

Respect

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

12th June 2020

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

With anticipation of the re-introduction of some face to face service provision Respect is beginning to consider themes and trends that have emerged during the Covid 19 lockdown and how these will affect services moving forward. Staff wellbeing has been highlighted in these briefings previously but this continues to present as an area of focus for the sector. It is recognised that whilst specialist domestic abuse services will have practitioners who have been challenged during this period this is not unique to our sector and wider awareness of these problems needs to be considered.

Respect-Accredited Members' and Drive Service Provision Update for the week ending 12/06/20.

Service Provision

Delivering interventions to clients from our homes has become the norm over the past twelve weeks. The expression "bringing perpetrators into our homes" has become common place and is recognised to be a point of challenge for practitioners. Other comments passed in reflection of the increase in one to one clients is that it is like "being on a conveyor belt". For some this has been very stressful and impact on the perception of their homes as a place of comfort and privacy has been tested. Whilst the offer of services to perpetrators and the need for an appropriate space for them to engage with programmes has been highlighted the same applies for practitioners. Respect would like to recognise how adaptable and committed the sector workforce has been in finding workable solutions but also that these solutions affect not only the practitioner but impact on their families also.

Support Available and Resilience

To support practitioners services have increased the frequency of clinical supervision and treatment management specifically. This is an unbudgeted and increased cost in many instances with expertise being bought in, external to the organisation. Respect is aware of managers who are offering increased line management whilst taking on caseloads themselves, again this is not considered sustainable. As many businesses are reporting that annual leave balances have increased because holiday plans and time off has changed with lockdown. To manage this and support wellbeing staff are encouraged to take a "staycation" to help in the practice of self-care and to maintain resilience.

Return to a new "normal"

Re-mobilisation planning is in progress and services report that the majority of practitioners seek a return to an office environment and face to face practice. With school and nurseries supporting limited numbers those with childcare responsibilities may not find returning to the workplace easy. In large cities travelling to work and maintaining social distancing bring other dynamics. The sentiment of #buildbackbetter is supported by many but the reality is not so simple.