



Respect Standards and Home Office Standards for perpetrator work – Briefing for Commissioners, Funders and Policy Makers. May 2023

Background

The [Respect Standard](#) is a quality assurance framework for safe, effective, and survivor-focused work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. It was developed so that members of the public, including survivors and perpetrators, funders, commissioners, and other professionals, could be assured of high-quality, safety-focused, and effective services. The first edition was published in 2008. As the domestic abuse perpetrator sector has grown over the years, the Standard has evolved and expanded to reflect the diversity of interventions. The most recent edition is the fourth, published in December 2022.

The Respect Standard is accompanied by a comprehensive and robust assessment process that includes:

- Assessing all aspects of a domestic abuse perpetrator intervention delivery, including the review of case files and of recorded sessions.
- Interviewing frontline staff and Service Managers to assess the quality and effectiveness of delivery.
- An independent, external, accreditation panel of experts who decide whether to award accreditation.

Respect Standard and Home Office's Standards for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions

In January 2023, the Home Office published [Standards for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions](#): overarching principles and practice guidelines for commissioning and delivering interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse; written by: Professor Nicole Westmarland (Durham University Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse) and Professor Liz Kelly (London Metropolitan University Child and Woman Studies).

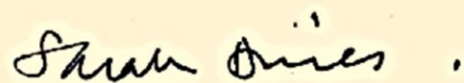
These seven standards and corresponding policy and practice guidelines were developed in consultation with practitioners, policy makers, academics, victims-survivors and perpetrators. It is intended that they will underpin the development of safe and effective domestic abuse perpetrator interventions across England and Wales. They are not a replacement for accreditation, but rather a higher-level set of principles that can be applied when making decisions about commissioning.

The Respect Standard is aligned with the Home Office Standards (2023). Commissioners can be assured of a coherent and streamlined approach, with the additional benefit of Respect's robust accreditation process in relation to the assessment of the Respect Standard.

In March 2022, we published the cross-government Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, with strategic commitments to prevent offending and pursue perpetrators, as well as to support victims and strengthen the system. We must stop domestic abuse from happening in the first place. When it does occur, our message must be unequivocal: perpetrators must change their behaviour.

Respect have pioneered work to keep survivors safe while offering perpetrators meaningful opportunities to change. The Respect Standard, first introduced in 2008, is central to this. By providing a quality assurance framework, it helps to ensure perpetrator interventions are delivered professionally and competently and are effective in reducing harm. As the intervention sector has grown in recent years, the Standard has expanded accordingly. I am therefore pleased to introduce the fourth version of the Respect Standard.

The Respect Standard is closely aligned with the Home Office Standards for Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions, and I am grateful for Respect's collaboration in developing these. By promoting a consistent approach, these Standards can help deliver safe and effective domestic abuse perpetrator interventions across England and Wales. Ultimately, our collective aim is to reduce the prevalence of these terrible crimes and this work is a core part of that effort.



Foreword in the 4th edition of the Respect Standard, by Minister for Safeguarding, Sarah Dines MP

Scope of the Respect Standard

The Respect Standard covers the following interventions for perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse:

1. Structured and sequential interventions

These can be categorised as either:

- **Behaviour-change interventions**, aimed at perpetrators who are willing to engage and are relatively stable in terms of mental health, housing, substance misuse, and other factors that may impact on their capacity to change; or,
- **Early response, awareness-raising interventions**, aimed at perpetrators who are concerned about their behaviour, are willing to make a change and do not have an outstanding civil or criminal matter relating to their behaviour. Early response interventions can be offered as standalone or as an add-on before a behaviour-change intervention.

2. Intensive Case Management interventions

Interventions designed primarily to engage with high-harm, high-risk and/or significant recidivist perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Services eligible for accreditation

The minimum unit considered for accreditation is a service working with perpetrators with an attached support service for survivors.

Organisations running an intervention for perpetrators without support for survivors cannot be considered for accreditation as they fundamentally breach the Respect Standard's [principles](#).

Benefits of the Respect Standard for Commissioners

Durham University Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) conducted research in the benefits of the Respect Standard in 2021, with responses from Respect-accredited services, as well as Commissioners, Funders and Policy Leads. The [Mapping the Benefits of the Respect Standard](#) report was written by Nicole Westmarland and Zuzana Zilkova.

Key benefits:

1. **Confident commissioning:** the Respect Standard is the benchmark that Commissioners felt was a 'guarantee that you're getting what is safe and what is doable'. Also, that it reduces the risk attached to commissioning interventions for domestic abuse perpetrators, which 'unlocked' funding for this type of work.
2. **Robustness of the accreditation process:** the Respect Standard is seen as a catalyst that improves practice and as necessary to demonstrate quality.
3. **The importance of prioritising survivor safety and welfare in service design and delivery:** Commissioners consider partner safety one of the primary benefits of the Respect Standard and the accreditation process.

Risk of commissioning non-accredited services

Funding non-accredited services may seem like a valid option if other criteria are met. This, however, carries enormous risk for Commissioners and, ultimately, for survivors and their children. It gives Commissioners no assurance whatsoever that the work a service gets funded to do will be meeting the Home Office Standards or Respect's. A commitment to work in line with these standards means nothing if it cannot be externally verified. In fact, we are aware of various non-accredited providers often claiming that they 'work towards' Respect standards. This is not possible: a service is either Respect-accredited or not, there is no option to work towards accreditation.

Respect's official position is that until a service has been awarded accreditation it is considered non-accredited. Engaging in the accreditation process is not a guarantee of quality or effectiveness, as some services fail the process.

The key question is whether a service is Respect-accredited. And there is a simple way to get the answer: visit this [webpage](#) where Respect lists the accredited services, including the date their accreditation is valid for.

The Home Office Standards don't have an accompanying process to assess whether the standards are met. They were written as a set of guidelines for Commissioners, to inform their decisions when they design and commission services. There is the expectation that specifications for services to be funded should be aligned with those Standards by design. The Home Office Standards place an additional responsibility to Commissioners to assess how services applying for funding meet those Standards. Currently, the only way to get this assurance is by funding Respect-accredited services.

The Respect Standard has been [endorsed](#) by key experts and organisations in the domestic abuse sector, including the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Nicole Jacobs, Women's Aid Federation of England, Welsh Women's Aid, Safe Lives and many others.

For more information about the Respect Standard and the accreditation process, including costs, please contact emma.hier@respect.org.uk or ippo.panteloudakis@respect.org.uk or <https://www.respect.org.uk/pages/respect-accredited-services>

May 2023