

Respect

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

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As concerns grow over a second spike in the Coronavirus pandemic and regional lockdowns are implemented (Leicester) there is also a degree of positivity in returning to "normal". For many organisations in our sector this provides an opportunity to return to in person service delivery.

Respect-Accredited Members' and Drive Service Provision Update for the week ending 03/08/20.

In Person Service Delivery

From members surveyed there is still some hesitance in delivering services in person with only 38% currently offering this however, 31% are in the process of exploring options. The challenges being reported are commonly the availability of suitable venues to hold groups and the cost of hiring larger spaces. Many community halls remain closed which have previously been utilised.

New referrals and Waiting Lists

All surveyed members are taking new referrals with some offering assessments to progress clients through into group or individual work. Two surveyed members reported employing a triage practitioner who could screen referrals to identify those with the highest need for support and intervention. Respect holds significant concern regarding the pressure placed on our sector as waiting lists have grown to as many as eighty clients in one instance which will take as much as three months to process.

Furlough of Staff

At its peak eight of the 25 surveyed services had furloughed staff. In one instance as much as 70% of the workforce had been placed on furlough. Whilst this number has reduced significantly with only 3 organisations now reporting having staff on furlough, although the financial impact of the pandemic is acute.

Increased Cost of Delivery

Where groupwork interventions were delivered by most accredited members prior to the pandemic, these were quickly replaced by one to one service delivery or small groups, online or via phone. In doing this, services are absorbing significant increases in what could be termed unit cost. These costs continue to have an impact even as we move out of lockdown. Owing to the need for social distancing groups are now running at a lower capacity, larger, more expensive venues are having to be employed to safely deliver groupwork programmes and there is the additional cost of PPE for staff and for clients.

Universally this increase in cost is impacting on services. There has been additional funding made available, but these income streams are neither long term nor being presented as sustainable.