

"They've been my Lifeline"

An Evaluation of South Yorkshire's Specialist Domestic Violence Court Initiative: **The Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service**

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and
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Hallam Centre for Community Justice

August 2008



Sheffield
Hallam University

SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

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We would very much like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the organisations below in making this evaluation report possible. It was funded by the Home Office, through South Yorkshire Police, Her Majesty's Court Service and the South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board.

We would also like to say a big thank you to the IDVA Service users who spoke to us so honestly and openly during the evaluation process. Special thanks go to the service user who coined the phrase which has become the title of this report.



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Dr Katherine Wilkinson and Joanna Davidson

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Executive Summary

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 described new powers for the Police and courts to deal with offenders, and measures to increase the support and protection that victims receive. In 2005, the Government published its first National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan, including the framework for a 'co-ordinated community response' to the issue. Central to this was the Specialist Domestic Violence Court Initiative (SDVC).

This involved a number of key components, and focused on:

- Specialist Domestic Violence Court systems
- A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference process (MARAC)
- An Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVAS)

These elements combined are intended to provide a holistic approach to addressing domestic violence, with a focus on the most high risk cases, to bring reductions in levels of repeat victimisation and domestic homicide, and an increase in successful prosecutions. South Yorkshire gained SDVC status in 2006.

The Home Office describe the role of Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services as the provision of advice, information and support to survivors of intimate partner violence living in the community about the range, effectiveness and suitability of options to improve their safety and that of their children. They are also central to the MARAC process, and to promoting good multi-agency responses to high risk victims of domestic abuse.

This report is the result of an evaluation conducted by the Hallam Centre for Community Justice, at Sheffield Hallam University, of the four South Yorkshire IDVA Services in Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley. Throughout the report the four IDVA services are presented in this order solely on the basis of descending population size. This report also presents SDVC court related data to inform an improved understanding of discontinuance rates in domestic violence cases in SDVC's in South Yorkshire.

The IDVAS Initiative in South Yorkshire

The initial IDVA Service mapping exercise for South Yorkshire identified the following:

Sheffield IDVA Service is hosted by Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum, a voluntary sector domestic violence delivery organisation, and began service delivery in April 2007. Between April 2007 and March 2008 they have received 82 referrals and have engaged 63 predominantly White British women. The

service accepts referrals from South Yorkshire Police only, of women assessed as high risk, using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool.

Doncaster IDVA Service is hosted by the Community Safety Team at Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, a statutory non domestic violence specific organisation. This service began in February 2007, and accepts referrals of female or male high risk victims of domestic violence, from both statutory and voluntary sector agencies, using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool. Between April 2007 and March 2008, Doncaster IDVAS received 497 high risk referrals and engaged 275 predominantly White British victims of domestic violence.

Rotherham IDVA Service is hosted by Rotherham Women's Refuge, a voluntary sector domestic violence specific organisation. This service began in June 2007, and accepts referrals of women who are high risk victims of domestic violence, from both statutory and voluntary agencies, using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool. Between April 2007 and March 2008, Rotherham IDVAS received 227 referrals from both statutory and voluntary agencies, engaging with 126 mainly White British service users.

Barnsley IDVA Service is hosted by Victim Support, a voluntary sector non domestic violence specific organisation, and began in November 2006. The IDVA accepts referrals of female or male victims of domestic violence from both statutory and voluntary sector agencies, and uses the FSU9 risk assessment tool. Barnsley IDVAS has received 357 high risk referrals from both statutory and voluntary sectors, engaging with 106 between April 2007 and March 2008.

IDVAS Key Findings

The key findings from the evaluation of the South Yorkshire IDVAS are identified as follows:

- Between April 2007 and March 2008 the four IDVA Services received more than 1,000 high risk referrals of which 570 engaged with their services
- IDVAS service users report that the service was invaluable in terms of both practical and emotional support, particularly when facing court processes: *'I dread to think where I'd be at this point without them'* (Service user)
- IDVAS service users also report that the support they receive enhances their feelings of safety: *'It made me feel a lot safer'* (Service user); *'made sure I felt safe in my home'* (Service user)
- Capacity issues and demand are challenges for all four of the IDVA Services
- All IDVA staff reported their desire to operate ideally within a multi-agency, co-located team

- Awareness of the specialist nature of the IDVA role proved essential for recruitment to a role where appropriate professional experience and elements of personal resilience are required to operate in what can often be a challenging work environment
- Uncertainty about sustainable funding for these essential services created unease for staff, when successful engagement in safety planning with service users could be put in jeopardy if funding ended during the support process.

IDVAS Good Practice Examples

- Elements of good practice which emerged from the evaluation included:
- Excellent local multi-agency working practices with Police, the voluntary sector and other agencies, assisted by the MARAC arrangements
- The considerable efforts made to contact high risk referrals within 24 hours
- The IDVA Services have adopted consistent data collection methods across South Yorkshire, since January 2008 with the introduction of the Modus Information System from Paloma
- The provision of a high standard of support, despite capacity restraints and funding concerns
- Beginning to develop more strategic IDVAS operational protocols
- Provision of an 'expert' advice role to other agencies and domestic abuse services
- Signposting clients onto other services.

IDVAS Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward by the evaluation team:

- The IDVA Service has been shown to be an essential initiative. A county wide strategy to secure sustainable funding for the IDVAS in South Yorkshire needs to be a top priority
- Consideration of the potential of extending this service to medium as well as high risk referrals
- Explore the potential of IDVA Services operating within a co-located, multi-agency team
- A review of IDVAS data collection practices to ensure a high standard of comparative monitoring data for both Home Office returns and performance monitoring with local partners
- Developing a county wide IDVA specific job specification drawing on experience gained during the first year of the service and CAADA guidance
- The wider SDVC initiative would also benefit from a data collection review, to ensure that high standard monitoring data can be produced and shared

within the SDVC initiative to engage more effectively with discontinuance rates in domestic violence related court cases.

The SDVC Court Initiative in South Yorkshire

The underpinning rationale behind the SDVC initiative is a commitment to treating domestic violence seriously. The HMCS in South Yorkshire is dedicated to ensuring that court-based data are collected in order to monitor the management of domestic violence cases. Their key aims are to increase; the number of effective domestic violence trials, the initial guilty plea rate and the numbers of complainants who remain engaged in the court process.

SDVC Data Key Findings

This report contains an exploratory analysis of SDVC data ranging from April 2007 to March 2008. The subsequent findings evidence the important progress made towards SDVC objectives (please see Chapter 6 for definitions of court terms):

- The percentage of effective trials have risen relatively consistently since April 2007, peaking at 34% in December 2007
- The initial guilty plea rates have risen by over 50% since April 2007
- The percentage of cracked trials have remained relatively low over the twelve month period, remaining on average at 32% between April 2007 and March 2008
- The percentage of vacated trials have remained low over the year at an average of 26%, with an all time low in March 2008 of 11%
- The fast tracking data over the year illustrates that overall, the Magistrates' Courts have been experiencing difficulties in increasing the number of trials listed within six weeks. However, a relatively high percentage of domestic violence cases have been recorded within the 42 day target in separate SDVC areas in South Yorkshire, and the average length of trials has reduced significantly in all areas.

Understanding why Domestic Violence Trials may not be Effective and why cases may be Discontinued

The court related data was analysed to inform an improved understanding of why domestic violence trials may not be effective and discontinuance rates in domestic violence cases in SDVC's in South Yorkshire. This report found that domestic violence trials may not be effective in South Yorkshire due to defendants changing their plea and witnesses being unavailable or complainants withdrawing from the process. The SDVC focus on increasing the numbers of initial guilty pleas heard is therefore clearly an appropriate area focus, within which they have recorded significant progress.

SDVC Recommendations

- Qualitative enquiries aimed at exploring working practices at the four SDVC Courts would ensure effective working practices can be mainstreamed across South Yorkshire Courts
- Consider building on SDVC successes in identifying and addressing discontinuance rates by distinguishing between the witness availability and / or complainant withdrawal reason coding in discontinued domestic violence trial data
- In order to extend the already successful collation of fast tracking data, consider recording the reasons for essential delays for complex evidence which result in cases being listed outside the 42 day protocol.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Specialist Domestic Violence Court Initiative

1.0 Introduction

This independent evaluation report by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) was commissioned by a partnership between the South Yorkshire Civil & Criminal Justice Working Group on Domestic Abuse, the Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) Task Group and the South Yorkshire Local Criminal Justice Board. The focus of this report is an evaluation of the four IDVA Services set up in Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley as part of the South Yorkshire SDVC initiative. This report also produces Specialist Domestic Violence Court initiative data for South Yorkshire, extracted from statistics provided by Her Majesty's Courts Services (HMCS).

1.1 The National Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Initiative

The national political agenda has been steadily acknowledging and responding to the devastating effects of domestic violence on families and communities. The Government definition of domestic violence, agreed in 2004 is:

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduced new powers for the Police and Courts to deal with offenders, while bolstering support and protection that victims receive. Tackling domestic violence was recognised as a cross-government priority and the Government formed an Inter-Ministerial Group for Domestic Violence. In 2005, the Government published its first national report for Domestic Violence containing the framework of the National Delivery Plan which identified five key outcomes and seven work objectives that would be pursued in 2005/061. The five key outcomes were:

1. To reduce the number of domestic violence-related homicides
2. To reduce the prevalence of domestic violence, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities
3. To increase the reporting of domestic violence, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities

¹ <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence51.pdf> (accessed 14/05/08).

4. To increase the number of reported domestic violence offences that are brought to justice, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities as well as in areas with high attrition rates
5. To ensure victims of domestic violence are adequately protected and supported nationwide.

In 2006/07 the seven objectives of the National Delivery Plan were re-defined to allow for greater transparency and capture more clearly the emerging model of local delivery:

1. Increase the early identification of and intervention with, victims of domestic violence by utilising all points of contact with key front line professionals
2. To build capacity within the domestic violence sector to provide effective advice and support to victims of domestic violence.
3. The promotion and promulgation of a co-ordinated community response to domestic violence
4. To increase reporting and arrests rates for domestic violence
5. Increase the rate at which sanction detections are converted into offences brought to justice, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities as well as in areas with high attrition rates.
6. To support victims through the CJS and manage perpetrators to reduce risk
7. Develop the evidence base to close key knowledge gaps, particularly around (a) understanding the nature and scope of domestic violence and (b) understanding what works in reducing the prevalence of domestic violence.

This Plan provided direction to local partnerships, agencies and communities on how to protect adult and child victims of domestic violence and bring perpetrators to justice. At the heart of the framework for delivering on these objectives, is the Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme (SDVC) which is central to a Co-ordinated Community Response to domestic violence. Although the SDVC programme has court processes at its heart, it also refers to early identification of domestic violence incidents particularly through Police, health and social care staff and also specialised and generic victim support. This programme can therefore be described as consisting of a three stemmed system of interlinking initiatives aimed at tackling domestic violence in a holistic manner, through: the court system, multi-agency risk assessment conferences and independent domestic violence victim advocacy support:

1.1.1 Specialist Domestic Violence Court System

The SDVC involves initiating particular working practices to enhance the effectiveness of court practices and make significant improvements to the outcomes of domestic violence cases. At the centre of these working practices in

South Yorkshire is the introduction of fast tracking of domestic violence trials, through magistrates' courts. This has been introduced with the aim of domestic violence trials being listed within six weeks from the first hearing.

1.1.2 Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference

The MARAC initiative is aligned with other public protection arrangements for managing offenders (MAPPA arrangements) but focused exclusively on high risk victims of domestic abuse. The purpose of the MARAC is to facilitate sharing of information on high risk cases between agencies, with the aim of reducing the risk of further harm, and putting in place appropriate interventions to ensure the safety of the victim and any children. Attendees represent a range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

1.1.3 Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

The IDVAS initiative involves the professional provision of advice, information and advocacy support to survivors of intimate partner violence who have been assessed as at high risk of further harm. With a focus on reducing the risk, work will include ensuring that they are aware of their options and able to access appropriate services, and co-ordinating the activity of all agencies to improve their safety and that of their children.

The National Delivery framework for the SDVC initiative was laid out by the Government, but was also designed to be delivered in a way that would be sensitive to regional expertise. Local Criminal Justice Boards were made aware of the Home Office funding available to set up SDVC initiatives with a view to different areas designing local ways to deliver the National Domestic Violence Delivery Framework. This funding consists of a contribution to start up costs for the IDVAS, and administration costs for the MARAC process.

1.2 The South Yorkshire Specialist Domestic Violence Court Initiative

Improvements to the ways in which domestic violence is approached have always been high on the agenda in South Yorkshire. A South Yorkshire Civil and Criminal Justice Working Group, chaired by the Honorary Recorder of Sheffield Judge Goldsack QC has been operating since 2001 to review court procedures concerning domestic violence cases. This group were central in initiating the fast tracking of domestic violence trials in the Magistrates' Court Service, independently of Government initiatives and this process was running by April 2006. The Government led Pre-charge Advice Initiative had also been introduced in South Yorkshire by 2006². Since 2003 the former South Yorkshire Magistrates'

² Police officers involved in a case approach a member of CPS with details and list of evidence before proceeding to court. This initiative was not domestic violence specific; however there are hopes that this procedure would be a further enhancement of court processes when dealing with domestic violence cases.

Courts Committee had been championing training based upon a national training pack developed by the Judicial Studies Board for the 700 plus magistrates in South Yorkshire, supporting them in dealing more effectively with domestic abuse cases when they come to court. Since the creation of Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) in 2005 this rolling programme of training has continued. The Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Probation and Voluntary Services in South Yorkshire have also been involved and given their support to these county-wide initiatives. Given this historical interest in prioritising domestic violence, South Yorkshire was well placed to establish a specialist domestic violence court programme in the areas³.

A time limited SDVC planning group was convened by the Justices Clerk for HMCS. This included the 4 local Domestic Violence / Abuse Forum Co-ordinators, South Yorkshire Police, the Probation Service, CPS, the Criminal Justice Board, Victim Support, and representatives from Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley. This group submitted four SDVC bids with assistance from Govt Office – one for the city of Sheffield and one for each of the three towns, signed off by the Chairs of their respective Crime & Disorder Partnerships. Four separate but linked bids were submitted, as the application for SDVC status was from the single HMCS court area of South Yorkshire – this was successful in September 2006.

Key members of the planning group continued to meet as a county-wide Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) Task Group, chaired by the Police Domestic Violence Co-ordinator. This group has helped to co-ordinate the initiative in the four local areas, proposing county-wide models for the IDVAS and the MARAC arrangements, and advising the local SDVC Steering Groups set up in each of the four areas to make operational decisions about delivery of the SDVC objectives. Care was taken to recognise and use the expertise, skills, experience and knowledge of the associated, but different strategic delivery areas of the SDVC initiative as follows:

1.2.1 The Court Component of the South Yorkshire SDVC

HMCS, through the Justices' Clerk for South Yorkshire were and continue to be responsible for the court and judicial side of the SDVC initiative. In the four SDVC areas, this initiative involves each Magistrate's Court delivering a specialist domestic violence court system and making adjustments to their working practices to better meet the needs of victims of domestic violence. These include:

³ When the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Programme commenced in April 2006 23 individual SDVC systems were identified by the Home Office. A further 39 SDVCs were selected in April 2007, bringing the total number to 64. In April 2008, a further 34 SDVC systems were selected, bringing the total number of SDVC systems accredited by the national programme to currently 98. <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv018.htm> (01/08/08).

- Flagging domestic violence related trials and ensuring that they are fast tracked
- Providing Magistrates and Legal Advisers with specific domestic violence case training.

Additionally, an existing Fast Track Working Group, chaired by the Legal Training Principal Manager, HMCS, South Yorkshire, to the Court Service, has continued to meet to focus on monitoring the fast-tracking of domestic violence cases in South Yorkshire. This Steering Group is driven, monitored and managed by HMCS with support from the Police and CPS. The local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) are linked by the Domestic Violence Co-ordinators in South Yorkshire SDVC delivery areas to the Fast Track Working Group. The overall project also has the support of the Local Criminal Justice Board for South Yorkshire.

1.2.2 The MARAC Component of the South Yorkshire SDVC

The CCR Task Group has adopted the model for this process developed by CAADA. (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse). South Yorkshire Police are administering and chairing the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences in each area. To assist this work, the Home Office funded MARAC workshops in each area to raise awareness and engage the key agencies that are required to participate. These took place in January 2007 and were facilitated by CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) who have since returned to evaluate MARAC performance in South Yorkshire. As the MARACs are evaluated separately, this evaluation report will **not** be focussing on MARAC processes. However, as this component of the SDVC initiative is referred to throughout the report, it is important to note the following⁴:

- The purpose of the MARAC is to identify and share information to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of victims of domestic violence and their children
- MARACs are attended by representatives from key statutory and voluntary agencies, including Police, Probation, health trusts, social services, housing, CAFCASS, mental health and substance misuse services, and the local IDVAS
- MARACs focus on action to reduce the risk, with partner agencies each contributing and actions followed up at the subsequent meeting .
- MARACs aim to construct multi-agency action plans around victims at high levels of risk from domestic violence, and to support staff involved in those cases

⁴ For more detail see: Domestic Violence MARAC Implementation Guide: CAADA; and Evaluation of the Cardiff MARACs 2004-2005: Cardiff University.

- MARACs aim to reduce levels of repeat victimisation and domestic homicide.

In South Yorkshire, Domestic Violence MARACs are held monthly in Barnsley, Rotherham, and Sheffield, and fortnightly in Doncaster, and are chaired by the Detective Inspector from the Public Protection Unit in that area.

1.2.3 The IDVAS Component of the South Yorkshire SDVC

It is felt that providing support to victims at high levels of risk from domestic violence, who may or may not be involved in court proceedings, requires a different set of localised knowledge and expertise. CAADA⁵ describe IDVA Services as follows:

An independent domestic violence advice service involves the professional provision of advice, information and support to survivors of intimate partner violence living in the community about the range, effectiveness and suitability of options to improve their safety and that of their children. This advice must be based on a thorough understanding and assessment of risk and its management, where possible as part of a multi-agency risk management strategy or MARAC process.

While advocacy services may accept all referrals, their focus is on providing a premium service to victims at medium to high risk of harm to address their safety needs and help manage the risk that they face. IDVA's typically provide short to medium term case work, focusing on safety advice covering improved physical security as well as remedies available from the civil and criminal justice systems.

An IDVA provides this service both at the point of crisis and in relation to medium and long term safety and support. The work of IDVA's has clear and measurable outcomes in terms of improved safety and a reduction in repeat offences. The service should be provided in such a way as to be sensitive to all cultural and other differences and needs. The IDVA also helps to ensure that all agencies involved in an individual case fulfil their obligations⁶.

In South Yorkshire the IDVA Services work to this definition. In summary, the Advocates:

- Provide help, legal advice, support and advocacy to those at high risk from domestic violence

⁵ CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse).

⁶ CAADA The Charter and Service Standards for IDVA Services: www.caada.org.uk (library of resources)

- Provide advice on safety planning to victims about their own, and their children's personal protection, and options for staying safe in their own home
- Provide service users with an explanation of the roles of the various agencies in the criminal justice system: Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Magistrates and Crown Court and the prison service. This includes their roles in domestic violence cases and these agencies policies and procedures
- Provide service users with an explanation of procedures under civil law, eligibility and accessing non-molestation and occupation orders, where appropriate.

The Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) Task Group made recommendations about models for delivery of the IDVA Service in the four South Yorkshire areas, based on the CAADA model, but did not want to be too prescriptive. Final decision making was given to local SDVC Steering Groups and Crime & Disorder Partnerships in Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley. The Domestic Violence / Abuse Co-ordinators from the four IDVAS areas have acted as strategic links between the CCR Task Group and their local SDVC Steering Groups, to manage the implementation of the IDVA Services, along with the MARAC arrangements. In this way, the planning stages were effectively linked into Local Authority plans in each of the four areas, an approach which recognised local discretion and encouraged local ownership of the initiative.

1.3 The Evaluation

This Report is an evaluation of the four IDVAS set up under the South Yorkshire SDVC initiative. The next chapter outlines the aims and objectives of the research and the methods utilised by the evaluation team.

Chapter 2: The Evaluation

2.0 Introduction

The Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the four Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services (IDVAS) in South Yorkshire. These IDVAS are located in Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley. Throughout the report, a decision was made to list the four areas in this order simply to reflect the largest to smallest population size of each area.

This evaluation involves a mapping exercise to establish the service delivery models used in each advocacy service. This approach will identify good practice and inform service planning for the future. This evaluation was further designed to provide reflections on the discontinuance rates of domestic violence cases in South Yorkshire through an examination of SDVC court data.

2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

The aims of the evaluation are to:

- identify the four IDVAS initiatives launched in South Yorkshire in April 2007
- gain a specific understanding of the impact of these initiatives on service users
- examine the impact of the four IDVAS initiatives in South Yorkshire on the partnership approach to the end to end care and support of victims of domestic violence within South Yorkshire
- promote a fuller understanding of discontinuance rates from court data
- examine criminal prosecution-based perspectives on the effectiveness of domestic violence focused initiatives in South Yorkshire.

Key evaluation objectives were therefore to:

- provide information on the four IDVA Services procedures and service delivery models
- assess the impact the IDVA Services on service users' experiences
- provide an overview analysis of discontinued, cracked, ineffective and vacated cases
- recommend developments to working practices with those who have experienced domestic abuse by identifying models of good practice from the South Yorkshire district.

2.1.1 Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was designed to identify the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire to draw out good practice and map the four services. In order to achieve these aims the following key research questions were addressed by the research:

- Has the establishment of these IDVAS initiatives led to a more effective partnership approach to the care and end to end support of victims of domestic violence within each area?
- Which agencies are the IDVAS initiatives referring their service users on to?
- What are service user views on the effectiveness of the four IDVAS initiatives?
- Why do domestic violence victims withdraw from court proceedings?

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. A qualitative approach was adopted to investigate perceptions of the IDVAS from service users and staff involved in the delivery of the SDVC initiatives. Representatives from referral organisations and representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Police were also involved in focus groups. Details of focus group attendees are provided in section 2.2.2 below. Service user views were gathered during semi-structured interviews, both face to face and telephone interviews. Quantitative data was provided by South Yorkshire Magistrates Court, detailing yearly data concerning domestic violence cases and year end data from each of the four IDVA services was provided. A more detailed description of the methodology is outlined below.

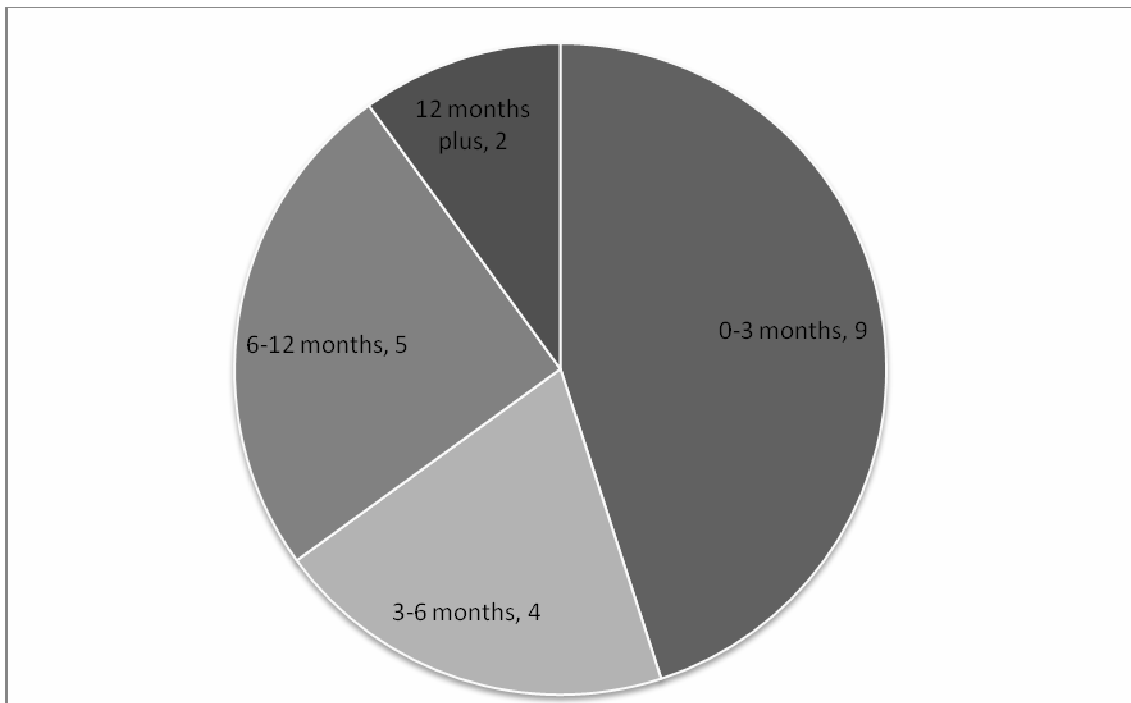
2.2.1 Semi Structured Interviews

Between March and May 2008 the evaluation team interviewed 21 service users; 5 from Sheffield, 5 from Doncaster, 6 from Rotherham⁷ and 5 from Barnsley. Service users were given the option of having a telephone interview as opposed to a face to face interview and the majority opted for this method. Eighteen of the interviews were conducted over the telephone and lasted between fifteen and thirty minutes approximately. Three service user interviews in Rotherham were conducted face to face using a semi-structured interview format. The interviewees' permission was sought via the IDVA Service workers/managers, who contacted five of their clients they considered able and willing to take part. The evaluation team were then provided with the service users' contact details. The service users were initially contacted by telephone and a convenient time to

⁷ 6 service users were interviewed in Rotherham as 6 women were informed that they would be contacted via the telephone and the evaluation team felt that they should be contacted in that case.

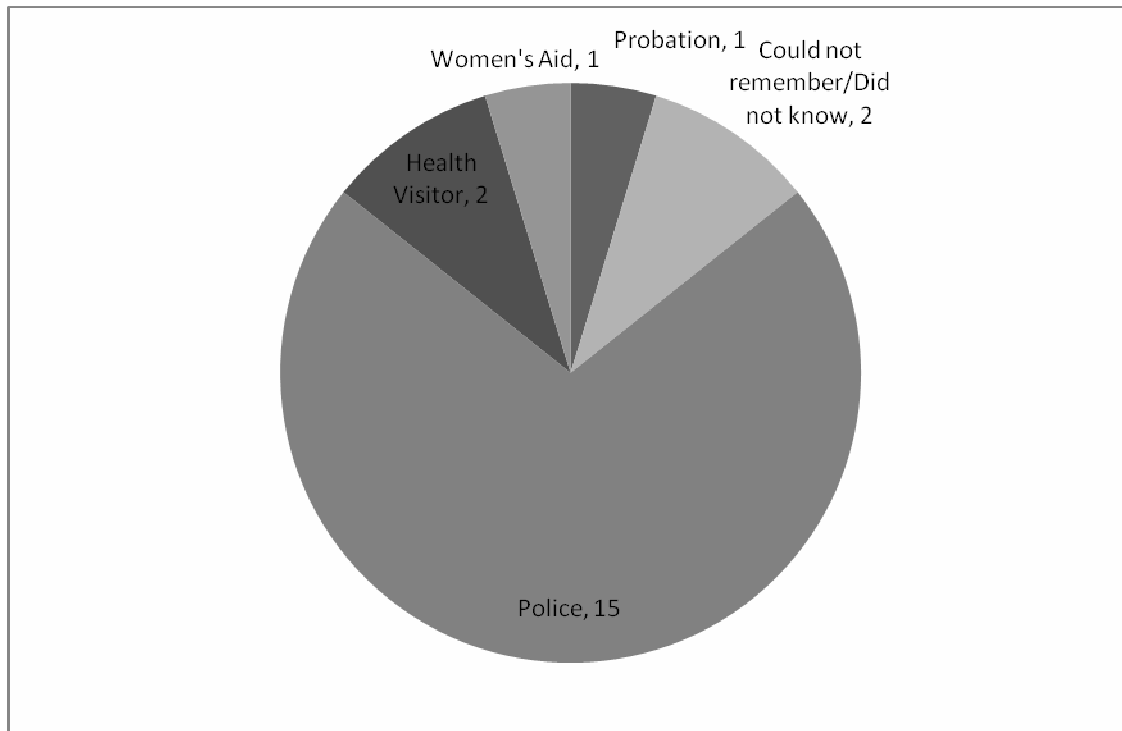
conduct the interview was arranged. As soon as the interviews had been conducted the contact details were destroyed. The length of time the service users interviewed had been supported by the IDVA Service varied from less than one month to more than a year. The majority of service users had been supported by the IDVAS for less than six months:

Figure 2.2.1a: Length of engagement with IDVAS



The majority of the women were referred to the IDVA Service by a Domestic Violence Officer based in the district Public Protection Units at South Yorkshire Police. The referral routes into the IDVA Service by the service users interviewed are shown in the chart below:

Figure 2.2.1b: Referrals Routes of Service User Interviewees



2.2.2 Focus Groups

Four focus groups were conducted with the IDVA Services in Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley. A focus group with the CPS and Police was also conducted. Focus groups lasted approximately two hours and followed activities developed by the evaluation team which would address the key research questions relating to the IDVA Services. The focus group data was hand written by a research assistant and typed up for analysis on completion. Figure 2.2.2a (overleaf) shows the date of each of the focus groups and the number of people who attended.

Figure 2.2.2a: Table of Focus Group Dates and Attendees

Sheffield IDVAS	Doncaster IDVAS	Rotherham IDVAS	Barnsley IDVAS	CPS and Police
21/02/08	27/02/08	19/02/08	06/03/08	21/04/08
7 attendees	2 attendees 3 apologies ⁸	5 attendees 1 apology ⁹	5 attendees	10 attendees
IDVAS Manager IDVAS Advocate South Yorkshire Probation Drug Intervention Programme, Haven House Sheffield City Council (Housing) Parson Cross Domestic Abuse Project	IDVA ISVA	IDVA Manager IDVA Worker 2010 Rotherham Ltd South Yorkshire Probation Choices and Options	IDVA Manager ISVA Worker Pathways Family Support Centre Berneslai Homes Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	* see below

The local IDVAS staff were present at each local focus group. At the Doncaster focus group the IDVA worker and the ISVA attended as they work closely together and telephone interviews were conducted at a later date with representatives from three other agencies in the area whose representatives were unable to attend the focus group date. A telephone interview was conducted at a later date with a fifth representative who was unable to attend the Rotherham focus group.

The evaluation team conducted a county-wide criminal justice focus group with representatives from the CPS South Yorkshire and Police from Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley. Attendees included: a Senior Crown Prosecutor, a Assistant District Crown Prosecutor, the Police Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, 2 Domestic Violence Police Officers, Public Protection Unit

⁸ The evaluation team received 3 apologies from representatives of voluntary sector agencies, telephone interviews were carried out with representatives from Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre, Doncaster Women's Aid and Doncaster Domestic violence Working Party.

⁹ A representative from Apna Haq project in Rotherham was unable to make the focus group and was interviewed over the phone.

Manager and a Sergeant, a Detective Sergeant, a Police Constable and a Police Sergeant. The CPS and Police focus group lasted for two hours and followed activities developed by the evaluation team to produce data with which to reflect on their perceptions of the DV initiatives in South Yorkshire.

2.2.3 Quantitative Data

The evaluation team received year end data from each of the four IDVA Services and from Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) for South Yorkshire. Data concerning cracked and vacated trials in South Yorkshire from September 2007 to March 2008 was also provided by HMCS. All data received was entered into Excel spreadsheets from which the evaluation team produced charts, graphs and tables.

2.2.4 Data Collection

In line with SHU's commitment to co-operative inquiry and empowering evaluation methods, the following approach was adopted towards data collection. All one-to-one interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee. The recordings were transcribed and then erased from the digital voice recorder. Focus group data was hand written by a research assistant attending the focus group and typed up for analysis upon conclusion of focus group activity. Interviewees and focus group attendees were given the opportunity to reflect on the evaluation process at the end of the interview and were asked if they had anything to add and/or they felt the interviewer had left out any important questions.

2.2.5 Documentary Analysis

A variety of documentation and information resources were analysed for evaluation purposes, including:

- CAADA literature
- Cardiff Women's Safety Unit literature
- Sheffield Multi-Agency Strategy for Domestic Abuse 2004-7
- Structure for Strategic Work on Domestic Abuse in Sheffield
- Policy documentation from each of the IDVA Service host organisations.

2.2.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

All semi-structured interview data were analysed using a thematic framework approach. This involves working through a number of distinct; although interconnected research phases (familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing and coding, mapping and interpretation) in order to make sense of the data. This is the preferred method of data analysis as it is a system that is based entirely on the original accounts of those studied. This qualitative analysis was an

interactive process between two members of the evaluation team and involved ongoing discussion and debate throughout all stages, particularly in relation to agreeing key themes. This approach is particularly effective as it provides a 'checking mechanism' for the interpretation of data, thus adding to the validity of the results.

2.2.7 Quantitative Data Analysis

All data received from both Her Majesty's Courts Service for South Yorkshire and Home Office year end data from the four IDVA Services was inputted into an Excel spread sheet. The data was analysed through the use of graph, charts and tables which are included in this report where appropriate.

Chapter 3: The South Yorkshire IDVAS Initiative

3.0 Introduction

As outlined in the introduction, the strategic development of the county-wide IDVA Service initiative was begun by the South Yorkshire Co-ordinated Community Response Task Group. Initially the agreed IDVA Service model was to be a women's service, with the contingency that in the event of any men being assessed as high risk, they would be signposted to Victim Support. The initial framework developed also foresaw the IDVA Service being hosted by an appropriate voluntary sector organisation, which would also provide line management support. A minimum staffing structure was recommended to be an IDVA Service Manager and one Advocate (or full time equivalent).

The SDVC Steering Groups (under the auspices of their respective Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships) within the four distinct areas then provided the leadership and discretionary planning for the introduction of the SDVC initiative in their own area. Home Office funding of £20,000 per area was to be provided via the Government Offices for Yorkshire and Humber (GOYH), for at least the first two years of IDVA Service operation, so each area had to secure additional funding through their Partnership to develop a realistic service model.

3.1 The Four South Yorkshire IDVAS

The four areas SDVC Steering Groups made strategic decisions about the model through which they would deliver their own IDVA Services. This section describes the operational characteristics of the four distinct IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. The final sections of this report contain operational issues and good practice examples raised during the focus group activities, which are themed across South Yorkshire's IDVA Service.

The services continue to have a consistent approach in key areas of operation: at least one IDVA from each area has attended the national IDVA training programme delivered by CAADA on behalf of the Home Office, they work with a clear focus on assessment of high risk and multi-agency working to reduce risk, and the four areas have collaborated to purchase a common data system ('Modus' from Paloma software) to record and monitor their service delivery.

3.2 The Sheffield IDVA Service

3.2.1 Service Structure

The Sheffield IDVA Service is hosted by Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum (SDAF) which is a specialist domestic abuse delivery organisation within the

voluntary sector. The service is based within Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum offices in central Sheffield.

Since June 2008, the Sheffield IDVA Service has a full time IDVAS Manager, three part time Advocates and part time admin support¹⁰. The IDVAS Manager post does case work, and directly manages the other staff. She is line managed by the Domestic Abuse Forum Co-ordinator, and also receives external supervision. The Co-ordinator represents the IDVAS at the county-wide CCR Task Group, and the Sheffield SDVC Steering Group, which meets under the auspices of the Safer Communities Partnership (CDRP). For full details on the management and governance membership and structure see Appendix 1 and 2.

3.2.2 Service Delivery

The Sheffield IDVA Service has been developed by the Forum in line with CAADA guidance and supports women at high risk from domestic abuse, identified and referred by the Police Public Protection Unit, or via the MARAC process. The service provides intensive short term support to women, in order to increase the safety of them and their children, sometimes in collaboration with other specialist domestic abuse services in the city. Once the risk has been reduced they refer on, or back, to other agencies for longer term support.

3.2.3 Policies and Procedures

The IDVA Service works within the policies and procedures of Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum, which include a Lone Working policy. This requires members of staff to notify the office of their arrival and safe exit from all home visits, with a clear procedure to be followed if an emergency arises.

3.2.4 Referrals to Service

Direct referrals to the service are only received from the Police Public Protection Unit via secure email. These are checked by the IDVAS Manager and placed in the new referrals folder for allocation to one of the Advocates, in line with the key working system. The Administrator books the new referrals on to the Paloma Modus data system. Referrals are not currently accepted from other agencies, except via the MARAC process, due to the limited capacity of the service. The referrals to the Sheffield IDVAS, as detailed in year end Home Office data are detailed below:

¹⁰ During evaluation data collection stages Sheffield had one IDVAS Manager and one Advocate post which was unfilled during parts of the year.

Sheffield	% of Total Referrals	Actual Figures
Police	100%	82
Health	0%	0
Social Services	0%	0
Housing	0%	0
Others	0%	0

3.2.5 Risk Assessment Procedures

All referrals have been risk assessed as High Risk using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool by South Yorkshire Police, and the IDVA Service uses the same risk assessment process.

3.2.6 Contact Procedures

New referrals will normally be contacted by telephone within 24 hours of the referral arriving, to offer support from the IDVA Service. If unsuccessful, they will check with the Police whether it is safe to send a letter and a leaflet explaining the independent service to the woman's address. If this is not possible, and other professionals are involved, they would ask them to provide information about the service. Where contact is made but the woman is unsure of whether she wants to engage, they offer to send a leaflet and to ring again. Once contact is made, they will discuss immediate safety concerns over the phone, then arrange a face to face appointment to look at support needs in more detail and complete paperwork. Where it is safe, they will do a joint visit to the woman's home, often with a Domestic Violence Officer or other agency worker. There is no limit to the number of times they will attempt contact.

3.2.7 Prioritisation and Case Management

Cases are prioritised according to risk, at weekly case management meetings. These meetings also consider which clients are ready to be referred on to other agencies for longer term support. New referrals are kept in a file which is checked daily, and actions are communicated via a log book, court book, and case notes in the Modus data system. The Advocates manage their own caseload on a daily basis, prioritising clients and referrals according to the level of support required and the level of risk involved, in consultation with the IDVAS Manager. Advocates receive individual supervision on a monthly basis.

3.2.8 Exit Protocols

Cases are moved to 'pending' if the woman is no longer considered high risk (e.g. perpetrator is in prison). If someone is not engaging with the service, work continues with other agencies to address safety issues and facilitate information

sharing, until the risk is lowered. The Advocates aim to ensure that women have opportunities to access longer term support from other services or agencies, and may do joint work before handing over cases. They will also reassure them that they can make contact if they need to in the future.

3.2.9 Engagement of Service Users

Between April 2007 and March 2008 the Sheffield IDVA Service has successfully contacted 95% of the high risk referrals made into their service. Over the same time period, they have effectively engaged¹¹ with 80% of those contacted. Sheffield IDVA Service referral and service user engagement statistics were as follows:

	April 07-March 08
Referrals into Service	82
Number of Female Referrals	82
Number of Male Referrals	0
Number of referrals Contacted	78
Number of Referrals Engaging with Service	63

3.2.10 Referral Profile: Ethnicity and Gender

In Sheffield, 90% (74) of their referrals identified themselves as white British, with 10% of referrals identifying themselves as from minority ethnic backgrounds. Sheffield IDVA Service referral's ethnicity profile details are as follows:

	Sheffield
Asian	3 (4%)
African	2 (2%)
Mixed Race	3 (4%)
White	74 (90%)

Sheffield IDVAS did not receive any male referrals to their service as the local Police have not assessed any men as high risk in Sheffield.

3.2.11 Links with other Agencies: Signposting and Support

The IDVA Service routinely signposts or refers clients on to housing services and to other specialist domestic abuse services, refuges and support groups, as well

¹¹ The CAADA definition of 'engaged' with IDVA Services consists of a first meeting plus four more contacts. However, the classifications of engagement vary between the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This definitional issue is currently under review.

as to related services such as drugs and alcohol, mental health, etc and to refuges and IDVA Services in other areas where women have to leave the city for their safety. In some cases they will work alongside other agencies to reduce the level of risk, while being careful not to duplicate the support available from other services. Appendix 3 contains a detailed list of agencies which the Sheffield IDVA Service are linked with.

From the Home Office year returns, Sheffield IDVA Service has, between April 2007 and March 2008, provided referrals to their service with support and, or, signposting in the following areas:

Sheffield	Actual Figures
Housing	42
Benefits	28
Education	25
Refuge	36
Health	25
Target Hardening	46
Immigration	1
Support Group	16
Other	7

As the table above illustrates, Target Hardening¹² support is the area in which Sheffield IDVA Service referrals require or receive most support (46), closely followed by Housing advice (42) and Refuge (36).

3.3 The Doncaster IDVA Service

3.3.1 Service Structure

The Doncaster IDVA Service is hosted by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC). The service is based within DMBC offices in central Doncaster. The service is managed by a Community Safety Consultant who is the Council's lead officer for Violent Crime, and has experience of domestic violence work as a practitioner and Manager of a specialist service.

Since February 2008, the Doncaster IDVA Service has a full time, fully qualified IDVA Advocate and one Assistant IDVA, who is a qualified social worker, but who has not yet received specialist IDVA training¹³. Administrative support, including input to the Paloma system is provided by the Community Safety Administration Officer.

¹² Target hardening refers to the strengthening of the security of an individual premises with a view to reducing or minimising the risk of attack.

¹³ During evaluation data collection stages Doncaster had one IDVAS Advocate

The service is overseen by DMBC and Safer Doncaster Partnership (CDRP). The SDVC steering group no longer meets separately; the operation of the SDVC is overseen by the Violent Crime Theme Group, as part of the Co-ordinated community Response to Domestic Violence. The Community Safety Consultant represents Doncaster at the county wide CCR task group. For full details on the management and governance membership and structure see Appendix 1 and 2.

3.3.2 Service Delivery

The Doncaster IDVA Service is available to both women and men at high risk from domestic violence. Service users are referred into the service from a variety of agencies (see later section). This service includes support through court processes, including attending court, and giving evidence as an expert witness, where required.

The IDVA staff are based within the Community Safety office, which is in the same building as other council services including children's services for the Urban area. Both IDVA staff have regular external Supervision, in addition to line management support, and have access to DMBC training and development opportunities. A separate ISVA post (Independent Sexual Violence Advocate) is hosted by Doncaster Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre.

3.3.3 Policies and Procedures

Doncaster IDVA Service works to the CAADA model, and has developed working practices in line with their guidance material. An Information Sharing Protocol has been signed by all agencies. An agreed process for referrals is used to attract referrals from a wide range of agencies trained in risk assessment and MARAC procedures.

As an employee of Doncaster Council the IDVA follows the Doncaster MBC lone working procedure. This involves logging all visits, and reporting back on completion. In addition the IDVA's are equipped with a Skyguard device, which uses GPS technology to pinpoint their whereabouts at all times. In cases of emergency, the Skyguard is linked directly to South Yorkshire Police 999 service with an immediate response equivalent to 'officer down' code. Information is also provided to the IDVAS by the Police on the whereabouts of perpetrators to inform this risk assessment. Risk assessments are undertaken before any visit and appropriate action to mitigate the identified risks are carried out. This may include a joint visit, or visit in another location.

3.3.4 Referrals to Service

Doncaster IDVA Service accepts referrals from any agency that has received risk assessment and MARAC training. These agencies can also refer directly into the

MARAC process. Referrals are made using secure email system, the Community Justice Secure Mail (CJSM). If however agencies do not have access to CJSM, Doncaster IDVA Service accepts referrals over the telephone, and a referral form can be faxed. The IDVA Advocates often advise and support local agencies in assessing high risk cases. Cases referred into the service and subsequently not found to be high risk when assessed by the IDVA, are signposted to other services for support.

The referrals to the Doncaster IDVAS, as detailed in year end Home Office data, are detailed below:

Doncaster	% of Total Referrals	Actual Figures
Police	73%	359
Health	8%	41
Social Services	2%	9
Housing	3%	17
Refuge	2%	10
Others	12%	58

3.3.5 Risk Assessment Procedures

All agencies referring to the service use the SPECSS+ Risk Assessment tool to refer in Doncaster IDVA Service, and the IDVA Service uses the same risk assessment process. A rolling programme of risk assessment and MARAC training is offered to ensure partner agencies are clear on the process.

3.3.6 Contact Procedures

The Doncaster IDVA Service does not use letter contact, due to the potential risk to the victim of the perpetrator intercepting the letter. All referrals are contacted by telephone as soon as possible after the referral is received. The service aims to make initial contact on the same day as the referral is received. Repeated attempts are made to establish contact, as long as the risk remains high. One alternative utilised in terms of attempting contact is through the MARAC, as this process provides the opportunity to make links with agencies with whom the victim is already engaging, and the possibility of a joint visit.

Once contact has been established the IDVA provides a landline and mobile telephone number, both of which have answer phone facilities, therefore enabling the IDVA to respond quickly. If out of the office the IDVA can pick up messages regularly. Service users are first asked if it is safe for them to speak. Where it is safe, home visits are arranged or the Advocate will meet the service user in a public building.

3.3.7 Prioritisation and Case Management

The aim of the IDVA Service is to work on a short term basis with clients and an individual action plan is completed with each service user. Risk is assessed and reassessed on an ongoing basis. The Doncaster IDVA also works closely with the Doncaster Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) where cases involve a sexual element. If further incidents occur following closure of the case, it is reopened as a new referral.

On the first visit the IDVA carries out a full risk assessment, provides advice on safety planning, and completes an Individual Action Plan with the service user. Service users are also signposted to any relevant specialist services. After completion of agreed actions, and assuming no further actions come from the MARAC, when the risk has reduced due to interventions put in place or their circumstances (e.g. perpetrator in custody), the service user is referred on to another agency such as Women's Aid or Victim Support, for ongoing support.

3.3.8 Exit Protocols

In the event that a service user's status changes from high risk, the IDVAS referrers on to another agency for support if required. The Doncaster IDVA provide all referrals with an 'Information about the IDVA Service' sheet at the beginning of the case in order to ensure service users appreciate that the IDVAS support is not indefinite and that the service is only provided whilst they are at high risk.

3.3.9 Engagement of Service Users

Between April 2007 and March 2008 the Doncaster IDVA Service has successfully contacted 72% of the high risk referrals made into their service. Over the same time period, they have effectively engaged¹⁴ with 77% of those contacted. Doncaster IDVAS referral and service user engagement statistics were as follows:

	April 07-March 08
Referrals into Service	494
Number of Female Referrals	489
Number of Male Referrals	5
Number of referrals Contacted	356
Number of Referrals Engaging with Service	275

¹⁴ The CAADA definition of 'engaged' with IDVA Services consists of a first meeting plus four more contacts. However, the classifications of engagement vary between the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This definitional issue is currently under review.

3.3.10 IDVAS Referral Profile: Ethnicity and Gender

In Doncaster, 44% (218) of their referrals identified themselves as white British, with 8% of referrals identifying themselves as from minority ethnic backgrounds (however 48% of their referrals ethnicity was not provided). Doncaster IDVAS referral's ethnicity profile details are as follows:

Asian	21 (4%)
African	2 (1%)
Mixed Race	1 (1%)
Chinese	2 (1%)
White	218 (44%)
Other	4 (1% ¹⁵)
Not Provided	246 (48%)

Between April 2007 and March 2008, 5 male high risk service users were referred to the Doncaster IDVA Service.

3.3.11 Links with other Agencies: Signposting and Support

Doncaster IDVA service both receives referrals and refers on to a wide range of agencies, including Police, Social Services, Women's Aid, Families First, Doncaster Women's Centre, Social Housing Providers, Probation, Education, Streetreach, Victim Support, CAFCASS, Other IDVA Services, Refuges outside area, and self referrals. Other specialist services accessed include Solicitors, Citizens Advice Bureau, Mental Health Services, Sure Start, and Education Welfare. See Appendix 3 for full list of agencies Doncaster IDVAS are linked with.

From the Home Office year returns, Doncaster IDVAS has, between April 2007 and March 2008, provided referrals to their service with support and, or, signposting in the following areas:

¹⁵ These data were small, so percentages were rounded up to a minimum of 1%, for illustrative purposes.

Doncaster	Actual Figures
Housing	89
Benefits	34
Education	5
Refuge	14
Health	37
Target Hardening ¹⁶	6
Immigration	1
Support Group	117
Other	10

It can be seen from the above table for Doncaster, that Support Groups are the area in which referrals are signposted onto the most at 117, followed by Housing with 89, Health with 37 and Benefits, 34.

3.4 Rotherham IDVA Service

3.4.1 Service Structure

The Rotherham IDVA Service is hosted by Rotherham Women's Refuge (RWR), and the service is based within RWR outreach offices on the outskirts of Rotherham. From June 2008, the IDVA Service is staffed by a full time IDVA Worker and a full time IDVA Co-ordinator who directly manages the service as well as doing client work. A part time Administrator provides organisational support.

The IDVA Co-ordinator line manages the IDVA Worker and Administrator. Line Management for the IDVA Co-ordinator is provided by the overall manager of RWR, who in turn reports to the MARAC/IDVA Steering group which has now been incorporated into the Rotherham Domestic Violence Priority Group. For full details on the management and governance membership and structure see Appendix 1 and 2.

3.4.2 Service Delivery

The Rotherham IDVA Service supports women at high risk from domestic abuse, who are referred to the service by the Police Domestic Violence Unit. The IDVAS aims to provide short term crisis intervention with the aim of increasing safety and preventing repeat victimisation. The aim is to contact all clients within 24 hours of referrals being received. Once the risk has been reduced they refer on to other agencies who can provide longer term support.

¹⁶ Target hardening refers to the strengthening of the security of an individual premises with a view to reducing or minimising the risk of attack.

3.4.3 Policies and Procedures

The IDVA Service adheres to the policies and procedures of Rotherham Women's Refuge. These include the Rotherham Women's Refuge Lone Working Policy, and subscription to Guardian 24. This is a phone service that logs the IDVA's visits and alerts other members of staff if the IDVA does not log off after a visit. It also has a panic button function which, if pressed, will raise an emergency alert.

3.4.4 Referrals to Service

The Rotherham IDVA Service receives referrals from the Police Domestic Violence Unit. Currently this IDVA Service is only publicised through the MARAC, as it would otherwise be unable to manage the potential demand within existing resources. The referrals to the Rotherham IDVA Service, as detailed in year end Home Office data are detailed below:

Rotherham	% of Total Referrals	Actual Figures
Police	93%	211
Health	0%	0
Social Services	1%	3
Housing	0%	0
Refuge	0%	1
Others	5%	11

3.4.5 Risk Assessment Procedures

The Rotherham IDVA service uses the SPECSS + risk assessment tool.

3.4.6 Contact Procedures

The IDVA Service aims to contact new referrals within 24 hours of the referral being received. Contact attempts are repeated at a variety of different times during the day. There is no limit on the number of times they will attempt contact, judged on a case by case basis and through consultation with the referrer. If unsuccessful, the service posts a letter to the referral, if it is safe to do so (if they are not living with the perpetrator). Once contact is made, the IDVA discusses immediate safety concerns, such as the need for alarms or access to a refuge for example. If considered safe, the Rotherham IDVA conducts a joint visit to the woman's home, possibly with a Domestic Violence Officer or other agency worker. A face to face appointment is arranged in order to examine the referrals support needs in more detail and complete paperwork.

3.4.7 Prioritisation and Case Management

Referrals to the service are emailed from the Police Domestic Violence Unit via secure email. The Administrator places a hard copy of the referral into a 'new referrals file' which the IDVA checks daily. The Administrator inputs all new referrals on to the Paloma Modus system and alerts the IDVA. The Rotherham IDVA Service accepts high risk referrals from other agencies but these referrals are limited, due to the capacity of the service.

Cases are prioritised according to risk at weekly case management meetings. These meetings are used to consider which, if any, service users are ready to be referred on to longer term support and to manage the IDVA's case load. The IDVA manage their caseload on a daily basis, prioritising service users and new referrals according to the level of support required and the level of risk involved. The IDVAS Advocates receive monthly supervision.

3.4.8 Exit Protocols

Clients' cases are closed once they are no longer considered high risk. The IDVA works closely with service users to ensure they have access to longer term support if they need it. The IDVA follows a Support Plan which is reviewed regularly in conjunction with the service users. Service users who exit the service are however, always encouraged to make contact if they need support again in the future.

3.4.9 Engagement of Service Users

Between April 2007 and March 2008 the Rotherham IDVAS has successfully contacted 98% of the high risk referrals made into their service. Over the same time period, they have effectively engaged¹⁷ with 56% of those contacted. The 3 male referrals were signposted on to the local Victim Support Office. Rotherham IDVAS referral and service user engagement statistics were as follows:

	April 07-March 08
Referrals into Service	227
Number of Female Referrals	224
Number of Male Referrals	3
Number of referrals Contacted	224
Number of Referrals Engaging with Service	126

¹⁷ The CAADA definition of 'engaged' with IDVA Services consists of a first meeting plus four more contacts. However, the classifications of engagement vary between the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This definitional issue is currently under review.

3.4.10 IDVAS Referral Profile: Ethnicity and Gender

In Rotherham, 96% (218) of their referrals identified themselves as white British, with 4% of referrals identifying themselves as from minority ethnic backgrounds (however 48% of their referrals ethnicity was not provided). Rotherham IDVA Service referral's ethnicity profile details are as follows:

Asian	7 (3%)
African	2 (1%)
White	218 (96%)

Between April 2007 and March 2008, 3 male high risk referrals have been referred to the Rotherham IDVA, all of whom were signposted on to the local Victim Support.

3.4.11 Links with other Agencies: Signposting and Support

The IDVA signposts and also refers service users on to other specialist projects such as drug and alcohol services and support groups. If the service user remains high risk, the IDVA service conducts joint work with other agencies. If service users are no longer high risk the service ensures they are signposted to other support agencies. Appendix 3 contains a detailed list of agencies which the Rotherham IDVAS are linked with.

From the Home Office year returns Rotherham IDVAS has, between April 2007 and March 2008, provided referrals to their service with support and, or, signposting in the following areas:

Rotherham	Actual Figures
Housing	36
Benefits	8
Education	14
Refuge	12
Health	11
Target Hardening ¹⁸	48
Immigration	1
Support Group	7
Other	0

It can be seen from the above table for Rotherham that Target Hardening is the area in which referrals receive most support (48), followed by Housing (36), Education (14) and Refuge (12).

¹⁸ Target hardening refers to the strengthening of the security of an individual premises with a view to reducing or minimising the risk of attack.

3.5 The Barnsley IDVA Service

3.5.1 Service Structure

The Barnsley IDVA Service is hosted by Victim Support Barnsley which is a national charity supporting victims of crime, witnesses and their families. Since April 2007, the Barnsley IDVA Service has a full time IDVA with some admin support. The IDVA is line managed by the Barnsley Victim Support Branch Manager. In addition, clinical supervision is provided through a trained counsellor with Pathways, a voluntary sector agency providing specialist support to victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The Barnsley Domestic Abuse Forum and the Principal Hate and Hidden Crime Officer co-ordinate the work of the statutory and voluntary agencies involved. The Co-ordinator represents the IDVA Service at the county-wide CCR Task Group, and the Barnsley SDVC Steering Group, which meets under the auspices of the Community Safety Service. For full details on the management and governance membership and structure see Appendix 1 and 2.

3.5.2 Service Delivery

The Barnsley IDVA Service supports men and women at high risk from domestic abuse, identified and referred by the Police Public Protection Unit, or via the MARAC process. The service provides intensive short term support in order to increase safety of the individual and their children, sometimes in collaboration with other specialist domestic abuse services in Barnsley. Once the risk has been reduced the IDVA Service refers on, or back, to other agencies for longer term support.

3.5.3 Policies and Procedures

The IDVA Service works within the policies and procedures of Victim Support, the MARAC information sharing protocol, the Domestic Abuse Policy and the interagency policy.

3.5.4 Referrals to Service

Direct referrals to the service are received from the Police Public Protection Unit by telephone, and since June 2008 from Victim Support's new national Victim Care Unit through a web based system. Referrals are also received from other voluntary and statutory agencies. Self referrals are also accepted at Barnsley IDVAS. The referrals to the Barnsley IDVAS, as detailed in year end Home Office data are detailed below:

Barnsley	% of Total Referrals	Actual Figures
Police	77%	274
Health	8%	27
Social Services	3%	10
Housing	1%	2
Others	12%	44

3.5.5 Risk Assessment Procedures

South Yorkshire Police referrals to the Barnsley service are assessed as High Risk using SPECSS+. Other referral agencies in Barnsley use the CAADA FSU9 risk assessment tool, which is also the risk assessment process which the Barnsley IDVA Service uses.

3.5.6 Contact Procedures

New referrals are normally contacted by telephone within 48 hours of the referral arriving, to offer support from the IDVA Service. There is no limit to the number of times they will attempt contact. Once contact is made, the IDVA will discuss immediate safety concerns over the phone, and then arrange a face to face appointment to look at support needs in more detail and complete paperwork. The IDVA will visit the referrals' home or will arrange meet at the Victim Support Offices. The IDVA also conducts joint visits with a Domestic Violence Officer or other agency worker.

3.5.7 Prioritisation and Case Management

Cases are prioritised according to risk. The Advocate manages her own caseload on a daily basis, prioritising clients and referrals according to the level of support required and the level of risk involved, in consultation with the IDVA line manager.

3.5.8 Exit Protocols

Cases are moved to 'pending' if the woman is no longer considered high risk (e.g. perpetrator is in prison). If someone is not engaging with the service, work continues with other agencies to address safety issues and facilitate information sharing, until the risk is lowered. The Advocate's aim is to ensure that service users have opportunities to access longer term support from other services or agencies. Barnsley IDVA assures service users' that they can make contact if they need to in the future.

3.5.9 Engagement of Service Users

Between April 2007 and March 2008 the Barnsley IDVAS has successfully contacted 64% of the high risk referrals made into their service. Over the same time period, they have effectively engaged¹⁹ with 46% of those contacted. Barnsley IDVAS referral and service user engagement statistics were as follows:

	April 07-March 08
Referrals into Service	357
Number of Female Referrals	340
Number of Male Referrals	17
Number of Referrals Contacted	230
Number of Referrals Engaging with Service	106

3.5.10 IDVAS Referral Profile: Ethnicity and Gender

In Barnsley 67% (239) of their referrals identified themselves as white British, with 1% of referrals identifying themselves as from minority ethnic backgrounds (however 32% of their referrals ethnicity was not provided). Barnsley IDVAS referral's ethnicity profile details are as follows:

African	2 (1%)
White	239 (67%)
Not Provided	116 (32%)

Between April 2007 and March 2008, 17 male high risk referrals have been to the Barnsley IDVA Service.

3.5.11 Links with other Agencies: Signposting and Support

The Barnsley IDVA Service routinely signposts or refers clients on to other specialist domestic abuse services and support groups, and to related services such as drugs and alcohol and mental health services. In some cases Barnsley IDVAS work alongside other agencies to reduce levels of risk, while being careful not to duplicate the support available from other services. Appendix 3 contains a detailed list of agencies which the Barnsley IDVAS are linked with.

From the Home Office year returns, Barnsley IDVAS has, between April 2007 and March 2008, provided referrals to their service with support and, or, signposting in the following areas:

¹⁹ The CAADA definition of 'engaged' with IDVA Services consists of a first meeting plus four more contacts. However, the classifications of engagement vary between the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This definitional issue is currently under review.

Barnsley	Actual Figures
Housing	86
Benefits	29
Education	69
Refuge	34
Health	30
Target Hardening ²⁰	61
Immigration	1
Support Group	16
Other	134

It can be seen that Barnsley IDVAS referrals receive the most support in 'other' areas (134), followed by Housing support or signposting (86) and Educational signposting or support (69).

3.6 South Yorkshire IDVA Services: An Overview

This section provides a collation of the IDVA service data from the Home Office year end returns in order to provide an overview of the extent of the service requirements across the South Yorkshire region.

3.6.1 High Risk Referrals to IDVA Services in South Yorkshire

Between April 2007 and March 2008, 1160 high risk domestic violence referrals were made to IDVA Services across South Yorkshire. Of these 1160, 888 (76%) were successfully contacted by the IDVAS teams across South Yorkshire. The number of these successfully contacted referrals who engaged²¹ with the South Yorkshire IDVA services was 570, 64% of those referred to the service originally.

3.6.2 South Yorkshire Service User Profile: Ethnicity and Gender

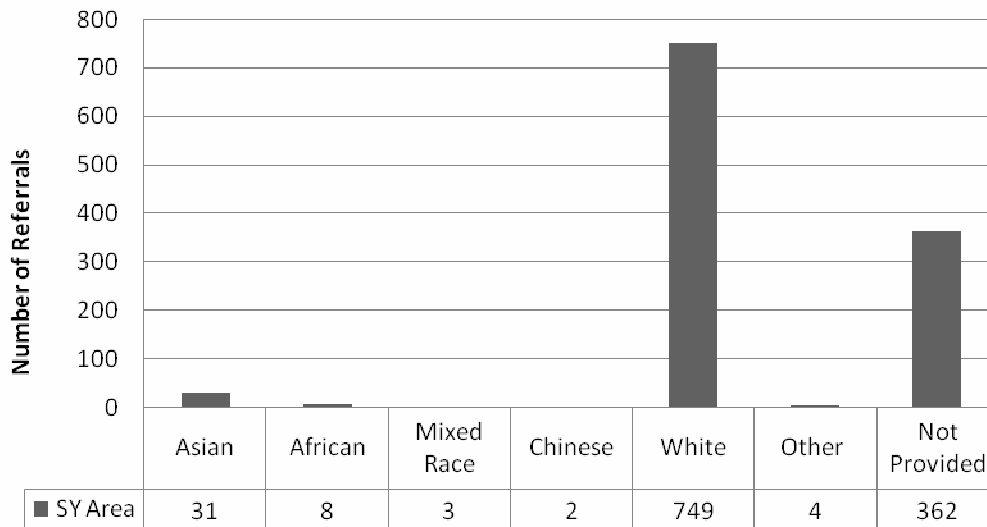
The majority of the 1160 referrals made to the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire, between April 2007 and March 2008, identified themselves as predominantly white British (749 or 65%) with a small number of clients from minority ethnic backgrounds (48 or 4%²²) :

²⁰ Target hardening refers to the strengthening of the security of an individual premises with a view to reducing or minimising the risk of attack.

²¹ Definitions of engagement vary between the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This definitional issue is currently under review.

²² The ethnicity of 362 (31%) referrals to the IDVA service were not provided.

South Yorkshire IDVA Referral Profile: Ethnicity



Two of the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire are women's services, and will sign post any male referrals on to Victim Support. Therefore, all service users engaging with Sheffield and Rotherham IDVA Services were female. However, Home Office year end data shows that IDVA Services in South Yorkshire received 25 male referrals between April 2007 and March 2008. 17 of these were referred to the IDVA based in Victim Support in Barnsley, 5 were to the Doncaster IDVAS, and 3 men were referred on by the Rotherham IDVAS to Victim Support. Data is not available to ascertain what proportion of the 25 male referrals to IDVA Service engaged with the services that provide support to men.

3.6.3 Agencies Referring High Risk Cases in South Yorkshire

The majority of referrals to the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire are made by South Yorkshire Police and primarily their Public Protection Units. Between April 2007 and March 2008, 80% or 926 of high risk referrals received by IDVA Services in South Yorkshire originated from the Police. The profile of other agencies referring into IDVA Services in South Yorkshire was as follows:

	% of Total Referrals	Actual Figures
Police	80%	926
Health	5%	68
Social Services	2%	22
Housing	2%	20
Refuge	1%	11
Others	10%	113

3.6.4 Signposting and Support Provided in South Yorkshire

Housing support or signposting to housing services is the most common area in which IDVAS referrals require/ receive the most advice and signposting (253), followed by Target Hardening advice and signposting to Support Groups (see table below).

South Yorkshire	Actual Figures
Housing	253
Benefits	99
Education	113
Refuge	96
Health	103
Target Hardening	161
Immigration	4
Support Group	156
Other	151

3.7 Operating an IDVA Service in South Yorkshire

3.7.1 The Specialist Requirements of the IDVA Role

It was apparent that the specialist role of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate was very demanding and potentially stressful, given that they are constantly working with those at the highest levels of risk from domestic violence, hearing about and responding to their experiences. The Sheffield service stressed the importance of recruiting the right people to deliver the service, with an appropriate level of experience, understanding and resilience. They had already been forced to terminate the probationary period of one Advocate who was unable to cope with the demands of the role, leaving the IDVA Service Manager once again working alone while recruitment took place, and having to suspend the service briefly while she was on sick leave. It was not considered appropriate for staff employed in other roles in the organisation to take over the specialist work of the IDVA Service, and the Police DVO's were already involved as the referring agency.

In some areas the host agencies for the IDVA's had strengthened their job specifications and recruitment processes to take account of the demands of the new service, and discussed the need for good arrangements for staff support and supervision to prevent workers 'burning out'.

These issues were reflected in the IDVA Service focus groups, in that the IDVA's felt the nature of their work was often challenging. The discussion revolved around the ideal work experience needed before applying for an IDVA post and the importance of the accredited CAADA training programme for IDVA's. Just as significant however, was the personal resilience it was felt was needed to ensure

an individual would be suited to the often demanding IDVA role. Running in parallel with these recruitment issues was the related discussion in terms of day to day support, in that it was felt the IDVA role operated most effectively where a team operated around them. The model of an IDVA Manager, Advocate(s) and a dedicated administrator with clear roles and responsibilities was reported to be a work environment that would provide extra support for this challenging role. Indeed, all the IDVAS staff and many other local agencies attending the workshops agreed that the ideal and most effective environment in which to operate an IDVA service would be in a multi-agency, co-located team. It was reported that this model was preferred as a way of developing the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire which they believed would prove key to supporting IDVA's that work in an already challenging environment.

3.7.2 Service Capacity, High Demand and Funding Pressures on IDVA Services

All four IDVA Services experience issues around low capacity and high demand for their services. At the time of the focus group, Sheffield IDVAS had suspended referrals into the service due to capacity problems. Doncaster IDVAS similarly reported that they had to freeze referrals into the service when annual leave was taken. Many of the IDVAS reported feeling guilty about having to turn off their mobile phones at the weekend and in the evenings, as they know that these are the times when most domestic violence incidents take place. In addition 'crunch times', such as Christmas to New Year and sporting events, often result in a high demand for domestic violence services, but often occur on weekends when IDVA Service advocates are not available.

All four IDVA Service teams felt that the service was also only dealing with the very 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of individuals at risk from domestic violence in South Yorkshire. Many felt that if the service should be extended to include those assessed as medium risk where the potential for more preventative work was felt to be significant. Other agencies attending focus groups also agreed that by working only with high risk, not medium risk, IDVA Services were missing an opportunity to intervene before medium turned to a high risk case. However, many felt that until sustainable funding was secured for high risk referrals, expanding this much needed service to medium risk referrals was a longer term objective in the development of the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. The lack of security felt by IDVA's around sustainable funding was discussed in all the focus groups as a source of concern. Some IDVA's reflected that they were often worried when they took on new referrals without the secure knowledge that funding would not end before they had provided the referral with the support they very much needed.

3.8 The Positive Impact of the IDVAS Initiative on Local Domestic Violence Support

Chapter four of this report contains the positive impacts of the IDVA services in South Yorkshire on the lives of the service users. It is also important to note that over and above these positive outcomes, the IDVA Service initiative has also had a positive impact on the local domestic violence provision across South Yorkshire.

3.8.1 Enhancing Multi-Agency Working

The evaluation team found that all of the IDVA Services had good working relationships, both with referral agencies and with the MARAC, and Agency Working Protocols were in draft. The evaluation team found that in the IDVAS models where an IDVA Manager was present; there was evidence that the managers had more time available to work on specific agency protocols. A close working relationship has developed between Doncaster's IDVA Service Advocate and the ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor), who often share the IDVA Service work load when capacity becomes difficult for one Advocate to manage. All of the IDVA Services prioritise multi-agency working which they have been able to enhance through their involvement with the MARAC.

Rotherham noted that the MARAC allows them to access and share knowledge and expertise, build up relationships with other agencies and offer support to women in various ways. Similarly Doncaster IDVA Service described the importance of links with other agencies, information sharing and team working, in particular their working partnership and communication with the CPS is good. Barnsley IDVA Service noted that personal relationships are important with other organisations and that their working with local agencies as well as with local authority is very positive. Sheffield IDVA Service noted that information to inform the risk assessment is now passed between agencies, including the Police.

The evaluation team found that relations between the IDVA Service and the MARAC were very positive, with the IDVA benefiting from being able to access the resources, in terms of expertise and knowledge, sharing of information and building relationships with agencies who offer support to their clients. Good working relationships between the IDVA and the MARAC are also crucial to the IDVAS service users in terms of being signposted to appropriate services and receiving a multi- agency response to their safety needs.

3.8.2 Bridging the Gap Between Statutory and Voluntary Sector DV Agencies

The influence the IDVA Services have on the way in which organisations in the statutory sector operate became evident during the data collection. The Sheffield IDVA Service noted that they were helping the Police to make sure officers take

domestic violence seriously as a crime, and they in turn feel they are taken more seriously by the Police. In addition, in terms of influencing working practices, all four of the IDVA Services felt that the Police understanding of the dynamics involved in domestic violence and therefore their risk assessment procedures had been enhanced. As a result of this, the IDVA's felt they also received better quality information from the Police.

Three of the IDVA's believed that their ability to influence working practices of statutory agencies to better meet the needs of service users, was related to the fact that most IDVA Service staff had experience of working in the statutory sector. This issue was reinforced by Police staff as they felt the IDVAS had a good working knowledge of their own working practices²³. All the IDVA's reported conducting joint visits with the Police.

Influence of the IDVA Services on the voluntary sector services with which they work and refer clients onto was also evident during data collection. The majority of voluntary sector representatives that attended the IDVA Service focus groups reported that they felt that their agencies were taken more seriously, particularly by statutory agencies, since their interaction with the IDVA Services. The inclusion of voluntary sector agencies in the MARAC process was also reported as significant by giving voluntary sector domestic violence services the recognition they often do not receive.

²³ This view was reported at the CPS and police focus group.

Chapter 4: Service User Reflections on the IDVA Services

4.0 Introduction

A crucial aspect of the evaluation involved investigating the experiences of some of the women who have received support from the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This section of the report outlines the key themes which emerged from the interviews with service user in their own words.

4.1 Service User Views of the IDVA Service

All the service users interviewed were wholly supportive and enthusiastic about the service they received from the South Yorkshire IDVA services.

4.1.1 The IDVAS Referral Processes

The majority of service users reported being too distressed to recall their referral process. One service user reported that:

All that happened from what I remember is the incident happened and then about 2 or 3 days later {the IDVA} got in contact with me saying she'd got a referral from the Police and would I like some support?
(Service user).

The majority of service users reported that the IDVA worker contacted them very quickly once they had been referred into the service:

I came out of the hospital on the Monday and I think I'd seen her by the Tuesday or Wednesday (Service user).

Most of the service users reported that at their initial meeting with the IDVA, the service had been explained to them, but felt that they had not really taken in the information due to the distressing situation they were experiencing. However, many service users were clear about certain key functions of the IDVA service:

{The IDVA} is there to make sure I feel safe in my home. To make sure I've got somebody to talk to and generally just try and help me feel safe
(Service user).

She is there to help me understand what happened and the court process and everything I went through. She was a big help because she was able to tell me what was happening (Service user).

4.1.2 Nature of IDVAS Engagement and Exit Strategies

The majority of service users reported that the support they received from the IDVA service was concentrated within the first three months following the domestic violence incident. Service users reported that the support then tended to reduce gradually and some reported moved on to telephone support. The service users then got in touch with the IDVA when they need some advice or support:

I was seeing her every week at first and phone calls a couple of times a week, but now it's more she phones me about once a fortnight just to make sure I'm okay and if there's anything wrong I'm to ring her
(Service user).

However, the support provided can often increase again depending on individual circumstances, for example when a perpetrator is released from prison or a court attendance is required.

The majority of service users hoped they would feel ready and able to leave the IDVAS at some point in the future. Many expressed the wish to retain telephone support when appropriate:

Even just knowing that even if it was a phone call a month just to make sure I felt I was safe (Service user).

I was quite happy that she said that they can still help, still be there and give the advice and support that I need (Service user).

4.1.3 Impacts of IDVAS Capacity Issues on Service Users

Many service users reported being aware of how busy their Advocate was. A small minority of service users reported this situation affected their experience of the IDVA Service as they had been unable to contact their advocate:

I think the worst thing was I didn't hear from {the IDVA} for ages and ages and I think I tried to phone and I left a message and she didn't get back to me. I think that's probably the only thing ... you know, the worst thing
(Service user).

I've had a few problems with the phone just ringing and ringing and ringing, but I think at the time she was away (Service user).

Many service users felt that the IDVAS initiative needed to be expanded in order to support victims of domestic violence out of office hours. One suggestion made

by a number of service users, was that a 24 hour number could be made available:

Even if it was an answering machine so they can get back to you if it was really important (Service user).

...sometimes at 9, 10 o'clock at night when your mind's racing with things, it'd be brilliant to talk to somebody at that time of night who knows what you're going through and not a stranger (Service user).

Data from the service users reflects the challenges with IDVAS capacity and demand discussed in the previous section.

4.2 The Impact of Service User Engagement with IDVAS

4.2.1 Helping Service Users to Comprehend their Experience

As well as signposting, the service users reflected that the IDVA workers provided them with practical information and advice, often relating to finances, housing, solicitors, children and court processes:

The fact that they came with me to the solicitor (Service user).

She's been brilliant with all that. I mean I have had a lot of money worries and I still have and she's been very supportive and giving me advice like well I need to go see Citizens' Advice or like who I can speak to like welfare rights and benefits advisors and ... I mean like I was looking at moving when everything had happened and she was very like behind me saying "Well, I'll write the recommendation for you and will also get the Police to write one and social services will write one" (Service user).

She was there, you know, all the time and offered support and it was nice to know that she was there; and obviously the visit round court and stuff and around my daughter. She got a booklet for my daughter to look at and to fill in and to colour and stuff, you know, and any questions that she wanted to ask. That was a big, big support and a big help and basically just being there (Service user).

The service users reported how they had appreciated talking to someone who could explain often complicated processes to them. Many of the service users felt this role was crucial, especially in terms of being prepared, if they go to court for example and the process they can expect to go through:

She always explains things really well and brings me leaflets (Service user).

You get sent the leaflets from court but you just read a lot of gibberish. I'd never been in a court before in my life, so it was good (Service user).

At the time letters were getting shoved in a drawer and ignored basically. I didn't read anything. I couldn't focus on anything. She sat down and explained everything (Service user).

4.2.2 Championing the Rights of Victims of Domestic Violence

An important aspect of IDVA support for the service users was that they felt the IDVA's were genuinely advocating for them by representing them in meetings and ensuring their voices were central to any decisions made about their case:

I just explain it to her and she can then put it across to other people for me... (Service user).

{The IDVA} fights your corner for you. So she's sort of like... well, standing in for me when I can't get words out (Service user).

Despite the earlier service user comments about being unable to contact their IDVA, the majority of service users' experienced a constant and stable line of support they felt they could rely on in times of crisis:

When I've phoned, if I've left a message she's got straight back and answered anything I've needed within... Do you know what I mean? If she couldn't answer it she'd be back to me within minutes (Service user).

She's always asking somebody or getting me the information, constantly without fail (Service user).

The service users reported that the IDVA is often the only person in their lives who they can rely on to drive actions forward, often with other agencies with which the service users sometimes find it difficult to interact:

And she also pushed people, like with the council, to move me before he came out (Service user).

I mean if I'd have gone into my local council and explained...they can like fob you off in a way, but because like you've got someone actually going in for you who's actually dealing with that type of situation, then they listen to them more (Service user).

Well, there was a serious breakdown in communication when he was let out because the domestic violence officer and {the IDVA} had been trying to get in touch with the prison to find out what was happening and they just weren't letting them know (Service user).

4.2.3 Supporting and Increasing Service User Confidence

The service users reflected that the IDVAS Advocates gave them increased confidence, both in terms of everyday issues, such as being able to venture out of the house to more specific events such as attending court.

At first she came to my house and then when I got a bit braver and I dared go out again we used to meet up and things like that (Service user).

IDVAS were also reported to help the service users see that the situation they were in was not of their doing, as this caused stress, anxiety and feelings of isolation and embarrassment:

Just being told that I'm not stupid, not crazy. It felt like it was me that was constantly in the wrong and everything was my fault, but just being told that I'm normal and I'm not the only person in the world that it's ever happened to (Service user).

Service users also reported that the support they receive from the IDVAS increased their feelings of safety:

I'd say I feel safer. But I don't think I'll ever feel that to be honest, as long as I know he's around (Service user).

4.3 Providing Support through Criminal and Civil Law Proceedings

Across South Yorkshire, 324 high risk IDVAS referrals were involved with court processes between April 2007 and March 2008. Of the 242 high risk referrals who agreed to IDVAS support through court processes, Sheffield IDVAS supported 48, Doncaster IDVAS, 115, the Rotherham IDVAS supported 62 and the Barnsley IDVAS supported 88 service users through court processes. The IDVAS in South Yorkshire also supported 136 service users who were seeking civil injunctions in between April 2007 and March 2008 was 136. Of these, 95 successfully received a civil injunction. The IDVAS also supported 106 service users through Magistrates' Court processes in the SDVC in South Yorkshire.

The service users interviewed reflected on their experiences of court processes, again, unfortunately, it was difficult to ascertain whether these were criminal, civil or crown court involvement. Of the 21 service users interviewed, over half (12 or 57%) reported having been involved in court proceedings of some kind. One service user reported that the measures put in place for her safety had proved ineffective:

I just don't think they take domestic violence serious at court...for instance, an injunction that I've had against my partner it had like three breaches of

that before they get sent to prison. So it meant he beat me up twice knowing that then the third time they'd get sent to prison, so obviously he'd not bother the third time (Service user).

However, two further service user's comments reflect a lack of awareness of the special measures available to complainants in domestic violence trials:

...it is quite intimidating going to court and it's not as though you're in separate rooms in the waiting room. You're in the same room as each other most of the time (Service user).

If they took them out of the court while you went in there or something like that (Service user).

Many of the service users reported that having the IDVA to explain court processes gave them the opportunity to prepare themselves for the possibility of an encounter with their partners and felt in some cases that this information saved their lives:

When the hearings have happened when they said guilty or not guilty, I didn't know and, you see, the CPS and the Police weren't getting in touch with me. So I always got onto {the IDVA} and if I hadn't I wouldn't have known whether he'd been released or was still on bail or on remand (Service user).

Another service user noted that having someone with you in the court would help you go ahead with the case as you will feel more supported:

I think its support, having someone there to come with you (Service user).

4.3.1 Service Users Withdrawing from Court Proceedings

According to the overwhelming majority of service users interviewed, fear was cited as the single most propelling reason why they felt that domestic violence victims withdrew from court proceedings:

It's because they're so bloody frightened of what's going to happen if they do because they know what they're up against and they know that they can work round the Police. They don't feel protected by the Police and they know that that person will come for them. And I know that's how you feel and I'd thought about it, but the Police do videos now so I couldn't drop the case. I've already dropped two others because I was so frightened and that's how it is (Service user).

I think it's a lot of the stress, the guilt and the hassle and everybody bombarding you (Service user).

Given this clear message that victims withdraw from court for fear of reprisal, the evaluation team went on to ask service users to reflect on the fast tracking of domestic violence cases at courts in South Yorkshire.

4.3.2 Service User Views on the SDVC Fast Tracking Initiative

The fast tracking initiative was introduced in South Yorkshire in 2006 with the aim of reducing the time between the first hearing of a domestic violence case and it coming to trial to six weeks. The HMCS in South Yorkshire were keen to ensure the majority of evidentially straightforward domestic violence cases could proceed quickly through the court system, thus reducing stress on the complainant and reducing the time in which pressure could be put on them by the perpetrator. However, domestic violence cases can often involve evidentially complex medical and forensic evidence, which the HMCS acknowledge will often take longer to collate, thus effecting the six week fast tracking aim.

None of the service users interviewed were aware of the fast tracking initiative in South Yorkshire; however felt that this initiative was a positive step for complainants in domestic violence trials:

The quicker you can get that out of the way the better and then you can focus on yourself (Service user).

It's a good thing to speed the process up because we'll feel safer (Service user).

I think dragging it on it just prolongs it and then you can just end up dropping charges (Service User).

It is important to note that, just under half (9) of the service users interviewed had not been through any court processes. However, they were keen to report their own views on domestic violence court processes. Two service users questioned the rationale behind speeding up often complex domestic violence cases through court:

I do think it's a good idea because you just want it to be over, but I think in some court cases it's a bit too quick because you need that time to think. But then it isn't because you want to get over it and try and get on with your life. So it's 50-50 for me (Service user).

I don't think six weeks is enough time sometimes I think there's a lot more work to be done in these cases' (Service user).

Although most of the service users interviewed were unaware of the SDVC fast tracking initiative, many were supportive of this move. However many were found to be sceptical about the realities of getting what can be quite complex domestic

violence cases to court in the six week period. Indeed, as illustrated above, some service users questioned the desirability of approaching domestic violence cases in this way.

4.4 The Impact of the IDVA Service on Service Users' Lives

The service users reflected that the impact of IDVA Service approach on their lives was positive in a way that was subtly different from other support services they had experienced. Many service users reported that their advocates took a more personal approach to helping them, and displayed a genuine concern for their well being:

Some tend to kind of back off a little bit whereas {the IDVA} made me feel as if she was more personal. I know it's just a job, but I just felt that...her heart was in it ... (Service user).

I think {the IDVA} dealt better with us than the Police. It was like she cared more (Service user).

It is dramatically different. Women's Aid is good, but they tend to kind of leave you to talk to them when you're ready and sometimes I do need that little push without making you feel uncomfortable (Service user).

The service users reflected that the IDVA service offered them support which was tailored for them specifically and focused on their needs:

A couple of years ago when I was in a domestic violence refuge, nobody mentioned anything about my house being secured. It was a case of move you to domestic violence, you lose all your stuff and have to start a new life somewhere else and that was it. There was no help like this to help me stay in my house and to feel safe again (Service user).

If I'd have not made contact with {the IDVAS} that day at the Police station, my life would have been totally different. I can't imagine ... I would have never left my husband and I don't know where I'd be. I dread to think where I would be at this point (Service user).

This section of the report has presented service user perceptions of the IDVA Service and reflections on their experiences in their own words.

Chapter 5: Criminal and Prosecution based Reflections on Domestic Violence-based Initiatives in South Yorkshire

5.0 Introduction

As part of the evaluation of the IDVA Services in the South Yorkshire district, a workshop was held with ten members of staff from the Police and Crown Prosecution Service. Please see evaluation methodology section for full list of attendees.

The workshop was held to ensure that CPS and Police staff views on the domestic violence provision were included in the evaluation. The workshop was designed to:

- Examine criminal prosecution-based perspectives on the effectiveness of domestic violence focused initiatives in South Yorkshire
- Provide Police/ CPS perspectives on cracked, effective and vacated domestic violence cases
- Reflect Police/ CPS perspectives on why domestic violence victims withdraw from court proceedings and what recommendations they think can be made to change this situation.

5.1 The Specialist Domestic Violence Court Initiative

It was reported at the focus group that participants felt that current IDVA and MARAC initiatives were more successful than previously with respect to high risk victims. However, it was reported that the majority of DV victims are not assessed as high risk; therefore the Police felt that current DV initiatives were only effective for a small minority of DV victims.

The Police reflected their view that the success of the IDVA and MARAC initiatives could be evidenced by the reduction in incidents reported to the Police and an enhanced service to victims. It was felt by members of the group that the current data collection process across all agencies does not currently pull together the whole picture across South Yorkshire.

5.1.1 Fast Tracking Protocol

CPS workshop participants reported that they believed that the fast tracking initiative resulted in domestic violence victims having less time to retract their statements and therefore gave the trial a better chance of proceeding. However, a Police representative commented that in her experience, victims retracted within 3 or 4 days and therefore was unsure if the fast tracking initiative would have a significant impact on levels of successful prosecutions. The CPS and Police representatives reflected that in their experience there was more chance

of a successful trial when it is proceeded quickly as it reduced the time in which the complainant could be put under pressure by the perpetrator. However, the CPS representatives did acknowledge that one disadvantage of the fast tracking protocol was that it cuts down on preparation time for the Police and CPS. It was reported that often medical or forensic evidence can take a long time to collect and this is outside of the control of both the Police and the CPS. However, the consensus view from workshop participants was that the fast tracking initiative was a positive step towards dealing with domestic violence cases effectively in court.

The workshop participants were asked to reflect on why as the previous section illustrates, there are disparities in the four SDVC areas in terms of attaining the six week fast tracking protocol. CPS representatives suggested that these disparities were due to the widely different volume of each court area and the numbers of trials listed. However, they also commented that the fast tracking steering group have discussed this on a number of occasions and have identified this issue to local courts. Some progress has been made; however, further work is needed.

5.1.2 Pre-Charge Advice Initiative

The pre-charge advice initiative was rolled out nationally by the Home Office to occur before the defendant is charged with any offence. However, every domestic violence case is required to go through this process, irrespective of whether the defendant is pleading guilty or not. The CPS workshop participants reported that the benefits of pre charge advice in domestic violence cases is that it allows the evidentially weaker cases to be weeded out. In this way, victim's expectations are not raised without due cause and this also frees up court time. The Police reported that the CPS providing pre charge advice often leads to better quality cases getting brought to court as it ensures that officers understand what is needed (for example inclusion of tapes of the 999 call, photos, neighbour statements etc).

The workshop participants reflected that the disadvantages to this system were that it was time consuming, especially at weekends or after office hours, when officers have to telephone the CPS out of hour's service for pre-charge advice. Police representatives reported their view that the local CPS often gave higher standard advice than the out of hour's team. However, the consensus from the workshop participants was that the pre-charge initiative worked well in domestic violence cases and was a constructive addition to the current SDVC programme.

5.2 SDVC Initiatives and Multi Agency Working

The workshop participants reported that good links were made into the CPS through the South Yorkshire Police DV Co-ordinator and CPS DV Representative; these strong working relationships were based on an established good link

between these organisations. It was reported that the South Yorkshire Police DV Co-ordinator and CPS DV Representative, outside of their set of arranged meetings, spoke on the phone when necessary. Currently these two posts are developing a service level agreement between the CPS and Police for South Yorkshire.

The SY Police Domestic Violence Co-ordinator meets bi-monthly with Domestic Violence Officers, while the CPS DV Representative meets with DV CPS leads regularly. It was suggested however that there could be a process of cross-agency communication and awareness arising if these individuals attended each other's meetings on occasion. This approach to interagency dissemination would complement the existing situation where a CPS representative assisted the SY Police DV Co-ordinator in providing training to Custody Officers.

Regarding working relations with the IDVAS, the Police representatives reported feeling comfortable and confident in their interaction with IDVAS, particularly where the IDVAS are former Police and Probation officers, as *'they understand professionally what can be done and what can't'* (Workshop Participant).

5.2.1 The IDVAS Initiative

It was felt that particularly with respect to the IDVAS initiative, the single most significant barriers to effective working relationships between IDVAS and the Police was one of the lack of IDVAS capacity. In each of the IDVAS areas it has already been established that there are not enough IDVAS posts to meet the demand. Indeed, Sheffield had been forced to freeze referrals into their services due to lack of capacity for a limited period of time in the past year. The Police report that this situation puts additional strain on them, as when there is no IDVAS available, the Police have to fill in the breach (all medium risk and standard risk victims have to be supported through Police staff at the PPU). According to the Police, when IDVA services close to new referrals, this is not the best situation for the victims as they often hold back information from the Police. The Police saw this as being the key value of having the IDVA Service. It was reflected that, although the Police do appreciate IDVA's in South Yorkshire, they are aware that they are working with extremely high case loads. Also, the IDVA's only work with high risk victims, the Police carry out support for medium and standard risk cases. According to the Police, this is not the best situation for the victims as they often hold back from talking to the Police.

5.2.2 The MARAC Initiative

Criminal prosecution-based perspectives on the MARAC initiative were overwhelmingly positive. The workshop participants reflected that they saw the MARAC as functioning very well with regard to sharing intelligence and information and saw the initiative as working well for high risk cases. However, one participant reflected that they saw information coming to light in the MARAC

that had been known for some time and reported he/she often feels this should have been passed on earlier. Participants reported that information sharing was not occurring to the same extent outside of the MARAC. Another Police representative felt that although they shared information with other agencies, this was not always reciprocated. It was also reflected that there is more information sharing outside MARAC than there was previously, but it was felt that there was room for improvement in this areas. The agreed assessment on the MARAC initiative was that the MARAC gives all agencies confidence about what can be shared and when and that it worked particularly effectively because it related to the more prioritised and immediate nature of high risk cases.

5.3 The Future of South Yorkshire SDVC Initiative

The provision of the fast tracking initiative and the pre charge advice protocols were well regarded. MARAC procedures were also reported as effectively supporting the multi agency solutions for the safety and support of domestic violence victims. Overall the workshop participants felt that the SDVC initiatives were a positive movement towards dealing more effectively with domestic violence cases in South Yorkshire. Regarding the IDVAS initiative, the workshop participants felt strongly that the current capacity issues at South Yorkshire's four IDVAS was critical. The Police representatives expressed relief that the Sheffield IDVAS had recently secured more funding for a second IDVAS Advocate post, however were very concerned that no such funding had as yet been forthcoming in the other three areas (this situation has since changed, see Chapter 3).

Workshop participants also expressed concerns regarding the operational development of the IDVA Services. The Police reported that they in the first instance envisaged that IDVAS would have more of a presence at local Police stations. In reality, this does not occur; the participants stated that this interaction is not happening because of volume of work in each IDVAS area. The Police expressed the view that they saw dealing with victims of domestic violence as requiring two processes: the investigation and evidence gathering, which is the Police's role and housing, legal and emotional support, which the IDVAS should ideally do. However, given the current resource level of the IDVAS the Police felt that they were more involved in some of the incident follow up areas. Therefore the majority view was that two actions needed to be prioritised with regard to the immediate future of the IDVAS initiative:

- Securing sustainable funding to ensure an increase in staffing levels
- That existing information sharing protocol and operational procedures agreed between the Police and IDVAS would benefit from further consultation, ensuring a integrated set of roles and responsibilities are disseminated

In the longer term, criminal prosecution-based perspectives on the future of the SDVC initiatives in South Yorkshire were focussed on developing and reinforcing

the three strands of the existing programme, which is still in its infancy. The majority view was that the multi-agency end to end support for domestic violence victims, which is at the heart of the SDVC initiative, should be reinforced and joined up more coherently. Like the focus group participants, the Police and CPS workshop attendees agreed that a possible step towards this was considered to be the creation of specialised and co-located multi-agency teams, typified by Cardiff Women's Safety Unit's 'domestic violence one-stop shop' model ²⁴.

²⁴ A base where key agencies are co-located (police, housing, safeguarding, health, IDVAS etc and access to solicitors).

Chapter 6: South Yorkshire Specialist Domestic Violence Court Data

6.0 Introduction

This chapter of the report includes SDVC data from between April 2007 and March 2008, collected by Her Majesty's Courts Service, from each of the four South Yorkshire Magistrates' Courts. It is important to note that although victims of domestic violence who receive IDVAS support through court processes are not identified in data collected by HMCS, across South Yorkshire, 324 high risk IDVAS referrals were involved in criminal and civil court processes within the same time scale. Of the 242 of these high risk referrals who agreed to IDVAS support through their experience of court, 136 were seeking a civil injunction. Of these, 95 were successful. The IDVAS also supported 106 service users through Magistrates' Court processes in the SDVC in South Yorkshire.

The underpinning rationale behind the SDVC initiative is a commitment to treating domestic violence as a serious offence. The HMCS in South Yorkshire is dedicated to ensuring that court-based data are collected in order to monitor the movement towards their aims with regard to the management of domestic violence trials, which include:

- increasing the numbers of domestic violence perpetrators brought to justice
- increasing the numbers of effective domestic violence trials
- increasing the initial guilty plea rate
- increasing the numbers of successful prosecutions
- increasing the numbers of complainants that come to court and stay in the processes by enhancing confidence in the court practices around domestic violence.

The court related data are presented here in order to inform an improved understanding of discontinuance rates in domestic violence cases in SDVC's in South Yorkshire. This information provides an exploratory analysis of the numbers of domestic violence trials that are listed at courts in South Yorkshire. The outcomes of those trials are also examined in terms of whether they proceeded as a trial on the date listed or whether they did not take place, and what reasons were given when they did not proceed into a domestic violence trial.

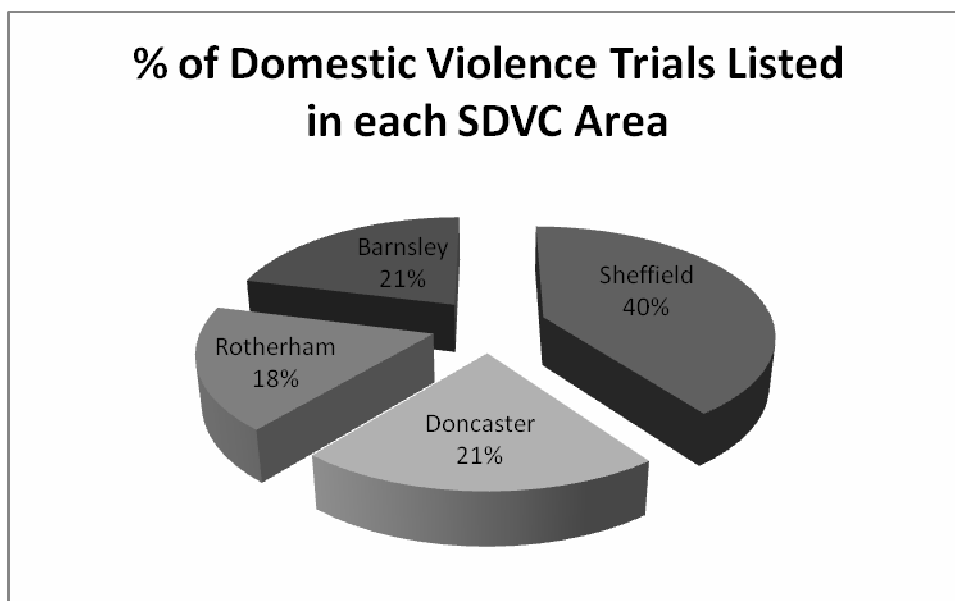
This chapter examines to what extent progress has been made by the SDVC in South Yorkshire against their aims and objectives as outlined above. With regard to the data presented in this chapter, two data limitations are highlighted here to ensure clarity regarding the content and statements made in this chapter:

- Specific data regarding domestic violence trial listings and outcomes were not collected before the introduction of the fast tracking initiative in South Yorkshire in April 2006. Therefore, this chapter cannot provide a comparative analysis pre and post SDVC court initiative
- The volumes of raw figures from which this chapter's analyses are based are small. Where appropriate the author has included the actual numbers being examined to ensure this is made clear.

6.1 Domestic Violence Trials Listed in SDVCs in South Yorkshire

Between April 2007 and March 2008, there were 706 domestic violence trials listed at SDVCs in South Yorkshire. The largest number of domestic violence trials listed was at the Sheffield Court, at 287, Doncaster and Rotherham Courts had 145 and 124 trials listed respectively and Barnsley Court saw a total of 150 trials listed over the stated period. This data are presented here to illustrate the volume of the total domestic violence trials listed at each SDVC area:

Fig. 6.1a: Percentage of DV trials listed in court by area (n= 706)

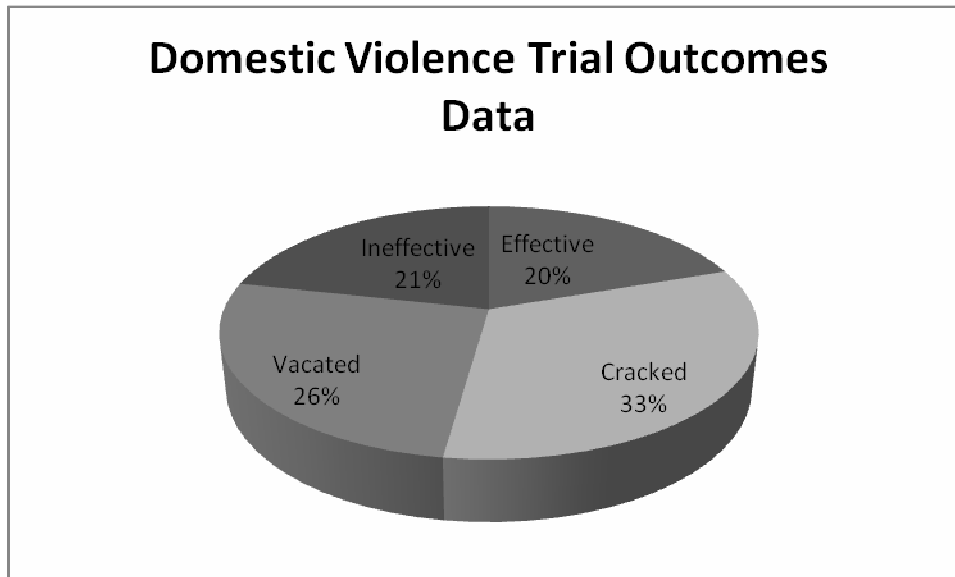


As the chart above illustrates, between April 2007 and March 2008, unsurprisingly Sheffield Courts had listed the highest volume of domestic violence work of the four SDVC areas.

6.2 Domestic Violence Trial Outcomes in South Yorkshire

The outcome data shows that of the 706 domestic violence trials listed at SDVCs in South Yorkshire between April 2007 and March 2008, 139 (20%) resulted in effective trials, 230 resulted in a cracked trial category (33%), 185 resulted in a vacated outcome category (26%) and 152 received an ineffective outcome category (21%). These domestic violence outcome findings are summarised in the chart below:

Fig. 6.2a: Trial Outcomes by percentage between April 2007 and March 2008 (n=706)



The rest of this section will discuss each of these domestic violence trial outcomes separately, providing definitions and the related data along with a number of reasons why this data is often difficult to interpret. It is important to note that a section is not provided for 'ineffective' trial data. An ineffective trial outcome is applied where on the trial date expected, progress is not made. The Trial is adjourned to another day. This may be due to a number of reasons such as the prosecution not being trial ready because they served additional evidence late on the defence; a prosecution witness being absent; the defence not being ready because they asked for additional witnesses to attend; the defendant may be ill or otherwise unfit to proceed or it may be due to the court over listing, another case may have over ran or there may be insufficient time to hear the trial. This section is not provided as the data mining activity required to address this category fell outside both the remit and timescale demands of this evaluation project²⁵. This however may be an area the SDVC working group wish to explore in the future.

²⁵ The data leading up to September 07 is incomplete as previous to this cases were tracked on Excel and trial details were not specified. Accessing this data is possible, but would have involved locating five months of paperwork and a labour intensive search. An Access database was introduced in September 2007 which has since enabled the specific collection of this detailed trial information.

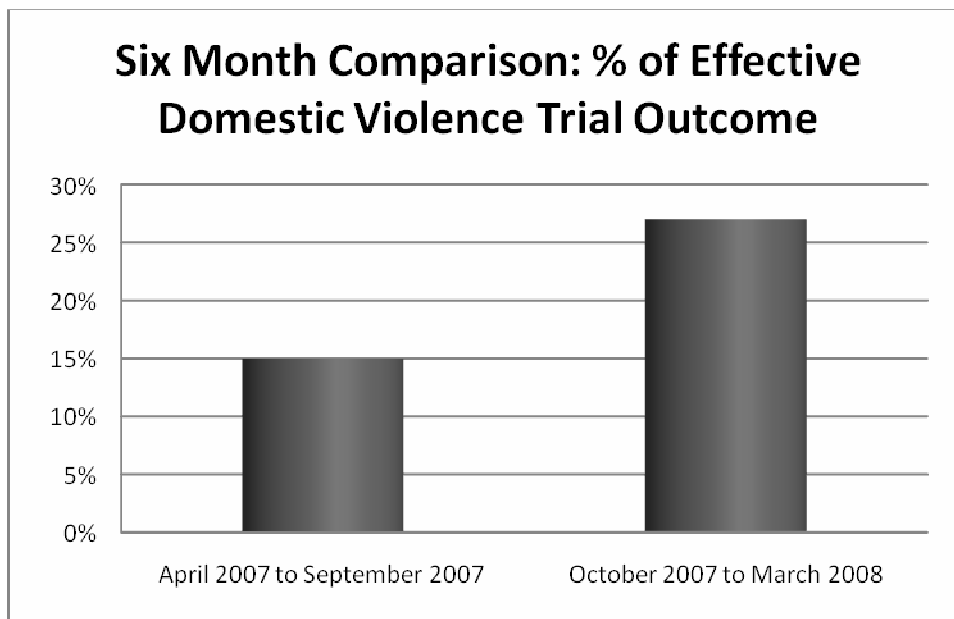
6.3 Effective Domestic Violence Trials

Of the 706 domestic violence trials listed across South Yorkshire, 139 (20%) were categorised as effective, in that a domestic violence case that was listed resulted in a trial taking place. When a domestic violence trial is heard the complainant gets the opportunity to see their case being taken forward, Police and CPS activity are utilised effectively and court time is used efficiently. Domestic Violence trials that are effective are a positive outcome for all involved.

The data provided by the HMCS Justices' Clerk's Office, Rotherham (April 2007 and March 2008) shows that there has been a positive movement towards the SDVC initiative objective of increasing the numbers of effective domestic violence trials in South Yorkshire²⁶. The chart below illustrates this by expressing the volume of effective domestic violence trials as a percentage of the total number of trials listed at courts in South Yorkshire. The data are presented by comparing the percentage of effective domestic violence trials between the first and second six months of the data collection period.

South Yorkshire Courts have seen an increase in the number of domestic violence cases resulting in an effective domestic violence trial increase in real terms from 64 in the first half of the selected timescale to 75 in the second. Ultimately, in percentage terms over the twelve month period, effective trials have risen relatively consistently, peaking at 34% in December 2007.

Fig 6.3a Percentage of Total DV Trials (n= 706), resulting in an Effective DV Trial

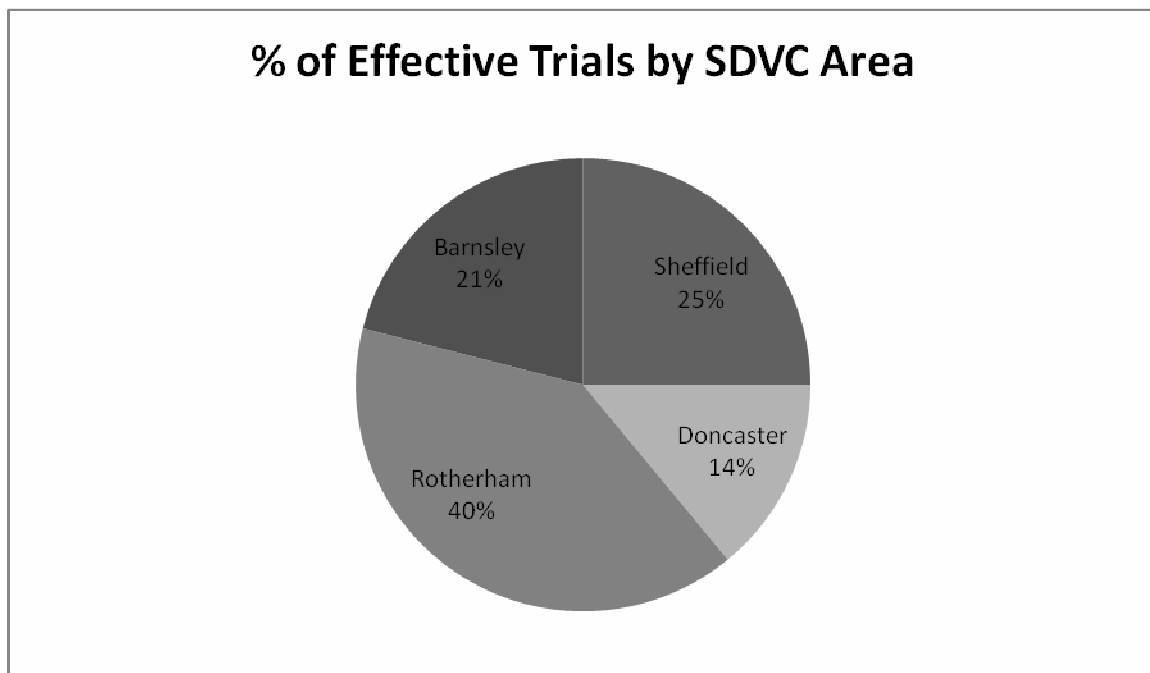


²⁶ It is however important to note that the raw numbers worked with are small.

Differences in this data were identified with regard to the percentages of effective domestic violence trials by SDVC area. For example, as Fig. 5.2b illustrates below, over the April 2007 to March 2008 data set, Rotherham Court has experienced a significantly higher percentage of their listed trials resulting in an effective domestic violence trial than any of the other three SDVC Court areas.

Given the usefulness of SDVC statistics highlighting these kinds of issues, it may be beneficial for the SDVC to commission further more detailed enquiries with regard to the particular working practices at Rotherham Court over this time period to ensure good practice is identified and can therefore be disseminated to other SDVC Court areas.

Fig. 6.3b: Percentage of Total DV Trials listed resulting in an Effective DV Trial by area (n= 706)



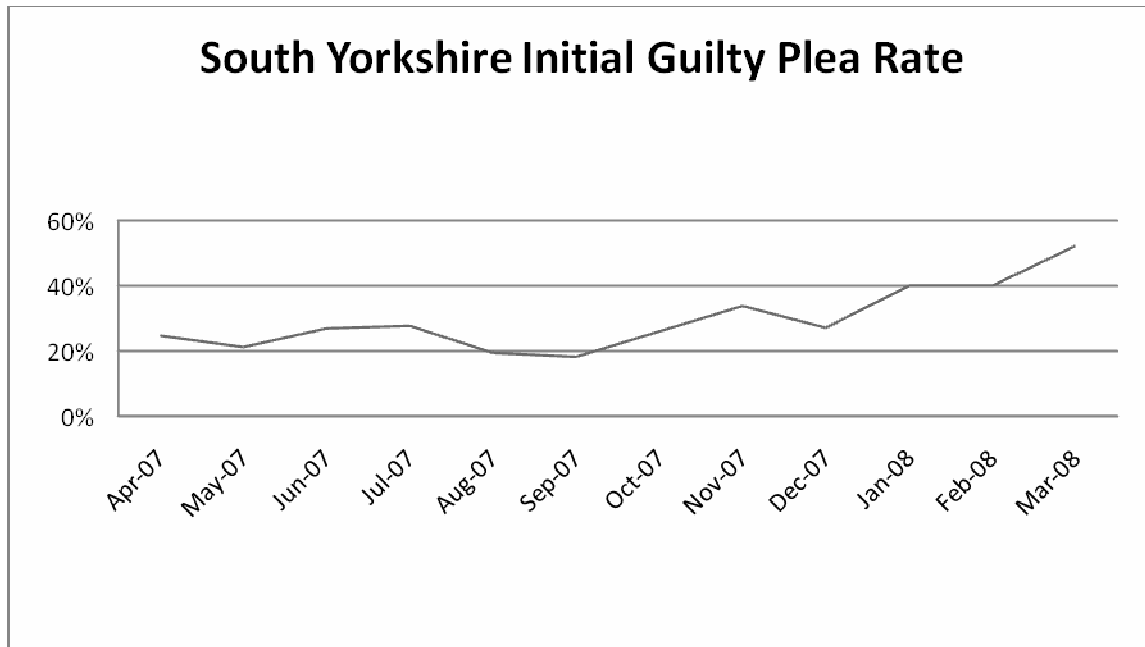
6.4 Initial Guilty Plea Rates

An important commitment to increasing the number of initial guilty pleas has been made by the SDVC and HMCS in South Yorkshire. An initial guilty plea in a domestic violence case is a positive outcome for all stakeholders. The data provided by the HMCS Justices' Clerk's Office, Rotherham²⁷ shows that between April 2007 and March 2008, there has been a consistent rise over the timescale selected providing evidence of the successful movement towards the SDVC

²⁷ This data provided was in percentages, which were rounded up or down to ensure presentation consistency.

initiative objective of increasing the initial guilty plea rate at the first hearing. Ultimately, the initial guilty plea rates have risen by over 50% since April 07.

Fig. 6.4a: Initial Guilty Plea Rate as % of domestic violence cases completed each month



Initial guilty plea data was also examined by SDVC Court area. Each of the four areas has reported a consistently rising percentage of domestic violence cases that are completed each month due to receiving initial guilty pleas. However, it is interesting to note that Rotherham Court's initial guilty plea in July 07 was 80% and in January 08, 60%, while Sheffield Court also recorded a 63% initial guilty plea rate during March 08.

Given the significant progress South Yorkshire SDVCs have made towards the aim of increasing the rate of initial guilty pleas, it may prove a constructive step for SDVC to make further enquiries from each court area to explore these exceptionally high rates and disseminate any good working practice findings.

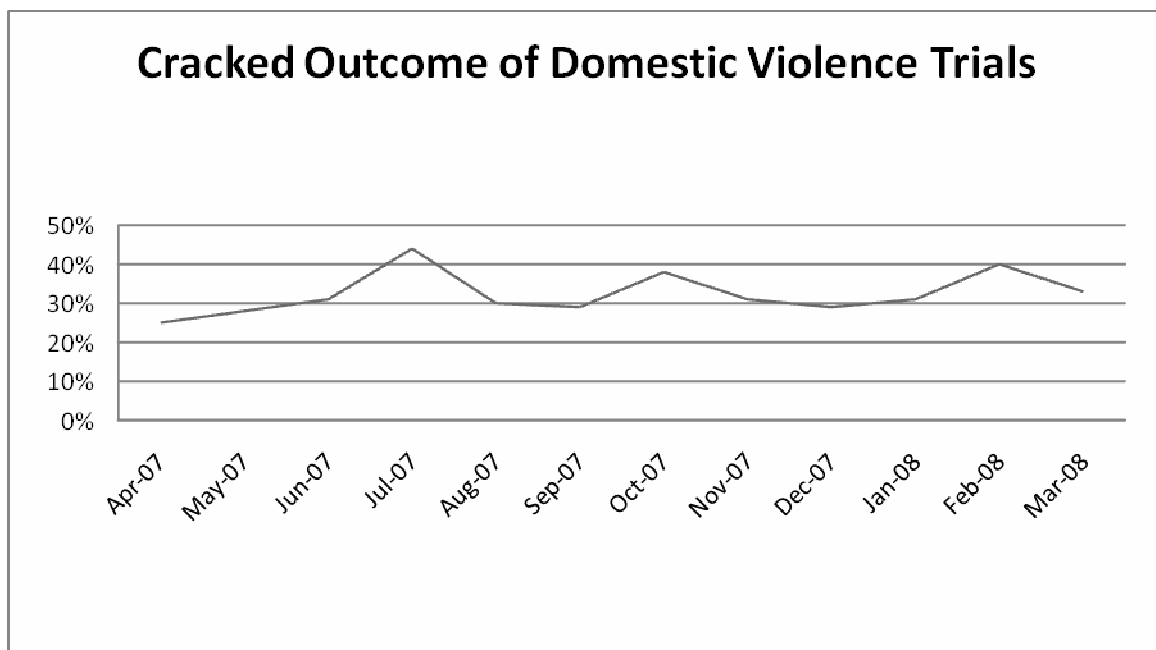
6.5 Cracked Domestic Violence Trials

A cracked trial is defined as where, on the trial date the defendant offers an acceptable or alternative plea which is accepted, or the prosecution offer no evidence and invite the magistrates' to dismiss the case usually because the complainant or a prosecution witness are not there on the day. A cracked trial requires no further court time; however it can involve further action, for example accepting a guilty plea and sentencing the defendant or the defendant being bound over. Whatever the action however, a cracked case is one where a domestic violence trial does not take place.

Given this multi-faceted definition, cracked outcome data can be ambiguous and difficult to interpret. Ultimately however, any domestic violence trial that has been listed, and has had a first hearing that does not then go on to be an effective domestic violence trial is more often than not, not a positive outcome for any of the stakeholders in the SDVC. In order therefore to meet their aims and objectives, outlined in the introduction to this chapter, HMCS staff acknowledge that SDVC are working towards a broad reduction in the number of domestic violence trials that result in a cracked trial category. It is also important to note that HMCS staff have also responded to the potential ambiguity of cracked trial data by beginning to collect 'reasons codes', which will be explained in more detail in the next section.

Between April 2007 and March 2008, there were 230 domestic violence trials in South Yorkshire that were categorised as cracked. Of the total domestic violence trials listed in South Yorkshire, those falling into the cracked category represent 33% of the total domestic violence trial outcomes over the specified time period. However, as the data below illustrates, the percentage of cracked outcomes in South Yorkshire SDVC has not exceeded 45% and has on three months over the twelve month period, been reduced to below 30%.

Fig 6.5a: Percentage of Total DV trials Resulting in Cracked Categorisation (n=706)

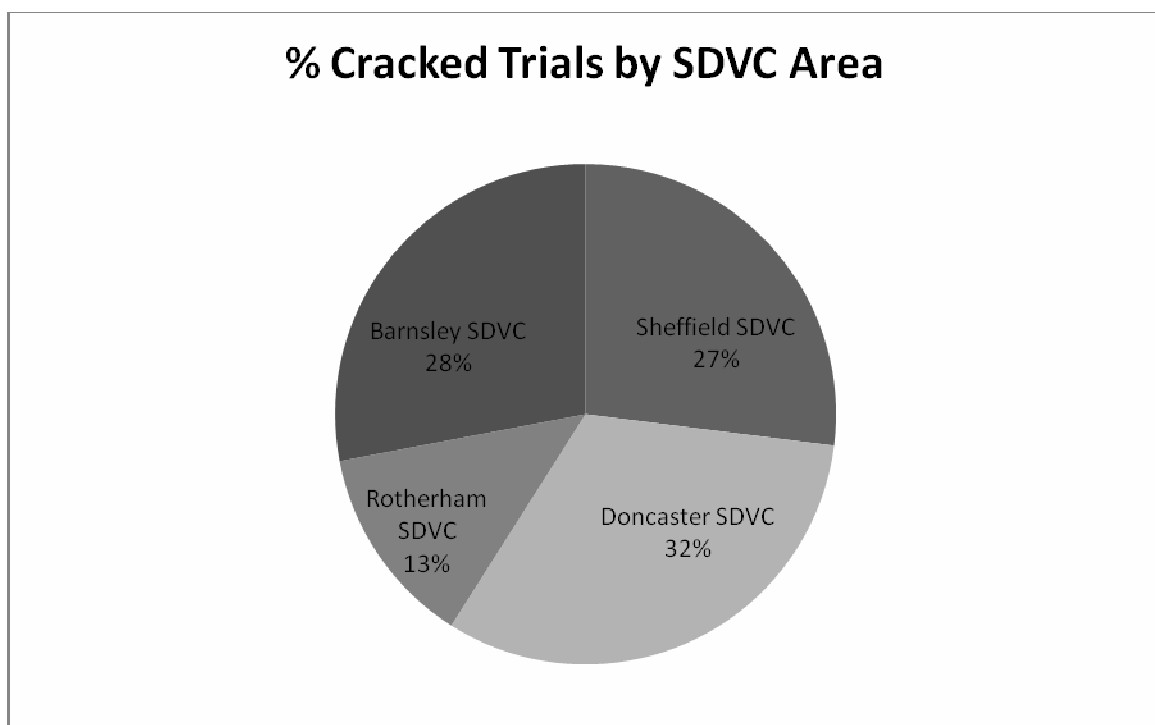


Cracked data was also examined per SDVC area. In the time period mentioned here the Sheffield Court saw 98 domestic violence cases resulting in a cracked outcome, Doncaster Court 59, Rotherham Court 20 and Barnsley Court 53. When represented in percentages, as in Fig. 5.4b below, this data shows a variation in the percentages of domestic violence trials in each SDVC area that

resulted in a cracked category. Sheffield, Doncaster and Barnsley Courts have comparatively similar percentages of cracked domestic violence trials. However, Rotherham Court data shows a significantly smaller percentage falling into the cracked domestic violence category over the twelve month period.

It may be beneficial for the SDVC to commission further, more detailed enquiries with regard to the particular working practices at the four SDVC Courts in South Yorkshire to ensure good working practices regarding cracked trial procedures can be disseminated across all SDVC Court areas.

Fig 6.5b: Percentage of total DV trials resulting in Cracked categorisation by area (n=706)



6.5.1 Reasons for Domestic Violence Trials being Cracked

Given the ambiguity of cracked domestic violence data as mentioned previously, this section examines the 'Cracked Trial Reason Codes' collated by court listing staff, when a cracked outcome is recorded. This data has been collected since September 2007²⁸.

²⁸ It is important to note that this data was incomplete for September, October and November 2007 as two SDVC's had made no returns on this data. A full data set is available from December 2007. The evaluation team felt that as the report aims were to present SDVC data for exploratory rather than conclusive data requirements, the seven month data set was analysed for these purposes in this section.

Between September 2007 and March 2008, 116 domestic violence trials listed in the four South Yorkshire SDVC areas received the outcome category of cracked. Cracked Trial reason codes were collected for 98 of these trials²⁹. For explanatory and illustrative reasons, the two most common reason codes used are illustrated, while the six remaining, much less frequently used codes were collapsed into one segment (each of these 6 categories had been used between 1 and a maximum of 9 times³⁰).

As can be seen in the chart below, in South Yorkshire Courts, the most common reason for domestic violence trials resulting in a cracked outcome is that the defendant changes their plea from not-guilty to guilty (48% or in 47 trials). Where the rationale behind the change in plea cannot be examined here, these statistics illustrate the often ambiguous nature of interpreting cracked trial data: the acceptance of a guilty plea in a cracked trial can be interpreted as a positive domestic violence trial outcome, as the defendant has re-thought their plea and taken responsibility for their actions. Conversely, one could also view this situation as less positive, as the defence could have submitted a guilty plea earlier and therefore not used up any more listed court time.

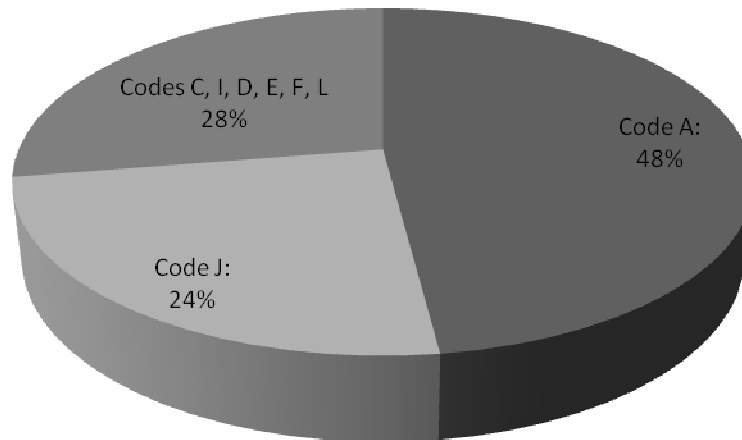
Fig.6.5.1a: Reasons Given for Domestic Violence Trials being Cracked (n=98)

²⁹ Taken from Effective, Cracked and Ineffective Trial Monitoring Form CITM 3.0 by HMCS, which is filled in by the Court Listings Officer. This form is not domestic violence specific.

³⁰ See Appendix 4 for full list of codes.

Cracked Trial Reason Codes

- Code A: Acceptable guilty plea(s) entered late to some or all charges on charge sheet, offered for the first time by the defence
- Code J: Prosecution end case: witness absent / withdrawn
- Codes C, I, D, E, F, L



The second most common reason (24% or in 24 trials) given for domestic violence trials resulting in a cracked outcome is that the prosecution end the case, due to a witness either being absent or having withdrawn. This is one example of where cracked case data is more obviously less positive. However, even here it is impossible to tell if the prosecution witness missing is a Police officer who is on annual-leave for example or more seriously, if the complainant has withdrawn. Complainants withdrawing from domestic violence trials can do so for what could be any number of reasons, none of which are referred to in the data collected. Given that the six objectives of the SDVC court initiative listed previously are not served by complainants withdrawing from court proceedings, an indication of how many in this reason category are either complainants, witnesses or others would prove extremely useful data. Collating these statistics would be particularly relevant for SDVC, IDVAS initiatives and also as an effective and meaningful way of communicating the progress of SDVC initiatives and therefore raise public confidence in the CJS.

6.6 Vacated Domestic Violence Trials

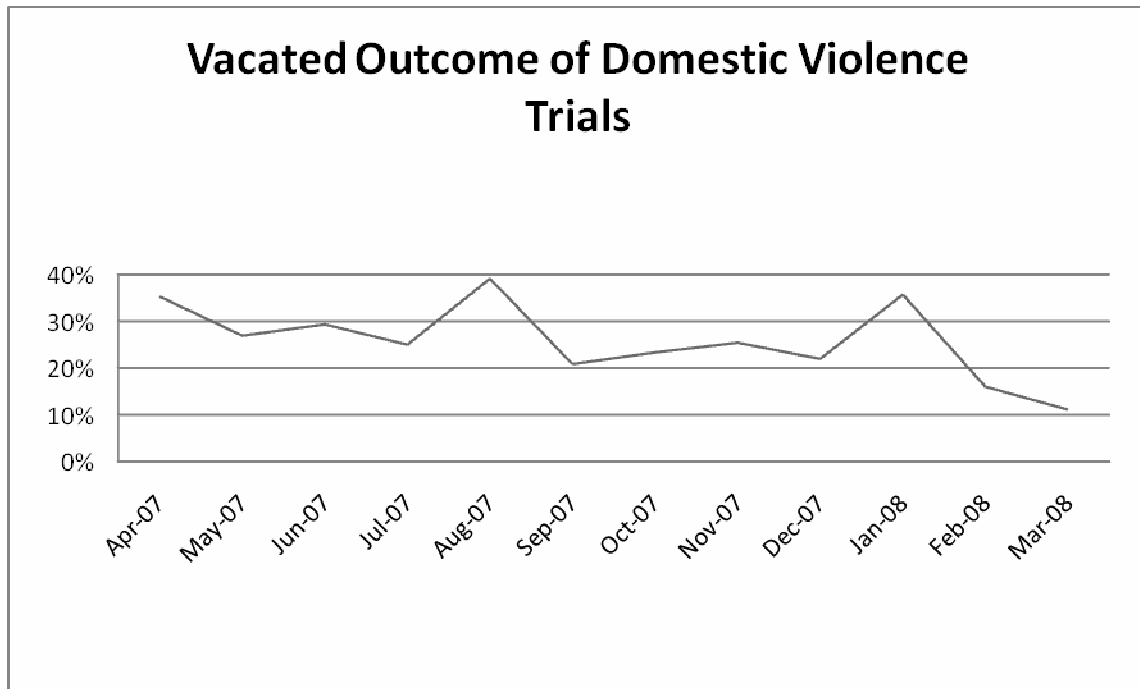
A vacated trial is where a trial is taken out of the court listing before the trial date, usually due to the prosecution or defence applying for the trial to be taken out of the list. This could be for a number of reasons, such as:

- the prosecution discontinuing the case prior to the trial date

- the defence indicating to the court that the defendant wishes to change his plea to guilty
- that further preparation time is needed by either the prosecution or defence
- there is a lack of court time available for the trial

Given that a vacated category trial means that it has been removed from the court listings prior to the trial date, and can also indicate the defendant changing their plea to guilty, this categorisation could be viewed as positive. However, not unlike the cracked data, vacated data can also be somewhat ambiguous when attempting to interpret, as a vacated category can also indicate that a prosecution witness or the complainant has withdrawn. Ultimately however, it is generally agreed by HMCS staff that the SDVC aims are better served by a lower rate of vacated domestic violence trials.

Fig 6.6a: Percentage of Total DV Trials Resulting in Vacated Category (n=706)

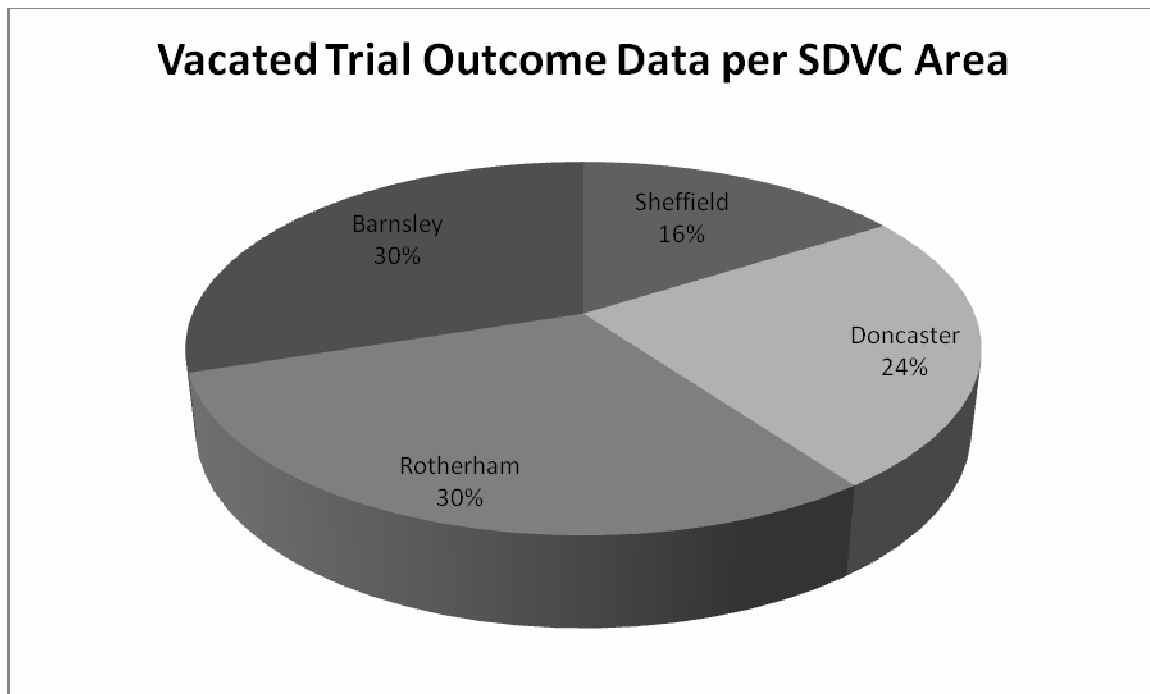


Between April 2007 and March 2008, there were 185 domestic violence trials in South Yorkshire whose outcome were categorised as vacated³¹. The chart above presents the vacated trials data as a percentage of the total domestic violence trials listed in South Yorkshire SDVC over the twelve month data set period. The percentage of vacated trials have remained low over the year at an average of 26%, with an all time low in March 2008 of 11%, highlighting the positive movement towards the SDVC initiative objectives.

Vacated trial data was also examined per SDVC area, to examine if any informative pattern could be identified over the twelve month data set. The Sheffield Court and Barnsley Court saw the largest number of trials vacated at 59 and 57 respectively. In Doncaster Court 31 domestic violence cases were vacated and in Rotherham Court, 38. However, when examined in percentage of the total domestic violence trials listed, the data shows that proportionally, Sheffield and Doncaster Courts have in reality experienced the least volume of trials that result in a vacated outcome.

³¹ Taken from Vacated Trial Monitoring Form VTM 2.0 by HMCS, which is filled in by the Court Listings Officer. This form is not domestic violence specific.

Fig 6.6b: Percentage of total DV trials resulting in vacated categorisation by area (n=706)



Given the differences identified, it may be beneficial for the SDVC to commission a further qualitative enquiry aimed at exploring working practices at the four SDVC Courts in South Yorkshire to ensure good working practices regarding vacated trial procedures can be disseminated across all SDVC Court areas.

6.6.1 Reasons Domestic Violence Trials are Being Vacated

Given the potential ambiguity of vacated data, this section examines the 'Vacated Trial Reason Codes' collated by court listing staff, when a vacated outcome is recorded³².

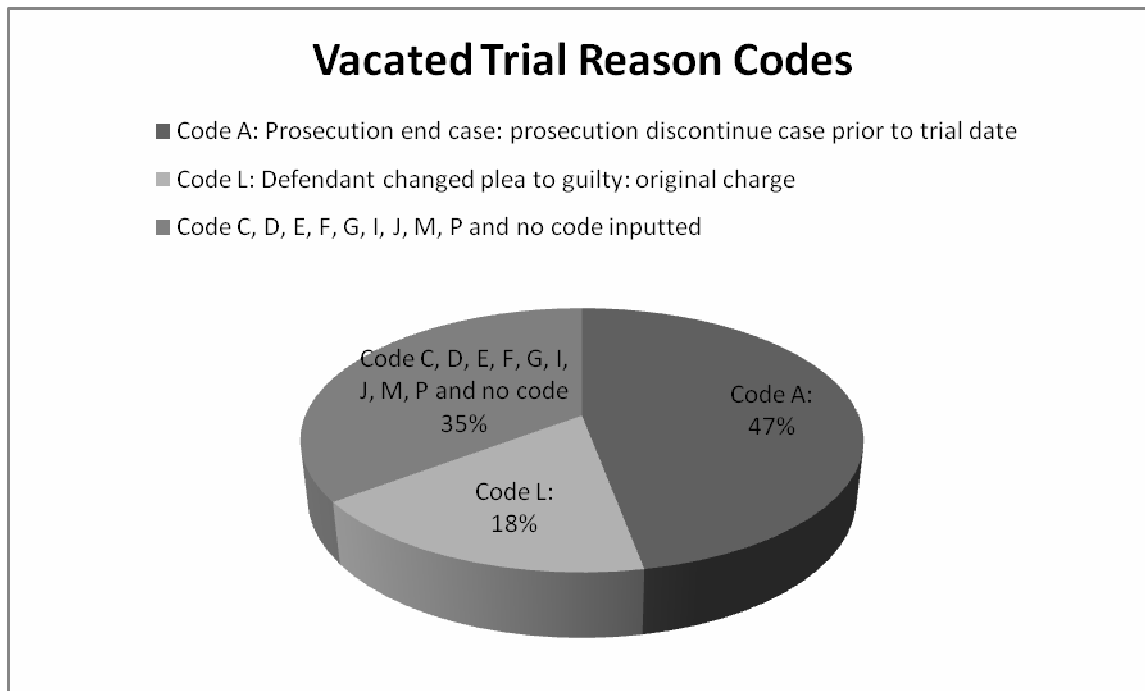
Between September 2007 and March 2008, 85 domestic violence trials listed in the four South Yorkshire SDVC areas received the outcome category of vacated. Vacated Trial reason codes were collected for 76³³ of these trials. For explanatory and illustrative reasons, the two most common reason codes used

³² This data also contained in reference, foot note 21 above.

³³ It is important to note that this data set included 9 vacated trials which were inputted into the data set without reason codes. The evaluation team felt that as the report aims were to present vacated trial data for exploratory rather than conclusive data requirements; this data set would be included for analysis in this section.

are illustrated, while the eight remaining, much less frequently used codes were collapsed into one segment (each of these 8 categories had been used between 1 and a maximum of 6 times³⁴).

Fig. 6.6.1a: Reasons for Domestic Violence Trial Outcomes Categorised as Vacated in South Yorkshire



As can be seen in the chart above, in South Yorkshire SDVCs, the most common reason for domestic violence trials resulting in a vacated outcome is that the prosecution withdraw the trial from the court listing before the trial date (47% or in 40 cases). Unlike a cracked trial which does not turn into a trial, but does get to court, a vacated trial is removed from the court listing before stakeholders have access to the court building. In this way, high rates of vacated trials for this reason can be seen as giving stakeholders false expectations, which may damage confidence in the CJS. Further, it is impossible to ascertain from these data sets what the rationale behind the prosecution withdrawing the trial was. This could have been for a number of reasons; the complainant may have withdrawn, or there may have been some other evidential reason why the prosecution are unable to proceed and have served notice of discontinuance, which are both not positive outcomes in terms of SDVC objectives.

The second most common reason for domestic violence trials resulting in a vacated outcome is that the defendant changes his not-guilty to a guilty plea (18% or in 15 cases). Not unlike the cracked data section, this outcome can be considered ambiguous as the defendant pleading guilty is always a good

³⁴ See Appendix 4 for full list of codes.

outcome; however it may have been more appropriate for the defendant to plead guilty at the first hearing.

The objectives of the SDVC court initiative are clearly best served by a reduction in complainants withdrawing from proceedings and an increase in defendants pleading guilty at the first hearing. Therefore being able to provide statistical evidence that focus on both these phenomena would prove extremely useful data. The possibility of introducing clearer distinctions within both vacated and cracked reason codes for domestic violence cases may benefit from being considered. Collating these more specific statistics would be particularly relevant to support the SDVCs to communicate the positive development of their initiatives and therefore raise public confidence in the CJS.

6.7 The Domestic Violence Trial Fast Tracking Initiative

HMCS took a 'dip' sample in both June and December 2004 which showed that the timescales of trials in South Yorkshire's Magistrates' Courts (not specifically domestic violence) proceeding through the courts were on average taking between 64 and 94 days between first hearing and trial listing (Report to LCJB, January 07³⁵). The objective of introducing the Fast Tracking System was to reduce these timescales when managing domestic violence trials, with the aim of achieving:

- increased confidence in victims and witnesses, so that fewer withdraw from the prosecution process
- an increase in the number of effective trials with successful outcomes
- an increase in the number of defendants pleading guilty at the first hearing

The Fast Tracking System was designed to identify and monitor the progress of domestic violence trials through the court systems. Data was to be collected in order to show the relative performance of the South Yorkshire SDVC as a whole and enable trends to be identified within each separate court. An increased focus was also placed on any 'not guilty' plea being entered at the first hearing (discussed earlier in this report). The Fast Tracking Working Group was keen to monitor how many domestic violence trials were being listed in accordance with the protocol aimed at increasing the number of trials listed within the agreed 42 days of the first hearing. A traffic-light tracker coded system was designed for the data:

³⁵ Cited in HMCS, Rotherham Branch Office, January 2007, Report to LCJB FTS.doc. Domestic violence cases were included in this sample, but not separated out.

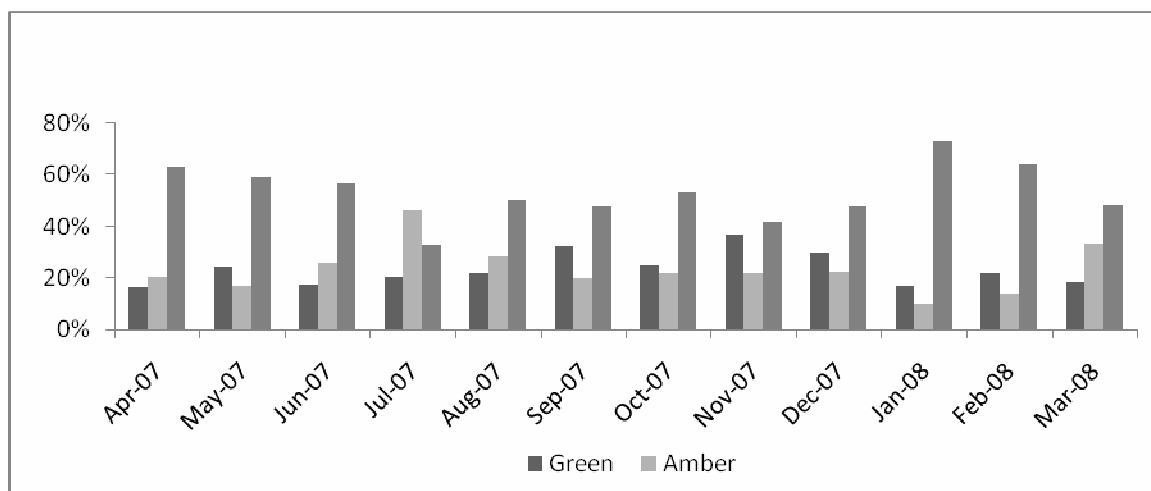
Green	Amber	Red
Domestic violence trial listed within 42 days (6 weeks) of the first hearing	Domestic violence trial listed between 42 and 49 days (between 6 and 7 weeks) of the first hearing	Domestic violence trial listed over 49 days (over 7 weeks) after the first hearing

It is important to note that the ability of a court to list domestic violence trials within the agreed timescale of 42 days was recognised by the Working Group as an optimum outcome which would be impacted upon by a number of issues which would correctly impact on the attainment of the 42 day timescale, such as:

- trials where more complex medical or forensic data were required by the prosecution
- witness availability

The Fast Track System has been effective since 3rd April 2006 and from July 2006 the Courts began to collect data on a monthly basis. For the purpose of this short report, the Fast Tracking data presented here are from between April 2007 to March 2008. The green, amber and red timescales achieved are presented in percentage form.

Fig. 6.7a: Fast Tracking Traffic Light Data South Yorkshire SDVC



As the table above illustrates, SDVC's in South Yorkshire have been experiencing difficulties in increasing the number of trials listed within the optimum 42 days of the first hearing.

However, when examining these data between SDVC areas (see Appendix 5), it can be seen that, with the exception of Sheffield Court, a relatively high percentage of domestic violence cases were being listed within the 42 days in the remaining three SDVC areas in South Yorkshire. Most notably, in September 2007, both Doncaster and Rotherham Courts recorded 68.42% and 50% respectively of trials that were listed within the 42 day protocol. Most significantly, Barnsley Court has achieved a high percentage of trials receiving the green tracker marking during the twelve month period. Indeed, for six months within the year, Barnsley has recorded 50% and above of their trials being listed within the 42 day protocol. Barnsley Court have reported a record maximum of 76.92% of domestic violence trials listed within the 42 protocol in August 07 and also a rate of 60% consistently between November 2007 and February 2008.

Sheffield Court has the highest volume of both domestic violence and non domestic violence trials and is experiencing difficulties in listing cases within 42 or 49 days. Certain strategies have been put in place to ease the pressure on listing, such as double booking domestic violence trials with non domestic violence trials and other domestic violence trials. The effects of these approaches to reducing the pressures on listings policy at Sheffield Court cannot, as yet, be seen to be impacting on their fast tracking data. Alternatively, one possible inference that could be taken from the data presented here, is the possibility that the protocol timescales are impractical for the management of a large number of domestic violence trials. The Fast Track Working Group may want to reconsider and review the rationale behind these timescales.

As highlighted at the beginning of this section, there may also be specific reasons why particularly Sheffield Court experience difficulties in listing domestic violence trials within the 42 day fast tracking protocol. It may be beneficial for the SDVC to commission a further qualitative enquiry aimed at exploring working practices at the four SDVC Courts in South Yorkshire to ensure good working practices regarding effective trial listing procedures can be disseminated across all SDVC Court areas.

However there is no way of ascertaining, from these data why some SDVC areas are experiencing more success in the fast tracking protocol than others. A constructive approach to examining these phenomena would be for data to be collected which would enable comment on why domestic violence trials are not, or indeed in some cases cannot, be listed within the agreed time scales. For example when a trial is not listed within the 42 day protocol because an essential delay occurs to await complex evidence, data to that effect could be recorded. This would provide the SDVC with valuable evidence of appropriate and effective domestic violence case management. In addition, the collection of this data would positively affect the interpretation of the existing fast tracking data.

This section has illustrated that although some positive data can be extracted regarding successes in raising the numbers of trials listed within the 42 day

protocol, over the twelve month data period there has been little significantly consistent improvement in the fast tracking data. However, the fast tracking data collection system, despite being a relatively new scheme, has been shown to be working well and as forming an important part of the co-ordinated SDVC response to domestic violence. Indeed, the work of the fast tracking system can be built upon; the data they collect can be refined in a variety of ways that could increase the effectiveness of this positive initiative aimed at enhancing domestic violence case management in the court system.

6.8 Understanding why Domestic Violence trials may not be effective and why cases may be discontinued

The court related data are presented here to inform an improved understanding of why domestic violence trials may not be effective and discontinuance rates in domestic violence cases in SDVC's in South Yorkshire. Cracked and vacated domestic violence trial outcome data can be ambiguous and difficult to interpret given the multi-faceted coding definitions under which these data are collated. However, this initial analysis can report that the two most common reasons why domestic violence trials result in a cracked outcome are:

1. the defendant changes their plea from not-guilty to guilty (48% or in 47 trials)
2. the prosecution end the case, due to a witness either being absent or having withdrawn (24% or in 24 trials).

Vacated domestic violence trial data reveals that the two most common reasons for domestic violence trials resulting in a vacated outcome are:

1. the prosecution withdraw the trial from the court listing before the trial date due to a witness not being available or a witness having withdrawn (47% or in 40 cases)
2. defendant changes his not-guilty to a guilty charge (18% or in 15 cases).

A summary of these findings would be that domestic violence trials in South Yorkshire are not effective due to defendants changing their plea and witnesses being unavailable or complainants withdrawing from the process. The SDVC focus on increasing the numbers of initial guilty pleas is therefore clearly an appropriate focus, an area which it has been already shown that South Yorkshire SDVC's have had significant success. However, given that a key objective of the SDVC is to increase the numbers of complainants staying with court processes, it would be beneficial to distinguish between the witness availability and / or complainant withdrawal reason coding in cracked and vacated discontinued domestic violence trial data.

Chapter 7: Key Findings and Recommendations

7.0 Summary

This evaluation was designed to conduct a mapping exercise to establish the service delivery models of the four IDVA services in South Yorkshire. The results of this exercise are summarised as follows:

7.0.1 *Sheffield IDVA Service* is hosted by Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum, a voluntary sector domestic violence delivery organisation, and began service delivery in April 2007. Between April 2007 and March 2008 they received 82 referrals and engaged 63 predominantly White British women. The service accepts referrals from South Yorkshire Police only, of women assessed as high risk, using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool.

7.0.2 *Doncaster IDVA Service* is hosted by the Community Safety Team at Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, a statutory non domestic violence specific organisation. This service began in February 2007, and accepts referrals of female or male high risk victims of domestic violence, from both statutory and voluntary sector agencies, using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool. Between April 2007 and March 2008, Doncaster IDVAS received 497 high risk referrals and engaged 275 predominantly White British victims of domestic violence.

7.0.3 *Rotherham IDVA Service* is hosted by Rotherham Women's Refuge, a voluntary sector domestic violence specific organisation. This service began in June 2007, and accepts referrals of women who are high risk victims of domestic violence, from both statutory and voluntary agencies, using the SPECSS+ risk assessment tool. Between April 2007 and March 2008, Rotherham IDVAS received 227 referrals from both statutory and voluntary agencies, engaging with 126 mainly White British service users.

7.0.4 *Barnsley IDVA Service* is hosted by Victim Support, a voluntary sector non domestic violence specific organisation, and began in November 2006. The IDVA accepts referrals of female or male victims of domestic violence from both statutory and voluntary sector agencies, and uses the FSU9 risk assessment tool. Barnsley IDVAS has received 357 high risk referrals from both statutory and voluntary sectors, engaging with 106 between April 2007 and March 2008.

7.1 IDVAS Key Findings

7.1.1 *An Essential Service*

Between April 2007 and March 2008, 1160 high risk domestic violence referrals were made to IDVA Services across South Yorkshire. Of these 1160, 888 (76%) were successfully contacted by the IDVAS teams across South Yorkshire. The

number of these successfully contacted referrals who engaged³⁶ with the South Yorkshire IDVA services was 570, 64% of those referred to the service originally.

All the service users interviewed were wholly supportive and enthusiastic about the service they received from the South Yorkshire IDVA services. The service users reported being contacted by the IDVA at a time when they were distressed and needed the support and guidance the service provides. They saw the service as invaluable in terms of both practical and emotional support, particularly when facing court processes and helping them to make their homes feel safer. Many service users felt that the IDVAS initiative needed to be expanded in order to support victims of domestic violence out of office hours. An important aspect of IDVA support for the service users was that they felt the IDVA's were genuinely advocating for them by representing them in meetings and ensuring their voices were central to any decisions made about their case. The service users also reflected that the IDVA is a service they can rely on to drive actions forward, often with other agencies with which the service users sometimes find it difficult to interact.

7.1.2 Service User Profiles and Agencies Referring into IDVA Services

The majority of the 1160 referrals made to the four IDVA Services in South Yorkshire, between April 2007 and March 2008, identified themselves as white British (749 or 65%) with a small number of clients from minority ethnic backgrounds (48 or 4%³⁷). Two of the four IDVA services in South Yorkshire do not accept male referrals and sign post any male high risk referrals made to them on to Victim Support. Home Office year end data shows that IDVA Services in South Yorkshire received 25 male high risk referrals between April 2007 and March 2008. Three of these men were referred immediately on to Victim Support Services as the IDVAS they were referred to did not accommodate male referrals. Data is not available to ascertain what proportion of the remaining 22 male referrals to IDVAS engaged with the services that provide support to male high risk referrals.

The majority of referrals to the IDVA services in South Yorkshire are made by South Yorkshire Police or their Public Protection Units. Between April 2007 and March 2008, 80% or 926 of high risk referrals received by IDVA services in South Yorkshire originated from the Police.

7.1.3 Signposting and Support Provided in South Yorkshire

Housing support or signposting to housing services is the most common area in which IDVAS referrals require/ receive the most advice and signposting at 22%, followed by Target Hardening advice and signposting to local Support Groups.

³⁶ Definitions of engagement vary between the IDVA Services in South Yorkshire. This definitional issue is currently under review.

³⁷ The ethnicity of 362 (31%) of referrals to the IDVA service were not provided.

7.1.4 *Operating an IDVAS in South Yorkshire*

The recruitment of appropriately trained individuals to fit the specialist requirements of the IDVAS role was found to be important to ensuring IDVA's can operate effectively in this often challenging environment. In response, some host agencies have strengthened their job specifications and recruitment processes to take account of the demands of the role, and have discussed arrangements for staff support and supervision to prevent workers 'burning out'.

All four IDVA services experience issues around low capacity and high demand for their services. Many participants in the evaluation felt that if the service should be extended to include those assessed as medium risk where the potential for more preventative work was felt to be significant. However, many also felt that until sustainable funding was secured for high risk referrals, expanding this much needed service to medium risk referrals was a longer term objective in the development of the IDVA services in South Yorkshire. The lack of security felt by IDVA's around sustainable funding was discussed in all the work shops as a source of concern. Some IDVA's reflected that they were often worried when they took on new referrals without the secure knowledge that funding would not be withdrawn before they had provided the referral with the support they very much needed. IDVA staff reported that ideally, in the long term the IDVAS service would be operating within a multi-agency, co-located team, similar to the Cardiff Women's Safety Unit model.

Excellent local multi-agency working practices with Police, the voluntary sector and other agencies, were identified by the evaluation team, assisted by the MARAC arrangements. The considerable efforts made to contact high risk referrals within 24 hours. The IDVA Service has adopted consistent data collection methods across South Yorkshire, since January 2008 with the introduction of the Paloma Information System. The four IDVA services in South Yorkshire were found to provide a high standard of support, despite capacity restraints and funding concerns.

7.2 IDVAS Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward by the evaluation team:

- The IDVA Service has been shown to be an essential initiative. A county wide strategy to secure sustainable funding for the IDVAS in South Yorkshire needs to be a top priority
- Consideration of the potential of extending this service to medium as well as high risk referrals
- Explore the potential of IDVA Services operating within a co-located, multi-agency team

- A review of IDVAS data collection practices to ensure a high standard of comparative monitoring data for both Home Office returns and performance monitoring with local partners
- Developing a county wide IDVA specific job specification, drawing on experience gained during the first year of the service and CAADA guidance
- The wider SDVC initiative would also benefit from a data collection review, to ensure that high standard monitoring data can be produced and shared within the SDVC initiative to engage more effectively with discontinuance rates in domestic violence related court cases.

7.3 The SDVC Court Initiative in South Yorkshire

The underpinning rationale behind the SDVC initiative is a commitment to treating domestic violence seriously. The HMCS in South Yorkshire is dedicated to ensuring that court-based data are collected in order to monitor the management of domestic violence cases, with the aims of increasing the numbers of effective domestic violence trials, initial guilty plea rates increasing the numbers of complainants that come to court and stay in the processes by enhancing confidence in court practices around domestic violence.

7.4 SDVC Data Key Findings

This report contains an exploratory analysis of SDVC data ranging from April 2007 to March 2008. The subsequent findings evidence important progress made towards SDVC objectives, which are summarised here:

- The percentage of effective trials have risen relatively consistently since April 2007, peaking at 34% in December 2007
- The initial guilty plea rates have risen by over 50% since April 07
- The percentage of cracked trials have remained relatively low over the twelve month period, remaining on average at 32% between April 2007 and March 2008
- The percentage of vacated trials have remained low over the year at an average of 26%, with an all time low in March 2008 of 11%
- The fast tracking data over the year illustrates that overall, the Magistrates' Courts have been experiencing difficulties in increasing the number of trials listed within six weeks. However, a relatively high percentage of domestic violence cases have been recorded within the 42 day protocol target in separate SDVC areas in South Yorkshire, and the average length of trials has reduced significantly in all areas.

7.4.1 Understanding why domestic violence trials may not be effective and why cases may be discontinued

The court related data was analysed to inform an improved understanding of why domestic violence trials may not be effective and discontinuance rates in domestic violence cases in SDVC's in South Yorkshire. This report found that trials may not be effective and discontinuance rates in South Yorkshire are accounted for by defendants changing their plea and witnesses being unavailable or complainants withdrawing from the process. The SDVC focus on increasing the numbers of initial guilty pleas heard is therefore clearly an appropriate area focus, within which they have recorded significant progress.

7.5 SDVC Data Recommendations

Given the evaluation findings contained in this report, a number of recommendations are made here in relation to future strategic development of the SDVC data collection initiative:

- Given the different outcomes data from each SDVC area in South Yorkshire, further qualitative enquiries aimed at exploring working practices at the four SDVC Courts would ensure effective working practices are identified and mainstreamed across South Yorkshire Courts
- The SDVC have been shown to have had successes in identifying and addressing discontinuance rates with regard to raising the rates of initial guilty pleas. In order to build on these successes, SDVC data could be developed to distinguish between the witness availability and / or complainant withdrawal reason coding in discontinued domestic violence trial data. This would provide the opportunity for HMCS to identify further reasons why domestic violence trials are ineffective and allow for the specific introduction of initiatives to address these trends
- In order to extend the already successful collation of fast tracking data, HMCS could consider recording the reasons for essential delays which result in cases being listed outside the 42 day protocol. In this way, SDVC staff can identify the numbers of domestic violence trials where the trial profile is not appropriate to be listed within the fast tracking protocol timescales.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: IDVAS Governance Membership by Area

The Sheffield SDVC Steering Group is made up of:

- 2 representatives from South Yorkshire Police, including lead for Domestic Violence, and the DI who chairs the MARAC
- Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum Co-ordinator
- The IDVAS Manager
- A representative from South Yorkshire Probation Service in Sheffield
- 3 representatives from Sheffield City Council who lead on behalf of Housing Solutions, Children & Young People's Directorate and Safeguarding Children
- Sheffield Homes Manager (main housing provider)
- Sheffield PCT (Designated Nurse for Child Protection)
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust (representing A&E and maternity services)
- Sheffield Youth Offending Service
- CAFCASS
- 2 DASAP representatives (voluntary sector Domestic & Sexual Abuse Projects)
- Victim Support

The Doncaster IDVAS Governance Group is made up of representatives from:

- The Police-Superintendent responsible for Violent Crime (Chair)
- DMBC Community Safety Consultant responsible for violent crime
- Police and Council Analysts
- Evening Economy Manager
- Trading Standards
- Criminal Justice
- Crime Reduction
- Law enforcement specialist
- Licensing
- Health
- Education
- Communications (Safer Doncaster Partnership)
- IDVA
- Hate Crime Police Officer
- Voluntary Sector including:
 - Rape and sexual abuse counselling service
 - ISVA
 - Women's aid

- Victim Support
- BME /LGBT Rep

The Rotherham SDVC/IDVAS Steering Group is made up of:

- Rotherham Domestic Violence Co-ordinator (RMBC)
- Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator South Yorkshire Police
- Chair of Rotherham Domestic Violence Forum
- Manager CAFCASS (Rotherham)
- Senior Probation Officer (Rotherham)
- Manager Adult Protection (RMBC)
- Deputy Chief Nurse (Quality and Standards) Rotherham District General Hospital (Representing the Foundation Trust)
- Public Health Specialist (Rotherham Primary Care Trust)
- Inspector Police Public Protection Unit
- Housing Choices Manager (Representing Neighbourhoods RMBC and 2010 – the Housing ALMO)
- Team Manager RDASH (Representing Mental Health Services)
- Manager Rotherham Women's Refuge
- Manager Choices and Options
- Manager Apna Haq
- Manager Victim Support
- Manager Children's Social Care (RMBC)
- Manager Child Protection (RMBC)
- Manager Courts Service Rotherham Magistrates Court
- Domestic Violence Lead – CPS
- Manager IDVA Service
- Domestic Violence Administrator RMBC (Minutes)

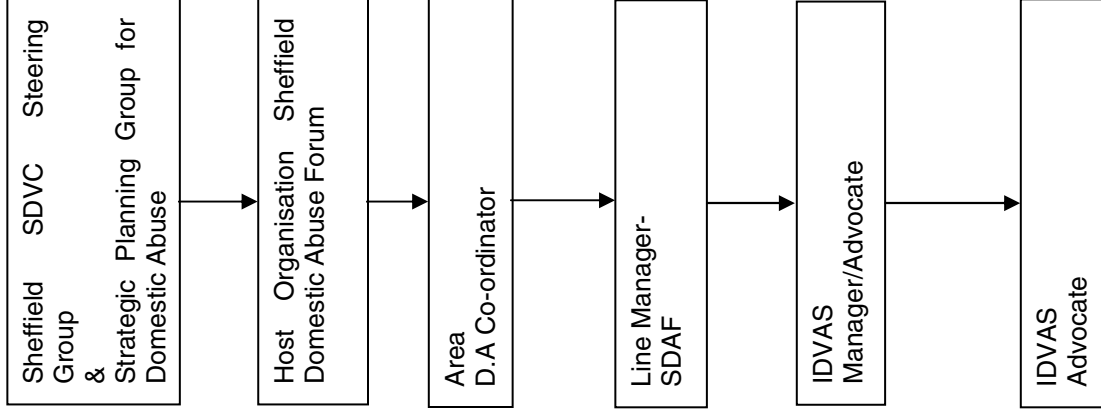
The Barnsley IDVAS Governance Group is made up of:

- Domestic Violence Coordinator/IDVA worker/IDVA Line Manager
- Branch Manager Victim Support
- ISVA
- Nurse Safeguarding Children
- 3 representative from mental health (CAMHS and Adult protection), including the head of mental health services PCT
- 2 representatives from the PPU (DI and Sergeant)
- Representative from Government Office
- Magistrates Court Manager
- CPS Representative
- Probation
- Bernslai Homes Representative
- Barnsley Hospital Foundation Trust Representative – Safeguarding children

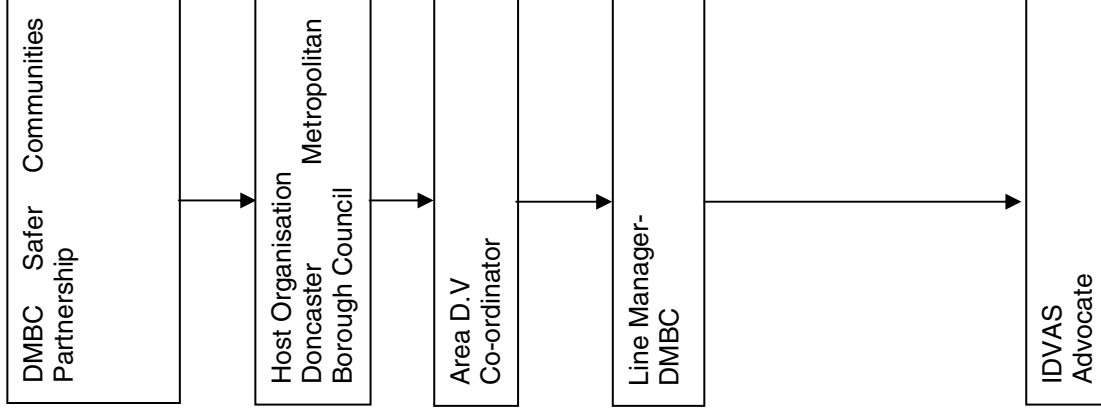
- Court Legal Advisor
- CAFCASS
- Education – Local Authority Officer
- Drug Intervention (DIP)
- YOT Officer

Appendix 2: South Yorkshire IDVA Service: Management and Governance Structures

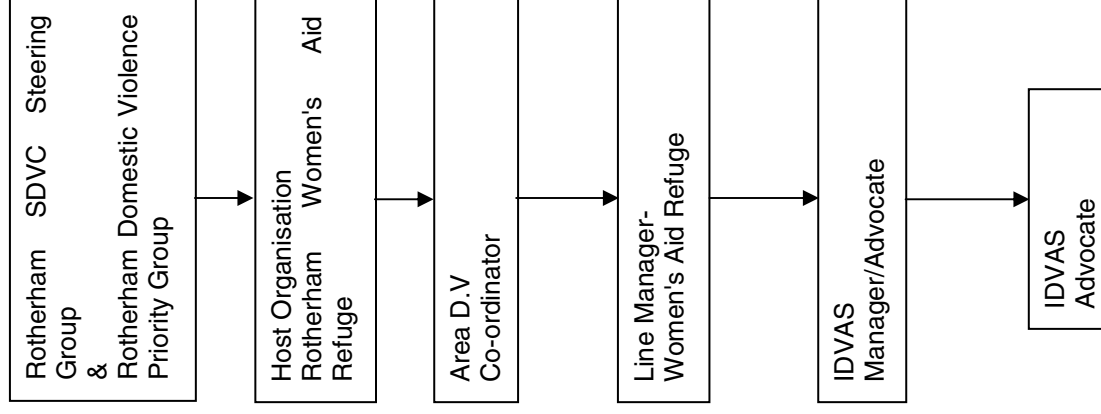
Sheffield IDVA



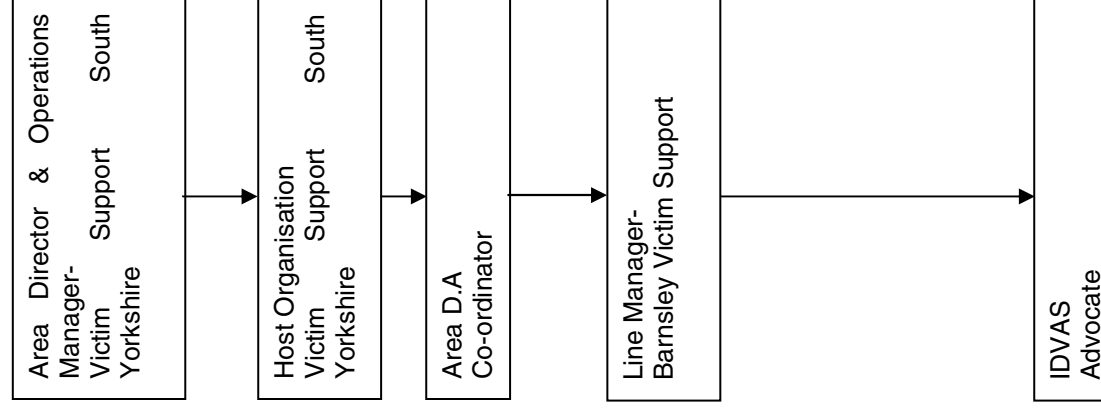
Doncaster IDVA



Rotherham IDVA



Barnsley IDVA



Appendix 3: Agencies IDVAS in South Yorkshire are Linked to

Sheffield IDVAS	Doncaster IDVAS	Rotherham IDVAS	Barnsley IDVAS
Sheffield Women's Aid	A&E	Rotherham Women's Refuge	Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Helpline
Haven House Project	Better Deal	Apna Haq (Asian women's service)	Barnsley Domestic Violence Helpline
Ashiana	Citizens Advice Bureau	Choices & Options	Dogs Trust Freedom Project
Roshni	Courts: County Court / Family	Refuges in other areas	Relate
Domestic Abuse Floating Support Service	Court re Orders	GROW	Mental Health Helpline
Burngreave Domestic Abuse Project	DMBC:	Outreach Drop-in	Social Services
Parson Cross Domestic Abuse Project	Safeguarding Adults	Bravehearts	Probation
South East Sheffield Domestic Abuse Project	Safeguarding Children	Victim Support	Children's Centres
Sheaf Domestic Abuse Project	Families First	Action Housing	Mental health services
Young Women's Housing Project	Family Centres	South Yorkshire HA Housing Department	Police
Rape & Sexual Abuse	Housing Benefits	C&YP Social Care	Adult Protection
Counselling Service	Doncaster Alcohol Services	Debt Advisory service	Barneslai Homes
Sheffield Women's Counselling & Therapy Service	DRASACS (Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling)	Drug & Alcohol services	Homeless Team
Step by Step (children's group work programme)	Garage: Doncaster Drug Team	Women's Safety	Pathways
SCC Children & Young People	Health: GP's/ Health Visitors / Midwifery / GU Clinic	Worker – Probation	NSPCC
Social Care Service	Housing Associations	Action Housing	Mind
SCC Safeguarding Adults	Housing: Floating Support Services	South Yorkshire HA Housing Department	Women's Refuges
SCC Housing Solutions & Sanctuary Scheme	IDVA/ISVA Services (locally & nationally)	Debt Advisory service	Women's Aid
SCC Housing Aid	Immigration	Drug & Alcohol services	IDVA Services / ISVA's other areas
Sheffield Homes	Jigsaw (young people)	Family Holiday Association	
NSPCC	Mental Health: Mind / CAMHS	Robond	
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	/ Improving Access to Psychological Therapies	IDVA Services / ISVA's in other areas	
SY Housing Association	NSPCC / Barnardos		
Thursday Project	Remedi Children Support Workers		
Other Housing Associations	Refuges (nationally)		
SCOOP Aid	SSAFA (Armed Forces)		
Roundabout / Stencil (Tenancy Support for Young People)	Sanctuary Scheme		
	Solicitors		
	South Yorkshire Police		

Shelter Dogs Trust Freedom Project Drug & Alcohol Services/DiP Refuges in other areas IDVA Services / ISVA's in other areas	Sure Start Street Reach The Bridge (young people's advice workers) The Junction (children & young people) Victim Support Women's Aid Women's Centre		
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Appendix 4: SDVC Vacated and Cracked Trial Reason Codes

Reason codes for vacated domestic violence cases

	Code vacated trials taken from the 'Vacated Trials Monitoring Form VTM 2.0'	Reasons taken from the 'Vacated Trials Monitoring Form VTM 2.0'
Prosecution Case Issues	A C D	Prosecution end case: prosecution discontinue case prior to trial date Prosecution witness absent: prosecution witness not able to attend trial: Police witness Prosecution witness not able to attend trial: Other witness
Defence case issues	E F G L M	Defendant ill / deceased/ unable to attend Defence not ready: further preparation needed Defence witness not able to attend trial Defendant changed plea to guilty: original charge Defendant changed plea to guilty: alternative charge
Court Issues	I P	Lack of court time: Prosecution request increased time estimate Accommodation / equipment failure
Not known		Where no information is provided

Reasons for cracked outcome of domestic violence cases

	Coding for cracked cases taken from 'Effective, cracked and Ineffective Trial Monitoring Form CITM 3.0'	Reasons for cracked cases taken from the 'Effective, cracked and Ineffective Trial Monitoring Form CITM 3.0'
Guilty plea entered	A C D	Acceptable guilty plea(s) entered late to some or all charges on charge sheet, offered for the first time by the defence Acceptable guilty plea(s) to alternative new charge (not previously on the charge sheet), first time offered by the defence Acceptable guilty plea(s) to alternative new charge (not previously on the charge sheet, previously rejected by the prosecution
Defendant bound over	E F	Defendant bound over, acceptable to prosecution, offered for first time by defence Defendant bound over, now acceptable to prosecution – previously rejected by prosecution
Prosecution end case	I J L	Prosecution end case: insufficient evidence Prosecution end case: witness absent / withdrawn Prosecution end case: adjournment refused
Not known		Information not provided

Appendix 5: Fast Tracking Data by Area: April 2007 to March 2008

Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	April-07		
					Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	4	5	1	10	40.00%	50.00%	10.00%
Doncaster	6	5	4	15	40.00%	33.33%	26.67%
Rotherham	0	1	13	14	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%
Sheffield	1	3	25	29	3.45%	10.34%	86.21%

Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	May-07		
					Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	5	5	1	11	45.45%	45.45%	9.09%
Doncaster	5	5	5	15	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
Rotherham	2	1	16	19	10.53%	5.26%	84.21%
Sheffield	7	2	24	33	21.21%	6.06%	72.73%

Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Jun-07		
					Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	4	7	3	14	28.57%	50.00%	21.43%
Doncaster	4	5	4	13	30.77%	38.46%	30.77%
Rotherham	2	5	9	16	12.50%	31.25%	56.25%
Sheffield	3	2	26	31	9.68%	6.45%	83.87%

Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Jul-07		
					Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	6	5	2	13	46.15%	38.46%	15.38%
Doncaster	12	36	5	53	22.64%	67.92%	9.43%
Rotherham	2	2	7	11	18.18%	18.18%	63.64%
Sheffield	0	2	18	20	0.00%	10.00%	90.00%

Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Aug-07		
					Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	6	2	0	8	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%
Doncaster	3	8	1	12	25.00%	66.67%	8.33%
Rotherham	1	1	3	5	20.00%	20.00%	60.00%
Sheffield	0	2	19	21	0.00%	9.52%	90.48%

Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Sep-07		
					Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	6	3	3	12	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%
Doncaster	13	3	3	19	68.42%	15.79%	15.79%
Rotherham	1	1	0	2	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Sheffield	1	6	25	32	3.13%	18.75%	78.13%

					Oct-07		
Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	6	5	3	14	42.86%	35.71%	21.43%
Doncaster	7	4	5	16	43.75%	25.00%	31.25%
Rotherham	1	1	7	9	11.11%	11.11%	77.78%
Sheffield	1	3	17	21	4.76%	14.29%	80.95%
					Nov-07		
Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	10	1	2	13	76.92%	7.69%	15.38%
Doncaster	10	6	1	17	58.82%	35.29%	5.88%
Rotherham	2	2	7	11	18.18%	18.18%	63.64%
Sheffield	0	4	15	19	0.00%	21.05%	78.95%
					Dec-07		
Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	9	4	2	15	60.00%	26.67%	13.33%
Doncaster	2	5	0	7	28.57%	71.43%	0.00%
Rotherham	1	0	5	6	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%
Sheffield	0	0	12	12	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
					Jan-08		
Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	6	1	2	9	66.67%	11.11%	22.22%
Doncaster	0	1	1	2	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%
Rotherham	0	2	9	11	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%
Sheffield	1	0	18	19	5.26%	0.00%	94.74%
					Feb-08		
Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	10	4	1	15	66.67%	26.67%	6.67%
Doncaster	0	1	6	7	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%
Rotherham	1	0	9	10	10.00%	0.00%	90.00%
Sheffield	0	2	16	18	0.00%	11.11%	88.89%
					Mar-08		
Court	Green	Amber	Red	Trials	Green	Amber	Red
Barnsley	4	6	1	11	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%
Doncaster	0	0	1	1	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Rotherham	1	2	1	4	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%
Sheffield	0	1	10	11	0.00%	9.09%	90.91%

They've been my lifeline. An evaluation of South Yorkshire's Specialist Domestic Violence Court initiative: the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

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