COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

By

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In memory of Tony Conway. We're almost there Dad

and

For Mum, Pat Conway. Your endless and selfless support drives me on.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

DEDICATION ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES vi

LIST OF FIGURES vii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

History of a Social Movement 1
A Typology of Domestic Violence 1
Global Definitions of Domestic Violence 2
Prevalence of Domestic Violence 3
Impact on Health and Well-being 3
A preventable Public Health Problem 4
Understanding the Root Causes of Domestic Violence 5
Feminist Frameworks: Gender Based Inequality and Oppression 6
Psychological & Sociological Frameworks 11
Key Tensions in Understanding Domestic Violence 17
Responses to Domestic Violence in Practice: A Literature Review 22
Reflections on the literature reviewed 23
Study Rationale 25
Study Aims 27

II. METHODOLOGY & METHODS 29

III. RESULTS 41

An Ecological Analysis 41
A Community Case Study in Context 47
Direct Responses to Domestic Abuse in a Local Community 48
Governmental Sector 53
Criminal Justice Sector 68
Non-Governmental Organization Sector 99
Housing Sector 112
Heath Sector 125
Social Services Sector 131
Prevention Analysis 138
The 3'P's Analysis 141
Reflections on Local Responses: What Works 145

IV. DISCUSSION 158

Summary of Results and Key Findings 158

Study Limitations and Opportunities for Further Research 162
Emergent Issues for Reflection 163

Appendix 173

A. Duluth Power & Control Wheel 173

B. Stakeholders, preliminary list 174

C. Semi-structured Interview questions 175

D. People and organisations interviewed 176

E: Journeys 177

REFERENCES 181

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Modified ecological levels 42
2. Levels of the social ecology as presented 44
3. Primary prevention efforts 138
4. Secondary prevention efforts 139
5. Tertiary prevention efforts 140
6. Responses at the level of Prevention 142
7. Responses at the level of Protection 143
8. Responses at the level of Provision 144

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	People in context, levels of the social ecology	28
2.	Sectors of Responses to Domestic Violence across the Levels of the Social Ecology	46
3.	Recording of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Scottish police as an offence or crime in 2004	84
4.	Disposal of incidents of domestic abuse reported to the Scottish Police AND recorded as a crime or offence	85
5.	Number of reports of Domestic Abuse recorded by 3 Scottish Agencies in 2004: the Police, Women's Aid and the Procurator Fiscal Service (PF)	86

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

History of a Social Movement

Domestic violence has been the subject of research and action for over 35 years. This international recognition of domestic violence as a public as well as private problem has emerged from decades of activism and scholarship, around the globe, to raise awareness of the existence of violence in domestic settings, and to organise responses to the problem, these efforts started with the 'battered-women's' social movement in the 1970's (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). This social movement emerged out of the larger women's movements in both the UK and the USA (Schechter, 1982). The battered-women's movement is said to have started in Chiswick, England in 1972, when women suffering domestic violence sought refuge at a newly opened community house for local women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). This sparked the birth of the National Women's Aid Federation in 1974 (Sutton, 1978), now a UK wide organisation offering refuge accommodation, legal and financial advice and political and policy advocacy on behalf of women suffering domestic violence[1]. Activism in support of battered-women quickly spread to the USA and other countries throughout the world, with the opening of refuges seen as key to offering an appropriate response to battered women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

A Typology of Domestic Violence

Johnson (2005) suggests that when we speak of 'domestic violence' we are most often referring to one of three major types of intimate partner violence known as 'intimate terrorism'. Intimate terrorism refers to instances when violence is "enacted in the service of taking general control over one's partner". Consistent with Johnson's theory, the term domestic violence is used throughout this study, to be consistent with the terminology of the field, but the term is being used only in reference to the intimate terrorism type of violence, which is the focus of this study. Intimate terrorism is markedly different from the other two

[1] The Women's Aid website offers full information on the organisation's activities throughout the UK (http://www.womensaid.org.uk/).

major types of domestic violence known as 'situational couple violence' and 'violent resistance'. 'Violent resistance' refers to violence "utilized in response to intimate terrorism", when someone suffering from intimate terrorism uses violence to fight back. 'Situational couple violence' is violence that is "not embedded in a general pattern of power and control but is a function of the escalation of a specific conflict or series of conflicts". Johnson clarifies that "although all three types of intimate partner violence can be either frequent or infrequent, and can range from relatively minor acts of violence to homicidal assaults, intimate terrorism is the type most likely to be frequent and brutal" (p. 1127). These differences are key to our understanding of 'what is' domestic violence. Johnson's typology is an aid to our understanding of the complexities presented in the field of domestic violence. Determining the type of violence we encounter or inquire about in our research enables us to study not only *acts* of domestic violence, but also, crucially, to study the *function* of such violent acts and the *contexts* in which they occur. It is this 'intimate terrorism' type of domestic violence that is the cause for grave concern globally, and also the focus of this study.

Global Definitions of Domestic Violence

The United Nations (U.N.) consider domestic violence as a sub-category of 'violence against women', which they define as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (U.N. General Assembly, 1993). For the U.N. 'domestic violence'[2] refers to instances when such acts occur *between those who are related to each other* "through blood or intimacy" (U.N. General Assembly, 2004).

In 2002 the World Health Organisation (W.H.O) published a global research report on 'Violence and Health' (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002), referred to as the "first comprehensive review of violence on a global scale - what it is, whom it affects and what can be done about it". The report describes domestic violence as including "acts of physical aggression, such as hitting or kicking", as well as "forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion, psychological abuse such as intimidation and

[2] Domestic Violence and Domestic Abuse are used interchangeably in this report to signify the same phenomena. The United Nations and the World Health Organisation define 'violence' as a term encompassing acts of abuse, while other organisations (e.g. Women's Aid and NHS Scotland) prefer the use of the term 'abuse' which is inclusive of, but does not necessitate, violence.

humiliation, and controlling behaviours such as isolating a person from family and friends or restricting access to information and assistance" (p. 24).

Prevalence of Domestic Violence

The W.H.O report found that violence against intimate partners occurs "in all countries, all cultures and at every level of society without exception"(Krug et al, 2002, p. 24). The report affirmed that although women can be violent towards their male partners and violence occurs also between partners of the same sex, the "overwhelming burden is borne by women at the hands of men" (p. 24). The WHO review found that "in 48 population-based surveys from around the world, 10–69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives" (p. 25). The review found there are two different patterns of domestic violence. The first, known as battering, is described as "a severe and escalating form characterized by multiple forms of abuse, terrorization and threats, and increasingly possessive and controlling behaviour on the part of the abuser". The second is said to be "a more moderate form of relationship violence, where continuing frustration and anger occasionally erupt into physical aggression", also called 'common couple violence' (p. 93). General population surveys are recommended as a means to investigate the second pattern of abuse, and seen as less useful for studies of battering.

Impact on Health and Well-being

The latest U.N. resolution on the 'elimination of domestic violence against women' (U.N. General Assembly, 2004) recognises the harm caused by domestic violence to the health and well-being of the person experiencing such violence. Similarly, the CDC, drawing on extensive empirical studies, report the myriad ways in which domestic violence damages health and well-being, with increasing damage the longer the abuse continues. The CDC outline the harm caused to physical health, emotional well-being and health behaviours (Centres for Disease Control, 2006, p.1),

> "Many victims suffer physical injuries. Some are minor like cuts, scratches, bruises, and welts. Others are more serious and can cause lasting disabilities. These include broken bones, internal bleeding, and head trauma…..Victims often have low self-esteem. They may have a hard time trusting others and being in relationships. The anger and stress that victims feel may lead to eating disorders and depression. Some victims even think about

or commit suicide…..Victims are more likely to smoke, abuse alcohol, use drugs, and engage in risky sexual activity".

A Preventable Public Health Problem

In recognition of the widespread prevalence of domestic violence throughout societies, and its serious impact on health and well-being of those who live with it, a new framing of domestic violence (raised over 20 years ago, but only recently coming to prominence) speaks of domestic violence as not just a personal, inter-personal or gendered problem, but as a *public health problem* (for a historical review see Goodman, Koss, Fitzgerald, Russo & Puryear Keita, 1993 or Tjaden, 2005). Currently promoted by major institutions such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation and the U.S. Centres for Disease Control (CDC), this new framing of domestic violence as a *public* health issue, extends the responsibility for responding to domestic violence into the public realm, and calls for states to take a role in responding to domestic violence.

Key to the emergent public health framing of domestic violence more recent reframing of domestic violence from a public health perspective is a call not only to *respond* to domestic violence, but also to actively work to *prevent* domestic violence from occurring in the general population. The WHO report on 'Violence and Health' (Krug et al, 2002) eloquently suggests: *"despite the fact that violence has always been present, the world does not have to accept it as an inevitable part of the human condition"* (p. 3).

The CDC states that 'Intimate Partner Violence' (IPV) is a major public health problem that is costly to society and needs to be prevented (Centres for Disease Control, 2006). Similarly the United Nations states that "domestic violence is of public concern and requires [U.N. member] States to take serious action to protect victims and prevent domestic violence" (U.N. General Assembly, 2004, p.2); while member states of the World Health Organisation have committed to addressing and preventing domestic violence within their own borders.

According to the public health perspective in order to prevent a problem emerging in the general population, the problems 'root causes' must be tackled to prevent it developing in the first place. Having an understanding of the *risk factors* associated with the development of the problem, enables development and implementation of *interventions* to reduce the likelihood of the problem emerging in those groups most

at risk. Interventions can also be aimed at those already experiencing the problem, in order to minimise its recurrence or harmful impact.

How we attempt to prevent domestic violence will be a reflection of what is understand to be the root causes, or put differently, *what* we believe must be changed in order to block the occurrence of such violence. The call to recognise domestic violence as a problem, to respond to it and ultimately prevent its occurrence is compelling, but **what is understood to be the cause(s) of domestic violence and what responses does that lead to in practice?**

Understanding The Root Causes Of Domestic Violence

Alongside the building of the battered-women's movement, multiple theories have emerged in an attempt to understand domestic violence, and consequently determine what needs to change to eliminate such violence. The battered-women's movement was always, and continues to be, comprised of multiple interest groups. Writing on the emergence of the movements in the UK and the US, Schecter (1982) and Dobash & Dobash (1992) make distinctions between the feminist sectors of the movement, including women's rights activists, radical feminists and socialist feminists on one hand, who advocate that domestic violence is a problem of unequal gender relations in society; and the other sectors of the movement which are said to be 'non-feminist' in that they do not consider gendered social arrangements as the underlying problem causing domestic violence.

Theoretical Explanations for Domestic Violence

Feminist theories predominate, but are not unanimously upheld. Whether or not domestic violence is a 'gendered-issue' is hotly debated. Theories draw from history, cultural practices and empirical work in order to come to understand why violence exists in domestic settings. In the introduction to their text titled 'Current controversies on family violence', editors Gelles & Loseke (1993) write that 'theoretical disagreements prevail over the causes of family violence and appropriate social interventions'. According to Gelles & Loseke, at the centre of the disagreement are psychological, sociological, and feminist frameworks offering what they refer to as 'competing ways to conceptualize the behaviors involved in family violence' (p. x).

Feminist Frameworks: Gender Based Inequality And Oppression

Patriarchy at Home

Feminist theorists (e.g. Schecter, 1982; Sugarman, 1996; Risman, 2004 for overviews) propose that domestic violence is a symptom of the gender inequality and gender-based oppression that exists in societies throughout the world. They argue that such oppression and inequality are a result of 'patriarchal' societies, structured on the basis of family units with men at the head of the family (see Dobash & Dobash, 1979 for a comprehensive review). Drawing back to the Roman and Christian roots of contemporary western cultures two of the leading researchers into the problem of domestic violence, Dobash & Dobash (1979) explain the mechanism of patriarchy as it has evolved in law, culture and rites of passage over time. They explain that within patriarchal societies family units are of fundamental importance. In these family units men, as the fathers, are deemed to have responsibility for and therefore authority over their family, including their wives. Under this system women are first the property of their fathers and then become property of their husband when they (and their wealth) are formally transferred to him through marriage. Men had a legal right and moral obligation to control their wives in order to maintain the social arrangements around which society was organised. Controlling wives included the use of physical abuse, as demonstrated by the 'Rule of Thumb' established as common-law in 18th Century England. The 'Rule of Thumb' deemed it a man's right to beat his wife, as long as it was with a stick no thicker than the diameter of his thumb.

Schecter (1982) explains that this patriarchal legacy impacts on how women are viewed in contemporary society. She states that women are often viewed as dependents rather than self-sufficient individuals, someone to be taken care of or a burden. Under this arrangement women become property rather than people (property of their fathers, husbands and society) and have been expected to refrain from work that did not service their family or community's needs. Women under these social arrangements are seen as a commodity, providing essential labour, without pay, to the family and community, in the form of household maintenance, child rearing and caring for the sick and elderly. Under these arrangements women without personal wealth lack economic independence, and are instead dependent on their husbands

for shelter, food and other resources. Working within the home is also socially isolating, women in this situation often find themselves with limited social support.

The battered-women's movement assert that these factors, women's limited economic and social independence, play a central role in women throughout the world putting up with violence at home. Kalmuss & Strauss's 1982 survey of over 1000 women in the U.S. general population supports this assertion. Their survey explored subjective (psychological) marital dependence, objective (economic) marital dependence and the experience of violence. They found correlations between marital dependency and experience of abuse, with rates of minor and severe marital violence increasing as wives' marital dependence increased. According to Kalmuss & Strauss, these findings suggest that both objectively and subjectively dependent wives tolerate more abuse than "non-dependent" wives, with subjective dependency having a stronger relationship to minor violence and objective dependency having a stronger relationship to reported severe violence at home.

Patriarchy Everywhere

The feminist framework states that the patriarchal structure of power and control also operates beyond the individual family setting, extending into society as a whole, resulting in society wide oppression of women and the maintenance of social structures that benefit men more than women (Lopez-Claros & Zahidi, 2005). In patriarchal societies men are said to have responsibility for collective society and consequently hold the positions of authority created to manage society. These positions are highly valued, and afford privilege to those who hold them. As a result, a gender-based power imbalance has been created and maintained in society, in which the male gender is afforded more privileges, and therefore more power, than the female (Dobash, 1979). Even in countries with equal rights for women and men, men predominantly fill positions of authority and other privileged positions (Lopez-Claros & Zahidi, 2005).

Under such patriarchal social systems, women and their work are said to be less valued than men and their occupations. The subordinate role of women in society has minimised their opportunities for education, self-expression, autonomy and control over their environments (Lopez-Claros & Zahidi, 2005). As a result, in societies today despite holding equal rights to education and employment under law, many women are still economically and socially dependent on their fathers or husbands. The dependence of

women on the men in their lives, and their limited independence is said to result in the tacit acceptance of violence against women under such societal arrangements (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

Gender, Power & Control

Patriarchal societies have resulted in social arrangements in which men typically hold more *social and economic power* compared to their female counterparts, creating a gender imbalance with wide impacts. Under these arrangements men are not only superior to women, women as the property of their men, become *subordinate* to men. With one group in society (men), having socially sanctioned power over the others (women and children), the dominant group are said to act violently against the subordinate group in order to maintain control over them, as an abuse of this male power (Allen & Strauss, 1980 as cited in Kalmuss & Straus, 1982). Domestic violence is said to be one form of such abuse of power, referred to by feminist theorists as being part of a 'continuum of violence' against women and children that also includes rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment (e.g. Leidig, 1992; Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, 2004). The results of a major population survey of experiences of intimate partner violence, involving 16,000 respondents, by the US Department of justice (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) supported this theory. The report states that their data supports the theory that *"violence perpetrated against women by male partners is part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control, or what some researchers have called 'patriarchal terrorism'."*(p.34). More specifically, the survey found that:

> "women whose partners were jealous, controlling, or verbally abusive were significantly more likely to report being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked by their partners, even when other sociodemographic and relationship characteristics were controlled. Indeed, having a verbally abusive partner was the variable most likely to predict that a woman would be victimized by an intimate partner. These findings support the theory that violence perpetrated against women by intimates is often part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control." (p. iv).

Patriarchal Legacy in Contemporary Relationships

In 1998, findings from research by Dobash & Dobash suggested four main causes of domestic violence in contemporary relationships (p.144). Each cause stems from what they term 'male sexual proprietariness' (p 214):

1. Men's possessiveness and jealousy.

2. Disagreements and expectations concerning domestic work and resources.
3. Men's sense of the right to punish 'their' women for perceived wrongdoing.
4. The importance to men of maintaining or exercising their power and authority.

In a similar vein, the more recent extensive review of global literature presented in the WHO 'Violence and Health report' (Krug et al., 2002) indicated that

> "around the world, the events that trigger violence in abusive relationships are remarkably consistent. They include disobeying or arguing with the man, questioning him about money or girlfriends, not having food ready on time, not caring adequately for the children or the home, refusing to have sex, and the man suspecting the woman of infidelity (p. 24).

Such violent acts by men on women are explained as a result of socially sanctioned male use of aggression, whereby boys and men are socialised to use aggressive behaviour as a way to maintain control over their environment, including those they live with (Kimmel, 2004).

How Power and Control Operates at Home

Developed by Ellen Pence and the Duluth Abuse Intervention Project, the 'power and control wheel' (Fineman & Mykitiuk, 1994, p.88; See Appendix-A) has become a pivotal tool in understanding the mechanisms through which power and authority are operationalised in abusive domestic relationships (see Pence & Shepard, 1999 for a complete overview). In Duluth, Minnesota an initiative was launched to co-ordinate existing community-based responses to perpetrators of domestic violence. The co-ordinated community response developed through this initiative is known as 'the Duluth model' (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The power and control wheel emerged from this initiative, developed from accounts of 200 women who had suffered domestic violence recorded in focus groups in Duluth during 1984 (Mederos, 1999).

The wheel outlines how power and control is operationalised and maintained in abusive relationships. Power and Control sit in the centre of the wheel, with sexual and physical violence at the periphery. Power and Control are said to be maintained or possible through the threat or use of physical and sexual violence within the relationship. The physical and sexual violence may happen infrequently, but the ever present threat enables women to be controlled by their partners, through other mechanisms. Between the violence at the periphery and the centre of power and control, are eight segments. Each of these segments emphasises a mechanisms used by men to maintain power and control over their partners. The mechanisms reported are, in no particular order of import, the use of (1) intimidation, (2) isolation, (3)

coercion and threats; the use of (4) emotional and (5) economic abuse; the use of (6) male privilege; the use of (7) children to manipulate women's behaviour and response to the violence; (8) silencing women through minimising or denying the abusive acts; deflecting responsibility for the abuse through attribution of blame for the abuse to the person being abused.

A Human rights Issue

The U.N. resolution on *the Elimination of Violence Against Women* (U.N. General Assembly, 2004) considers violence against women to be a *human rights issue*. The resolution recognises that violence against women is "inter alia, a societal problem and a manifestation of unequal power relations between women and men" (p. 2). In an expert paper delivered to the U.N. in 2005, Tjaden states that gender-based violence "constitutes discrimination against women" and impacts upon "women's well-being and their enjoyment of human rights" (p. 3). As such, the human rights perspective focuses attention on "state-tolerated and state-sponsored discrimination against women", and recognises that such "discriminatory practices make women more vulnerable to violent victimization and emotional abuse" (p. 3). The U.N. resolution, therefore calls for the promotion of gender equality in member states, particularly for the "empowerment of women and their economic independence as critical tools to prevent and eliminate domestic violence against women" (U.N. General Assembly, 2004, p. 2).

Feminist Solutions

These theories of domestic violence emphasise the social and cultural roots of what was long regarded as socially acceptable practices. With the advent of the 20th Century women's suffrage and women's rights movements the practices lost their acceptability, but did not diminish. They instead became private troubles, which women suffered in silence (Mears & Visher, 2005). Feminist understanding of domestic violence emphasise the gendered roots of these private troubles, making them visible and calling for appropriate and effective responses to women dealing with domestic violence. Recognition of inequity in gender relationships is called for, and redress sought through social changes.

Chancer (2004) suggests that in order to prevent domestic violence we must focus beyond "battering, per se" and implement social interventions that both critique and transform how we understand

gender relations. She calls for a more concerted effort to "bring gender respect and gender awareness into early childhood (not just college) curriculums with the same vigor as recent progress has been made toward inserting study of ethnic and racial diversely into American education." (p. 261). Chancer promotes changes to family counselling services, recommending they "promote gender equality as an ordinary rather than extraordinary goal" (p. 261). She also suggests there is "much room for improvement" in the popular cultural representations of gendered power-relations (Chancer, 2004, p. 261). These suggestions are part of a call for social changes which redefine male-female social relationships, secure equality for women under the law and the physical representation of women in valued social institutions. Changes called for are aimed at empowering women, reducing the power men have over women, and therefore protecting women from violence in domestic relationships.

Psychological & Sociological Frameworks

The 'non-gendered' theories of domestic violence, are essentially psychological and sociological theories which offer explanations for domestic violence based in problems of individual psychology, relational psychology and social structure such as 'the family' rather than a problem of gendered power relations (e.g. Gelles & Loseke, 1993). Prominent within these frameworks are theories of 'intergenerational learned behaviour' and 'individual pathology' as explanations for violent behaviour of not only men, but also women, in domestic settings.

Individual Pathology Of Women: Masochistic Wives

The founder of the first refuge in Chiswick, Erin Pizzey, drew on the intergenerational transmission of violence theory to explain the behaviour of the women staying in her refuge. Pizzey's (1982) theory proposes that women *actively sought out* violent relationships as a result of their experiences of domestic abuse in childhood. Pizzey was not alone, this theory known as the masochistic wife theory, was supported by psychologists and psychiatrists of the day. Pizzey's views were shared by the psychiatrist J.J. Gayford, with whom she collaborated on early research into the aetiology of domestic violence. In her 1982 text *'Prone to Violence'*, based on 10 years of work at the Chiswick Refuge, Pizzey suggests that children growing up in violent families 'bond to pain' leading to an addiction to pain, with the

result that "throughout life, the person then recreates situations of violence and pain, for those situations stir the only feelings of love and satisfaction the person has ever known" (p. 7). Pizzey calls for the 'caring community' to help such "emotionally disabled" and "violence-prone" women learn how to "overcome their addiction to pain", so that "these people can then learn to trust and be happy in love instead of pain" (p. 7).

Pizzey's theory that women experiencing domestic abuse actively seek out violent relationships, has always been rejected by the feminist sectors of the battered women's movement. Her lack of influence on the growing battered-women's movement did not, however, diminish her ability to persuade others of the merit of her perspective, with far ranging consequences. As a well-connected upper middle-class woman, Pizzey had opportunities to promote this theory widely in the UK and US. She was regarded as a key figure in domestic violence activism which allowed her to occupy a position of influence, independent of the movement. Pizzey and Gayford were considered experts on domestic violence by those outwith the movement, and as such were asked to provide testimony to the UK parliament during deliberation upon the newly proposed 'Battered Wives (Rights to Possession of Matrimonial Home) Bill (Ashley, 1975). The Pizzey-Gayford view of domestic violence, referred to as the 'theory of deprivation' was used as a framework for the governmental response to domestic violence and is suggested to have directly contributed to the development of pervasive cultural myths about domestic violence, namely that it is a problem affecting 'damaged', violent and 'vulnerable' women, predominantly in the working classes. This framing led to the psychopathology of victims, suggested they be protected from themselves as much as their abuser, and that as damaged, vulnerable and themselves violent people it would be in the best necessary for society (via social services) to take over their role of parent, for the sake of their children (see e.g. McCabe, 1977).

This theory of women seeking out violence, or 'masochistic wives' has also, according to O'Leary (1993) fallen into disrepute in the field of psychology, due to recognition of the concept as victim-blaming, with no evidence to support it. Morley & Mullender (1994) report findings from three studies, which contradict this notion of the masochistic wife. The first, a 1988 study by Andrews and Brown, 'the Islington community study', found that of the 32 abused women who had lived with more than one man, only 3 had been involved in more than one *violent* relationship. The second study reported, research

conducted by Kelly in 1988 of self-reported survivors of domestic violence was said to have found that "in every case where the woman had experienced more than one violent relationship, the new partner knew of the previous violence and used it as a justification for his own violence" (Morley & Mullender, 1994, p. 5). Morley and Mullender state that this "casts doubt on the common suggestion that some women seek out violent relation-ships" (p.5). The third study, one of women survivors in the USA, by Pagelow (1981) found 57% of male partners who had been previously married were known to have been violent to another wife, suggesting that the "evidence is stronger" that violent men, rather than masochistic women, "carry their violence from one relationship to another" (Morley & Mullender, 1994, p. 5).

Individual Pathology Of Men

Drawing on the work of previous theorists, Johnson & Ferraro (2000) suggest there are three typologies of 'male-batterers'. They reference Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's (1994) typologies of 'family-only', 'generally-violent-antisocial' and 'dysphoric-borderline' batterers (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 950). Johnson & Ferraro suggest that the 'family-only' batterers are those engaging in situational couple violence, while the other two engage in intimate terrorism. They propose that these two types of batterers "come to their terrorism through two quite different developmental histories and psychological profiles", with one type being "broadly sociopathic and violent" ('generally-violent-antisocial' batterers) and the other "deeply emotionally dependent on their relationship with their partner" ('dysphoric-borderline' batterers) (p. 950). Johnson & Ferraro discuss findings from a study by Jacobson & Gottman (1998) of the physiological responses of batterers during arguments.

This study found physiological response differences within their group, with one group, labelled as 'cobras', showed "a 'cold' physiology even in the heat of vicious verbal attacks on their partners, with heart rate and other physiological indicators that suggest a chilling internal calmness" (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p.950). The men labelled as 'cobras', according to Johnson and Ferraro shared characteristics and personal histories consistent with Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's 'generally-violent-antisocial' batterers. The second group identified by Jacobson & Gottman's study were labelled 'pit-bulls'. These men were "more physiologically in tune with the emotional displays involved in their verbal attacks on their partners" (p.950), and resembled the "dysphoric-borderline" type of batterer identified by Holtzworth-Munroe and

Stuart. Johnson & Ferraro report that these typologies of male-batterers have received 'general empirical support in a number of empirical tests' (p. 950).

Alcohol And Violence

There is a long history in western societies of associating alcohol consumption with family abuse and neglect (see Gelles, 1993 for an overview). This connection has been used to explain violent acts in domestic relationships. Empirical support has been found for such a connection, with violent partners found to be either alcohol abusers or to perpetrate violent acts when drinking (Morley & Mullender, 1994). These studies have been criticised for over emphasising the connection between alcohol use and violence. Morley & Mullender (1994) advise that on closer inspection of these studies, the generalisability of the connections found between some men who are violent and alcohol use or abuse are questionable. They report that in most of these studies no more than half of the samples studies report alcohol use or addiction, "indicating that alcohol cannot explain the behaviour of the other half" (p. 6). They also cite research by Kaufman, Kantor and Straus (1987) who found that while 'men who were classified as high or binge drinkers had a two-to-three times greater rate of assaulting their wives than did husbands who abstained, … about 80 percent of the men in both the high and binge drinking groups did not hit their wives at all during the year of this survey' (p. 10). Morley and Mullender suggest that rather than being the direct *cause* of violence, "alcohol is better viewed as a means of gaining courage to carry out the act and/or as a convenient rationale to excuse it once it has occurred" (p. 6).

Intergenerational Transmission Of Violence

First proposed by clinicians and academics in the late 1960's and early 1970's (Gelles & Loseke, 1993) the 'intergenerational transmission of violence' theory sought to explain how domestic violence continued to manifest itself over successive generations of a family, through understanding of the psychological and behavioural consequences of such violence in families. In essence this theory suggests that people engage in abusive relationships as adults as a result of the psychological and social consequences of experiencing or witnessing abuse in the home during their childhood. The introduction of this theory coincides with the period just prior to the emergence of the battered-women's social movement.

Empirical Support

In 1975 the prominent and influential British Medical Journal published findings from an early study by Gayford into the aetiology of domestic violence. Gayford surveyed 100 of the women seeking shelter at the Chiswick refuge on both they and their partner's life experiences of abuse. Interestingly the findings from Gayford's study did not substantiate the theory he and Pizzey espoused, with only 23% of the women interviewed reporting having been "exposed to models of family violence" in childhood. A larger number of the interviewees (51%) reported that their abusive partners, however, had been exposed to family violence. Gayford offers no explanation for the inconsistency in the theory and data presented, shows surprise at the high level of education held by some of the women, and ultimately recommends a course of action to remedy domestic violence based on the theory that these women are emotionally and psychologically damaged and seek out violence in relationships.

A recent study by Rapoza and Baker (2008) lends support to the intergenerational transmission of violence theory. Rapoza & Baker reported findings of specific "risk factor for victimisation or perpetration of violence in an adult relationship" amongst their cohort stemming from the "experience of abuse in childhood" (p. 54). They report findings from a survey of 171 heterosexual dating couples, drawn from a U.S. undergraduate student cohort, who were asked about the behaviours they and their partner "use to resolve conflict" as a couple (p. 56). Amongst the women in their cohort childhood experiences of "physical and psychological abuse from the father were reported significantly more often by the physically violent group". A similar picture emerged for the men in the study, with "physical abuse from both parents, psychological abuse from the mother and greater anxious attachment, all reported significantly more often by the physically violent group" (p. 60). The authors suggest that their study contributes to "a growing body of research demonstrating that both men and women engage in physical violence in their dating relationships" (p. 60). Rapoza & Baker draw parallels with their study findings and the findings of other major research into 'intimate partner violence'. The questions asked in the study, however, are specifically about the type of domestic violence referred to by Johnson as 'situational couple violence'. Caution should therefore be used with these finding to avoid over-generalizing them to speak to the type of violence we think of as 'intimate terrorism'.

A study by Ehrensaft, Cohen, Brown, Smailes, Chen & Johnson (2003) found support for the

intergenerational transmission of violence theory amongst a more representative general-population based sample. In 1999, as part of their 20-year longitudinal study of a random population cohort of over 800 children, questionnaires were sent to the cohort asking about their experiences of aggressive behaviour and partner violence in a current relationship. Of the 543 people returning questionnaires (66% of original cohort), 39% reported having "seen or heard physical fights between his or her parents or between a parent and the parent's partner, as a child" (p. 744). Amongst this sub-cohort, 25% reported one incident of seeing or hearing a parental physical fight, while 14% reported two or more incidents. 22% of the sub-cohort reported perpetrating some act of partner violence over the past year, while 19% reported being victim to some act of partner violence over the same time period (p. 745). Using self-report and officially recorded reports of abuse in childhood, 8% of the sub-cohort were classified as belonging to one or more of three childhood maltreatment groups: experienced neglect; experienced sexual abuse, and experienced physical abuse in childhood. Their analysis of these variables found that for the sub-cohort, *being exposed "*to domestic violence between parents as a child" was predictive of becoming victim to domestic violence as an adult. The analysis also found that *experiencing* abuse as a child increased the risk of being violent towards ones partner in adulthood.

The scale of this study is impressive, and the results certainly merit more investigation. Recalling Johnson's advice to heed the type of domestic violence under study, however, casts some ambiguity on the conclusions drawn here. The study makes claims about exposure to 'domestic violence' in childhood and the perpetration or experience of the same in adulthood. Consideration of the specific questions asked in the study suggests that the type of domestic violence respondents were asked about was actually 'situational couple violence', rather than 'intimate terrorism'. People were asked to speak to their relationship experiences *over the past 12 months*. Respondents could not therefore share potential experiences of abuse over the length of their relationship or even in past relationships, which could have shed light on whether or not domestic violence was a persistent feature of their lives, or a unique occurrence in their recent relationship history. The questions did not inquire into the *function* of violent acts either perpetrated or suffered as adults, or the context in which they occurred. As a result we do not know to what extent the violent acts could be said to reflect a more problematic attempt to control or be controlled through violence, which would help us determine the type of violence reported. The omission of

questions aimed at understanding the function of violent acts and the role of control issues, creates ambiguity around the labelling of respondents as having 'been exposed to domestic violence in childhood'. The questions ask whether people saw or heard 'fights between parents', specifically physical fights. There were no opportunities to share whether the events reported, mostly lone events, were embedded in a pattern of abuse of the intimate terrorism type, or more as a part of situational couple violence. Different questions may have led to different responses.

Increased Risk Versus Predisposition

An important distinction can be made between Pizzey and Gayford's framing of domestic violence and the contemporary studies that support the intergenerational transmission of violence theory. Whereas Pizzey and Gayford suggest childhood experiences of abuse *predisposes* people to seek out violence and act violent themselves, the contemporary theories explain childhood abuse as a *potential risk factor* for becoming victim to, or perpetrating domestic violence in adulthood.

Key Tensions In Understanding Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence as Pervasive and 'Normal'

Chancer (2004) states that "domestic violence remains disturbingly common" (p. 255). The ubiquity of domestic violence is upheld to refute individual pathology and reaction to stress theories for such violence. Rather than being a problem of 'deprivation' domestic violence has been found to occur to women in all walks of life. Speaking on behalf of a study conducted by the American Psychological Association's 'Committee on Women in Psychology's Task Force on Male Violence Against Women' (APA Task Force) Goodman et al (1993) report that male violence against women is found to cross "lines of ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, and age" (p. 1054). In their study on dating violence, Rapozza & Baker (2008) sampled predominantly middle-class couples, who reported perpetrating and being victim physical assault in their relationship. Weitzman's (2000) popular study on upscale violence highlighted how those in the upper-middle classes experience and cope with domestic violence.

The findings of the APA Task Force cautions that: "psychology's disciplinary tradition of focusing on the individual must not obscure the problem's social and cultural dimensions" (Goodman et al, 1993, p. 1056). The Task Force report concludes by emphasizing "that the problem of violence against women cannot be fully understood, let alone solved, by focusing exclusively on individual psychology. Only by changing the social and cultural institutions that have given rise to the problem can a lasting solution be achieved" (p. 1054).

Women Who Are Violent

Despite the overwhelming evidence indicating that women are most often victim to violence from their male partners (Krug et al, 2002), research findings which highlight the existence of violence by women *against men* and violence in *same-sex* relationships are interpreted as evidence that domestic violent is not a gendered problem. Das Dasgupta (1999) engages this issue in a paper titled *'Just like Men?: A Critical View of Violence by Women'*. She suggests that "the hasty attempt to equate men and women who have used physical force against intimate partners to *batterers,* stems from the misinterpretation of the concept of battering itself" and that "to comprehend battering only in terms of the incidence of violence is to misconstrue its full implications". Das Dasgupta defines battering as a "pattern of coercion in which abusers establish control over their partners" (p. 199). This brings to mind Johnson's typology of 'intimate terrorism'. Like Johnson's insistence that we think beyond the acts of violence to the functions they serve, Das Dasgupta reminds us that just with all other forms of violence, we must consider the "motivations, intentions, results and consequences" of violent behaviour within intimate relationships.

Methodological Issues

Johnson (2005) suggests that the findings of research into domestic violence have less utility when the *type* of violence studied is not made clear when the different types of domestic violence are discussed as a unitary phenomenon. The problem, according to Johnson & Ferraro (2000), stems from the tendency of studies to lump together the different types of violence. With intimate terrorism essentially perpetrated by men, violent resistance perpetrated most often by women, and situational couple violence perpetrated only slightly more by men than women, putting together experiences of all three types of violence can give the

impression that women and men are equally abusive. Without attending to the type of violence under study, or attempting to understand the function of the violence reported by participants, data from people reporting 'situational couple violence' or 'violent resistance' are reported *as if* the findings were about the experience of 'intimate terrorism'. Johnson (2005) critiques such work as creating unnecessary conflict over the prevalence, cause and mechanisms of the type of violence labelled intimate terrorism. In his view *"serious errors of fact, theory and intervention inevitably follow from the failure to acknowledge the major differences among the three different types of intimate partner violence"* (p. 1126).

What Should Be Done About Domestic Violence?

There is disagreement over how we should respond to domestic abuse based on these apparently competing frameworks of understanding. Those who adopt a feminist framework promote equal rights for women under the laws of the land, or call for an end to the gender-based oppression of women, through the restructuring of hierarchical relationships in society. Those who have adopted a psychological or sociological framework, the 'non-feminist' sectors, call for recognition of domestic violence against children, and violence perpetrated *by* women against men and their children, and are said to promote the end of *all* violence in the family setting (for an overview see Gelles & Loseke, 1993). Despite these differences it seem that all those concerned with domestic violence agree that domestic violence in all its forms is a pervasive and damaging problem in society that should be prevented. This is a central concept in the emergent 'preventable public health problem' approach to domestic violence. This approach may offer a way past these controversies to find how we can most effectively respond to domestic violence.

A Third Position?

A public health approach to violence is said to offer an inter-disciplinary and scientific approach "to preventing health problems, and extending better care and safety to entire populations" (Krug et al., 2002, p. 3). The approach emphasizes 'collective action', meaning that it promotes co-operative efforts from sectors such as health, education, social services, justice and policy to solve problems.

The field of public health works to prevent problems before they arise in a population. In order to prevent a problem, we must know from where the problem stems. For public health approaches in order to

understand the 'complex causation of domestic violence' necessitates investigations of its 'root causes'. Public health approaches utilise an 'ecological model' in their attempts to understand the 'roots of violence'. Their ecological model views used situates the roots of violence in four places, namely the individual, relationships, the community and society (Krug et al., 2002; p. 12). Coming to know how domestic violence emerges or can be resisted in each of these 'spaces' is said to offer possibilities for prevention of the problem.

This means that their focus recognizes a need for individual, relational, community *and* societal level strategies to prevent problems such as domestic violence. As stated by the lead U.S. public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC):

> "A combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of IPV. Understanding these multilevel factors can help identify various opportunities for prevention." (Centers for Disease Control, n.d.).

The solutions to domestic violence advocated by the CDC are a mixture of feminist, psychological and sociological approaches, with a clear emphasis on trans-agency partnerships and prevention efforts:

> "Prevention efforts should ultimately reduce risk factors and promote protective factors. In addition, prevention should address all levels that influence IPV: individual, relationship, community, and society. Effective prevention strategies are necessary to promote awareness about IPV and to foster the commitment to social change."

The public health approach therefore offers us a win-win approach to tackling domestic violence. Instead of being forced to choose either a feminist or 'non-feminist' framework of understanding, so that we may attend to *either* the structural, cultural and gendered roots of domestic violence *or* the social, relational and psychological roots, the public health perspective demands that we attend to them all, in a collaborative effort to end domestic violence.

Prevention In Practice

A comprehensive public health approach to preventing domestic violence involves working at all three levels of prevention, primary, secondary and tertiary, each defined by their temporal aspects. Primary prevention takes place *before* violence occurs, secondary prevention are efforts enacted *immediately afterwards* to prevent the problem worsening and tertiary prevention occurs *over the long-term* to continue to support people in the wake of violence (Krug et al., 2002, p.15). The WHO report recognises that

member states are currently making effort towards secondary and tertiary prevention, but advises that *"such responses, while important and in need of strengthening, should be accompanied by a greater investment in primary prevention"*. The report notes a preponderance of programmes attempting to "deal with the immediate and numerous consequences of intimate partner violence" (secondary and tertiary prevention efforts) (Krug et al., 2002, p. 113). The efforts to develop sufficient programming are said to be understandable, but result in an overshadowing of the importance of developing primary prevention efforts. The report clarifies that a

> "comprehensive response to violence is one that not only protects and supports victims of violence, but also promotes non-violence, reduces the perpetration of violence, and changes the circumstances and conditions that give rise to violence in the first place" (Krug et al., 2002, p. 15).

Long-term success in the prevention of violence is said to require comprehensive, collaborative approaches across institutional sectors at local (community), national and global (international) levels. The report advises that responses must include "empowering women and girls, reaching out to men, providing for the needs of victims and increasing the penalties for abusers" (Krug et al., 2002, p. 113). The involvement of children and young people and a focus on 'changing community and societal norms' are said to be 'vital' in any efforts to successfully reduce violence against intimate partners.

Considering Existing Responses To Domestic Violence

The WHO has set a challenge to member states to work to prevent violence in all its forms within their borders. The public health approach is suggested as a way to work towards prevention, but the details as to how the commitment made by member states could or should be enacted is left up to each state to determine. Whether these commitments are being enacted in practice is yet to be seen. What resources, if any, are committed to responding to this public problem and preventing its occurrence is not known. As suggested by the WHO report, if there are active efforts to intervene in domestic violence within states, it cannot be presumed that prevention is a goal, or that root causes are being tackled.

The study presented below is concerned with *how domestic violence is responded to in the public realm*, with a particular interest in prevention efforts. The frameworks discussed so far explain how domestic violence is understood in theory, while the following section turns to how it is responded to in practice.

Responses To Domestic Violence In Practice: A Literature Review

General Domestic Violence Literature

Peer reviewed literature on domestic violence over the past two decades covers a multitude of issues related to the phenomenon of domestic violence. Some aspects, however, are presented more frequently, such as (i) those with a focus on elements of risk of being victim to domestic violence, or risk of repeat offending by perpetrators, (ii) the treatment of perpetrators or victims of domestic violence, and (iii) the physical and mental health impacts of living with domestic violence. In general, the published research focuses overwhelmingly on either the perpetrators of domestic violence or those who find themselves victim to it. Few articles relate to the role of communities, society, culture or institutions in this social problem (see Salazar & Cook, 2002 for a comprehensive overview).

Literature On 'Responses To Domestic Violence'.

A small literature was found on responses to domestic violence, published since 2000 (119 journal articles). Of these research articles, the responses discussed were largely split between (i) exploration of responses to domestic violence at the system level (such as the criminal justice system or the health care system) (28%) (e.g. Seave, 2006; Fleury-Steiner, Bybee, Sullivan, Belknap & Melton, 2006; Allen, 2006; Hopkins & Koss, 2005; Pennell & Francis, 2005; Burman & Chantler, 2005; Mears & Vusher, 2005; Welsh, 2005) (ii) responses by particular bodies (such as the police or medics and including policy, resource provision and treatments offered), (28%) (e.g. Stapleton, Taylor & Asmundson, 2007; Baig, Shadigian & Heisler, 2006; Worrall, Ross & McCord, 2006; Hovell, Seid & Liles, 2006; Haggblom, Hallberg & Moller, 2005; Griffin, Resick & Yehuda, 2005; Errez & Bach, 2003) and (iii) responses of victims themselves to the violence (such as help-seeking behaviours and emotional reactions) (28%) (e.g. Buzawa, Hotaling & Byrne, 2007; Hollenshead, Dai, Ragsdale, Massey & Scott, 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2007; Fisher & Shelton, 2006; Goodkind, Sullivan & Bybee, 2004).

The remaining articles focus on a variety of responses to domestic violence, such as considerations of the perspective of women who have been victim to domestic violence (6%) (e.g. Tower, McMurray,

Rowe & Wallis, 2006; Dienemann, Glass & Hyman, 2005; Belknap & Sayeed, 2003) or understanding perpetrators and/or their responses to treatment (14%) (e.g. Rivett & Rees, 2004; Sartin, 2005; Field, Caetano & Nelson, 2004).

A small number of those papers focus on responses at the societal level (4%) (e.g. Phillips, 2006; Gracia & Herrero, 2006) and the community level (3%) (e.g. Atkins, 2005; Rose, 2003). A proportion of all studies (13%) discuss responses at more than one ecological level, commonly looking at how individuals (victims) engage with a particular system[3] (e.g. Stalans & Finn, 2006; Kelly, 2004; Baker, Cook & Norris, 2003).

The published research overwhelmingly discusses violence against women by male partners, with a subsection exploring domestic violence within same-sex relationships, mainly within lesbian couples (e.g. Atkins, 2005; Rosen, 2003; Younglove, Marcee & Vitello, 2002; Tigert, 2001). A very small number of papers focus on the responses geared towards young people and children as victims of domestic violence (e.g. Cohan, 2007; Waugh & Bonner, 2002).

Reflections On The 'Responding To Domestic Violence' Literature Reviewed

Recognising Typology

The vast majority of these studies used the term 'domestic violence or assault'. A large proportion used the more recently adopted term 'intimate partner violence or abuse'. Some used ambiguous terms such as 'partner violence' and 'violent behaviour', while others used specific terms for the type of violence under study such as 'male violence', 'violent-men', 'batterers', 'men who batter', 'lesbian batterers' and 'battered women'. Some of the specific terms used, such as 'abusive relationships', 'low-level violence', 'family violence', suggest a focus on the 'situational couple' or 'common couple' type of violence, but as Johnson (2005) asserted the studies rarely acknowledged the typology engaged and typically generalised their findings to other types of domestic violence.

[3] This accounts for the total number of studies exceeding 100%.

Frameworks Used

Gendered, psychological, sociological and public health frameworks for understanding domestic violence were all represented in the studies reviewed. The gendered and psychological frames were predominant. Gendered frameworks tended to speak of battering, while the psychologically framed studies had a strong emphasis on developing therapeutic responses to those who are victim to abuse. Some of these studies employed the now discredited 'victim-blaming' framework, through focussing on the psychology of victims of domestic violence, particularly the aspects of their psychology or past which puts them at risk of becoming victim to violent behaviour. It appears from this review that there is still a disproportionate focus on victims of abuse over a focus on the perpetrators. Responses focussed on perpetrators of domestic violence are reported, but are housed firmly in the criminal justice system, with no reports of wider community-based interventions with other men who abuse.

Prevention Efforts

Primary prevention efforts were not represented in the literature reviewed. As the WHO review suggested, there was an overwhelming focus on responding to the immediate and long-term needs of people who become victim to abuse or changing the behaviour of those who are abusive (secondary and tertiary prevention efforts). Assessment of risk factors for becoming victim to abuse or perpetrating abuse were reported, but not beyond the individual or relational level. Exploration of resilience to abuse, potential preventative factors, was not reported in this literature. An encouraging number of the published responses to domestic violence, did however, focus on the adequacy of provider responses, and even systems of response. This indicates recognition of the role the wider community has in responding to domestic violence. The majority of these studies focussed on the criminal justice system, however, with limited coverage of the other social and community resources that could be enacted to respond to domestic violence.

The frameworks for understanding domestic violence enable us to think through the complexities of this pervasive social problem. They offer us insights into what causes the problem and how best to respond. Reviewing the literature of reported responses to domestic violence enables us to look beyond the

theory, to how domestic violence is engaged with in practice. This provides us some insight about what action is being taken, by whom, and to what end, to address domestic violence in our societies.

Study Rationale

Despite the insights offered by such a review of the literature, the responses published in journals do not necessarily represent the *actual responses* to domestic violence taking place in society. By focussing on the responses of individuals, individual agencies or individual systems, the vast majority of these reported responses have been de-contextualised. They are explained in isolation to the very context in which they operate. The bulk of the responses reported were operating at the relational or community level, with very little exploration of responses at the state or society levels. Whether this is because few responses *actually* exist at these levels of the ecology is unknown. These studies are of course useful, but they do not facilitate our understanding of *how we respond to domestic violence across an entire social ecology*. In other words, these studies do not provide insight as to what the sum total efforts looks like, collectively, across all levels of a particular ecology. Such an understanding would enable reflection on how well we are responding to domestic violence, to determine where efforts are based, where resources are being allocated and why, and where resources may need to be re-allocated in order to comprehensively tackle domestic violence. The literature reviewed suggests that responses to domestic violence are not geared towards primary prevention efforts, again whether this reflects reality is unknown. Seeking an understanding of the total *responses across a social ecology* would provide insights as to whether or not efforts, in practice, are extending beyond secondary and tertiary prevention to primary prevention.

In order to come to know how domestic violence is responded to in practice, **across all levels of a particular social ecology,** a community-based case study of responses to domestic violence was conducted. Based in the field of community psychology, this study took *an ecological approach* to the case study. Community psychology concerns "the relationships of the individual to communities and society. Through collaborative research and action, community psychologists seek to understand and to enhance quality of life for individuals, communities, and society." (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001, p. 5). An ecological approach recognises that people live their lives within a social ecology, comprised of multiple-levels of action and interaction, which impact upon people's lived experience. The levels of the

social ecology interconnect the individual experiencing abuse with their family, their local community, the society and the wider cultural, political and economic structures within which they live. A community-based case study enabled the study to position itself at a level of the social ecology *between* individuals and the societies they live in.

Understanding the Ecological Approach

A social ecology refers to the entire society within which we as individuals live. This is the context within which we live and as such our lives cannot be fully understood without reference to it. Taking this approach to domestic abuse views the lives of the people affected *in context*.

This ecology is comprised of multiple inter-connected levels. Levels include the social, political, economic and relational structures in which we live. Within community psychology the levels of our social ecology are spoken of as 'ecological levels of analysis' (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001). Various theorists have labelled these levels of analysis, but all follow a similar format. The levels are explained as being centred around the individual, increasingly extending out from the individual first to those levels closest to the individual, such as relationships/ family/ work to those levels furthest removed, such as political and economic systems. Analogies have been made likening the levels of the social ecology surrounding us as individuals that of a Russian nesting doll (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The distance of the level from the individual (or the levels separating the smallest doll from the biggest) does not refer to the extent that this level has influence on the persons life, rather it connotes the distance from their daily interactions. Bronfenbrenner (1979) first assigned labels to the levels of our social ecology. He termed these levels as the individual, microsystems, mesosystems, exosystem and macrosystem (see Figure 1). He explains that

> "Microsystems are the immediate pattern of activities, roles, and relationships of the individual. Microsystems are encircled by the mesosystem, the relationships between two or more settings in which the individual participates [for instance home and church]. Mesosystems exist within exosystems, which are settings outside of the individuals' direct contact but whose decisions affect the individual [e.g. your child's school, local health services]. Lastly, the outermost ring of the model represents macrosytems, the social order and cultural norms underlying the consistencies in the inner circles".

Maton (2000) later termed the levels of the social ecology as: person (individual), setting (microsystems), community (mesosystems), culture (exosystem), society (macrosystem) and world. The level of 'world' is referring to the effects of globalisation and how that also impacts upon us as individuals.

In this study taking an ecological approach entailed seeking out existing responses to domestic violence at all levels in the social ecology of which the community is a part. A community base allows development of an understanding of what responses were immediately available to individuals in the community dealing with domestic violence. The community identified also formed a base from which responses at all levels of the social ecology *connected to the community* could be explored and reflected upon. The use of an ecological approach enables a fuller understanding of how we respond to domestic violence in context, by identifying the responses *throughout* our society. Attending to the social ecology as a whole furthermore reflects the approach suggested by the preventable public health framing of domestic violence. Identifying all the places where we respond to domestic violence in this specific community's social ecology also respects the different frameworks explaining domestic violence.

Study Aims

This study investigated (i) how domestic violence is responded to in practice, across all levels of a particular social ecology. More specifically this study sought to understand *who* is responding to domestic violence; *what form* their responses take; what *objectives and perspectives* guide the responses; *what level* of our social ecology the responses occur at; (ii) what, if any, efforts to prevent domestic violence were in place and how prevention is understood and operationalised; (iii) and where those people impacted by domestic violence met the responses available and how those responses meet the needs of people impacted. The intention was to not only come to know what responses existed, but to be able to reflect on their perceived utility.

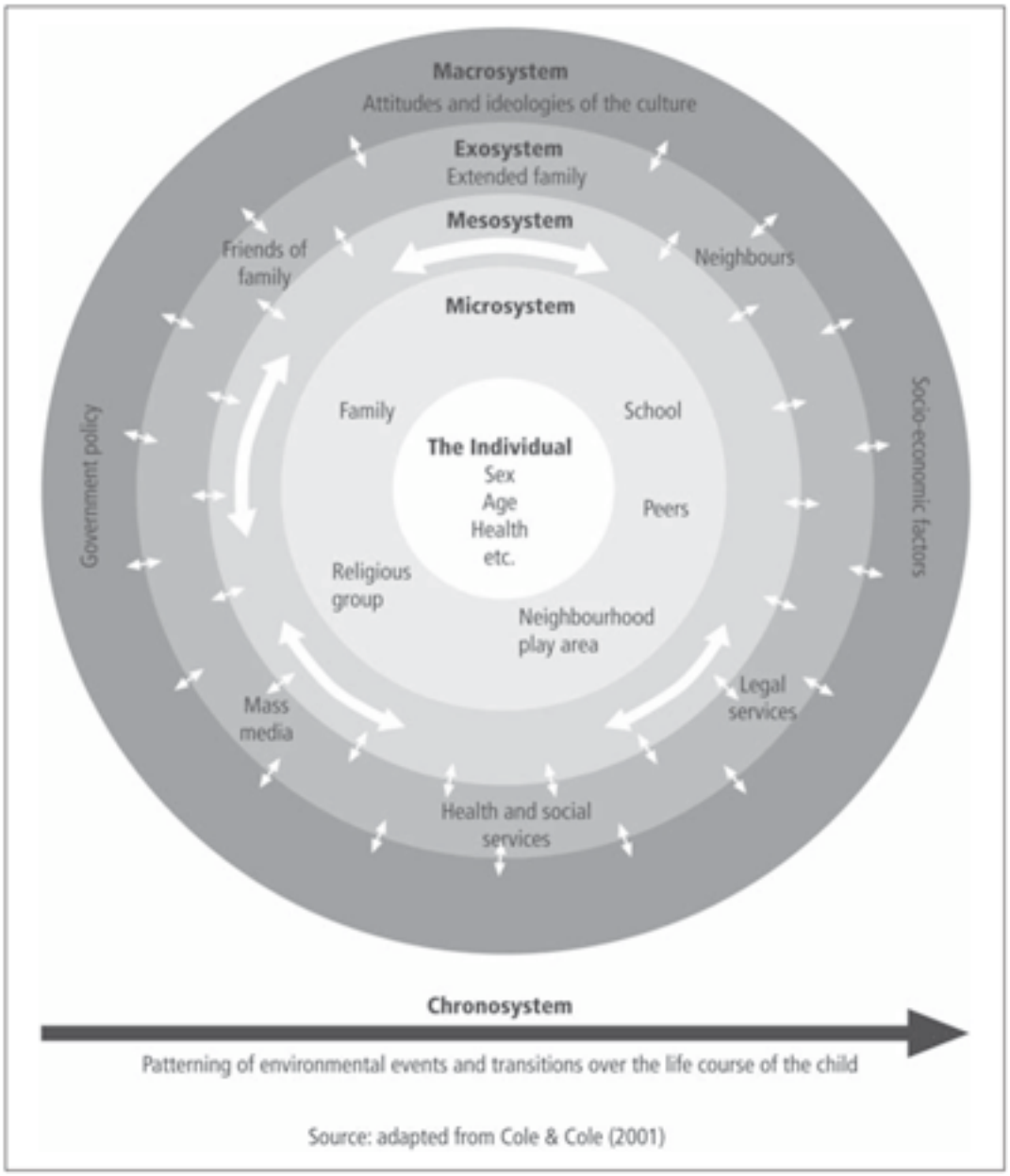


FIGURE 1. – People in context, levels of the social ecology

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY & METHODS

Participatory Approach

The field of community Psychology recognises and values the non-professional expertise of ordinary people, who bring local knowledge, various expertise and their own community-based experiences to our attempts to 'know' better (for example see Hanlin et al., 2007; Levine, Perkins & Perkins, 2005). Professional ways of knowing are understood as being too often privileged at the expense of these 'non-expert' voices. This study presumed that professional voices, particularly upper-management agendas would be privileged in the creation of responses to domestic violence. This study sought out the perspectives of both those directly impacted by domestic violence and responding to domestic violence to 'give voice' to their experience and knowledge (Rappaport, 1995; Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000; Stein & Mankowski, 2004).

This was achieved through engaging in participatory research with members of a particular local community who have been directly impacted and/or are actively responding to domestic violence. This collaborative approach grounded the research in the expertise and experiences of local women. Kelly & van der Riet (2001) 'participation' in participatory research implies that "outside researchers and local participants are involved in joint enquiry, an educational process, and a programme of action related to problems of mutual interest" (p.170). A participatory process was felt to further facilitated the ecological analysis, through enabling an analysis of 'what responses existed' to start not only from within the community, but with those trying to engage such responses.

Identification of Site of Case Study

The case study took place in a community in Scotland, a Western European country with a population of 5 million (MacNiven, 2004).

A web-based search of community responses to domestic violence in two areas of Scotland led the researcher to a local community with both a domestic violence project and a local domestic violence

support-action group. The project staff were contacted via telephone and agreed to a meeting. After meetings with the project staff and the group members, it was agreed that they would form the base community for this study.

The local community takes the form of a large housing estate, peripheral to the city of Newville, with a population of approximately 18,000. This area has been long characterised as deprived with high unemployment levels, a lack of essential facilities, poor housing and derelict land, high levels of crime and low education attainment.

A Collaborative Process

Based on the principles of collaborative research it was agreed that the methods of exploration would be co-developed by the researcher and both community groups. Collaborative research is a well-established and empirically sound approach to social research. This approach recognises the limits of drawing conclusions from any one perspective. Knowledge takes several forms, mainly academic understanding, popular understanding and wisdom. Investigating all forms of knowledge within the research process leads to more accurate understanding of the phenomena (Fals Borda, 1991). The collaborative research approach sees knowledge claims as problematic when arrived at without reference to the 'stakeholders', those directly impacted by the phenomena. In addition to seeking out the experiences and understanding of those implicated, this approach recognises the benefits in determining the research design in collaboration with stakeholders. Stakeholders understanding of the phenomena can enhance the research design through (i) identifying who should be consulted that the outside researcher is unaware of (additional stakeholders) and (ii) increasing the relevance of questions asked or information attended to. The collaborative research approach provides an opportunity to produce an account that is meaningful and relevant for those affected by the outcomes of such research, in this case the local women in this particular Newville community who are working on the problem of domestic abuse.

Together the support-action group members, project workers and researcher reached agreement upon the case study aims and determined the most appropriate methods for the investigation. Decisions were reached through discussion and a brainstorming exercise during the support-action group meetings.

Determining The Research Methods

Appropriate research methods were decided upon after consideration of several factors: (i) the aims of the study (ii) the information required (iii) where that information should come from (iv) accessibility of information (v) potential research methods.

Methods Selected

The following methods were selected as most appropriate for achieving the aims of the research project:

- Conduct a case-study of the local community responses to domestic abuse and their connections to the wider regional and state responses, specifically through:
    - Observation of the work of the Newville Project.
    - Participant-observation of the support-action group.
    - Identification of stakeholders through:
        - a group exercise with the collaborating research team
        - a 'systems interview' with the project staff
        - use of the snowball technique with identified stakeholders
    - Semi-structured interviews with local and regional stakeholders to:
        - Determine the nature of existing responses to domestic abuse and
        - Explore the perspectives of stakeholders on the existing community responses to domestic abuse.
    - Analysis of state level response through accessing existing documentation and the perspectives of stakeholders.
    - Critical reflection on the responses identified with the collaborating research team.

Case Study Method

The use of case studies is recognised as a valid method of inquiry (Yin, 2003; Jahoda, 1971). Case studies serve as specific examples of more complex phenomena. By undertaking a case-study it is possible to develop specific knowledge about a more general phenomenon. In this research, a community level case study enabled exploration of the complex system of responses to domestic abuse within the social ecology, through coming to know and understand responses available within one specific community.

This study was an exploration of what responses exist to domestic abuse in a particular social ecology and the perspectives of stakeholders on the available responses. This was a descriptive task, well-suited to the case study method. In addition to thick description case studies also contain a causal analysis,

which attempt to explain the phenomena studied (Orford, 1992). As stated by Bhana & Kanjee (2001) a case study is a means of being a chronicler before being an agent of change.

Reliability in this study was enhanced through the use of the multiple methods of interviews with stakeholders, participant-observation and engagement with relevant documentation. Multiple informants were interviewed, in the form of stakeholders occupying a variety of positions, both those with experience of domestic abuse and the same or other people responding to domestic abuse from a variety of agencies.

These multiple accounts served as a means to cross-verify statements of what existed in terms of responses to domestic abuse, as well as the salience of individual perspectives on available responses. These multiple accounts were also verified against observations of the local community response, existing documentation, while conversely serving as a means of reflecting on any difference between stated policy and observed responses.

Direct Observation

Throughout the study period there were opportunities to observe the project and support-action group in multiple locations:

- Observation of the Newville project staff in their day to day roles within their office base
- Observation of weekly support-action group meetings
- Observation of drama rehearsals, commissioned performances of the drama and creation of new drama productions
- Attendance at the local community inter-agency Domestic Violence Forum
- Attendance at a strategic planning weekend for both the support-action group and the project
- Attendance of a national domestic violence conference with the project staff

Observation in multiple locations throughout the wider social ecology enabled the researcher to consider the authenticity of accounts or beliefs shared about existing responses to domestic abuse. Multiple observations enabled comparison between what was said and the observed 'reality' of what was done. Further triangulation was achieved through the sourcing of and reflection on key project documents and the policy documents of key agencies, where available.

Participant-Observation

The research team determined that the researcher would take the role of Participant Observer, rather than that of a passive-observer. As a participant in the activities of both the project and the support-action group the researcher had access to their activities, experienced involvement in multiple settings, contributed to the work and spirit of the groups endeavours and was able to offer a critical perspective in the role of participant-conceptualizer (Elias, 1994) on the local community responses to domestic abuse. Participant observation is said to increase the researchers involvement in the phenomena (Parker, 2005). Observations through participation provide an additional perspective from which to come to know the community responses to domestic abuse, a perspective from *within* the roles, rules, norms, actions and interactions observed (Kelly & van der Riet, 2001).

Generating a Preliminary Stakeholder List

The group determined that information pertaining to existing responses to domestic abuse would most authentically come from two sources (1) those creating and delivering these responses and (2) those with experience of domestic abuse. Members of the support-action group were the informants for the second source. The first source involved those agencies, organisations and, essentially, the personnel actively responding to domestic abuse in the local area and wider region.

The project workers and support-action group members generated a list of all those other than themselves with a stake in responding to domestic abuse at the local and regional levels. This list of stakeholders included those who self-identify as responding directly to domestic abuse, and those felt by the project and support-action group who should respond to domestic abuse.

Local Stakeholders

The support-action group members and project staff collectively generated a list of local stakeholders by answering the following group generated questions:

- *Who would notice if the Newville project ceased to operate?*
- *Who would not notice that should?*

The purpose of these questions was to highlight both the actual and desired stakeholders responding to domestic abuse in the local community. The list generated is available in Appendix-B.

Regional Stakeholders

The regional stakeholder list was further developed by the Newville project workers in light of their understanding of the system-wide responses to domestic violence. This information was compiled through the 'systems- response interview', discussed below, as well as through on-going conversations with the project workers.

A snowball technique (Orford, 1992) was used to identify further stakeholders. This technique involved asking each person contacted for the names of agencies and individuals they believe to be responding to domestic abuse. Using this method identification of stakeholders was ongoing.

A protocol was established to contact the lead representative from each relevant agency identified. Contact was made by telephone, informing people about the purpose of the research and requesting an interview. At interview these people were asked to identify whom they felt were the key stakeholders responding to domestic abuse. When informed of a stakeholder who was not on the list, the researcher sought contact information for the key person identified and then approach them to request an interview. Few additional stakeholders were identified using this technique.

Interviews

The method felt most appropriate for obtaining information from stakeholders was the semi-structured interview. The use of *interview* was chosen over alternative methods for ascertaining existing responses and view points, such as a survey or questionnaire, to avoid pre-empting or limiting the responses of stakeholders. Interview was chosen over multi-person methods such as focus groups due to both the sensitive nature of domestic abuse and the desire for critical reflection upon existing responses. Stakeholders may be more frank and critically reflexive in a private interview, without fear of revealing problematic aspects of their lives or critical perspectives on existing responses directly to others. Face-to-face interviews with each stakeholder would enable in-depth discussion of each individual's perspective, people's experiences, each agencies response to domestic abuse and the critical perspective of key personnel.

A *semi-structured interview* approach was decided upon as this structure enables asking a small number of set questions to frame the purpose of the interview, followed by exploration of the particular perspective shared by each individual spoken with. Alternatives interview approaches such as structured or depth interviews were rejected. Structured interviews would provide answers to all key research questions but would not enable novel responses to emerge that the research team may not have considered. Structured interviews prohibit further exploration of responses and would therefore not provide this study with the depth of information and critical reflection sought from stakeholders. Depth interviewing, although enabling maximum engagement with the perspective of those interviewed, was felt to be inappropriate for this project. The objectives were to ask specific key questions of each stakeholder pertaining to their agencies response to domestic abuse, which gave the interviews a structure not found in the depth interview approach.

Three Levels Of Interview were decided upon and conducted:

(1) The first level was a formal interview with the Newville project staff, termed the **'systems-response interview'**. The purpose of this interview was to identify all known stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels of their social-ecology.

(2) Level two of the interviews involved semi-structured-interviews with the **members of the support-action group**. The aim of these interviews was to ascertain each woman's understanding of community responses to domestic abuse, as they experienced it. The interviews would encourage critical reflection on the support-action group, the Newville project, other local responses and if appropriate, regional responses.

(3) Level three interviews were interviews with each of the **key stakeholders** identified in responding to domestic abuse. This included the staff of the Newville project, local agency workers, representatives of national agencies and key regional stakeholders.

Determining The Interview Questions

Two interview schedules were designed collectively at a support-action group meeting. The first schedule was designed for interviews with those with experience of domestic abuse, the support-action group members. The second schedule was designed for interviews with all other stakeholders. Core interview questions are available in Appendix C.

Selection Of Interviewer

It was agreed that the researcher would take on the task of conducting the interviews. This decision was based on understanding that the researcher had the time, training and resources to undertake this task. The members of the support-action group and project, although perfectly able to develop interviewing skills, had limited spare time due to their family and work commitments and collectively, their drama commitments with the support-action group.

Conducting Interviews

In total 25 interviews were conducted, with a total of 27 participants. Interviews were held with the 2 Newville project staff members (individually and joint), 5 members of the women's support-action group and 20 representatives and/or lead workers of 14 key agencies based in either the local community or the city of Newville. A full list of the people and organisations interviewed is available in Appendix-D.

Demographics of Participants

Of those interviewed, 25 were women and 2 men. All participants were Caucasian and identified as Scottish Nationals. The Newville Project workers and support action group members were all Caucasian women.

Setting of Interviews

Interviews were held at a location convenient to each stakeholder. The Newville project workers and all but one of the support-action group members were interviewed in a private room in the local community center. One support-action group member was interviewed at her place of work. Sixteen of the 17 stakeholder interviews took place within the agencies headquarters or place of work. One stakeholder was interviewed in an empty city café for their convenience.

Recording of Interviews

Permission was sought to tape all interviews. Verbal consent to record was given by all those interviewed. Interviews were recorded either on audio-tape or digitally.

Feedback of Interviews

Interviews with the support-action group members and project workers were transcribed and handed back to the women. The women read through their transcriptions with a marker pen and were asked to over-score any statements that they did not want included in the research findings. The researcher sought individual elaborations or corrections to the transcripts. During the subsequent support-action group meeting the women reflected on the experience of talking about their lives and reading their own words in print. For many it evoked feelings of sadness, and hope. It was decided that the interview transcripts should be contextualised for each of the women. This context would take the form of a written record of the 'journey' of each woman leading up to and during their involvement with the group. These journeys were written out during the meeting and can be found in Appendix-E.

Formal Ethical Considerations

Ethic Board Approval

Permission to undertake this research project was obtained from the University of Stirling Ethics Board. Approval was granted to undertake the case study utilising participant observation and to conduct semi-structured interviews with multiple stakeholders on the subject of both experiences of, and responses to, domestic abuse.

Consent

An informal contract (Snow, Grady & Goyette-Ewing, 2000) was agreed upon with each individual interviewed. Permission was sought and granted in each case, with verbal consent given and recorded on audio to:

- Conduct the interview
- Record the interview, and to
- Utilise the interview as part of the findings for the researchers thesis.

Protection

Transcripts were shared with all project and group members, each having the right to censor or amend their interview to ensure that their views were accurately represented.

Confidentiality

Recordings of interviews and all field notes were stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researchers office and later in a locked case in the researchers home. Electronic copies of interviews were protected by password, known only to the researcher.

Practices across the social ecology, as reported during interviews, were discussed with the support-action group members and project staff for reflection and information sharing. The opinions and perspectives of agency personnel expressed during interview were kept in total confidence.

Anonymity

Pseudonyms are used throughout this report to protect the identity of those who agreed to participate in the research project. The names of the city and local community have been changed and specific locations undisclosed to reduce identification of individual stakeholders due to the often unique roles they occupy within the city. The names of the project and support-action group have not been disclosed to further protect the identity of all involved.

Data Collation

Data was collected in several forms:

- Verbal and documented history of the Newville project, from interview with project staff and access to the projects constitution and key reports within the local community
- Verbal and documented history of the support-action group from interview with group members and access to the group's constitution.
- Detailed field notes made during and immediately after observations of the project, group meetings, group activities, forum meetings and interviews.
- Recordings of 24 interviews.
- Documentation pertaining to official agency responses to domestic violence in the form of:
    - Web-based documentation pertaining to state level responses.
    - Policy and practice documentation from local and regional agencies, if and when such documents existed and were available. Documents were identified through the system interview with the Newville project staff and by asking all stakeholders at interview what

documentation related to domestic violence they were aware of, and how to gain access to those documents.

Analysis

Qualitative analysis methods were employed throughout. All interviews were recorded on audio or digitally cassette and observations were recorded in detailed field notes. Interviews with the project staff and support-action group members were transcribed in full. All other interviews were content mapped using Novamind software[4].

For The Transcribed Interviews With Project Workers And Group Members

Each interview transcript was analysed thematically for primary and secondary themes. Emergent themes were titled according to subject matter and interview responses pertaining to the theme grouped under the title. Emergent themes across all interviews were grouped together under existing themes, or, were appropriate, new overarching themes. Themes that recurred most frequently were termed primary themes. Lower frequency themes were termed the secondary themes.

Stakeholder Interviews

Each stakeholder interview was analysed thematically. Interview recordings were listened to and the content was mapped out using Novamind mapping software. This software enables emergent themes to be organised into branches, and unlimited sub-branches. Each branch was titled by the emergent theme and sub-branches added with information supporting the theme. Sub-branches were also added for connected themes. The interview content and subsequent themes included agency and worker practices; documentation referred to; worker perspectives on their agency and role in relation to domestic abuse; reference to other agencies work and worker perspectives on the wider system responses to domestic abuse. Interviews were listened to for a second time and each map adjusted as necessary to ensure accuracy of the information mapped and the themes captured.

Twenty maps were constructed in total, one for each of the stakeholder interviews; a map of the Newville project and its connections to responses in the local and regional levels and a final map of the

[4]This software is available to view from www.novamind.com

overall community responses to domestic abuse at the regional level with connections to the local level under study.

Document Review

All documents obtained were collated and reviewed. Particular attention was paid to policy documents of the agencies represented through interview, where available, and state level documents pertaining to domestic abuse. Analysis focussed on the extent to which the policy documents reflected the practices within agencies and the practices or responses perceived necessary by the workers interviewed.

Prevention Analysis

Once all responses to domestic violence surrounding the case studied community were determined, a 'prevention analysis' was conducted to determine what, if any, prevention efforts were in place across the social ecology, and the scope of these efforts. The prevention analysis was conducted using the three types of prevention outlined by the field of public health and adapted by the field of community psychology, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention (for an overview see Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001).

Accountability

The limitations of analysis by the researcher alone are recognised. Attempts were made throughout the study when engaging with available documentation and conducting interviews to make sense of the findings *with* those involved in the study. This took the form of conversations with group members and especially the project workers enabling critical reflection and sense making. During interviews with stakeholders clarification was sought on the researchers own emerging understanding of the agency response, documentation available and wider system responses.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Findings from this community-based case study of responses to domestic violence are presented below in three sections. The first describes the existing responses to domestic violence *across* the community's social ecology. The second presents a prevention analysis of these responses, in order to reflect on the levels of prevention engaged in across the social ecology. The third and final section reports the perspectives of the local women on their experiences of available responses to domestic violence, both past and present.

An Ecological Analysis

In the first section the responses to domestic violence at the local community level are presented, followed by an ecological analysis of all other responses across the social ecology. The ecological analysis enabled the responses to be placed in context, in relation to each other and the broader social ecology around the community. Findings outline *what* action is taken, and by *whom,* to respond to domestic violence. Stakeholder reflections on where those impacted by domestic violence meet (or don't meet) the available responses and how well those responses meet the needs of people impacted are presented throughout. Responses to domestic violence are presented according to the level of the social ecology which they operate from.

Adaptation of the Levels of the Social Ecology

After data collation and analysis it was necessary to modify the ecological levels as labelled by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and built upon by Maton (2000) in order to fully explicate the findings. The originally labelled levels of person (individual), setting (microsystems), community (mesosystems), culture (exosystem), society (macrosystem) and world were adapted to women and children, local community, regional, national and global levels (see Table 1).

Rationale for Adaptation

The level of 'person' was modified to 'women and children' for two reasons (i) the responses to domestic violence found across the social ecology were overwhelmingly aimed at responding to women and children who experience domestic violence; (ii) as this study aims to keep those directly impacted by domestic abuse at the forefront, the starting point of the findings is at the level of the individual woman within the community case studied and the responses available to her when dealing with domestic abuse. The community collaborators were all women, and took as their focus responding to women and children who experience abuse.

Table 1. Modified ecological levels

Person (individual)	→	Women and Children
Setting (microsystems)	→	the Support-action group
Community (mesosystems)	→	Local community
Culture (exosystem)	→	Regional level
Society (macrosystem)	→	National level
World	→	Global level

The level of setting is only partially included in this analysis. The women participating in this research project engage in multiple active settings, including but not limited to their families, work places, colleges, church and neighbourhoods. These settings, although common to many of us, reflect the individual and personal resources and experiences of the women rather than resources necessarily available to all women in the community. Closer attention to the resources available in each woman's personal life are beyond the scope of this study and have been the focus of other studies. As the focus of this study is to determine responses to domestic abuse available to all people, at the community level and beyond, these settings were not explored. The setting of support-action group, which all the women are a part, including the project workers, is included and explicitly addressed in this analysis.

The label of community was modified to reflect the use of the term 'local community' throughout to signify the site of the community-based case study. Similarly the level of society was relabelled 'national' to indicate responses to domestic violence that are in relation to all of society, not peculiar to any one community or region as they are enacted at the national level. 'Global' was a preferred term for the label 'world' in respect of the widespread uptake of the term global to refer to responses across societies or nations.

The level of 'region' has been parsed out for the purpose of this study. This was in recognition of the variation in the operation of bodies responding to domestic violence throughout the nation, depending on regional level policies and funding. State agencies have national guidelines, but are operationalised *within* regions. Funding of agencies comes from both national and regional sources. Agencies are also *managed* at the regional level. Responses to domestic abuse at the regional level could therefore be quite distinct from the national policy. Regional responses to domestic abuse are conceivably a level of the social ecology operating between communities and the state and were therefore attended to as a level in itself.

The ecological level of cultural is not *directly* engaged in this study. Responses which attempt to effect cultural change are included, but no attempt was made to identify popular or dominant cultural responses to domestic abuse, such as media representations or use of vernacular around domestic abuse. Such responses were beyond the scope of this study.

Indirect and Direct Responses

Further adjustments to the local and regional levels were necessary. Each of these levels had to be split into 'direct' and 'indirect' responses to domestic abuse in order to reflect the different forms responses took at this regional level (see Table 2). Direct responses represented those roles or structures *dedicated to domestic abuse*. Indirect responses include instances were responses were made, but not through dedicated domestic abuse efforts, such as when (i) people or agencies respond to domestic abuse as *part* of their wider roles and (iii) policy relating to domestic abuse.

Table 2. Levels of the social ecology arising from this study

Women and Children
Local Direct responses
Local Indirect responses
Regional Direct responses
Regional Direct responses
National level
Global level

'Sectors' of Response

Responses to domestic violence across the social ecology, although interconnected, were found to operate within discrete sectors of response. These sectors represented distinct groupings of the agencies and organisations identified as responding to domestic abuse *across* the ecological levels. The sectors identified through this study were: 'Government', 'Criminal Justice', 'Social', 'Health', 'Housing' and 'Non-Government Organisations'. Findings are presented in sectors to more fully relate the interconnectedness of existing responses within that sector. See Figure 2 for an overview of the levels and sectors of the social ecology as defined by this ecological analysis.

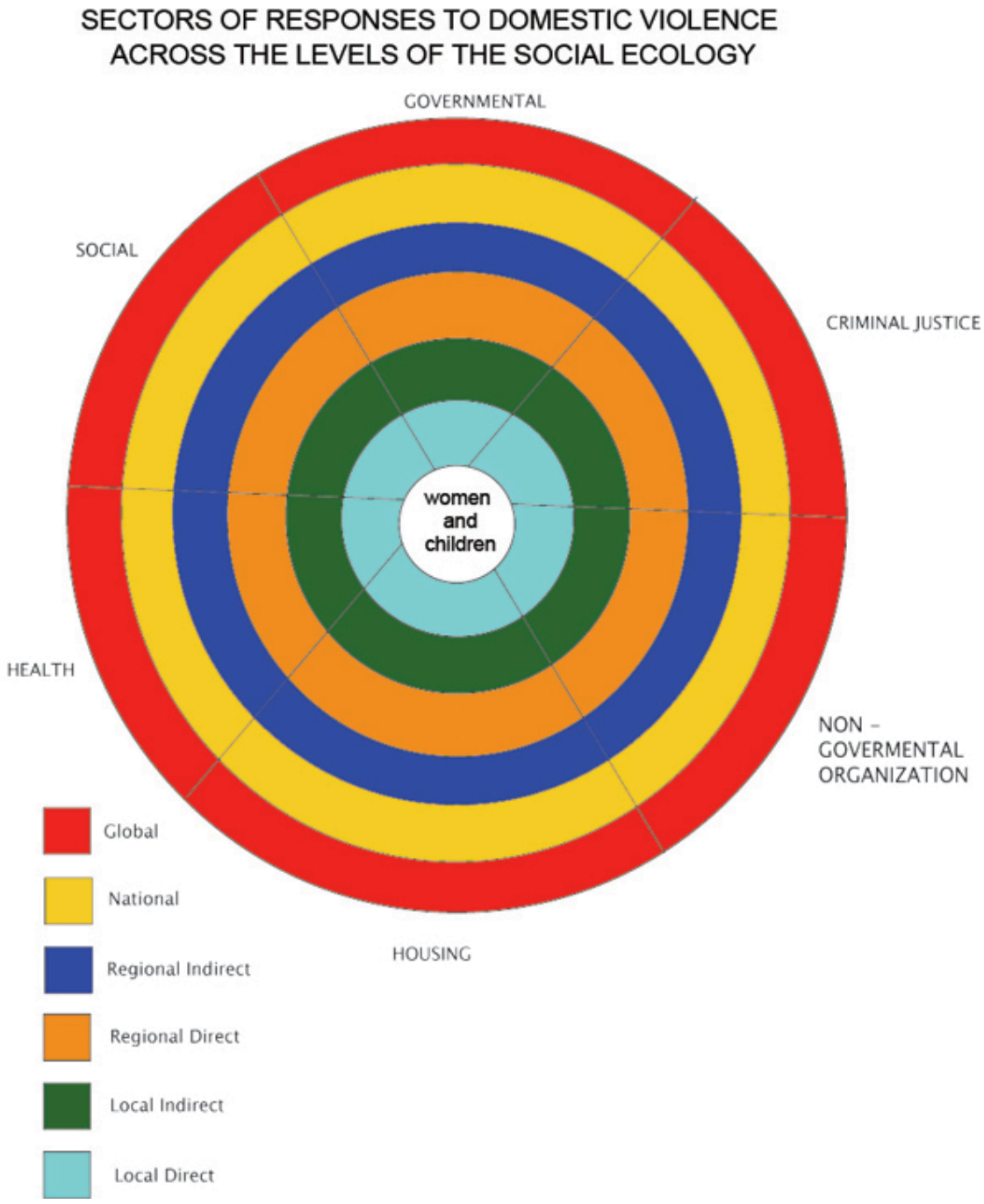
Prevention Analysis

All responses were analysed to determine the *level* of prevention at which they operated. Responses were assessed as primary, secondary or tertiary prevention efforts, according to the definitions used by the fields of public health and community psychology.

An additional analysis was conducted to assess the function of the responses according to *National criteria*. This analysis determined whether responses were aimed at the national government objectives of 'prevention' of, 'protection' from or 'provision' in response to, domestic violence.

Reflections

The third and final section reports the perspectives of the local women on what they view to be useful and appropriate responses to domestic violence. These perspectives are taken from interviews with local women. Interviews were analysed thematically for themes regarding what 'works' or is needed from responses to those dealing with domestic violence. From the perspective of the local women, their own local efforts 'work'. Themes as to the key functions of their community-based efforts to respond to domestic violence are therefore presented with explanations as to what purpose these functions serve for the women.



<u>Figure 2.</u> **Sectors of Responses to Domestic Violence across the Levels of the Social Ecology**

The Community Case Study In Context

National Context - Scotland

Domestic violence is a major cause of death and injury to women in Scotland. There were 43,678 incidents of domestic violence reported to the police in Scotland in 2004 (Statistical Bulletin, 2005). Domestic Violence predominantly impacts the lives of women in Scotland. A study of the 2000 Scottish crime survey (Macpherson, 2002) found that of those incidents of domestic violence reported to the police, 92% involved a female victim and a male perpetrator (p. 5). The 2000 Scottish Crime survey found that 19% of women and 8% of men interviewed reported that 'they had experienced either threats or force from a partner' at 'some time in their lives'. In 1997, the Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) estimated that "as many as 260,000 to 700,000 Scottish women may be experiencing domestic violence", predicted from the domestic violence prevalence rates reported in multiple empirical studies (as cited in Macpherson, 2002). Police figures show that across the United Kingdom 50% of women who are murdered are killed by partners or ex-partners (HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, 1997). UK Police figures report that between 1 and 2 women are murdered each week by their partners or ex-partners, with the risk to women increasing after leaving an abusive relationship (Hague and Malos, 1993). In 1996-97, 12% of all households assessed as being homeless or threatened with homelessness were due to violent disputes with partners (Preventing Violence Against Women, 1998). The leading NGO responding to Domestic Abuse in Scotland – 'Women's Aid' received 59,134 requests from women for information, support and/or refuge regarding domestic abuse in 1999/2000 (as cited in Statistical Bulletin, 2002).

Regional Context – Newville

Newville is one of the more densely populated regions of Scotland. Newville may reasonably be said to have more resources than other regions in Scotland and should not be viewed as representative of all Scottish regions in terms of availability of community responses to domestic abuse. A 1990 survey of women in Newville, led by a Newville based women's project and a local newspaper, found that of 1,503 respondents, 52% had experienced some form of abuse by men, but few had officially reported this

(undisclosed, 1997[5]). During 2003-4 the regional police force recorded 8,112 domestic abuse incidents in the region, with 9 out of 10 incidents involving men abusing women. In 2002-3 just over 6,000 incidents were reported to the regional police force (undisclosed, 2003; undisclosed, 2004[6]). In 2002-2003 Newville Women's Aid received 10,560 requests from women for information, support and/or refuge related to domestic abuse (undisclosed, 2003[7]).

Local Context – 'the Local Community'

A division of the regional police-force polices the local community. This division covers the largest population group in the region of Newville. Of all the communities covered by this police division, this local community has the highest recorded figures of incidents of domestic abuse. In 2004 the Local community Domestic Abuse Unit had 308 reported incidents of domestic abuse for this community, with 197 of those reports being repeat offences. Of the 308 reported incidents, 95 (31%) resulted in reports to the Procurator Fiscal (gatekeepers to Scotland's Judicial System) and 169 reports (55%) to the Reporter to the Children's Panel (Scotland's Judicial System for children)[8].

Direct Responses to Domestic Abuse in the Local Community

The local community has three resources dedicated to addressing domestic abuse within the community. These bodies take the form of two non-governmental organizations providing a direct response to domestic abuse and a local inter-agency Domestic Abuse Forum.

The two direct response organizations are (i) a self-help, mutual support and action group for women concerned with violence in the local community referred to as 'the support-action group' and (ii) a community based domestic abuse project, referred to as 'the Newville project'. Within the region, the Domestic Abuse Project and the support-action group are unique community entities.

[5] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request
[6] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request
[7] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request
[8] Figures obtained through personal correspondence, taken from records of the Local Domestic Abuse Unit.

Inter-Agency Domestic Violence Forum

The local community hosts one of eight inter-agency forums on violence against women in the Newville region. The local forum is part of a region-wide structure developed by 'the Coalition' to change policy and practice in agencies responding to violence against women. The local forum focuses specifically on domestic violence. Monthly forums are attended by staff of some of the key agencies responding to domestic abuse in the local area, from front-line workers through directors. At the time of this study membership included:

- The Newville Project (Chair)
- Representation from the local support-action group
- Director of the local social work department
- Co-ordinator of the regional midwifery program
- Staff of the local police domestic abuse unit
- Lawyer from the local law centre
- Criminal court based victim support worker.

Those who attend state that the forum functions as a space for *'accurate information sharing'* particularly about the changing policies within their agencies. The forum was valued as an opportunity for networking enabling the development of joint working practices, with the aim of improving responses to domestic abuse in the local community. Information shared on agency policy and procedures enables the workers to more knowledgeably '*support people's cases locally*'. One member of the local forum attends several of the local forums. In their view the local community forum was *'very progressive'* and '*very involved in the local community'* compared to other forums. The local community forum is unique in that they are the only forum with input from a local domestic abuse project and, most significantly, representation from local women who have experienced domestic abuse. Members of the support-action group spoke about themselves in relation to the systems around them as a *'wee dolphin'*, that is as '*ordinary people with little clout or authority*' with the large organisations responding to domestic abuse. Membership on the forum gives the local support-action group access to information and an a-typical opportunity to comment and impact upon agency practice based on their experiences and knowledge.

Support-Action Group

The support-action group is a locally based self-help, mutual support and action group. The group is open to any local women who want to address violence, in all its forms, within the community. In

practice the group takes domestic abuse as its focus. They have a core membership of eight women, two of who are founding members.

Although the group does not keep records of attendance they report that a significant number of women have participated in the group since its conception. Most, though not all, of the members have experienced domestic abuse as adults or children. The group offers emotional support to any woman who approaches the group, and will refer people to the Newville project for practical support and advocacy. The women support each other through the process of healing and moving on from domestic abuse, but do so in a manner unlike traditional self-help and mutual support groups. The support-action group does not base its membership on suffering or experience of abuse. Life experience of abuse is not a necessary condition of membership of the group, it is neither asked about nor is such disclosure expected. The group does however respond supportively to anyone who needs to speak about such experiences. The group ensures that visitors and members get appropriate support through (i) offering training on how domestic abuse operates (through the 'Freedom programme'), (ii) performing drama work to educate the general public and key agencies responding to those experiencing abuse, (iii) referring people to the Newville project for support and (iv) helping people access other local services.

Observation of the support-action group meetings showed members to be focused simultaneously on encouraging each other to challenge themselves in life while planning action to raise awareness about domestic abuse in the community and beyond. The group moves between a focus on supporting each other as individuals to move on (emotionally) from abuse and a collective focus on working together to end abuse in their community. Their collective work involves providing education and training on the complexities of domestic abuse, through producing and performing dramatic productions in communities, institutions, work-forces and other bodies around central Scotland. In interviews the members defined the group as serving multiple functions: offering social, practical and emotional support; being a mechanism for social change; and for each of them providing a forward looking perspective, beyond the abuse; bringing them hope and most significantly changing their lives.

Newville Domestic Violence Project

The Newville project (the project) aims to meet the needs of women experiencing domestic abuse while working towards *preventing* domestic abuse in the local community. In brief, the project state their aims and objectives as:

> "To raise awareness of issues around domestic abuse through inter-agency working, and to address the needs identified by local women. To support local women to be fully participating partners in the Domestic Abuse Forum. To provide inter-agency training and to work with other professionals, to ensure all available services respond appropriately to the needs of women and children in domestic abuse situations." (Newville Project Mission Statement, personal communication, n.d.)

The Newville project consists of two full time staff members (i) a project manager and (ii) a resource/training worker. The project is based in a shared office in the local community center. The staff's key functions include co-ordinating the local inter-agency forum on domestic abuse, responding directly to people experiencing domestic abuse and facilitating the support-action group. The project and support-action group are inter-connected but essentially separate entities. The project offers training and practical support to both the support-action group and its members and they are seen as key members of the group. The project functions to benefit these women and other people in the community who experience domestic abuse, including men and local youth. They do so through offering people information and support, referring them to appropriate community resources and/or advocating on behalf of those people directly to local services as well as indirectly to local and regional services in order to effect policy change. This inter-agency working enables the project to remain aware of what resources are available in the community while representing the views of those who experience domestic abuse directly to those who do or ideally should respond. Through this the project has developed a network within their local community, which enables them to respond effectively when approached for support.

Accessing The Project And Support-Action Group

Local women, men and young people access these organisations in a variety of ways. Their presence is spread largely through word of mouth from people who have accessed them and also through their leaflets and posters, which are left in key locations around the community and with all relevant services and organizations. The project receives telephone calls; drop in visits at their office, either independent or accompanied by someone known to the project; informal chats within the community;

regular meetings with the support-action group; referrals from other women and agencies both locally and regionally, especially health visitors, the law center, the police domestic abuse unit and the a local mental health service.

Drama Work

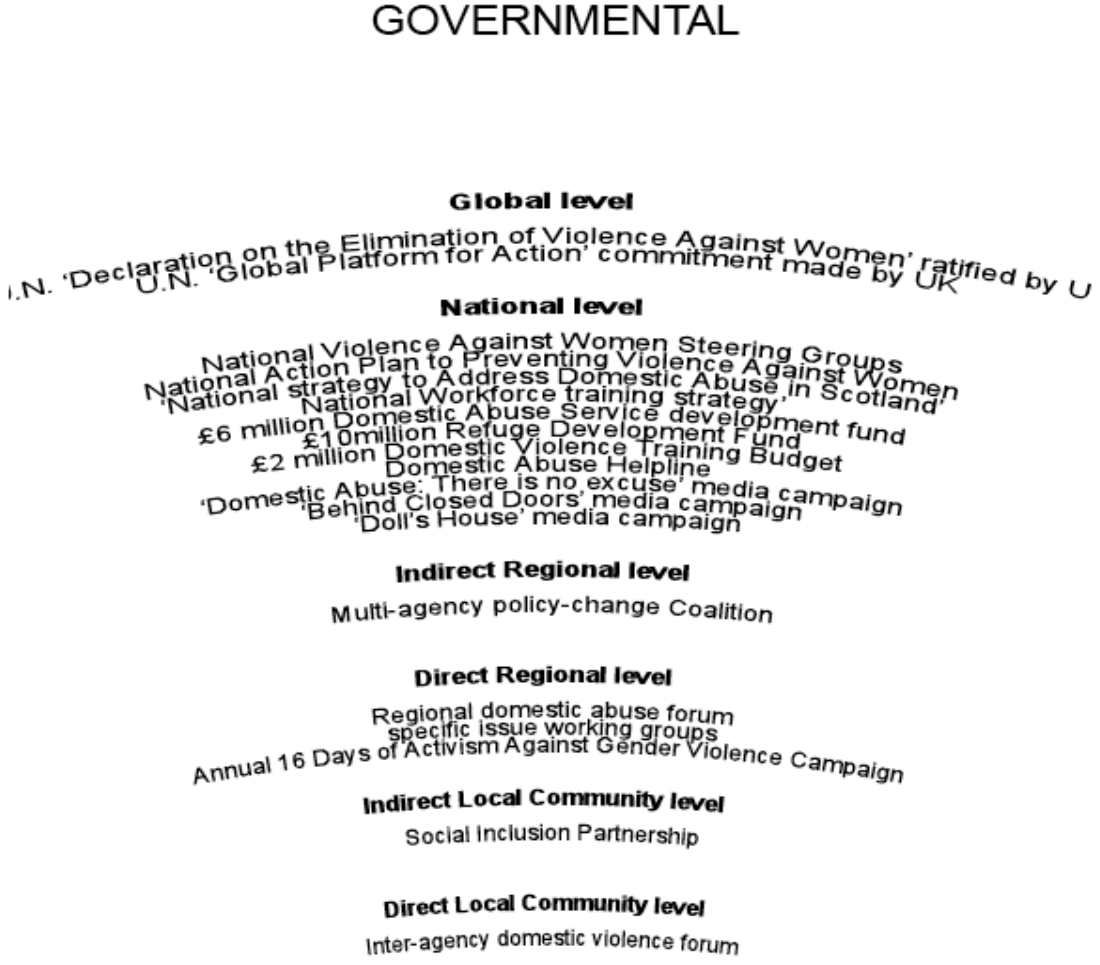
Beyond direct and indirect support and advocacy, the project and group work together for social change to prevent domestic abuse. They do so through drama productions, written, produced and performed by themselves and delivered around central Scotland for training and awareness raising purposes. They have been commissioned to perform their plays by the city of Newville council, regional health services, a major University and a prominent regional theatre, in addition to many groups and organizations at the regional and local levels.

Joint Working

These three local bodies work closely together to respond to domestic abuse in the local community. The Newville project takes responsibility for co-ordinating meetings of the local domestic abuse forum. The project's lead worker sits as the forum chair, representing the forum at the regional level. Members of the support-action group have representation on the local forum. The support-action group is part of the Newville project's management group while the project staff are both facilitators of the support-action group. The three bodies view themselves as working in parallel, together responding to domestic abuse in the community.

Surrounding these local community efforts are the responses to domestic violence throughout their social ecology, presented below according to the sector from which they respond.

GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR



National, Regional and Local Government Responses to Domestic Violence.

The Scottish Parliament or Executive is the elected government of Scotland, and here represents government at the national level of Scotland's social ecology. It will be referred to interchangeably as the Scottish Executive (S.E.), the Executive or national government. Within Scotland, regional government bodies called 'councils' have jurisdiction over spending on health, education and social services. Funding for these services comes from the Executive and regional tax revenues.

The national government, first as the Scottish office of the British Parliament and subsequently as the Scottish Executive has responded to the problem of domestic abuse in a range of ways since the 1990's. The national government recognises domestic abuse as a social problem to be tackled and views domestic abuse as largely a gender-based issue:

> Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women and takes a number of specific and identifiable forms. The existence of violence against men is not denied, nor is the existence of violence in same sex relationships, nor other forms of abuse, but domestic abuse requires a response which takes account of the gender specific elements and the broader gender inequalities which women face. (Scottish Partnership, 2000, p. 5).

From this statement, the Executive definition of domestic abuse has been adapted to the following:

> Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends). (Scottish Partnership, 2000, p. 5).

Global level Responses to Domestic Violence

In 1993 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women' at the UN World Conference on Human Rights (U.N. General Assembly, 1993). The declaration framed Domestic Abuse as a human rights issue, a form of gender-based violence that is pervasive around the world, and once ratified, something that signatory governments have a responsibility

to respond to. The declaration was ratified and signed by 171 states, including the United Kingdom (U.K.), of which Scotland is part (undisclosed, 2003 [9]).

In 1995, the 4th UN World Conference on Women, in Beijing, adopted a 'Global Platform for Action' to improve the status of women world-wide, committing signatories, including the U.K., to develop plans for action to address violence against women in their own nations.

Stemming from these two global events, the early Scottish governmental responses to domestic abuse were said to be part of the government's 'international commitment to tackle all forms of violence against women' (The Scottish Government News, 1998).

National Government Responses to Domestic Violence

National Media Campaigns

In June 1994, the national government launched the first of its media campaigns on the issue of domestic violence. The main aims of the campaign were *"to foster an atmosphere of public condemnation towards the perpetrators of such violence; to encourage perpetrators to think about the consequences and implications of their behaviour; and to provide information about support for those affected by domestic violence."* (Scottish Office Central Research & Statistics Unit, 1995).

The campaign had three main components: a television advertisement shown over a seven-month period, a poster campaign and the launching of a nationwide domestic violence telephone information line, advertised through follow-up television commercials. A second campaign was launched in 1998, called *'Domestic Abuse: There is no excuse'*. The campaign aimed to further foster public condemnation of domestic abuse. In 2002, a third campaign called 'Behind Closed Doors' started, with the aim of tackling prevailing stereotypes around domestic abuse, particularly the myths that drug or alcohol abuse is always involved, and that domestic abuse occurs only in working class homes. The most recent 'Doll's House' campaign (from 2002-2004) aimed to highlight the impact that domestic abuse has on children who witness violence in the home. Each campaign has utilised multiple mediums, including billboards, bus-shelter and public transportation posters, beer mats in pubs, television advertisements, press, radio and youth media

[9] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request

coverage, as well as the launching of a domestic abuse website and advertising the national helpline. During interviews the campaigns were described as both 'powerful' and 'unpleasant'. One NGO worker reflected that the use of images of battered and bruised women in some of the campaigns could result in the unintended consequence of reducing the number of women who may identify themselves as experiencing domestic abuse if the mark of abuse was viewed as being beaten until you were severely bruised.

National Steering Groups

The national government convened two groups to develop and steer the nations responses to tackling violence against women. Both of these groups comprised senior level representatives of the agencies and organisations identified as key to tackling violence against women in Scotland[10]. The *'Scottish Partnership on Domestic Violence'* met from 1998 through 2001, after which the *'National Group to address Domestic Abuse in Scotland'* was formed, later renamed the *'National Group to address Violence Against Women in Scotland'*. The purpose of the National Group was to progress responses to domestic abuse through *"a series of specific issue working groups. Groups have been established to review current legislative provision relating to domestic abuse; to review current recommendations on refuge provision; to develop a prevention strategy; and to develop a training strategy"* (The Scottish Government, n.d.).

Strategies & Action Plans

In 1998 the national government produced the first of several formal publications covering the issue of domestic abuse. The first report titled *'Preventing Violence Against Women: A Scottish Office*

[10]The Chairperson of the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse was Mrs Anne Smith QC. The Partnership comprised members from COSLA, local authorities, the National Health Service, the police, The Crown Office, the judiciary, the Scottish Prison Service, the Law Society of Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid, Shakti Women's Aid, The Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust, Victim Support Scotland, Rape Crisis Scotland and The Scottish Executive (Social Work, Health, Education, Housing, Civil Law and Crime Prevention).

The National Group is chaired by the Minister [of Scottish parliament] for Social Justice and the current members are DCC Robert Ovens, Chair of ACPOS Community Safety Sub Committee; Dharmendra Kanani, Director, Commission for Racial Equality Scotland; Jon Harris, COSLA; Professor Sheila Hunt, Dean of Nursing Dundee University; Keir Bloomer, Chief Executive Clackmannanshire Council and a Director of Learning and Teaching Scotland; Claire Houghton, Scottish Women's Aid; Janette de Haan, Women's Support Project and Sheriff Pamela Bowman.

Action Plan'[11], evokes a human rights perspective in stating and recognising the right of women to be safe from violence in their homes and throughout society. The report outlines existing legal protections and service provisions for those experiencing domestic abuse and explicates further resources needed to better respond to domestic violence.

National Government Policy – the 3 'P's'

A key element of this action plan was the establishment of government policy on violence against women. Referred to as 'the 3 P's', the national policy was frequently raised by those interviewed. The '3 P's' stand for (1) Prevention, (2) Provision and (3) Protection. The policy calls for the need to prevent violence against women from occurring and to both provide for, and protect, those who experience violence. The action plan states these policy objectives more fully as:

Prevention: *To prevent, remove or diminish the risk of violence by various means, ranging from promoting change in social attitudes, to creating physical and other barriers to the commission of violent acts.*

Protection: *To protect victims and potential victims from repeat victimisation or harassment by perpetrators.*

Provision: *To provide adequate services to deal with the consequences of violence against women and to help women rebuild their lives.*

(Preventing Violence Against Women, 1998, p. 10)

In November of 2000 the Scottish Executive published a report specifically addressing the issue of domestic abuse, the *'National strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland'*. The national strategy was composed by the *Scottish partnership on Domestic Violence* in consultation with Scottish Women's Aid (the leading NGO responding to domestic abuse) and women directly impacted by domestic violence. The report outlines the *'key actions which are required to tackle domestic abuse in Scotland from 2000-2003'*. The strategy is *'rooted in a commitment to promote equality and to end discrimination and social exclusion'* (p.4), and states that '*domestic abuse is never acceptable and will not be tolerated'* (p.5). The strategy states that *"politicians, policy makers, service providers and the public in Scotland"* all *"have a role in the elimination of domestic abuse and in supporting women or children who experience this"* (p.9).

[11] After a consultation period, the report was revised based on comments received and re-published in October of 2001 entitled: *'Preventing Violence Against Women, action across the Scottish Executive'.*

The aims of the strategy draw on the '3 P's' of the violence against women policy objectives, modifying and narrowing them to include children as victims of male violence and focussing on the criminal justice system as the best means to offer protection.

Prevention: as the active prevention of crimes against women and children.

Protection: as the appropriate *legal protection* for women and children experiencing male violence.

Provision: as adequate provision of a range of quality support services for women and children. (p.8)

The 'ultimate goal' of the strategy is stated as:

> 'to take all practicable measures towards the elimination of domestic abuse, including a clear acknowledgement that responsibility for abuse lies firmly with the perpetrator. It is essential that action is taken against these perpetrators and that their behaviour is challenged and addressed through a range of means. The main concerns at present, however, must be with meeting the diverse needs of women or children in Scotland who experience abuse and with working towards the development of a society in which domestic abuse will not be tolerated. This includes reducing the incidence of domestic abuse, increasing the reporting and improving services.' (p.8)

Multiple agencies were identified in the report as those most relevant in efforts to address domestic abuse:

• Housing services	• Health and medical services
• Court services	• Scottish Prison Service
• Legal Professionals	• Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
• Police	• Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
• Benefits Agency	• Education services
• Social work services	• Other local authority departments
• Women's Aid	• Rape Crisis
• Other specialist voluntary organisations	

Since publication of the national strategy annual conferences have been held, providing an opportunity for management and staff of these key agencies to network and better plan their responses to domestic abuse.

Prevention & Training Strategies

The *National Group to address Domestic Abuse in Scotland* took this strategy forward by developing two specific strategy reports: *'**Preventing** Domestic Abuse – A National Strategy'* (2003) and *'Domestic Abuse: A National **Training** Strategy'* (2004). The prevention report outlines the responsibilities

of key national and regional organisations and governmental institutions in responding to domestic abuse. The training strategy details *who* needs training on the issue of domestic abuse in order to respond more effectively. Training of front-line workers is said to be of most import, especially of teachers, police, solicitors, health service, social workers and voluntary sector workers. The need to train policy makers, senior practitioners and all levels of managers is also recognised.

Funding provision

Service development

In 1999 the Executive announced an £8 million package to assist women and children experiencing domestic abuse throughout Scotland (Scottish Government News, 1999). £6 million of the fund was allocated to a *'Domestic Abuse Service development fund'*, established *"to provide financial support"* to local work focussing on the '3 P's', stated as *"prevention of domestic abuse; protection of those who experience domestic abuse; and provision of services to meet their requirements"*. The development fund provided £3 million worth of funding over two years for fifty-nine projects across Scotland (£1.5 million per year from the Executive, requiring matched funding from local authorities). The intention was for the fund to take forward the Executives' *National Strategy on Domestic Abuse* (2000) through fostering local responses to tackle domestic abuse, while securing local funds to do so. Funded projects were expected to meet one of the 3 'P's'. After a favourable official evaluation of the funds impact, the fund was extended for a further 2 years (until 2004) benefiting 57 projects across Scotland.

Interviewees regularly brought up the '*Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund'*. It was understood that those initiatives receiving monies from the fund were given opportunities to attend national level networking and information sharing events, which were closed to outsiders. Some concerns were voiced about the lack of opportunity to engage in such networks for those not financed through the fund.

Refuge

In 2000 a £10million, 3-year Refuge Development Fund was announced to develop refuge provision around the country, either through building new refuges or renovating existing properties.

Workforce training

In 2004, in conjunction with the release of the *National Training Strategy* the Executive allocated £700,000 per year for 3 years to establish a network of local 'domestic abuse trainers'. Funding was also allocated to pay salaries of two national training co-ordinators given the remit of training these local trainers and to produce training materials. Part of the national trainers remit is *'building up tiers of training that go beyond awareness raising and address the skills required to deal with domestic abuse'*.

Specific Initiatives

Domestic Abuse Helpline

The Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline[12] was launched in 1994 as a means through which those experiencing domestic abuse could learn where to go for support. The helpline is accessed through a free-phone telephone number, which will not appear on itemised phone bills to protect those who use the service. It initially functioned as a 24-hour answering service through which, if people left their details, they would be sent out a domestic abuse information pack. After user feedback the service has been transformed into a live helpline operating 14 hours a day, 365 days a year. The new helpline is managed by Women's Aid and staffed by trained volunteers. An Executive progress report (Implementation of the National Strategy, 2003) stated that the helpline offers *"relevant local information for all parts of Scotland"* (Section 38). Figures from 2003 show that they received an average of 70 calls per week, rising to 500 per week during the national media campaign.

While the national government policy on domestic abuse, the '3 P's', was frequently spoken of in interview, as was the *'Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund'* to a lesser extent, the other national government efforts were rarely mentioned across all interviews.

Indirect Regional Responses to Domestic Violence

Regional Government

The regional branch of government for Newville, known as 'the council' responds to the issue of domestic abuse through involvement of personnel on ongoing initiatives, funding support and policy

[12] Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline: (UK) 0800 027 1234

development. The council Equality Officer chairs 'the Coalition' board. The council has also developed a domestic abuse policy with the housing sector, discussed in the housing section below.

The local community council representative (the 'councillor') is also the convenor of Social Work for the entire region. During interview the councillor explained that prior to transferring the councils housing stock to the non-profit sector in 2003 approximately 50% of their public consultation time was taken up with community members raising housing problems. The councillor believed this was because when housing was the responsibility of the council, council members could influence the allocation of housing. The councillor stated that since the transfer councillors have no influence over housing allocation. The council, as the regional government, still have a legal responsibility to tackle homelessness. Domestic Abuse has been officially recognised by the Executive as a cause of homelessness. Therefore the council housing policy, although welcome by those tackling domestic abuse, reflects the council's statutory responsibility to tackle homelessness more than a direct effort to tackle domestic abuse.

When asked in what way the council could or do respond to domestic abuse, the councillor responded that domestic abuse was in part a social care concern, part housing concern and part concern of the education system (for prevention). They felt that amongst their council colleagues *'domestic abuse is not a priority*' concern and that the realistic constraints of budgets meant that *'there's just not enough money'* to do everything. They explained that within the council domestic abuse was seen as a problem *'based in families or within relationships'*. Within the council they felt that domestic abuse was generally viewed as *'unacceptable'* but was in their opinion, '*still a taboo topic'* and therefore not something felt appropriate to discuss openly. These responses were particularly interesting in light of the Executives visible commitment to ending domestic abuse and the councils strong fiscal connection to the Executive - the council receives 80% of it's funding from the national government with 20% coming from regional taxes.

As social work convenor for the regional government, the councillor interviewed has to make decisions over allocation of the regions social care budget, which at the time of this study was £525 million. They explained that any council funding to tackle domestic abuse in the social care budget would come from 'section-10 grants', which are awarded to voluntary organisations. This could be interpreted as the convenor of social work holding the view that tackling domestic abuse is work for the voluntary sector

rather than core social work. The councillor's personal view was that *'a community response is needed to tackle domestic abuse'*. They went on to explain that by community response, they meant action taken by local people, rather than society.

Mechanism for multi-agency, multi-level learning

Within the Newville region effort has been expended to create mechanisms through which policy makers and direct service staff can communicate to improve their policy and practices regarding all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse. These mechanisms are facilitated through a small but prominent organisation referred to here as 'the Coalition'. The Coalition grew from the efforts of staff in both local authority and non-governmental organisations who set up a multi-agency steering committee in order to identify the gaps and needs in existing services when responding to violence against women. In 2000 the steering committee took advantage of Executive funds made available for multi-agency partnerships approaches to tackling violence against women. The new Coalition Board is comprised of people who occupy a range of positions in their organisations, from agency directors to field workers, and are mostly female personnel. There is no representation of lay women on the board. The Coalition manager reported being conscious of this lack of involvement from lay women, but was wary of how to involve such women directly. They felt that the staff of the NGO Women's Aid who sit on the board were suitable *'advocates for the voices of survivors'*.

The Coalition is essentially two full time members of staff. One staff member co-ordinates 'the board', and has worked hard to ensure that this group represents the agencies key to responding to violence against women in the region[13]. The second staff member co-ordinates direct responses to domestic abuse in the region, in the form of working groups and a regional forum, discussed below. The coalition has a web-site offering information from organisations providing support to women who experience abuse, or for workers supporting such women. The website receives on average 250 hits per month (undisclosed, 2003, p.5[14]).

[13] At the time of this study the board of the Coalition comprised of: the Head of the Family Protection Units for the Regional Police Force; The public Health Department of the regional health board; the equality officer of the regional government, or 'council'; representatives of the women's voluntary sector; a the regional government employment and benefit agency; regional homelessness partnership; representation from the Procurator Fiscal Office.

[14] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request

As an Executive funded body, the coalition must work to the Executive definition of domestic abuse and align its efforts with national objectives, the '3 P's. The coalition aims to identify gaps in the services available to women who experience violence and to effect regional wide *'operational and strategic changes in service responses'*. An overall focus of the Coalition is to link existing efforts to protect women with those aimed at the protection of children. Their ultimate aim is to reach a place where every organisation or agency represented on their board is *'committed to ending male violence against women and children'* through developing *'political leadership'* on tackling violence against women at the most senior levels of these agencies[15]. One criminal justice worker interviewed felt that the Coalition board is *'at the moment, a talking shop, because they are not delivering'*. Coalition staff stated in interview that they were still unclear on what their outcomes should be but feel they are a *'driver for change'* and have had repeated small wins over time. These wins include bringing homelessness workers onto their board, to promote the uptake of domestic abuse as an issue relevant to homeless work, and the resultant funding of a homeless worker dedicated to working with women experiencing violence; making the 16 days public campaign high profile; the set up of a regional rape and sexual assault unit and more generally increased communication and awareness across agencies on gender-based violence.

Direct Regional Responses to Domestic Violence

Regional Domestic Abuse Forum

In addition to organisation of the board group discussed above, the Coalition staff co-ordinate a monthly regional domestic violence forum for direct service workers responding to domestic abuse. Each of the local areas of the Newville region has an inter-agency violence against women forum with part, if not sole, focus on domestic abuse. One local forum member, usually the chair, represents the area at the regional forum. The forum structure enables 'front-line' workers across multiple agencies to learn from each other at local forum meetings, as their agencies formal response to domestic abuse evolves. The aim in setting up the local forums was, according to one of the Coalition staff to *'change practices at the local level'* and to *'gather front-line workers views to feed up to the board'* [of the Coalition]. Representation of these local workers at a region-wide forum aimed to create a mechanism through which the workers

[15] From interview with 'the Coalition' manager

perspectives could be heard and relayed to the board of the Coalition, who are essentially the service directors and policy makers of their respective agencies. The forum members interviewed conveyed a limited belief in the ability of individual local workers to challenge organisational practices, but valued the forum structure for support and information sharing. Some workers are in the words of one forum member *'overloaded with people coming to them'* for services, and therefore benefit for the mutual support the forum provides. Another forum member found the local forums to be *'excellent for inter-agency updates'*. Another member who attends several of the local forums felt that *'some forums are more productive than others'*.

The regional and local forum structure was criticised by the local support-action group and local project for failing to have adequate representation from lay-women who have experienced violence. Others interviewed, like Women's Aid, felt it was appropriate to have local women *represented* by the organisations offering support, especially their organisation, yet Women's Aid do not operate in all local areas and take part in some, but not all of the local forums, meaning they cannot appropriately represent the community specific needs of women throughout the regional.

Specific Issue Working groups

A third role of the Coalition is the co-ordination of five regional working groups focussed on specific issues pertaining to violence against women. These groups are comprised of relevant organisational representatives, at the senior but not usually directorial level, along with representation from the regional forum. Working groups focus on 'Civil and Criminal Justice', 'Violence Against Disabled Women', 'Rape and Sexual Assault', 'Staffing and implementation' and 'Improving Practice'. These groups are structured to both receive input from and provide information to the front-line forum representatives and the Coalition board.

Public Event Series

Since 2003 the regional government has partnered with the Coalition to co-ordinate Newville's version of an international annual public campaign to end violence against women known as the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign*[16].

In 1999 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution naming the 25th November as the *International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women*[17] and called for worldwide activities on that day to appeal for ending violence against women[18]. The resolution connected with a growing international campaign called *'16 days of action against gender violence'* started in 1991 by the first 'Global Leadership Institute' of the 'Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights'[19]. Since 1991 the campaign starts on the 25th November, representing the day in 1960 that 3 sisters were killed in the Dominican Republic for their political activism and outspokenness to the regime of the day, and continues until the 10th December, International Human Rights Day, to symbolically link violence against women and human rights[20].

The Newville 16 Days Campaign involves mostly art and theatre events, taking place in bookstores, libraries, theatres and public spaces throughout the city and local communities. Public schools participate, with the teaching a special domestic abuse curriculum and performances of a youth focussed gendered violence drama production. Several plays have been written for the 16 Days campaign and used

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[16] The campaign is observed globally by activities at the local, national, regional and international levels. Activities include radio, television and video programming; press conferences; film screenings; workshops, seminars, panels and other meetings; demonstrations, protests, marches and vigils; photo, poster, art and book exhibitions; lectures, debates, testimonies and talks; petition drives; public education campaigns; concerts, plays and other theatre performances; street dramas and other community programmes; distribution of posters, stickers, leaflets, information kits and other publications.

[17] Previously, 25 November was observed in Latin America and a growing number of other countries around the world as "International Day Against Violence Against Women". With no standard title, it was also referred to as "No Violence Against Women Day" and the "Day to End Violence Against Women". It was first declared by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Bogota, Colombia (18 to 21 July 1981). At that Encuentro women systematically denounced gender violence from domestic battery, to rape and sexual harassment, to state violence including torture and abuses of women political prisoners. The date was chosen to commemorate the lives of the Mirabal sisters. It originally marked the day that the three Mirabal sisters from the Dominican Republic were violently assassinated in 1960 during the Trujillo dictatorship (Rafael Trujillo 1930-1961). The day was used to pay tribute to the Mirabal sisters, as well as global recognition of gender violence.

[18] More information is available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/vawd.html

[19] The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence came out of the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights. In June 1991, the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) with participants of the first Women's Global Institute on Women, Violence and Human Rights, a forum involving 23 women from 20 countries called for a global campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.

[20] The campaign would highlight the connections between women, violence, and human rights from 25 November to 10 December 1991. The time period encompassed four significant dates: 25 November, the International Day Against Violence Against Women; 1 December, World AIDS Day; 6 December, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, when 14 women engineering students were gunned down for being feminists; and 10 December, Human Rights Day.

widely thereafter. Works of art have been created for the event and displayed publicly for the event and more permanently. The local support-action group wrote and produced a play for the campaign. This play, discussed more fully below, was well-received resulting in ongoing commissions to perform the play around the country as well as new funding to develop their drama based work.

The regional government supported the campaign *'in recognition of the city's high profile in tackling violence against women'* (undisclosed, 2003[21]). Funding for events has been secured from the council, the regional police force and other regional government and non-government organisations. From the first the campaign has been launched in prominent venues, with high-profile speakers and received regional media attention. Publicity for the 'the Coalition' website and the national domestic abuse helpline during the campaign has increased usage of those resources by 400% and 100% respectively (undisclosed, 2003, p.5[22])

Indirect Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Social Inclusion Partnership

As an area with a high level of economic deprivation, the local community receives additional central government funding, distributed through the local 'social inclusion partnership'. The partnership provides funding to various initiatives in the community, one of which is the Newville Project, which receives the majority of its funding from this source. The social inclusion partnership manager explained during interview that the partnership remit was to *'make the community a better place to live in'*. Their agenda is to work through social inclusion strategies such as *'trying to get people out of poverty into employment and training'* or through *'softer outcomes, like confidence building'*. The partnership co-ordinates four community task force groups: 'health and wellbeing', 'building community capacity', 'tackling poverty' and 'education and lifelong learning'. The Newville project co-ordinator sits on the health and well-being group. The project is said to *'absolutely fit this strategy'* and to be *'vital'* to the local communities efforts. The project is seen to reflect community capacity building, as they are *'innovative and unique'* and are an example of *'people in the community doing something for themselves'*. The

[21] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request
[22] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request

Newville project was also seen to be tackling poverty and promoting lifelong learning through empowering local women to enter back into education or seek advanced employment. Members of the support-action group were also involved in the partnership task forces, representing themselves as community members. For some of the women this meant taking on a level of community responsibility as treasurers or secretaries that they had never thought themselves capable of. Re-prioritisation of national government funds meant that the various social inclusion partnerships around the country would not be funded after 2006, with reduced funding for 2005-06. This meant the partnership would be unable to fund the Newville project in 2005 and at the time of this study there was uncertainty as to whether or not the local community, let alone the project, would be eligible for the new 'community planning' funds.

Direct Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Inter-agency domestic violence forum

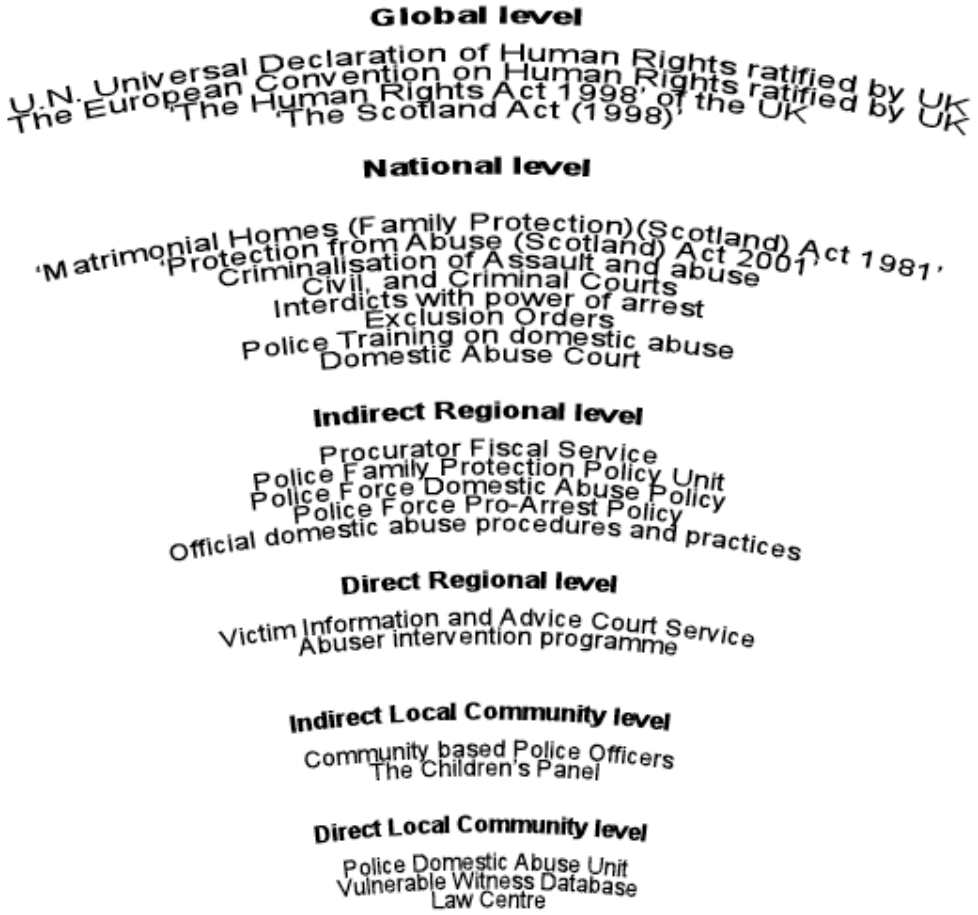
As discussed in local context section above.

Reflections

Overall the national government response to domestic abuse has been wide-ranging, broad in scope and action oriented. The policy set out to tackle domestic violence is comprehensive and supported by those engaged in efforts to respond. Putting the policy into practice, however, relies not just on executive action, but the actions of many others. The executive has a key hand to play in realising these efforts. As central government they fund the national criminal justice, social and health care systems. The Non-Governmental Organisation sector relies heavily on indirect and direct government funding, while the housing sector is indirectly linked to central government funds and responsible for operating according to the statutes defined by central government. The government presence is therefore felt throughout the other sectors responding to domestic violence.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SECTOR

CRIMINAL JUSTICE



Global level Responses to Domestic Violence

In 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The European Convention on Human Rights was subsequently drawn up in 1950 and was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1951. Since that date the UK countries, including Scotland, have been required to give effect to the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention.

In 1998 'The Human Rights Act 1998' became an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom, aiming to give further effect in UK law to the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights. That same year 'The Scotland Act (1998)' was passed, binding the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Executive and public authorities to both the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act.

- Section 29 provides that an Act of the Scottish Parliament may not include provisions which are incompatible with Convention rights, as they are defined in the Human Rights Act. (The Scottish Office, 1999)

- Section 57(2) provides that a member of the Scottish Executive has no power to make any subordinate legislation, or to do any other act, which would be incompatible with Convention rights. (The Scottish Office, 1999)

These Acts make the actions of public authorities unlawful if they are incompatible with a Convention right. Under these acts the State must take appropriate measures to protect its citizens from assault on their person. Measures taken by states include the criminalisation of such assaults, including domestic abuse, the implementation of effective investigation and the provision of measures to uphold the rights specified.

National Level Responses to Domestic Violence

Domestic Abuse and the Law

Abuse of someone within a domestic relationship is viewed as a crime in Scotland and punishable by law. There are both civil (common law) and criminal mechanisms available to respond to those who are abusive. Under Scots law 'abuse' *"includes violence, harassment, threatening conduct, and any other conduct giving rise, or likely to give rise, to physical or mental injury, fear, alarm or distress;"* (Protection from Abuse Act, 2001, section 7).

Someone who commits an act of abuse (emotional, physical or sexual) against someone they are or have been in a close relationship with, including same-sex relationships, whether they reside together or not, can be arrested and prosecuted under Scots law. The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) define domestic abuse as:

> "Any form of physical, sexual or mental and emotional abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a close relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere." (ACPOS, 2001, p.1).

The APCOS definition of domestic abuse is used as the operational definition throughout the police forces in Scotland, including the Newville police force.

Criminal and Civil Law Systems

There are two legal systems in Scotland, the civil (common) law system and the criminal law system. Both systems can be utilised in response to acts of domestic abuse. These legal systems operate through various types and levels of courts.

Criminal Courts

The criminal court system has at its lowest level the 'District courts'. These are courts of first instance in each district of Scotland, with limited jurisdiction. Operating at a higher level than the District Courts are the 'Sheriff courts'. These are a system of 49 courts throughout Scotland and serve as the main criminal court of first instance. The highest level of court in the criminal system is the 'High court of Justiciary'. This unique court operates both as a court of first instances for serious offences and as a court of appeal for decisions made in the lower criminal courts.

One or more lay magistrates, titled 'Justices of the Peace' (JP), administer the District Courts alongside a qualified legal assessor. The JP(s) make decision on cases brought before them. Their decisions are restricted to imposing fines not in excess of £2,500, or sentencing an offender to no more than 60 days in prison. Decisions in the main criminal courts, the Sheriff Courts, are made either through a solemn procedure, where the Sheriff sits with a Jury of fifteen people, or a summary procedure, where the Sheriff sits alone. The maximum penalty imposable is 3 months' imprisonment or a £5,000 fine (in summary cases) or 5 years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine (in solemn cases). Higher sentencing may be

imposed in cases tried through a solemn procedure by referring the case to the High Court of Justiciary. One criminal justice worker interviewed explained that cases of domestic abuse tend to be tried under summary rather than solemn procedures. To this worker that meant unfortunately that most convictions resulted in a fine or a community disposal rather than a prison sentence.

Civil Courts

The civil court system starts with the same 'Sheriff court' system referred to above, but serving in a civil rather than criminal capacity, and moves up through the unique 'Court of Session', through to the British House of Lords and on to the European courts. In the main, legal procedures regarding cases of domestic abuse are dealt with in the civil court system.

Levels of Proof

The criminal and civil legal systems operate based on two separate levels of proof in order to determine whether or not a law has been breached. Evidence of a breech in the civil system is judged based upon the 'balance of probability'. This requires a decision, based upon all the evidence presented, that 'on balance' the law has most probably been breeched. Criminal law decisions are based upon more stringent criteria; there must be enough evidence to convince a Sheriff or jury that the law was breeched 'beyond a reasonable doubt'. The level of proof must be reached through the availability of corroborated evidence, that is evidence from two independent sources e.g. medical, forensic, circumstantial or eye-witness evidence (Preventing Violence Against Women, 1999). A senior police officer interviewed clarified that in cases of domestic abuse corroborated evidence can include *"neighbours statements, evidence of an assault or confirming statement made by at the time by the perpetrator, the victim or children in the house"*.

Use of Criminal or Civil Legal Systems in Relation to Domestic Abuse

The criminal system is used to judge cases when the police have charged an individual with the crime of assault or abuse, *and* the state elects to pursue these charges in a court of law. Few cases of domestic abuse result in police involvement or arrest however and fewer still are taken to court by the state.

The senior police officer reported that domestic abuse is *"inherently difficult to prove"* in a criminal court as it is *"an invisible crime"* which means there is often insufficient evidence for corroboration.

The civil system is therefore more commonly used in responding to domestic abuse. Individuals pursue a response through the civil system for their own protection against someone who has abused them, in the form of 'interdicts' and/or 'exclusion' orders. These orders may be pursued in the civil system (and potentially but more rarely, in the criminal system) through one of two pieces of key legislation. These are the 'Matrimonial Homes Act' and the more recent 'Protection from Abuse Act'.

Legislation

Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981

This act lays out the legal rights available for married couples, under civil law, in relation to their marital home. In cases were domestic abuse occurs, a married person can utilise this act to (i) apply to have any occupancy rights to the family home held by their abusive spouse suspended through an 'exclusion order', meaning the abusers right to live in or enter the family home is revoked and/or (ii) apply for a 'matrimonial interdict', an order which prohibits or restricts the abusive partner from approaching the abused person, their family home and/or a specified area in the vicinity of the home. In 2004 'the Matrimonial Homes Act' was amended by 'the Civil Partnership Act' in order to recognise not just couples who are married, but also same sex couples and co-habiting couples under civil law.

Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001 (PFA Act)

When an interdict has been granted to protect someone from abuse, the PFA Act provides individuals the option to request that a 'power of arrest' be applied to the interdict. The power of arrest is enforceable by the police force and in practice can lead to the arrest of and, most pertinently, *removal* of someone for breaking the terms of the interdict, such as approaching the individual or their home or even the vicinity of their home, dependent on the details of the interdict granted. This power of arrest option brings interdicts into the criminal as well as the civil law system. A formal evaluation of the PFA act in 2003 states that the Act was introduced *"primarily to give greater protection to those who could previously only access common-law interdicts, widely regarded as ineffective due to problems enforcing interdicts unsupported by powers of arrest" (*Cavanagh, Connelly & Scoular, 2003, p.2).

One NGO worker succinctly expressed the views of many of those interviewed when she said, *"interdicts are not worth the paper they are written on without the power of arrest"*. When an interdict was granted before power of arrest was available, it was left to the woman herself to deal with the situation if her abuser broke the interdict conditions. The onus was on her to go back to her lawyer and take a new case to court, to prove that the interdict terms were broken. Besides the expense and time, this process offered women no protection from their abuser at the time when the interdict was broken. Women can now call the police when an interdict is broken, and the police now have the right to make an arrest for that act alone.

In addition to the ability to have power of arrest attached to an interdict, the PFA Act enables individuals to apply for an interdict *without* having to prove any relationship between themselves and the abuser and to pursue the same without any connections to occupancy rights, as is required in the Matrimonial Homes Act.

Obtaining an Interdict or Exclusion Order

Interdicts and exclusion orders have to be requested through courts. Individuals must appoint a solicitor to apply to the courts on their behalf. People may be entitled to civil legal aid to help with the costs of the application. Solicitors often help their client fill out the necessary paperwork to apply for such aid.

Complications

Workers in the NGO sector, who have experience of aiding many women dealing with domestic abuse, report that problems arise with interdicts as they usually apply to a fixed address rather than to the person experiencing abuse. According to the domestic abuse solicitor interviewed, this makes the interdict less useful as the interdict does not follow the woman out of the police force area. If the person holding the interdict moves out of the area in which the interdict was awarded they must then go through an additional process to enforce the interdict at their new address by informing the Chief Constable in their new area of their presence and the interdict granted. They may have to re-apply to the area Sheriff Court to grant a new interdict. This is a difficulty in cases of domestic abuse in which moving from one area to another is

common when for instance taking up refuge or new housing for safety. Interestingly the Newville domestic abuse policy officer contradicted these concerns, by positing that interdicts state *"X shall not approach <u>that named individual</u> or come within 200 meters of set address"*, therefore applying to both the physical home *and* the individual themselves. Whatever the legal position may be, it would seem that interdicts are not being enforced when a woman moves from one area to another and that in practice this makes them less useful to someone dealing with domestic abuse.

The solicitor interviewed also raised the complications that arise due to the nature of both domestic abuse and the court process itself. People often need immediate and urgent protection from abuse, whereas applying for an interdict, especially if legal aid is needed, can take weeks to process. In this time people can be further abused and may well have moved out with the area for safety, which may render useless any interdict that was then granted.

<u>Limitations</u>

According to legal, criminal justice, police, N.G.O. workers and the local women interviewed the efficacy of interdicts in protecting women who have suffered domestic abuse depends on several factors:

(i) The affordability of initiating a court proceeding / eligibility for legal aid
(ii) Legal aid being granted and/or the court awarding the interdict in time enough before 'the victim' has had to leave their address for safety
(iii) An interdict being granted by the court
(iv) The perpetrator then respecting the interdict *or*
(v) If the perpetrator violates the interdict, the police attending *and*
(vi) Arresting and/or removing the perpetrator.

<u>Police Training</u>

The Scottish Police College training programme for all new police recruits includes training on domestic abuse. This means that every new officer in Scotland is exposed, at least in theory, to domestic abuse as a crime, the legal responses available, the police force policy and existing police powers in relation to domestic abuse.

Pilot Domestic Abuse Court

At the time of this research a 'Domestic Violence court' pilot initiative was being planning by the national government. The pilot programme was due to commence later in the year 2004, *after* this research was conducted. Plans for the pilot were discussed by many of the stakeholders interviewed. The project involves dedicating court space, court personnel, and court time to the processing of cases of domestic abuse, along with newly appointed workers to liaise between the court and those community members who bring charges of domestic abuse. The court will allocate specific Sheriffs to the domestic abuse court, already selected and said to be understanding of the problem of domestic abuse. There is some hope that the attitudes of these Sheriffs will impact upon the actions taken by the PF office in relation to their pursuance of domestic abuse referrals. The pilot also provides funding for a support project to help the women who bring charges of domestic abuse to stay with the charges, rather than re-canting them when in the midst of the court process, apparently a common occurrence. Support will stop when the case is disposed of in court, regardless of the outcome. The pilot is expected to cost £500,000 to fund, with monies allocated from public funds.

Although the court pilot was not yet operational at the time of this study it was raised repeatedly in interview with much uncertainty as to how the court would eventually operate. Few of the key stakeholders interviewed had been involved in the formal planning process for the pilot court, only one local Women's Aid worker and the Coalition staff. Most interviewees reported this lack of consultation as a shortcoming of the project. They feel that the project would have been improved with the input of both women experiencing domestic abuse and those who respond to domestic abuse. In some agencies, particularly criminal justice, the higher management had input into the pilot deliberations but did not seek input from the general workers. These lack of consultation from those who are involved daily in responding to domestic abuse seems to have caused much offence and resentment, becoming "a bone of contention" in the words one person interviewed.

Despite the lack of consultation, some stakeholders welcomed the pilot court, seeing it as a co-ordinated response 'at the hard end' of community responses to domestic abuse. The perspective of some was that the exclusive focus on domestic abuse could result in a more efficient or even sympathetic service. The ability of the new court liaison workers to visit 'victims' at home was seen as an asset to by some,

mainly those workers who are not able to do so within their own positions. None of the NGO's or support-action group members highlighted this as a strength, perhaps reflecting different ideas on how agencies can be useful to women experiencing domestic abuse. Concerns were shared that the project would be funded in a way that forced it to be a watered down version of the original plan, therefore limiting its potential impact. The initial plan suggested the establishment of a new agency of five workers to link between those experiencing domestic abuse that have a case at court, and the court system itself. The reasoning here is that people will be less likely to drop domestic abuse charges going through the court system if they have adequate support.

Concerns regarding funding were not unfounded, at the time of this study, funding for the pilot agency had been cut down to two domestic abuse court liaisons rather than five. One Women's Aid worker reported that they had been asked to work with the pilot on a voluntary basis, rather than as paid consultants. Some of those interviewed felt there was a possibility that the pilot could result in a more 'efficient' or 'sympathetic' service, but on the whole they shared concerns that a tremendous amount of national public domestic abuse funds were being put to the use of a system responding to only 'a tiny proportion' of incidents of domestic abuse occurring in only one region, let alone the nation.

Indirect Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Procurator Fiscal Service

Under the Scottish legal system, prosecution of almost all criminal offences is by 'the Crown' in the person of 'Her Majesty's Lord Advocate'. As an individual the Lord Advocate is incapable of residing over all offences prosecuted throughout the nation. She is therefore represented by a large body of people working under the auspices of 'the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service' (PF service). There are 11 PF services in Scotland. Each service has a designated PF, an extended staff and multiple locally based offices. Newville is covered by one such service, PF and office[23]. The PF service employs solicitors and advocates who represent the Crown in the criminal courts. Each PF office is staffed by civil servants, offices are large with up to 300 civil servants dealing with the charges sent to a service. If the police make

[23] Retrieved July 8, 2008, from http://www.crownoffice.gov.uk/About/Departmental-Overview/COPFS-Structure

an arrest they file a report and send it to the PF office. The officers of this service are ultimately responsible for prosecuting cases of domestic abuse in the region. The PF (or a civil servant under the auspices of the PF office) determines whether there is enough evidence to prosecute each charge brought and if 'it is in the public's interest' to do so. The PF can also discharge a charge or seek a non-court disposal. The PF or their representative has autonomy to decide whether or not to proceed with a case in the name of the Crown, regardless if an individual has been arrested or charged by the police.

If the PF service decides to prosecute the charges can be brought to court as 'summary' or 'petition'. Petition charges are dealt with in court. Under petition a plea is sought, statements are sought and a trial set. Summary charges are dealt with either at sheriff court, with a Jury, or at the High Court. Summary charges are usually brought against charges of serious injury, rape and murder.

Despite receiving personal recommendations for contacts within the PF office, no-one in the service was prepared to be interviewed formally or informally for this study. The perspectives of the regional PF office as to their responses to domestic abuse are, therefore, unknown in this study. Reflections on the services role in responding to domestic abuse are presented from official documents and other agency worker interviews alone.

The 2004 Executive 'Domestic Abuse Training Strategy' recommends that the staff of the Procurator Fiscals office need increased awareness on the causes and nature of domestic abuse and the role they can play in supporting women who have experienced abuse as witnesses in these cases.

A senior domestic abuse criminal justice worker interviewed reflected that the PF's office has "*huge amounts of discretionary powers"* and that problems in prosecuting cases of domestic abuse arise in the criminal system due to the "*problem of plea-bargaining"* practiced by that office. They explained that the PF office decides whether or not it is in the Crowns best interest to prosecute a criminal offence. The PF is interest is in prosecuting cases that are likely to result in a conviction to avoid *"clogging up the court system"*. In practice this often means that the actual offences people are arrested and charged with are reduced down to far less serious offences or "plea bargained", in order to secure a conviction. The worker conveyed that it was common to see domestic abuse charges of serious assault reduced to the far lesser charge of breach of the peace. Another example in their experience has been the sexual content of charges of marital rape omitted in order to secure a conviction on the lesser crime of simple assault. The worker

suggested that this reduces motivation for those who may consider taking their case of domestic abuse into the criminal justice system.

Newville Police Family Protection Policy Unit

Newville is overseen by one of the eight police forces in Scotland. At the time of this study, the Newville force had a Family Protection *Policy* Unit (FPPU), and each division in the Newville force had a Family Protection Unit. These units have a remit of responding to criminal cases of "all sensitive and emotive crimes" including domestic abuse, cases of child protection from abuse and neglect, sexual offenders in the community and family liaison issues. The division based Family Protection Units are comprised in part by local Domestic Abuse Units (see direct local responses below). Once an offence is reported to any police office in the Newville Police Force area, local police officers will attend in the first instance. Thereafter, the police office will automatically pass on details of the offence to the local Family Protection Unit, specifically to the Domestic Abuse Unit. Once this information has been received, the Unit will determine an appropriate response. Less directly, the FPPU oversees the force policy and the practice of all force police officers in relation to domestic abuse.

The lead policy officer of Newville's FPPU explained that they consider domestic abuse to be *"serious violent crime in a domestic context",* citing *"3 murders and 40-50 attempted murders"* in a domestic context in Newville the year before. They explained that in the police force domestic abuse was not initially dealt with through criminal investigations, rather it was seen *"historically as a private issue"* and therefore *"intervention was (seen as) prying"*, a tag that is now *"binned"*, or no longer acceptable. They went on to reflect that within the force, *"the past 5 years have turned attitudes on their head, converted a lot of people"* to understanding the community nature of domestic abuse and the *"gendered issues"*, as well as *"power imbalances"* that underlie the problem.

They spoke to the remit of the FPPU in relation to domestic abuse as *"ultimately the protection of victims and their families"*. In practice this meant conducting "*thorough investigations*", the "*detection of offenders to bring people to justice*" and "*making onward referrals to partners or other agencies*". A key part of the policy unit's role is to *"monitor and review force policy on domestic abuse"*. They do this by:

> "(i) reviewing documents from the Scottish Executive; (ii) providing guidance to the (police) force executive – the chief constable (the commanding officer of Newville's

police force) and the assistant chief constable for crime"; and (iii) they "try to generate new ideas for ways to respond to domestic abuse by looking at models across the UK on the risk assessment of offenders and worldwide at force policy and practices."

Newville Police Force Domestic Abuse Policy

At the time of conducting this research the Newville Police force had a one-page force policy on domestic abuse. This document states that the force *"is committed to providing a professional, sensitive and consistent approach to victims of Domestic Abuse."* The policy states that the force makes a commitment to *"support victims of Domestic Abuse and to bring to justice those responsible"*. In practice, they state this commitment to mean:

- *Where sufficiency of evidence exists in law, to arrest the offender.*
- *Provision of support and information and the referral of the victim to a support agency.*
- *Continued contact with the victim as appropriate to individual circumstances.*
- *Partnership working with both criminal justice agencies and other statutory and voluntary sector services to provide better outcomes for victims and their families.*

The FPPU lead policy officer explained that for the force the *"bottom line is to produce better outcomes for the victim"*. They went on to clarify that this means *improving people's lives (so that they are) not having to put up with violence in the home, around children; empowerment; and reducing the incidence of repeat victimisation"* of those experiencing domestic abuse. In their view this could be done by *"encouraging women to report incidents as a crime"* and by *"persuading women that we (the police) are here to help"*. This statement was made in recognition that presently *"by the time people call the police it is the straw that broke the camel's back, it (the abuse) will have happened ten times before"* and that *"people simply want the violence to stop. They usually want the police to diffuse (the situations) and remove the perpetrator, no more, no less. People commonly say 'I don't want to make a complaint' they just want it (the abuse) to stop"*. This has led to the force opting to take a pro-arrest policy to domestic abuse, discussed below.

Domestic Abuse and Youth Offending

The FPPU officer also stated a less obvious intended outcome to their efforts to tackle domestic abuse. They reported that the police force is:

"slowly recognising that children raised in a violent context are not all directly involved in youth offending, but a high majority are. I think the 'SCRA' [prosecuting

> body in children's judicial system] have carried out a study that a vast majority of children initially referred for child protection concerns, some of them being domestic abuse, have gone onto offend".

They preface this as evidence that "*many young offenders have a history (of growing up with domestic abuse)",* and that if they (the police) "*make the links, (they can) take the holistic view and stop youth offending at its source"*, therefore their work to tackle domestic abuse aims to tackle another form of crime that is viewed as highly problematic in the current social climate, that of youth offending. This point was revisited later in the interview when it was said that the force *"need robust policies, intervention strategies, to reduce domestic abuse at the first point of report, then lower youth offending"*. The outcome of reducing youth offending through reducing domestic abuse became an unexpected central theme in this interview. A force policy in line with this view was explained as *"if a child lives in a household were there is domestic abuse, the child will be referred to the Reporter (SCRA)"* and may therefore be monitored in the community. The children's judicial system can decide that the child should be removed from the 'abusive' home, or that the mother leaves the home in order to retain custody of her children.

Criticisms of Child Referral Policy

The forces child referral policy is criticised by others in the domestic abuse field as victimising women twice, forcing the system to focus on the non-offending parent and resulting in women running the risk of losing custody of her children if she reports an incident of domestic abuse to the police.

S.O.P. and Police Training

Behind the force policy are the force's standard operating procedure's (SOP's), which are set by the FPPU using guiding documents from the Scottish Executive, Central government and ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers). The FPPU identify best practice for the force and tailor it for policing in the Newville region, incorporating feedback from police officers in the community and the local Domestic Abuse units. SOP's are put into both new officer training and ongoing training in the force divisions. Each division has a training team, to whom the FPPU *"dictate exactly what has to be disseminated"* to the officers in each division. The FPPU offer direct guidelines for officers, advising them on how to use existing powers to respond to domestic abuse. Their training materials are said to

communicate that domestic abuse is a serious violent crime while offering learning tools to help street police judge situations in the community. Tools such as guidelines on what factors would increase someone's risk of offending or causing serious harm; guides as to what they can and cannot do under the law and by sharing test cases, that did or did not result in conviction in court, as models for officers to draw in when they are attending incidents or reporting to the PF. The training is said to emphasis the *"clear force policy that, when in doubt you will record it as a domestic abuse incident."* It also encourages officers at local police stations to remand perpetrators of domestic abuse in custody until they appear in court due to the likelihood that they would re-offend otherwise, as "per the Lord Advocates instructions".

Pro-Arrest Policy

The FPPU opts to operate a pro-arrest policy for cases involving domestic abuse. In practice this means that officers are encouraged to arrest the 'perpetrator', whenever they are called out to an incident and there is evidence that domestic abuse has occurred, *whether or not* the 'victim' wants to press charges. This policy is used in other police forces around the world and is hoped to send a message that (i) domestic abuse is not socially acceptable and (ii) even if the person abused is too fearful to press criminal charges, the state will do so on their behalf. The unit officer is aware of the criticisms levied against the force for using such a policy. They know that concerns centre on the policy as disempowering for those who are experiencing abuse. The NGO sector specifically have criticised the policy as forcing women into a situation when the timing may be wrong, arrest may well escalate violent behaviour and she may not have anywhere to go to ensure her safety, and that ultimately the policy may place women in more danger. The policy officer recognises the legitimacy of the criticisms yet feels that the police are *"duty bound to protect people and stop crime. The force can't turn a blind eye to violence or corroborate with the symptoms of abuse"*. They explained that the police do not need the person experiencing abuse to agree to take a case to court:

> "we've never ever brought a case to court, in a murder trial, when we've had the complainer stand in the witness box, because he is dead. We do not need the complainer (victim) to give evidence in court, we need two complainers (witnesses)".

When asked if they feel that the pro-arrest policy deters women from contacting the police, they explained that *"year upon year our figures for domestic abuse have steadily risen, from 14,000 complaints*

in 2002-3 up to 20,000 in 2003-4" and that they are convinced that it is reporting of incidents that has increased, not the rates of domestic abuse.

Statistics

The FPPU record the number of incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police, subsequent number of arrests made and cases reported to the PF for collation at the national level. Similar figures are recorded throughout Scotland, but unfortunately the unit do not record the percentage of arrests that were made using the pro-arrest policy, compared to 'victim' request.

Joint Protocol between Newville P.F. office and the Newville Police Force

A protocol was agreed between the Procurator Fiscal offices and the Police force in Newville on their 'procedures and practices' in cases of domestic abuse. The document of protocol states that a programme of training will support staff adoption of the principles and standards set down by the protocol. The domestic abuse policy officer interviewed made no mention of such training, or details of the protocol, the extent to which any joint protocol is operationalised is not known. The protocol officially recognises the P.F. and police force role in investigating, reporting and prosecuting cases of domestic abuses. The protocol states that Newville Police will treat cases as high priority and were possible provide and immediate response by police officers. The police will investigate the crime thoroughly and actively pursue anyone who has committed abuse. The pro-arrest policy is outlined along with the commitment to record incidents, offer advice on safety and community resources and to refer 'victims' on to the domestic abuse unit for follow-on contact. According to the protocol, all cases with sufficient corroborated evidence will be reported to the PF with all relevant historical information. The PF office will request that additional evidence be pursued if necessary to corroborate the charges. If no case can be brought due to insufficient evidence, the PF will notify the police in advance of releasing the 'accused' from custody, so that the 'victim' may be notified in advance for safety. When there is sufficient evidence the PF will favour prosecution over an alternative disposal of the case and cases will proceed in the higher level courts, the Sheriff or High court. In these cases the PF will either oppose bail or consider setting restrictive bail conditions and requesting an early trial. If the accused is granted bail the PF victim services or police force

must notify the 'victim' that bail has been granted, within 24 hours of the court decision. When a 'victim' retracts a complaint, the PF office must investigate to determine if this is due to *"overt or implicit pressure from the accused"*. The PF can decide to continue with or without the 'victim's' complaint. Any decision to not continue apparently must be made by a senior member of the PF's staff.

If we take the views of those who work in the area of domestic abuse seriously, based on their experience aiding people dealing with abuse or who have abused, then the practices laid out in the protocol, particularly of the PF office, would seem to be something to aspire to as opposed to a reflection of actual practice.

Direct Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Getting to Court

Incidents of domestic abuse are dealt with as a crime *if* the incident of abuse is reported to the police *and* charges are then pressed against the perpetrator *and* the Procurator Fiscal decides to take the case forward to one of the criminal courts.

Figures of reported incidents of domestic abuse have been recorded annually throughout the Scottish police forces since 1999. The Scottish Executive published a statistical bulletin containing the figures for reported incidents of domestic abuse in 2004 (Statistical Bulletin, 2005). The bulletin shows that there were 43,678 incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police throughout Scotland in 2004. This was a 10 per cent increase upon the figures recorded in 2003 and is said to reflect a "steady increase in incidents reported since 1999".

Rates of Reported Abuse and Criminal Justice Uptake

Of the 43,678 incidents reported to the police, half (21,795) led to a crime *or* offence being recorded, most commonly as the offence of petty assault (9,701; 22 %) or breach of the peace (17%). Only 10 percent of all incidents (4,497) were recorded as a crime [see Figure 3].

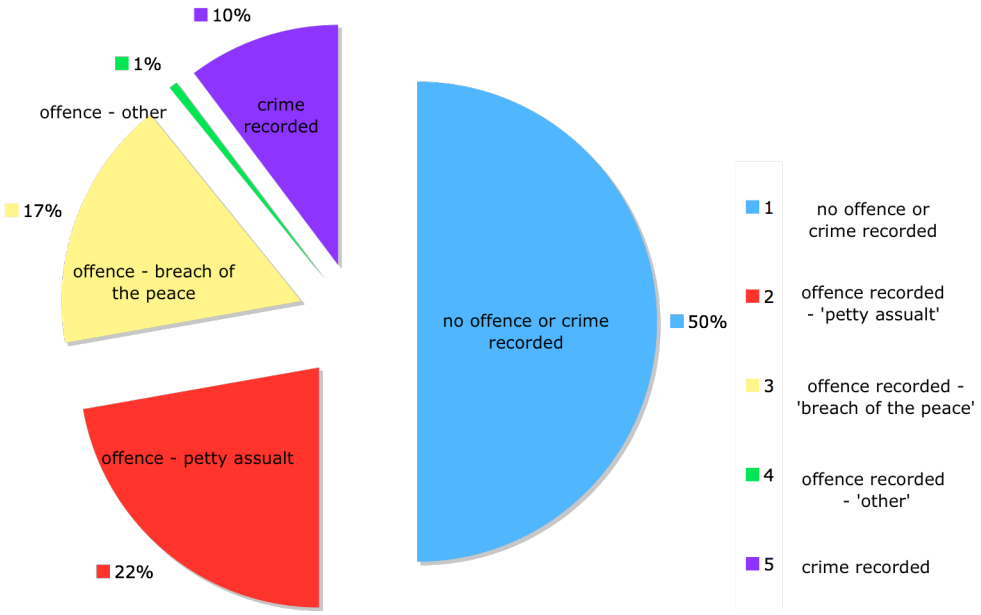


Figure 3. Recording of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Scottish police as an offence or crime in 2004

Of the incidents recorded as a crime or offence by the police (50% of the total reports), 63 percent (13,632) were referred to the PF "with a view to charges being brought against the offender", that is 31 percent of total incidents reported. Of the remaining cases were a crime or offence was recorded, 6 percent resulted in a police warning, 24 percent involved "some other type of action" e.g. referral to an NGO or victim support, and 6 percent resulted in 'no further action'. It is not clear from the bulletin what was the outcome of the 50 percent of incidents *not* recorded as a crime or offence [see Figure. 4].

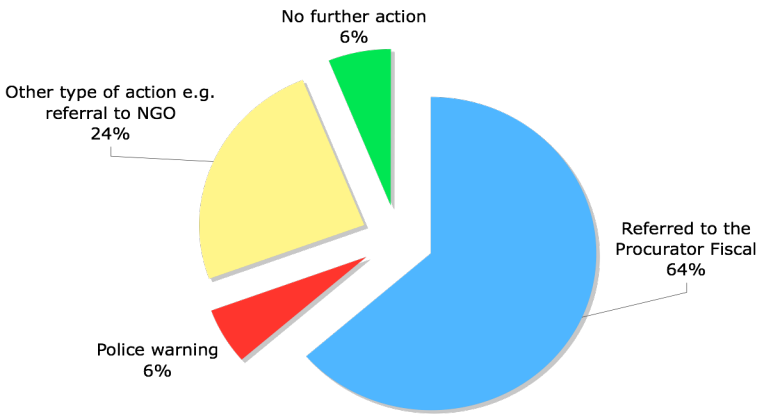


Figure 4. Disposal of incidents of domestic abuse reported to the Scottish Police AND recorded as a crime or offence

From these figures we can determine that 31 percent of domestic abuse incidents *reported* to the police were referred to the PF in 2004, representing only 4 percent of all the cases reported to the PF Services in Scotland that year (total 321,340[24]). Of the total number of reports *received by* the PF Service in Scotland in 2003-04, only 40 percent proceeded to the courts. The number of domestic abuse cases that were prosecuted by the PF is not known, but inferring from the percentages above, it is likely to be only a fraction of the cases, with an even smaller number resulting in prosecution of some sort.

Another indicator of how small a percentage of actual incidents of domestic abuse are responded to in the criminal justice system is the fact that the number of incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police in 2004 (43,678) reflects just over half of the same number of requests for information or support for domestic abuse made to Scottish Women's Aid in the same year (83,226 requests) (Scottish Women's Aid, 2004) [see Figure. 5]. Using these comparison figures, with an awareness that requests to Women's Aid

[24] Retrieved July 8, 2008 from the Crown Office website: http://www.crownoffice.gov.uk/About/corporate-info/Caseproclast5

under-represent instances of domestic abuse, we can crudely estimate that less than 16 percent of incidents of domestic abuse are considered for prosecution by the PF office, and fewer still taken forward for prosecution or resulting in legal chastisement of the abuse (potentially less than 7% following percentages outlined above).

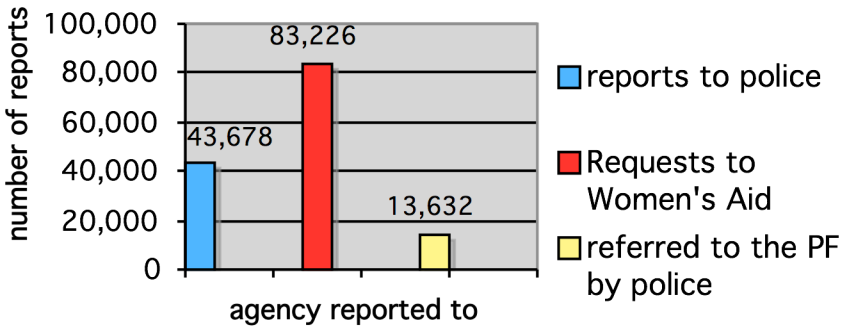


Figure 5. Number of reports of Domestic Abuse recorded by 3 Scottish Agencies in 2004: the Police, Women's Aid and the Procurator Fiscal Service (PF).

The small percentage of domestic abuse incidents dealt with through the criminal justice system aside, for those 31 percent of *reported* instances of domestic abuse that we know go forward to the PF for consideration, there are established procedures for response within the system, discussed below.

Court process

As described above, the PF has full discretion over whether or not to prosecute a domestic abuse case 'in the public interest'. The PF can decide on *what count* to seek a prosecution, with the potential for reducing the charges brought in order to secure a guilty plea. The PF can also determine whether or not to grant someone bail while they await a trial date, and the conditions attached to the bail. The disposals available to the court (or possibilities for prosecution) depend on which court the charges are sent to, the Sheriff or High Court, as discussed previously. Sentencing can take the form of a fine, an interdict, a rehabilitation programme or a prison sentence and other less common disposals. As part of the PF service

there is an office with the sole remit of assisting people through the court process, called Victim Information and Advice (VIA).

VIA

Victim Information and Advice (VIA) is part of the Procurator Fiscal (PF) Service. VIA was set up to support victims of crimes as the case involving them moves through the criminal court process. The PF service has a policy of mandatory referral of domestic abuse cases to VIA whenever the PF determines to bring such a case to court for prosecution. In the Newville VIA office cases of domestic abuse had very recently been allocated to a designated worker as part of their general workload, this worker was interviewed in the current study. As yet the worker has not received any training on the nature of domestic abuse, they are instead learning as they go.

The worker contacts each 'victim' reported in every domestic abuse case brought in front of the courts, as soon as they receive a disposal from the first court appearance. Contact is made via the telephone. Ongoing telephone based support is offered to support people through the court process. The Support is offered in the form of information and emotional support. Information is shared as to the community-based supports available to those dealing with domestic abuse; advise on the court process, the bail process and progress of the case concerning them as it progresses through the court system. Emotional support is offered through informal counselling. The worker reported that not all those telephoned opt to take up the supports offered. The small number who do, however, tend to use the support services heavily. These people are *"sometimes terrified of the abuser breaking their bail conditions, want to drop the charges they brought for fear of further harm and often just want to talk to someone"*.

The worker deals with up to fifteen cases a week, predominantly affecting women. Interestingly the worker reports receiving more cases on a Monday, and suggests this is possibly as court is not in session over the weekend. The number of cases received by the worker was roughly estimated at interview and based on only three months of their working on the issue of domestic abuse. Accurate figures are recorded by the clerks' office of the PF service. These figures, however, were not made available to the researcher upon request and have not been located in public records. Taking the worker's estimates as a rough guide, the number of domestic abuse cases reaching court in Newville may be as few as 780 per year (15 estimated cases per week for 52 weeks in a year). This number represents less than 10 percent of the

reports made to the PF by the Newville police force in 2004, potentially highlighting once more the small percentage of domestic abuse crimes prosecuted through the justice system.

Abuser Intervention Programme

A small team of six Criminal Justice workers, employed by the Newville Social Work Department run the Newville domestic abuse male offender programme. This is a court mandated, intensive, group intervention programme to challenge violent behaviour in men convicted of domestic abuse. The Scottish Executive funds the programme.

A senior worker on the programme was interviewed in this study. They explained how the programme operates, the programme limitations and strengths as well as reflections on the key challenges they face in their work.

The programme was designed by two university based criminal justice scholars, one of whom runs the programme to date. There is a core team of programme workers supported by forty other criminal justice workers, representing a third of Newville's total criminal justice workers, who have opted to be trained in the programme techniques.

It is worth reflecting that in the entirety of the community responses to domestic abuse available in the Region and local community, this programme was *the sole response* in which *the work was directly with men who are abusive*; all other provision is aimed at the women who experience abuse.

Accessing the Programme

The programme is ran to tackle the behaviour of men who have been convicted of a crime involving domestic abuse. The programme can only be accessed upon court order; men cannot access the programme voluntarily. It is offered as an alternative to custody and is viewed as a 'heavy community disposal', requiring a 2-year probation order. The programme is considered amongst other available disposals by a criminal justice team. The worker estimates that around 50-60 percent of cases involving domestic abuse that go through the court are recommended to the programme. If felt appropriate as an alternative to custody the programme will be recommended to the Sheriff, who has agreed with this recommendation in a little over 70 percent of cases. According to the worker *"the number of referrals (to the programme) is incredible"*. More than 250 men have been through the programme, and at the time of

interview had a 10-month waiting list. Initial plans were to hold four programmes per year, but demand meant that 21 programmes were ran in the less than four years since first offered. The worker reasoned that this should not be surprising as a *"quarter of all violent crime in Scotland that is recorded and gets through court, is domestic violence"*.

Programme Format

At the time of this research, a new programme was being started each month, with twelve men in each group. The groups meet weekly for six months, led by one male and two female workers. The gender mix is seen as very important in order to model healthy mixed-gender relationships, avoid male workers colluding with perpetrators and also to convey that domestic abuse is unacceptable to men as well as women. Men are prepared for entering the group over a period of several months. They work either one to one with a probation officer or with a mixed gender team of programme workers, due to *"some of the risks and denials presented*". At the end of the six-month programme, men are seen on an individual basis for one more year to tackle some of the concepts that they have had difficulty with.

Participants and Outcomes

They aim to work with men to reduce and ultimately change their violent and abusive behaviour. The men who are sent to the programme are assumed to be the *"high risk ones, the scary ones, they will threaten you (as a programme worker)"*. These are men who have been found guilty of crimes of stalking, sexual assault and serious physical assaults. The worker reported that, despite their high-risk status, some of these men can and do change, although the programme does not have clearly defined outcomes of success. Research was referenced, from this line of work, which showed similar programmes to result in an end to violent acts, but only a slight decrease in abusive, controlling or manipulative behaviours of the men involved. The worker interviewed hopes that the men in their programme will cease all violent, abusive and controlling behaviours as a result of the programme.

The team do not work with *"men in denial"* of their abusive behaviour, and not all men complete the programme. In the workers experience, those men who drop out of the programme are typically higher risk to start with. Most worryingly they say is that research on such intervention programmes has highlighted that men who start but don't finish the programmes become even higher risk perhaps due to

their increased knowledge of abusive behaviours. The worker feels that these men are angry at having to attend the programme. There are no real penalties for non-compliance with the programme, which the worker interviewed believes send out a message that the programme is not taken seriously and reduces people's motivation to engage with the programme. If a man drops out of the programme they have technically broken their bail conditions and have to go back to court for sentencing. In reality, however, the worker explained that it can take up to six months for the case to come back to court, and when it does sentencing is light e.g. 3-6 months in jail or the case is admonished, meaning it is essentially dropped with no consequence to the man in question. The worker feels that admonishments are a symptom of *"misogyny in the courtroom"*, a place where domestic abuse is *"not always treated seriously"*.

Supporting the Abused Partner

The programme was said to have to work in interaction with other stakeholders in order to work at all. The other agencies they interact with are mainly the PF Office, court Sheriffs, Victim Support (a national NGO for victims of all crime), agencies working with abused women and essentially the partners of the men themselves.

When a man is assigned to the programme, his partner or ex-partner is contacted and made aware of the materials and concepts used in the programme *"so that they can't be manipulated by what the man learns on the programme"*. The programme team also like to maintain contact with the (ex)-partners to monitor the men's behaviour, as men have in the past become more dangerous during the programme, showing increasing anger, even opting out of the programme and harming their partner. When the programme first began, partners were contacted mainly to share information, assess them and refer them onto other agencies. The workers realised, however, that these women did not *"go anywhere near services"* and that there were no services *"suitable for their stage"*. These statements were made in reference to both the extreme abuse that these women were felt to experience, as well as the *"huge barriers to women accessing services"* in general for domestic abuse, including risk of further abuse from partners, risk of children being removed from their care and limited social support in terms of housing or finances. The workers, in recognition of these factors, started to work directly with the (ex)-partners of the men in the programme. In recognition that these women can and do get killed by their (ex)-partners, the team feels

it is necessary to *"work around safety and protecting them"* by teaching them 'how to keep themselves safe from abuse'. Safety planning involves 'practical work' such as finding them a solicitor, potentially to gain an interdict, confidence building work and encouragement to move objects, with which they could be assaulted, out of sight in their homes. The worker reflected that although this work is controversial, it is necessary in order to support women were they are, rather than taking a stance of 'your only option is to leave', as women do have to be kept safe from harm. They report working from Prochaska & DiClemente's stages of change model, which the worker refers to as 'an addiction model'.

A review of the literature suggests that the stages-of-change-model has been heavily adopted by the addictions field, particularly to smoking cessation programmes. The worker reported that using this model they help women work through the model's five stages of change to determine *"if they want to stay in the relationship and why they stay when they don't want to"*. The stages of change are outlined as (1) pre-contemplation (denial of problem/addiction), (2) contemplation (identified problem exists/ recognise addiction), (3) preparation (tried unsuccessfully to change/ quit, but plan to try again), (4) action (actively trying to change/ avoid addictive substance), (5) maintenance (work to prevent relapse and maintain change) (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992). Whether an addictions model is used because of its familiarity to criminal justice workers, or because women experiencing abuse are viewed as having an addiction to abuse was not clear. The worker advised that at some point in this process, when women are *"further in terms of empowerment"*, the team refer them onto the NGO sector for ongoing support.

Limitations and Criticisms of the Programme

Limitations and criticisms conveyed about the rehabilitation programme come from the thoughts of the programme worker as well as many of the others interviewed during this study.

Motivation

With no voluntary opt-in to the programme, those men who attend often did so reluctantly and solely as a means to avoid jail, rather than to address their own behaviour. For such men, already little motivated to take the programme seriously, the lack of consequences for disengaging with the programme compounds the problem.

Insufficient Evaluation

The programme was evaluated after it had been run seven times. The evaluation has been criticised as it focussed only on those men who completed the programme, and opted to base outcomes on the reports of these men's partners as to whether or not they had been violent or abusive. The evaluation was expert led, without consultation with women who had experienced abuse. None the less the programme was improved based on the evaluation findings. They increased the length of time men were in the programme recognising that *"you don't change lifelong behaviour in six months"*. Two new modules on 'children and domestic abuse' were added to the programme.

Emphasis on Reading and Writing

New techniques were incorporated into the programme design, such as drama based work in an attempt to move away from the initial purely literacy based programme, which had *"huge implications for undereducated guys"*.

Working Downstream

The worker reflected that the programme reflected a form of *"downstream work"* operating on *"the drowning man syndrome"*, meaning that the men who attend the programme represent only the *"tip of the iceberg"* of abusive men. The programme therefore only tackles the behaviour of a small group of those who are being abusive, and who are abusive to extremes. In order to more fully tackle domestic abuse, the criminal justice workers would need to engage in more *"upstream work"*, with more men, in the form of *"community awareness and attitude change"*.

It's Not Good Enough, but It's All We Have

Many of those who criticised the programme were also at pains to point out that this programme was the only formal response the local and regional community had that tackled men's abusive behaviour directly.

Typical Criticisms

Many criticisms were levied at the programme during interview with other stakeholders. NGO's commonly share a concern that the availability of a programme that aims to rehabilitate abusive men will cause more harm to women, in particular that women will stay with abusive men because they are in such a programme.

The programme has been criticised as an ineffective means to tackle the behaviour of the abusive men in society due to the small proportion of men engage with. The concern stems from the nature of the pathway to the programme, it is able to deal only with those men whose abuse was reported to the police, taken seriously enough to be charged and sent to court and then found guilty of domestic abuse charges. Critics have concerns about the attrition rates of the programme (not conveyed at interview or publicly available), and question what becomes of those men that don't stick with programme.

Criticisms have been levied as to the nature of the programme itself. Concerns are raised that the men are not assessed properly, in terms of their level of psychopathy, such that if they were (properly assessed) they would be found to be more dangerous than thought, and therefore better interned in jail rather than in a community based programme. There is also general disbelief from some stakeholders that a programme can and will change the abusive behaviours of these men.

Disconcertingly, one criminal justice system worker interviewed did not know a lot about the programme, despite being directly involved in the court system.

There was a feeling from many places around the region and locally that the Criminal Justice System in general does not take domestic abuse seriously and that the emphasis upon this programme as how to deal with abusive men is another reflection of that lack of serious engagement.

Indirect Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Community-Based Police Officers

Interviews were held with a senior police officer in the Family Protection and Policy Unit and two officers running the local division Domestic Abuse Unit. No general community based police officers were

interviewed. Information here is therefore taken from the reflections of the police personnel interviewed, who work directly with community-based officers on the issue of addressing reports of domestic abuse.

Police Officers attending a reported incident have discretionary powers to record the incident as a crime, an offence or to take no further action. They have discretion to decide whether or not to utilise the force pro-arrest policy. As individuals the officers have the discretion to take the reported incident seriously and when the report is well-founded, whether or not to collude with the abuser. If an interdict with power of arrest is held and broken, officers have the ability to decide the extent to which they will pursue the perpetrator for arrest. Police officers may or may not be aware of the powers available to them when called out to an incident of domestic abuse. Training at the National police academy and within local divisions attempts to redress this, but cannot guarantee well-informed action. To this extent, the responses of officers to domestic abuse in the community could be said, at times, to be based in limited awareness, at others times deliberate.

The Children's Panel

Scotland Judicial system for children, the Children's Panel system, operates at the local level. This system is presided over by lay members of the community. The decision as to whether or not to bring a case in front of the lay panel, however, is made by an individual called 'the Reporter'. The Reporter holds a position similar to that of the Procurator Fiscal, although there is often more than one Reporter per local area. Reporters determine whether or not to dismiss a referral, send it to the criminal courts or send it to the children's panel. Reporters are on the whole lawyers by training. They are employed by an agency called SCRA (Scottish Children's Reporter Authority) who set policies and practice guidelines in reference to the law, test cases and concerns over child welfare. The police are duty bound to inform Social Services if a child lives in the house were an incident of domestic abuse was recorded. Social Services are duty bound to protect such children, and will visit the child's home. The allocated social worker may refer the child to the Reporter on the basis of their living in a house with domestic abuse. SCRA recognises this as adequate grounds of referral. Reporters can then decide whether or not to bring a child to a panel because they live with domestic abuse. The outcome of this is that the mother of the child, who is directly experiencing the abuse, can be requested to take herself away from the relationship for the sake of her child's welfare. Children can and do get removed from their mothers care because of their mothers

'failure' to protect her children by leaving a relationship where there is or has been domestic abuse. NGO, criminal justice and social system workers were quick to highlight the victim blaming nature of this system, in which the abusive father/ partner goes unchallenged by these systems, while the onus to ensure that the child is not harmed becomes the responsibility of the abused woman, not the abusive father/partner. While critical, people at the same time recognise the difficulty of the situation. Children can and do become harmed when living in a home with domestic abuse and may need protection beyond that which their mother can afford them.

Direct Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Police Domestic Abuse Unit

If an incident is reported to the police and recorded as an incident of domestic abuse:

Each Police Division throughout Newville has a dedicated Domestic Abuse Unit (DA Unit) as part of the divisions Family Protection Unit. The DA Unit covering the local community is manned by two female police officers that administer an extensive database on the incidents of domestic abuse within the area. This database is referred to as the 'Vulnerable Witness Database'. Police officers responding to a report of domestic abuse are obliged, through protocol, to question whoever the allegation is made against and to then report the incident to the DA Unit for recording purposes *whether charges are brought against the perpetrator or not.*

Vulnerable Witness Database

This information is used to collate figures on incidence of domestic abuse, to use as an alert system for repeat offences, for child protection purposes and improvement of force response. When the Unit is made aware of a reported incident of domestic abuse they initially check their database to determine if this is a repeat incident of reported abuse. The officers' state that a large part of their focus is on child protection, with a protocol in place to share reports of domestic abuse with the child protection system (social services) each time an incident is reported in a household where a child resides. The workers are office-based. Their contact with those experiencing domestic abuse is made via telephone as a follow-up the day after a reported incident. Telephone follow-up is only possible if a contact number was provided

by the attending police officer. The staff also monitor police department responses to reported incidents of domestic abuse throughout the division area. The unit reports back on 'good' and 'bad' practices to individual police stations. This system places emphasis on the supervisory and senior officers within each division to improve their responses to domestic abuse. The policy unit officer reflected that database 'cost a fortune' and provides a community practice feedback mechanism not in place for any other crime.

Support

The Unit staff is able to offer telephone support to people experiencing domestic abuse who were subject of a reported incident. They typically help people understand the criminal justice system and the options for support available to locally. Conversations are said to often be extensive with repeated conversations over time. The officers recommend the Newville project and the support-action group to people from the local community area. They believe that ongoing, face-to-face contact is necessary in assisting someone coping with domestic abuse. This is a response that they themselves cannot currently provide, which causes them frustration, as they would value being able to offer support *"away from their desks"*.

Law Centre

If local people want to involve the powers of law and are awarded legal aid or can afford legal costs:

The local community Law centre was established to represent the interests of women and children in the legal system, to meet *"unmet legal needs"*. The law centre run a 'women's and children's rights project' as well as a service to people pursuing criminal injuries compensation for rape and sexual abuse. The centre lawyer responsible for dealing with all cases of domestic abuse was interviewed during this study. The workers main role in responding to domestic abuse is facilitating women to apply for interdicts with the power of arrest against their abuser through the new Protection from Abuse Act.

When someone applies for an interdict they either must have sufficient personal monies to take the case to court, or apply for and be granted legal aid to cover court costs. Legal aid is not awarded automatically when applying for an interdict, unless there is a 'mental health issue'. Aid must be applied for and granted, involving completion of substantial paperwork. The law centre therefore also assists people in completing and submitting their applications for aid. If aid is granted, or the person has the

financial ability to take the case forward independently, the law centre can then apply for an interdict on behalf of the individual.

Many stakeholders interviewed questioned the utility of interdicts and the difficulty in obtaining an order or enforcing one already granted. One Women's Aid worker reflected the concerns of many of those spoken to when she said *"the process of applying for an interdict was usually stressful, unpleasant and ineffective"*. The legal centre attempts to make that process less stressful and unpleasant for local women.

The centre lawyer explained that as the process of applying for an interdict and/or legal aid involves recording a lot of information, appointments with the centre tend to be businesslike. The lawyer believes from her experience that women in this position also require emotional support and seek it out, which the centre cannot provide. The centre therefore gratefully works with the local Newville project and support action group, who can offer such emotional support. They receive referrals from the Newville project and routinely inform women about both the project and support group.

The application procedure for legal aid can delay the process of applying for an interdict by several weeks. They reflected that the law had no provision to protect women while they awaited a funding decision. It was explained that in the meantime women may well have moved address, complicating the very terms of the applied for interdict. As there is no refuge provision within the area of Newville which the local community is a part, it is likely that a someone who leaves their home for their own safety will have limited opportunity to remain in the local community. It is the lawyer's perspective that the legal aid system as it stands *"does not make sense in responding to someone who is usually leaving a violent situation"*. One provision in the legal system was felt to be of some benefit in this delayed process, that if an abuser harasses the woman *while* they are applying for an interdict against him, this harassment can be counted as evidence against him when the case eventually comes to court.

The worker was not able to provide figures as to how many local women use their service each year, so it is unclear as to the level of uptake for such a service in the local community. The lawyer also notes that because women often lose touch with the centre once their application to the court has processed, they are not aware if their services were useful. They welcome such feedback and feel they tap into this in part through involvement with the local Domestic Abuse Forum.

Despite the high levels of funding seen elsewhere in the criminal justice system, the centre's work has been difficult to fund. When the centre was initially formed, in the 1990's, they were able to attract sufficient funding as an innovative service to employ one full time lawyer to work on interdict applications. They have not been able to sustain such funding as an ongoing, essential service. Funding is now reduced and the centre is able to cover only part time hours on the project.

N.G.O. SECTOR

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Global level

The Global Feminist Movements

National level

Scottish Women's Aid
'Zero Tolerance' Media Campaign

Indirect Regional level

Public Information Office
Counselling service for ethnic minority women

Direct Regional level

Workforce training on Domestic Abuse
Respect training for young people
Newville Women's Aid: Information, Support & Refuge

Indirect Local Community level

Community Youth Group
Recycled furniture service

Direct Local Community level

Newville Domestic Violence Project
Support-Action Group
Drama Education Productions

Global Responses to Domestic Violence

When discussing the existing community based responses to domestic abuse, many stakeholders in the study referenced the global Feminist Movements. A feminist analysis of violence against women, especially in recognition of the gender-based nature of such violence, rooted in power-imbalances in society, was pervasive amongst those spoken to in both the wider regional and local community. This was most apparent in, but not exclusive to, interviews and conversations with senior female workers.

National Responses to Domestic Violence

Scottish Women's Aid: Information, Support and Refuge

The most prominent organisation responding to domestic abuse throughout Scotland is a charitable, Non-Government organisation (N.G.O.) called 'Women's Aid'. Women's Aid started in 1973 in Scotland, emerging from the 2nd wave of the global feminist movement. The then independent fledgling groups opened and operated the first refuges for women leaving violent homes in Scotland. Today those groups have come together under one organisational name, with branches throughout the British Isles and over 39 groups in Scotland. The groups operate independently while paying into a national office called 'Scottish Women's Aid'. The national office literature states that they are *'a confidential organisation, that provides information, support and safe refuge for women, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse'* (Scottish Women's Aid, 2003, p.4). The national office supplies the public and individual Women's Aid groups with publications, statistics and leaflets, while theoretically providing a means for networking between the groups. This aims to form a British wide network whereby *'women and their children can be accommodated anywhere in Britain if they are at risk in their own area'* (Scottish Women's Aid, 2003, p.4). Women's Aid groups continue to be the main, if not sole, operators of refuges throughout Scotland. The central government recognise this key role that Women's Aids groups fill nationally. On the Executives domestic abuse website[25] they refer to Women's Aid as *'where to go for*

[25] Scottish Executive Domestic Abuse website: http://www.webzone.uk.com/dma/dom_display_splash.jsp;jsessionid=3063790A4A9A306178EF2B615CF26CA9?pContentID=190&p_applic=CCC&p_service=Content.show&

refuge, a break, and advice on housing'. That site also states, or more accurately, overstates, that Women's Aid will provide refuge *"for as long as you want, as often as you want"*. Despite filling such a key, and recognised, role in responding to domestic abuse, Women's Aid groups do not receive direct or 'core' government funding. The National Office funding comes from charitable donations and some Scottish Executive funds while local groups rely on charitable donations, national and local government competitive grants and most crucially local government housing funds, paid as fees to cover an individuals refuge costs.

Public Awareness Campaigns

The first crime prevention campaign to tackle the issue of male violence against women and children in Britain was launched in 1992 by the 'Women's Committee' of a branch of regional government. Named 'Zero Tolerance', this poster-based campaign continues to date, and since 1995 has been run through a formalised charitable organisation called 'The Zero tolerance Charitable Trust'. The trust operates throughout the UK and Europe and *'campaigns for the prevention of male violence against women and children'*. The Trust formally recognises that *"the causes of violence against women are based on wider inequalities and power relations in society."* Their website (http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk./index.php) states that, in addition to their public campaigns, the Trust:

> 'works with a range of agencies to promote innovative policy and best practice that target the root causes of male violence. Zero Tolerance lobbies governments, commissions research and develops educational intervention and training programmes'.

The Trust has four working campaigns. The 'Respect' campaign is aimed at young people with the aim of preventing violence before it takes place, the 'Prevalence' campaign aims to challenge stereotypes and myths about domestic violence, while the 'Justice' and 'Excuses' campaigns aim to foster public condemnation and intolerance for domestic abuse, mainly achieved through their public poster campaigns.

The Trust has adopted the Scottish Executive's three-pronged strategy to tackle violence against women and children, the '3 P's': Prevention, Provision and Protection. This is emphasised on their website, stating that:

> "it is clear that public education on its own is not enough to tackle male violence and the campaigns promote a three pronged approach to highlight the key areas for any strategy which aims to combat violence against women and children - the 3 Ps."

The Executives '3 P's' approach is said to be *"highlighted and reinforced in all Zero Tolerance work……with a primary focus on prevention."* The reason for the Trusts adopting the Executive's 3 P's is not clear, although reference is made in their literature to an ambitious Executive funded two-city pilot *'primary prevention initiative'* developed by the Trust in 2001-02. This pilot education programme, based in schools, led to further funding for the Trust from the Executive, to provide the same programming to schools in every local authority throughout Scotland. This programming is based on the Trust's 'Respect' campaign.

Two Studies of Young People's Attitudes to Violence and Relationships

The impetus to launch the Zero Tolerance campaign arose in response to two local research studies commissioned by the council district. The first study was a local survey, which highlighted violence against women as a *'priority issue for women'* in this sizeable district. The survey was followed by a research study, date unknown, in three of the district schools with young people aged 12-16 years old. The research investigated young people's *'knowledge and attitudes to violence against women'*. Key findings reported were that (i) boys found violence against women more acceptable than the girls (ii) both boys and girls found violence more acceptable if the perpetrator was married to the victim (iii) the majority of young people interviewed expressed some likelihood of using violence in their future relationships.

In 1998 the Zero Tolerance Trust carried out a larger scale follow-up survey to explore *'youth attitudes to relationships and violence'*. This study surveyed over 2,000 young people aged 14-21, in two areas of Scotland and one in England, regarding their attitudes to '*violence, sex and relationships'*. Key findings of this later study included:

- 1 in 2 boys and 1 in 3 girls find it acceptable to hit a woman in certain circumstances *(e.g. if they nag)*.
- Boys and girls find forced sex more acceptable than hitting.
- More than half the young people think that women provoke violence in a range of contexts *(e.g. by the way they dress, by flirting)*.
- Over half the young people knew someone who had been hit by their male partner and exactly half knew someone who had been sexually assaulted.

The results of these surveys were cited often and accurately by the stakeholders interviewed, although they were referred to as coming from one, rather than two, pieces of research. The key findings of

these surveys were repeatedly conveyed to the researcher as worrying findings. More specifically they were feared to be indicative of an emergent generation in Scotland that were tolerant of violence against women. The consistent opinion of stakeholders was that these data showed the need for urgent preventative work with children and young people to change their attitudes towards violence and relationships. These surveys appear to significantly influence the attitudes of those interviewed as to what was to be done and where to prevent domestic abuse – the answer being prevent abuse from occurring by changing the attitudes of young people through education.

Indirect Regional Responses to Domestic Violence

Raising Awareness - The Women's Initiative

The Women's Initiative Representatives of the Women's Initiative were asked to participate in this study, but declined. Information about the Initiative is taken from their published literature and stakeholder interviews. A small N.G.O with five staff members, the Women's Initiative offer a response to violence against women and children through their research, offering workforce training on domestic violence and according to their literature through *"raising awareness of the extent and effects of violence against women and children"*. The Initiative raises awareness by providing literature and information on abuse and violence to professional groups, and the public to a lesser extent. They operate in the city centre during restricted office-hours. Their office acts as a resource library, which people can access by appointment.

Counselling Services

A regional N.G.O. with offices in the city centre offers *"Information, advice, support and counselling to female victims of sexual violence over 16 years of age, who live in Newville"*. Although they respond to the experience of sexual violence rather than domestic abuse more generally, they were reported by other stakeholders to offer counselling to women experiencing domestic abuse who may also have suffered sexual violence. The organisation advertises itself as offering *"information, advice, support and counselling to women from ethnic minority communities regarding any issue"*.

Direct Regional Responses to Domestic Violence

The Women's Initiative – Domestic Abuse 'Basic Awareness' Training

The initiative was referenced by many of the stakeholders interviewed as the key agency offering training to services and agencies on the issue of domestic abuse throughout the region. They are said to provide basic awareness training to agencies and the agency workers on domestic abuse for a £600 fee. One of the Newville project workers stated that before the support-action group offered their play as a means to educate people on domestic abuse, the Women's Initiative *"trained everyone in the region"*.

Newville Women's Aid & The Coalition - Work-force Training

Partnering with the Coalition, Newville Women's Aid offer a multi-agency training for workers from varied agencies identified as key to responding to domestic abuse. This full day training involves *"going through the basics"* about domestic abuse and reviewing particular agency work practices. This training programme has been piloted in one section of the city aiming to provide training to every worker from what are viewed as the key agencies: social work, health, housing, police and job centre plus.

Respect Training for Young People

In 2001 the Zero Tolerance Trust began to offer their 'Respect programme', on behalf of the Scottish Executive, at primary and secondary schools and youth groups across the country. The aim of the programme is to prevent domestic abuse in relationships through intervention with young people at an age when they have not yet, or are beginning to form, romantic relationships. June Strachan, representing Zero Tolerance in an Executive newsletter states:

> "'Respect' challenges the root causes of violence and abuse. It empowers young people with useful knowledge, skills and understanding, and it promotes positive, non-violent relationships based on equality and respect." (The Scottish Executive, 2001).

Newville Women's Aid

Newville's Women's Aid offers direct support and services to women experiencing domestic abuse in the city centre and some of the surrounding local areas. According to one of their workers, their remit is said to be to provide information to women in safe spaces, in order to offer them choices rather

than answers, in a bid to empower women when dealing with domestic abuse. Based on a feminist analysis of violence against women, Women's Aid tries to *"redress the impacts of patriarchal hierarchies"* through empowering their female staff *"by operating as a collective, with equal pay and equal decision-making powers for all staff"* and ultimately, it would seem, through empowering women to get away from violent relationships.

Newville Women's Aid attract funding from both central and local government for the direct service provision they provide for women, and work in conjunction with multiple other agencies responding to violence against women. The agency is a major stakeholder in the existing community based-responses to domestic abuse. Staff and other stakeholders oft referred to the agency having representation in the majority of governmental initiatives at the regional level, and conveyed the agencies regularly called upon role as advocates for women dealing with domestic abuse.

They offer 3 direct services to women dealing with domestic abuse: information, support and refuge. In 2002-3 they responded to 10,560 requests for services, over 50% of which were self-referrals (undisclosed, 2003)[26]. The other referrals came from friends and relatives, social work, health professionals, housing agencies, the police, other Women's Aid groups and voluntary organisations.

The majority of the women accessing Women's Aid receive aid in the form of (i) information and (ii) support. These services are offered through the city centre based public access office. The public office operates during business hours and accepts drop in appointments throughout the majority of the week (accounting for 17% of contacts made in 2002-3). Telephone support is offered for slightly more extended hours (80% of contacts made in 2002-3), and a limited, informal, out of hours response is provided (3% of contacts in 2002-3). The public access office has a large playroom and a children's worker on site when possible, to attend to any children brought to the office, enabling private consultations between staff and the mothers.

(i) Information

One Newville Women's Aid worker spoke to their providing information on five prominent issues: (i) financial, (ii) welfare, (iii) health, (iv) legal and (v) housing issues.

[26] All figures and terminology taken from 2002-3 Newville Women's Aid annual report. Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request

Financial & Welfare Issues

As explained by one of the Newville Project workers, limited financial independence can be a very real barrier to a woman leaving a relationship and starting over by herself. This can be because of insufficient funds to start over for women who have very little financial resources already, or for those more affluent women, a reluctance to sacrifice the comfortable home / lifestyle or for example private school fees that the violent partner may provide. Government benefits, available to those with limited or no income, may provide essential financial assistance. Staff share information on accessing such benefits with the women.

Health Issues

Although there can be very real *physical* health implications for women living with domestic abuse, one worker interviewed said that they more commonly shared information on the counselling services available to help with the *psychological health* problems related to abuse. Referring to the weighty psychological impact of living with domestic abuse, the worker spoke of how in particular women's *"self esteem and confidence is often worn down"* and counselling services said to be *"hard to access"* generally. The experiences of the Newville project workers and the local women was that counselling services were particularly hard to access on the basis of dealing with domestic abuse, due to the services lacking any categorisation of such psychological harm. Newville Women's Aid staff therefore share information on two projects based in the city, referred to above, which offer counselling services directly to women experiencing domestic abuse.

Legal Issues

Some women request help in order to protect themselves and their children from harm from abuse, using available legal options. Information is shared with all women who contact the agency on the legal options available to women who are dealing with domestic abuse. This includes information on interdicts and exclusion orders (see the Criminal Justice sector for a full explanation) as well as the contact information for lawyers who are said to be *"sensitive to domestic abuse"*.

Housing Issues

On the whole agency staff reported that most information (and practical support) is given on the issue of housing. They reported that Women's Aid have the ability to influence housing allocation. This is usually done through writing a letter to Newville's city housing association supporting the women's request for housing. Such a letter often results in the applicant receiving additional housing points, which brings them closer to being allocated an affordable rental house. The agency can also help get a housing transfer for someone who already has an affordable rental but needs to move out of the particular property or area for safety. The agency offers information on the refuge accommodation they manage, which according to one worker *"may not be ideal accommodation"* compared to a private tenancy *"but they can offer support"* to a woman when transitioning from refuge into her own house.

(ii) Emotional and Practical Support

At times a worker will refer a woman on to more appropriate support services but if contact is maintained with Women's Aid, women can expect repeated visits or calls with the worker to help them *"think about their choices"*, which vary from woman to woman. The worker spoken to reflected that the *"commonest way to end abuse…. in a relationship is for the woman to leave her home……. which can mean leaving all that is familiar and supportive"*. Much of the support provided to women initially is therefore emotional support, as the process of leaving a violent partner is *"an emotional journey. It can take a long time and requires building the woman up"* to a point where she can face the decision to leave. If a woman decides to leave her partner then the worker can offer more practical support. Practical forms of support involve helping women to *"navigate the services"* available to them which can be *"overwhelming and often unfamiliar"*. Services include accessing benefits, housing and refuge or even securing a legal interdict against their violent partner.

Refuge

Newville women's Aid offers seven refuges based throughout the city centre with accommodation for up to sixty families at any one time. Dedicated refuge workers are on site to support the women, including child play-therapy workers, to support the children who have experienced or witnessed abuse.

The support workers continue to work with women and their families when they leave the refuge, in order to help women *"navigate systems, apply for grants and work with the children"*. Of their seven refuges, two have recently been developed to offer specific provision for women with physically and sensory impairments and women from ethnic minority groups.

In 2002-3, Newville Women's Aid received requests for refuge for a total of 875 women and children. Of those 875, 329 women and children were admitted to their refuges, with 417 more turned away due to lack of space, 57 did not accept the refuge space offered and 72 were deemed 'inappropriate for refuge' (undisclosed, 2003[27]).

The worker interviewed explained that Newville Women's Aid would deem someone 'inappropriate for refuge' if they had an active addiction to drugs and/or alcohol, due to the communal nature of the refuge accommodation. The worker stated that they are aware that *"there are few alternatives for these women",* and suggested that *"maybe social work"* helps them. One of the local Women's Aid branches involved in this study clarified that the exclusion of those with an addiction is common practice for Women's Aid groups, but ultimately depends on the views of each local group. This Women's Aid, located in a high poverty area close to the city, *will* accept women with addictions into their refuge accommodation, space permitting.

Although this was the only exclusion policy mentioned by the workers interviewed, the Newville Project staff and some of the local women spoke to the limited support that Women's Aid can offer. They spoke of not only exclusion from refuge for drug or alcohol addiction, but also exclusion of women from refuge who have male children in their teens. Their main reflection on the services offered by Women's Aid, however, was that they provided services only in the city-centre, which could be impractical for some women to utilise. Some local areas have their own smaller Women's Aid group, but the area in which the local community of this study stands has no group, meaning there was a complete absence of refuge provision in or near the community. In practice this means that in order to access refuge the local women have to leave the community completely. This was said to compromise their children's schooling, the

[27] All figures and terminology taken from 2002-3 Newville Women's Aid annual report. Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request

women's jobs and their ability to draw on their social support systems, making them unlikely to utilise this community resource.

Barriers to Their Work

1. Funding

Although Newville Women's Aid provide the largest scale direct response to women dealing with domestic abuse in the region, and provide *all* the refuge provision throughout the region, the organisation is not funded directly by central or local government. Their operating costs are covered predominantly by local authority 'housing benefit' (80% in 2002, 45% in 2003[28]) (undisclosed, 2003[29]). Housing benefit must be applied for and granted to an individual in order for them to receive coverage of rent, hostel or refuge. When a woman who has been 'awarded' housing benefit stays in a Women's Aid refuge, the organisation charges the local authority for this housing benefit.

Other funds for Newville Women's Aid come from less stable sources such as charitable donations and fundraising (3.5% in 2002, 6% in 2003) or government grant monies, applied for on an annual basis (17% in 2002, 45.5% in 2003). Successful bids are made annually for housing related grants and funds for working with children who have lived with domestic abuse. Many of the governmental grants however tend to be offered for limited periods of time e.g. 1-3 years, to fund new initiatives and staff positions rather than maintain ongoing service provision and/or posts.

Securing finances is, according to one worker, a "*constant struggle"* for the group who, like many N.G.O.'s, spend part of their budget on staff dedicated to fund-raising. This worker felt that they agency would be able to increase the support they offer, and work with more security if they were in receipt of 'central funding' (an annual budget from the national government), similar to that paid to education, health and social services. They felt that such ongoing secured funds would provide both the agency and the women who use them with a desired sense of security and enable them to provide refuges in *all* local areas.

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[28] The percentage of income derived from housing benefit in 2003 reduced dramatically due to the award of large national grants for that year. These grants were for one year duration and temporarily doubled the groups budget and therefore reduced the percentage of income derived from traditionally relied upon sources.

[29] All figures and terminology taken from 2002-3 Newville Women's Aid annual report. Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request.

2. Attitudes/ Ignorance

People's attitudes towards those who experience domestic abuse were raised as creating barriers to the establishment of effective community responses. One Women's Aid worker noted the common-place blaming of women who experience domestic abuse for 'putting up with' such relationships, highlighted by the frequent refrain of *"if it's that bad (the relationship) why doesn't she just leave?"*. In their opinion there is an acceptability of domestic abuse in Scottish society. This opinion was said to be reflected in the attitudes from the youth surveys, media apathy to the problem and to the collective silencing of abuse through the established pattern of not discussing 'what goes on behind closed doors' in both older and new generations. The ignorance around why women stay in abusive relationships and victim-blaming attitudes towards women who suffer domestic abuse were to produce a lack of sympathy for such women. In the workers experience, these attitudes were so pervasive that they interfered with the level of service and support women dealing with domestic abuse received from various agencies. The worker felt that there was need for training and awareness-raising in agencies to challenge such ill-informed attitudes about domestic abuse.

3. The 'Nature' of Abuse

It was suggested by many stakeholders interviewed that the very difficulties women face in an abusive relationship fuel these attitudes. They highlight that not all women who experience domestic abuse leave their relationship. Commonly, women who do leave their partners reconcile up to seven times typically before leaving for good. This means that supporters and agencies may be approached to assist the same woman multiple times, resulting in a frustration and a feeling of *"why help her, she'll only go back (to him)"*. This can result in reluctance of agency workers to help woman access a new tenancy or other resources when needed.

Indirect Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Recycled Furniture

A local non-profit collects unwanted furniture and offers it to people who are setting up a new home with limited finances. When women leave their abusive partner at short notice, which is often the case, this service can be useful in obtaining essential furnishings for the women and, if relevant, their children.

Community Youth Group

The local community youth group have partnered with the Newville Project and support-action group on drama projects. The youth have taken on roles in the support-action group's signature play on domestic abuse, performing with the group in local and regional venues. More recently the youth group has worked with the support-action group on a regional theatre based initiative to develop new, inter-generational works pertaining to domestic abuse.

Direct Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Support-action Group

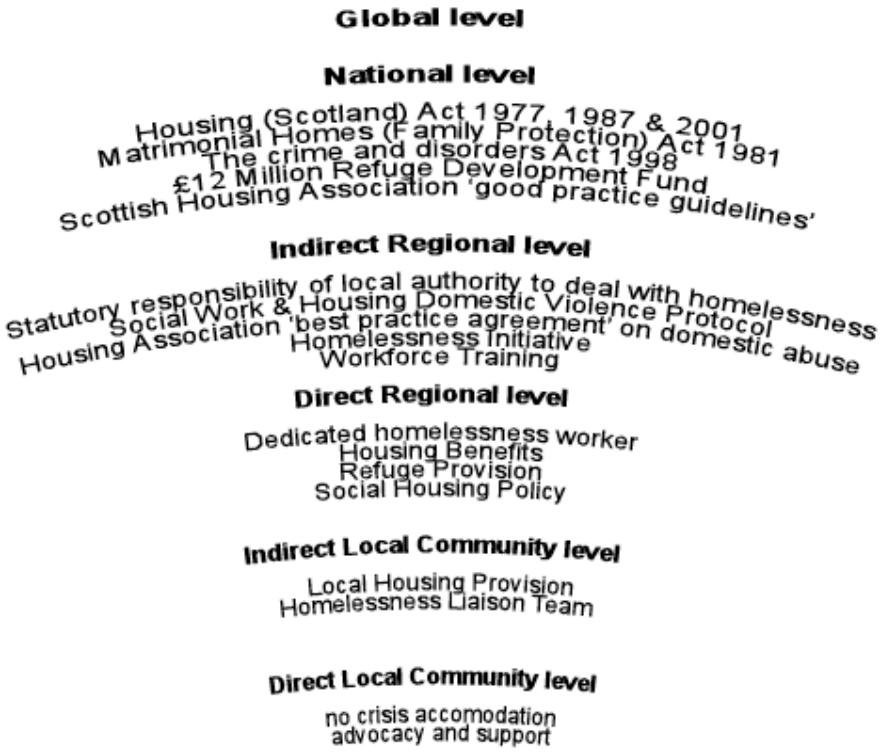
Refer to local community responses, above.

Newville Domestic Violence Project

Refer to local community responses, above.

HOUSING SECTOR

HOUSING



Housing Sector

The most common way an abusive relationship is ended, according to the extensive experience of many of the stakeholders, is by the person subjected to the abuse moving out of the shared home. When a decision is made to leave an abusive partner, commonly for reasons of safety, women need somewhere new to stay. Temporary 'crisis' residence can be sought via family members or through refuge such as Women's Aid offer, but new permanent residency is often required.

Global level Responses to Domestic Violence

No global level responses to domestic abuse pertaining to housing were indicated.

National level Responses to Domestic Violence

Domestic Abuse & Homelessness: National Recognition

National homelessness statistics show that "violent disputes with partners are a significant cause of homelessness, accounting for 12% of all households assessed by local authorities as being homeless or threatened with being homeless in 1996-97 (4,560 households)" (Preventing Violence Against Women, 1998, p.13).

Domestic Abuse & Housing: National Recommendations

Both National Government action plans to prevent violence against women (Preventing Violence Against Women, 1998; Preventing Violence Against Women, 2001) recognise the key role social housing providers (social landlords) occupy in responding to women experiencing homelessness due to their experience of domestic abuse. The action plans recommend that social landlords help women facing such homelessness through invoking available legislation which confers power to landlords to transfer the name of a rented property from one tenant to another. Culturally it is tradition when a couple rent social housing the tenancy is legally placed in the name of the male partner. This means that if a women experiencing domestic violence chooses to end the relationship, she often loses the right to live in her home, and faces homelessness. The power to transfer the name on a shared tenancy can help women dealing with domestic

violence stay in their family home, while, if necessary evicting their partner from the home under the *Housing (Scotland) Act 2001* & *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

Scottish Women's Aid have made available an *'agency awareness information'* leaflet containing specific information and good practice guidelines for agencies working with those who live with abuse. Housing workers are offered specific advise. The 'housing information' section advises housing workers that 'every year thousands of women, children and young people become homeless because of domestic abuse' (Scottish Women's Aid, 2003, p. 9). They also convey that when dealing with domestic abuse, some victims wish to stay in their homes, but have additional safety measures installed; some women may want to transfer the tenancy into their own name, some may seek temporary respite, while others will seek a new house. Scottish Women's Aid advise housing workers of their crucial role in supporting such women as "access to information and suitable temporary or permanent housing is vital in her escape from violence". The guide explains the right of women to public housing when experiencing domestic abuse, and informs housing workers of the legislation they can either utilise, or must 'act in regard for', when responding to women in this situation.

Legislation

Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) Act 1981

This legislation allows women experiencing domestic abuse to apply to the courts for an 'exclusion order', which would remove their abusive partners right to reside in their shared property.

Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977

This Act required local authorities to house homeless people who meet certain criteria, including women fleeing domestic violence.

Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

This act subsumed the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act of 1977. Under the 1987 Act women 'suffering or in fear of violence' are classed as having *'a priority need'* to access available public housing (whether or not they have children). Section 26 of the Act states that people should *never* be regarded as 'intentionally homeless' if they are fleeing domestic violence (Scottish Women's Aid, 2003, p. 10).

The Code of Guidance – Homelessness: Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act

A statutory code of guidance was written to enforce the 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act. Under this code, local authorities have a duty, by statute, to provide permanent accommodation for all those assessed as homeless with 'a priority need', including those experiencing domestic abuse. The code states that a woman's expressed fear of violence is sufficient to assess her as homeless, with no need for proof from a third party, for example medical records demonstrating physical injury, as was the case before the act was passed. The code is clear that when a woman approaches services for help with housing, they are obliged to advise her of her right to apply for an exclusion order and/or an interdict against her abusive partner under the Matrimonial (Family Protection)(Scotland) Act, 1981. The code states that workers should not, however, press women to take legal action against their partners.

Under the 1987 Act local authorities were given additional powers to enable them to meet their statutory obligations. These powers allow them to transfer the name on a council tenancy (and therefore the right to live there) from the name of an abuser into their partners' name (Preventing Violence Against Women, 2001).

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The 2001 Housing Act *amends* the 1987 Housing Act in several specific ways:

1. The new (2001) Act was amended so that, under the act, women who become homeless because of domestic abuse have *a statutory right* to temporary and permanent accommodation. Such women are classed as having 'a priority need' *if* they have dependent children living with them. For women without dependent children, section 25[c] of the 2001 act [30]enables them to be labelled as a "person who is vulnerable" and therefore eligible for 'priority need' under that term.

2. The 2001 Act introduces a new *right to joint tenancy* for all social sector tenants. This enables women to establish a right to their tenancy equal to that of their partners, whether the tenancy is rented in their name or not. This right makes it possible for women to apply for an exclusion order if necessary. The new right

[30] Retrieved July 8, 2008 from http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2001/asp_20010010_en_1

also allows local authorities to end the abusive partners rights to tenancy, without compromising the women's right to stay on in the home.

3. The 2001 Act also removes the residency requirement previously in place which only allowed women to access tenancy in other local authority areas *if* they were recorded as tenant in their previous locale. Previously this requirement had created a barrier for women whose home was recorded in their partner's name only.

4. The 2001 Act extends the definition of anti-social behaviour as a ground of eviction to include harassment of a person living in or visiting the locality, a definition befitting the nature of domestic abuse.

5. The housing covered by the 2001 Act is extended to cover social (non-government owned affordable housing) as well as public housing. The power to transfer tenancies from one partner to the other is extended to registered 'Social Landlords', which are private Housing Organisations. This change was necessary in light of the increasing privatisation of public housing throughout Scotland, with affordable housing moving from local authority to housing authority (social landlord) control.

The Crime and Disorders Act (1998)

Section 23 of this act[31] 'anti-social behaviour as ground of eviction' states that landlords would be unwarranted in placing a women at risk of eviction from her tenancy for not being able to control problems caused through the behaviour of an abusive partner. Under the act, rent arrears should not prevent a women from being assessed as a 'priority need' when facing homelessness. When the arrears are the fault of the abusive partner, the woman should not be held accountable for such arrears. Local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (Housing Organisations) can utilise this act in order to evict abusive partners, for 'criminal activity in the locality'.

National Government Funding

The Scottish Executive recognises that domestic abuse is a major cause of homelessness. Their response has been to support the work of Scottish Women's Aid, particularly their efforts to develop and

[31]Retrieved July 8, 2008 from http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/ukpga_19980037_en_3

dissemination information leaflets on domestic abuse and housing rights, as well as the agencies management of the nations refuges. Since April 2000, the Scottish Executive has given £12million to fund refuge places around Scotland in order to build new refuges and adapt or upgrade existing refuge accommodation.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

This is a federation of the non-profit organisations (Housing Associations) that control much of the affordable rented accommodation throughout the nation. Housing Associations have a legal responsibility to provide accommodation to homeless people under the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act. The 2001 Executive action plan reports that in 1999 the federation published a guidance booklet *'good practice in dealing with domestic abuse'*[32]. The booklet was co-created with Scottish Women's Aid for the use of individual Housing Associations regarding how best to respond to those seeking housing support due to problems with domestic abuse.

Indirect Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Local Authority Responsibility & Provision

The Newville local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that community members assessed as having a 'priority need' for housing get housed. This would include those needed re-housed due to problems with domestic violence. The local authority (or council) has a spokesperson on homelessness, not interviewed during this study, who may have provided more specific information on the role of the local authority in responding to such housing issues. Information presented here on the local authority response to women experiencing homelessness through domestic violence is taken from the insights of other stakeholders interviewed and available official public documents.

The elected local community councillor interviewed, who is also the Convenor of Social Services did speak to the councils changing role regarding housing. Prior to the transfer of public housing stock

[32] This booklet was out of print by the time this study was conducted. No stakeholders had a print copy, therefore the guidelines have not been reviewed here. Accordingly it is unclear what the good practice advice given in the booklet would be. Due to the co-creation with Women's Aid, it is, however, reasonable to assume that the guidelines would be similar to those offered to housing workers in the Women's Aid 'agency awareness' leaflet.

over to private non-profit Housing Associations in 2003, public or 'council houses' were managed and maintained by the local council. The system was run at great cost to local councils, resulting in their amassing huge council housing related debts. With a housing office based in each community, councils and their employees had discretion over allocating available accommodations at short notice, as is needed when someone is leaving, or fleeing an abusive partner. The councillor stated that before the public housing transfer out with local authority control, up to 50% of their public clinic time was spent dealing with constituent requests for assistance with housing. The councillor informed me that housing officers are no longer council employees, and that housing is now completely separate from the council, and therefore they no longer have influence over housing allocation.

Of interest is that this local authority representative, also Convenor of Social Services, did not raise the council's continued statutory responsibility to provide housing for those in 'priority need' for housing, such as those leaving a violent home. Nor did the councillor raise the deal struck between the council and the new housing associations, in order for the local authority to meets its statutory responsibility for people considered homeless. The terms of the deal are that in exchange for the transfer of all council housing stock to the Housing Associations, the local authority would have use of a fixed percentage of the housing to allocate to those with priority need.

Housing Associations Policy

At the time of this study it was reported that the local community housing associations and regional housing association were in the process of developing a joint domestic abuse policy. The staff of the inter-agency 'Coalition' reported that the regional Housing Association have not accepted offers to sit on the board of the Coalition, despite being viewed as a valuable contribution to the region wide inter-agency efforts to respond to domestic abuse.

Regional Joint Working Best Practice Agreement

In 2000, the regional government and Housing Association released a best practice agreement on how they should work together to respond to domestic abuse. The agreement offers recommendations to the local authority staff, especially social work and homelessness staff, the regional housing association

staff and staff of the wider network of local housing organisations. The intention behind the agreement is said to be:

> "to provide women and their children who have experiences domestic violence or abuse, with a high quality, sensitive, responsive service in relation to housing provision, information, advice and support".

The agreement clarifies that the statement applies to dealings with women and children experiencing abuse who are living in, leaving, or have already left an abusive relationship. The agreement was compiled in conjunction with staff of the two organisations. Women who have experienced domestic violence were not included in the preparation of the agreement. Staff of the Homelessness Initiative say that the agreement sounds good, and could have a positive impact on the response women receive from these institutions '*if* staff read it, are trained on it and buy into it'.

Workforce Training

Women's Aid offer domestic abuse awareness training to housing workers, which includes specific guidance on how housing staff can best respond to women seeking support.

Homelessness Initiative

The Homelessness Initiative is a regional inter-agency body funded by the Scottish Executive. The Initiative has representation from the health service, social work and the voluntary sector. Their remit is to build local and regional organisational capacity to deal with homelessness as preparation for the planned closure of homeless hostels throughout the region. Part of their remit is to develop community-based options for people dealing with homelessness in order to 'minimise the personal, social and economic damage that homelessness can cause'.

Direct Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Homelessness Initiative

After staff of the Homelessness Initiative took part in work-force training on domestic abuse offered by 'the Coalition', they 'took domestic abuse on' as an issue. The Initiative joined the Coalition

board and sought and received funding to establish a dedicated gender-based violence and homelessness team with the strategic role of integrating gender-based violence issues in to the overall strategy of the partnerships work. With a dedicated gender-based violence and homelessness worker, the Initiative emphasise the links between domestic abuse and homelessness and view those seeking new accommodation when leaving domestic abuse as homeless.

Housing Benefits

The regional government provides financial assistance for housing to those in need who meet nationally established eligibility criteria. Women experiencing domestic abuse may be eligible for these benefits, especially if they are unemployed or homemakers. The assistance takes the form of a fixed rate housing benefit paid directly to social landlords to cover rent, or Women's Aid for refuge provision (see NGO sector-refuge provision for more details).

Social Work Services

Social Work Services (SWS), have made available a multi-language domestic violence leaflet in their offices. The leaflet states that SWS will give advice and information on housing to those experiencing domestic abuse, offering local area office information and an emergency SWS telephone number.

One senior social worker explained during interview that when children are involved in domestic abuse, SWS have the ability to place women and their children in temporary accommodations while they wait for new permanent housing. Unfortunately the accommodation used by SWS, according to other stakeholders, is most often unsanitary hostels contracted by SWS for crisis use.

Refuge Provision

A full description of refuge provision throughout the region can be found in the NGO Sector findings. Newville Women's Aid provides eight refuges throughout the region, offering short-term crisis accommodation for those dealing with domestic violence. A limited number of transition houses are also available through Women's Aid, for those who require more time to adjust before moving into their own permanent tenancy. When women leave a refuge, they are allocated a support worker who helps them

navigate agencies, to apply for available benefits and grants and to continue supporting the woman's children, through e.g. play therapy. Every year women presenting to Women's Aid for refuge are turned away due to lack of space in the eight refuges. For these women, the alternative is to become temporarily homeless, stay with relatives or friends, or return home. In the 2003 annual Women's Aid report[33], one refuge worker reflects that both the privatization and tenant purchasing of public housing exacerbates this problem, as they reduce the number of available affordable rentals. Less available rentals, means longer waits for permanent housing for those in refuge. The worker relays that not only does this reduce the number of families offered refuge, it also compromises women's ability to move on and live independently after refuge.

Regional Housing Associations

As stated above, Housing Associations have both a statutory responsibility to house those dealing with domestic abuse and legal mechanisms to help them do so. Housing Associations can evict an abusive partner, transfer a tenancy into a women's own name, place women higher up the waiting list for a new home, forgive rent arrears, install safety features and advise women of their legal rights.

Indirect Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Local Housing Provision

As a low-income area there are few people in the local community who could afford to pay for privately rented accommodations, according to the Newville Domestic Abuse project staff. For those reliant on local authority funded housing benefit, typically home-makers, the unemployed and some retirees, the fixed rate of housing benefit usually restricts people to living in affordable Housing Authority accommodation. Most housing in the area is affordable social housing (formally public housing) now managed by two local Housing Associations. The local Housing Authorities are said to play a central role in meeting the housing needs of women in the community who are dealing with domestic abuse.

[33] Full reference available from Vanderbilt University Department of Human & Organisational Development on request

Local Homelessness Liaison Team

In order to 'get homelessness back on the community agenda' and prepare communities for the pending regional hostel closure, the Homeless Initiative has established a community case-work team in the local community. The team will approach local Housing Associations on behalf of people facing homelessness to secure temporary accommodation. The local Housing Associations are said to have 'worked well with the case-work team'. An inter-agency area liaison group has been established to help secure accommodation for individual homeless people. The Newville project is part of the liaison team for the local community.

Direct Local Community Responses to Domestic Violence

Crisis Accommodation Provision

If the move out of the family home has been sudden rather than planned, which is often the case with domestic violence, then crisis accommodation is required. By virtue of its nature, there is no guarantee that crisis accommodation will be located close to the woman's community. For women in the local community presented here there is no crisis accommodation available in the community. There is no refuge provision within the local community or surrounding communities. The closest refuge is in the regional city centre, a forty-minute bus journey away. Taking up this type of accommodation and any affordable housing offered thereafter can mean that a woman must leave all that is familiar and supportive in her life. As one local woman said when asked where people can go in a crisis:

'there's only, there's Women's' Aid, but there is only so many of them, you know, and some of them are too far out or in other schemes [neighbourhoods].'

Housing Association Response

The local Housing Associations have been willing and able to re-house women immediately when they are facing homelessness due to domestic abuse. The Homelessness Initiative staff state that the local Housing Associations response to requests for help has on the whole been 'good'. This was explained as meaning that women in need have not been automatically offered 'void lets', that is unoccupied housing in very poor state of repair.

The local women interviewed report that the Housing Associations appropriate and speedy responses have been largely due to the advocacy and authority of the Newville project, not a reflection of common agency practice. One support-action group member felt they were treated disrespectfully when approaching a local agency alone. She sought new housing in the neighbourhood she had lived her whole life, but was told that she 'needed to take whatever was offered to her' because she was 'making (herself) homeless' by leaving her husband and their home.

According to the local women and the direct stakeholders spoken to, staying within ones area is often preferred by women, in order to maintain social and family connections as well as access to community resources like the dentist, general practitioner, child-care, educational facilities and employment. New housing or gaining the right to stay in existing housing *within* the local community is therefore one of the key resources sought by those coping with domestic abuse.

When the support-action group member in need of housing returned with a Newville project staff member she felt she was treated more cordially, and was offered alternative accommodation in her own neighbourhood. Another member of the support-action group reports having an 'ongoing battle' with a local housing agency trying to have the family home transferred into her own name rather than her ex-husband's. She reports only making progress once the project staff became involved.

The local police officers interviewed relayed a story to reflect the lack of foresight demonstrated by some Housing workers when responding to domestic abuse. One woman in the community had her violent husband successfully evicted and prosecuted. When he was remanded from police custody, he was offered a new tenancy by a local housing association. His new tenancy was directly facing his old family home, where his wife still lived, which in the police's view, greatly diminished the woman's ability to feel safe in her own home and move on with her life.

Advocacy & Support

Staff of the Newville project will advocate for women in their dealings with the local Housing Association offices and follow-up with the agency by telephone or in person, as necessary, to get women the support they need. The project do not wish to seek solutions *for* local women, rather they support them through the process and barriers that arise when dealing with the Housing Associations. This support has

extended to helping women secure new tenancies and making their new property habitable. The local support-action group members have offered practical assistance, such as cleaning and decorating women's new accommodations, when needed.

HEALTH SECTOR

HEALTH

Global level

W.H.O. Violence & Health Report ratified by U.K.

National level

NHS Scotland guidance for healthcare workers on Domestic Abuse
National Training Strategy for Healthcare workers

Indirect Regional level

Public Health Department

Direct Regional level

Midwife Domestic Abuse Service

Indirect Local Community level

Mental Health Services

Direct Local Community level

Art Therapy for children
Dedicated Domestic Abuse Midwife

Global level Responses to Domestic Violence

Violence as a Public Health Problem

As part of the World Health Assembly, Scotland ratified the World Health Organisation report on Violence and Health (Krug et al., 2002). By ratifying the report the Scottish Minister of Health acknowledged violence as a public health problem. Ratification also entailed a commitment to develop national efforts to respond to the health needs of women experiencing domestic violence. At the time of this research the WHO report had been launched formally in England and Wales, but not Scotland. No public health prevention plan was in development. The regional health service were, however, preparing a 'gender and health paper' in a bid to encourage the Executive Health Department to respond.

National level Responses to Domestic Violence

National Health Service (NHS) Guidelines

In 2003 the Executive Minister for Health released *"Responding to Domestic Abuse in NHS Scotland - Guidance for Healthcare Workers"*. This document provided guidance for National Health Service (NHS) workers by the Scottish Executive Health Department. The guidance utilises the Executive definition and policy on domestic abuse, and offers clarification of the role of the NHS in responding to this problem. The report advises NHS workers of the health effects of domestic abuse and the signs they should be aware of which may indicate someone in their care is experiencing abuse. The 2004 Executive training strategy notes that amongst health care workers there is a "personal reluctance to encroach on what is often perceived as private problems" (p.16). Workers are advised on strategies to help them raise the subject of domestic abuse in the clinical setting and offered guidance on supporting and advising women dealing with abuse. A list of available community supports for women experiencing domestic abuse are included in the report for the use of workers. The report outlines the responsibilities of the NHS management structures to help and support health care workers *"to ensure that they are able to respond effectively to anyone experiencing domestic abuse"*. Management are required to *'produce local templates for the implementation of the Guidance'* (Domestic Abuse, 2004, p.16), and are advised of the factors to take into

account when doing so, including staff education and training needs.

National Domestic Abuse Training Strategy

The 2004 Executive training strategy outlines issues specific to building effective responses within health care settings. The report emphasises the crucial role of health services, stating that *"whilst many women experiencing abuse may use other services, the role of the Health Service is pivotal since virtually all women will at some point interact with health services, either on their own or their children's behalf"* (p.16, 2004). The training strategy recommends that NHS managers focus their initial efforts to develop adequate responses to domestic abuse on the services most often used by women experiencing abuse, suggesting "the Mental Health, Primary Care, Maternity and Accident & Emergency services" as priorities, *"In view of the prevalence of abuse amongst women"* using these services (p.16, 2004). NHS staff are said to need training that offers basic awareness-raising seminars and more skills-based interventions.

The training guidelines also clearly state the need for staff training to include a focus on perpetrators of abuse and the role of the health service in responding to them. The strategy advises *"training should cover all levels of staff in debunking myths about the nature of abusers and the reasons they abuse"*. The strategy suggests that General Practitioners (physicians) are:

> "likely to be the first contact point for the (admittedly small) number of perpetrators looking for help". A perpetrator is likely to present with problems of depression, anxiety, alcohol, anger problems, etc. GPs and other staff need to have the insight to look beyond this and see the knock-on problems in relation to women and children, as well as to offer the perpetrator access to a service which might stop his abuse." (p.17, 2004)

Indirect Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Public Health Department

During interview, a lead Public Health planner with the Newville Health Board clarified that their department was less concerned with service provision and more focussed on prevention efforts to promote good health. The department has to follow nationally set public health targets to reduce inequalities in health, with a specific focus on improving nutrition, community safety, physical activity and heart health. They did not view domestic abuse as the public health department's remit. They suggested rather that it

was more the remit of the women's health team. Within the health board domestic abuse is seen as a women's problem as opposed to a societal problem. In practice this would mean that the region were not engaging with domestic violence as a preventable public health problem at that time. The representative of the women's health team was not available for interview at the time of the evaluation and therefore the full health board perspective and practice relating to domestic abuse cannot be commented upon.

Interestingly the public health team part finance the local community Newville domestic abuse project. The health worker explained this was due to the projects *"thoughtful, well-respected and participatory approach to working with local community members"*. The funding of the project reflects the public health department's objective of working in partnership with local communities to create structural change in order to improve the health of the population.

Direct Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Dedicated Midwifery Service

The NHS department of midwifery in Newville has allocated funds for employment of midwife posts dedicated to improving midwife service practice in responding to domestic abuse. This important service is able to provide a response to a specific sub-group of women utilising the health service, namely women of childbearing age who are expecting and go on to deliver babies.

The lead midwife said that the rationale for the service is to counter the impact domestic abuse has on the physical and mental health of women and children, including those yet to be born. They explained that babies have been born with fractures that may not have been a result of delivery but as a result of physical assault to their mother when in the womb. The services perspective on domestic violence is reported as 'gendered', viewing domestic abuse as a problem of male abuse of power and control. The service prefer to use the term 'abuse' over 'violence' in recognition of the emotional, sexual and financial abuse that women may suffer, with or without suffering physical abuse.

When the service was first established, they sent out a questionnaire to over 600 nurses, midwifery and gynaecology staff. Their response rate was 59%, of whom most reported having a role in responding to domestic abuse, seen as a supportive role. Their preliminary study of health records suggested that some

of their colleagues were “clueless” about domestic abuse, or “colluding” with silencing of the abuse. As examples they shared statements recorded in patient files after routine vaginal examinations. Some records simply state “difficult vaginal examinations” with no indication that inquiries were made as to what made the exam difficult. Other records showed even less helpful responses such as “un-co-operative patient”, “abusive patient”, or simply “junky”, a colloquial term for a drug addict.

These dedicated midwives support the wider community of midwives, helping them to identify domestic abuse and respond appropriately when it is reported, disclosed or discovered. They offer staff training and ensure useful literature and resource information is available in all midwife work settings. The worker interviewed reported that since establishment of the dedicated posts, and staff training, disclosures of abuse have ‘rocketed’. They are finding that the most important thing women appreciate during disclosure is being listened to, and believed. Midwives are encouraged to inquire how they can best support each woman that discloses abuse.

Indirect Local Community level Responses to Domestic Violence

Mental Health

Support for those dealing with psychological and mental health problems is available in the local community through referrals to the community mental health team. These services have counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists and community psychiatric nurses (CPN’s) available for consultation. The mental health teams are understaffed throughout the region, making it very difficult to obtain a referral or to be offered an appointment. When appointments are offered, they are usually for several months in the future. Once someone is actively attending the mental health service they can receive more immediate support, especially from CPN’s, although the entire system is appointment based with no out of hours or crisis provision. The Newville Project has received many referrals from the local mental hea lth service. They explain that the service ‘doesn’t know what to do with women experiencing abuse’, and have found this to be due to the service having no operational diagnosis for abuse as a psychological or psychiatric health problem. The project advised that they were continuing to work with the service in recognition of how essential the service could be to women recovering emotionally from abuse. One of the support-action

group members reported that over all the years of abuse she endured that the emotional abuse was always harder to bare than the physical. She called it 'mental cruelty', giving an example of her husband typically saying things like *'when you go out make sure you walk under a bus'*. For this lady the support of 'her' CPN was said to be invaluable in her rebuilding her mental health after years of emotional and physical abuse. The project continue to accept referrals from the mental health team while endeavouring to educate them and help them develop more appropriate responses for women suffering emotionally and psychologically from abuse.

Direct Local Community level Responses to Domestic Violence

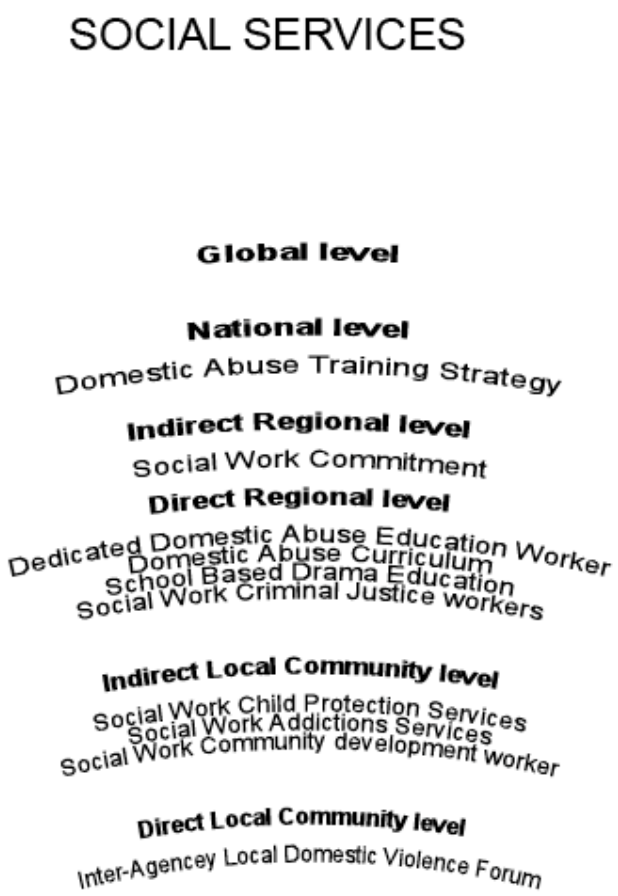
Local Midwife

One of the dedicated domestic abuse service midwives regularly attends the local domestic violence forum, offering updates on policy and practices and seeking input from the group on how best to respond to women in the health setting who may be suffering abuse. This worker can then serve as a direct contact for other local agencies when they come into contact with pregnant women seeking support for abuse.

Art Therapy with Children

The Newville project and local support-action group used part of their funding to pay for two local childcare workers to be trained in art therapy. They did this in a bid to create a resource for the children of local women experiencing abuse. They hope that the art therapy offered to children can help them work through their experiences of witnessing and/or experiencing abuse and minimise their development of violent behaviour within their peer and sibling relationships.

SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR



Global level Responses to Domestic Violence

No responses to domestic violence were identified at the global level within the social services sector.

National level Responses to Domestic Violence

Domestic Abuse Training Strategy

The Executive's Domestic Abuse Training Strategy (2004) report outlines specific training needs for Education and Social Work staff. The Executive expect domestic abuse to become established as part of workforce training and Continued Professional Development.

Social Work

The strategy suggests that one way Social work services can meet their statutory responsibility to children is to support mothers who experience domestic abuse. This advice is based on the belief that "one of the most effective ways of protecting children is by helping a woman to protect herself, and thereby, her children" (p. 14, 2004). The training strategy recognises that *"women who are abused may be reluctant to seek help from social workers fearful that their children may be taken from them"* (p. 14). The report suggests that this is *"a threat often made by perpetrators"* (p. 15). According to the social work manager interviewed this is no idle threat, but a "legitimate fear" considering social services responsibility is first and foremost to child safety and that living in a home with domestic abuse is grounds for removal of children to a place of safety (p.14, 2004). The strategy suggests that in order to "deliver effective services" to those woman and children dealing with abuse, *and* to the men who are abusive *"all social workers (including those managing the services) require a sound understanding of the impact, causes and consequences of domestic abuse"* (p. 15). Cultural change is called for within the profession of social work so that they recognise that (i) *"historically and indeed contemporarily social work to women who have been abused has been and is minimal"* and (ii) *"domestic abuse is unacceptable and that responding to it both timeously and effectively is an essential part of the social work task"* (p. 15). Building domestic abuse

into social work education courses, while training existing staff is said to be key to effecting changes in attitude and practices. According to the social work staff interviewed, the Executive fund all social services in the nation, and write their policy documents, therefore they would play a key role in fostering any institutional cultural transformation that has to take place.

Education

The domestic abuse training strategy suggests that there are clear links between the training needs of education workers and the National Prevention strategy. For the education system to enact both strategies the report state that teachers will *"require some considerable input on this area of work, if they are to be equipped not only to teach about these issues but also to respond appropriately to children who may be experiencing abuse"* (p. 17). The strategy advises that training on domestic abuse must become part of the *'core business'* of the education system and the value of such training promoted.

Indirect Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Social Work Commitment

In a leaflet produced by the regional government Social Work Services are said to *"have a commitment to women dealing with domestic abuse"*. The leaflet says that if women approach social work they will be able to provide advice on benefits and housing, and refer people onto counselling and other support services. In light of the national recognition of the limited role social work currently take in responding to domestic abuse, and the understanding of other stakeholders interviewed, this leaflet is suggested to reflect social services need to be seen to respond to domestic abuse, rather than their actual practices.

Social Work Services fund a counselling support and information service in the city for people victim to sexual violence and sexual abuse. In the past the service have been willing to offer counselling to women experiencing domestic violence, and are committed to providing a service to ethnic minority women on any grounds.

Direct Regional level Responses to Domestic Violence

Education

Although the nation-wide education system is funded through the national government budget, the regional government, 'the Council', determines how education funds are allocated within the region. The Council have launched three educational initiatives on domestic abuse. These initiatives were created in response to the research findings from the Zero Tolerance Trust's 1998 survey of *'young people's attitudes toward sex, violence and relationships'*.

1. School-based Drama Education

The Council have commissioned a theatre company, on an ongoing basis, to develop and perform productions about domestic abuse. These productions are performed for senior pupils in schools throughout the region and accompanied by workshops with relevant organisations (such as Women's Aid) to explore issues further and learn about domestic abuse.

2. Domestic Abuse Curriculum Pack

An educational aide has been developed to support the incorporation of domestic abuse curriculum into the wider school curriculum.

3. Dedicated Domestic Abuse Education Worker

The Council allocated funding for the creation of a dedicated domestic abuse education worker. The workers remit is to work with schools to prevent domestic abuse. During interview the worker explained that their role is varied and involves partnering with other organisations, such as Women's Aid and the Police. They work with pupils from aged 5 to 14, offer workshops for young people both in schools and in leisure centres (in a bid to reach children who do not attend school). The worker consults with senior teacher to determine how to incorporate domestic abuse curriculum in to the school. They offer training to teachers on domestic abuse, including how to teach the subject and discuss it with pupils. They co-teach classes to support teacher learning on how to do this by themselves. The worker operates from the Executive framing of domestic violence, viewing the issue as a problem of power, patriarchy and gender inequity.

The domestic abuse education worker raised some specific barriers to working with young people to prevent domestic violence. One barrier is the Executive controlled teacher training calendar. The worker has not been able to get domestic abuse training onto the annual calendar, despite the Executives commitment to preventing domestic abuse through work in the education system. Another barrier is the lack of supports available to respond to young people living with domestic violence, estimated to be over 10,000 young people in the region. Of specific concern is that the workers remit is to raise the problem of domestic abuse with children, without being able to offer support to those impacted. An example given was Women's Aid, who only offer support to children and young people after their mother seeks the agencies support.

Social Work – Criminal Justice Work

Social workers, in the role of criminal justice workers, are involved in delivering court-mandated re-educational programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

Indirect Local Community level Responses to Domestic Violence

Addictions and Child Protection

Despite the high incidence of domestic abuse within the local community, social services currently offer no direct service to people experiencing domestic abuse. Services are provided to women experiencing domestic abuse only indirectly through either child protection procedures or their adult addiction services. Support is available only to mothers with young children who come to the attention of social work, or those women who seek help with an addiction. The addictions worker interviewed estimated that around 50% of the cases they work with involve domestic abuse. For those women without an addiction, without children, or whose children have grown, there is no direct support available from social services. The local social work staff interviewed recognised domestic abuse as an issue but had no capacity to allocate their resources to offering a response. Social Work's primary remit was said to be child protection, and that in that regard 'the buck stops' with social work. Following this remit often means removing children from their parent's custody if one parent is violent. This is said to be a reason why

women do not approach social services for support with domestic abuse. The addictions worker felt, however, that if social work offered a formal response, people would come despite the risk to their family unit. They recounted that when the addictions service was established, they faced the same issue, but their statutory obligation to protect children from harm has not got in the way of people approaching them for support with addictions, and the system has found ways to work with addicts to keep children in their custody.

Community Development

A very marginal team within social work services are the community development team. This team have been supportive of the local Newville Project and support-action group from their inception and continue to work with the project and group. They offer the project workers support and provide training on community development approaches to working with communities to harness existing strengths and act collectively for social change.

Direct Local Community level Responses to Domestic Violence

Social Work

Local Domestic Violence Forum

The manager of the local social work department regularly attends the inter-agency domestic violence forum. They go along in recognition of the prevalence of domestic violence in the area, in order to keep up with developments and remain a presence.

Institutional culture

During interviews with local women, experiences with the local social work department were recounted and opinions on how to improve their response were shared. For one member, who had worked with the social work department, social workers were said to take an unhelpful authoritarian approach within the community:

"Social workers, they jist see them as coming in and..taking over. 'This is best for you, and this is best for you'. 'well, you cannae dae this, you'll need tae dae this'. How does anybody else know what is best for somebody else?"

Another member who has had direct dealings with social work through her children, reports being repeatedly put at risk during meetings with her children's social worker. The social worker asked her on many occasions 'if her husband was being violent towards her', *while her husband was in the room*. This woman explained that *"You're no going to turn round and say 'oh, aye' to go hame and get a doing"* [a beating]. In her opinion, the social work department *"need a good wake up to domestic violence"*.

This same woman has felt hindered by the social work department in her efforts to keep her family together. She explains that when she was still living with her violent ex-husband, their children were temporarily removed from their custody. After she had left her husband, she was awarded custody of their children on the condition that she attended parenting classes. It was agreed at the hearing that the social work department would find a class for her to attend. After almost a year with no class arranged and no communication from the social work department, she turned to the Newville Project for help. The project staff found a parenting class, which she completed allowing her to fulfil the conditions of the supervision order placed upon her family.

One of the Newville project workers explains that women report a stigma attached to social work. Attending the department involves 'checking in' with the receptionists, who are said to have little concept of confidentiality and receive people with a less than helpful attitude. She explained that the receptionists look like they are *'sucking lemons'* and *'shout out your business'*, leaving people feeling like a trip to the social work department compromises their privacy.

Prevention Analysis

*Responses classed as **primary prevention*** **efforts** are those responses that take place *before* violence occurs in order to prevent the problem emerging in the general population. These efforts are those aimed at the entire population 'before they are in a condition of known need or distress'. Primary prevention efforts aim to 'reduce potentially harmful circumstances before they have a chance to create the difficulty'.

Table 3. Primary prevention efforts

	Response
1	National Media Campaigns
2	Zero-Tolerance campaign
3	16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence
4	Criminalisation of assault and abuse
5	Support-action group drama-education

Five of the responses to domestic violence, across the social ecology, were classed as primary prevention efforts (see Table 3). The national media campaigns were aimed at the national population, and sought to achieve cultural change in attitudes to domestic violence. The 16 Days campaign sought to raise awareness and effect attitude change also, at the regional rather than national level. The support-action group drama-education productions were also an attempt to explode myths surrounding domestic violence and change the attitudes and behaviours of people in communities around the country. The criminalisation of assault and abuse intends to send out a message that domestic abuse socially unacceptable, and will be reprimanded within society.

*Responses classed as **secondary prevention*** **efforts** are those aimed at populations most 'at risk' of domestic violence to stop the problem emerging, sometimes called 'early intervention'. Responses were also classed as secondary prevention (according to the public health framework) if they were enacted *immediately after* the problem emerges to prevent the problem getting worse.

Table 4. Secondary prevention efforts

Response
• Housing Legislation
• Dedicated Domestic Abuse Education worker
• School based drama-education
• Domestic Abuse curriculum
• Respect training for young people
• Police Domestic Abuse Unit
• Police pro-arrest policy
• Workforce Training Co-ordinators
• Workforce Training Programme
• Workforce Drama-education
• Newville Project support and advocacy
• Women's Aid information and support
• Midwife domestic abuse service
• Dedicate homelessness worker

Secondary prevention efforts for domestic violence across the social ecology are listed in table 4. These included early intervention efforts with young people throughout the region. Immediate response efforts included the police force pro-arrest policy to reprimand those who commit violent acts with or without consent from the victim is a means to demonstrate social intolerance for the behaviour, while taking pressure off of the victim to stand up to her abuser. Training for agency staff is aimed at improving their reactions to those presenting for help, while the dedicated midwifery service aims to identify those dealing with abuse and offer support. The national housing legislation gives those experiencing violence a statutory right to be housed or gain tenancy of their family home, especially at short notice, this can support women in extracting themselves from the abuse.

Tertiary prevention efforts are those, which provide *long-term* support to people in the wake of violence. This are efforts to support those who have already experience or perpetrated domestic violence, with the intention of limiting the impact of the abuse on the lives of those affected to prevent repeat events or additional complications.

The responses to domestic abuse classed as tertiary prevention included mental health services and art therapy for children (see Table. 5). These are therapeutic responses aiming to help victims and their children emotionally heal after their experiences of abuse. The art therapy with children is also carried out

with the aim of preventing the children develop violent ways of relating, or acting out. The re-education programme for men who abuse is an attempt to stop those men abusing women now and in the future, in recognition that they are likely to re-offend otherwise. The regional refuge provision is classed as tertiary prevention due to refuges specific role in offering women an alternative, safe and supportive place to stay in the midst of a crisis or when moving on. Tertiary prevention efforts are essentially the provision of services, of which there are many throughout the social ecology, including the local domestic abuse responses and the regional and national Women's Aid organisations. These responses provide invaluable ongoing support, information and advocacy for women who seek out help.

Table 5. Tertiary prevention efforts

Response

- Abuser intervention program
- Art therapy for children
- Women's Aid
  - Information
  - Support
  - Refuges
- Domestic Abuse Helpline
- Multi-Agency Policy Change Coalition
  - Domestic Violence Forums
  - Specific issues working groups
- Homelessness liaison team
- Newville Project
  - Support
  - Advocacy
  - Training
    - Freedom programme
- Support-action group
- Mental health services
- Local law centre
- Civil law
  - Interdicts with power of arrest
  - Exclusion orders

The 3'P's Analysis

The Executive policy on taking action against violence against women, known as the 3 P's, is a major influence on efforts across sectors and the different levels of the social ecology. The simplicity of the 3P's: 'prevention, protection and provision' makes it both memorable and clear to envision. The Executive is the key funding body for many of the response to domestic violence. Its influence extends beyond its power as funding body, however, to the widespread use of their extensive research and the guidance they offer through their policy and strategy documents. The strategies, research, evaluation and guidance offer those working to tackle domestic abuse a shared frame for action and offer tangible goals to work towards.

The responses to domestic violence across the social ecology were analysed to determine which of the 3 P's they were attending to. The Executive definitions of prevention, protection and provision were used as the frame for analysis.

Prevention

> *"To prevent, remove or diminish the risk of violence by various means, ranging from promoting change in social attitudes, to creating physical and other barriers to the commission of violent acts."*

The Executives definition of prevention differs from that used by public health and community psychology, including primary and secondary levels of prevention. The Executive definition share a primary prevention focus on population wide efforts to prevent abuse occurring, but the their explication of what this would involve: social attitude change and creating barriers to prevent harm, includes early intervention efforts with at risk populations, which is secondary prevention (see Table 6).

The UN declaration on the elimination of violence against women, along with their global platform for action, represented the global recognition of domestic abuse as a problem that national governments have a responsibility to prevent. This represents a new attitude for UN member states to adopt, one of nations actively working to prevent violence against women within their own borders. In turn the national government and NGO media campaigns are an effort to change attitudes in Scotland's society towards domestic violence, to dispel myths about abuse, and shame the behaviour. The aim to make very public what is often referred to as 'private troubles', asking society to not 'turn a blind eye' to domestic abuse, to collectively condemn such behaviour.

Table 6. Responses at the level of Prevention

Response
Changing attitudes
1 Declaration on elimination of VAW
2 UN global platform for action
3 National action plans
4 National Media campaigns
5 Zero Tolerance
6 16 days campaign
7 Education worker
8 Respect training with young people
9 School domestic abuse curriculum
10 Drama Education – school and community
Creating barriers to violent acts
1 Child Protection Services
2 Interdicts & Exclusion Orders

More recently developing efforts to change attitudes have been focussed on the nation's young people. Educating young people, at an age when they will be developing romantic partnerships, is viewed as crucial to efforts to prevent domestic violence. The education efforts are aimed at creating understanding of *and* disapproval for domestic abuse within relationships, while helping young people develop what was referred to s 'gender-respect'. Efforts to create barriers against violent acts include the protection offered by interdicts and exclusion orders, but these are barriers for specific groups in the population, *after* abuse has already occurred. Child protection services, including social work and the Children's Panel do create a barrier to abuse for children at risk of abuse, in as much as they can remove children the home if their mother is suffering abuse. Whether this measure will prevent children from abuse in the long-term, or from becoming abusive later in life is not clear. In practice, however, the child protection barriers do no offer protection to all the nations children. Social services and the Childrens' Panel most often respond to issue that arise within families in the lower socio-economic groupings. People come into contact with social services and/ or the childrens' judicial system either through they themselves seeking out help for problems with addiction, mental ill health, their child's behaviour etc or through their difficulties being visible enough for someone else to report them to the authorities. Although children from

all socio-economic groupings live in abusive households, they rarely come in contact with these services. The problem is not that these children are slipping through the proverbial net, more that the net doesn't extend into their more affluent neighbourhood.

Protection

> *"To protect victims and potential victims from repeat victimisation or harassment by perpetrators".*

The Executive category of protection would reasonably fall under the public health (WHO) definition of secondary prevention: those enacted *immediately after* the problem emerges to prevent the problem getting worse.

Table 7. Responses at the level of Protection

Response
• The criminal justice system
1. Pilot Domestic Abuse Court
2. Legislation
a. Interdicts & exclusion orders
3. Police provision
a. Vulnerable witness database
b. Domestic abuse unit
c. Pro-arrest policy
4. Abuser intervention programme

Existing efforts to protect those who have experienced domestic violence are found in the criminal justice sector of responses over the national, regional and local levels of the social ecology (see Table 7). Within this social ecology responsibility for protecting people is placed firmly on the police and legal system, and the women themselves through safety planning or leaving.

Provision

> *"To provide adequate services to deal with the consequences of violence against women and to help women rebuild their lives."*

The Executive definition of provision is essentially what public health and community psychology term tertiary prevention. The majority of the responses to domestic violence across the social ecology involved providing support, information, resources and improved practices to those dealing with domestic violence (see Table 8). This is inline with the research findings from around the globe reported by the WHO.

Table 8. Responses at the level of Provision

Response	
1	The Coalition
2	Domestic violence forums
3	Specific issue Working groups
4	Workforce Training strategy
5	Domestic Abuse Helpline
6	Funds (refuge/ training/ service development)
7	ALL Health
8	ALL Housing
9	Women's Aid
10	Public Information office
11	Newville Domestic Violence Project
12	Support-action group
13	Counselling service
14	Court based victim information & advice service

Reflections on Local Responses: What Works

Presented below is a thematic analysis of the key functions of the Newville Project according to project staff, members of the support-action group, and other stakeholders. Each of the sub-headings below is a theme that repeatedly emerged during interviews when describing the operation and benefits of the project.

Recognition of Strengths and Agency, Over Victim-hood.

The Newville Project believes in the ability of people to transform both themselves and their environment to redress the impact and occurrence of domestic violence. The Newville Project focuses on the strengths of women, not their deficits, and works to enhance their capabilities. Newville Project takes an 'anti-victim' stance, like labelling theory, looking not to how people are damaged as victims of domestic violence, but their strengths and knowledge gained through experiences, which enable them to help themselves and others, 'heal' and move on. This community development approach has led to the creation of their drama-education work, which is impacting responses to domestic violence around the region.

In stark contrast to the regional and national community responses to domestic violence The Newville Project works for both and with those who seek their support. They do so through supporting people to make the best decision for themselves at any given time, and by sharing decision-making in their work with the support-action group. Newville Project's processes respectfully ensure that within the support-action group each member is listened to and responded to and everyone's input is recognized. The support-action group are supported to determine those responses to domestic violence that are useful and why, which are harmful or problematic, and how to tackle violence in their own community. Through these processes the womens' agency is recognized and their voices are both heard and responded to.

Perspective is Grounded in the Experience of Women, both Locally and in the Wider Literature

The approach of the Newville Project is based on a sophisticated understanding of the causes and consequences of domestic violence in combination with a belief in the possibility of improving community responses to this problem. More significantly their practices are based on key critical considerations of how their local, regional and national communities respond to domestic violence. Considerations such as:

What matters when someone experiencing domestic violence seeks support? What works, what doesn't work and why? What is needed to respond more effectively? What can they do to make this happen? What can be done to prevent domestic violence from occurring? How can that be achieved? And by whom?

The Newville Project explores answers to these questions not only at a professional level, through engagement with the wider community of groups responding to domestic violence, but essentially through dialogue with those who have experienced domestic violence. Their approach to domestic violence is therefore taken from the perspective, expertise and needs base of women who have lived through this problem.

Using this approach, those who have experienced domestic violence, and sought support in the local community can have a direct influence on how their community services respond to domestic violence. This is facilitated through membership of the support-action group with representation on the local inter-agency domestic violence forum. In addition, their voices, experiences and perspectives can have influence at the local level and beyond through the advocacy of Newville Project and most directly through the use of their drama-education productions.

Multi-level Working, Networking & Advocacy

Politically, the Newville Project and the support-action group represent the interests of the people they support through their involvement in the local community, their local and city-wide domestic violence forums, participation at conferences and think-tanks, commissioned training of professional groups and by raising awareness of violence against women amongst communities locally and city wide.

Their objective is for all agencies to respond appropriately and usefully to people when they report that they are experiencing violence. These agencies include police, legal services, courts, general practitioners (physicians), hospital services, especially emergency and gynaecological services, mental health services, housing agencies, state benefit agencies, schools, and social services.

The Newville Project and the support-action group impact on the service provision of these agencies through (i) the local inter-agency domestic violence forum, and (ii) contracted staff training using their drama productions.

(i) At the interagency forum the Newville Project presents accounts of the experiences local women have had currently and historically when approaching local agencies for assistance. This allows local agency workers to reflect on how they provide assistance, what service responses are working and those needing improvement. In addition, they learn what the developing policies and practices are for domestic violence in their respective agencies.

The Newville Project holds a key role in their local domestic violence forum, holding the position of chair and taking responsibility for coordinating the forum. The support-action group have formal representation alongside the local agencies. The forum has impacted daily practice and procedures in the local area. It has also raised awareness of the extent of domestic violence in the area and highlights which agencies are implicated in responding to domestic violence. The Newville Project has representation at the regional domestic violence forum, advocating on behalf of the local women. This forum has had an impact on procedural change within agencies and feeds into the citywide policy level responses to domestic violence.

The Newville Project provides an invaluable link between those who have experienced domestic violence and the agencies both locally and regionally that are commissioned and/or needed to support these women. They bring the voices of the women they represent into the formal structures set up in their local community and region which determine how best to respond to domestic violence. In this way the very people who are at the mercy of agency policies have some input in directing the ongoing development of these policies and direct practices. At a local level, the Newville Project has established a network and rapport with many of the key agencies in their local community. This enables them to respond to requests for support quickly, effectively and with influence. This enables people to obtain the support they need with more success, sensitivity and respect than they have previously encountered.

> *"(The Newville Project) Must exist for women in crisis – to link with other agencies and get what(s) needed."*

> *"There are specially trained workers in the benefits agency. If you phone the right person and say 'this woman's in trouble, domestic abuse situation, she needs to get her benefits sorted', you get a completely different service from [the women herself] going down to the office".*

> *"Every time somebody comes through they tell us how they got on at all the different agencies. So we address issues as they come up."*

Action Through Drama-education.

(ii) Newville Project and the support-action group have been commissioned by many agencies locally and citywide to offer training to staff on domestic violence through their educational drama productions. These productions are written, produced and directed by both the project and the women's group. They take domestic violence as their theme and are based on the experiences of the men, women and children who have lived with violence. The productions incorporate popular education methods to encourage discussion of the central issues of domestic violence, to aid understanding of the problem and to dispel collective myths surrounding the issue. It is through this work that the Newville Project becomes a direct action project for social change in addition to its role in providing support, advocacy and inter agency collaboration.

Newville Project and the support-action group have taken their drama productions to local communities throughout the region. They have regular commissions to perform in the city during the international 16 Days against violence, at large open air and indoor public venues as well as at other violence related events. They have worked with youth groups locally to raise awareness, been commissioned to develop an inter-generational production at a respected city theatre, and work closely with their local community to produce pantomimes (Christmas plays) with local children and be a presence generally at local events. They receive regular commissions to perform the play as part of training for professional groups in health, the criminal justice service and education. The training events have the potential to positively influence the hands on work and response of workers in those agencies and systems caught up in responding to those impacted by domestic violence. The performance is powerful, thought provoking and challenging. Those who watch it are often visibly moved and engage sincerely in the discussion that follows. Through all these activities they are transmitting a message of the end of silence and secrecy surrounding domestic violence, of the strength, creativity and expertise of those women, children and grown up children who have survived an abusive relationship and their rejection of violent environments in general.

Creativity and Flexibility

The Newville Project is a creative and flexible project. Though small in size, their impact is substantial within the community. By working in multiple roles, and managing them all effectively, the project goes far beyond typical agencies in responding to what is a serious social problem. The balance of their work between offering direct support, advocacy, training, education and prevention efforts renders them a unique resource in the arena of domestic violence. The variety of roles in which they engage in are a means of redressing the impact of domestic violence at many levels simultaneously. This flexibility and creativity enhances the efficacy and sustainability of the project and acts as an exemplar for community-based responses to domestic violence.

Specific Functions of the Project

A Presence in Itself

The Newville Project has the use of shared premises in the local community centre. This community centre is located close to the major, albeit limited, amenities in the area such as shops, library, swimming pool, youth complex and post-office and can be easily accessed by several local bus routes. The community centre holds the major childcare nursery for the area, as well as the community stage and hall, meeting room and community cafe and is the venue for many recreational groups and clubs. This location is preferred over space within a human service agency as it is part of the whole, healthy community. The Newville Project's hope is that the project will be accessed as a community resource more than a helping service, and that people can access the resource discreetly without arousing the suspicion of those who may harm them. The Newville Project's hope is that the project will be assessed as a community resource more so than a helping service, and that people can assess the resource discreetly and therefore without arousing the suspicion of those who may harm them. The Newville Project shares the same office space with administrators of another project, with whom they informally agree to a system of discretion and confidentiality. In addition to this confidentiality agreement, each agency has sole use of the space one day of the week. The support-action group has access to a private room within the nursery section of the centre whenever they need it and use the centre committee room for regular support meetings and drama rehearsals. Those interviewed for this evaluation believed that the very existence of a domestic violence

project highlights the problem and conveys a message that it is being taken seriously in their community. A physical office space was also felt to be an asset for proper response.

> *(Having a domestic violence project with a base) "makes an impression so people know domestic violence goes on and something needs to be done about it."*
>
> *"The project has a base, you can come into, it has practical information and advice. And it also links into the group (The Support-Action Group)."*

Clout/ Authority

While the members of the support-action group see their own group as necessary, they do not believe that they have the authority or connections to influence local agencies. They see this as a strength and function of the Newville Project. This 'clout' or authority refers to the ability of the Newville Project to make contact with and impact the decision making of agencies when responding to the needs of those experiencing domestic violence. The support-action group view this as an invaluable quality, resulting in effective direct support at times of need as well as influencing ongoing policy and practice within agencies.

> *"(the project have) Clout, (they are) good at getting round the agencies"*
>
> *"(the project are) able to be (a) kind of pressure group"*
>
> *"(the project) can take the issue further a field"*
>
> *"but if you go in (to agencies) without, a woman or a tag, as in your position [referring to professional status of researcher], then you're, you get whatever's going. If you go in with the expectation and the knowledge of what their remit is and what their policy and practice is then you've got a chance of getting that."*

A Resource

Training, Education & Information

Newville Project offers a training programme to those who have experienced domestic violence. The programme, developed by Pat Craven is called the Freedom Programme. Either the project staff or long-standing members of the support-action group deliver this 12-week course. The programme is based on the Duluth model of domestic violence and designed to educate people who have lived with domestic violence about the root causes of the problem. This is a gendered course, aimed at women with abusive male partners, and seeks to convey the central issues of power and control in violent relationships. The

support-action group members value this knowledge of gender, power and controlling behaviour in domestic violence as a means to understand and move on from their experiences.

> *"(the Newville Project) Teach people to look for the signs (of domestic violence). The Freedom course – you recognise yourself in it."*

> *"Hopefully be using like the Freedom programme to say: domestic abuse is not just about the belt in the mouth, it's about how you are treated, it's about the control, it's about all of those things that don't allow you to participate fully in your life and that's our starting point"*

In addition to the Freedom Programme, the Newville Project alongside the support-action group offer training in the form of drama-education to key agencies, systems, community bodies and many others throughout the local area and wider regions. This provides communities around the country with an opportunity to learn about domestic violence and to respond to this problem more effectively.

Referrals

Newville Project acts as a referral point for those seeking support for domestic violence. They refer directly to the support-action group as a form of self-help, mutual support and action group. Their knowledge of the local agencies and regional and state policies enable them to refer people to specific individuals within agencies for whatever support is necessary. This typically involves referral to the law centre, housing, and benefits agency as well as physical and mental health services. Newville Project also receives referrals from many of the local and regional agencies mentioned in this report.

Empowerment & Growth

Newville Project, based on a community development model, operates on the principle that their service is to provide support over guidance. Their aim is to support people first to make their own decisions and then to enact those decisions. This focus on support rather than guidance encourages people who approach the service to take control of their own lives, with the benefit of backing from a knowledgeable and influential service as well as a group of local women (the support-action group). The Newville Project also fosters empowerment of this support group by working with and *for* the group, the service being managed by the support group and not the reverse. The Newville Project further empowers local women by hosting a forum of those organisations and institutions in the community that impact on the

lives of people experiencing violence, including the police, social services, the courts, health and education. This forum has representation from the support-action group, which further empowers those women by connecting them with the structures around them and giving them a voice in influencing the practices of these institutions. The support-action group in turn empower themselves through their existence as a self-managed, community based, non-expert support network.

> *"The project supports people to make their choices, gives them the information, no 'leave him' messages, they (women) know him better than we do"*
>
> *"The project is – options"*

Support

Emotional

- *Respect*
- *Listening*
- *Encouragement*
- *Trust*
- *Commitment*

The Newville Project provides emotional support to those accessing the project. Support is given in the form of conversations either in person or over the telephone. The staff successfully utilise listening skills to hear each person's story. They seek to understand the person's situation and immediate needs. Their response to people's stories is respectful of the person's unique circumstances and agency. Through encouragement and information sharing they encourage people to think through their own goals and to decide what if any action is best for them at that particular point in time. If action is sought, whether to leave their abusive partner, take legal action or access an agency, the project staff offers the relevant information and contacts, and most appreciably their commitment to walk alongside each person as they make these changes. The projects commitment to confidentiality along with their sound knowledge and timely responses fosters trust in the staff, giving those who approach them further strength and hope.

> *"(you get Newville Project) support if you leave or not, for what you want, for actually leaving if need be "*
>
> *"(Newville Project are) Not telling, (but) giving information".*
>
> *"just sitting telling us their life story none of its recorded"*

Life Coaching/ Quasi-counselling

The Newville Project manager is a trained life coach. She offers coaching to those who use the project regularly, and to the members of the support-action group as a means of setting goals for themselves and holding themselves accountable to achieving them. This approach has the impact of motivating the women and building their confidence. They set themselves ongoing challenges and then collectively, through informal conversations encourage each other to continue working on their current goal. With encouragement and mutual support the women have re-entered education, joined the work force, changed careers, obtained and decorated their own homes, challenged agencies negatively impacting their lives and for many of them have newfound aspirations. The approach of the project is to foster self-help and mutual support, through the support-action group, yet they do provide counsel when necessary. Ultimately the projects aim is not to counsel but to link in with and challenge those services that have a remit and obligation to counsel and provide support.

Practical

The Newville Project is aware that enabling those who access the project to meet their needs requires more than emotional support. When someone is coping with domestic violence in addition to being heard and encouraged they often need legal support, medical help, financial assistance, a new home, child support and protection. The control over people that is a central feature of domestic abuse results in diminished confidence, social support and access to resources for that person. In order to access the practical support required usually involves taking action, this involves dealing with a variety of agencies or services, not all of which are sympathetic or equipped to respond adequately. The project therefore also provides direct support and advocacy for people. The support takes myriad forms depending on each persons particular needs, most commonly the project staff will make contact with key agencies to elicit a quick and appropriate response, assist with required paperwork or accompany people to the agencies or other key appointments.

"(Newville Project offer) practical help, like getting people refuge and housing."

"They referred me to the law centre for an interdict."

"They accompanied me to the housing."

"(the Newville Project are) able to advocate."

"the project organised parenting classes for me that the children's panel demanded I take, but social work haven't done it".

"they (Newville Project) helped [a local women] get a house".

Training

Training is offered to women who have experienced domestic violence to enable them to understand the root causes of the problem. For the wider community, drama-education is offered to increase understanding of domestic violence and to improve responses to this social problem. See the 'resource' section above for details of the projects training work.

Process and format of the project

Space

Those women interviewed who had utilised the Newville Project valued having a physical place in their community where they could go and talk about coping with violence in their lives. A designated domestic violence project was seen as preferable to accessing other community agencies, which may not be sympathetic or capable of supporting the women to think through their situation and options and to make decisions.

"somewhere to sit, somewhere to chill out, to make your choices, think about it in peace rather than in your own house or in the housing department."

Non-expert

Neither the project nor its staff identify with a specific professional group. They operate as laywomen concerned with domestic violence and employed to improve their community and wider societies responses to this problem. They view themselves as working for and on behalf of those who suffer domestic violence, to ensure that those people's experiences and perspectives are heard and responded to. This non-expert approach is a key strength of Newville Project. Through this they enable those directly impacted by domestic violence to set the agenda and have influence within their community and beyond. Whereas expert or professionally driven support services tend to focus on the problems *of* the

individual and seek to change only them, the Newville Project approach focuses on the problem of domestic violence and seeks to transform all aspects of this issue.

"I wanted to talk to someone, I didn't need to know or understand better."

Drop-in

The project operates on a drop-in basis. No appointments are set or necessary to access them. Those interviewed stated that this is valuable as it allows people to access support both when they have opportunity to and feel able rather than missing appointments due to a change of situation or inability to attend and subsequently feeling reluctant to make contact again.

"People come along to project now and then, for one-offs, can be big gaps between visits – that's ok for the project and for the support-action group."

"we don't put times on people 'just come in'."

Respect

The approach of the Newville Project is respectful of those who are experiencing violence, their situation and most significantly their agency and right to choice. The project is aware of the limitations of agency responses to domestic violence. Rather than encourage people to accept the unsatisfactory assistance offered, especially in housing allocation, child support and shelter, they work to get the best outcome they can for each person in respect to their preferences and needs.

Flexibility

The Newville Project aims to support those experiencing domestic violence regardless of their current circumstances. Their work often necessitates offering crucial supports that are lacking in the community. Until agencies respond appropriately, the Newville Project fills some of the gaps in existing service provision. This can take the form of supporting individuals with psychological problems, addictions, those who retract their official complaints or continue to live with their abusive partners. Other agencies are restricted in whom they can support and under what circumstances, which results in no available support for some people. The Newville Project provides an avenue of support for those people within their local community.

"even if women's aid turned up in [the community], we would still need the project though, as they exclude for addiction, mental health or children over 16"

A Safe Space

Newville Project is not a statutory agency and valued for that. Statutory agencies are by nature run by professionals. They are accountable to their profession and often the state. They operate on a service giver – service receiver model, with previously determined categories of who is eligible for their support and in what form. The women interviewed express disquiet and negative consequences of engaging with statutory services. For those with children especially, disclosing domestic violence can have a serious impact on family life. Social services for example do not offer support directly to those experiencing domestic violence, but have a child-protection remit, which requires they involve themselves with children who witness this violence. Other statutory agencies, like the Police service, maintain close links with social services. Although well intended, the outcome of this is a reluctance of women to officially report domestic violence or access support due to a perceived fear that doing so will result in loss of the care their children. The Newville Project *will* break confidentiality if a child is at risk of harm, but has the flexibility of supporting people without automatically involving statutory services.

"Project can offer safer space to talk – less risk than with social services, police involved – less frightened to talk about it"

Responsive

The Newville Project are seen to be supportive and effective in their efforts to tackle domestic violence. They make realistic promises and commitments and follow through on them swiftly. Their extensive knowledge of the systems in place to respond to domestic violence enables them to identify key contacts and routes to support that are more likely to have a successful outcome.

Child Friendly

Children are a key part of the work of both Newville Project and the support-action group. Provision is made for the children of those who attend the project, the support-action group or take part in drama-education commissions. There is recognition that those experiencing domestic violence are often women with children, who may become single parents through dealing with domestic violence. Children

are welcomed at visits and meetings. The childcare located within the community centre is utilised when required and paid for through the Newville Project and the support-action group budget. When commissioned to perform their drama-education, childcare costs are built into the budget. The children have the opportunity to connect with each other and work on their experiences with domestic violence through art therapy offered by the childcare staff. With childcare provided, many of the women have been able to become active in tackling domestic violence within their community, stating that they could not otherwise have become involved.

"Having childcare available meant I could volunteer (with the support-action group)."

Deliberate Distinction of Roles. Working From Where People Are and Protecting Women.

In addition to fulfilling their own remit, the Newville Project is interdependent with the local communities women's support and action group, the support-action group. The Newville Project staff are paid employees whereas the support-action group are volunteers, many with full time employment. Although the support-action group work alongside the project to tackle domestic violence in their community the women do not want responsibility for co-ordinating and providing a response. The support-action group members view all the work of the Newville Project as necessary, but do not feel they have the capacity or resources to take on that role, they instead want people they can trust to do this work on their behalf. The roles are therefore divided between the project and the support-action group. The project offers practical support, develops the local agency network and takes on the organisation of all activities, while the support-action group offer emotional and social support. Through this role separation they build on their collective strengths without overburdening volunteers whom are themselves going through a process of change.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Summary of Results and Key Findings

Responses to Domestic Violence Across the Social Ecology

There was a large array of response to domestic violence across the social ecology of the community case studied. These responses were operating at all levels of influence, local, regional, national and global surrounding the community. Responses ranged from international governmental commitments to end violence against women, through on the ground support and service provision to women and children dealing with domestic violence.

Responses were found to operate from within six sectors in society, the government, the criminal justice system, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), and the housing, healthcare and social systems. The responses made within each sector were often, but not necessarily, inter-related. Responses also connected *across* sectors with establishment of an inter-agency policy group, domestic violence forums, joint practice statements, and policy to guide several or all sectors.

The responses were not balanced throughout the sectors. The health, housing and social sectors had few responses to domestic violence, while the non-governmental organization Women's Aid played a major role in responding. The criminal justice sector contained the bulk of efforts to respond to domestic violence. The central government, 'the Executive' played a key role in the responses made throughout the social ecology. Their national policy to tackle domestic violence, the 3P's, is influencing the responses of multiple agencies. From national media campaigns through legislation, training strategies through a national domestic abuse helpline, to providing core and indirect funding to efforts, the Executive's presence can be felt throughout the ecology of responses to domestic violence. The national government leadership in tackling domestic violence is commendable, as is their approach to doing so. They fund research into key controversies in the field, such as the incidence of domestic violence against men in Scotland, and commit funds to evaluating all initiatives in order to determine their impact.

The Executives policy on domestic abuse and strategies for tackling it are strong, although it was not clear at the time of this study whether they would make funds available to take their agenda forward, or, if the onus to respond was being passed to agencies without financial support to do so. All sectors are either publicly funded or non-for-profit, meaning that their resources are overstretched as is. Even with the desire to respond more effectively to domestic abuse, these agencies may not be able to do so in an effective manner without dedicated funds.

From interviews and the literature engaged with it was clear that throughout the social ecology the framework for understanding domestic abuse is overwhelmingly a gendered framework. Everyone interviewed, without exception, gave gendered explanation for domestic abuse. A smaller number of the responses, namely the dedicated domestic abuse resources, also raised the role of power differentials in society. Those taking a clear feminist perspective included the Executive, Women's Aid, Housing worker, Education worker, the Coalition and the Newville Project. There was clear feminist leadership setting many of the agendas throughout the ecology. Although feminist theories predominate policy, research and dedicated projects, some of the available responses also draw strongly on the individual pathology and intergenerational transmission of violence frames of understanding. This was most apparent in the social work response through child protection, and the police force policy to tackle youth crime through tackling domestic abuse.

All stakeholders used the more general terms 'domestic violence' and 'domestic abuse', but all were responding to the type of domestic violence Johnson (2005) labelled as 'intimate terrorism', rather than violent resistance or situational couple violence. Stakeholders did not raise these types of violence as a focus of their efforts.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, across the social ecology of which this community is part, the voice of women experiencing domestic abuse was almost entirely absent. The involvement of women in the local community efforts was the exception rather than the rule. Within the local community local women, as members of the support-action group, have membership of the local domestic violence forum. Out of the eight local forums in the region, this one alone had local women's input. From national policy through

service delivery, women who had experienced violence were represented by the advocacy of Women's Aid.

Prevention Efforts

The bulk of the responses to domestic violence were focused on the provision of services to those who had already experienced abuse, or tertiary prevention efforts. This emphasis on tertiary prevention is inline with the findings of the WHO global review. These findings are not cause for concern, prevention of domestic violence is a goal, but until it is realised it is essential that society respond to the needs of those who are victim to such violence. Overall the efforts made to prevent domestic violence were encouraging, with national media campaigns to challenge societal attitudes to domestic violence, through early intervention in schools and legislation to protect and support those experiencing abuse. These reflect tertiary, secondary and primary prevention efforts, occurring at the multiple levels of the social ecology, and across all sectors of response. Within this social ecology the different levels of influence impacting on the individual experiencing violence are recognized and attempts made to act at these levels. The WHO recommends collaborative approaches, between agencies, in order to prevent domestic violence, an approach found to be operating in this social ecology, via the agency joint practice statements and the regional and local level multi-agency initiatives.

There was a widely held belief that in order to prevent domestic violence, early intervention efforts with the nations children would be crucial. The thinking behind this position was that if you can educate young people to be respectful and non-violent in their relationships, they will be less likely to engage in abusive relationships as adults. This education approach to prevention makes sense, and has precedent. The 'smoke-busters' curriculum of the 1980's raised an anti-smoking generation; by 2004 cigarette advertising was illegal, and a public smoking ban was in place. Domestic violence, however, is not akin to smoking. With roots in cultural representations of the roles of men and women, an entrenched social hierarchy, gender-imbalanced social arrangements and traditional relationships which reduce women's financial and emotional independence, the roots of domestic violence run deep. The influence of school setting on children's value development is less than the influence of home and peers. This focus on preventing domestic violence through the re-education of young people may be a case of putting 'all our

eggs in one basket'. Teaching children the value of mutual respect over abuse in their relationships may only be effective if placed within a larger array of social change efforts. For instance, modelling for society less traditional and/or healthier ways of being in our relationships through e.g. soap operas or drama productions. In the popular text 'The New Rules of Marriage', author Terrence Real (2007) suggests that we have changed our expectations for how a marriage should work, without developing the skills to *be* other than traditional in relationships. Along with attitude and value change to domestic abuse, it would seem necessary to work to limit abuses of power throughout society, such as anti-discrimination efforts. The local women spoke of the need to create a balance between establishing rights and protections with attitude change efforts. They reminded us of countries around the world, including Scotland that had equal gender rights and anti-discrimination written into the law of the land, but the women in these countries don't get to exercise their rights because of far more influential family and cultural attitudes defining their role in life. Nationally ascribed values, in the local women's opinion, must be supported with efforts to shift public and private attitudes.

Perspectives of Stakeholders

The local women who collaborated in this study were all active in responding to domestic violence within their local community, and through their drama-education work, they were active in the wider region, and around the nation. These women had different experiences of domestic abuse, some as children, some as adults. Their journeys in life, like all of us, had been unique to them, but they did share common themes, the most prominent of which was the profound transformation they were all going through as members of the support-action group. The women attributed the key successes in their lives to their involvement in the group, not because the group had 'saved them' from abuse, but through feeling empowered through their activism with the group. For these group and project to have such a profound impact on people's lives suggests that what they do is worthy of our attention. The key functions of the project and group were explored during interviews and found to be many and varied. Those most valued by the local women included having a space in the community to come together and get support; being able to focus on developing their strengths over their victim-hood; having the practical support and authority of the project behind them; and working as agents of change to tackle domestic violence.

From the experiences of the local women, including the expertise of the project staff, many of the existing responses to domestic violence are not being utilized by the local women, or supporting their needs, because they not meeting women 'where they are', both physically in terms of geography and emotionally in terms of supporting them to make a wide-range of choices, respecting their need for things not typically attended to such as family, community, public honour and dignity.

The children of the local women, including grown children, where a major priority in each of their decision-making, whether it meant serving their daughters food first to disrupt gender norms, putting up with abuse to keep the family together, not leaving as it would compromise children's education or social world, or leaving because their children could not bear to see them so abused. The local women were seriously concerned at the lack of support available to children and grown-children who had experienced or witnessed abuse. As a result, they paid for the training of two local therapists, so that their own children can work through their experiences. They also ensure that their processes are child friendly, by budgeting for childcare for every meeting and during productions, which was a major aide for enabling involvement of those with little children.

Study Limitations and Opportunities for Further Research

The case study method was an effective means of determining responses to domestic violence across the social ecology of which the community was part. The collaborative approach taken to the case study was essential to understanding, reflecting, getting access and learning other ways of responding to domestic violence. Through this method all responses to domestic violence across the social ecology were identified, however, it was not possible to speak directly to representatives of every response. Of those identified five bodies *were not* interviewed. The local housing agency was unable to determine a member of staff who felt able to discuss responses to domestic abuse. The city council's equality officer was amenable to interview but had no available appointments. Contact could not be established with either the Health Board's women's health officer or the local mental health project. The procurator fiscals office preferred not to be interviewed. Input from each of these would have been valuable in understanding these particular responses.

Findings discussed only briefly here but worthy of further exploration include a comparison of different types of support groups, to assess the impact of those which are focussed on healing compared to those, like the support-action group, that are focussed on social change. The potential ways in which children could be supported through their experiences of domestic violence was not explored here, but was a key concern of the local women and other stakeholders. The potential for funding for domestic abuse to come from the central government, 'core funding', was raised but not explored. The use of drama-education as a mechanism of popular-education and social change around domestic violence merits further research, in order to explore its potential use in primary prevention efforts.

Emergent Issues for Reflection

Led by the concerns of the local women, other stakeholders and my own findings, it is worth exploring a few emergent issues. These are (i) the disproportionate emphasis on the criminal justice system as a means to tackle domestic violence (ii) the invisibility of men, both perpetrators and non-perpetrators in the responses to domestic violence, (iii) the need to meet women experiencing domestic violence where they are, rather than where agencies think they should be, and (iv) the missed opportunity of recognising the expertise of women who have experienced abuse, through the current lack of involvement of women in agency response and decision-making.

Over Focus on Criminal Justice Sector

Women in Scotland have a right under the law to not be abused or be protected from repeat abuse once it has occurred. The criminalisation of domestic abuse can be taken as a victory for feminist and human rights frameworks in getting domestic abuse acknowledged as a crime against women as opposed to acceptable or tolerated behaviour or 'private troubles'. When the Executive policy on violence against women was adapted to address domestic violence, the focus on how to protect women from abuse was placed entirely on the criminal justice system. The framing of domestic abuse as a crime seems to have narrowed our thinking as to what can be done to respond to such abuse. This focus does not leave room, or resources, for building community capacity to prevent such violence through other means. It fails to see

that domestic abuse is more than a crime to be punished, that it is a complex part of people's meaningful relationships, woven into their life. Women who experience abuse are invested in their relationships the same as everyone else, and bound to them not just emotionally but through connections to place, family and cultural expectations. People want the abuse to stop, but not always for 'their man' to be 'locked up'.

When the only recourse in this perspective is to involve the law, which for many is not a viable option, where does this leave those needing a community response? We know that only a small proportion of people who experience abuse involve the police, and an even smaller proportion have their cases taken forward into the court system. Massive effort is made to secure legislation and funds to transform the responses of this system, even though they are in practice offering protection to only a tiny proportion of people experiencing abuse. The funds are allocated in order to get women to use the system more, such as the pilot Domestic Abuse court and the court victim support service. Although well-intentioned, these efforts may be failing to see the bigger picture, that is how the criminal justice system are viewed within wider society, and how involving them impacts upon people's lives. Helping those who do go to court is a worthwhile endeavour but trying to bring more people into this system, or keep them in the system which takes a long time to proceed, is complicated, expensive, and public, does not necessarily improve the women's lot.

What is not clear is whether the labelling of domestic abuse as a crime acts as a deterrent or protects women in practice and therefore, whether it is deserving of such prominent focus. To engage the criminal justice system means to *publicly* report that you are being abused, and that your partner is your abuser. Women are most at risk of serious bodily harm after they leave an abusive partner, so taking your abuser to task legally is a major challenge to the abuse dynamic and could result in severe retribution, and does. There is also shame attached to being abused, coupled with a climate of victim blaming it is understandable that this would not be an easy response to accept for those dealing with abuse.

The response from the police force to instances of domestic abuse in the community is encouraging, the pro-arrest policy certainly responds to this issue, but the criminal justice system responses seems to fall apart when cases are transferred from the police to the courts. The Procurator Fiscals take few of these charges of domestic abuse forward to court, and even then plea-bargaining makes light of their capacity to respond to the issue. The impact of plea-bargaining on people's beliefs about the efficacy of the

criminal justice system in responding to abuse is worthy of further research. Are women less likely to utilise a system that may reduce their abuse to a common 'breach of the peace'? With court disposals erring on the light side, such as fines and community service, there may be little motivation to drag oneself and family though such a legal ordeal for so little gain in terms of protection. When people are getting very short or no prison terms, this may be seen as aggravation without protection. Even taking the pressure off of women through pro-arrest, the women, their children, family and neighbours may be put under tremendous pressure by their abuser to not offer witness testimony. The availability of interdicts with power of arrest are a potentially more helpful response within the criminal justice system, but some serious kinks need to be ironed out to enable them to be used, and enforced. These include enabling the protection to follow women more easily if and when they have to move out of their area, improving rates of arrest for breaches of interdicts and making the application for interdict less expensive and onerous. Domestic violence continues to go largely unreported to the criminal justice system. The US Department of Justice national survey on intimate partner violence, involving over 16,000 respondents, found that most incidents disclosed during survey had not been reported to the police, "*approximately one-fifth of all rapes, one-quarter of all physical assaults, and one-half of all stalkings perpetrated against female respondents by intimates were reported to the police"*(Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000, p. v). Further questioning during the survey found that *"the majority of victims who did not report their victimization to the police thought the police would not or could not do anything on their behalf"*(p. v). The survey authors conclude that "*these findings suggest that most victims of intimate partner violence do not consider the justice system an appropriate vehicle for resolving conflicts with intimates"*. (p. v). Further research on why women don't go forward to arrest, or stick with the court system when they are within it, is merited. This would facilitate an understanding of what role the system could take realistically, rather than ideally, in responding to this problem.

Invisible Men

The local women, including the project staff and many of the other stakeholders interviewed were gravely concerned at how invisible men are in efforts to respond to domestic violence. With the exception of one response (out of 93), the prevention, provision and protection efforts throughout the ecology are

overwhelmingly aimed at helping women cope with and escape violence, to support those who are abused, rather than deal with those who commit the abuse. Stakeholders suggested that we are so focussed on the women, that we forget about the men who abuse, and as a result men are standing still in the midst of all the efforts to respond to domestic violence.

This lone response for men who perpetrate abuse is only accessible through the court system and engages what were called the absolute worst abusers (those the criminal justice worker referred to as 'the scary ones' or Jacobson & Gottman's 'cobras'). Efforts must be made to engage men out with the criminal justice system as part of the community wide efforts to prevent domestic violence. With the exception of the criminal justice system, men were also invisible in *responding* to domestic abuse. If communities and societies are intent on preventing domestic violence, then it seems only common sense that all members of the community should respond, not just women. There are thankfully far more men who do not abuse their partners, than those who do. These men should be viewed as a strength in the community and efforts should be enacted to secure their involvement in developing responses within their communities. The U.S. group MPAS (Men Promoting a Solution) are an example of such an effort.

Professionals, Victims and Agents

An unexpected finding from this study was the unique approach taken by the Newville project and support-action group. Although they offered similar services to other agencies (such as Women's Aid), their operational structure was distinctly different from the norm. Whereas other agencies help women experiencing abuse, the Newville project and support-action group work in partnership together. This is not to say that the local women in the group are not helped by the project, but the relationship structure is that of colleagues or a support-network, rather than one of agency-client.

In addition to this support, they take a strengths based, capacity building approach to their interactions, believing in the ability of the local women to work together and transform their environments. In essence what seems to distinguish their approach from others is (i) a respect for where women are in their relationship and lives and (ii) an appreciation of the agency of women, over and above their victim-hood. This partnership approach facilitated the group's membership of the local domestic violence forum, the only forum in the region to have such representation. The Project are also directly accountable to the

support-action group having a place on the project board. This gives local women the opportunity to directly influence how their community is responding to domestic violence. This acknowledgment of the strengths and expertise local women bring to endeavours is rare, women are not collaborators in any other policy setting across the social ecology. Other agencies view Women's Aid as appropriate advocates for 'the voice' of the women impacted.

Supporting Women from Where They Are

Like Women's Aid the Project offered practical and emotional support, information and a space to think through choices. What differentiated the Project was the tailoring of their response to the unique needs and situation of each person who came to their service. The Project focus is on supporting women in the choices that they make, even if that means staying in their relationship, and support them closely through whatever process that entails. They emphasise recognition of the journey women have made, how far they have come and focus on enhancement of their strengths, which women reported as an empowering process. Women's Aid in contrast, offer refuge provision so that people may leave their relationships, when they are ready to, viewing leaving as the end stage of a process of emancipation that women need supported through.

The key difference in working to empower versus working to emancipate is in who is agentic and who is passive in the process, the identities that are ascribed to each of the actors in these relationships. Empowerment is a process which someone themselves, as an agent of change, goes through, with the support of others who are also going through a process of empowerment. Empowerment processes are collaborative with all in the role of agent of change. Emancipation in contrast involves one person being acted upon by another person; women do not emancipate themselves, rather they are emancipated. In such a process women are not agentic, it is the emancipator who is the agent of change, who gives freedom. This is not to say that Women's Aid or other key respondents are positioning themselves as emancipators, this would be an unfair charge. What it does speak to, however, is the position of professionals as the experts on domestic violence who have the remedy and means to get women there. The remedy has been determined as the woman leaving the abuse, and her treatment is her engaging the responses offered in order to start a gradual emancipation until she is free, and won't make the same mistakes again. This

dominant perspective casts women as first and foremost 'victims', and furthermore ascribes a restricted set of behaviours as to how the victim must respond to her abuse. With only certain forms of support legitimated, however unintentionally, a role of 'legitimate victim' has been created, which strips away the agency of women. The legitimate victims seek out help, and the help offered means engaging the criminal justice services, alternative accommodation and emotional support so that they can leave their abusive relationship and work towards never being abused again.

We can only at this point surmise where the role of the legitimate victim came from. In part it could be a result of a process of demystifying domestic violence. In response to the all too common refrain of 'why doesn't she just leave?', activists moved to explain why women stay, citing the dependency of women on their husbands in society. In response we saw the changing of laws to give women equal rights to men, and to provide refuge for women suffering abuse, but the women didn't leave, or often returned after respite. In order to counter victim blaming perspectives that viewed these women as 'addicted to violence' or lesser in intelligence (and therefore stupid enough to remain in an abusive situation), the activists tried another tactic. They demonstrated the ubiquity of abuse, across class and educational lines, and emphasised the mechanisms of abuse which bind women to her abuser, through financial, social and emotional dependence stemming from the stripping down of her self worth. Cast in this role, women were now victims of abuse, who would have to be freed from their situation. Our notions of what it means to be free have come to mean being independent. Society is offering means through which women can become independent of their relationship. Whether our ascribing the roles of legitimate victim and emancipator is based on values of self-sufficiency, or more cynically, benevolent notions of people having to earn their freedom, or deserve the allocation of scarce resources to help them, is not clear and worthy of further research. What we do know is that possibly through this process a 'legitimate victim' role was born.

When we look at the journeys of the local women in this study, and their explanations of what works in supporting them, what we realise is that few were prepared to become a 'legitimate victim'. For these women, and the many more who have worked with the Newville project, the system as it stands could not support them, *on their own terms*.

These terms include wanting to stay in their own neighbourhoods, around their family and friends and the area they call home. This makes the available refuge accommodation useless to them, as it is all

outwith the local community. Although women experiencing abuse have been given rights under the law to access alternative housing in a crisis, in practice this means being offered whatever housing the local Housing Association is prepared to offer. The alternative is no alternative at all if it means moving away from all that is familiar and dear to you, even if your life is unbearable. The terms reported by local women also included wanting to avoid disruption of their children's lives. This can mean, again not taking up refuge or alternative accommodation to avoid moving away from their children's school and friends; not seeking out support from police or other public agencies through the legitimate fear of losing their children.

It is essential that those responding domestic violence consider the situation of women who do not want to leave, who just want the abuse to stop. For some their marriage vows are sacred, for others the relationship has enough highs to enable them to put up with the lows, some have made a commitment to keep their family together for the sake of their children. Such reasons for staying are commonly conveyed in research with women who have experienced domestic violence. These reasons are interpreted as being symptomatic of the disempowerment of women through living within patriarchal social and religious structures, and the manifestations of gender inequity such as economic dependency (e.g. LaViollette & Barnett, 2000). Regardless of whether the desire of some women to maintain their relationship is respected or viewed as a stage in their growth, one which must be overcome to move them closer to leaving, our systems of response must determine if those women can still be viewed as legitimate victims. This raises the question of whether women who have experienced abuse have a right to fix their marriage, in order to have the family life they want. We must determine if women can be supported by society in this way. We must consider if the only response available is to leave, or for society to step in and make him leave, if this forces some women to be silent about their abuse. Whether women experiencing abuse feel social pressure to leave if they declare abuse, and whether that puts some women off of seeking out support at all is worthy of further investigation. Accepting that people may choose not to leave (now or ever), and need different forms of support to stay is *not* colluding with the abuse, nor is it promoting or sanctioning the continued use of the uncritical couples therapy (or conjoint treatment) for intimate partner violence currently offered, as has been suggested by critiques of family therapy approaches. Without offering solutions as to what forms support may take for those who want to stay, acknowledging and supporting people in this position, rather, represents a respect for the agency (albeit limited) of individual women rather than disempowering

them further by prescribing what they need. If working with women within their relationships were the only solution advocated by society, this would be a major problem, but as part of a range of crucial responses, such as already exists in this particular social ecology this would be a way of respecting the agency and lives of the women themselves.

The local Newville Project and support-action group approach can serve as a model for practice here. They support women from *where they are*, emotionally and physically while respecting their changing needs. From the analysis of the responses available across this full social ecology it would seem that their response is both novel and necessary. They provide what Sarason (1972) calls an 'alternative place or space' where unmet needs can finally be met.

The approaches to domestic violence of the Newville project and the support-action group are unique to this particular community. It is not known what responses to domestic violence exist in communities in other regions of the country, and as a case study of a particular community, within a particular region and nation, this study is not representative of any community other than itself. Despite these cautions it is still reasonable to suggest that the model used by these local domestic violence initiatives could serve as a useful model, not only for other local communities, but for the wider regional and national responses.

Recognising the Agency and Expertise of Women

While those suffering domestic violence are rightly referred to as victims of this abuse, the label of victim can limit how those people are viewed and responded to within their communities. The label 'victim' connotes an inability to act or a lack of agency as well as passive suffering. This label does not do justice to the experiences of those dealing with domestic violence, who show tremendous creativity and strength under debilitating and limiting conditions. Unfortunately, it is in part this view of people as victims that prompts statutory agencies to respond and assist people experiencing domestic violence. As a result this assistance is often not respectful of the agency of people or their circumstances but is instead prescriptive, limiting and even authoritarian. People are at worst *invisible*, or further demeaned and at best acted *upon*, rather than supported from where they in ways that they themselves identify as needed.

Mahoney (1994) takes on this issue, writing of the creation of a false dichotomy between victimisation and agency in responding to violence against women. Mahoney explains that "agency and victimisation are understood in relation to each other: agency is exercised by a self-determining individual, one who is not victimized by others" (p. 60). She suggests that this view of what it means to be agentic is exacerbated by several factors in law and popular culture, which "combine to make it difficult to portray both oppression and struggle in women's experience of domestic violence" (p. 59). A women's agency, as enacted within a controlling relationship, is for Mahoney all too often 'invisible'. Furthermore, she states that by drawing on such social stereotypes and cultural expectations about the behavior of battered women, we "equate agency in battered women with separation from the relationship alone", and that 'staying' has become a 'socially suspect choice', "often perceived as acceptance of violence". Mahoney explains "the prevalent social focus on leaving conceals the nature of domestic violence as a struggle for control, pretends away the extreme dangers of separation, and hides the interaction of social structures that oppress women" (p. 61). Mahoney asserts that the socially held "assumptions about staying and leaving, and the concepts of agency and victimization that underlie them, need to be challenged and transformed" (p.74).

This study found that there was little rationale for not involving women as expert collaborators. The members of the support-action group, having lived experience of domestic abuse as adults and/or children should be recognised as experts on this issue. Their experiences and perspective could be key to critical reflection on both existing responses and the responses believed to be required. McWilliams & McKiernan (1993) remind us that these women are not "passive victims" of domestic abuse, "but are instead strong women, who cope and search out support and help to change their situation".

This sentiment may well be shared by other stakeholders in responding to domestic abuse throughout the social ecology. Lack of collaboration with women may well be a result of agencies not knowing *how to* engage with 'lay people', rather than a questioning of the legitimacy of women as experts. An existing resource within social services, that of community-development officers, could play a vital part in helping agencies come to value and learn how tap into the tremendous human and intellectual resources within communities. In order to truly respect the expertise of women these processes should not be tokenistic in nature. Women should not just be offered a seat at the table, offering input into pre-existing structures. To enable participation, the structures will have to change in ways that are appropriate to the

particular setting. This may mean building a structure that involves women as overseers, as a screen for policy and practice, or as formalised evaluators. Meetings may have to move out of the office and into the community; formal processes, such as minutes and agendas may have to be left behind; community members and staff alike may have to be trained in how to engage in public forums. The field of community-development (also called community organising) could play a key role in developing appropriate and useful processes.

Participating not Burdening

Acknowledging the expertise of women who have experienced abuse, and developing structures to aid their participation, is not to suggest that the women themselves should become responsible for ending domestic violence. A balance has to be reached between incorporating the voices of women, without burdening them. The local women who participated in this research valued being involved and having a say regarding what should be done to prevent domestic violence. They were clear, however, that they did not want the burden of being in control, rather they valued partnering with existing agencies, which had the dedicated staff and resources to actually respond. Again, the collaboration between the Newville Project and the support-action group can serve as a model for such a way of working.

Appendix – A. Duluth Power & Control Wheel

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.duluth-model.org

Appendix – B. Stakeholders, preliminary list

Who would notice if the project ceased to exist?

Local level

- Support-Action group
- Local women
- Local Housing Association
- Local mental health services
- Youth complex
- Community center
- Childcare workers
- Social Inclusion Partnership (funders)
- Members of the local Domestic Violence Forum, including:
  Social Work Department
  Housing
  Police Domestic Abuse Unit
  Link midwives/ health visitors

Regional Level

- Other domestic violence forums
- Health Board
- Newville Coalition

Who would not notice if the project ceased to exist, that should notice?

- Social work staff
- Education
- Police officers
- Four other housing associations

Appendix – C. Semi-structured Interview questions

***Interview schedule 1*: for support-action group members and Newville project staff:**

- *How* did you get involved with the project and support-action group?
- *Why* did you get involved with the project and support-action group?
- Has the project or support-action group affected your life?
- *How* does the project or support-action group affect your life?
- What have you achieved since becoming involved with either of them?
- What would you change about the project or support-action group, and why?
- Have you been involved with any other agencies responding to domestic abuse?
- What was your experience?
- How do you think agencies should respond?
- What responses to domestic abuse are needed? And by whom?

***Interview schedule 2*: for all other stakeholders:**

- *Does* your agency respond to domestic abuse?
- *Why* does your agency respond to domestic abuse?
- *Who* responds to domestic abuse in your agency?
- *What* is your agencies response?
    - *In policy*
    - *In practice*
- How else *could* your agency respond to domestic abuse?
- Do you work with any other agencies in responding to domestic abuse?
- If so, How? And does your work differ from / compliment their response?
- What other responses to domestic abuse are you aware of in this region and nationally?
- What is your understanding of these other responses?
- What responses to domestic abuse are needed? And by whom?

Appendix – D. People (n=27) and organisations (n=14) interviewed (n=25)

(1-5) Five Members of the support-action group (Individual interviews)

(6-8) Both staff of the Newville Domestic Violence Project (Individual interviews & joint 'systems' interview)

(9) Both staff of the local Police Domestic Abuse Unit* (Joint interview)

(10) Regional Manager of local Social Services*

(11) Local Community Development officer

(12) Solicitor from the local Law Centre*

(13) Senior social work addictions worker, locally based

(14) Lead worker for local community Social Inclusion Partnership

(15) Councillor for local community and convenor of social services for of Newville

(16) Newville Women's Aid resource worker

(17) Victim Information and Advice worker with domestic violence remit*

(18) Regional Education board domestic violence training worker

(19) Member of Newville Health Board

(20) Women's Aid staff (Joint interview)

(21) Criminal Justice worker for the regional perpetrator re-education programme

(22) Co-ordinator of the city level Newville Coalition

(23) Mid-wife with remit for domestic violence across the region*

(24) Policy officer of the regional police family unit

(25) Newville Homelessness Initiative staff (Joint interview)

*Members of the local Domestic Violence Forum

Appendix – E: Journeys

A. Mother of 6 children

↓

Experience of domestic violence

↓

Single mother

↓

Low confidence and self-esteem

↓

Lack of support

↓

Difficulty managing day to day

↓

Introduction to (support-action) group

↓

Drama role in play

↓

Increased support/ social interaction

↓

New experiences

↓

Vice chair of group

↓

Adult literacy classes

↓

Happier/ content/ able to cope

B. Adult child of domestic violence

↓

Baby blues

↓

Low confidence and self esteem

↓

Lack of social interaction and support

↓

Introduction to (support-action) group

↓

Informal training opportunities

↓

Group support and new experiences

↓

Increased confidence and work experience

↓

New job

↓

Stronger/ happier adult

C. Growing up with domestic abuse

↓

Silence and anger

↓

Injustice

↓

Leave home, challenge men, good relationship

↓

Need to stop the violence

↓

Powerless/ overwhelmed/ ineffective

↓

Finding out so many people care about domestic violence

↓

Met the (support-action) group

↓

The play – observed and took part in

↓

Understanding, recognition, laughs

↓

Inspired

↓

Friendships and Support

↓

Confidence, self-belief and hope

D. Discharged from hospital - depression

↓

Feeling low

↓

Joined (support-action) group

↓

Support from (local domestic violence) project and group

↓

Feeling better

↓

Got own house

↓

Happy within myself

↓

Voluntary work

↓

In control of my life

E. Needed support

↓

Getting out of house

↓

(support-action) group

↓

Getting support

↓

Training

↓

Confidence in others

↓

Self-confidence and self-esteem

↓

The Play – performing it and making a CD

↓

Closeness/ gelling of group

↓

Sisterhood

↓

Audience participation

↓

Looking forward to (support-action) group developing in other areas

↓

Transatlantic (support-action group)

F. Experience of control in relationships

↓

Moods etc

↓

Recognised need for support for self and others

↓

Broke isolation*

↓

Shared experiences*

↓

Forming (support-action group), birth process

↓

Self esteem

↓

Writing play

↓

Getting song*

↓

Performing play live

↓

CD

↓

Sisterhood

↓

New drama opportunities

↓

Looking forward to exchange visit to U.S. of A

G. Survivor of Domestic Violence

↓

Hectic/ chaotic life

↓

Frightened

↓

Mother/ home maker

↓

Introduction to (support-action) group

↓

Confidence

↓

Feeling important/ opinion mattered

↓

Built self esteem/ assertiveness

↓

Chair of group

↓

Confidence to go for full time job

↓

Responsible work role

↓

Happier/ hopeful/ optimistic

↓

Forward thinking

H. Rocky/ happy relationship

↓

Had baby

↓

Traumatic experience - baby died

↓

Lost onus? My life

↓

Regained my confidence

↓

Returned to work

↓

Had another baby

↓

Partner left before baby was born

↓

Felt out of life baby's first year, off work for a year

↓

Changed jobs - Voluntary sector

↓

Shared office with the local Domestic Violence Project

↓

Got involved with (support-action) group

↓

Made friendships

↓

Gained confidence in every aspect of life

↓

Worked on drama and was involved in a play!

↓

Mondays would not be the same without the group!

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