

Respect

The Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Services

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Now in the third week of the "Stag Alert" response to the Coronavirus epidemic society is taking steps to work towards the re-introduction of many freedoms whilst still adhering to the principle of social distancing. Respect recognises that with this brings a period of change and further transition for services working with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Respect-Accredited Members' and Drive Service Provision Update for the week ending 29/05/20.

Service provision and Funding

As the pace of change has slowed over recent weeks, surveyed services are in the process of what is being termed "exit planning". The complications of designing face to face delivery with adherence to social distancing guidelines is a challenge. Few organisations have suitable premises and one additional unbudgeted cost is venue hire, which will need to be large enough to run socially distanced groups. Additional costs are anticipated through the running of smaller or "half-capacity" groups. In each instance the cost to the organisation could be significant. Developing new costing models is a current focus in the sector.

Referrals, Waiting Lists and Caseloads

Owing to services delivering largely a one to one intervention at this time with few running groups online (10%) the pressure on waiting lists has grown significantly. This presents challenges in risk assessment and management. To meet this additional stress several service managers across the sector have reported taking on caseloads. Whilst this reflects positively on the willingness of colleagues to deliver a safe and effective service it is not considered sustainable long term.

Impact on Staff

With the advent of service delivery through video conferencing platforms several pressures have been placed on the resilience of practitioners and their safety. One key aspect reported is "bringing clients into the home". This has presented an unease for some which has meant they have offered telephone only provision. In taking client work home there is a concern that a previous place previously reserved for rest, family and comfort has been re-defined. Concern regarding the longer-term impact of this is held by Respect and partners in the sector.

In addition to the caseloads which service managers report holding there are additional levels of pastoral and practice support being offered to frontline practitioners. Because the level of support and oversight provided by managers has increased this has impacted significantly on their workloads.