

Drive: Second Reading of the Domestic Abuse Bill Brief

Summary

Drive welcomes the Domestic Abuse Bill. There are many positive elements within it that will make a real difference to the lives of victims and survivors.

However, we would like to see financial and strategic non-legislative commitments from the government – to accompany this Bill – that effectively challenge those perpetrators who cause the nearly 600,000 recorded incidences of domestic abuse each year¹. For far too long, perpetrators of domestic abuse have been getting away with their crimes, sometimes with multiple partners, often over a period of years.

We know that there are perpetrator interventions that work. The government needs to use the opportunity of this Bill to scale these up, as part of a broader England and Wales Perpetrator Strategy.

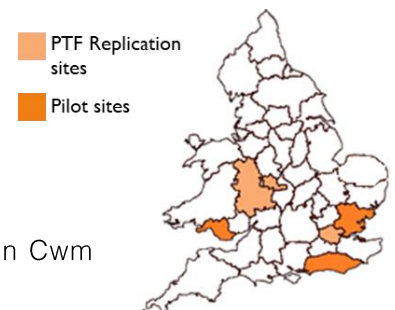
The pre-legislative committee on the Domestic Abuse Bill called on the government to *“ensure that there is sufficient provision of quality assured specialist interventions for the full spectrum of perpetrators, across all risk levels. This will require an adequate level of funding and cooperation with expert providers.”*² This is also required by the Istanbul Convention.³

The government must use the Bill to commit to developing a Perpetrator Strategy. This strategy will ensure every opportunity is taken – whether inside the criminal justice system or in the community – to challenge and prevent controlling and abusive behaviour.

1. Background – What is Drive?

Drive was developed in 2015 by three organisations, Respect, SafeLives and Social Finance, to address a gap in work with high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse. It focuses on holding perpetrators to account to make victims, survivors, their children and wider families safer. Drive recently completed a 3-year pilot in Essex, West Sussex and South Wales, and is currently testing replication in:

- **Croydon** delivered by RISE
- **Birmingham and Sandwell** delivered by Richmond Fellowship
- **Cardiff** delivered by Safer Merthyr Tydfil, work also continues in Cwm Taf
- **Worcestershire** delivered by Cranstoun



Drive reduces abuse and increases victim safety

The most recent University of Bristol evaluation of the Drive programme has shown:

- **physical abuse** reduced by **two-thirds**;
- **sexual abuse** reduced by **over three quarters**;
- **controlling behaviour and harassment and stalking** reduced by **over half**

¹ ONS data available at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

² Report of the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill June 2019:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201719/jtselect/jtddab/2075/2075.pdf>

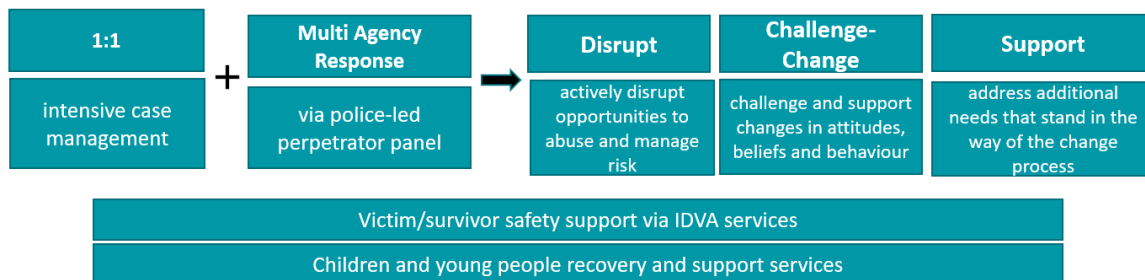
³ The Istanbul Convention says that state parties must “Set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviours,” accessible at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

- police data shows a **30% reduction in number of criminal DVA incidents for Drive service users** in 6 months after the intervention compared to 6 months before. By comparison, there was **no change for control group perpetrators** for the same period.

How does Drive work?

The Drive Project incorporates:

- Intensive one-to-one work and case management. The Drive case manager works with the perpetrator to challenge attitudes and behaviour. They offer support with additional needs that otherwise stand in the way of the change process, such as substance misuse and housing issues.
- Police-led multi-agency responses that disrupt opportunities for abuse and reduce risk.
- IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser) support provided for the associated victim/survivor to ensure joined up working and safety. This year, Drive also began to trial the provision of recovery services for children affected by domestic abuse.



2. Call to Action for a long term, strategic response to perpetrators of domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Bill creates an opportunity to build on the foundation and learnings from Drive by making **effective responses available everywhere**.

Drive works with the most dangerous perpetrators, however, to reduce the number of domestic abuse victims, we must intervene not only with those already causing serious harm, but those on the cusp of abusing, and all stages in between. It means intervening with all types of relationships. Perpetrator interventions must exist alongside high quality victims services, effective enforcement, and strong criminal justice outcomes. A co-ordinated multi-agency community response is key.

We are developing a Call to Action for a Perpetrator Strategy backed by organisations across a range of sectors (voluntary, statutory, academia). This will be published in the coming weeks. We stand ready to support the government in formulating a Perpetrator Strategy.

Key elements of any Perpetrator Strategy:

1. Provision of best practice perpetrator interventions, including both statutory and voluntary sector services, across England and Wales;
2. Empowering public and voluntary sectors to hold perpetrators to account;
3. A sustainable source of funding;
4. National infrastructure to improve quality and safety of delivery. Including national data collection on what works;
5. Strategic oversight and leadership to make this happen.

The second reading is an opportunity for government to call time on perpetrators of abuse and announce its intent to publish a clear strategy to end abusive behaviour.