

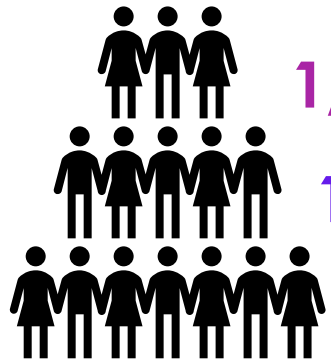
# Domestic Violence interventions: The evidence

**Sarah Henfrey**

Chartered & Registered Practitioner Forensic Psychologist

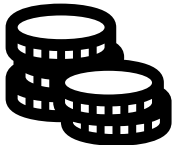
Expert group chair

# The scale of the problem



1/4 women worldwide

1/5 women in the EU

€ 228 billion 

## Costs to survivors (and their children)

Physical injury

Fear & distress

Shame

Anxiety

Physical ill health

Depression

Financial hardship

Isolation

Substance misuse

# Tackling Domestic Violence

- ▶ Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025)
- ▶ Istanbul Convention
- ▶ World Health Organisation

# Interventions



# Limitations of the evidence

- ▶ Most research has been conducted in North America
- ▶ Poor data collection
- ▶ No one offence of domestic violence and abuse
- ▶ Principle Offence rule
- ▶ Under-reporting
- ▶ There are few studies with robust research designs
- ▶ Varied definitions of domestic abuse and coercive control
- ▶ Varied measurements of domestic violence and abuse





## **Multi-Agency coordinated approaches**

**Multi-agency approaches are often viewed as the most effective way to tackle domestic violence and abuse at both an operational and strategic level**

### **They aim to:**

- ▶ Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of system responses
- ▶ Coordinate services
- ▶ Enhance safety and wellbeing for survivors and their children
- ▶ Increase the accountability of the perpetrator

(Klevens et al., 2008)

## Multi-Agency coordinated approaches

# The evidence

Numerous research studies have examined the effectiveness of Coordinated Community Responses (CCRs)

## Outcomes

- Increases in arrests, convictions, and sentences including programmes
- Reductions in recidivism
- More positive interactions between survivors and criminal justice agencies



No impact

**“CCRs to DV may be effective at enhancing system, offender and victim outcomes following DV incidents”**

Johnson & Stylianou (2020, pp.14)

# Perpetrator Interventions

**Psychological programmes are designed to change the behaviour of perpetrators and reduce reoffending**

**They aim to work with the perpetrator to:**

- ▶ Increase understanding about the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- ▶ Motivate change
- ▶ Develop attitudes and beliefs that support equality within relationships
- ▶ Develop skills for accepting and/or managing unhelpful thoughts
- ▶ Develop skills to manage unhelpful emotions
- ▶ Develop the interpersonal skills needed for a healthy relationship



## Perpetrator Interventions

# The evidence

Numerous research studies have examined the impact of programmes designed to reduce intimate partner violence and abuse

## Outcomes

Desired behaviour change



No behaviour change identified

“we do not yet know what works best, for whom, and under what circumstances”.

Akoensi et al., (2013, pp.1220)

# Protection Orders

## The evidence

**Aim to: Prevent perpetrators from committing further domestic violence and abuse**

### **Cordier et al., (2021)**

- ▶ POs were not effective in completely stopping or preventing repeat abuse
- ▶ Qualitatively, victims reported that they thought POs were effective and that they made them feel safer
- ▶ The evidence to support Protection Orders as a standalone intervention is mixed
- ▶ POs issued alongside an arrest for an offence were found to significantly reduce the rates of reoffending
- ▶ PO were less effective when perpetrators had a history of stalking behaviours or higher rates of arrest and/ or violence
- ▶ POs were less effective when victims stayed in the relationship with the perpetrator, were unemployed or from a low income family.

# Take away messages

- ▶ Domestic violence and abuse are major public health concerns
- ▶ Investment and commitment to tackling domestic abuse is essential
- ▶ Whilst the evidence to support varying interventions is mixed, there are many promising findings
- ▶ There is a convincing consensus that the ongoing development of interventions is critical
- ▶ Approaches that involve multiple agencies, a combination of interventions, and that are tailored to the specific needs of the case, are likely to have the most promising outcomes

# Take away messages

- ▶ Be interested in the evidence!
- ▶ Think about how you can contribute to building the evidence about 'what works' in the field of domestic violence and abuse

# Questions

