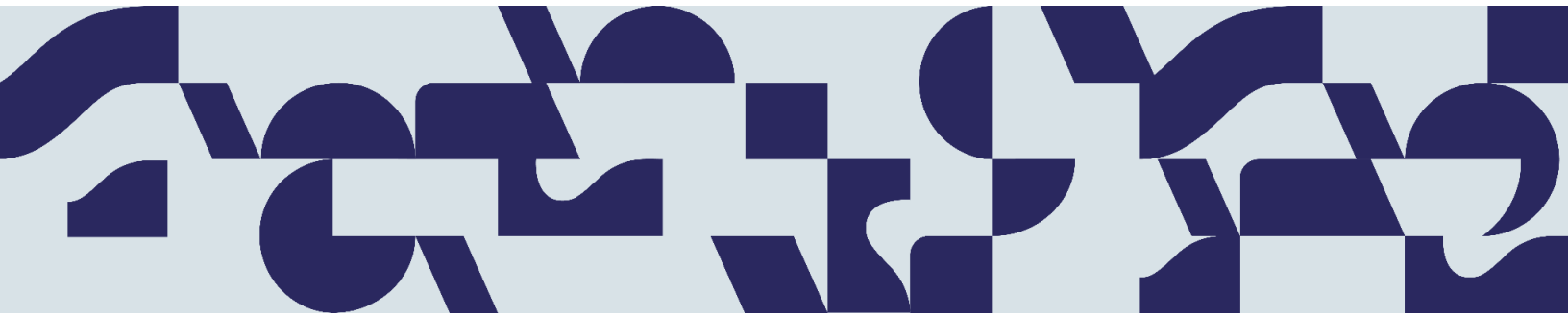
Identifying offenders at risk of domestic abuse perpetration and intervention points in offending journeys

Summary of Research Findings and Implications for Practitioners

Published 22nd of February 2023

Note: This report is a summary of the research and recommendations. The technical research report outlining the full methodology and findings is published separately.



About Crest Advisory

We are crime and justice specialists - equal parts research, strategy and communication. From police forces to public inquiries, from tech companies to devolved authorities, we believe all these organisations (and more) have their own part to play in building a safer, more secure society. As the UK's only consultancy with this focus, we are as much of a blend as the crime and justice sector itself.

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2 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London, EC2A 3DR
www.crestadvisory.com

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Research Team

Eleanor Covell
James Stott
Julian Sandler
Jessica Hull
Madeline Rolfe
Patrick Olajide
Sarah Hibbert
Alex Stacey

Timeframe and publication

This research was conducted between December 2021 and March 2022, with the final report submitted to the Home Office in May 2022. The report was reviewed in February 2023 prior to publication but may contain some references to agencies which are now out of date - for example Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary is now His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. The individuals listed in the acknowledgements may also have changed roles.

Contents

Executive Summary **5**

Introduction **15**

Summary of research findings **22**

System-wide recommendations **41**

Recommendation 1: Wider offending history should inform domestic abuse intervention 41

Recommendation 2: Identify specific non-domestic abuse offences that factor into harm 43

Recommendation 3: Breach offences should trigger enhanced assessment and response 45

Recommendation 4: Offences indicative of wider abuse tendencies should be flagged 47

Recommendation 5: Substance misuse and domestic abuse should be tackled in tandem 48

Recommendation 6: Risk assessment processes should take account of previous risks 50

Sector/typology-specific recommendations **52**

1. Initial response to reported domestic abuse 55

2. Safeguarding 58

3. Offender management 60

4. Prevention and diversion 63

5. Prisons and probation 68

Wider considerations for agencies outside the criminal justice system **73**

Adult social care 74

Children's services 74

Housing 75

Youth justice system 76

Health 77

Substance misuse services 78

Schools/ educational settings 79

Opportunities for further research **80**

Annex 1: Case Study 1 (Simon) 84

Annex 2: Case Study 2 (David) 90

Annex 3: Definition of key terms 95

Annex 4: Bibliography 99

This research includes references to self-harm, suicide, domestic abuse, child abuse and substance misuse which some people will find upsetting.

Executive Summary

This report is the product of research undertaken by Crest Advisory, in partnership with West Midlands Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, and funded via the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Research Fund.

The research used qualitative[1] and quantitative[2] methods to establish typologies of domestic abuse perpetrators based on their offending history to support frontline practitioners in identifying and targeting perpetrators (or potential perpetrators) of domestic abuse.

This report outlines the key findings from the research and what this means for agencies working with perpetrators and on domestic violence - we have called this the 'operationalisation' of the research. The technical research report outlines the research in detail and can be read separately. It is intended for stakeholders who are more interested in how the research was conducted and what it found.

Can practitioners use wider offending history to identify and intervene with domestic abuse perpetrators?

For the purposes of this study, individuals with an offending history were of primary interest. Existing research has proven that the majority of harm caused through domestic abuse can be attributed to a small proportion of perpetrators. **Findings from this report were the same.**

This research found that over the ten year span of police data, **the majority of individuals had been recorded against just one domestic abuse-related incident**. For the most part, these individuals were involved in **low level crime or non-crime incidents** that were assessed as standard risk by police. **The majority of harm in the data set was caused by a small group of individuals.**

This group was of particular interest because it was found that **the greater the domestic abuse harms they caused, the more likely the individual was to have a history of non-domestic abuse offences.** This supports the hypothesis that there is value in practitioners understanding the non-domestic abuse offending histories of domestic abuse perpetrators. Two further groups of domestic abuse only offenders were also flagged as important because while their recorded offending was low, the type, duration and/or level of harm of the offending was indicative of patterns of abuse.

[1] Evidence review, semi-structured and in-depth interviews, and practitioner workshops. For more detail on the qualitative methodology, please see the Technical Research Report.
[2] Clustering and regression analysis of police incident and crime data over a ten year span. For more details on the quantitative methodology, please see the Technical Research Report.

Existing research has identified a relationship between gender-based violence[3] and domestic abuse, and between child or vulnerable adult abuse and domestic abuse[4], and indeed the Priority Perpetrator Identification tool currently used in some police forces identifies these as "linked" and therefore "risky" offences[5]. **This research suggests that a wider range of offences can also be usefully indicative of domestic abuse perpetration risks.**

To what extent is wider offending associated with domestic abuse perpetration?

The research found that a number of non-domestic abuse offences were particularly significant in patterns of offending which resulted in higher harm domestic abuse. Consistent with previous research, this included sexual offences, particularly those against children, which were likely to co-occur with domestic abuse. However this research also found evidence of a relationship with some less well-evidenced crime types.

This research investigated the effect of committing non-domestic abuse offences on the level of harm caused by domestic abuse offences, using linear regression model(s). The results showed that of the 656 (non-domestic abuse-related) individual offence types included in the analysis, 16% had a statistically significant effect on the domestic abuse level of harm[6]. In all cases the offence had a positive relationship with domestic abuse harm, meaning that offenders who committed these specific offences tended to cause higher domestic abuse harm.

The research found evidence of a relationship between domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse across four broad categories:

- **Sexual offences**: rape and sexual offences against both adults and children were found to be statistically significant.
- **Acquisitive crime:** attempted burglary, robbery, making off without payment and theft of motor vehicles were also related to more harmful domestic abuse.
- **Violent crime:** malicious wounding, grievous bodily harm, racially aggravated assaults, threats to kill and threats with a weapon were also indicative of higher harm.
- **Intractability:** breach offences (breach of non-molestation order/restraining order/bail conditions) and licence recalls were also statistically significant, along with assaults on police, threats to witnesses/jurors, criminal damage and driving offences which tend to be united in terms of an overall criminogenic attitude or tendency toward civil disobedience.

The analysis revealed that non-DA offenders committing breaches of stalking orders and interim stalking orders,

[3] Radford, J., Friedberg, M. and Harne, L., 2000. Women, violence and strategies for action (pp. 167-168). Buckingham: Open University Press.

[4] Richards, T.N., Tillyer, M.S. and Wright, E.M., 2017. Intimate partner violence and the overlap of perpetration and victimization: Considering the influence of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in childhood. Child abuse & neglect, 67, pp.240-248.

[5] Robinson, A. L. and Clancy, A. (2021) 'Systematically identifying and prioritising domestic abuse perpetrators for targeted intervention', Criminology & Criminal Justice, 21(5), pp. 687–704.

[6] When using the standard $p<0.05$ significance level

statistically, was strongly predictive of higher harm domestic abuse offences. In terms of offences predictive of the level of DA-related harm this was followed by: possession of extreme pornographic images with serious injury, endangering the life of a child under 2, posessing a shotgun and rape of female aged 16 or over by multiple undefined offenders.

What does wider offending history and behaviour tell practitioners about types of domestic abuse perpetrator?

As part of this research, clustering analysis was conducted to identify similar groups of perpetrators in the data. The clustering analysis was based on 37 factors including:

- age of perpetrator and how it compared to age of victim(s);
- incident type;
- severity and frequency of offending; and
- location of the incident.

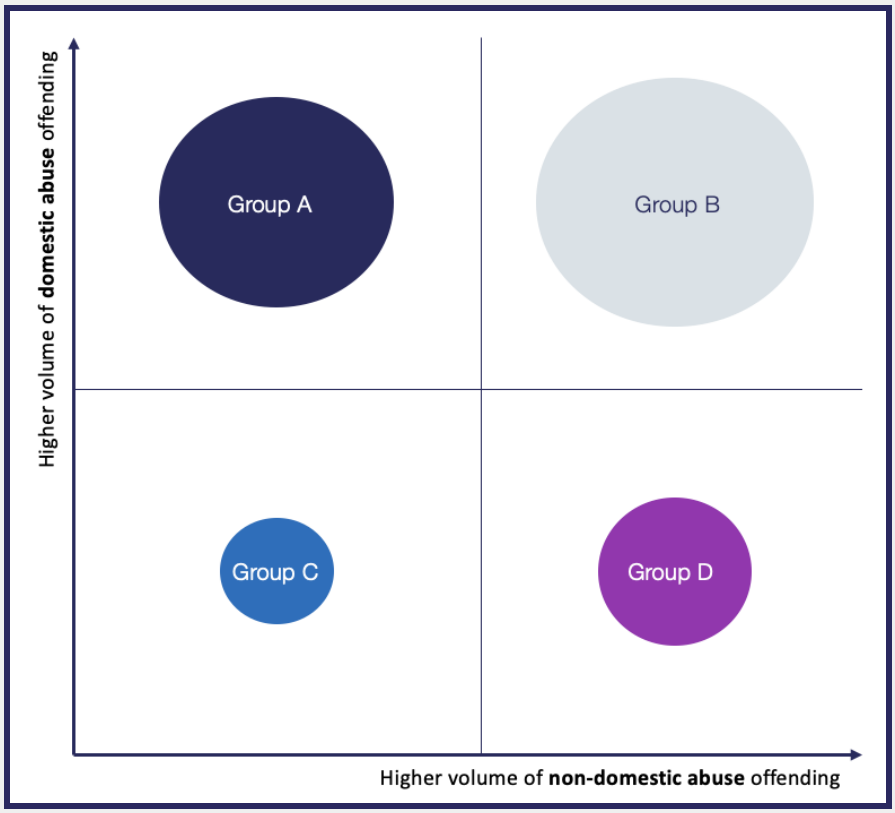
The analysis found multiple distinct clusters (referred to in the report as subgroups) of perpetrators and that these can usefully be identified and targeted by practitioners. These clusters of offenders can be broadly categorised based on severity of domestic abuse, volume of domestic abuse, and volume of non-domestic abuse offending (see figure 1 below).

These findings are consistent with existing research, which has found that domestic abuse perpetrators are not one distinct cohort. Previous academic studies[7] identified three main groups differentiated by severity and generality of offending (the 'family-only' abuser, the 'dysphoric/borderline' abuser and the 'generally violent/antisocial' abuser)[8][9]. In 2008, Johnson[10] conceptualised domestic abuse in a similar way, with: 'intimate terrorism', 'situational couple violence' and 'violent resistance'. While both papers were subject to criticism around their reductionist approach, they are important in articulating the differing drivers of domestic abuse behaviours and outlining the need for different individually targeted interventions.

[7] Cunningham, A., Jaffe, P.G., Baker, L., Dick, T., Malla, S., Mazaheri, N. and Poisson, S., 1998. Theory-derived explanations of male violence against female partners: Literature update and related implications for treatment and evaluation (pp. 1-10). London: London Family Court Clinic.
[8]Sechrist, SM, Weil, JD (2018) Assessing the impact of a focused deterrence strategy to combat intimate partner domestic violence. Violence against Women 24(3): 243–265.
[9] Klein, A, Tobin, T (2008) Longitudinal study of arrested batterers, 1995–2005: Career criminals. Violence against Women 14(2): 136–157.
[10] Johnson, M. and VIOLENCE, A.O.D., 2008. Intimate Terrorism. Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence.

***Figure 1**: Categorisation of clusters of offenders based on severity of domestic abuse, volume of domestic abuse, and volume of non-domestic abuse offending.*

Bubble size = total DA severity



Within each group, there are a number of distinct sub-groups or clusters, each demanding a slightly different method of identification, initial response and intervention:

***Figure 2**: Typology of domestic abuse perpetrators based on offending history*

Group A: High volume DA, low volume non-DA	Group B: High volume both	Group C: Low volume both	Group D: High volume non-DA, low volume DA	Group E: DA-only (not shown above)
Serial abuser (3&4)	High harm offender	Serial abuser (1&2)		Coercive controller
Domestic abuse specialist	Lower harm economic compulsive			Catastrophic offender
Female victim/offender	Higher harm economic compulsive			
	Prolific violent offender			
	Non-specialised law breakers			
	Prolific Young Offender			

Some practitioners were initially reluctant to identify a link between domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse offending (and resisted the suggestion of causation). They noted that, while non-domestic abuse offending and domestic abuse-related offending may coexist for some perpetrators, in other cases no link was apparent. The perceived prevalence of domestic abuse 'specialists' - those with high volume domestic abuse offending but no prior non-domestic abuse offending - informed the suggestion made by one police offender manager that "the link is weak at best". However, upon the presentation of findings from this report, many of these typologies resonated in one way or another. Some are clearly already strongly identified - for example, the 'female victim/offender' overlap group was often mentioned by practitioners.

> *"We see a lot of women that are offenders, but it's their way of coping with being a victim of domestic abuse [... they are] just trying to escape and trying to deal with what's going on. But it just gets them into a constant cycle that just doesn't stop."* - Probation.

Similarly the 'Prolific Violent Offender' group was identified by many practitioners.

> *"I can definitely think of cases where they've got offences against members of the public, and then in domestic settings they perpetrate violence, or physical violence to a partner. [...] In either scenario, they don't really differentiate between who the victim is - it's more about releasing their aggression"* - MARAC lead.

These individual clusters (or sub-groups) are explored in more detail in the accompanying technical research report, along with implications for the response by practitioners.

For the purposes of this report, **9 system-wide strategic recommendations are highlighted:**

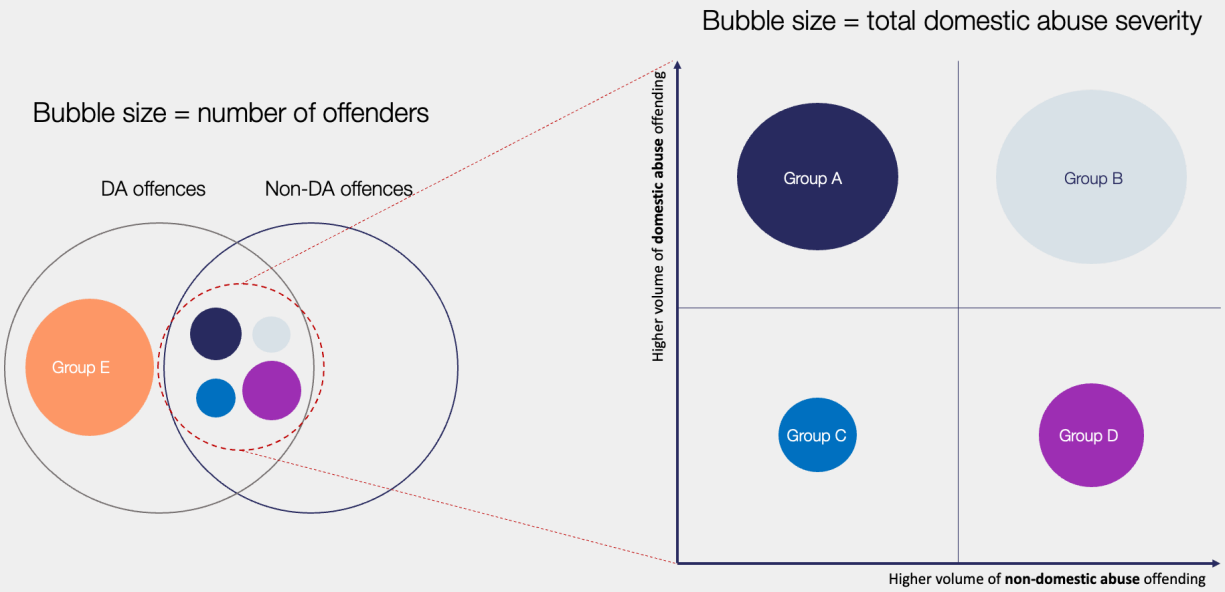
System-wide recommendations

The volumes of victims and perpetrators affected by or involved in domestic abuse is clearly greater than the system can cope with. By necessity, the system has to prioritise who to deal with and is not currently able to meet all demand. Being able to segment perpetrators, and then identify those at the greatest risk of causing harm in order to target resources effectively, is critical for agencies at each stage of the justice system.

Based on the analysis presented in the accompanying research report, close to two-thirds of all domestic abuse perpetrators have little, if any, history of offending for practitioners to work with (Group E). **At first sight, this implies their offending history is less relevant to domestic abuse perpetration and will not be useful to help identify domestic abuse perpetrators.** However, **there are a number of reasons why offending history *is* relevant to domestic abuse perpetration for some offenders (Group A and B) and might help to address the demand domestic abuse presents to agencies.**

- **Higher harm perpetrators generally have an offending footprint**: Generally, where there is offending history, the harm caused by the perpetrator in the domestic context is likely to be higher. The only exception to this is a sub-group known as catastrophic offenders who committed high harm domestic abuse with minimal other offending histories in the data available.

Figure 3*: Categorisation of clusters of offenders based on severity of domestic abuse, volume of domestic abuse, and volume of non-domestic abuse offending.*
Bubble size = total DA severity



Recommendation 1: Findings from this report suggest that where there is a non-domestic abuse-related offending history, the harm caused by the perpetrator *in* the domestic context is higher. Offending history should be a relevant factor informing criminal justice system processes, service provision and commissioning decisions. In particular all agencies conducting risk assessments of domestic abuse perpetrators should include an assessment of non-domestic abuse offending.

- **Certain types of offending footprint are associated with higher harm**: Certain, non-domestic abuse-related offences are significantly associated with domestic abuse harm, especially acquisitive crime, sexual offences and violence against the person offences.

Recommendation 2: When individuals come to the attention of police for non-domestic abuse related offences, officers should check to see if there have been any domestic abuse incidents in the individual's history. If this is the case the police should conduct a domestic abuse risk assessment, where applicable, of the individual's current domestic situation. Equally domestic abuse-specific offender managers should be notified when offenders commit a non-domestic abuse offence. This should act as a red flag for officers to update their risk assessments.

- In particular, **some of the most frequently occurring offences** related to higher harm (breaches of licence conditions, orders and injunctions, dangerous driving and assaults on police) **are associated with broader criminogenic attitudes** and general compliance issues in relation to law and law enforcement.

Recommendation 3: Individuals coming to the attention of police for domestic-abuse related offences should be risk assessed against compliance-related offences in their histories. The presence of such an offence indicating a general disregard for law enforcement should instigate a heightened risk level and associated response.

- There are a number of incidents and offences (such as **assaults or sexual abuse against children or vulnerable adults**) that **do not meet the current definition of a domestic-abuse related incident or offence, but are clearly indicative of abusive tendencies.** There are obvious parallels in the drivers and presenting factors of these offences.

Recommendation 4: Police should introduce a DA-parallel flag for offences that may indicate tendencies towards abusive behaviours in a domestic setting that would ensure these offences are picked up and raised in reviews of offending behaviour. Overall commissioning and funding for interfamilial abuse should be improved.

- **Existing research has evidenced the relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse perpetration.** In concordance with this substance misuse was found to be a prevalent factor in many of the offender typologies identified through this research.

Recommendation 5: The system as a whole should be upskilled to effectively tackle substance misuse and domestic abuse in tandem. Drug testing on arrest should be expanded to domestic abuse perpetrators and substance misuse services should be equipped to identify domestic abuse and given the ability to refer directly to locally commissioned perpetrator programmes.

- **Risk assessment must continue informing proportionate responses**: Risk assessment tools continue to be a significant part of the response to domestic abuse. Regardless of the type and severity of the incident they are being assessed for, the result of the first domestic abuse risk assessment of an offender can be deemed relatively indicative of their subsequent risk of domestic abuse offending.

Recommendation 6: The police should place further enhanced support around first-time high-risk and medium-risk assessments. Previous risk assessment levels should be weighted and included as part of future assessments.

Sector/typology-specific recommendations

Recommendation 7: The response to domestic abuse by criminal justice system agencies is likely to be enhanced by the application of a more granular typology of domestic abuse perpetrators to facilitate a priority-driven and targeted approach. We recommend 35 improvements across the criminal justice system - some relevant to all perpetrators, some relevant to specific typologies. As in the table below, the criminal justice system is considered in terms of the **initial response** to domestic abuse, **safeguarding, offender management, prevention and diversion, prisons and probation**.

Response type	Most relevant clusters/typologies
Initial response	Coercive controllers, economic compulsive offenders, catastrophic offenders
Safeguarding	Serial abusers, domestic abuse specialists
Offender Management	Prolific violent offenders, non-specialised law breakers
Prevention and diversion	Prolific young offenders, female victim/ offenders
Probation and prisons	High harm offenders

Further sector/typology-specific considerations

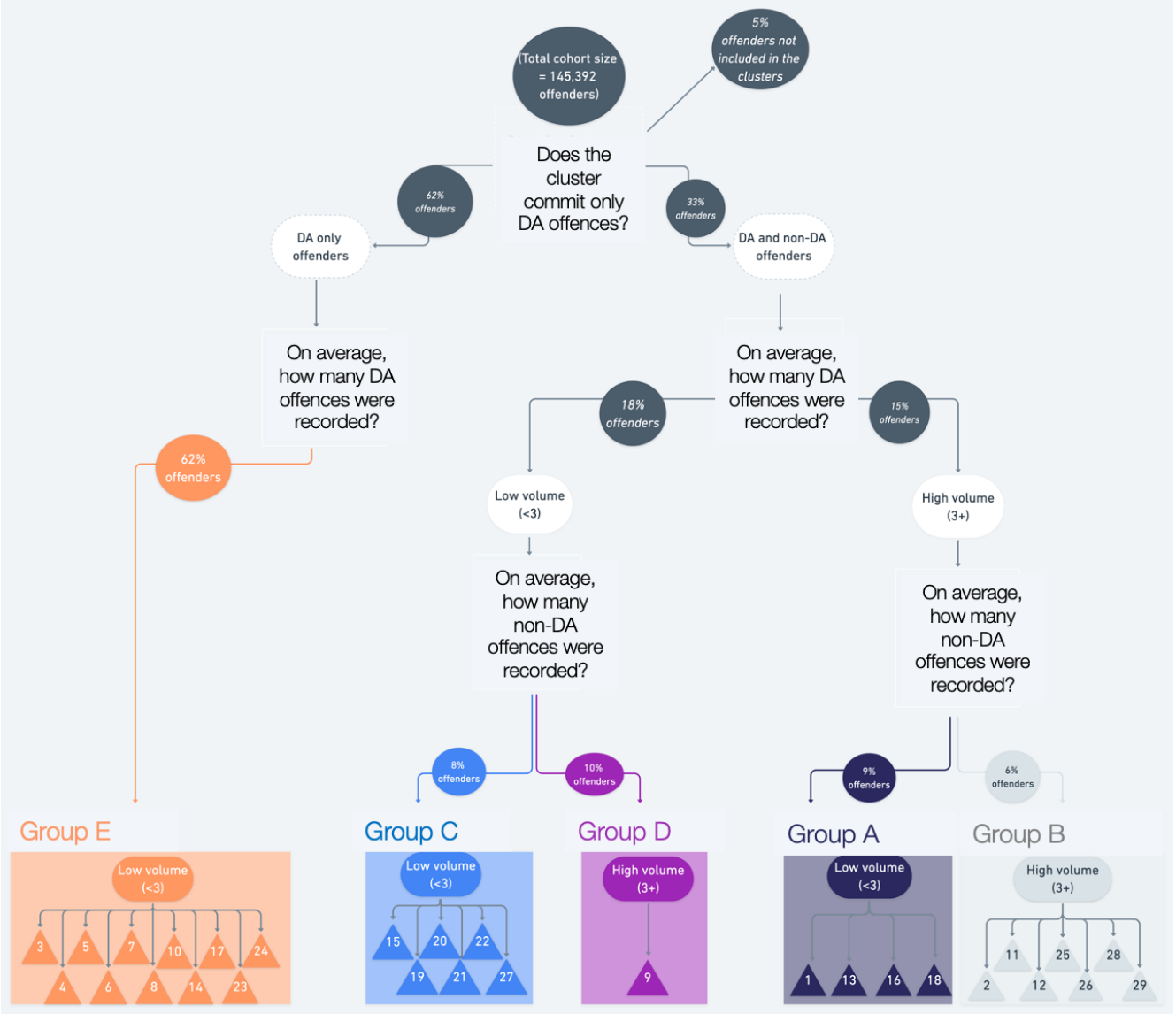
Recommendation 8: An approach to identifying and intervening with domestic abuse perpetrators does not yet have the same maturity as policy and commissioning around domestic abuse victims and wider safeguarding. Local areas, led by the police and Police and Crime Commissioners, should explore how services are commissioned, including the use of budgets, in the context of the whole partnership landscape and engage with partners to instil coherency and cogency across all activities.

Further research

Recommendation 9: Researchers should continue to exploit the potential of recorded data on offending history. In particular there would be value in exploring the relationship between police outcomes and future perpetration, the significance of demographic factors (in particular ethnicity) and comparing offending patterns by type of domestic abuse relationship (intimate or non-intimate). Further

> work with practitioners to improve risk assessment processes incorporating a view of non-domestic abuse offending would also be beneficial.

Figure 4: The distribution of clusters into offender groups looking at the volume of DA and non-DA incidents, with proportions of offenders



Introduction

The context - rising domestic abuse and increasing demand on the criminal justice system

Nationally, the demand generated by domestic abuse incidents has increased rapidly in recent years. Between March 2020 and March 2021, the number of domestic abuse crimes recorded by police in England and Wales increased by 6% - continuing a trend that may only be attributed in part to improved offence-recording practices and victim reporting.[11] 18% of all crimes recorded by police in the year ending March 2021 were domestic abuse-related, representing an increase of 3% from the previous year.[12]

The increasing prevalence of domestic abuse is placing unprecedented pressure on police, the criminal justice system and other public services. The volumes of victims and perpetrators affected by or involved in domestic abuse are clearly greater than the system can cope with. By necessity, the system has to prioritise who to deal with and is not currently able to meet all demand. Being able to segment perpetrators, and then identify those at the greatest risk of causing harm in order to target resources effectively, is critical for agencies at each stage of the justice system.

Limited resources mean that police (and other agencies) may respond selectively to domestic abuse incidents[13]. Risk assessment tools are intended to allow professionals to prioritise high-risk cases and allocate resources where they are most needed[14]. Risk assessment procedures directly determine who is referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and given that the result of a risk assessment carries significant implications, it is important to consider who is the focus of risk assessment procedures.[15]

The way in which current domestic abuse-related processes and services are tailored is primarily based on domestic abuse risk. Risk helps agencies prioritise demand, a necessity given the extent of the demand presented by domestic abuse. At the acute end of the criminal justice system, offender managers can only work with the top 5% highest risk perpetrators, with higher demand areas only able to review the top 3%.

Identifying and assessing perpetrators utilising offending histories - what is already known

Crime and domestic abuse-related crime have observable and interrelated risk factors which increase the criminogenic needs of offenders. These risk factors include economic instability,

[11] ONS, Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021

[12] Ibid.

[13]Almond, L., McManus, M., Brian, D. and Merrington, D.P., 2017. Exploration of the risk factors contained within the UK's existing domestic abuse risk assessment tool (DASH): do these risk factors have individual predictive validity regarding recidivism?. Journal of aggression, conflict and peace research.

[14]Turner, E., Medina, J. and Brown, G., 2019. Dashing hopes? The predictive accuracy of domestic abuse risk assessment by police. The British Journal of Criminology, 59(5), pp.1013-1034.

[15]Cordis Bright. (2022). Evidence on 'what works' with Domestic Abuse Perpetrators.

mental health needs, substance misuse issues, adverse childhood experiences and the presence of criminal histories, associations or attitudes, all of which can influence the perpetration of both DA-related and non-DA-related offences. A 2020 study, into predictors of domestic abuse in Essex, found that at a neighbourhood level, income and anti-social behaviour were the strongest predictors of both the overall domestic abuse rate and the rate of repeat victimisation[16]. The findings from this analysis suggest similar mechanisms in the drivers of crime, regardless of whether offences were committed in public, private or domestic settings. Here, structural factors of concentrated disadvantage and social disorder can be observed as strong predictors of DA-related or non-DA-related crime, in all settings.

Further overlap can be observed between DA-related crime and non-DA-related crime within the age-crime curve. The age-crime curve[17] refers to a predictable pattern of delinquency and criminal behaviour identified in young people by criminologists. In this pattern, delinquent and criminal behaviour increases during early adolescence (10-14) and mid adolescence (14-17), peaks in late adolescence (18-21), and then rapidly declines during early adulthood.[18] A study of 1200 males and females aged 13 to 28, observed similar trends in the perpetration of intimate partner violence (IPV) and the age-crime curve[19], with IPV perpetration peaking later than general crime at 20-22 before declining later in life. These findings are in line with general theories of crime, violence and antisocial behaviour, which predict an overlap between different forms of antisocial, violent or non-domestic abuse offending behaviour and IPV perpetration.

This overlap is reinforced by Bland's[20] observation of domestic abuse perpetration patterns within offender cohorts. This research highlighted a strong trend amongst perpetrators with multiple victims for higher volume and harm in other types of non-DA related crimes. Seventy percent of the serial perpetrators (1,233 of the 1,770) within this study were linked to non–domestic abuse crimes.

However, research on connections between domestic abuse offending and non-domestic abuse offending offers an incomplete picture; much abuse does not come to the attention of police due to issues in reporting, including victims being unwilling to report because they fear the implications of doing so and/or lack confidence in justice outcomes. In the year ending March 2018, only 17% of partner abuse victims reported their experience of abuse to police.[21]

Existing research has primarily focused on the escalation of domestic abuse over time, rather than

[16]Weir, R., 2020. Individuals, Families and Neighbourhoods: Predictors of Domestic Abuse in Essex (Doctoral dissertation, University of Essex).

[17] Johnson et. al 2015. *The Age-IPV Curve: Changes in Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration during Adolescence and Young Adulthood. Pp 708-726*

[18] Verbruggen et.al 2020. The Relationship Between the Development of non-domestic abuse offending and Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration in Young Adulthood

[19] Johnson et. al 2015. *The Age-IPV Curve: Changes in Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration during Adolescence and Young Adulthood. Pp 708-726*

[20] Bland, M.P. and Ariel, B., 2020. *Targeting domestic abuse with police data*. Springer International Publishing.

[21] ONS, Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: March 2018

considering the interplay of domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse offending across variables such as severity and time between incidents. However, two key studies have assessed the relationship between wider offending and domestic abuse. A 2021 Dutch study[22] demonstrated that individuals committing general and violent offending were more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence in later life, while a UK-based study found that assessing prior non-domestic abuse offending could, hypothetically, predict 37% of future serious domestic abuse arrests up to two years before they occur.[23]

Similarly, existing research has classified domestic abuse perpetrators into sub-groups or typologies. The first significant research by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart[24] identified three main groups differentiated by severity and generality of offending (the 'family-only' abuser, the 'dysphoric/borderline' abuser and the 'generally violent/antisocial' abuser). Later, in 2008, Johnson [25] conceptualised domestic abuse in a similar way with: 'intimate terrorism', 'situational couple violence' and 'violent resistance'. While both papers were subject to criticism around their reductionist approach, they are important in articulating the differing drivers of domestic abuse behaviours and outlining the need for different individually targeted interventions.

Recent reviews, including an HMICFRS (Her (at the time of writing) Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services) review, have outlined challenges in identifying the highest risk or harm perpetrators. Evaluation of the DASH risk assessment used in many police forces found it to be generally ineffective due to inconsistent use and a lack of focus on non-physical offending. Robinson and Clancy[26] developed a Priority Perpetrator Intervention Tool (PPIT) and piloted it in three forces in England and Wales. A significant difference between the DASH assessment and PPIT is the inclusion of "linked" non-domestic abuse offences in the assessment.

Robinson and Clancy summarised that the pilots "led to the identification of a number of priority domestic abuse perpetrators who were previously **'under the radar'** of agencies. This tended to occur because information was previously limited, incomplete, outdated, or not shared. Consequently, **some individuals were not known for any type of offending, or they were known as offenders but not for domestic abuse, or their domestic abuse offending was (improperly) categorised as low or medium risk**. Prior to the pilots, these individuals had not been dealt with at all or not in a way that was proportionate to their offending. The pilots enabled a clearer view of their offending, which agencies could then respond to with a range of intervention options." [27]

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[22] Bijlsma, A., van der Put, C., Vial, A., van Horn, J., Overbeek, G. and Assink, M., 2021. Gender Differences Between Domestic Violent Men and Women: Criminogenic Risk Factors and Their Association With Treatment Dropout. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*

[23] Bland, M.P. and Ariel, B., 2020. *Targeting domestic abuse with police data*. Springer International Publishing.

[24] Holtzworth-Munroe, A, Stuart, GL (1994) Typologies of male batterers: Three subtypes and the differences among them. Psychological Bulletin 16(3): 476–497

[25] Johnson, M 2008. Intimate Terrorism. Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence.

[26] Robinson, A. and Clancy, A., 2015. Development of the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) for domestic abuse.

[27] Ibid.

When observing patterns of domestic abuse offending within offender cohorts, a strong trend can be observed amongst serial perpetrators in committing also a higher volume of non-domestic abuse crimes - with those crimes also generally being higher harm. Bland's[28] study on domestic abuse crimes, incidents and arrest records from across four police forces found that serial perpetrators were more commonly associated with non–domestic abuse crimes than repeat or single-time offenders. Serial perpetrators can be seen as more 'generalist' in their offending compared to repeat offenders, who displayed more specialism within their perpetration of domestic abuse. Both of these cohorts had a greater proportion of individuals connected to non-domestic abuse offending than single/non-repeat offenders. Seventy percent of serial perpetrators and 57% of repeat offenders were linked to non–domestic abuse crimes, compared to 33% of non-repeat/single-time offenders, suggesting a greater tendency towards generalist offending amongst perpetrators with more than one incident or victim of domestic abuse[29]. Despite this, only a small proportion of these individuals are deemed 'high risk' when using Probation risk assessment tools (OASys and SARA). This is significant due to findings on the connections between domestic abuse offending and non-domestic abuse offending.[30]

Using police data to better understand offending patterns of domestic abuse perpetrators

In partnership with West Midlands police, who supplied police data covering a 10-year period, this research seeks to answer the question: **How can police data be used to understand the offending patterns of domestic abuse perpetrators?**

Data supplied by West Midlands Police covered the ten-year period from the beginning of January 2011 to the end of December 2020, and included records of all crimes and non-crimes with a domestic abuse flag, and all crime and non-crimes that were not domestic abuse related but were linked to any named suspect on any domestic abuse-flagged incident in that same time period.

This data was cleaned and incidents were grouped by unique offender ID, enabling the analysis of both domestic and non-domestic offending patterns of individuals in the data. The individuals were grouped into clusters following principal component analysis, using variables derived from qualitative insight. **The total number of individuals included in the clustered data set was 137,661, across 29 discrete clusters.[31]**

The 29 clusters group individuals based on commonalities across variables such as: who they are (including age but excluding the categorical variables of gender and ethnicity); who they are perpetrating against (age difference from victim); how many people they perpetrate against and how many incidents are linked to them; when offending happens and the duration of each incident;

[28] Bland, M.P., 2020. *Targeting domestic abuse by mining police records* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge).
[29] Robinson, A.L., Clancy, A. and Hanks, S., 2014. Prevalence and characteristics of serial domestic abuse perpetrators: Multi-agency evidence from Wales.
[30] Bland, M.P., 2020. *Targeting domestic abuse by mining police records* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge).
[31] Excluding those individuals (n=7,731) who had missing data in one of the variables included in the PCA/clustering

location and level of area deprivation; offence type, severity and frequency; was the individual a victim themselves; were substances involved. These variables were selected to inform the clustering based on the idea that they reflect the information that practitioners have access to at the initial onset of an incident - making the research most applicable.

Alongside the quantitative analysis, qualitative interviews were conducted with 36 practitioners who work closely with domestic abuse perpetrators in the West Midlands, including police offender managers, youth offending services, community interest groups, children/family services, the voluntary sector, health and probation. A further two interviews were conducted with domestic abuse perpetrators, providing an in-depth account of domestic abuse triggers, behaviours and rehabilitative pathways from their perspective. Insight from these interviews is woven throughout the report, and has proved useful to elucidate the complexities of the data. A comprehensive methodology is set out in the Technical Research Report.

Based on initial qualitative insight, common themes around domestic abuse offending reflecting perceived overlaps with non-domestic abuse offending were developed. These themes led to the the following classifications:

- domestic abuse offenders with no non-domestic abuse offending history,
- domestic abuse offenders with drug offences and non-domestic abuse offending linked to/driven by substance misuse,
- domestic abuse offenders with non-domestic abuse offending linked to acquisitive crime,
- domestic abuse offenders with non-domestic abuse offending linked to violence, and
- domestic abuse offenders with non-domestic abuse offending linked to stalking and harassment.

Age and gender variations were also considered.

Using offending history to identify and target high harm perpetrators

We found that two thirds of individuals had only been recorded as committing a single domestic abuse offence in the ten-year data set. For the most part these individuals were involved in low level crime or non-crime incidents that were assessed as standard risk by police. Therefore, the majority of harm in the data set was caused by a small group of individuals.

The significant resourcing pressures on police and other public services referenced means that the correct identification of the highest risk perpetrators is critical. Existing research has indicated that a small proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators cause the majority of harm.[32] Cordis Bright's

[32] Research indicates that the majority of harm caused by domestic abuse can be attributed to a small proportion of perpetrators: the 'power few' or 'felonious few' (Sherman et al. 2016). In Thames Valley, for example, Barnham et al. (2017) identified a 'power few' of 3% who accounted for 90% of total intimate partner abuse crime inflicted by all perpetrators. Bland and Ariel (2015) identified a similar trend in Suffolk Constabulary, where over 80% of harm was concentrated in less than 2% of the victim-perpetrator dyads.

review of risk assessments outlined the need for more effective approaches to identifying these few individuals in order to prevent the most significant harms.[33]

Analysis conducted for this report has found that offenders causing the greatest domestic abuse harms were much more likely to also be committing other types of offending, thus highlighting valuable opportunities for practitioners in the identification and targeting of domestic abuse perpetrators.

Existing research has identified a relationship between gender-based violence and domestic abuse,[34] and between child or vulnerable adult abuse and domestic abuse[35]. However, this report suggests that a wider range of offences can be usefully indicative of domestic abuse perpetration risks.

There is an opportunity to use these findings to enable the processes and services focused on risk to be more responsive to different types of domestic abuse perpetrators, and to make the case for improving the way in which we meet the demand facing criminal justice agencies. Looking across both non-domestic and domestic abuse offending provides practitioners with a more complete picture ensuring that, where behaviours are not restricted to a specific domestic context, interventions can adequately address more generalised risk.

Identifying operational recommendations

Following the first phase of research, we used our interim findings to conduct a second phase to inform the development of recommendations aimed primarily at enhancing the response of frontline practitioners. We interviewed practitioners across the West Midlands to inform the development of process maps. This helped visualise potential intervention points as individuals are processed by the police, the criminal justice system and multi-agency networks.

We then held four virtual workshops with practitioners in the West Midlands to discuss the typologies of perpetrators identified and the opportunities for intervention. Each workshop centred around a different contributing factor to, or important dimension of, the relationship between domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse offending: general violence; substance misuse; no offending history beyond domestic abuse offending; and young offenders.

Through this forum, we identified the potential opportunities for identification of perpetrators and intervention points highlighted below. The practitioner workshops provided a wide range of insights beyond simply *where* in the process the intervention points might be, but also *what these*

[33]Cordis Bright. (2022). Evidence on 'what works' with Domestic Abuse Perpetrators.

[34] Radford, J., Friedberg, M. and Harne, L., 2000. Women, violence and strategies for action (pp. 167-168). Buckingham: Open University Press.

[35] Richards, T.N., Tillyer, M.S. and Wright, E.M., 2017. Intimate partner violence and the overlap of perpetration and victimization: Considering the influence of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in childhood. Child abuse & neglect, 67, pp.240-248.

interventions might need to look like. We have utilised this insight as well as that generated through the quantitative analysis to generate recommendations that operationalise the research conducted.

This report outlines our high level findings, before discussion on recommendations. We have grouped the recommendations into two and outlined some areas for further investigation:

A. **System-wide recommendations:** the research findings indicate there are opportunities for the system as a whole to utilise offending histories to inform the response to domestic abuse.

B. **Sector/typology-specific recommendations:** perpetrators are not one homogenous group, but many types (some distinct, some overlapping). The response to domestic abuse perpetrators should therefore vary by typology of offending and sector focus.

C. **Further research**: We have also outlined recommendations for further research in this area.

Please note that a detailed methodology for the analysis and the full research findings are published in a separate report.

Summary of research findings

This research found that most domestic abuse offenders do not have an offending history, but for those that do there is untapped potential for earlier identification and intervention. The clustering analysis undertaken in this research helped to describe five key groups of interest for practitioners when identifying domestic abuse perpetrators:

- Group A: High volume DA, low volume non-DA
- Group B: High volume both
- Group C: Low volume both
- Group D: High volume non-DA, low volume DA
- Group E: Low volume DA-only

Most individuals in the data set were not recorded as a perpetrator for more than one incident (Group E)

Over the ten year span of police data, three fifths of individuals had been recorded as connected to just one domestic abuse-related incident (Group E). Therefore, for the majority of domestic abuse perpetrators in the data, the offending history is not extensive enough to help in identifying perpetrators. For the most part, these individuals were involved in low level crime or non-crime incidents that were assessed as standard risk by police.

The majority of harm was caused by a small group of individuals (Groups A-D)

This group was of particular interest because it was found that the greater the domestic abuse harms they caused, the more likely the individual was to have a history of non-domestic abuse offences. This supports the hypothesis that there is value in practitioners understanding the non-domestic abuse offending histories of domestic abuse perpetrators. Two further sub-groups of domestic abuse only offenders were also flagged as important because while their recorded offending was low, the type, duration and/or level of harm of the offending was indicative of patterns of abuse.

There was a statistically significant relationship between gender-based violence, child abuse and domestic abuse, as evidenced in existing research

Existing research has identified a relationship between gender-based violence[36] and domestic abuse, and between child or vulnerable adult abuse and domestic abuse[37]. Indeed, the Priority

[36] Radford, J., Friedberg, M. and Harne, L., 2000. Women, violence and strategies for action (pp. 167-168). Buckingham: Open University Press.

[37] Richards, T.N., Tillyer, M.S. and Wright, E.M., 2017. Intimate partner violence and the overlap of perpetration and victimization: Considering the influence of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in childhood. Child abuse & neglect, 67, pp.240-248.

Perpetrator Identification tool currently used in some police forces identifies these as “linked” and therefore “risky” offences[38].

The research found that a number of non-domestic abuse offences were particularly significant in patterns of offending which resulted in higher harm to domestic abuse. As previous research has shown, this research found that sexual offences, including those against children, were likely to co-occur with domestic abuse.

However, the research also suggests that a wider range of offences can be usefully indicative of domestic abuse perpetration risks

Generally speaking the research found evidence of a relationship between domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse across four categories:

- **Sexual offences**: rape and sexual offences against both adults and children were found to be statistically significant.
- **Acquisitive crime:** attempted burglary, robbery, making off without payment and theft of motor vehicles were also related to more harmful domestic abuse.
- **Violent crime:** malicious wounding, grievous bodily harm, racially aggravated assaults, threats to kill and threats with a weapon were also indicative of higher harm.
- **Intractability:** breach offences (breach of non-molestation order/restraining order/bail conditions) and licence recalls were also statistically significant, along with assaults on police, threats to witnesses/jurors, criminal damage and driving offences which tend to be united in terms of an overall criminogenic attitude or tendency toward civil disobedience.

[38] Robinson, A. L. and Clancy, A. (2021) ‘Systematically identifying and prioritising domestic abuse perpetrators for targeted intervention’, Criminology & Criminal Justice, 21(5), pp. 687–704.

Despite the greatest harm being caused by a small group of perpetrators, they are not a homogenous group - there are distinct sub-groups of perpetrators within this group.

Group A: High volume DA, low volume non-DA	Group B: High volume both	Group C: Low volume both	Group D: High volume non-DA, low volume DA	Group E: DA-only (not shown above)
Serial abuser (3&4)	High harm offender	Serial abuser (1&2)		Coercive controller
Domestic abuse specialist	Lower harm economic compulsive			Catastrophic offender
Female victim/offender	Higher harm economic compulsive			
	Prolific violent offender			
	Non-specialised law breakers			
	Prolific Young Offender			

Serial Abuser (2 sub groups)

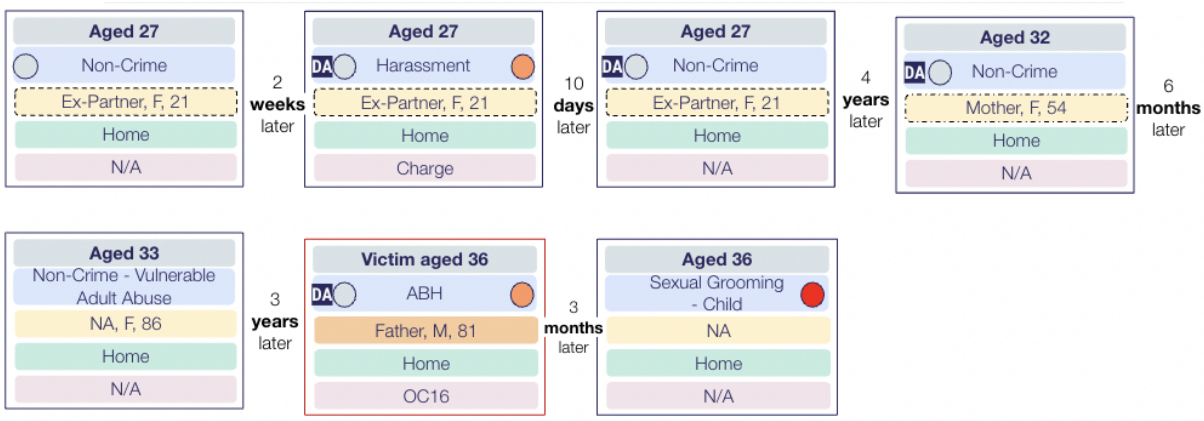
Serial Abuser (2 sub groups)

Our Serial Abuser category is made up of four separate sub-groups identified through quantitative analysis. However the similarities in the presenting non-domestic abuse offences, and the availability of existing evidence indicated that these four sub-groups could be considered as one group of "serial abusers". Generally speaking these sub-groups display a high volume of domestic abuse perpetration alongside non-domestic abuse offending indicative of wider abusive tendencies. This includes child abuse, sexual abuse and abuse against vulnerable adults.

One of the Serial Abuser case studies reflects this profile with a history of both non-domestic abuse and domestic abuse offending over a seven and a half year period. The first three incidents which appear in the data occur within a short duration (around three to four weeks) and are a combination of two non-crime incidents and a recorded domestic abuse-related offence of harassment against the same ex-partner. Following a period of four years with no offence recorded, the individual reappears in the data for a domestic abuse non-crime incident involving his mother. Six months later, a vulnerable adult abuse non-crime incident is recorded, involving an 86 year-old

woman. Three years later, the police recorded a high severity child sexual grooming offence against the individual. However, there is no information on the outcome for this recorded offence.[39]

Serial Abuser Representative Case Study (male) - see key in annex



Based on this offending record, the individual would be considered a serial domestic abuse perpetrator based on the domestic abuse offending alone, but consideration by practitioners of the non-domestic abuse offending history would highlight broader abusive or controlling tendencies of this individual to factor into a reponse.

Female Victim/Offender

The Female Victim/Offender sub-group has a similar profile to the Serial Abusers in terms of domestic abuse offending history but is notably different for its demographic make-up. Ninety-three percent of individuals in this sub-group are women, compared to 24% women across the cohort as a whole (hence the naming convention for this group). The severity of both domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse incidents perpetrated by individuals in this sub-group is low - 51% of domestic abuse is non-crime.

Significantly, on average, individuals in this sub-group have also been the victim of 16 domestic abuse-related incidents. The case study for the Female Victim/Offender group was the victim of sustained abuse perpetrated by an ex-partner across a five year period. The case study individual perpetrated domestic abuse against this ex-partner on one occasion within the parameters of the data set, and this is a non-crime incident. The other incidents of domestic abuse perpetrated by the case study individual were directed at the individual's mother, with incidents of child abuse non-crime perpetrated against the individual's son.

[39] It is unclear why the sexual grooming offence has an N/A against outcome and no victim details. This may be a recording issue

Practitioners acknowledged that female perpetrators of domestic abuse were less common in their cohorts, and noted that their domestic abuse offending was often a response to being a victim of abuse in the current, or a previous, domestic setting.

> *"[One woman] offended with all of her partners, but has also been the victim with all of her partners and has had dreadful ACEs, really, really bad ACEs and a really sad life to be honest."* - Domestic abuse offender manager

This victim-perpetrator overlap for female offenders is well-evidenced. The Corston report concluded: "Women with histories of violence and abuse are over-represented in the criminal justice system and can be described as victims as well as offenders."[40] The perpetuating nature of this overlap can mean female perpetrators find themselves trapped in a cycle of domestic abuse victimhood and offending.

> *"We see a lot of women that are offenders, but it's their ways of coping with being a victim of domestic abuse [... they are] just trying to escape and trying to deal with what's going on. But it just gets them into a constant cycle that just doesn't stop."* - Probation

Practitioners flagged alcohol and substance misuse as common risk factors for female domestic abuse perpetrators. 36% of domestic abuse incidents and 20% of non-domestic abuse incidents perpetrated by individuals female victim/offenders involved substances.

Significantly, practitioners noted that substance misuse was often a feature of the relationship itself, rather than a behaviour specific to the perpetrator; this appears to be a significant dimension of 'toxic' relationships.

Domestic Abuse Specialist

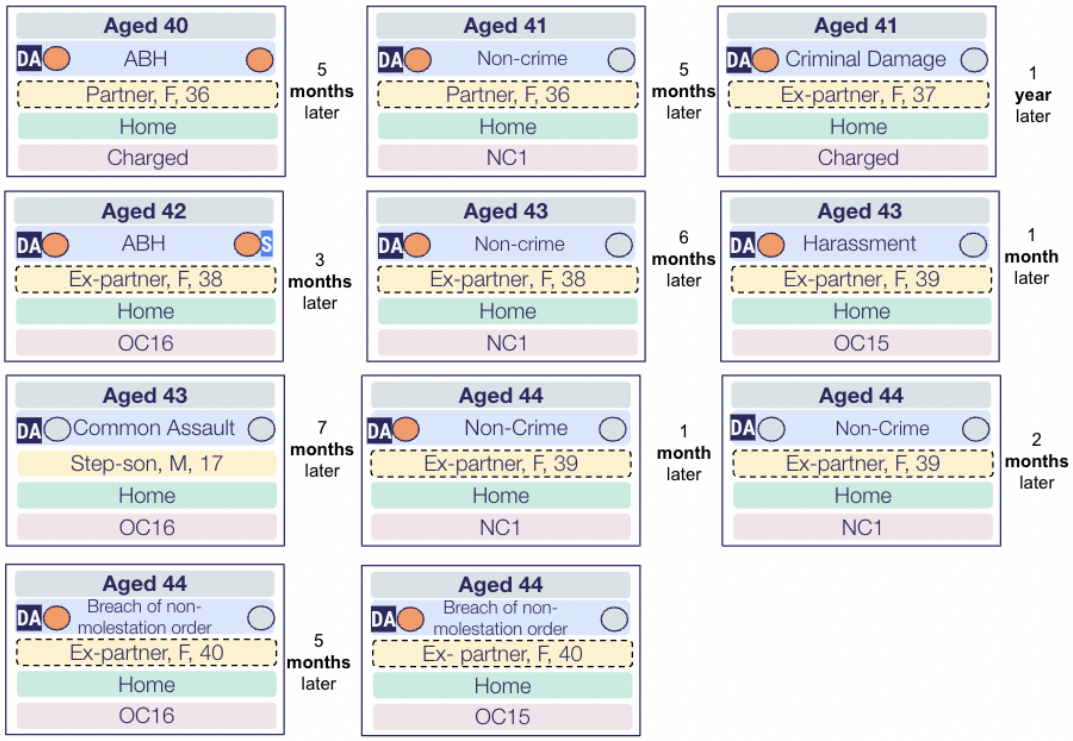
In the Domestic Abuse Specialists sub-group, 69% of individuals are involved exclusively in domestic abuse incidents, and have no non-domestic abuse offending history. Across the sub-group, the average number of domestic abuse incidents is seven (typically perpetrated against one victim), however the severity of domestic abuse incidents is low to medium, with non-crime incidents the biggest proportion of incidents.

The representative case study for this sub-group is illustrative of the 'high volume' domestic abuse-only perpetrator with 11 domestic abuse incidents recorded across a four year period in the

[40]Corston, B.J., 2007. The Corston Report: A report of a review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system. Home Office.

data set. With one exception, the abuse is perpetrated against the same victim - a partner who is later recorded as an ex-partner.

Domestic Abuse Specialist Representative Case Study (male)



Practitioners suggest that domestic abuse 'specialists' might experience detachment between their abusive behaviours and their perception of criminality. In other words, even where a perpetrator has an extensive domestic abuse offending history, they may view their behaviours as distinct from other types of crime, such as theft.

> *"We do have people that are just pure [domestic abuse] offenders and in their moral compass, you know, burgling is a disgusting crime, or robbing old ladies on the street - 'God I'd never do that, that's a criminal that is'. But they don't think twice about beating up their partner"* - Domestic abuse offender manager

To explain this disconnect in the perception of harm, practitioners described a sense of perceived entitlement from perpetrators in the domestic setting. Often, this entitlement stems from misogynistic views, which may have developed in childhood and manifest as learned behaviour. Practitioners reflected that perpetrators holding these views could be difficult to engage.

> *"I've got a handful of cases that are extremely aggressive to professionals, there's kind of*

> *misogynistic attitudes, they won't respond well to women, you know, they're really anti authoritarian"* - MARAC representative

Several practitioners pointed to the prevalence of intergenerational domestic abuse leading to the normalisation of this behaviour.

> *"What I find is that witnessing physical violence as a child between parents leads to stereotypes around masculinity. It's, you know, it's a man's world and women should do all the cooking and cleaning, that really enforces their attitudes around male and female roles and how a partner should behave."* - MARAC representative

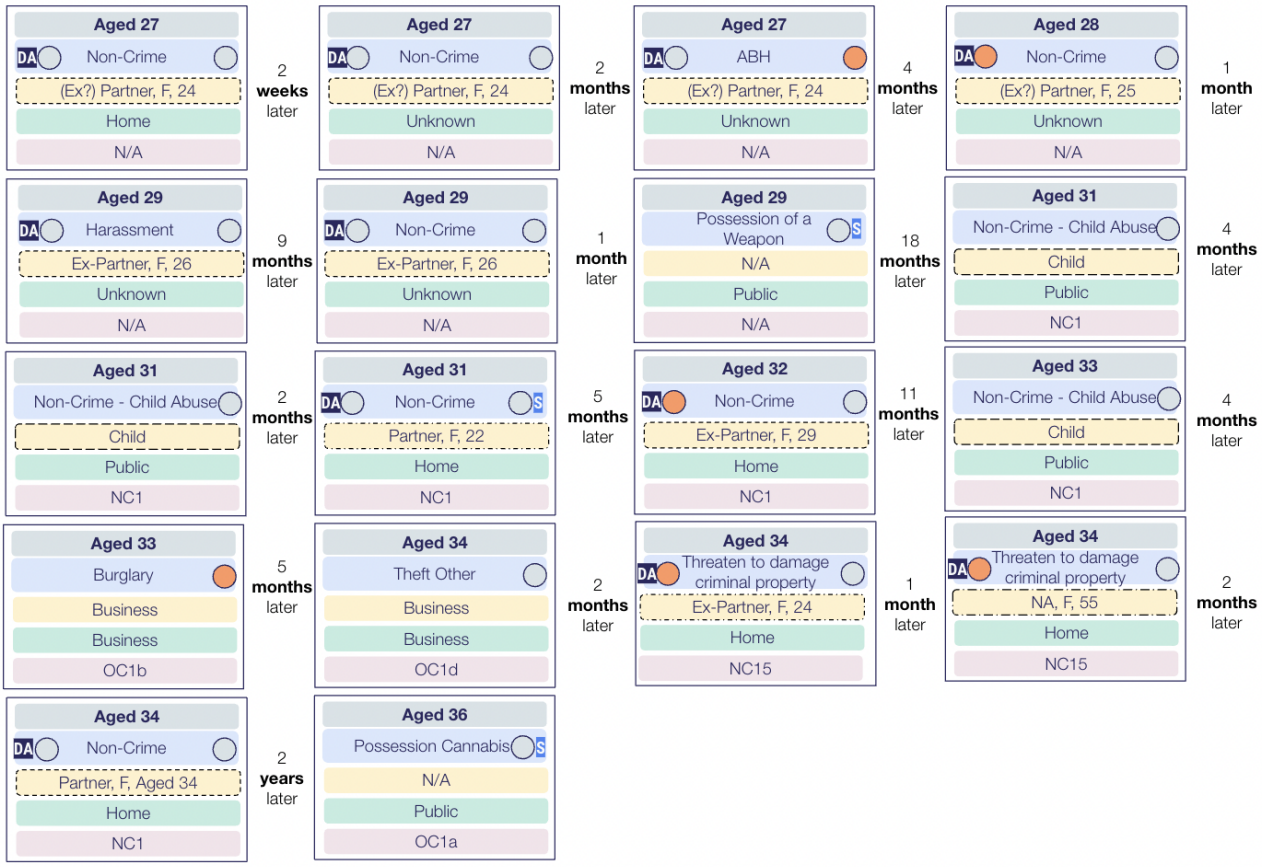
Individuals fitting this type may compartmentalise their domestic and non-domestic spheres, demonstrating abusive behaviours only in the context of a domestic relationship. This duality can make such individuals difficult for agencies and services to identify, and may discourage victim reporting.

Non-specialised Law Breakers

On average the Non-specialised Law Breakers are involved in 15 incidents affecting eight different victims across both non-domestic abuse offending and domestic abuse-related offending. They have twice as many domestic abuse incidents recorded than non-domestic abuse offences. While the average severity of non-domestic abuse-related incidents is slightly higher than for domestic abuse incidents, the frequency of incidents means that the cumulative harm caused by both types of offending is significant. Ninety-four percent of individuals are men, which is well above the proportion across the total clustered data set (76%).

The pattern of domestic abuse-related incidents perpetrated by the representative case study individual points to possible stalking and harassment behaviour against an ex-partner. The first six incidents in the individual's offending history are perpetrated against the same ex-partner. The incidents are a combination of non-crime incidents, ABH and harassment offences and are reported in the space of 17 months.

Non-specialised law breaker Representative Case Study (male)



This may represent what one practitioner referred to as the 'unravelling period'; the period in which a domestic abuse offender experiences setbacks following changes to their relationship with the victim. Despite the generally low level of risk or severity assigned to isolated incidents, the cumulative effect of these incidents can cause significant harm to victims.

The non-domestic abuse offending for the representative case study is not specialised, and includes possession of a weapon, theft and drug offences. Practitioners suggested that domestic abuse perpetrators with high volume non-domestic abuse offending may possess broader criminogenic attitudes or beliefs. A sense of entitlement, or even arrogance around law breaking, might explain the prevalence of offending in both domestic and non-domestic spheres, and the lack of specialisation.

Prolific Young Offenders

The individuals in this sub-group are, on average, the youngest across the clustered data set; the average age at which the perpetrators in this group first commit domestic abuse is 23. They are involved in significantly more non-domestic abuse incidents than domestic abuse incidents, and the non-domestic abuse offending was typically more severe than domestic abuse offending.

Indicative of this trend, the representative case study individual was involved in 18 offences before they turned 18, and five offences once they turned 18. Domestic abuse incidents perpetrated by the individual involve both the individual's partner and the individual's mother.

An analysis of the non-domestic abuse incidents recorded does not immediately suggest a pattern or specialised type of offending - offences include violence against the person, criminal damage, drugs possession, theft and sexual offences. However, recording practices around domestic abuse for individuals under the age of 16 may disrupt a clear understanding of abusive behaviours presenting at an early age.

Notably, the statutory definition of domestic abuse sets the criteria that the person carrying out the behaviour must be aged 16 or over. Consequently, incidents of common assault against a parent when the case study individual was aged 12 and 13 are not recorded as domestic abuse incidents. Moreover, when aged 16, an offence of criminal damage at an aunt's house, occurring three days after a non-crime incident perpetrated against the individual's mother, is *not* recorded as a domestic abuse incident. This might suggest inconsistencies in recording practices around what constitutes a domestic relationship.

The detail of these incidents, while not flagged as domestic abuse, may provide useful context for a practitioner working with a young person like this. An exploration of non-domestic abuse incidents involving conflict or a tendency to violence may provide valuable insight into emerging abusive behaviours. Indeed, YOT practitioners pointed out that the young people entering the system are rarely there as a result of domestic abuse offending.

> *"It's not necessarily the primary reason they've come to youth offending, so it might be that they've come through for another offence. But in working with them we've realised actually they may be in a toxic relationship or controlling relationship, there's coercive control going on. And also sometimes even physical violence."* - Practitioner in youth offending service

However, once practitioners begin work with them, abusive behaviours or troubling beliefs around conflict and relationships can become apparent.

Case Study: David*

David's offending and early interactions with the criminal justice system are comparable to the typical offending patterns for individuals in the **Prolific Youth Offenders** sub-group.

As a child, David had a "short fuse" and struggled to control his anger, lashing out at other children in the playground. At the age of 16, he started using cocaine and became addicted. This led to a mentality of "I want everything and I want it now" and he became involved in criminal activity to support his habit and lifestyle.

> *"I blasted a girl across the playground because she said something to me. [...] If someone says something to me I won't think, I'll do it straight away - it's impulsive behaviour."*

It wasn't until David had already committed numerous offences as a child and had been in and out of both young offender institutions and prison that he committed his first domestic abuse offence. Following a break-up, David's relationship with his ex-partner deteriorated, resulting in violent threats and altercations for several years.

David was referred to anger management support through the magistrates' court as a child, but this intervention had limited impact and David was removed from the course for fighting. He received a mental health diagnosis later in life, but felt that better mental health support at school could have helped him to manage his anger and aggression, and potentially avoid the domestic abuse altogether.

*This case study is based on an interview conducted with David, a domestic abuse perpetrator. Names have been changed and identifiable information removed

Prolific Violent Offenders

On average, individuals in this sub-group perpetrated 20 domestic abuse incidents involving six different victims - this is the second highest across all the groups. Non-domestic abuse offending for these individuals is also significant (though lesser), averaging 12 incidents.

The case study individual was involved in 31 incidents which span the entirety of the ten-year period analysed; twenty incidents were domestic abuse-related and involved 5 different victims, typically the individual's partner or ex-partner. Notably, just over half of the individual's domestic abuse-related incidents were non-crime incidents, and the remaining offences included several counts of ABH, criminal damage, burglary and common assault. These incidents were variously flagged by police as standard, medium and high risk, though it is worth noting that risk level is

more consistently marked as medium/high as the offences accumulate; this is likely as police took account of previous offending behaviour and the increased risk to the victim(s).

Significantly, the individual also has a number of violence against the person offences that are non-domestic abuse related, and are perpetrated against men, typically of similar age to the individual but of no relation. The prevalence of violent offences involving numerous victims in *both* the domestic and non-domestic sphere suggests that the individual is prone to violence or aggression. For the group as a whole 31% of non-domestic abuse-related offending is violence against the person and 39% of domestic abuse offending is violence against the person. Practitioners reflecting on risk factors common to both domestic abuse offending and non-domestic abuse offending pointed to the normalisation of violence as a mode of conflict resolution, poor emotional regulation and anger management, and low self-esteem.

> *"I can definitely think of cases where they've got offences against members of the public, and then in domestic settings they perpetrate violence, or physical violence to a partner. [...] In either scenario, they don't really differentiate between who the victim is - it's more about releasing their aggression"* - Probation

Both probation officers and service providers noted the value of exploring violent non-domestic abuse offending with domestic abuse perpetrators as indicative of more generalised harmful behaviour.

> *"[There is a] high prevalence in males who might go out and get into fights whilst they're drinking in pubs or being in clubs and things like that, - it's actually usually a pretty big indicator that there's also violence within the home as well."* - Probation

The prevalence of violent behaviours in both domestic and non-domestic settings may be indicative of a normalisation of violence as a means of resolving conflict or gaining control over people or a situation. In both settings, violence can be influenced by intergenerational trauma and an individual's exposure to wider criminality in their community.

Substance misuse was also raised as a prominent risk factor common to violent offending in both the domestic and the non-domestic sphere.

Case Study: David*

While David's history closely correlates to the Prolific Young Offender sub-group, his later life also aligns with the **Prolific Violent Offenders** sub-group, with the normalisation of violence identified as a key factor in the offending trajectory. To some degree we might consider whether those in the prolific young offenders sub-group are likely to transition to the prolific violent offenders sub-group over time.

Growing up, David was exposed to violence. He recalled witnessing bar fights at a local pub which he would visit regularly with his father and uncles. David felt that his early exposure to violent behaviour was likely to have influenced his approach to dealing with conflict.

> *"As a kid at 12 I've seen a geezer having a glass stuck in his head, that ain't normal behaviour. [...] You think, s**t that's how I've got to be in my life to get anywhere."*

David reflected that his **'short fuse' was not sufficiently connected to his mental health** while he was at school.

> *"When I was younger, it was put down to ADHD and things like that. That's an easy diagnosis for the doctor [...] not knowing some of those kids now have got severe mental health problems."*

David's offending was violent in both the domestic and non-domestic spheres, suggesting the normalisation of violence as a means of dealing with conflict. He received two custodial sentences for non-domestic abuse-related violent offences while under the age of 18. **David's domestic abuse offending could also be very violent**. He recalled a violent assault against his then-partner, following a 'three-day bender' and a subsequent kidnapping offence.

*This case study is based on an interview conducted with David, a domestic abuse perpetrator. Names have been changed and identifiable information removed

Case Study: Simon*

Simon's substance misuse fuelled offending could also place him in the **Prolific Violent Offenders** sub-group.

At the age of 14, Simon **got involved in crack and heroin.** His **offending at this time was linked to his substance misuse**. Either he would get into fights while under the influence, or would commit crime to fund his habit. After time spent in prison, Simon swapped crack and heroin for speed and cocaine.

> *"I just chopped and changed one for the other. And it's still brought the same results, the same pain, same offending behaviour, same trouble"*

Simon got into his first proper relationship around this time, which **started off well but was "rife" with drinking and drug use.** Simon perpetrated domestic abuse against his partner. The abuse was violent - smashing the property and belongings - and emotional, and could sometimes be triggered by his partner's refusal to have sex.

A few years later, Simon started a relationship with a new partner, **both were using drugs heavily and were involved in selling cocaine**. Simon perpetrated domestic abuse in this relationship, and **found drugs and alcohol to be a big trigger for abusive behaviour**.

> *"The drinking, and the drug taking, obviously played a part in where the domestic violence happened, because we were both drinking, and obviously tempers can get risen. So for me, probably not for everybody, but that was probably my biggest trigger."*

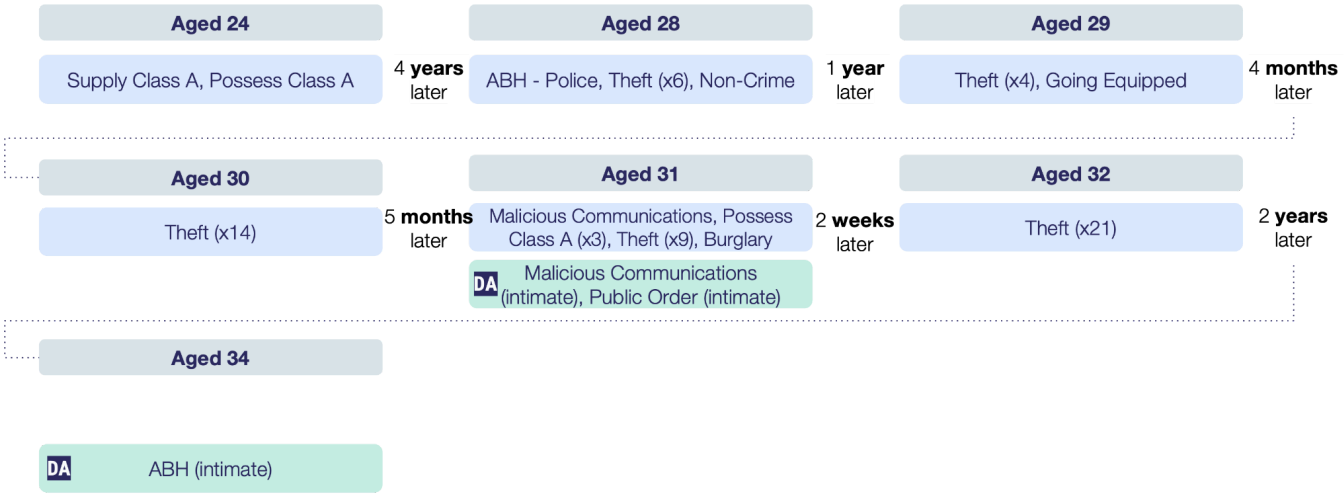
*This case study is based on an interview conducted with Simon, a domestic abuse perpetrator. Names have been changed and identifiable information removed

Lower harm economic compulsive offenders

Individuals in this sub-group perpetrate both domestic abuse offences and non-domestic abuse offences, but with a greater weighting on their non-domestic abuse offending. Substance misuse is also an important element of offending in this sub-group; thirty percent of domestic abuse-related incidents involve drugs or alcohol, while 8% of non-domestic abuse offences involved drugs or alcohol.

The representative case study follows this trend. The individual committed 69 offences, of which 54 were theft offences and three were domestic abuse-related offences. The individual also had a number of drug offences, concerning the supply or possession of class A drugs.

Lower harm economic compulsive offender representative case study (male)



Practitioners indicated that non-domestic abuse offending for this sub-group was primarily economic-compulsive: offences were committed to gain money or goods to obtain drugs. They also suggested that in some cases economic-compulsive offending would spill over into domestic abuse - where threat, violence or manipulation would be applied to a partner or relative to help secure funds to buy drugs.

> *"He repeatedly harasses his family members for money to then fund that drug habit, and I've had more than one offender with that particular issue*" - Domestic abuse offender manager

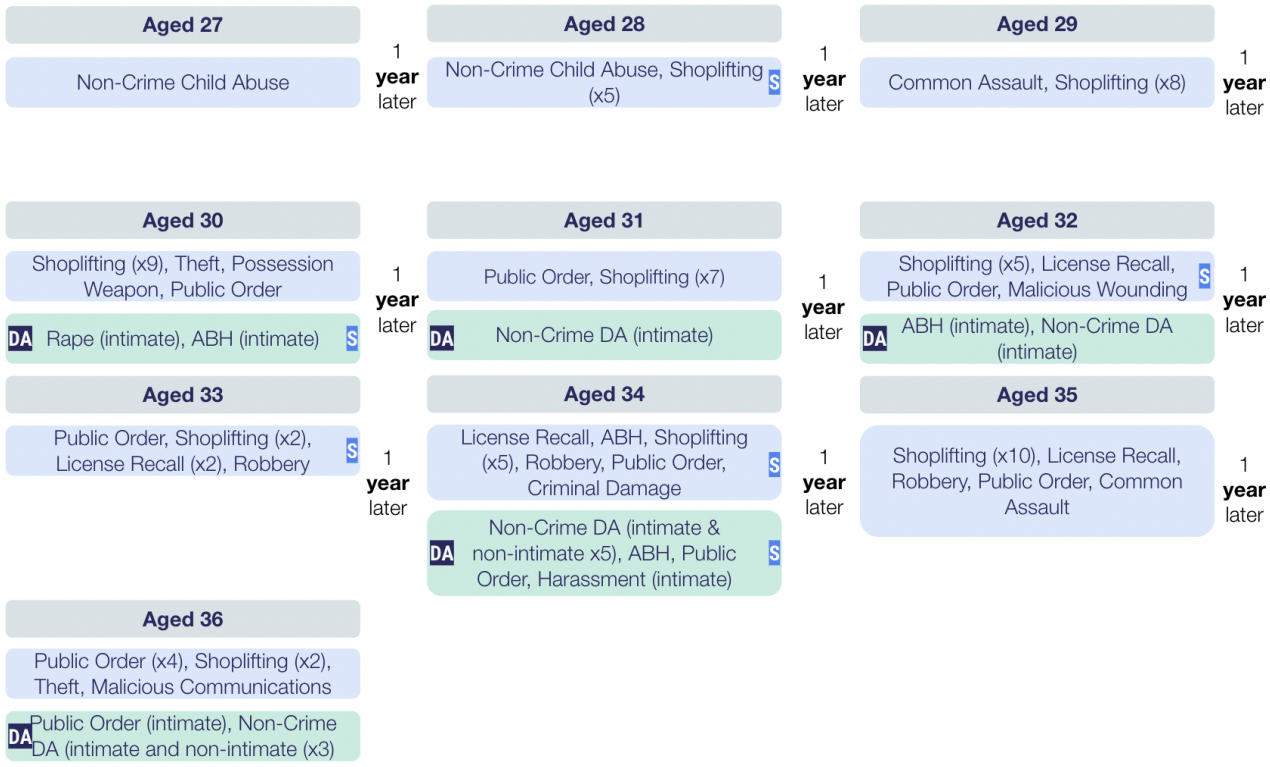
For economic-compulsive offenders, domestic abuse appears to be more clearly linked to problematic behaviours to sustain a habit, as opposed to the direct effects of the substance on behaviour.

Higher harm economic compulsive offenders

Similar to the lower harm sub-group, the majority of non-domestic abuse offences committed by individuals here constitute acquisitive crime, however the group on average causes a higher degree of harm.

The representative case study is involved in 102 incidents, primarily theft (from a shop or store) and public order offences. In many ways the individual has a similar profile to the lower harm economic compulsive offender, with predominantly acquisitive crime and multiple substance misuse flags; as such, this individual broadly fits the description for an economic compulsive offender.

Higher harm economic compulsive offender representative case study (male)



High Harm Offenders

These individuals are extremely prolific domestic abuse perpetrators, with an average of 31 domestic abuse incidents perpetrated against 15 different victims. However, they also have high volume non-domestic abuse offending, with an average of 29 non-domestic abuse incidents recorded per individual in the 10-year period analysed. All 12 individuals in this sub-group are male and 38% of domestic abuse incidents involve substances.

The domestic abuse perpetrated by the representative case study individual ranges from non-crime incidents to higher severity offences of kidnap, assault occasioning ABH and rape. Abuse is perpetrated against 15 different victims across different familial relationships (father, aunt) and intimate partner relationships (partners, ex-partners).

High harm offender representative case study (male)

Aged 29	Aged 30	Aged 31
Robbery, Public Order, ABH	Malicious Wounding, Public Order, Assault Police, Shoplifting	Non-crime Child Abuse
Non-Crime DA (intimate & non-intimate	Non-Crime DA (intimate & non-intimate, ABH (intimate)	Non-Crime DA (non-intimate, Common Assault (non-intimate)
Aged 32	**Aged 33**	**Aged 34**
Robbery	Non-crime Child Abuse, License Recall	Non-crime Child Abuse
	Non-Crime DA (intimate)	False Imprisonment (intimate)
Aged 35	**Aged 36**	**Aged 37**
Non-crime Child Abuse, Threat to damage property,		Criminal Damage, Sexual Assault
Non-crime DA (intimate & non-intimate)	Non-crime DA (intimate & non-intimate)	Non-crime DA (non-intimate)
Aged 38	**Aged 39**	
Rape	GBH, ABH, Malicious Wounding, Kidnap	
Non-crime DA (non-intimate), Criminal Damage (intimate), Malicious Wounding (intimate)	Kidnap, Rape, Non-Crime DA (non-intimate & intimate)	

The prevalence of non-domestic abuse criminal damage offences (in the case study and across the sub-group) is significant. Regression analysis found that perpetrators with criminal damage in their non-domestic abuse offending history were estimated to cause more domestic abuse harm than perpetrators without. Practitioners noted that criminal damage offences, even when low harm, were a good indicator of aggression and important to consider when assessing risk.

> *"Generally it can start off with low level offending, just criminal damage. So causing criminal damage within the home, [...] putting your fist through a door, punching, having a verbal argument with mum or with parents, and then it can kind of develop. So aggression is a red flag in terms of assessing risk."* - Practitioner in youth offending service.

In addition, the domestic abuse offending and non-domestic offending are closely linked in terms of type of offence and severity. For the case study individual, there are a number of non-domestic absuse-related violence against the person and sexual offences recorded, including the rape of a friend and a count of GBH against a younger woman of no relation. Moreover, there are eight child abuse non-crime incidents recorded for this individual, including one perpetrated against the individual's step-son. This may indicate that the domestic abuse offending is one manifestation of a more fundamental propensity for violence and abusive behaviour.

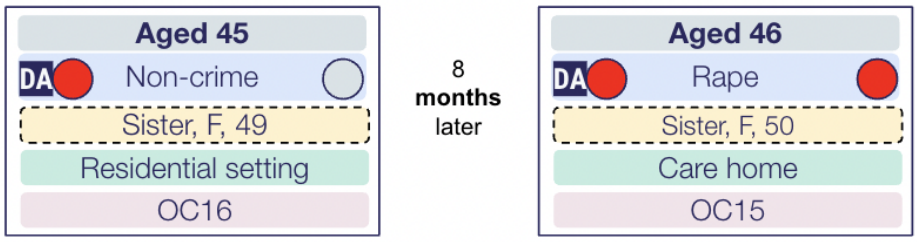
In other words, the harm caused is not confined within a specific relationship, type of relationship, or particular setting. Non-domestic abuse offending and domestic abuse offending histories should be considered concurrently by practitioners, as risk factors are likely to be common to behaviours in both spheres.

Catastrophic Offender

While the majority of perpetrators in the large group of low volume domestic abuse-only offenders caused relatively low harm, one sub-group stood out as perpetrators of significant domestic harms, despite their limited history. Fifty-eight domestic homicides were recorded against perpetrators in this sub-group - this accounts for all domestic homicides across the data set bar one.

The representative case study individual for this sub-group commits one non-crime incident against their sister, before eight months later being reported for raping the sister. Although the initial incident was recorded as a non-crime it was graded high risk. Questions might reasonably be asked about why the perpetrator was able to gain access to assault the victim in a monitored setting (a care home), shortly after being involved in a high risk non-crime incident.

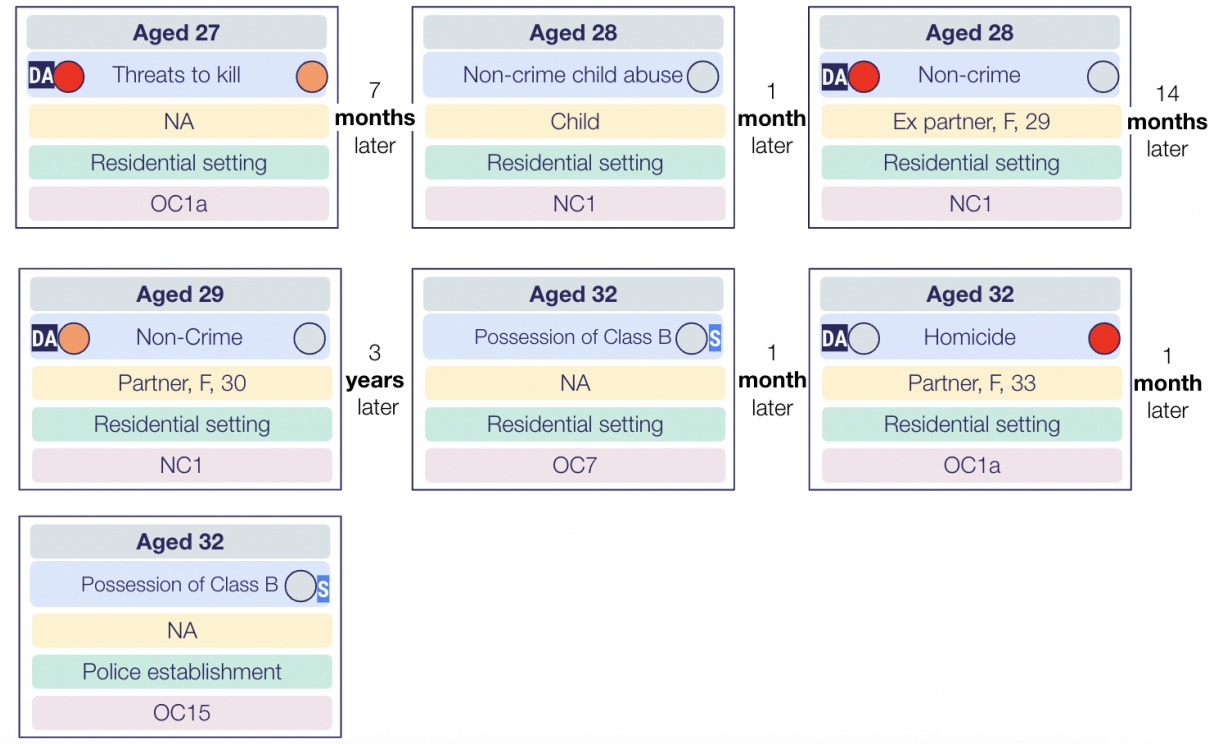
Catastrophic offender representative case study (male)



Individuals in this catastrophic offender sub-group had a much higher proportion of non-crime domestic incidents with a high risk flag than other sub-groups. Fourteen percent of all non-crimes committed by this sub-group were flagged as high risk, and a similar proportion were flagged as medium risk.

Looking at one of the perpetrators with a domestic homicide recorded against them further highlights this.

Catastrophic offender - homicide (male)



The two domestic abuse non-crime incidents occurred three to four years prior to the domestic homicide. The escalation from non-crime to catastrophic offence is steep but, as the regression analysis suggests, not unanticipated. High risk DA non-crime incidents must be taken seriously as an indication of an individual's potential to perpetrate a high harm offence. In this instance, the earlier threat to kill offence also provides a useful indication of the significant risk posed by this perpetrator. Notably, a month prior to the domestic homicide offence, the perpetrator was given a warning for possession of a Class B substance. The location of this offence was recorded as a residential setting; a police presence in the domestic space at this point would have been a valuable opportunity to assess the current domestic abuse risk posed by the perpetrator.

Coercive Controller

On average, individuals in this sub-group were involved in one domestic abuse incident against one victim during the 10-year period analysed. Based on incident count, individuals in this sub-group would be considered non-repeat perpetrators. However, the average severity of domestic abuse incidents associated with this sub-group is higher than all other low volume domestic abuse-only sub-groups, apart from the Catastrophic Offender sub-group. Controlling or coercive behaviour was the most common classification (21%) of domestic abuse incidents linked to this sub-group. The average duration of domestic abuse incidents perpetrated by this sub-group was exponentially

higher than all other subgroups at over 10 years and indicates a pattern of sustained abuse being reported retrospectively.

The representative case study individual for this sub-group exemplifies this profile; the individual has only one recorded domestic abuse offence of controlling/coercive behaviour perpetrated against his ex-wife, however the offence duration is 9 years.

Practitioners indicated that perpetrators in this category could be manipulative and adept at hiding offending behaviour, outwardly presenting as a 'good citizen'. In such cases, domestic abuse might be happening under the radar and going unreported.

> "*The offender whose life is pretty okay, you know, it's sometimes what we call 'Teflon' offenders that nothing ever seems to stick and actually, you know, they've got money, they've got relationships, why would that offender need to change and one thing that is my big thing is getting away with it.*" - Victim's services practitioner

Importantly, coercive and controlling behaviours might not be recognised as abuse by perpetrators themselves and may be normalised in the context of the relationship, preventing the victim from reporting.

> "*I think there's a level of denial anyway, with DA incidents, whether that's a low level assault or higher level, but with the stalking and the coercive and controlling behaviour really moving into this realm.*" - Domestic abuse offender manager

The demographic make-up of this sub-group is significant. Forty-five percent of perpetrators in this sub-group are Asian, the highest proportion by a clear margin (12 percentage points) across all clusters; indeed, only 23% of perpetrators included in the total clustered data set are Asian. Importantly, ethnicity was not a variable included in the clustering process, meaning that the overrepresentation of Asian individuals in this cluster is a coincidental result of commonalities across their offending patterns, rather than a consequence of their shared ethnic group.

Practitioners noted some cultural barriers to reporting incidents of domestic abuse within Asian communities.

> *"I think there is possibly a massive underreporting in some ethnic groups in relation to domestic abuse. I know I certainly looked at a case the other day [...] quite serious offences against the female victim by her partner or ex partner. She's gone to a refuge but then come back because she was getting a lot of issues in the family, who were encouraging her to return to that relationship [...] So I definitely think that is an issue for reporting and pursuing a complaint.*" - Domestic abuse offender manager

This is an important factor to consider in relation to the longer average duration of domestic abuse incidents in this cluster and the likelihood of retrospective reporting; it is not unlikely that the low volume offending histories of these individuals mask unreported abuse perpetrated over a sustained period.

System-wide recommendations

Recommendation 1: Wider offending history should inform domestic abuse intervention

Analysis of the ten year span of offending data in our study showed that domestic abuse harm is clustered in a small group of individuals in the data set. Of these, sixty percent have a high volume of non-domestic abuse offending.

Table 1: Clusters ranked by DA harm (harm = average total domestic abuse severity per individual)

Cluster	Total DA harm ranking	Total non DA harm ranking
High Harm Offender	1	2
Catastrophic Offender	2	18
Prolific Violent Offender	3	5
Higher Harm Economic Compulsive	4	1
Non-specialised law breakers)	5	10
Domestic Abuse Specialist	6	20
Cluster 29*	7	9
Lower Harm Economic Compulsive	8	6
Prolific Young Offender	9	3
Serial Abuser	10	11

Other studies have also highlighted the relevance of wider offences to domestic abuse perpetration. For example, the pilot of a Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool in three police forces

in England and Wales found that between 30% and 56% of perpetrators identified as highest priority in each force had a history of linked offences (that were not domestic abuse).[41]

The rationale for the criminal justice system and wider agencies to incorporate an assessment of offending histories into the response to domestic abuse is straightforward - the prevalence of non-domestic abuse indicates a risk of high harm domestic abuse perpetration.

Current assessments of risk at the front end of the system tend to be victim-centred, and do not all take offending histories into account. Assessment tools and processes are inconsistent, not only between criminal justice system agencies, but also within them. HMICFRS (At the time of writing Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services) inspected the police response to domestic abuse in 2014 and 2019[42] and found the quality and supervision of police risk assessments was inconsistent both times. A Cordis Bright review[43] in 2021 suggested little has changed, with the identification and risk assessment of perpetrators remaining a key area for improvement.

Neither victim nor police officer is asked to consider thoroughly the wider offending patterns, attitudes or behaviours of perpetrators in either the DASH or DARA assessments most frequently used in policing at present. However, the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) was developed by Robinson and Clancy in 2015 following consultation with practitioners and it is designed to be used consistently across policing, the criminal justice system and the third sector to ensure all information is translatable across agencies.[44] The tool places an emphasis on both past and current offending (both domestic abuse-related and not) and early results from the pilot study are promising - successfully identifying the highest risk perpetrators for targeting.

Similarly the Canadian ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment) model includes an assessment of non-domestic assaults prior to the current incident, custodial sentences served, breaches, violence against others and substance misuse. In Messing and Thaller's review[45] of risk assessment tools, the ODARA model was found to be the most predictive of harm.

The College of Policing and University College London are currently undertaking research to improve understanding of a Recency, Frequency, Gravity and Victimisation model for policing domestic abuse. More work is needed to improve the algorithm over the next three years. We

[41]Robinson, A.L. and Clancy, A., 2021. Systematically identifying and prioritising domestic abuse perpetrators for targeted intervention. Criminology & Criminal Justice, 21(5), pp.687-704.

* Due to the key variables around which Cluster 29 grouped, this cluster is not considered a group of interest in this report. The reasons for this are set out in the accompanying research report.

[42]HMICFRS. (2019). The police response to domestic abuse - Justice Inspectorates.

[43]Cordis Bright. (2022). Evidence on 'what works' with Domestic Abuse Perpetrators.

[44]Robinson, A.L. and Clancy, A., 2021. Systematically identifying and prioritising domestic abuse perpetrators for targeted intervention. Criminology & Criminal Justice, 21(5), pp.687-704.

[45] Messing, J.T. and Thaller, J., 2013. The average predictive validity of intimate partner violence risk assessment instruments. Journal of interpersonal violence, 28(7), pp.1537-1558.

suggest that non-domestic abuse offending history should be incorporated into this model and tested. [46]

In addition, practitioners should be analysing patterns of behaviour in perpetrator offending histories, rather than the risk of individual offences. If incidents are treated in isolation, these low proportions might obscure the scale of the issue. Practitioners should explore patterns of offending, especially where incidents involve the same victim, to ensure that cumulative risk is recognised.

> "*To me, if you if you deal with stalking you potentially are preventing lots of time and resources because if you're going out to twelve breaches of an order, when you could just look at one stalking offence, you're actually, you're actually going to be saving time and resources, if you focus on that stalking offence*" - Victim Services practitioner.

Equally, practitioner professional judgement is also important. Monckton-Smith's study[47] of temporal sequences and perpetrator interventions in domestic abuse-related deaths, homicides and suicides, drew attention to the limitations of checklist-based domestic abuse risk assessments, which do not take into account the characteristics, contexts and motivations behind domestic-abuse offending.

Recommendation 1: Findings from this report suggest that where there is a non-domestic abuse-related offending history, the harm caused by the perpetrator *in* the domestic context is higher. Offending history should be a relevant factor informing criminal justice system processes, service provision and commissioning decisions. In particular all agencies conducting risk assessments of domestic abuse perpetrators should include an assessment of non-domestic abuse offending.

Recommendation 2: Identify specific non-domestic abuse offences that factor into harm

As outlined above, this report found that a small number of perpetrators were indeed responsible for the majority of harm. But beyond that, *certain types* of perpetrators are more likely to be associated with higher harm. Particular non-domestic abuse-related offences in perpetrator offending histories are significantly associated with domestic abuse harm. These associated non-DA offences include:

- **Sexual offences**: rape and sexual offences against both adults and children were found to be statistically significant.

[46]Home Office. (2021). Tackling violence against women and girls. Crime, justice and law. Violence against women and girls.

[47]Monckton-Smith, J., Siddiqui, H., Haile, S. and Sandham, A., 2022. Building a temporal sequence for developing prevention strategies, risk assessment, and perpetrator interventions in domestic abuse related suicide, honour killing, and intimate partner homicide.

- **Acquisitive crime:** attempted burglary, robbery, making off without payment and theft of motor vehicles were also related to more harmful domestic abuse.
- **Violent crime:** malicious wounding, grievous bodily harm, racially aggravated assaults, threats to kill and threats with a weapon were also indicative of higher harm.
- **Intractability:** breach offences (breach of non-molestation order/restraining order/bail conditions) and licence recalls were also statistically significant, along with assaults on police, threats to witnesses/jurors, criminal damage and driving offences which tend to be united in terms of an overall criminogenic attitude or tendency toward civil disobedience.

To illustrate the impact of this relationship with an example - perpetrators with rape, assault or kidnapping in their non-domestic abuse history were estimated to commit the equivalent of four more domestic assaults than those without this type of offending history.

The segmentation of statistically significant offences into four overall categories should support practitioners across the criminal justice system in identifying domestic abuse perpetration risks. While the research does not suggest that every offender with an acquisitive offending history (for example) is at risk of perpetrating domestic abuse, it does suggest that there are opportunities to identify domestic abuse perpetrators outside the immediate sphere of victims reporting to police.

Almond et al's[48] exploration of risk factors within DASH assessments and connections to future reoffending identified criminal history, trouble with the police, and separation as key factors in predicting future DA-related offending. Recommendations from this research outline that by identifying in risk assessments, the specific individual factors indicative of reoffending and the severity of reoffending, police decision-makers could improve the response to and further prevention of DA incidents through more accurate risk levels.

We suggest that offender management is an area which would benefit from integrating these categories of offenders into general assessments. In the West Midlands there are both general integrated offender management processes and specialist domestic abuse ones. General offender managers should utilise the framework of statistically significant offences in combination with other information provided by wider public services, or the individual's own description of their domestic situation to flag up any potential domestic abuse risks. If appropriate this could involve the offender manager conducting a form of domestic abuse specific risk assessment involving a domestic abuse offender manager. Equally domestic abuse-specific offender managers should be notified when offenders commit a non-domestic abuse offence. This should act as a red flag for officers to update their risk assessments.

[48]Almond, L., McManus, M., Brian, D. and Merrington, D.P., 2017. Exploration of the risk factors contained within the UK's existing domestic abuse risk assessment tool (DASH): do these risk factors have individual predictive validity regarding recidivism?. Journal of aggression, conflict and peace research.

Similarly probation officers could make use of the framework of statistically significant offences to act as a red flag for further investigation of the domestic context for offenders not being supervised specifically for a domestic abuse-related offence.

Recommendation 2: Certain non-domestic abuse-related offences are significantly associated with domestic abuse harm, especially acquisitive crime, sexual offences and violence against the person offences. When individuals come to the attention of police for non-domestic abuse related offences, officers should check to see if there have been any domestic abuse incidents in the individual's history. If this is the case the police should conduct a domestic abuse risk assessment, where applicable, of the individual's current domestic situation. Equally domestic abuse-specific offender managers should be notified when offenders commit a non-domestic abuse offence. This should act as a red flag for officers to update their risk assessments.

Recommendation 3: Breach offences should trigger enhanced assessment and response

Of the offences outlined above that have a statistically significant relationship to domestic abuse, some of the most frequently occurring offences are particularly associated with general criminogenic attitudes and compliance issues in relation to law and law enforcement. For example, histories involving breaches of licence conditions, orders and injunctions, dangerous driving and assaults on police might indicate a general disregard for complying with the law or that the concept of compliance tends to be outweighed by impulsive behaviours and emotional triggers. This represents a potentially very high risk group of offenders whose domestic abuse perpetration may be less affected by sanctions and orders designed to alter behaviour.

One of our case study participants, "Simon", articulated a lack of perception of seriousness around the non-molestation order he was given, and described going on to breach it twice.

Case Study: Simon*

The first time authorities became aware of Simon's domestic abuse perpetration was after he was arrested for going round to his partner's house and smashing her windows and doors. **His partner had an injunction against Simon, and he was given a non-molestation order.**

The conditions of this order meant that Simon was not allowed to contact his partner directly or indirectly, and could not go within a specified area. Looking back, **Simon feels that these conditions did not go far enough, and were not paired with support**.

> *"The first time I've got arrested for domestic violence, just giving me a map and I can't get in contact, directly or indirectly. Is that really a punishment? [...] there's got to be something that can be done sooner. Maybe get a bit harsher"*

Simon **breached the non-molestation order twice, and was sent to prison twice**, serving six weeks each time.

*This case study is based on an interview conducted with Simon, a domestic abuse perpetrator. Names have been changed and identifiable information removed

While for "Simon" this breach resulted in a custodial sanction, practitioners told us that this outcome was rare. Looking at the case study individual for the Domestic Abuse Specialist sub-group, the perpetrator breached a non-molestation order but no action was taken. Five months later they went on to breach the non-molestation order for a second time, again with no action taken.

In 2017[49] HMICFRS surveyed domestic abuse practitioners on the areas all frontline officers most needed to improve. The second highest area they identified as requiring improvement was **responding effectively to breaches of orders and bail.** When asked about *specialist* officers, responding effectively to breaches was identified as the biggest issue requiring improvement.

Practitioners interviewed as part of this research outlined the need for a better response to breaches of bail or orders and frequently cited occasions when breaches were reported, but no or a very minimal sanction was given to the perpetrator.

> "*They had a DVPO…put into place, and we went to court and there was a kind of procedural mistake on our part that we didn't send the police to the right court. So the magistrate apologised to the perpetrator and sent him on his way, with nothing. But what would that say to that perpetrator - we have got a judge who's apologised to the perpetrator.*" - Neighbourhood policing officer

However, a further worrying trend is the reduction in use of police bail as a method of controlling perpetrator behaviour. The 2019 HMICFRS inspection report found that the number of people on bail for domestic abuse was dropping (to around 65%)[50]. The implications of this were widespread with increased challenges for victims in seeking emergency housing from local authorities without evidence of bail conditions, and in applying for protection orders (e.g. restraining order) without information on bail history and breaches of bail. This feeds into a cycle of on-going abuse.

The Inspectorate also pointed out that *"when there are delays in the response to breaches, or if the response is not as robust as it should be, victims can lose confidence in the police and the criminal justice process. Breaches of DVPOs and other orders can increase the risk that the perpetrator*

[49] HMICFRS. (2017). A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse. Justice Inspectorates

[50] HMICFRS. (2019). The police response to domestic abuse. Justice Inspectorates

poses and compromise the safety of the victim. If the police apply for these orders, and if the courts grant them, then they should be enforced."

This report suggests, therefore, that the approach to breaches of bail conditions and any civil or criminal court orders should be an urgent focus for improvement. Practitioners should be aware of the potential risks posed by offenders who breach conditions, and provide a robust and timely response. Where possible, in advance of the likely national roll out of DAPOs in 2025[51], the use of currently available conditions and orders should be increased, to protect victims and to help identify the highest risk offenders through reporting of breaches. However this uplift in use must be reflected in an uplift in responding to breaches.

In addition there are a number of related offences including assaults on police, threatening jurors, criminal damage and dangerous driving offences that together would support the identification of risk of non-compliance. Offenders with these offences in their histories should be flagged as a higher risk of breaching orders and potentially causing further harm. Practitioners across the criminal justice system should be aware of these related offences which should feed into risk assessments and pre-sentence reports. More widely they could also be used as priority factors for other public services in considering the housing and other needs of victims related to this perpetrator group.

Recommendation 3: Some of the most frequently occurring offences related to higher harm (breaches of licence conditions, orders and injunctions, dangerous driving and assaults on police) are associated with broader criminogenic attitudes and general compliance issues in relation to law and order. Individuals coming to the attention of police for domestic-abuse related offences should be risk assessed against compliance-related offences in their histories. The presence of such an offence indicating a general disregard for law enforcement should instigate a heightened risk level and associated response.

Recommendation 4: Offences indicative of wider abuse tendencies should be flagged

There are a number of incidents and offences (such as assaults or sexual abuse against children or vulnerable adults) that do not meet the current definition of a domestic-abuse related incident or offence, but are clearly indicative of abusive tendencies. There are obvious parallels in the drivers and presenting factors of these offences. Existing research has clearly evidenced common co-occurrences of intimate partner violence and child sexual/physical abuse in particular. Guy et al's study[52] into early intervention in domestic violence and abuse highlighted frequent co-occurrence within child maltreatment and domestic abuse, confirmed in CAADAs, Children's Insights dataset. This data showed that 62% of children exposed to domestic abuse had also been

[51]Home Office. (2021). Tackling violence against women and girls. Crime, justice and law. Violence against women and girls.

[52]Guy, J., Feinstein, L. and Griffiths, A., 2014. Early intervention in domestic violence and abuse.

directly harmed. Findings from this report, looking at perpetrators in the West Midlands were that the presence of these types of offences in an offending history was linked to a greater degree of domestic abuse-specific offending.

While this has, to at least some degree, flowed through to operational risk assessment tools, not all police forces (or wider criminal justice system agencies) are consistently and systematically assessing the prevalence of these highly interrelated offences. The DASH model used by many forces does include on the checklist a consideration of offending against children in the family, and wider violent or sexual offending. However, it is inconsistently applied across forces and the overall focus of the model on victims detracts from the importance of the perpetrators offending history.

Robinson and Clancy's Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) identifies related or linked types of offending to domestic abuse as gender-based offender (sexual violence and exploitation, honour based violence and stalking) and offending against vulnerable groups (children and vulnerable adults). The PPIT assessment enables practitioners to consider these offences alongside domestic abuse to identify the highest risk perpetrators. The SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment) tool also includes items related to past sexual assault and violence to support the identification of risk.[53]

To support police and wider agencies to efficiently assess this group of highly related offences, this report recommends that police introduce a DA-parallel flag for crime and incident records that would enable practitioners to quickly establish patterns of broader abusive tendencies. Most domestic abuse assessments do ask practitioners to consider whether children have been harmed or any related offending has occurred, but this relies on the victim's perception and the attending officer's ability to pull the relevant information from crime recording systems. Introducing a related offences flagging system would support officers to consistently (and quickly) establish where related offences have occurred and share this information with other agencies.

Related to this, flagging child to parent violence consistently could support the earlier identification of some domestic abuse perpetrators. Looking particularly at the case study for the young prolific offenders sub-group, the individual perpetrated two violent offences against a parent before the age of 16 and later went on to commit further offences against a parent which were then classified as domestic abuse due to the age of the individual at that time. Having a recording practice which would enable police and partners to systematically track the potential progression of child to parent violence to domestic abuse, may enable earlier intervention and prevention of future harms.

Recommendation 4: There are a number of incidents and offences (such as assaults or sexual abuse against children or vulnerable adults, and child to parent violence) that do not meet the current definition of a domestic-abuse related incident or offence, but are clearly indicative of abusive tendencies and/or interfamilial violence. There are obvious parallels in the drivers and

[53]Robinson, A. and Clancy, A., 2015. Development of the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) for domestic abuse.

presenting factors of these offences. Police should introduce a DA-parallel flag for offences that may indicate tendencies towards abusive behaviours in a domestic setting that would ensure these offences are picked up and raised in reviews of offending behaviour. Overall commissioning and funding for interfamilial abuse should be improved.

Recommendation 5: Substance misuse and domestic abuse should be tackled in tandem

Our initial engagement with practitioners in the West Midlands led to the development of a theoretical typology of a domestic abuse perpetrator who was substance-dependent. However, the quantitative analysis conducted painted a more complex picture.

Two sub-groups were identified through clustering analysis as economic compulsive offenders. The relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse was particularly clear here. Practitioners indicated that for these sub-groups of offenders acquisitive offences were committed to gain money or goods to obtain drugs and in some cases, economic-compulsive offending would spill over into domestic abuse - where threat, violence or manipulation would be applied to a partner or relative to help secure funds to buy drugs. For economic-compulsive offenders, domestic abuse appears to be more clearly linked to problematic behaviours to sustain a habit, as opposed to the direct effects of the substance on behaviour.

Beyond the economic compulsive offenders, substance misuse was a factor present in both domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse-related offending for a significant number of the other offender typologies of offender. 36% of domestic abuse offences committed by the female victim/offender cohort for example had substance misuse flags. Speaking generally, practitioners have highlighted that substance misuse might be a feature of a more 'chaotic' lifestyle, where offences are committed under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, and of the impact of effectively breaking the cycle of substance misuse:

> *"For one individual, when we broke those addictions, you know, [...] everything else fell into place. He wasn't you know, a perpetrator, he was being clouded by the drink and the drugs"* - Domestic abuse offender manager

Several existing studies have cited substance misuse as an indicator that could help identify perpetrators. In their analysis of IPH cases, Bridger et al.[54] found that chronic substance abuse was the most prevalent characteristic among perpetrators of domestic homicide, present in 61% of

[54] Bridger, E., Strang, H., Parkinson, J. and Sherman, L.W., 2017. Intimate partner homicide in England and Wales 2011–2013: Pathways to prediction from multi-agency domestic homicide reviews. Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing, 1(2), pp.93-104.

male perpetrators in their dataset. Hegarty et al.[55] note that substance abuse issues can be linked to DVA, and are often associated with greater harm.

In October 2021 the government announced support for police to expand the use of drug testing on arrest[56]. In addition five areas (including the West Midlands) were given funding to test the expansion of the trigger offences for test on arrest - domestic abuse was referred to as an example trigger offence for consideration. Our research makes a case for domestic abuse to be trialled as a trigger offence as an urgent priority.

Substance misuse services participating in this research also identified the need for greater understanding of the relationship with domestic abuse and tools to help identify perpetrators coming through substance misuse services who are not yet identified by police. As perpetrator programmes are developed locally, referral pathways into them from wider service (but in particular substance misuse services) should be a key consideration in commissioning. Upskilling the system as a whole to recognise the relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse will support effective use of these referral pathways.

Recommendation 5: Existing research has evidenced the relationship between substance misuse and domestic abuse perpetration. In concordance with this substance misuse was found to be a prevalent factor in many of the offender typologies identified through this research. The system as a whole should be upskilled to effectively tackle substance misuse and domestic abuse in tandem. Drug testing on arrest should be expanded to domestic abuse perpetrators and substance misuse services should be equipped to identify domestic abuse and given the ability to refer directly to locally commissioned perpetrator programmes.

Recommendation 6: Risk assessment processes should take account of previous risks

Risk assessment tools continue to be a critical part of the response to domestic abuse, particularly in light of the rate of increasing demand outstripping the rate of increase in resources. It is increasingly important to make sure that the right (or highest risk) offenders are identified for prioritisation and targeting.

Our analysis found that, regardless of the type and severity of the incident they are being assessed for, the outcome of the first domestic abuse risk assessment of an offender can be deemed relatively indicative of their subsequent domestic abuse offending. In essence if the first risk assessment recorded against a perpetrator in the ten year span of data was graded high risk, the perpetrator was much more likely to go on to commit greater domestic abuse harms.

[55] Hegarty, K., Forsdike-Young, K., Tarzia, L., Schweitzer, R. and Vlais, R., 2016. Identifying and responding to men who use violence in their intimate relationships. Australian family physician, 45(4), pp.176-181.

[56]Home Office. (2021a). Drug testing on arrest expanded to help cut crime. Crime, justice and law.

This finding supports a continued emphasis on the importance of the initial risk assessment, but also puts forward a case for reviewing the initial risk assessment for perpetrators in any future assessment. At present the police risk assessment is based on the attending officer's perception of the situation on the day in question (utilising information provided by the victim and what they know about the perpetrator from recording systems). There would be a benefit in formally incorporating previous risk assessments into all assessments conducted in future.

Further work would be required to establish an appropriate weighting to be applied to previous assessments, and due consideration will need to be given to not inadvertently discriminating against reformed offenders. This could form part of the College of Policing and University College London algorithm testing.

Recommendation 6: Regardless of the type and severity of the incident they are being assessed for, the result of the first domestic abuse risk assessment of an offender can be deemed relatively indicative of their subsequent domestic abuse offending. The police should place further enhanced support around first-time high-risk and medium-risk assessments. Previous risk assessment levels should be weighted and included as part of future assessments.

Sector/typology-specific recommendations

Recommendation 7: The response to domestic abuse by Criminal Justice System agencies is likely to be enhanced by application of a more granular typology of domestic abuse perpetrators to facilitate a priority-driven and targeted approach. We recommend 35 improvements across the criminal justice system - some relevant to all perpetrators, some relevant to specific typologies. The criminal justice system is considered in terms of the **initial response** to domestic abuse, **safeguarding, offender management, prevention and diversion, prisons and probation**.

The typologies of domestic abuse perpetrator identified highlight some key differences in the drivers and presentation of domestic abuse, and therefore the likely effectiveness of different intervention mechanisms.

Processes and services that are tailored to a certain sub-group of domestic abuse perpetrators might lead to a more effective response than treating perpetrators as a homogenous group; such an approach to stalking cases is familiar to frontline practitioners.[57] Equally, a better understanding of some offending trajectories may support practitioners in identifying those at the highest risk of perpetrating abuse later down the line, facilitating earlier intervention.

Because the quantitative elements of this research were centred around police data, and the mapping of demand into the criminal justice system, the findings in this section are disproportionately weighted towards criminal justice system agencies. We discuss some general recommendations which may apply more broadly to wider services, but due to the nature of the data we focus on criminal justice system agencies here.

The key perpetrator typologies developed through the research were:

Coercive controller	Offenders who generally showed up in the data with a very small number of domestic abuse incidents, but which were reported to have occurred over a long duration.
Economic compulsive	Offenders where acquisitive crime and substance misuse are prevalent.
Catastrophic offenders	Offenders with little, if any, offending history who go on to commit a single (or small number of) very high-harm domestic abuse offences.

[57] A typology of stalkers developed by Mullen, Pathé and Purcell divides cases into five types; (1) the rejected stalker, (2) the resentful stalker, (3) the intimacy seeking stalker, (4) the incompetent suitor and (5) the predatory stalker - Mullen, P., Pathé, M., Purcell, R., & Stuart, G. W. (1999). Study of stalkers. American Journal of Psychiatry, 156 (8), 1244 – 1249.

Serial abuser	Offenders who frequently perpetrated domestic abuse along with offences against children and/or vulnerable individuals.
Domestic abuse specialist	Offenders who perpetrated higher volumes of domestic abuse but with no other offending history.
Prolific violent offender	Domestic abuse offenders who also had significant violent offending histories.
Non-specialised law breakers	Offenders who had committed a high volume of non-domestic abuse offences (alongside domestic abuse) but across a range of offence types - generally indicating a lack of compliance.
Female victim/ offender	Female domestic abuse offenders who also committed some related/linked offences but also experienced high rates of victimisation.
Prolific young offender	Younger offenders with a prolific offending history involving violence and wider offending.
High harm offender	A small cohort where harm across all offending (both domestic abuse and other offending) is very high.

Recommendations are set out where the research suggests there is a need to tailor the response to a specific group of offenders, or where there is an opportunity for intervention at a certain point in an offender journey.

We have grouped the intervention points in terms of the criminal justice system as:

1. Initial response to reported domestic abuse
2. Safeguarding
3. Offender management
4. Prevention and diversion
5. Prison and probation supervision

Table 2 sets out the key focuses of recommendations by typology of offender

	Initial Response	Safeguarding	Offender Management	Prevention and Diversion	Prison and Probation
Coercive controller: Infrequent DA offenders, with incidents lasting a long time.	●	○	○	○	○
Economic compulsive: Cohorts where acquisitive crime and substance misuse are prevalent	●	○	○	○	○
Catastrophic offenders: Offenders with little, if any, offending history going on to commit high-harm domestic abuse.	●	○	○	○	○
Serial abuser: Frequent DA offender perpetrating in the home or against vulnerable individuals.	○	●	○	○	○
Domestic abuse specialist: Frequent DA offenders with no other offending history.	○	●	○	○	○
Prolific violent offender: Offenders with violent offending history	○	○	●	○	○
Non-specialised law breakers: Offenders with high volume offending but no specialising non-DA offending.	○	○	●	○	○
Female victim/ offender: Infrequent non-DA offenders with high rates of victimisation.	○	○	○	●	○
Prolific young offender: Younger offenders with more diverse offending history.	○	○	○	●	○
High harm offender: Small cohort where harm across all offending is high.	○	○	○	○	●
	● = cluster-specific recommendation			○ = no cluster-specific recommendation	

1. Initial response to reported domestic abuse

Initial response 1: Thorough initial risk assessment should continue to underpin the police response to domestic abuse. Officers should increase focus on elements of risk assessments which consider historical offending and attitudes in line with the Priority Perpetrator Tool (PPIT) currently being trialled in three forces.	**All perpetrators**
Initial response 2: Further research looking at offending history should be used to explore and understand how different communities are affected by domestic abuse, specifically to understand how demographic differences affect reporting.	**All perpetrators**

Disclosure of domestic abuse (when a crime report is made) is the most important intervention point for any offender. When a report of domestic abuse is made to the police, a decision to deploy is made based on a THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigative opportunities, vulnerability and engagement) assessment. On attendance a police officer will establish whether the incident meets the threshold of a crime (or is deemed a non-crime incident), and either way will conduct a risk assessment (West Midlands Police currently use the DARA - domestic abuse risk assessment-model).

This assessment generally consists of a series of questions which are asked to the complainant and cover the historical context of the incident to establish if there is a pattern of behaviour and how the abuse presents (physical/emotional etc). Although the police interview itself must remain centred on the facts of the specific offence, there will be opportunities around this for the police (and not necessarily the investigating officer) to build rapport with the suspect and potentially gain further insight to the relationship and understand risk factors for further abuse, and readiness to change. This could generate opportunities to refer the perpetrator to other services.

The Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) was designed to identify domestic abuse perpetrators who could be considered priority targets for management - question 5 enquires whether there is any linked formed of offending (other violent/ abuse behaviour such as stalking, sexual violence, child abuse, elder abuse, honor based violence) in recent history or historically, questions 9 and 10 ask if there has been any noticeable worsening of mental health or increase in alcohol and/or drug use. This certainly mirrors both our quantitative and qualitative findings around overlaps between DA and non-DA offending history and the shared causes of offending.

When practitioners (across the system) reviewed existing cases against the PPIT criteria, the 10 PPIT considerations were more likely to be present, and the difference in prevalence was substantial. The tool was therefore deemed a suitable way to identify priority cases. In addition, practitioners noted that the process of completing the PPIT assessment brought “a level of focus and proactive effort on perpetrators that went well beyond the status quo” and in some cases

“revealed instances where offenders were not being managed at all, or they were being inappropriately managed given their level of risk.”[58] Therefore, a thorough risk assessment tool that is similar to this but builds upon our understanding of the overlap in offending patterns is recommended.

Across the qualitative aspects, practitioners would mention various cultural aspects to reporting domestic abuse - we made a conscious decision not to include any variables based on the gender or ethnicity of offenders within the clustering analysis. However, clustered sub-groups *did* differ on both of these variables.

> *“And, again, it may be due to reporting issues and confidence in the police and so forth, but the majority of my cases are heterosexual. But we do get a lot of homosexual crimes as well.*" - Domestic abuse offender manager

> "*You know, we're a very diverse area. And, you know, looking again, at our board, there aren't many people of an ethnic background that we are managing on it. I do not think it's because they do not commit the crimes. I do think there's an underreporting.*" - Domestic abuse offender manager

For example, 45% of the coercive controller sub-group, and 33% of the catastrophic offenders sub-group, were from asian backgrounds - while overall 23% of individuals were from asian backgrounds. There is no insight from the data on why this is but the qualitative evidence should encourage the police to gain a deeper understanding of how demographics vary in these clusters, and how demographics impact perpetrators coming to police attention, especially where they may impact victim disclosure and therefore identifying priority perpetrators.

Initial response 3: Where coercive control is flagged by officers, consideration should be given to an immediate referral pathway should be made through to offender management and offender managers should be allocated to deal with the highest risk coercive controllers. Evidence is generally lacking around what works in terms of interventions with coercive and controlling offenders and research in this area should be prioritised.	**Coercive Controller**

It is important for the police to approach coercive control differently to other types of domestic abuse.[59] For example, Offender Managers should consider taking on ‘Coercive Controllers’ even though their offending would not necessarily meet the threshold for management. This is even

[58]Robinson, A. and Clancy, A., 2017. New initiatives to tackle domestic violence using the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT).

[59]Cordis Bright. (2022). Evidence on 'what works' with Domestic Abuse Perpetrators.

more important as they are unlikely to be under statutory probation supervision. These individuals are likely to only come to police attention once, following a lengthy period of coercive control against their victims. In this case the pattern of abuse should be clear to police from the report made by the victim, as well as their sensitivity to feeling comfortable in reporting to police. These offences should be treated as a priority as the window of engagement is so minimal. These perpetrators are unlikely to be picked up again if the incident does not result in a positive outcome.

This would enable the Offender Managers to identify opportunities for intervention around attitudes and behaviours that may be suitable for the perpetrator. The poor understanding of coercive control and the difficulty identifying it leads to variable practice in risk assessment. Practitioners often fail to categorise cases with signs of coercive control as medium or high risk when compared to cases that involve physical violence. This leads to inaccurate risk assessment of some DVA cases, allowing some priority perpetrators to 'fly under the radar' of police attention (Medina Ariza et al[60]; Robinson et al[61]; Myhill & Hohl[62]). Moreover, priority in risk assessment is given to physical abuse rather than coercive control. For example, Barlow and Walklate (2021) identify a significant variation in police responses to cases associated with actual bodily harm (ABH) and those with signs of coercive control. They found that cases with ABH were much more likely to result in arrest and charge and that officers were more likely to assess coercive control cases as standard or medium risks. This is problematic when we consider the harm that coercive control can cause, and the fact that it can escalate into physical harm. Greater attention should therefore be paid to coercive control as an early 'warning sign' that could flag further potential harm.

Initial response 4: High-risk non crime incidents should be given more scrutiny by the police.	**Catastrophic Offender**
Initial response 5: Further work using offending history should be used to explore the catastrophic offender cohort, linking in with domestic homicide reviews.	**Catastrophic Offender**

Finally, the catastrophic offender cluster presents particular risks, given the low number of incidents expected before particularly high severity domestic abuse (all but one of the domestic homicides were committed by offenders in this sub-group). The regression analysis found these offenders had a higher proportion of non-crime domestic incidents with a high risk flag than others, meaning there could be an opportunity to scrutinise these incidents more closely to establish whether the abuse, or pattern of abuse, has been minimised or masked in some way. However, a review of Domestic Homicide Reviews in the West Midlands have made similar conclusions around the short

[60] Medina Ariza, J., Robinson, A. and Myhill, A., 2016. Cheaper, faster, better: Expectations and achievements in police risk assessment of domestic abuse. Policing: a journal of policy and practice, 10(4), pp.341-350.

[61] Robinson, A.L., Pinchevsky, G.M. and Guthrie, J.A., 2018. A small constellation: Risk factors informing police perceptions of domestic abuse. Policing and society, 28(2), pp.189-204.

[62] Myhill, A. and Hohl, K., 2019. The "golden thread": Coercive control and risk assessment for domestic violence. Journal of interpersonal violence, 34(21-22), pp.4477-4497.

lead up time to high severity domestic abuse incidents - there is an opportunity to combine this review with a deep-dive into recorded data on catastrophic offenders to further understand points of intervention.

2. Safeguarding

Safeguarding 1: Where child abuse is identified by the Children's Services/Local Authority and referred to MASH, police should review the current risk of domestic abuse for the adults involved (and wider partners where relevant).	**Serial Abuser**
Safeguarding 2: Where historical child abuse is reported to police, enquiries into the current domestic situation of the suspect should be conducted by police and local authority.	**Serial Abuser**

For some cohorts, namely those with little to no non-DA offences, the emphasis of the response should continue to be safeguarding, especially as these sub-groups identify a number of victims in the domestic context (whether that is children, other relatives or vulnerable adults as well as intimate partners). Current processes (e.g. police and local authority risk assessments, MASH etc) for safeguarding victims and families from abuse could improve their focus on perpetrator offending, both DA and non-DA, to inform wider actions that aim to keep victims and families safe in the medium and long-term.

Disclosure does not always arise from a crime report - for example, a case may come to the attention of Children's Services, Adult's Social Care and health.

> *"I see people who are involved in domestic abuse either as perpetrators or victims, who have not been to the police, who the police don't know about, because they hadn't reported, but we still see them because they've been brought to the attention of children's services for other reasons. So we see quite a lot of that where there have been no reports and often that puts us in a difficult position because we can't do anything about it if it hasn't been reported to the police*" - Mental health practitioner.

> "Primarily, it's been because social children's services have become involved, or the police or children's services have become involved because of an incident. But there's been no other offending history for that person" - Domestic violence perpetrator programme practitioner.

Police should use reported child abuse/adult abuse as a platform to understand wider familial risk in the domestic context and risk assess families of concern. Where historical abuse is reported, namely to the police, both the police and relevant local authority services should act jointly to investigate the current domestic context.

Safeguarding 3: For cases put forward but not deemed to meet the threshold for MARAC, police and local authority safeguarding could conduct a rapid cross-checking exercise to search for any red flags (i.e. prevalence of domestic abuse and child abuse in either organisation's records).	**Serial Abuser**
Safeguarding 4: It should be standard practice to ensure core agencies inform a set of actions aimed at managing perpetrators - offender management, probation and MARAC should cross-check actions. This means MARAC should build in more time to address perpetrator needs and behaviours in a structured and holistic way.	**Serial Abuser**
Safeguarding 5: New occurrences of non-domestic abuse offending (linked to a higher risk of domestic abuse harm) should be utilised by practitioners as an additional driver to instigate a MARAC referral.	**All perpetrators**

MARAC only has the capacity to discuss the most high risk cases of domestic abuse, leading to decision making on how to triage cases. However, other agencies and forums could take an interest in cases which don't proceed to MARAC - these forums don't necessarily have the same access to information. For example, in the West Midlands, partners take part in a multi-agency meeting called 'One Day, One Conversation' (ODOC) which flags offenders for management who partners consider a risk, some of which are specifically tailored to domestic violence.

> *"We have a meeting. It's called an ODOC or a DA ODOC, domestic abuse 'One Day, One Conversation' and we have that once a month, where all the, all the partner agencies from mental health, housing, council, probation, they're all attending or if you've got concerns about someone it'll say explain."* - Domestic abuse offender manager

At MARAC, agencies should be supported to spend more time on developing actions that focus on managing the perpetrator. A lack of attention on perpetrators is one of the limitations of current MARACs, identified by practitioners in the West Midlands as well as in other police force area such as the Pan London MARAC; for example, in London, barriers to risk management included a focus on the 'responsibilisation' of survivors and the inconsistent involvement of offender-focused agencies, like the NPS.[63] In a survey conducted by the University of Suffolk, 8% of professionals believed the role of MARAC concerned risk management.[64] In the West Midlands, the following was mentioned about current processes:

[63] London et. al (2021), What does Good' look like? Pan London MARAC Review.
[64]Adisa, O (2020), Professionals' perspectives of MARACs and barriers to attendance: Headline findings from the 'Are MARACs still fit for purpose?' survey.

> "*There is a reason why this 17 year old boy's that violent at that age, and something's gone wrong somewhere for him, you know, as an example. You know, and we won't always talk about this openly at MARAC governance, because you've got victim services there who are strongly victim focused, which our process is, but that includes being perpetrator focused, if you didn't get it right*" - MARAC representative

> *"MARAC is very limited in terms of what they can do for perpetrators, because it's a forum very much geared towards victims, lots to do with families*" - MARAC representative

3. Offender management

Offender management 1: Offender managers and probation are expected to review all offender history of the individual, especially where the domestic abuse offending is physically violent. In particular, practitioners should be acquainted with the typology of offenders outlined above, especially in discussing and reflecting on the different drivers of abuse between these groups.	**All perpetrators**
Offender management 2: Where civil orders/protection notices are utilised by police, increased attention should be given to monitoring compliance for those perpetrators who have a history of non-compliance or general law breaking attitudes. Civil orders should be encouraged as breach of such orders may give an indication to offender managers of who is higher risk.	**All perpetrators**
Offender management 3: Recommendation 3 is particularly relevant for non-specialised law breakers to ascertain their intractability. If this raises concerns, offender managers should conduct a DARA.	**Non-specialised law breakers**

We found that, while some offender managers would review all offending history of the high risk perpetrators they worked with, this was not standard practice. Some offender managers would review offending from three years prior to the index offence, others would only review domestic abuse offending. Some offender managers felt that understanding patterns of non-domestic abuse offending would help inform risk management, but others suggested that reviewing non-domestic abuse offending history without context could be deceptive, with offences listed on PNC such as burglary or theft potentially painting a misleading picture. Most offender managers would not discuss offending history with the perpetrators they worked with, unless the perpetrator wanted to, because the focus was on looking forward rather than revisiting past offences.

> *"To me, it's important to know their general makeup in terms of their previous offending"* - Domestic abuse offender manager.

> *"We don't tend to dwell on their history unless they bring it up. Because we're more interested in moving forward and breaking that cycle with them and helping them to do that. So unless they bring it up, we wouldn't generally touch on anything.*" - Domestic abuse offender manager.

However, this research could be used to *challenge* the idea that some offending history is not relevant. The results of regression show the mix of non-DA offending associated with higher harm domestic abuse and the qualitative findings discuss that even though the offending behaviour is different (acquisitive crime versus physically violent domestic abuse), the root causes of the offending may be similar (substance misuse). For offenders where the pattern is less specialised, namely our "non-specialised law breakers" cohort, offender managers should consider this general intractability as an early warning sign of future harm and ensure an up-to-date DARA exists for the current domestic context.

Furthermore, this research supports the role of the offender manager in terms of their control and disruption remit - breaches of civil orders are associated with future high harm domestic abuse and therefore compliance with civil orders are important. Moreover, it should be incentivised to continue to use civil orders as any non-compliance with orders could be used to reassess and tighten the control and disrupt measures in place.

Offender management 4: The police should review how they enrol individuals onto Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes, such as making use of mandatory points of engagement such as the fixed and flex IOM (Integrated Offender Management) cohorts, to offer to offenders regardless of index offence.	**All perpetrators**
Offender management 5: There should be no data barriers to bringing together data on offending history that sits outside of police systems, including on quick access to probation, health and local authority datasets, either at MARAC or equivalent structure.	**All perpetrators**
Offender management 6: Where the individual was known to the youth justice system, offender managers and probation should approach the relevant Youth Offending Service to understand the wider context to the offending and the work done by the YOS.	**Violent Adult Offender**

Practitioners raised numerous concerns around the use of domestic violence perpetrator programmes, including:

- General capacity in terms of the numbers of individuals who could be engaged in a programme at any given point, as well as the resources available to manage the

programme and evaluate outcomes

- Their inability to work with individuals with multiple and complex needs, or take a tailored approach to individuals, and these 'outstanding' needs affecting the ability to affect/ motivation to change

- The difficulty of running programmes where there was no statutory responsibility, such as diversion programmes following an out-of-court disposal or where the crime had been NFA'd, for example:
    - Because individuals in denial about their offending would have to voluntarily accept their behaviour was wrong and needed to change - the mere fact of being a labelled a perpetrator programme *in their view* would be labelling and stigmatising their behaviour
    - Because practitioners in the non-statutory space are faced with potentially violent and intimidating individuals are are not equipped to deal with that

- Thresholds were unnecessarily exclusionary meaning perpetrators across all risk levels couldn't access programmes. For instance, a historic strangulation incident under the influence of substances might prevent a perpetrator meeting the threshold for a DVPP despite different contemporary circumstances. Several offender managers felt they had no options for referral, meaning offending behaviour wasn't addressed and offending would recur.

Where the non-domestic abuse offending is tied up in a wider belief system or rigid attitudes (for example our "Prolific Violent Offender" sub-group), an intervention which is not domestic-abuse specific could be more helpful to address the wider issues, as well as the domestic abuse (examples given were around anger management and controlling emotions courses). These programmes should set up individuals to succeed, and that often means greater wrap-around support is provided than is traditionally offered through a DVPP.

The police should review the points at which individuals should be referred to a DVPP and agree in principle, based on this research, that the index offence doesn't have to necessarily be domestic abuse-related. An obvious point to use is the Integrated Offender Management cohort as a general referral pathway, particularly using the clusters and regression analysis to identify DA risk in fixed cohorts and fastrack these individuals to DA offender management. Integrated Offender Management is a framework for allowing agencies, particularly the police and probation, to prioritise and target offenders. The Neighbourhood Crime Integrated Offender Management Strategy, published in December 2020, modified the approach to ensure IOM looked at fixed, flex and free cohorts:

- Fixed: Neighbourhood crime offenders with a high, very high or prolific risk of reoffending, assessed using the Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS)

- Flex: The 'flex' surrounding the fixed priority cohort aims to ensure that this IOM model remains locally driven and that a matrix approach is complemented with professional judgement.
- Free: We are aware that some local areas are running IOM schemes for other cohorts of offenders with different needs, risks and offending patterns. This includes schemes focused on serious violence, serious organised crime and domestic abuse.

Other practitioners working with domestic abuse perpetrators reported differing levels of access to offending histories, depending on existing relationships and information sharing protocols in place with statutory agencies, and the method of referral. For instance, while NHS Foundation Trusts might receive offending histories, MARAC minutes and OASys summaries from offender managers, third sector organisations such as the Drive Project - which receives a large number of self-referrals - are reliant on information that the perpetrator chooses to disclose. Agencies should prioritise, led by the police, seamless information sharing to improve the multi-agency offender management. This is even more so important when individuals transition through services, for example from youth justice services to probation.

> *"We won't get anything that's non domestic abuse. So if it wasn't domestic abuse related, then that would be almost like a breach of confidentiality. So we don't get that information."* - Victim's services practitioner

> *"We were taking around 50% self referrals. So you're quite reliant on what the person discloses [...]. You don't have the same ability to just, you know, speak to all of those key agencies and find out what the history is. So there is definitely a lot more unknown"* - Domestic violence perpetrator programme practitioner

4. Prevention and diversion

Prevention and diversion 1: Police should continue to support referrals to diversion programmes where an out-of-court disposal is given (including programmes like Project CARA). Where the crime is NFA'd, the police should routinely signpost to community programmes.	**All perpetrators**

If Police find enough evidence to charge the suspect, or offer an out of court disposal, this is a key intervention opportunity to prevent future offending, for example, through diversion programmes - there may even be reason to offer voluntary activities where the case has been NFA'd. Practitioners told us that more use could be made of out of court disposals. These can require perpetrators to participate in some form of rehabilitative activity, with failure to do so resulting in a charge. One such programme is CARA (Cautioning and Relationship Abuse). It's aimed at domestic abuse

offenders who have received a conditional caution. CARA involves a number of workshops for men who had assaulted their partners and who were assessed as 'low-risk'. Offenders were only allowed onto the scheme if it was their first domestic abuse offence and they'd admitted to committing the offence. Offenders who had attended the workshop and were later rearrested committed crimes with a total Cambridge Harm Index value 27% lower than those in the control group. Workshop participants were also 35% less likely to be rearrested in the control group.[65]

Prevention and diversion 2: Police should continue to support referrals to diversion programmes where an out-of-court disposal is given (including programmes like Project CARA). Where the crime is NFA'd, the police should routinely signpost to community programmes.	**Prolific Young Offender**

A significant proportion of offences result in no further action which means that a large proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators are therefore not supervised by probation - while the police only have the resources to manage the highest priority offenders. Consequently, there is a gap in terms of interventions and referral pathways for domestic abuse perpetrators who will not be supervised by probation or the police.

In particular, voluntary services spoke of financial and resource limitations which impacted their ability to effectively engage perpetrators across a variety of offending cohorts. They noted the limited provisions available for domestic abuse perpetrators who were high risk, had unmet mental health and/or substance misuse needs, or who were still living with the victim. Critically, these perpetrator groups were often most in need of service intervention.

> *"If we then try to offer one to one, then the money just doesn't add up. I mean, I had a man that I spoke to yesterday who has ADHD. And he said that he'd made it clear to the social worker that he would need one to one and couldn't do a group. Well, that's going to be a difficulty I think. But I don't know what other options would be available for that man"* - Domestic violence perpetrator programme practitioner

> *"We've got £68,000 to deliver the programme, that doesn't include any follow up work, we just can't do it, we haven't got the money."* - Domestic violence perpetrator programme practitioner

> *"He needs mental health support. Trying to get somebody into mental health is a bloody nightmare. You can't - you can try and try again. But what happens is because you can't refer this person anywhere, the abuse, and the risk is just increasing constantly"* - Victim's services practitioner

[65]Strang, H et al. (2017), Reducing the Harm of Intimate Partner Violence: Randomized Controlled Trial of the Hampshire Constabulary CARA Experiment.

Prevention and diversion 3: For young offenders coming to attention for DA-type offending, the police should begin to flag this against the crime report. For young offenders coming to the attention for non-DA offending, a review of their offending history and any victimisations should be conducted to understand if there has been any recent harmful behaviour.	**Prolific Young Offender**
Prevention and diversion 4: Where there is evidence of harmful behaviour, the police should expedite the investigation.	**Prolific Young Offender**
Prevention and diversion 5: Where there is evidence of harmful behaviour, the police should make an early notification, pre-outcome, to ensure any preventive/ diversionary work can be offered to the young person immediately, on a voluntary basis, before the outcome of the investigation.	**Prolific Young Offender**
Prevention and diversion 6: Police should consider referral pathways involving youth services that ensure harmful behaviour is challenged at an early age in a non-stigmatising environment.	**Prolific Young Offender**

The emergence of harmful behaviour in domestic contexts by young people poses a challenge for practitioners. There is an acknowledgment that, while a child-first approach seeks to avoid labelling and stigmatisation, it is imperative to ensure that such behaviour is prevented while the justice system has the support and levers to do so. Challenges were raised in the West Midlands surrounding understanding of domestic abuse, particularly among youth cohorts, and practitioners noted a general assumption that domestic abuse was not an arena of offending that young people could be easily engaged in due to their age.

> *"I don't know, I think there's still this kind of myth that they don't do it because they're children? And I'm just like, no, They really do. And they are going to be my DV perpetrators in the future at probation*" - Practitioner in youth offending service

> *"I think if you can catch them young, and help them out at that younger age, you would help them further down the line. But there's no guarantee, obviously, but I think the younger you can catch them and change their attitude and behaviour."* - Domestic abuse offender manager

The police should flag equivalent behaviour between 10 and 16 as well as expedite investigations and ensure early YOT notification where the case concerns such behaviour. Once working with the

YOT, either voluntarily or under statutory work, interventions challenging harmful behaviour in a non-stigmatising environment should be the norm. Some practitioners noted the lack of perpetrator programmes, although some would challenge the use of the word perpetrator, for young people. Practitioners also noted a lack of targeted domestic abuse interventions for perpetrators who are under 18 and high risk. Youth offenders are often not eligible for high risk domestic abuse interventions because they don't have an extensive offending history (compared to repeat and serial adult offenders), and are competing for places with adults who are serial offenders. It was acknowledged that there is a need for effective, early intervention and prevention programmes, in order to prevent youth offenders from entering the MARAC arena as adults for ongoing domestic violence perpetration.

> *"I have looked high and low. And what you'll get is there are lots of intervention providers that will do 18 plus. So obviously, when you get into the probation cohort, there are intervention providers that are present"* - Practitioner in youth offending service

Prevention and diversion 7: Police should facilitate information sharing arrangements around young offenders moving from youth to adult justice, specifically consideration of the offending history and interventions already used. Resources will need to be focused to enable practitioners to work to the Youth Justice Board transition guidance effectively.	**Prolific Young Offender**

It is also important to take a graduated, transitional approach to young people as they move into adult services. This could be improved by better information-sharing. Several practitioners suggested that links between YOS, probation and police offender managers are poor, and information sharing between these agencies is limited. Youth justice practitioners stressed that this was a key area for improvement, representing an opportunity to share information on a perpetrator's background and the best approach to management.

> *"We're talking, you know, days between somebody being a youth perpetrator or an adult [...] 24 hours. And actually, I think the world can very much change for them in how they're treated and how they are understood, and how we intervene. I don't think we do enough in youth justice to see the risk, I don't think we do enough to see really high risk really concerning behaviours*" - Practitioner in youth offending service

> *"Probation very rarely makes contact. Which for me, I think is really important. Because a lot of our young people are kind of on the cusp of becoming an adult. So we have them and then they transition across to probation."* - Practitioner in youth offending service

Prevention and diversion 8: Police should consider enhanced offender management provision for 18 to 25 years olds, similar to the YOT model. Applying the same supervisory framework to young adults will also require access to services in line with those available for the youth cohort therefore commissioning decisions should factor in provision for 18 to 25 year olds.	**Prolific Young Offender**

We have recommended elsewhere that the YOT model should be extended to 18 to 25 years olds so the preventative and diversionary work can continue for young people, especially considering the evidence around maturity and brain development.[66] While this is something that is unlikely to be in the operational gift of police forces, a degree of enhanced support to take a graduated approach to transitioning into adulthood is recommended and should be considered by commissioners.

Prevention and diversion 9: When police attend incidents with male complainants and female perpetrators, the risk assessment process should ideally be conducted with both parties separately and additional attention paid to the complainant to assess if there is any risk of perpetration from them.	**Female Victim/ Offender**
Prevention and diversion 10: While any criminal allegations against the woman may by necessity be progressed, police should also consider if any action needs to be taken against the complainant and whether the woman is suitable for referral to a Women's Centre.	**Female Victim/ Offender**
Prevention and diversion 11: Female offenders should benefit from mandatory written pre-sentence reports.	**Female Victim/ Offender**

Police must approach female perpetrators with consideration of their likely victimisation and complexity.

> *"I'd say that we have a lot of female offenders who were more likely to have domestic violence committed on them."* - Mental health practitioner

> *"Those figures on the MARAC are kind of skewed in a way about female offenders because it's, it's retaliations, it's resistant violence, resistance, violence, those things that need to be considered. So we've not had anybody to do the work with. What we've seen with the women is serious mental health problems. And they are repeat victims. they've endured multiple incidents and coercive control."* - Domestic violence perpetrator

[66] Crest Advisory (January 2022), Making the criminal justice system work better: how to improve out-of-court disposals and diversion schemes.

> programme practitioner

This begins with ascertaining risks of victimisation even when an individual is accused of perpetrating domestic abuse. At the point of contact with female offenders, consideration should also be given to how to divert the individual, including choosing community sentences over short custodial sentences. Outcomes for female perpetrators should be informed by a comprehensive needs assessment of the individual ahead of sentencing.

Practitioners were not currently well-versed in how to deal with counter allegations of victimisation and understanding complexities of domestic abuse; this is particularly important for a female victim-offender cohort.

5. Prisons and probation

Prisons and probation 1: Probation should develop toolkits specific to the typologies of domestic abuse perpetrator set out in this research.	**All perpetrators**
Prisons and probation 2: Pre-Sentence Reports produced for court should detail all relevant offending history based on the typologies outlined to enable sentencers to tailor sentencing to wider attitudes and behaviours.	**All perpetrators**
Prisons and probation 3: Police and Probation should work with Courts to deliver a robust local response to breaches of domestic abuse related orders.	**All perpetrators**

One key theme from stakeholders in probation was practitioner capability around working with domestic abuse perpetrators, including ensuring that all practitioners have access to tools to better understand and work with perpetrators. For example, one individual raised the need for more inclusive practitioner toolkits, particularly looking at female offenders - this may be most relevant to working with the 'Female Victim Offender' sub-group.

> "*Not many of the toolkits are suitable for working with women when we need a different approach.*" - Probation.

> "*A lot of the toolkits, I think, don't seem to be written with an eye to neurodiversity, or learning difficulties, which are, again, quite prevalent on our caseload.*" - Probation.

This research drew particular attention to substance misuse, because it is a commonly recorded flag in police data, but there are a range of risk factors that are relevant to offending. Toolkits that help manage cohorts of domestic abuse offenders with a high prevalence of substance misuse flags/ drugs offences, or who are typically younger at their first incident, or who have a history of victimisation, might result in a more tailored response to risk that does not already exist. Building Better Relationships (BBR) is an example of DVPP in which participants are taught to deal with their emotional control in conflict situations along with challenging the thoughts that justify harmful behaviour[67]. A report from 2021, however, suggests that the BBR programme was not responsive to a diverse population of domestic abuse perpetrators as it did not take into account complex needs other than conflict resolution[68].

Beyond that, probation stakeholders mentioned that the knowledge and skills of practitioners in terms of interrogating offending history could be developed - this is particularly relevant to Pre-Sentence Reports.

Finally, the police felt a stronger approach could be taken by the justice system to breaches of civil orders and improving the role of civil order compliance in informing and strengthening the justice response.

Prisons and probation 4: The police, with prison and probation services should co-commission housing provision post release from prison.	**High Harm Offender**

For higher harm offenders, prison and probation may offer agencies an important opportunity to intervene with the perpetrator. One area for improvement is ensuring perpetrators are supported to find accommodation immediately upon release, given the often precarious position individuals are put into when they leave prison. Upon release, prisoners are given £47 for accommodation. If they already have temporary accommodation in a rented property, the service can give them a grant of an extra £50 which goes directly to the accommodation provider.[69] Prisoners are not allowed to apply for universal credit whilst in custody. Upon release, the housing part of universal credit can take up to 9 weeks to be paid. When going to the council for housing, prisoners are often turned away as they are not classed as a priority need. This leaves a lot of prisoners homeless upon release. Roughly one third of prisoners getting released said that they have nowhere to stay.[70]

[67]CEP Probation. (2019). Collection of good practices/treatment programs. Domestic violence. England-Wales-Becoming-New-Me-Plus.

[68] Renehan, N. (2021). BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS? INTERROGATING THE 'BLACK BOX' OF A STATUTORY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR PROGRAMME: SUMMARY OF THESIS AND KEY FINDINGS REPORT.

[69]Crisis. (2017). Prison leavers. Ending homelessness. Law and rights. Prison leavers.

[70] Cooper, V. (2013). No Fixed Abode: The implications for homeless people in the criminal justice system. London: Howard League for Penal Reform.

Being homeless or living in temporary accommodation results in a higher chance of re-offending.[71]

For domestic abuse perpetrators, having no fixed abode could lead to them returning to the family home for support and trying to gain access to victims. Living in temporary accommodation or being homeless on the streets gives people more open access to drugs. In one study, regular Class A drug use up to one year after release increased reoffending rates by 58%. In 2020 the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance started working with Drive Partnership to build a case for former perpetrators of domestic abuse to be a priority housing need upon release which would keep them away from victims and families the perpetrator has affected and therefore reduce the likelihood of reoffending.[72]

Prisons and probation 5: Prison and Probation, with support from police officers, should identify domestic abuse offending history on prison entry, and agree whether service provision would be suitable during their sentence. This could be through access to the last police-recorded DARA or a more extensive list of offending history. HMPSS committed to reviewing risk assessments in the national Domestic Abuse Strategy published earlier this year - this review could include a trial of different mechanisms to improve domestic abuse assessment on entry to prison and interventions during a sentence.	**High Harm Offender**
Prisons and probation 6: When known high harm perpetrators are in custody for non-domestic abuse-related offending, police and/or the local authority should make contact with any known victims or individuals at risk of victimisation to conduct a risk assessment and offer referral and support pathways.	**High Harm Offender**
Prisons and probation 7: Programmes should be adaptable to ensure individuals on short sentences are able to access them and thresholds for such programmes should not be overly prohibitive.	**High Harm Offender**
Prisons and probation 8: The sentence plan should be used as an opportunity to provide enhanced support building on recognised protective factors against reoffending.	**High Harm Offender**

Another important point of intervention is the prison sentence itself. As in the courts, on entry to prison domestic abuse offenders are not necessarily viewed with the typology of their offending in mind. Prisons have not been designed to address the drivers of domestic abuse perpetration.

[71] Brunton-Smith, I., & Hopkins, K. (2013). The factors associated with proven re-offending following release from prison: findings from Waves 1 to 3 of SPCR. Results from the surveying prisoner crime reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.

[72] Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). (2021). Accommodation for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.

HMIP's inspection of Through the Gate Resettlement Services[73] (for short-term prisoners) found that basic screening on the first night in custody was inadequate for resettlement purposes as the prisoner only disclosed what they wanted to talk about rather than officers using full information gathering tools. Having more information on the perpetrator's history (in particular including non-crimes and crimes resulting in no further action) when the prisoner arrives would mean officers could signpost prisoners to the relevant agencies regarding their specific offending behaviour. OASyS reports detail some of this information, but the reports are not always accessible by third sector services providing interventions within the prison, and in some cases are not accessible by officers dealing with the prisoner. Some prisoners find it difficult to talk about their case due to shame or denial; this can mean that, unless the offending history is accessible, there is limited information to fully engage the individual and offer all of the resources that would benefit them.

There are specific courses that take place within the prison for domestic abuse perpetrators. For example, the Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP) is an accredited programme specifically tailored towards prisoners with a domestic abuse charge.[74] To be accepted onto the programme, prisoners must not present a serious violent risk to staff or have high risk behaviours e.g. use of weapon or strangulation. They must also not have any uncontrolled mental health conditions or substance misuse problems. This is likely to have an impact on the amount of domestic abuse perpetrators that are being targeted and have access to these accredited interventions. Prisons should ensure that criteria for inclusion are not unreasonably exclusionary or set too high.

Given the opportunities presented to agencies while high harm offenders are in custody, further support should be given to domestic abuse perpetrators as part of the sentence plan. For example, family is the biggest protective factor for reducing reoffending in general, however, domestic abuse perpetrators may not be able to contact their family due to their offence. In this way, domestic abuse perpetrators are a unique group of offenders where the crime relates to the most influential protective factor normally seen in other crime types. Qualitative research shows that domestic abuse perpetrators often strive to repair relationships with their children. For Simon*, one of the domestic abuse perpetrators interviewed for this research, having his two eldest children removed to foster care was a key driver behind his decision to change his abusive behaviour. Simon reflected, "It probably wasn't the fact of the domestic violence towards my current partner that made me want to make the changes that I changed [...] It was the fact that my two children have been removed from me, then I knew something had to change."

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) are there to support families who want to build on their relationship.[75] Their main goal is to support prisoners and their families throughout their time in custody and upon release. They do group work and one-to-one support for prisoners and their families and also have visiting centres in local communities for children who have been affected by

[73] HM Inspectorate of Probation. (2017). An Inspection of Through the Gate Resettlement Services for Prisoners Serving 12 Months or More.

[74]DMAT Services (NW) LTD. (2016). Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme.

[75] PACT. (2022). Group work. Prisoners - Families - Communities- A Fresh Start Together.

family members being in custody. The CFO3 programme, also run by PACT, works with prisoners with more complex needs on a one-to-one basis - looking at all of their needs such as substance misuse, accommodation, debt issues, mental health conditions and family relationships. PACT, therefore, can support domestic abusers holistically and help to rebuild their connections with loved ones upon release, context permitting. Prior to domestic abuse offending, strengthening family ties and building equal relationships with spouses can help to induce healthier relationships which may prevent or reduce breakdowns in relationships that involve abuse.

Wider considerations for agencies outside the criminal justice system

Recommendation 8: An approach to identifying and intervening with domestic abuse perpetrators does not yet have the same maturity as policy and commissioning around domestic abuse victims and wider safeguarding. Local areas, led by the police and Police and Crime Commissioners, should explore how services are commissioned, including the use of budgets, in the context of the whole partnership landscape and engage with partners to instil coherency and cogency across all activities.

During the workshop sessions, representative practitioners from across health, substance misuse and housing highlighted that, despite multi-agency forums such as MARACs nominally gathering different agencies together, agencies were often not working together effectively to address complex issues related to domestic abuse perpetration. Linked risk factors, such as substance misuse and mental health, were dealt with separately despite recognition from practitioners on the value of a coordinated response. Pressure on resourcing and funding, as well as individual agency agendas and narrowly defined service remits, were raised as contributing factors to siloed working. Practitioners reflected that they often had no clear sense of what services other agencies were offering for domestic abuse perpetrators.

Moreover, practitioners acknowledged gaps in knowledge around what information could be shared across agencies, and emphasised the need for a clear protocol for data sharing within multi-agency forums. It was noted that delays or misunderstandings around information sharing procedure were especially problematic in the case of young people, where concerns around GDPR prevented the timely sharing of information between GPs, schools and statutory partners.

An approach to identifying and intervening with domestic abuse perpetrators does not yet have the same maturity as policy and commissioning around domestic abuse victims and wider safeguarding. Local areas, led by PCCs, should explore how services are commissioned, including the use of budgets, in the context of the whole partnership landscape and engage with partners to instil coherency and cogency across all activities. A Strategic Commissioning Plan will outline a whole-system focus on perpetrators, including commitments to information-sharing, and proposals for how to better leverage commissioning power.

The following section lays out some early considerations of a whole-system approach to the perpetration of domestic abuse. The existing evidence base on how non-criminal justice system agencies can effectively engage in perpetrator identification is limited. While many studies reference the importance of multi-agency collaboration, they often lack detailed information about how specific agencies should work alongside the police or other agencies to support perpetrator identification and risk assessment. **We recommend that this is a priority for further research.**

Adult social care

Consideration:	Serial Abuser Domestic Abuse Specialist
➔ Are adequate information sharing processes around perpetrators in place with police when vulnerable adult abuse is identified by adult social care?	

Adult social care is an important access point for the identification of domestic abuse involving vulnerable adults. However, according to practitioners, perpetrators of domestic abuse are not always effectively identified by adult social care; where adult social care is involved in responding to domestic abuse, the response is often victim-focused. Practitioners suggested that perpetrator support needs such as substance misuse service could be better signposted by social care for those individuals displaying risky behaviours.

The Catastrophic Offender case study may give insight on the harm caused when information on risk isn't shared, or effectively responded to - eight months after a high risk domestic abuse non-crime incident the perpetrator went on to rape his sister in a care home. To ensure that individuals posing a high risk of domestic abuse are not given access to vulnerable adults, information must be shared between social care and police.

Children's services

Consideration:	Serial Abuser Domestic Abuse Specialist
➔ Are effective interventions in place for children witnessing violence? ➔ Are adequate information sharing processes around perpetrators in place with police when child abuse is identified by children's services? ➔ Is child-to-parent abuse being effectively identified and labelled, and reported to police?	

Witnessing domestic abuse or violence at a young age is recognised as an adverse and traumatising factor in a young person's development[76], and can entrench abusive behaviours as a response to conflict in intimate or familial relationships. When a child or young person is known to children's services due to domestic abuse occurring in the home, children's services are well placed to do preventative work to manage the risk of copied or learned behaviour.

Children and young people from households where domestic abuse occurs account for a significant proportion of MASH referrals. This forum represents a key intervention point for work with young people around healthy relationships.

[76]Guy, J., Feinstein, L. and Griffiths, A., 2014. Early intervention in domestic violence and abuse.

The research findings highlight the association between child abuse incidents and domestic abuse. The analysis of Serial Abusers, which contained a higher proportion of child abuse incidents, revealed a longer average incident duration. This pointed to a pattern of abuse over a sustained period, and suggested that child abuse incidents are often reported retrospectively. Where children's services have identified that child abuse is taking place, it is important that effective information sharing process are in place with the police to ensure a timely response.

Children's services also play a key role in identifying and reporting child-to-parent abuse and working closely with youth offending teams. Children perpetrating abuse against their parents may carry abusive behaviours into adulthood, and ultimately perpetrate domestic abuse. This pattern of offending can be seen in the Prolific Young Offender group. The case study individual was involved in non-crime incidents and assaults against his parents while under the age of 16, and later went on to perpetrate domestic abuse against his mother and his partner.

There are significant barriers to the identification and consistent reporting of child-to-parent abuse - including a reluctance to criminalise children, and fears from parents that children may be removed from their care. Child-to-parent abuse remains a relatively new area for practitioners working in this space, and there is a risk that this abuse is wrongly identified as a learning need or disability, or 'acting out' as a normal response to adverse childhood experiences. Practitioners working for children's services need improved training on the signs of, and risk factors for, child-to-parent abuse to improve their confidence in issuing appropriate advice and support. Without clear guidance from services, parents might be unsure about how they can access help and may fear repercussions for their children, leading to delayed reporting and consequently a delayed - and less effective - intervention.

Housing

Consideration: ➔ Are effective supported housing options available for substance-affected perpetrator groups? ➔ Is suitable accommodation available on release from prison? ➔ Are housing services able to respond quickly to police requests around the location of offenders?	**All perpetrators**

Suitable housing is an important factor in the effective rehabilitation of domestic abuse perpetrators, especially where substance misuse is a risk factor in offending. Where supported housing options for perpetrators affected by substance misuse are inadequate - for instance, where accommodation is shared with individuals who have access to drugs - perpetrators can relapse and return to harmful abusive behaviours triggered by substance use. This was the reality for one of the domestic abuse perpetrators interviewed for this research; Simon* moved out of the family home due to his abusive behaviour, and made a decision to stop taking drugs. However, the accommodation he was in was shared with a cocaine user and Simon relapsed, delaying his

rehabilitation. It was at this point that Simon sought help from his police offender manager, and asked to be recommended to a residential recovery programme to improve his chances of staying clean.

Upon release from prison, suitable housing for domestic abuse perpetrators is important to promote desistance and to ensure the effective safeguarding of victims. Some domestic abuse perpetrators will continue to pose a risk to their victim(s) when released from prison, but may be housed in the same area as their victim(s) due to a lack of coordination between prison, probation and housing. Improved communication between these partners upon release can mitigate the risk of abuse reoccurring, prevent licence breaches and improve victim safeguarding.

Youth justice system

Consideration: ➔ Is child-to-parent abuse being effectively identified and labelled, and reported to police? ➔ Are violent tendencies in young people being considered along with other offending? Is the YOS working closely with offender management? ➔ Are substance misuse services available to the YOS?	**Prolific Young Offender**

As discussed above in relation to children's services, youth offending teams play an important role in effectively identifying and reporting child-to-parent abuse to target early intervention and prevent the escalation of abusive behaviours into adulthood. To encourage disclosure and create an environment within the YOS where children and young people feel comfortable discussing behaviours, practitioners must carefully consider the accessibility of language used. For instance, a best approach might explore positive and negative networks and relationship dynamics, rather than label children and young people as 'perpetrators'.

When young people are involved with the Youth Offending Service for a non-domestic abuse-related incident, previous patterns of offending or indications of violent behaviour might provide important insight into potential domestic abuse risk. Practitioners noted that young people are typically *not* referred to the service as a result of domestic abuse incidents, but that abusive or violent behaviours were apparent once work with the young person began. A standard intervention for young people involved with the YOS around healthy relationships and masculinity may facilitate the disclosure of problematic behaviours or incidents of abuse, allowing for more tailored support. There is a significant overlap between domestic abuse perpetration and victimhood within the youth offending cohort. Practitioners are increasingly aware of this overlap, and trauma-informed practice is key to effective preventative work.

The YOS should work closely with offender management to inform engagement plans and effective risk management, looking across both domestic and non-domestic incidents. Where young people are expected to transition from the YOS to probation, information sharing on offending histories and

insight on domestic abuse behaviours and risk are critical to ensure continuity of provision and to prevent blindspots.

It is acknowledged that abusive behaviours are difficult to challenge and change once they become entrenched in adulthood. Interventions tackling this behaviour in its early stages are likely to be more effective. With sufficient resourcing, the YOS could play an integral role in the delivery of early intervention work around domestic abuse in schools and other educational settings. This approach has been trialled in Dudley in the West Midlands as part of a pledge to focus on prevention.

Health

Consideration: ➔ Are health services being effectively leveraged as key opportunities for domestic abuse disclosures? Particularly where there might be barriers to reporting? ➔ Are health services coordinating provision with substance misuse services effectively?	**Female Victim Offender**

Health services, and especially mental health services, should be recognised and effectively leveraged as key sites for domestic abuse disclosures. This is particularly important where victims face barriers to reporting domestic abuse directly to the police, or where perpetrators struggle to recognise their behaviour as abusive. For example, a perpetrator may be more likely to indirectly disclose abusive behaviours or incidents via an anger management course than on a dedicated domestic abuse programme.

However, in some cases health practitioners lack specific training on how to respond to domestic abuse disclosures - especially where an individual has no prior offending history. Training on how to manage these difficult conversations, for instance using motivational interviewing techniques, would encourage an appropriate and effective response. Once practitioners receive information on a possibly domestic abuse incident, they need to know how to use this information to effectively safeguard victims and ensure that risk is managed. An awareness of established information sharing protocols is key. Where applicable, practitioners can practise 'appropriate intelligence sharing' within a service to link connected service user profiles; this will allow for a more nuanced understanding of relationship networks and associated risk.

Evidence suggests that mental health and substance misuse are closely associated with domestic abuse perpetration, and constitute the 'toxic trio'[77]. A holistic response to risk factors associated with domestic abuse must ensure that, where mental health and substance misuse are related triggers for a perpetrator, service provision is coordinated. Mental health services must work

[77] Middleton, C. and Hardy, J., 2014. Vulnerability and the 'toxic trio': the role of health visiting: this article explores the association between domestic violence, maternal mental health and alcohol substance misuse, and how when they are combined, the risk of significant harm is made more probable. Community Practitioner, 87(12), pp.38-45

effectively with substance misuse services to address associated risk factors driving abusive behaviour; this might include improved information sharing between services and greater alignment in assessment processes.

Substance misuse services

Consideration:	**Economic Compulsive**
➔ Are substance misuse services available in particular for economic compulsive perpetrator groups? ➔ How is the YOS engaged with substance misuse services? ➔ How is treatment coordinated with health services, and other interventions around attitudes and behaviours? ➔ Are substance misuse programmes pushed as part of sentencing decisions and probation rehabilitation requirements?	

Economic compulsive perpetrator groups represent a significant risk, with offending driven by the need to secure funds to support a habit - often substance addiction. In such cases, a perpetrator's domestic abuse behaviours have a complex relationship with their substance misuse and non-domestic abuse offending; abuse may be the result of the psychopharmacological effects of a substance, as well as a mechanism for securing funds - for instance, demanding money from a partner or family member. Substance misuse services need a nuanced understanding of how misuse features in a perpetrator's offending patterns in order to provide tailored and responsive support.

Linked to this, substance misuse practitioners need improved training in identifying the signs of domestic abuse, particularly controlling or coercive behaviour which can have a more discreet presentation. While some practitioners from substance misuse services attend MARACs and develop expertise in this field, this knowledge is often not shared across teams, leading to an inconsistent approach to flagging and reporting. Social network assessments can be a useful tool to initiate conversation with service users around problematic behaviours and to understand codependency dynamics common to relationships involving substance misuse and abuse.

Substance misuse services appropriate for young offenders displaying abusive behaviours are also important. The YOS must engage with substance misuse service providers to ensure that provision is reflective of young people's needs and experiences, and referral pathways are clear and accessible.

As outlined above, links between substance misuse services and mental health services could be improved. Practitioners identified a hierarchy of provision whereby an individual might be turned away for mental health support until substance misuse issues are resolved; this approach prevented timely access to support and a coordinated, holistic response to linked risk factors.

Schools/ educational settings

Consideration: ➔ Are primary interventions around healthy relationships and attitudes in place? ➔ Are unhealthy relationships picked up by secondary schools? ➔ Is information shared via Operation Encompass effectively acted on? ➔ Is information around parental attitudes and controlling behaviour shared with local authority/police?	**Prolific Young Offender** **Coercive Controller** **Domestic abuse specialist**

Once abusive behaviours are entrenched they are much more difficult to challenge and change. Early preventative work is key to addressing problematic behaviours, reducing risk and minimising the need for more punitive interventions downstream. Schools and other educational settings are ideal environments to deliver education on healthy relationships, misogyny and consent. Teaching on these topics should use appropriate language to engage young people and ensure that learning is relevant to their experience. For example, young people might respond better to discussion on 'toxic relationships' than domestic abuse. Linked to this, schools should aim to provide non-judgemental access to information on what constitutes abusive behaviours, to reduce the shame and stigma associated with domestic abuse and encourage disclosure and requests for support.

Currently, teachers delivering lessons on healthy relationships, misogyny and consent in schools can lack specific training in these areas and are at capacity. Dedicated domestic abuse practitioners based in schools and leading sessions with young people would help to ease the burden on teachers and ensure that lessons are effectively delivered. This work should be coordinated with other agencies delivering work in schools around overlapping issues, as schools are under pressure to balance this type of work with curriculum learning.

Where schools are made aware of domestic abuse at home, information sharing protocol with police and local authority partners must be clear and consistently applied. Where abuse is disclosed to a teacher or education worker, this represents an opportunity for a young person to talk about their experiences in a safe and familiar setting.

Opportunities for further research

Recommendation 9: Researchers should continue to exploit the potential of recorded data on offending history. In particular there would be value in exploring the relationship between police outcomes and future perpetration, the significance of demographic factors (in particular ethnicity) and comparing offending patterns by type of domestic abuse relationship (intimate or non-intimate). Further work with practitioners to improve risk assessment processes incorporating a view of non-domestic abuse offending would also be beneficial.

The data provided by West Midlands police force provided an unprecedented opportunity to look at offending patterns of domestic abuse perpetrators. However, this type of data has further potential to answer lingering questions on domestic abuse perpetration. Given the limitations of the quantitative method, there are a number of areas where we could improve, and build on, the richness of the data used in this research.

1. ***How could the richness of the data be improved?***

- Further research could use data from a larger time window, for example 30 years
- Research could also look at offending in other police force areas, particularly those adjacent to the area of interest, to understand offending by individuals who offend outside of the force area
- Research could use data from more than one police force area to compare offending patterns to establish if there are any differences in the results

This research focuses on the relationship between DA and non-DA offending, but has not considered the impact of recorded police outcomes on future offending. Future research should consider the overlap between different police outcomes and future perpetration.

2. ***What is the relationship between police outcomes and future perpetration?***

- Analysis factoring in the impact of outcomes or looking at how outcomes relate to total incident severity
- Investigation of how the timeliness of the outcome impacts further reporting, in a more victim-focused study
- For individuals who have received custodial sentences, looking at the relationship between this life event and future perpetration
- For individuals who have received domestic abuse-specific interventions, look at the relationship between these interventions and future perpetration
- For individuals who have not been charged, but have received an out-of-court disposal, looking at the relationship between this outcome and future perpetration

There is also an opportunity to further explore the behaviour behind overlapping offending that has not been done in this research.

3. ***Where there is a suspected relationship between DA and non-DA offending, what are the reasons behind this?***

- There were a number of potential overlaps mentioned in interviews that could be explored in future research, namely:
    - Crimes recorded with a hate crime flag or where the individual is linked to extremism, including linking data with intelligence
    - Individuals known to be involved in gangs, including linking data with police intelligence

The clustering did not include data on offenders with no history of domestic abuse - they are the only permutation absent from this research (for obvious reasons given the research question). However, further research could compare offending patterns with cohorts.

4. ***How do offending patterns of domestic abuse perpetrators compare with offenders with no history of domestic abuse?***

- A study could consider the comparison between domestic abuse perpetrators to offenders with no history of domestic abuse, including to see if an algorithm can predict from the data who is a domestic abuse perpetrator and who is not
- Research would then seek understand how the machine learning algorithm makes that prediction – this is called classification analysis
- This could be repeated with a richer dataset that looks not only at all offending linked to an offender, but all the times they were a victim or witness of any offences too

While we have a basic demographic understanding of the types of domestic abuse perpetrator (age, gender, ethnicity), we are not able to say if there are any significant differences in the perpetration of domestic abuse based on a range of individual, familial, community and societal demographic factors.

5. ***How can demographic data provide a greater understanding of the types of domestic abuse perpetrator?***

- With more specific location data than Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), research could focus on further analysis of location, including potential hotspots of perpetration and the

relationship between the geographical location of domestic abuse-related and non-domestic abuse-related offending
- Using the age and gender data to seek to understand whether types of domestic abuse perpetrator are more likely to perpetrate abuse against certain people only (family or intimate partner only) or in certain relationships only. Certain types of abuse in domestic contexts (child-to-parent violence, elder abuse and child abuse) could be further compared to intimate partner violence
- Using age data to conduct a deep-dive into offending patterns of young offenders and how offending in childhood transitions, or not, into adult offending, especially around domestic abuse perpetration

The relationship between non-crime and domestic abuse offending could be further explored, especially to ensure non-crimes are not minimised (given the number of non-crimes where medium or high risk DARAs were completed).

6. ***What does the relationship between domestic abuse non-crimes and domestic abuse crime tell us about the progression of domestic abuse offending?***

- Analysis could look more closely at non-crimes and the typical number of non-crimes before domestic abuse offence

A key limitation of the data is that it relies on what we know about domestic abuse, and it is commonly understood that the majority of domestic abuse goes unreported. Building up our understanding of unreported incidents in relation to offending patterns might improve our ability to identify perpetrators.

7. ***How do we stop our reliance on recorded data and better understand the extent of domestic abuse perpetration and its overlap with wider offending?***

- Victim surveys should be used to understand the scale of unreported incidents, focusing on the reasons why they have not been reported how these incidents interacted with the reported timeline

Finally, the regression analysis on first-time risk assessments demonstrates the importance of risk management to get ahead of future harm. DARA is just one type of risk assessment used by police forces and the recency, frequency, gravity score is just one way of assessing risk cumulatively. Future research might consider how patterns of offending inform better risk assessment.

8. *How do offending patterns inform risk assessment processes?*

- Research could establish a reliable mechanism for weighting previous assessments to inform offender managers when to enrol an individual
- Research might establish. based on offending patterns, when the police should carry out a further risk assessment to refresh the picture when there has not been a crime report that would trigger one

Annex 1: Case Study 1 (Simon)

Simon was interviewed for this research on 11 February 2022. All the names in this case study have been changed.

Simon's childhood was difficult. He remembers **domestic abuse in the family home** between his parents. His dad could be 'heavy handed' and violence would sometimes involve the children. **Alcohol was always around**. Extended family members were aware of the abuse but no one intervened. For Simon, this level of violence was normal. While Simon did well at primary school, **he was bullied**. There were good parts, and Simon remembers enjoying playing football at primary school and for local clubs. He remembers family gatherings at Christmas as a positive time.

When Simon was 11 years old, his parents separated. Simon felt angry with the situation, and this led him to act out at school and rebel. **He was expelled from two schools** for fighting, throwing chairs at teachers, and poor attendance. After these expulsions, Simon wasn't able to attend mainstream schools due to his behaviour. It was at this point that **Simon first started to use drugs and alcohol**, and engage in criminal activity. **He would go missing from home** for days, and his mum was no longer able to cope. Simon was **placed in foster care**, but never settled anywhere, and consequently bounced from placement to placement. Simon had multiple social workers during this period. He was **committing offences such as shoplifting, car theft, burglaries** with his friends, and using cannabis and drinking alcohol.

At the age of 14, the group Simon was friends with **got involved in crack and heroin** - Simon also got involved and at age 16 was injecting heroin. Simon quickly became addicted, and would steal to fund his habit.

> *"It used to take me out of my feelings of what was actually going on to me. You know, that was my escape, just to forget about everything [...] but at that point, I suppose I enjoyed the buzz, I enjoyed what it was doing to me"*

Simon's offending at this time was linked to his substance misuse. Either he would get into fights while under the influence, or would commit crime to fund his habit. His first involvement with police was at age 14; he was arrested with friends for burglary and shoplifting. Simon received a **two-year supervision order with the Youth Offending Service**, and had multiple different YOS workers over this period.

From the age of 16 to 21, **Simon was homeless** and was selling the Big Issue and shoplifting. He went to **prison twice during this period**, for just under a year each time. In prison, Simon received minimal support for his heroin addiction, and didn't engage in education. Simon was initially scared of going to prison, but adapted quickly and found prison preferable to homelessness.

> *"I thought it was [...] great. Because at the time I was homeless. To now having a bed, three*

square meals a day.[...] I used to commit offences to get put on remand, just so I could have a break from being out on the streets. It might sound mad, but that's how it was."

When he'd served his second sentence, Simon felt that he didn't want to be homeless and begging anymore. He wanted a different way of living but there were **no support services on offer apart from probation**, which he felt was limited and tokenistic.

"There were no services offered apart from probation [...] and probation you just walk in, you see someone for 10 minutes and you walk back out, you put your name on a piece of paper and you go back out. I wasn't really offered anything, even coming from foster care or anything like that."

Instead, Simon ended up **swapping crack and heroin for speed and cocaine**. He found it difficult to give up cannabis and alcohol, partly because sanctions for these substances were less severe, and they were considered socially acceptable.

"I just chopped and changed one for the other. And it's still brought the same results, the same pain, same offending behaviour, same trouble"

Simon got into his first proper relationship around this time, which started off well but was "rife" with drinking and drug use. Simon had two children with this partner; one child was born with significant disabilities and had a disability social worker to support the family. Simon remembers this as a stressful time, and reflected that **both the health visitor and disability social worker were aware of Simon and his partner's cannabis use** but didn't intervene or refer to any services.

"I was using cocaine heavily, drinking heavily, smoking cannabis constantly."

Simon perpetrated domestic abuse against his partner. The abuse was violent - smashing the property and belongings - and emotional. The first time authorities became aware of Simon's domestic abuse perpetration was after he was arrested for going round to his partner's house and smashing her windows and doors. **His partner had an injunction against Simon, and he was given a non-molestation order.** The conditions of this order meant that Simon was not allowed to contact his partner directly or indirectly, and could not go within a specified area. Looking back, **Simon feels that these conditions did not go far enough, and were not paired with support**.

"The first time I've got arrested for domestic violence, just giving me a map and I can't get in contact, directly or indirectly. Is that really a punishment? [...] there's got to be something that can be done sooner. Maybe get a bit harsher"

Simon **breached the non-molestation order twice, and was sent to prison twice**, serving six weeks each time. This relationship ended after Simon served time in prison. **At the time, Simon didn't recognise some of his abusive behaviours as domestic abuse**.

”I recognised that the physical side was domestic abuse, because I grew up around it, that was just kind of normal. It wasn’t until the course that I kind of understood that, it's not normal. It isn't just physical points that make domestic violence, there's a lot of emotional abuse as well, that can go with that. I used to put her down, call her names. At that time when I was doing that, I just thought that I was calling her names you know, I didn’t realise the emotional effect that that would have had on her”

Around this time, Simon was selling cannabis and **his non-domestic abuse offending otherwise declined because he no longer needed to steal to fund his habit**. There was little incentive for Simon to change at this time, as he was making money from selling drugs and felt more in control.

“There was less criminality going on at that time because I was living off the selling of drugs [...] I had free use and was making money at the same time”

“I thought I was king of the world [...] because I've been bullied at school, that was me regaining power. I wanted to have a bit of power in my life.”

A few years later, Simon started a relationship with a new partner, **both were using drugs heavily and were involved in selling cocaine**. They had children together. Simon perpetrated domestic abuse in this relationship, and **found drugs and alcohol to be a big trigger for abusive behaviour**.

“The drinking, and the drug taking, obviously played a part in where the domestic violence happened, because we were both drinking, and obviously tempers can get risen. So for me, probably not for everybody, but that was probably my biggest trigger. Since I'm not drinking, I'm so calm with my current partner. Now, if we're having shouting battles or arguments, we sit down and we discuss, we actually sit on the sofa, and I let her know, where I'm at, what I'm feeling”

Five years into this relationship, Simon earned supervised visits with his two children from his previous relationship. It became clear that the children’s mother was struggling with her mental health and was not able to properly look after the children. Simon informed a social worker and the children moved to stay with Simon. However, while the children were in Simon’s care, **he violently assaulted his new partner while under the influence of alcohol and drugs**. Simon can’t remember the incident but was shown CCTV of the incident which he found difficult to watch. Simon was arrested for assault, and signed a section 20 order for **his two eldest children who were then placed in foster care.**

A few months later, Simon was flagged as a persistent domestic abuser and contacted by Mike, an Offender Manager, and **asked to engage in voluntary interventions.** At this point in his life, **Simon was ready to engage** and had already taken steps in his own rehabilitation. For Simon, having his two eldest children removed to foster care was a key driver behind his decision to change his behaviour.

“I wanted to engage at that point, I’d started going to NA meetings, I’d had enough of the

wreckage of my life, you know, and I didn't like the person that I was, or had become. My two oldest had been removed from me and placed in foster care [...] and that hit hard. That was hard. That was probably one of the hardest things in my life [...] to face sitting in the kids' school, and them telling me that I can't leave the school with my children. That was, it was hard. That was tough. But then I got into recovery. Started going to NA meetings. I was engaging with [Mike]"

"It probably wasn't the fact of the domestic violence towards my current partner that made me want to make the changes that I changed [...] It was the fact that my two children have been removed from me, then I knew something had to change"

Because of Simon's abusive behaviours, he wasn't allowed to be at the family home at this time. However, he had spent time at the house over Christmas and his children's school were made aware. His children were put on a Child Protection Order, which he fully complied with; Simon made a decision to stop taking drugs and found accommodation in a shared flat. Simon was able to stay clean for 6-7 weeks, but **lapsed due to sharing the flat with a cocaine user.** At this point, Simon got in touch with Mike and asked for support.

"I picked the phone up to [Mike] and said to [him] look I need help. This house isn't right for me. I've been using and I want to do better. I want to try and get into a proper recovery house."

Mike helped Simon get into a **residential recovery programme** which required a negative drug test. Simon was there for five-six months, and attended NA meetings, weekly group sessions and had constant contact with a support worker. The interventions at the centre were around substance misuse, not domestic abuse, but Simon felt his time on **the programme improved his relationship with his partner and helped him to better understand his emotions**.

"Whilst I was there I managed to get started doing a bit of voluntary work for the organisation. I was helping with the gardening, looking after all the properties and that was really good. Really good. Very good time in my life"

"Over that period of time, I kind of learned a lot about myself, my relationships, my thinking. One of the hardest things to deal with is my feelings and emotions. Because I've kind of suppressed them all with the use of cannabis, alcohol, drugs".

When he left the centre, Simon was six months clean. He moved to another shared house and did have a few substance misuse lapses. At this time, Mike referred Simon to a Domestic Violence Perpetrator programme, but due to Covid restrictions Simon wasn't able to attend. Instead, Simon participated in an **online domestic abuse course, encouraged by Mike and his social worker**. The course encouraged Simon to recognise certain behaviours as abusive and implement coping mechanisms.

"There was stuff in there that was classed as domestic abuse that I wouldn't even have thought

it was domestic abuse"

"I learned a lot, I know the physical side of the domestic abuse but just certain things, the emotional side of it all. I've learned from it ways of how to cope and deal with it all. And if those situations arise now, the easiest thing for me to do is get up and walk out. If it's getting to a point like that, I remove myself from the situation"

Simon found the course beneficial, and it has improved his relationship with his current partner. However, he felt that the course would have been **better if it was delivered face to face.**

"But over the last couple years, mine and my current partner's relationship, it's brilliant, absolutely brilliant. We've both done the freedom course. [...] We've been back together working on it for a couple of years. And it's been amazing. It's been absolutely amazing. I have my three boys."

Simon thinks that he might not have engaged with the course at an earlier point in his life, as he didn't care and was in active addiction. Simon suggested that **an individual's desire to change is key to how they engage** in services.

"It depends on the individual as well, though, you know, you can throw services at people, you can offer this, you can offer that, but it's on that person as well, at the same time. You've got to be willing to change".

However, Simon also noted that he **sometimes had to actively seek out interventions once he was ready to change**.

"A lot of the stuff that I accessed, I accessed on my own, I managed to source it and find it myself. You know, when I first got involved with [Mike], he was quite surprised at how much I had accessed already on my own, without social workers or anyone else putting it to me. But I suppose that was how much I wanted to change at that point."

Simon is now **comfortable asking for support**, and recognises the importance of his group networks.

"I'm learning that it's okay to feel those feelings, they're normal. As long as I pick the phone up, reach out, speak to people, I'm going to be okay."

"From when I was 11 I've gone on with my thinking, without really much intervention apart from the time in prison [...] And these people in my support network that I've got now, I haven't got to go by my thinking. I mean, I can pick my phone up, and I can get answers from so many other people now."

Annex 2: Case Study 2 (David)

David was interviewed for this research on 4 March 2022. All the names in this case study have been changed.

David described himself as a 'nerd' at primary school, but **found school difficult and got into trouble**. David would hide outside the school and was once suspended. At the age of five or six, David was **hanging around with older children and teenagers**, and was brought back home by the police on at least one occasion.

At secondary school, David felt he had to be like the "popular lads" to fit in. School was a tough environment; David recalled that the teachers were regularly assaulted by pupils, and windows and buildings were damaged.

> *"When you're in that environment, you adapt to it. Like when you've been to prison, you adapt to that environment. If everyone's doing that, you want to be like that, if that makes sense."*

As a child, **David had a "short fuse" and struggled to control his anger**. Looking back, David recognised that his behaviour at this time was impulsive and often violent. He was referred to **anger management support** through the magistrates' court, but this intervention had limited impact and David was removed from the course for fighting.

> *"I blasted a girl across the playground because she said something to me. [...] If someone says something to me I won't think, I'll do it straight away - it's impulsive behaviour."*
>
> *"I had a very short fuse [...] I wouldn't wait for someone to hit me, I'd hit them first. [...] When I was younger I thought, yeah I love a scrap. Not knowing the hotheadedness and the short fuse was from mental health until later on in life."*

Growing up, David was exposed to violence. He recalled witnessing bar fights at a local pub which he would visit regularly with his father and uncles. David felt that his early exposure to violent behaviour was likely to have influenced his approach to dealing with conflict.

> *"As a kid at 12 I've seen a geezer having a glass stuck in his head, that ain't normal behaviour. [...] You think, [...] that's how I've got to be in my life to get anywhere."*

David received a mental health diagnosis later in life, but **felt that better mental health support at school** could have helped him to manage his anger and aggression. Although David recognised that approaches to mental health support have since improved, he did not feel supported by teachers at the time and felt **his violent behaviour was not sufficiently connected to his mental health.**

> *"When I was younger, it was put down to ADHD and things like that. That's an easy diagnosis for*

the doctor [...] not knowing some of those kids now have got severe mental health problems."

"Later on in life, when I've got my diagnosis, when I look back it's straightforward, how I behaved and what happened. It's all down to my mental health."

At the age of 16, **David started using cocaine and became addicted**. David's cocaine use led to a mentality of "I want everything and I want it now" and he became involved in criminal activity to support his habit and lifestyle. Looking back, David recognised his cocaine use as a mechanism to cope with his mental health.

David's daughter was born when he was 17, and around this time he was **sent to a Young Offenders Institute for a violent offence**. This was the first time David received a custodial sentence. David received a **second custodial sentence for a violent offence** after he assaulted someone on their doorstep. He broke the conditions of his licence and was sent back to the YOI.

"That was bad, you can imagine the testosterone, all the young men running round [...] I wasted all of my twenties in prison more or less".

David's relationship with his daughter's mum broke down and she prevented David from seeing his daughter - something he found difficult. **David remembered a lot of arguments with his ex-partner,** but felt that there was no domestic abuse in this relationship. Following their break-up, David's relationship with his ex-partner deteriorated further and her family got involved in the dispute, resulting in violent threats and altercations for several years.

After he was released from the YOI, David entered a long-term relationship with a new partner. They were together for five years before separating amicably; David recalled that they rarely had arguments.

Around this time, David received a **three-year custodial sentence for theft and handling stolen goods.** While he was in prison, David rekindled a relationship via social media with a woman he had known at school. However, the relationship "turned sour" when David asked her to take a DNA test after she told him she was pregnant. David said that he was never physically violent in this relationship, but **acknowledged that he made threats and damaged his partner's property**. David is not allowed to see his son with this partner as a condition of his licence.

Not long after ending the relationship with his son's mother, David began a relationship with Lisa. At this time, **David was using cocaine heavily and found that the drug made him paranoid and easily provoked to violence**.

"I lost my way, bad. Obviously when I was on cocaine it was bad, your best friend you'd think was shagging your mum, it send things into your head."

"People will go and get half a gram, I'd go get an ounce and sit there for three days. Smashed,

not caring [...] Then she'd provoke a situation where I'm already tired, I've had no sleep and then it would just escalate. I'm swearing at her, she's swearing at me. I suppose that drug's probably a big factor in domestic violence."

David described his relationship with Lisa as "**toxic**", **fuelled by his cocaine use** and arguments about how to parent her children.

"I got paranoid from it, I suppose. She was paranoid with me because I was going out all the time. [...] It was toxic, and I should have walked away sooner. I was bad under drugs"

In the most significant domestic abuse incident, David recalled an argument with Lisa following "**a three day bender**". The argument escalated and Lisa poked David's eye, at which point **David hit Lisa repeatedly causing her to fall and hit her head**. Fearing that he would be sent to prison, David fled.

"I suppose I panicked, I shouldn't have done it but I did. She tried to attack me again, so I pushed her over and she hit her head on a bunk bed and it knocked her out. [...] I know I'm a nutter but she was a psycho, she wouldn't let it go, she kept trying to attack me."

When he returned from Amsterdam, David was arrested and then bailed. On a separate occasion, **David was arrested for kidnapping Lisa** after he stopped a taxi she was in, assaulted the taxi driver and told Lisa to get in his car so they could resolve an argument. Lisa did not report the incident, but the police were made aware by the taxi driver and members of the public.

David attributed the domestic abuse that occurred in his relationship with Lisa to a **combination of his cocaine use and his undiagnosed mental health**. However, he **described their relationship as mutually abusive**, and felt it was important that men are also recognised as victims of domestic violence.

"Drugs was my main thing, and mental health. Because I didn't know something was wrong with me, I took the drugs to drown something out. When I used to have cocaine, [...] it would calm me down at the time, but the next day I was like the evil devil."

"A man shouldn't hit a woman, I get that. But why is it okay for a woman to hit a man. That's domestic violence as well."

Eighteen months ago, David was released from prison after serving a **five-year sentence for robbery**. Despite some positives, such as prison jobs and time spent at the gym, David struggled to cope inside - especially when Covid-19 restrictions led to a lot of time in isolation. After drinking hooch on Christmas day, **David attacked another prisoner before attempting to take his own life**.

"It set me off. I battered him, sat down and waited for him to wake up, then battered him again. Screws came for me, I went nuts, pulled a blade out, stabbed myself through the neck, slashed myself. I woke up in intensive care and I'd lost four pints of blood. [...] That's why I don't drink no

more [...] It scared me, I could have killed that kid and not realised I'd done it."

After a few days in hospital, David met with the **prison mental health team who he found to be dismissive**.

> *"My mental health team in prison [...] they done nothing for me the whole sentence. I told them I've got severe mental health, I've been sectioned [...] they weren't arsed. This is why in prison so many people lose their lives, they don't care."*

When David left prison, he was given a referral letter via the mental health team to take to his GP. David felt that the referral process should start *before* a person leaves prison, **so that vulnerable prisoners aren't waiting for support in the community** upon release.

> *"I think they should do the referral before you leave prison. Because a referral could take anything up to 8 to 12 weeks. Prior to your release, they should do that referral [...] so when you're due to come out, they're ready to see you back in the community. Because you're throwing people back into the community with mental health you're failing them, because they're not going to be seen for a while."*

> *"I didn't want to fail this time. I was onto them, pressuring the mental health team in there to get something in place for me to come out [...] I know I've got something wrong, I've got mental health [...] can you get something in place for me on release so I'm not going backwards, I want to go forwards. If I come out, and don't have medication now for 6 weeks, my head's going to fall off [...]. And then you're failing me because I'm going to be back in prison."*

David was eventually **diagnosed with schizophrenia and emotional unstable personality disorder (EUPD)** and is currently taking medication to help him manage his symptoms. He felt that his violent behaviour, "short fuse" and impulsivity were largely a result of these conditions. David only speaks to a psychiatrist every six months, as **Covid-19 has impacted capacity**.

> *"Mental health had a big part in all of it. I didn't get diagnosed until I came out of prison this time. So until I was 30, I didn't get diagnosed. So all these times, years and years of bad stuff happening, behaviour and patterns of behaviour, I didn't know it was mental health. I get on with it now, [...] now I've been diagnosed".*

> *"I could be sound now. Don't take the medication, then by tonight I could have battered half the street [...] In that sense, it comes that quick, a split decision - bang, and you're off on one."*

David believed that **going to the gym has had a significant positive influence** on his life, enabling him to refocus his energy and connect with a new support network. David also took pride in his **involvement in charity work**, and proactively helped to coordinate present donations for children at Christmas.

"I find the gym helped me [...] and I took myself away from my old circle. It just shows how much influence they have on you. I've turned it all around now. I haven't been in trouble for 18 months now".

David indicated that **his relationship with his police offender manager - has also been a significant factor in his rehabilitation**. David felt that his mindset has changed; he is no longer "stubborn" and is ready to accept support. David has also done some work with his probation officer around **healthy relationships**, and is looking forward to working again once his licence conditions are lifted.

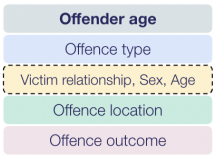
"He didn't judge me for anything I did. He used to ring me, chat to me - anything I need. A few years ago I'd be against the police. But this time, actually it works when you can work with them. I wanted to give something back this time [...] I suppose it's a guilt thing."

"I was too macho to go and speak to someone about my problems and then it led to worse things, which led to nearly losing my life. Then opening up to someone about it has helped me more now."

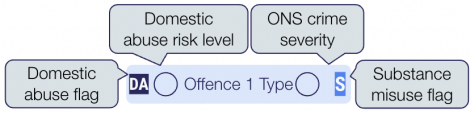
Annex 3: Definition of key terms

Domestic abuse	In the context of this report, domestic abuse is referenced as per the current cross-government definition of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people aged 16+ who are or have been intimate or are family. References to domestic abuse include domestic violence. In relation to the police data included in the research, any incident (crime or non-crime) that has been given a domestic abuse flag by police is refernced as domestic abuse, and in addition any offences marked as involving honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
Domestic abuse perpetrator	The subjects of this study are individuals listed as named suspects on at least one domestic abuse incident recorded by the West Midlands police between 2011 and 2020. This group of subjects are referred to throughout as “domestic abuse perpetrators” for ease of singular terminology, but it is recognised that there are nuances within this description.
Domestic abuse offender	Within the group of subjects, some have been suspected of a criminal offence (as opposed to a domestic non-crime incident). These individuals are referred to as “domestic abuse offenders”. Whilst many of these will not necessarily be charged with a crime, due to what is known about the difficulties in victims supporting a prosecution, this label includes all of those suspected of committing a domestic abuse offence.
Offending history/offending pattern	Similarly, these terms refer to the pattern of incidents recorded by police including the same individual as a named suspect. This means that the individual won’t necessarily have been charged with or convicted of all offences included in the offending pattern but have been identified by police as a suspect. This also may include some non-crime incidents which form part of the pattern of incidents.
Victim	Any individual who is recorded by the police as the victim in an incident (whether crime or non-crime) is included in the term “victim”. It is important to note that the police usually describe the complainant (who made the report) as the victim, unless there is significant evidence to suggest otherwise.
Incident	Throughout the report an incident is regarded as any event which police have been involved in (whether crime or non-crime). An incident may involve one or more offences committed at the same time by one offender, to one or more victims.

Crime/Offence	These terms are used when discussing an incident involving police which has been recorded as a criminal offence (and therefore excludes non-crime incidents).
Domestic abuse offences/ Domestic abuse-related offending	These terms are used when describing patterns of both crime and non-crime incidents which have been given a domestic abuse flag by police, indicating the incident met the definition of domestic abuse.
Non- domestic abuse offending	This term in the main refers to criminal offences recorded by police which did not have a domestic abuse flag or descriptor, however there are a small number of non-crimes included in this grouping in addition (which did not relate to domestic abuse) - generally these were safeguarding or child protection incidents.
High volume	The threshold for grouping individuals into the 'high volume' category was having 3+ incidents (including non-crime) of one type (DA vs other offending) recorded against the individual at any point within the 10 year period of data.
Low volume	Low volume offenders/individuals had less than 3 incidents (including non-crime) of one type (DA vs other offending) recorded against them at any point within the 10 year period of data.
Repeat offender	This term is used by the police to describe domestic abuse offenders who have perpetrated more than once against the same victim.
Serial offender	This term is used by the police to describe domestic abuse offenders who have perpetrated against more than one victim.
High/Medium/ Standard risk	Where these terms are used they relate to the grading assigned to the domestic abuse incident as a result of the DARA (domestic abuse risk assessment) conducted by the attending officer and signed off by a supervisor. **Standard:** There appears to be no pattern of abusive behaviour, or control of one person by another. Current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm. **Medium:** There appears to be a pattern of abuse/control of one person by another, and/or frequent physical violence. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, such as the victim attempting to leave. **High:** There is an extreme level of control of one person by another and/or

	very frequent and severe physical violence. There is a serious threat of harm posed to the victim by the perpetrator. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious.
High/Medium/ Low crime severity	Where these terms are used they refer to the Office for National Statistics crime severity score[78] as a new weighted measure of crime severity. The new measure reflects the relative harm of an offence to society and the likely demands on the police, given that the police resource requirements are likely to be greater for offences that are more serious and therefore weighted more highly. Incidents in the data set had an associated ONS crime severity score. In this research, an incident was considered to be **Low** when the score was less than 100, **Medium** where the score ranged between 100 and 500, and **High** where the score was 501 or above.
Cluster or subgroup	The group that an offender was assigned to following the clustering analysis process described below. The analysis divided the cohort of offenders into 29 clusters in total, with each cluster containing offenders that had similar offending profiles to each other.
Cluster (subgroup) medoid or representative case study	The medoid of a cluster is the offender within that cluster that is most representative of the cluster as a whole. It is the offender who is least dissimilar (or conversely, most similar) to the rest of the offenders in that cluster in terms of the features of their offending profiles that were included in the clustering analysis. The medoid offender in a cluster does not necessarily have the average of every feature, they may deviate slightly. In the report we have generally referred to the medoid as the "representative case study".
Cluster (subgroup) medoid visualisation key	The offending history of the cluster medoids have been presented as visual timelines in this report. In these timelines, each offence has been presented in chronological order with a distinct box for each offence. These boxes include the details of the offence: the offender's age at the time of the offence, the offence type, the victim's sex, age, and relationship to the offender, location of the offence and the offence outcome code.  The offending history of the cluster medoids have been presented as visual timelines in this report. In these timelines, each offence has been presented

[78]ONS 2020. Crime Severity Score (Experimental Statistics) - Office for National Statistics July 2020 release [online].

	in chronological order with a distinct box for each offence. These boxes include the details of the offence: the offender's age at the time of the offence, the offence type, the victim's sex, age, and relationship to the offender, location of the offence and the offence outcome code. Where the victim is the same across multiple offences this is shown by the patterned outline of the victim box. The outcome codes are the Home Office-defined codes - included as an annex in the Technical Research Report. Where information was available on victimisation of the perpetrator, this was also included. It is important to note the time stamps related to when an incident occurred (rather than when it was actually reported to police). Therefore in some cases offences may have been reported historically in a group. Where offenders had prolific histories the timelines have been simplified to just include domestic abuse offences in green and non-domestic abuse offences in blue.
Cluster (subgroup) medoid flags	The cluster medoid visualisations also included context about the given incident. Where the cluster media visualisations present the offence type, flags were added to highlight domestic abuse (DA) and substance misuse (S) flags. Also included was the domestic abuse risk level and the ONS crime severity. Both measures are ranked by colour codes: High, Medium, and Standard/Low. 
Substance misuse flag	For the purpose of this research, a substance misuse flag includes all those incidents (domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse) involving a drugs or alcohol related offence, as well as incidents that had a drugs involved special interest marker, an alcohol involved special interest marker, or a solvent abuse special interest marker. It should be noted that the use of special interest markers is inconsistent across local police teams.

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