

AN EVALUATION OF THE ESSEX VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS PERPETRATOR PATHWAY

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Lauren Godier-McBard, Elisa Orofino &
Samantha Lundrigan



a.r.u.

Policing Institute
for the Eastern Region

Veterans & Families Institute
for Military Social Research

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UK legal framework and strategies aimed at reducing and preventing **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)** have developed significantly in the UK over the past two decades. In 2017, the Home Office launched a £17million, **three-year VAWG Service Transformation Fund** for local commissioners to help prevent and address violence against women and girls (Home Office, 2016b). Within this framework, a multi-agency VAWG perpetrator pathway model was developed by the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board. The main aims of the fund included **preventing perpetrators from (re)offending**, identifying **opportunities to prevent harm**, implementing **early intervention**, and **promoting local best practices**. Among the successful bids, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) was allocated £450,000 to implement the 'Essex VAWG perpetrator pathway' as well as to increase funding support to sexual violence and abuse support services. (Home Office, 2017). In this report, we present an evaluation of the four perpetrator interventions funded by the Essex PFCC, in relation to the wider aims and objectives of the VAWG strategy. The four interventions were as follows:

1. The Community Perpetrator outreach programme (**The Change Project**) delivered by the Change Project. This project provides expert services for cases in which domestic abuse (DA) is a feature. This is in the form of a consultation service and workshops to upskill practitioners working with families, and a voluntary one-to-one perpetrator intervention that agencies can refer to.
2. The Bystander Intervention (**Bringing in the Bystander**) delivered by the University of Essex and Anglia Ruskin University. This intervention is delivered to staff and students, and is delivered in a workshop format which teaches bystanders how to safely intervene in situations in which sexual violence, DA or stalking are occurring, or are at risk of occurring.
3. The Prison-based intervention (**CHOICES Programme**) delivered by The Essex Community Rehabilitation Company Limited. CHOICES is a voluntary 12-session, group-based programme for adult male prisoners for whom DA is identified as an issue. The programme aims to equip participants with the understanding and skills to promote healthy relationships and behaviours.
4. The Male-mentoring programme (**The Good Man Project**) delivered by the Essex County Council Youth Services. This is a 5-week programme that can be delivered in a group or one-to-one, for young men aged 13-18 who are at risk of entering into abusive relationships. The

programme aims to educate participants to show respect in relationships, and what differentiates a healthy relationship from an unhealthy one.

A mixed-methods evaluation was carried out, utilising existing data from the interventions (i.e. regarding delivery and engagement and any existing anonymised feedback), an online stakeholder survey for those directly involved with the pathway or with a vested interest in DA services, and qualitative interviews with service providers and users of the four interventions.

Feedback provided by stakeholders and participants of the VAWG perpetrator pathway was **largely positive**. Analysis of the online survey suggested that the majority of stakeholders felt that the VAWG pathway had achieved its strategic aims and objectives. Most stakeholders expressed satisfaction towards the ability of the VAWG pathway to **promote partnership working** between different agencies, to implement **early intervention** and to provide **adequate training for professionals**.

This positive assessment of the pathway was confirmed by evaluation of the single interventions, i.e. The Change Project, The Bystander Intervention, CHOICES and the Good Man Project. Stakeholders and participants felt that the interventions were able to equip participants with **new skills**, to challenge the **attitudes values and beliefs that underpin DA-related behaviours**, and to effectively **support victims**. Common obstacles and suggestions for future improvements centred around **better awareness** of the pathway outside those directly involved with it, improving **information sharing and collaborative working**, targeting **hard-to-reach communities**, and increasing limited **funding and resources**.

Following analysis of the stakeholder survey and the data provided by the individual interventions, we recommend that the Essex PFCC should:

1. **Continue to fund perpetrator-based VAWG interventions beyond the end of the VAWG Service Transformation Fund.** The feedback from participants and stakeholders was very positive for the individual interventions and the pathway as a whole, and interventions experienced higher demand than expected. Furthermore, participants and stakeholders reported behavioural change as a result of the interventions.
2. **Work to promote a wider awareness of VAWG perpetrator pathway, beyond services that are involved in the pathway.** A common criticism of the overall VAWG pathway, was that many professionals and agencies were not aware of the interventions, and so did not refer their clients.
3. **Work to promote better partnership-working and information-sharing between agencies.** Stakeholders indicated that partnership-working was not always easy, and that practical restrictions, such as access to buildings and information sharing, was not always enabled by

other agencies. This made it difficult for stakeholders to follow up on clients referred to other agencies and to access information regarding reoffending. A better understanding and awareness of the perpetrator pathway throughout relevant agencies in Essex may help to remove this barrier.

4. **Support interventions that aim to engage with hard to reach communities and at risk groups.** Stakeholders for some of the interventions indicated that they had struggled to engage with what they considered the harder to reach clients, such as the LGBTQ, travellers and Black and Minority Ethnic communities. These communities may have particular needs and vulnerabilities in relation to VAWG that the current pathway has not addressed.
5. **Carry out a longitudinal evaluation of VAWG perpetrator interventions.** Longitudinal data would be required to fully assess the impact of perpetrator interventions on DA-related outcomes (i.e. reoffending, repeat victims, victims' feelings of safety) and wider health and social outcomes for perpetrators and victims (i.e. well-being, physical and mental health).

INTRODUCTION

The efforts of HM Government in fighting Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) have developed significantly in the past two decades, which has seen a number of legislative changes implemented. In 2004, the **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act** was introduced. This represented an important change in the law, amending the Family Law Act 1996 by introducing a specific code of practice for victims (HM Government, 2004). Furthermore, this Act established a Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses of Domestic Abuse, made common assault an arrestable offence, and included the provision for the payment of surcharges by offenders.

International bodies have also contributed to shaping the UK legal framework to tackle VAWG. The United Nations and Council of Europe have emphasised the importance of a legislative focus on human rights and implemented regulations to reflect this. Among them was **the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act**, introduced in 2007, which aims to assist victims of forced marriage and prosecute perpetrators. This Act clearly outlines a range of perpetrators of forced marriage, including not just the person to whom the forced marriage occurs, but any other person who aids, abets or encourages the forced marriage to occur (HM Government, 2007).

Following this, legislation has continued to develop, VAWG-related crimes have been defined and addressed with increasing details. In April 2008, The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) published a **Violence Against Women (VAW) Strategy and Action Plan** which provided a framework for all actions devoted to tackle the following crimes (Crown Prosecution Service, 2008):

- domestic abuse (DA), including harassment;
- forced marriage and so-called honour crimes;
- rape and sexual offences;
- child abuse;
- crimes against older people;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- pornography;
- prostitution;
- human trafficking.

The CPS identified VAW as a core priority, establishing designated actions to achieve the following aims: 1) improve the number and quality of prosecutions; 2) increase public confidence; 3) improve support, safety and satisfaction for victims; and 4) address any equality disproportionality.

In order to succeed in those aims, HM Government has placed greater attention on multi-agency work, promoting an integrated approach to VAW crimes. Inter-Ministerial Groups were created, as well as cross-government delivery plans on DA, sexual violence, human trafficking and prostitution. In March 2009, the Home Secretary announced details of a national VAW consultation, to be followed by the publication of a cross-government VAW strategy, in Autumn 2009. Over the past decade multi-agency working in this area has become commonplace.

On 25 November 2010 - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – the government published the **Call to End Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)**, a paper outlining their ambition and guiding principles to tackle violence not only against women, but also girls. This paper was led by a vision built on the following 4 principles (HM Government, 2010):

1. Prevent violence from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it;
2. Provide adequate support where violence does occur;
3. Work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families;
4. Take action to reduce the risk to women and girls who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

These principles inspired future governmental publications. In March 2011, an **Action Plan** with 88 supporting actions was published for taking the call forward. The document again stressed the importance of an integrated approach to VAWG crimes and presented four main sections: preventing violence, provision of services, partnership working, justice outcomes and risk reduction (HM Government, 2011). More than half of the 88 actions were completed successfully and the 2011 Action Plan worked as a solid foundation for the development of the **2012 Victims' Strategy 'Getting it right for Victims and Witnesses'** (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

This Strategy reformed the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, increasing the sum of money available for supporting victims. More specifically, the Strategy included monetary compensation for pain and suffering experienced by victims of sexual offences and patterns of abuse (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

In 2013, the annual **CPS Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Crime Report** helped monitoring the progress against VAWG-related crimes. This report marked the following important achievements:

- An increased number of VAWG perpetrator referrals thanks to the introduction of VAWG crimes: 109,419 were referred to CPS in 2013-14 – a rise of 15,905 referrals (17%) from 2012-13;
- An increased number of VAWG crimes prosecuted: from 82,165 in 2012-13 to 90,516 in 2013-14, with a 74.6% rate of prosecutions reached for DA.

However, the report also identified the fall in conviction rate for rape crimes compared to 2012-2013 (Crown Prosecution Service, 2014). This problem was addressed in the following year: the **CPS VAWG Crime Report 2014-2015** confirmed that VAWG police referrals rates were at the highest recorded level in terms of perpetrators charged, prosecuted and convicted. This translated into 11,000 more defendants convicted – a 17% increase from the previous year – including convictions for rape-related crimes, which showed a 10% increase, 233 more convictions compared to 2013-2014 (Crown Prosecution Service, 2014).

In 2014, **Clare's Law** was introduced, also known as **Domestic Abuse Offender Disclosure Scheme (DAODS)**. This provision was named after Clare Wood, who was killed by her partner (Home Office, 2016a). During the inquest, it was stressed that if she had been given access to information regarding her partner's abusive past, she would not have been likely to remain in a relationship with him. For this reason, Clare's Law introduced the right for the public to make inquiries about their partners if they suspect past abusive behaviours.

In March 2016, the Home Office (HO) published the **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy**, which marks the beginning of a series of reforms supported by an £80million fund, running until 2020 (HM Government, 2016). This Fund stresses the Government's priority of protecting women and girls from violence, supporting victims, and bringing more perpetrators to justice. In 2017, this funding has supported the launch of a £17million, **three-year VAWG Service Transformation Fund** for local commissioners to help prevent and address VAWG (Home Office, 2016b). Within this framework, a multi-agency VAWG perpetrator pathway model was developed by the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Domestic Abuse Board (Home Office, 2016b). The main aims of the fund included preventing perpetrators from (re)offending, identifying opportunities to prevent harm, implementing early intervention, and promoting local best practices. Among the successful bids, the Essex PFCC was allocated £450,000 to implement the 'Essex VAWG perpetrator pathway', increasing funding support to sexual violence and abuse support services. (Home Office, 2017).

In this report, we review the current VAWG initiatives, and present an evaluation of the four perpetrator interventions funded by the Essex PFCC, in relation to the wider aims and objectives of the VAWG strategy.

A Review of VAWG Initiatives

Given the Government's recognition of tackling VAWG crimes as 'everybody's business' (Home Office, 2016b, p. 8), VAWG strategies have been implemented throughout the national territory in a similar time-frame and with common interventions. Supported programmes ranged from complementary and existing services, to new initiatives aimed at improving the collaboration between local commissioners, service providers, local authorities, health commissioners encouraging a collaborative approach. All new initiatives had to incorporate early intervention, establishing and embedding effective ways to support victims and their families, as well as suggesting new methods to reduce the prevalence of VAWG-related crimes. The following examines existing literature on regional initiatives under the VAWG strategy and outlines the initiatives evaluated in SET. All local strategies will be discussed by going through four main areas: **prevention, provision, protection** and **partnership**.

Warwickshire

The **first VAWG Strategy in Warwickshire** was implemented for the period 2015-2018 (Warwickshire County Council, 2015). Data showed that whilst 9,000 women are victims of DA each year in Warwickshire, only 40% of DA incidents are reported to the police. Furthermore, the estimated cost of DA to public services in Warwickshire alone is £54.3 million. The Warwickshire Strategy aims to boost the fight against all forms of VAWG, e.g. DA, sexual violence, FGM, forced marriage, prostitution/sex work and trafficking, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and stalking.

Prevention. Early intervention initiatives have been developed, tackling attitude and behaviours leading to VAWG. Whilst a number of initiatives like Respect Yourself Campaign, Coaching for a Healthy and Respectful Masculinity Programme and Warwickshire against Domestic Abuse helpline/website were already in place, the VAWG Strategy aimed to engage harder-to-reach/protected communities. This involved the launch of a co-ordinated package of VAWG education for schools, a training package for frontline professionals and VAWG champions introduced into universal services, who would act as 'experts' when a team member has concerns and/or is unsure how to respond to a problem (Warwickshire County Council, 2015).

Provision. Additional provision has been implemented in the form of high quality services aimed at supporting victims of VAWG. This involved the development of specialist support services for children and young people affected by VAWG, providing additional safe accommodation options for victims and their families, and improving services for people with complex needs (e.g. mental health issues). New guidance for working with young people (16-17 years old) affected by VAWG was also developed. The need to deliver adequate services to hard-to-reach and protected communities, such as Eastern European communities, was also highlighted.

Protection. The VAWG Strategy had a dedicated section aimed at protecting women and girls, ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and given opportunities to change. Several programmes were launched to achieve this aim including the Court Mandated Perpetrator Programme, the New Police training programme and the Specialist Domestic Abuse Court, which improved the victims' confidence and supported them in accessing the criminal justice system. The programme also enhanced the rehabilitation rate of both male and female perpetrators. New initiatives were launched to ensure that employees affected by VAWG are protected and supported, to better train frontline professionals dealing with perpetrators, and to reach women offenders.

Partnership. This was identified as a core area of intervention, aimed at bringing together different agencies to achieve the best outcomes for victims and their families (Warwickshire County Council, 2015, p.4). The VAWG Strategic Board, the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board and local Community Safety Partnerships all worked hard to improve their co-ordinated efforts to effectively tackle VAWG in Warwickshire. New programmes within the VAWG Strategy aimed to improve information sharing between statutory and voluntary sector agencies, to establish a VAWG Practitioner Forum for frontline professionals to come together to learn about the latest policy and practice developments, and to deliver a programme of needs assessments on all forms of VAWG.

Durham

In 2015, the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) launched a **2-year regional VAWG Strategy for both Durham and Darlington** (Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, 2015). This aimed to strengthen the work carried out by the police and the criminal justice system to support the behavioural change of perpetrators, as well as tackle the culture that makes VAWG acceptable. The Strategy (2015-2017) aims at tackling different kinds of VAWG, including DA, FGM, forced marriage and sexual abuse and identifies **20 priorities** falling under the four main areas identified above: prevention, provision, protection and partnership.

Prevention. Early interventions with perpetrators were introduced through the Dynamic DA Perpetrator Programmes. Working with young men was identified as a key priority of prevention. Hence, the Harbour Support Service was launched: founded by Public Health, this service is delivered in schools in Durham. Durham Police was also involved in the work with young people by hosting specific conferences to discuss healthy relationships.

Provision. High-quality services to support VAWG victims were implemented in Durham. Among them, Durham Police established a Sexual Violence Implementation Group in 2011. The group is supported by statutory and voluntary agencies who work to help victims of rape and sexual violence. A new action plan was launched in 2015, which incorporates the DA agenda. Other actions were taken in the field of sex work, where the PCC is committed to support victims and to better understand the impact of this kind of offence. For this reason, the PCC also commissioned Changing Lives (a national charity) to produce peer-based research into the scale of sex work within County Durham and Darlington.

Protection. The PCC funded the programme HALO, aimed at engaging with the community to develop useful tools. Among them the Freedom App, which is free to download and looks like a game (not easily detectable), and enables young people to make contact with supportive organisations. Specific protection initiatives were also launched targeting vulnerable people with the aim of keeping them safe. Among them, the Safeguarding training for personnel working in the night-time led by the Alcohol Harm Reduction Unit. Moreover, an on-going collaboration is on with drug and alcohol services to help reduce risks of serious harm.

Partnership. Both Durham and Darlington have a DA Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which works as the ideal platform for agencies to come and share their concerns about safeguarding issues. The Durham VAWG Strategy identified the workplace as a core environment in which to tackle VAWG. With this aim in mind, the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Champions Network was created and 650 champions have been trained in Durham and Darlington by the DA Workplace Project Officer. The latter has collaborated with the local voluntary sector (Harbour Support Service) to ensure that the victim perspective is heard (Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, 2015).

Croydon

The **Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) strategy 2018-2021** represents the evolution of the previous strategy in place from 2015-2018 and aligns local priorities with the Government's priority of tackling VAWG and improving people's lives (HM Government, 2016). Overall, the new strategy aims to work as a framework for the delivery of programmes aimed at preventing and responding to DA

and sexual violence in Croydon. In line with the other local strategies reviewed so far, four priorities were identified for the period 2018-2021: preventing violence and abuse, provision of services, protection and partnership working.

Prevention. Great emphasis was given to children and young people in this area. Schools were targeted again as important venues in which to carry out preventative work and to educate, inform and challenge young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent. The College Ambassadors' Programme – promoting good practices and behaviours – will be expanded to more schools (Croydon Council, 2018). Furthermore, GPs are called to play an active role in spotting early sign of VAWG, referring patients and potential victims of DA and sexual violence.

Provision. Better quality services were envisaged to address specific needs of victims. New actions are devoted to tackling financial difficulties (including those with no Recourse to Public Funds and EEA migrants) and supporting hard-to-access communities (LGBT and minorities). A volunteer programme was established in order to provide emotional support to victims and families of VAWG. As the others so far examined, Croydon Strategy included an integrated approach focusing on both victims and perpetrators. For these, an embedded robust approach was elaborated which promotes the work of front line practitioners with fathers/men to challenge unhealthy behaviour and promote healthy role models. The core aim of this approach is to better understand the perpetrators' motives for their behaviour, to reduce their risk of re-offending.

Protection. Croydon VAWG Strategy prioritises the need to ensure the voice of the victims are heard. For this reason, constant consultation is in place with VAWG victims/survivors to inform practice and develop safe peer support. Among them, great emphasis is given to the voice of children and young people victims of VAWG.

Partnership. Multi-agency work is regarded by this VAWG Strategy as essential. Specific communication plans were set up to engage all Croydon practitioners and the wider public on the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) agenda. Multiple agencies are consistently engaged in order to provide an adequate response for those people with multiple needs, such as mental health, substance misuse, and disability. The Committee of the Adults and Children Safeguarding Boards was created to oversee the VAWG Strategy, enabling improved risk mitigation and needs-led interventions. Croydon's VAWG Strategy also highlights the importance of information sharing, clear and transparent ownership of actions as well as best practice exchange among different professionals involved in the programmes, such as health commissioners and providers, police and social services.

Oxfordshire

In 2016, Oxfordshire reviewed their current approach to tackling DA in the light of the VAWG strategy (Oxfordshire County Council, 2016). They found that between 2015 and 2016, there were 28,000 estimated victims of DA in Oxfordshire aged 15-59. Within this group, the highest rates were seen in 19-24 year-old women. The **Oxfordshire VAWG Strategy** joined the call for more work to be carried out with perpetrators within a multi-agency approach aimed at implementing early intervention to prevent VAWG.

Prevention The Champions Network was set up to train and support frontline professionals from different organisations to act as DA Champions. These organisations include the police, housing, schools, health care, social care, mental health, substance misuse, specialist DA services, solicitors and probation. The Champions will provide advice according to their own specific expertise, working together to support victims and provide them with the resources they need. Besides these DA Champions, the Reducing the Risk Website was created as a hub of advice and information for both the public and professionals.

Provision. The Oxfordshire VAWG Strategy stressed the need for new programmes addressing hard-to-reach communities, where DA is perpetrated, but few reports are made. Among these groups, the Strategy identifies older people, LGBTQ, people with a learning disability, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) groups, where DA is culturally tolerated, and people with physical disabilities. This Strategy also involved high-quality programmes to support victims, such as the Freedom Programme, a 12 week programme examining the beliefs and actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors to help victims to make sense of and understand what has happened to them. Another initiative is SAFE, which consists of 12 one-to-one sessions, focusing on Protective Behaviours and Restorative Approaches to help young people to regain a sense of safety and build their confidence after experiencing victimisation. With regard to the work on perpetrators, Oxfordshire's VAWG Strategy highlights the lack of perpetrators services in the area and the fact that the demand for DA services is higher than supply.

Protection. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) were set up to protect victims at high risk. Advisors provide post-trauma support, help victims to build resilience, explore options for the future and enable access to resources for long term safety and wellbeing. IDVAs also support parents to safeguard children. Additionally, the Sanctuary Scheme was created in Oxfordshire to help victims put in place security measures to feel safe in their own home. This service is accessible regardless of housing tenure.

Partnership. Multi-agency work is a priority in Oxfordshire and successful partnership working is seen between the IDVA service, Health Visitors and Home School Link Workers (HSLW). Stakeholders were strongly encouraged to work together and share relevant information. Other significant initiatives in this field include the creation of a local Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in 2014, which receives all new child safeguarding concerns. In the future, the main aim of MASH will be to share information concerning suspicions of hidden harm and the triage of DA notifications. MASH partner agencies include the police and probation services, health services, drug and alcohol services, city council and ambulance services (Oxfordshire County Council, 2016).

Bromley

The **Bromley VAWG Strategy** (London Borough of Bromley, 2016) was launched for a 3-year period (2016-2019). In line with the Government's priorities and with similar initiatives implemented at the national level, the Bromley VAWG Strategy aims to work as a framework for effective programmes addressing both victims and perpetrators. As in Warwickshire, Bromley Strategy ambitions focus on four main areas:

Prevention. Initiatives in this area focus on multiple aspects, such as providing DA training to all partner agencies in order to spot the signs of abuse and intervene as early as possible. Public awareness campaigns have been implemented to raise the profile of DA to the wider community. Social media (Twitter/Facebook/Instagram) were used, as well as international events, e.g. the UN International day for the elimination of VAWG. In parallel, school programmes already in place have continued to be delivered, such as the Healthy Relationships Programme. This programme aims to educate children in Bromley primary schools as to what a healthy relationship is, how to stay safe and who to talk to if they feel frightened (London Borough of Bromley, 2016).

Provision. This area aims at assisting victims by providing effective services, advice and support. Information on the services offered by partner agencies are shared by the Bromley DV/VAWG Forum to raise awareness of what services are available. For instance, the Children Social Care and Children's Early Intervention Teams provide support, advocacy and deliver age appropriate work in a range of educational, youth and Community settings. Moreover, specific services are offered to perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse by the Domestic Violence Intervention Programme (DVIP). This programme was designed for perpetrators who want to address their behaviour, by offering them support for personal change. DVIP is based on a wide range of approaches and addresses relevant themes, such as masculinity, sexual respect and intimate partner violence.

Protection. Great emphasis was given to the development of an effective criminal justice system by working towards prosecution. A domestic violence court was established in Bromley to shorten the time period necessary for a case to be processed from charge to a judicial outcome. As all other specialist domestic violence courts, Bromley court was provided with dedicated rooms for victims and witness and video evidencing facilities. Both prosecutors and magistrates receive DA training before assessing the cases.

Partnership. This area stresses the importance of multi-agency work between different stakeholders involved in the VAWG Strategy. This includes the development of governance arrangements for VAWG among partners with clear roles, accountability and monitoring processes. Within this framework, the Bromley DV/VAWG Forum was established in Bromley in order to ensure that services meet local needs. The Forum also stands as a platform to share best practices and innovative approaches to tackle VAWG. Various partner agencies are given the opportunity to present the service they provide, referral criteria, referral pathways, and service user feedback if available. Bromley VAWG Strategy also stresses the importance of information sharing between relevant agencies in order to improve the identification of abuse and the quality of support provided.

Essex

The **Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Joint Commissioning Strategy for DA 2015-2020** sets the guidelines for all initiatives aimed at tackling VAWG at the local level (Essex DA Strategic Board, 2015). In full accordance with the Transformation Fund, **the Essex VAWG Strategy**'s main aim is to 'assist partnerships and agencies across Greater Essex in delivering appropriate joined up responses to those affected by domestic abuse' (Southend Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board, 2015, p.5). In 2013, 26,000 DA incidents were reported in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. When considering non-reported incidents this figure is estimated to rise to 125,000. The reported figures also highlighted the hidden victimisation of the over 65-year-old population, a high percentage of repeat victims, and an urgent need for support for children and young people affected by DA (Southend Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board, 2015).

Prevention. Great attention was given to services delivered to young men in schools in order to educate them on healthy relationships. Future actions embedded in this Strategy include the development of a DA module to the Risk Avert education and preventative programmes to be delivered in schools across Greater Essex. Other actions useful to prevent VAWG include initiatives aimed at enhancing DA awareness within the community.

Provision. The VAWG Strategy stresses the need to deliver high quality support services to more victims and to effectively communicate the range of support programmes available. Additionally, buy in and engagement with victims in the area in which they live is regarded as essential, even in case of warrant relocation. Community-based services for victims are prioritised. Besides victims' services, programmes for DA perpetrators were identified as a priority. More initiatives are to be developed in both Criminal Justice and non-Criminal Justice settings focusing on referrals of different agencies including those providing substance misuse and mental health support.

Protection. The Essex VAWG Strategy aims at protecting victims by ensuring effective use of Police/Court Bail for perpetrator and by tailoring the support programmes to the victims primary needs, e.g. feeling safe and supported to get back to normal, receiving a quick response from the agencies and police, and understanding the impact of VAWG. Greater awareness should also be raised among front-line practitioners to improve signposting of victims and perpetrators to support services.

Partnership. Many provisions of the Essex VAWG Strategy involve partnership. Firstly, joint training for service providers across all agencies to increase the awareness of available support services. Partners and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to share relevant information to allow appropriate signposting and to improve the delivery of the programmes. Finally, Essex VAWG Strategy called for the development of MASH teams, with the longer-term aim of exploring the opportunity to develop single services covering Greater Essex.

The Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway

The Essex VAWG perpetrator pathway, evaluated in this report, consists of **a set of evidence-based perpetrator interventions** that respond to the Government's call for major actions at the local level to tackle VAWG and DA (HM Government, 2016). As suggested by the name, the focus on perpetrators – rather than on victims alone – is the main feature of the perpetrator pathway.

The main aims of the pathway address the four priority areas identified by local VAWG strategies so far reviewed, i.e. prevention, provision, protection and partnership. The pathway stresses the importance of *preventing* perpetrators (or potential perpetrators) from (re-)offending, identifying opportunities to prevent harm and reducing the escalation of risk of DA. In the field of *provision*, the pathway aims at improving the clarity and consistency of pathways into appropriate interventions so that access to services can also be facilitated. Initiatives within this area should also aim to foster

transformative change in the approach to perpetrators of DA across Essex and to increase the capacity within support services to manage increased (knock-on) demand.

Within *protection*, the pathway aimed to improve professionals' preparedness to challenge abusive and coercive behaviours as well as helping professionals better identify appropriate cohorts of service users by providing them with an increased specialist knowledge around VAWG issues. The pathway also gave much prominence to *partnership* and aimed at protecting victims through collaborative working. Multi-agency, collaborative leadership, information sharing and exchange of evidence-based good practice were also targeted as core aims of the pathway within the partnership area.

The four interventions that formed the perpetrator pathway model are as follows, and are evaluated in this report:

1. The Community Perpetrator outreach programme (**The Change Project**) delivered by the Change Project
2. The Bystander Intervention (**Bringing in the Bystander**) delivered by Essex University and Anglia Ruskin University.
3. The Prison-based intervention (**CHOICES Programme**) delivered by The Essex Community Rehabilitation Company Limited
4. The Male-mentoring programme (**The Good Man Project**) delivered by the Essex County Council Youth Services

Over three years (2016-2019), these initiatives aimed to reach around 1,100 perpetrators in Greater Essex.

METHODS

Overall design

A mixed-methods methods approach was utilised with two concurrent phases, as outlined below:

Phase One – Procedural effectiveness

This phase explored the extent to which intervention policy and procedure aims have been implemented and the strategic objectives of the programme have been met (i.e., reduction of reoffending; reduction of harm; improvement in clarity and consistency of pathways into appropriate interventions).

Firstly, the extent to which the individual interventions have met their key deliverables was assessed by obtaining data on programme delivery and engagement. This data was collated and analysed on a number of objective outcome measures/indicators (where available, such as programme completion numbers, number of referrals, reoffending, etc).

Secondly, an online survey was conducted with VAWG stakeholders in order to identify perceived benefits, facilitators, barriers and challenges to effective implementation of policy and procedure, and achievement of the strategic objectives of the programme.

Phase Two – Progress and outcome effectiveness

The second phase explored efficacy for intervention participants. Through qualitative interviews with service providers and users, and anonymised feedback forms completed by participants, self-reported feedback data was captured exploring experiences and perceptions of the impact of the VAWG perpetrator pathway.

Data collection and participants

This evaluation used a mixture of new and existing data. Existing data was provided by the individual interventions, and new data was collected from stakeholders and service users through interviews and surveys. Data included both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

Existing data

The individual interventions were asked to provide the following existing data (if available):

- Information/documentation on the policies, procedures and aims of the individual interventions;
- Delivery and engagement data: target number of beneficiaries, beneficiary referral, engagement and completions;
- Existing outcome data: Beneficiary feedback/evaluation, outcome measures (i.e. changes in attitudes towards DA, validated questionnaires etc.), data on reoffending;
- Any other data deemed relevant to the evaluation.

Stakeholder survey

An online stakeholder survey was designed by the research team using www.onlinesurveys.co.uk (formerly Bristol Online Surveys). This survey was designed to be completed by stakeholders in Essex with direct involvement in delivering the pathway, referring beneficiaries to the pathway, oversight of the pathway or with a vested interest in DA services.

The stakeholder survey was distributed by the SET DA Coordinator to all relevant service providers and stakeholders who come into contact with DA cases. This included those involved in delivering the four perpetrator interventions, and associated agencies such as the council, police and social services, and community support services throughout Southend, Essex and Thurrock.

The survey collected feedback on the barriers and facilitators, achievement and challenges associated with the implementation of the VAWG perpetrator pathway, and whether it had met its strategic aims. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

Interviews

Interviews and focus groups were carried out with those managing and facilitating the interventions, and those who had taken part in them (where access was possible and appropriate). For each intervention, at least two service providers or delivery managers were interviewed. This convenience sample included at least one individual with experience of delivering the intervention and at least one individual with broader oversight of implementation and management of the intervention. Service users were recruited for interviews from those who had taken part in the interventions directly.

Interview guides were developed collaboratively by the research team. Interviews with managers/facilitators covered a beneficiaries' journey through the intervention (in the form of a case study), barriers and facilitators to the delivery of the intervention, achievement and possible improvements. Interviews with beneficiaries covered feedback on their experience of the intervention, including the benefits or risks of taking part, any impact or changes made to their life

following the intervention, what they did and didn't like, and any suggested improvements. Copies of the interview protocols used can be found in Appendix 2.

The Change Project: The Domestic Abuse Services Manager and facilitator of this programme were interviewed. Four perpetrators who had taken part in the intervention were recruited for interview through the facilitator, who acted as a gatekeeper. We were also provided with anonymised feedback from 6 agencies who used the consultation service, and amalgamated feedback from 15 attendees of a workshop focused on 'coercive control'.

The Bystander Intervention: The implementation leads for this project at both Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Essex were interviewed. Difficulties caused by two changes in intervention staff that occurred during the evaluation meant that we were unable to complete the intended focus groups with participants of this intervention at the University of Essex. We were provided with a summary analysis of feedback from 229 participants, and a summary analysis of the Bystander Efficacy Scale (assessing confidence in a number of bystander actions), completed by 206 participants. Due to difficulties in the implementation of this intervention at Anglia Ruskin University (described in the Results section; it is now intended that a different intervention will be implemented in September 2019), we were not able to interview intervention participants.

CHOICES Project: The intervention delivery manager and two facilitators for this intervention took part in a focus group. We were unable to interview perpetrators for this intervention, as all were either still in custody, or no longer a client of the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). Instead we were provided with 15 anonymised feedback forms completed by the majority of perpetrators following completion of the intervention, and 15 reports for each participants, completed by the facilitators of the intervention.

The Goodman Project: The Operations Manager, Youth Advisor and facilitator of this intervention were interviewed. Due to service users being under 18, we were not able to interview participants of this intervention. We were however provided with 15 anonymised feedback forms from each of the schools who took part in the intervention, and anonymised extracts from 102 feedback forms completed by participants.

Procedures

Ethical approval and consent

Ethical approval was granted by the Department Research Ethics Panel at Anglia Ruskin University. Consent for the online stakeholder survey was assumed by completion of the survey. Interview/focus group participants were provided with participant information sheets outlining the evaluation and

interviews, and were asked to sign a consent form if they were happy to take part. Participants who took part in an interview by telephone rather than face-to-face either emailed a signed consent form to the research team, or provided consent verbally.

Stakeholder Survey

An invitation to take part in the online survey was distributed to stakeholders by SET Domestic Abuse Coordinator. This included a link to enable them to take part online. Email reminders were sent out regularly over a 3-month period to encourage stakeholders to complete the survey.

Interviews/Focus groups

Managers and facilitators: Face-to-face and telephone interviews and focus groups were conducted with the delivery managers and facilitators of each of the interventions. Contact details for the main points of contact for each intervention were provided to the research team by the PFCC's office and were contacted directly for interview. When face-to-face, interviews took place at either the organisations offices, or at Anglia Ruskin University.

Beneficiaries: Interviews with beneficiaries from the Change Project took place over the telephone as this was more convenient for participants. The outreach worker for the Change Project acted as gatekeeper and provided the research team with contact details for beneficiaries who were willing to take part. The research team then contacted the beneficiaries directly to arrange a convenient time for interview.

All interviews/focus groups were recorded for the purpose of transcription, and lasted between 10 and 90 minutes. Participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the evaluation (including procedures for maintaining confidentiality and right to withdraw from the study), and were asked to sign a consent form, or verbally give consent, before taking part.

Data analysis

The analysis was guided by the main aims of the evaluation, enabling an in-depth analysis of:

- the extent to which stakeholders feel the VAWG has improved outcomes for perpetrators and victims;
- barriers and challenges to the ability of the programme to achieve these outcomes;
- innovative aspects of the intervention;
- areas for improvement to inform future commissioning decisions and the development of DA interventions.

Quantitative analysis

Stakeholder survey: Data from the stakeholder survey was downloaded into a statistical analysis software package (SPSS) and presented using frequencies and means (median and mode). Qualitative feedback data collected in this survey was analysed using the same thematic analysis method outlined below.

Existing data: Existing data on delivery and engagement was provided to the research team in excel spreadsheets and is presented descriptively, using percentages where appropriate. Any existing beneficiary feedback data provided in a qualitative format was analysed using the same thematic analysis method outlined below.

Qualitative analysis

The interview/focus group data was transcribed verbatim by an external transcription service (UK Transcription) and uploaded into a qualitative data analysis software package (NVivo). Data were submitted to a rigorous thematic analysis following the widely used procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process provided core thematic material related to participants' experiences and the impact of the programme, and consisted of six stages:

- 1) Data familiarisation: Transcribing, reading and re-reading the data for content familiarity
- 2) Generating initial codes: Systematically coding the data and collating data relevant to each code
- 3) Searching for themes: Grouping codes into potential themes, collating all data relevant to a particular theme
- 4) Reviewing themes: Confirming that themes make sense in relation to codes and overall data set, producing a 'thematic map' of potential themes
- 5) Defining and naming themes: Refining the specifics of each theme, clarifying content of themes and giving each theme a clear name, describing the overall 'story' the analysis tells
- 6) Producing the report: Detailed presentation of the evidence underpinning each theme, selection of data extracts to illustrate themes.

RESULTS

Stakeholder survey

The stakeholder survey was distributed to approximately 60 individuals and was completed by 23 individuals (a response rate of 38%). Respondents came from a number of different types of organisations shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey respondent organisations

Organisation Type	Number of respondents
Youth Services	2
Police	4
Councils	5
Schools	2
Community Support Services	8
Domestic Abuse Support Services	2

Respondents' roles varied and included service and team managers, family support workers, social workers, practitioners, police officers, safeguarding leads, and the campaign manager and coordinator of the VAWG perpetrator pathway. Respondents were from across the county of Essex. Four respondents reported not being involved with or aware of the VAWG perpetrator pathway and therefore were excluded from analysis.

Structured questions

Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses for each of the structured questions, which respondents scored on a five-point scale (Extremely effective, Very Effective, Moderately effective, Slightly effective, Not at all effective). Average responses are presented using median (middle response) and modes (most common response) in Appendix 3. One respondent did not complete the questions included in Table 2, and was excluded from the analysis.

Figure 1 shows that, for most of the questions, the majority of respondents chose the 'Very effective' or 'Extremely effective' response, and this is reflected in the median and modes shown in Appendix 3. This suggests that on average stakeholders felt that the VAWG perpetrator pathway had achieved its strategic aims and objectives.

The following aspects were seen as the least effective on average (however, all still received at least a 'Moderately Effective' median and mode):

- Informing professionals about evidence-based good practice;
- Facilitating the production and dissemination of shared learning materials;
- Increasing capacity within support services to manage increased (knock-on) demand;
- Achieving transformative change in the approach to perpetrators of DA across Essex.

Four respondents reported not being involved in or aware of the pathway suggesting that outside of those who have been directly involved in the pathway, there was little awareness of the VAWG perpetrator pathway.

Figure 1. How effective do you think the Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway has been in the following areas:



Open-text questions

When asked what worked well in the delivery of the VAWG perpetrator pathway, a number of respondents commented that having additional specialist services was, in itself, **very positive**. A quick and efficient referral process was mentioned by some, as well as better communication between agencies. In particular, having an engaging and **effective early intervention for young males** (the Goodman Project) was mentioned by a number of respondents.

'The facilitator [of the Goodman Project] was very good at engaging the young people he worked with and enabling them to recognise positive relationships.'

Furthermore, the consultancy service provided by the **Change Project** was also a very popular aspect of the pathway, enabling stakeholders to get much needed advice and guidance.

'The clear guidance and support. Having case consultations to discuss ideas to help influence practice.'

The **Goodman Project** was further mentioned by a number of respondents when asked what the pathways greatest achievement was. Other respondents felt that the greatest achievement of the pathway was the promotion of partnership working between different agencies.

'Developing partnership working and providing a space for effective information sharing.'

However, respondents felt that a key **challenge in the delivery** of the pathway had been a **lack of awareness**. A number of respondents reporting they were not aware of the pathway, or that their colleagues had not been aware.

'Some staff have mentioned that they were not aware of the pathway, which could be for many reasons, so spreading the message is key.'

Recommendations for future delivery of the perpetrator interventions again centred on **raising awareness** amongst services and professionals more widely.

'Promoting on a larger scale in Essex.'

Others mentioned the need for a **robust evidence base/evaluation** of perpetrator interventions, and expanded the services beyond what is currently available. Furthermore, information sharing/security and collaborative working was seen as something that could also be improved.

'Improvements could be made by reiterating to professionals the service that is available and having information to give to perpetrators in written/leaflet format available for professionals to give out.'

The Change Project – A Community Outreach Perpetrator Programme

The Initiative

The Outreach Perpetrator Programme is part of a wider portfolio provided by 'The Change Project', a counselling and DA prevention support service¹. The service is based on the Safe and Together Model, a field-tested approach developed in the US (Mandel, 2013), which emphasises the importance of intervention in child welfare cases in which DA is a feature, and working to keep the non-offending parent and child together. The Safe and Together Model consists of a set of assumptions and principles and critical components for use in DA cases, that help to improve identification, assessment, documents, case-planning and decision-making.

This intervention was developed following recognition that there were a number of practitioners who felt unskilled and unable to make decisions regarding cases involving perpetration of DA. As such, two components to the service were developed: a consultation service and workshops for organisations who come across cases in which DA is a feature, and a Violence Prevention programme for men or women referred to the service who have shown abusive behaviour in their relationships.

The Change Project works together with family, community and drug and alcohol services, with the following **aims**:

- To **provide expert services** with within SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) in cases where DA is a feature, including:
 - Case management – consultation and support;
 - Referral and risk assessment of male or female perpetrators;
 - Referral and identification of support needs for male or female victims/survivors.
- To work with partners to ensure the outreach service is **engaging with hard-to-reach clients**. This may be done by way of joint visits, attending partnership meetings, or dissemination of information (leaflets/Posters).
- To work with organisations to **upskill practitioners** on identifying clients using abusive behaviour, and to provide relevant training to partner organisations staff
- To provide **workshops** on how to work with perpetrators, where the main aim is to identify, encourage and motivate change.
- To provide **perpetrator prevention consultation** and support to practitioners working with families who are experiencing DA.

¹ <https://www.thechange-project.org/>

- To **establish links** with family support organisations to provide information about specialist organisations able to support families experiencing DA.
- To develop innovative ways **in engaging hard-to-reach perpetrators** of DA.
- To **link with local community groups** to identify potential service users.
- To provide **proactive support and safety planning** for victims whose (ex)partners are referred to the Violence Prevention Programme.
- To **improve joint working** and influence cultural and structural practices.
- To provide clients engaged with the Outreach Services up to **10 individual sessions** with an Outreach Worker.

The **Violence Prevention Programme** is an intervention developed by the Change Project Caseworker, and is based on the Duluth Model, and the Caledonian System:

- The **Duluth Model** was developed by Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, and used in cases in which DA is used as a means for men to exhibit power and establish control over their female partners (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The focus of this model is on the coordination of community responses to empower and protect the survivors of DA while holding the perpetrators accountable (Mankowski, Haaken, & Silvergleid, 2002; Pence & Paymar, 1993). The model incorporates both education and cognitive-behavioural techniques. The Duluth Model has a robust evidence-base, which supports the importance of power and control in cases of DA (Bohall, Bautista, & Musson, 2016).
- The **Caledonian System** has been developed by Respect as a non-gendered programme, which enables work with both men and women perpetrators. This approach emphasises the need to work with the family as a whole, and encompasses a wider system of multi-agency working. The Caledonian System uses a person-centred approach coupled with cognitive behavioural techniques in order to encourage men and women to recognise their abuse and take responsibility for themselves and their relationship with their ex/partners and children. Evaluation of this system indicates that following the programme, perpetrators posed a lower risk, and victims felt safer (Ormston, Mullholland, & Setterfield, 2016).

The Violence Prevention Programme can be delivered as either group-based or one-to-one sessions. Group work programmes will be delivered in 9 modules, with each module being 3 weeks in duration. The 1:1 programmes are delivered over 18-20 weeks.

Criteria for suitability to the intervention are as follows:

- Aged 18+

- Show accountability for their abusive behaviour
- Have no significant mental health issues*
- Have no significant drug and alcohol issues*
- Are not currently on licence for a domestic abuse relate conviction
- *Mental health and drug and alcohol issues are to be explored and, where necessary, an expert diagnoses/opinion sought. Where the issues would impact on the client's ability to engage and participate on a DA prevention programme, the client would be encouraged to address his/her mental health, drug or alcohol issue with the support of an appropriate team first. If the client embarks on additional treatment, the case worker will liaise with the agency involved and if and when appropriate, the DA prevention programme can resume.

Engagement and delivery figures

The service was expected to engage 150 clients a year, based on 1.5 workers, with an average caseload of 100 service users per FTE staff member. Prior to January 2019, there was one full-time Outreach Worker (OW). The remaining OW post has now been filled, bringing the staffing level to 2 FTE; 0.5 FTE above previous expected staffing for this Service. To reflect reduced staffing levels in the first 9 months of the project, the expected number of clients engaged in the Outreach Service during the 2018/19 financial year was revised to 125.

Table 2 shows the expected and actual numbers of client engagement. The caseworker was aware of just one case of a perpetrator being arrested and convicted of a DA offence following completion of the intervention. This was with the caveat that the caseworkers were not often informed of client reoffending, unless they were informed through other organisations, such as social services.

Table 2. Engagement and delivery figures for the Change Project.

Apr 18- Mar 19	Expected client engagement	Outreach Service Referrals, including consultations	Intervention offered	Client engagement in intervention	Client non- completions
Q1	20	29	7	6	0
Q2	35	51	6	3	3
Q3	35	48	11	9	2
Q4	35	16	3	3	0
Total	125	144	27	21	5

Table 2 suggests that a higher number of clients were engaged (including both perpetrators and consultations with other organisations) than was expected. There was a 78% take up rate of those who engaged with the intervention when it was offered, and a 24% non-completion rate of perpetrators who engaged with the intervention to completion. Client non-completions were defined as a client assessed as suitable who did not commence the Intervention offered. As the intervention is voluntary, clients can decide to withdraw at any time following commencement – this was not considered a ‘non-completion’.

The user experience

Two case studies provide an outline of the user journey through the perpetrator intervention provided by the Change Project.

Case Study 1: Male client, low risk, short engagement.

This client was referred by the Social Services Assessment and Intervention team in Essex. This was following an incident reported to them by the Ambulance service, who attended the attempted suicide of his female partner. The female partner made allegations of emotional abuse and coercive control against the client. This was witnessed by the couple’s two children, and as such was referred to social services. There was no indication or allegation of violence in this case.

The client was very willing to participate in the intervention, and an initial assessment determined there was a standard risk of escalation. The client acknowledged that there were changes that could be made to improve the relationship. It was determined that for this client the most suitable intervention would be around raising his awareness of what DA is, and how it is related to his own behaviour.

The second session focused on respect, emotional abuse and active listening, and discussions around decision-making in relation to the client’s previous behaviour. This approach was largely strength-based, focusing on situations in which the client’s behaviour had promoted a healthy interpersonal relationship, and how this could be replicated in the future.

The intervention concluded after this session, as the OW felt that they had covered what was required. The client had been very willing to engage in thinking about unhealthy behaviour in his relationship. The client was signposted to agencies he could access in the community for further support. The client’s female partner was also referred to a DA support service. The OW was not aware of any further incidents involving this client.

Case Study 2: Male client, higher risk, maximum engagement

The client was referred through a family community support service following the involvement of social services in Essex. The incident involved the client threatening and intimidating his female partner, with the couple's three children present in the house. There was no further action taken by the police, but a referral was made to the Change Project.

At the outset of the intervention, it was clear that the client saw the programme as something that was necessary to appease social services. However, the OW managed to identify areas that the client was willing to work on during the assessment. This was mainly focussed on emotional and verbal abuse towards his partner, which the client acknowledged was unhealthy for his relationship.

The sessions extensively covered the Duluth Power and Control Wheel, a tool that helps explain the different ways an abusive partner can use power and control to manipulate a relationship. The client showed signs of extensive controlling behaviour, which required the OW to cover a broad range of issues, including communication, assertiveness, listening, emotional management or mismanagement, looking at specific incidents to ascertain how to deescalate behaviour in the future. The client also had alcohol and gambling issues, and was not engaging with support services to address these issues, despite the OW signposting to other agencies.

During the course of the 10 sessions, the client's relationship broke down, and the OW helped the client to manage the separation and the development of a co-parenting relationship. The intervention was concluded with signposting to other agencies for further support. The OW was not aware of any further incidents involving this client.

Contribution to VAWG aims and objectives

The implementation of the Community Outreach service within the Change Project has contributed to the overall aims of the VAWG pathway in the following ways:

1. **Identifying opportunities to prevent harm & reducing the risk of escalation:** One of the main focuses of this programme is to reduce risk. This is through both direct work with perpetrators and with other agencies to upskill professionals who come into contact with DA cases.

'Certainly reducing risk, that's the main outcome. Whether that's through direct work, whether that's through work with another professional involved in the family to enhance the work that they're doing, increase their confidence to engage a perpetrator in the direct work that they're doing' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

Participants who had taken part in the one-to-one intervention all felt as though they the intervention had a **positive impact on their behaviour**, providing them with techniques to avoid escalation, and leading some to reevaluate their relationships.

'I was in a really bad situation and she made me think, "You know what? She's right, I'm not doing this"... If she didn't say that, I would have probably gone and done it, and it would have been bad consequences because of it' Change Project Participant 2.

'It's led me to do a bit of deep thinking, and work out where I've been going wrong, and what's been going wrong, and it's led me to divorce, which is actually the logical conclusion of what's been going wrong' Change Project Participant 4.

All participants suggested they would recommend the service to others. One participant in particular felt that this had impacted on his life and behaviour more broadly, reducing the risk of aggressive behaviour more generally.

'It helps currently in all aspects, not just relationship-wise. Road rage and everything like that, every aspect, you could get annoyed and it just helps with every aspect' Change Project Participant 1.

2. Improving clarity and consistency of pathways and access into appropriate interventions:

The Change Project provides both a direct intervention for perpetrators and signposting to other agencies that can provide support. Participants felt that the programme had given them an opportunity to change their behaviour, and emphasised that there was not much support available to them.

'I'm father to a new-born baby and we're trying to give it a go now, after all this Social has cleared and everything has cleared, we're actually kind of making a go of it. That's enabled me to have that chance, rather than be over-looked completely' Change Project Participant 1.

'That's the only help I'm getting at the moment. I've asked social services for so much help. I even put myself to [organisation name], nothing. She's the only thing I've got at the moment' Change Project Participant 2

3. **Helping professionals better identify cohorts of service users; improving professionals' preparedness to challenge abusive and coercive behaviours; helping develop specialist knowledge and informing professionals about evidence-based good practice:** The consultation service and workshops provided by the Change Project upskill practitioners in dealing with cases that feature DA, and identifying the behaviours associated with this.

Five agency feedback forms and amalgamated workshop feedback were very positive. These suggested an **easy and efficient referral system**, and a number of positive outcomes. These included effective signposting of perpetrators and families to appropriate services, case management support, direct support for families and successful perpetrator intervention. All organisations confirmed that would use the service again for referral.

Ten of the fifteen participants of a 'Coercive Control' workshop carried out on the 11th July 2018 also provided feedback on the session. Participants emphasised how informative the workshop was, and a number of the comments centred on **gaining new knowledge and resources/tools** to use with perpetrators of DA.

Stakeholders from the Change Project emphasised the need to upskill practitioners who are not often provided with training in this area. As a result practitioners reported that they feel better equipped to deal with and support cases in which DA features.

'There is an expectation that certain workers need to be doing things with perpetrators when it doesn't feel very safe to the practitioner... the feedback I'm getting is it is proving to be really helpful, really successful in terms of the support the practitioners are getting' Change Project Stakeholder 1.

Obstacles/limitations

There were very few limitations reported by participants of the intervention, except for individual comments around accessibility of buildings and timing of sessions. However, stakeholders mentioned a few obstacles that they had encountered in implementing and running the intervention:

1. **Practical restrictions:** Stakeholders mentioned difficulties that were experienced as a result of working with different agencies, including getting in and out of restricted buildings, and in terms of information sharing. For example, ensuring access to safe and secure email services.

'We are working with agencies, we are not members of staff within the agencies, trying to get in to buildings and get around buildings, those kinds of things. In terms of information sharing, that's an issue' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

2. **Funding:** Stakeholders indicated that the nature of funding limited what they were able to achieve, and that this had knock-on effects on staffing and the number of clients they were able to support.

'the amount of funding hasn't worked so well because we haven't been able to achieve... we would be able to work with obviously more cases if we had more people' Change Project Stakeholder 1.

3. **Partnership working:** Working with and referring beneficiaries to some agencies was mentioned as a challenge by stakeholders, and this limited information sharing around victim support and reoffending. This resistance to collaborative working and information sharing from some organisations had reduced the ability to follow up following referrals, and to evidence certain KPIs (particularly reoffending and victim outcomes).

'We can say we've referred the victim for support, but we don't know whether they've taken it up' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

Innovative aspects

The outreach perpetrator and consultation services provided by the Change Project were designed to **fill gaps in provision** that are not currently available to practitioners and perpetrators in Essex. Prior to development of the programme, the OW consulted with a number of professionals to determine what would be useful. This had enabled the service to begin to address the needs of both practitioners and perpetrators, that otherwise may not be met.

'The outreach service, as we've developed it thus far, is looking to fill gaps, not replicate' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

'I mean, what she has discovered is there is still that lack of skills. There is an expectation that certain workers need to be doing things with perpetrators when it doesn't feel very safe to the practitioner' Change Project Stakeholder 1.

Additionally, the direct intervention can be tailored to the client, both in terms of length and content. This **flexibility** enables the OW to address the specific needs of the client, rather than follow a pre-determined specification. Because the intervention is also voluntary, this puts the client at the centre of the intervention, empowering them both to decide whether or not to take part, and to input into what is covered in the sessions.

'It can be tailored. That probably feels more meaningful to somebody than doing an entire programme where, maybe, there are bits of it that you simply don't relate to' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

Future improvements

Participants in the intervention had few suggestions for future improvements, and felt the support they had received has usefully impacted on their behaviour. However, stakeholders and clients had a few suggestions for further development of the programme.

1. **A structured framework:** The outreach programme currently works on a flexible basis, tailoring support to meet the needs of those receiving it. However, both stakeholders felt that over time a framework could be developed based on the most successful aspects of the intervention. Furthermore, one participant and a stakeholder felt that a more structured conclusion to the sessions would be beneficial.

'While that is an approach that, I think, has benefits, I do think that it would be helpful, perhaps, to, in year two, start to consider the trends and the themes and put some structure around it' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

'It doesn't have a conclusion as such. I think that would be a help, if it had a conclusion, but I don't know how you would come to a conclusion' Change project Participant 4.

2. **Hard-to-reach clients:** Stakeholders felt that they had not quite managed to engage hard-to-reach clients, and that this should be a focus going forward, including LGBTQ, traveller and BAMER communities.

'My ambition for year two is to develop it towards hard to reach communities... To try to extend it to those, perhaps, where there are additional barriers, and that's in my opinion what true outreach work is, that's going to take a little bit longer to do' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

3. **Expand to other agencies:** There were additional agencies that stakeholders felt they had not yet been able to engage with the Change Project. For example, more adult-facing and health-based services. This was suggested as an aim for the project going forward, in order to reach a wider range of practitioners and perpetrators.

'So year two is about, I think, looking at, "Where are we not?"' Change Project Stakeholder 2.

'I think she's had some barriers in terms of health visiting is one of the difficult ones to get into, which would be really helpful, particularly mental health' Change Project Stakeholder 1.

The Bystander Intervention – University of Essex

The Initiative

Bringing in the Bystander® is an intervention that was originally developed by the Prevention Innovations Research Centre at the University of New Hampshire² as a workshop that teaches bystanders **how to safely intervene** in situations in which sexual violence, domestic violence or stalking are occurring or are at risk of occurring. This initiative was designed around a **bystander intervention model**, which suggests that community norms play a significant role in the perpetration of violence, particularly on university campuses (Schwartz & DeKeserdy, 2000). As such, the **main objectives** of this intervention are to help students, academics, professional services staff and community members to:

- Identify behaviours on a continuum of violence;
- Develop empathy for those who have experienced violence;
- Practice safe and appropriate intervention skills;
- Commit to intervene before, during and after an incident of sexual abuse, relationship violence and stalking occurs.

The training programme involves an introduction to **bystander responsibility** in the student community, definitions and local examples and statistics, active learning exercises focused on the continuum of sexual violence, and discussions around identifying and intervening safely in risky situations. Participants sign ‘bystander pledges’ at the end of the session and are able to take away ‘Active Bystanders Care’ cards which remind them of the process for intervening safely.

The initiative can be run in 1 or 3 sessions, with the University of Essex choosing the 1 session delivery programme. The sessions are delivered to students and staff, 3 times a week. The initiative was run initially by staff when it was launched in 2017, and subsequently six students staff have been trained to facilitate the sessions. **Delivery** consists of a presentation followed by active learning activities asking participants how they would respond to certain incidents. The original programme was adapted to ensure relevance in the UK context, as the initiative enables customisation to incorporate local resources and relevant examples. The sessions **can also be tailored** to address concerns within specific cohorts or groups (for example, societies within the University). There is also an evaluation component

² <https://cola.unh.edu/prevention-innovations-research-center/evidence-based>

to the sessions, and participants are asked to complete measures of attitudes towards bystander intervention before and after taking part in the session, as well as a feedback form.

Bringing in the Bystander® already has a **robust evidence-base**, showing positive shifts in the likelihood of bystander action across a number of populations in both men and women (Cares et al., 2015; Moynihan, Banyard, Arnold, Eckstein, & Stapleton, 2010, 2011; Potter & Moynihan, 2011). The Prevention Innovations Research Centre report that 365 colleges, universities, health centres and coalitions now use the intervention across a number of different countries¹.

Engagement and delivery figures

Table 3 shows that the expected beneficiary engagement was realised in Semester 2 2018, between June and November. However, there was a 19.6% drop out rate, with 55 individuals signing up but not attending the sessions. Due to the nature of the intervention, it was not possible to collect data around offending or reoffending in this cohort.

Table 3. Engagement and delivery figures for the Bystander Intervention in Semester 2 (June-Nov) 2018.

Expected beneficiary engagement	Actual beneficiary engagement	Beneficiary completion	Beneficiary non-completion
280	280	225	55

Contribution to VAWG overall aims

The implementation of the Bystander Intervention at the University of Essex has contributed to the VAWG perpetrator pathways overall aims in the following ways:

1. **Identifying opportunities to prevent harm & reducing the risk of escalation:** The initiative provides participants with an understanding of the skills required to intervene in potentially risk and difficult situations, to prevent escalation and harm to victims.

‘It equips people who attend to safely intervene, to safely report, in order to prevent an incident escalating or getting any worse’ Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

A summary of data analysis was provided by the University of Essex³, from the Bystander Efficacy scale, in which participants are asked to complete prior to attending the session and after they have completed the session. This scale requires participants to rate how confident they are in carrying out a number of behaviours on a scale of 1-100. A copy of this scale can be found in Appendix 4.

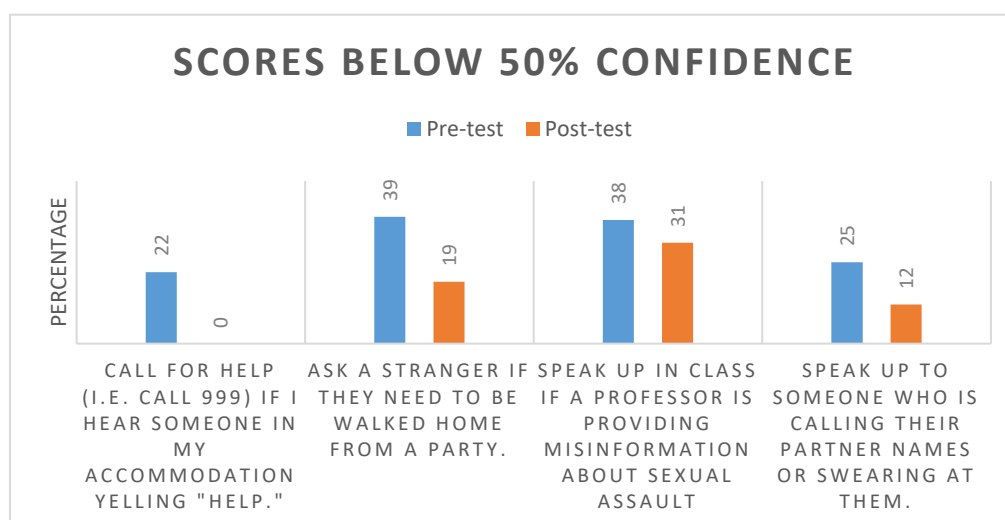


Figure 2. Percentage confidence levels on the Bystander Efficacy Scale, pre and post-intervention.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of participants scoring below 50% confidence on the questions shown. This shows that the intervention had addressed **confidence in calling for help** particularly well, as no one scored below 50% in confidence on this question.

2. **Improving access to interventions:** The Bystander Intervention is open to 280 participants each semester, as shown in Table 3 above, providing a large scale opportunity to educate and equip participants with an understanding of what sexual violence is, and how to intervene safely.
3. **Achieving transformative change:** The Bystander Intervention aims to create a **change in culture** around bystander responsibility and recognising behaviours that constitute sexual and interpersonal violence. At the University of Essex, stakeholders reported that the reporting of instances of sexual violence have increased following intervention sessions. Whilst we cannot be sure that this is directly caused by the intervention, it may be that it has increased awareness following the sessions has led to individuals feeling more confident in reporting incidents.

³ N.B. A summary analysis was provided for the four questions shown in Figure 1, however data for the remaining questions was not provided.

'We have found that there is an increase following some of the those training sessions, that people then think, "Okay, actually, I never knew that was wrong," or, "I don't realise that this...," and then they report it through Report and Support' Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

Obstacles/limitations

It was reported that certain groups had been **hard to engage** in the intervention. These were often groups that had been asked to complete the sessions following concerns about behaviour and culture within that group. This led to reduced engagement in the sessions compared to those who had volunteered to take part.

'There are certainly some groups of people that may be asked to go along, begrudgingly, because of allegations, and then you don't get the same level of engagement. You get people looking at their phones. You get people not taking it seriously, and possibly making a joke out of it, so I'd say that's a barrier' Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

Additional limitations of the intervention emerged from a summary analysis of the Bystander Efficacy scale (as shown in Figure 2). This suggested that there were certain areas that the intervention had not addressed well enough for participants to feel confident in carrying out the following behaviours (i.e. a number of students scored below 50 on a 1-100 scale of confidence):

- Speaking up in class if a professor is providing misinformation about sexual assault;
- Asking a stranger if they need to be walked home from a party;
- Speaking up to someone who is calling their partner names or swearing at them.

Innovative Aspects

The University of Essex have made a particular effort to **target at-risk groups**, and groups (often university societies), in which there have been allegations or observations of inappropriate behaviours. This focused approach to participation has enabled the intervention to be used as an **early intervention technique** in this context.

'We have specific sports societies where there are concerns about them. It's been quite difficult. We've addressed that with the sports societies and said, "Put them all on Bystander"' Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

Future Improvements

A number of improvements were suggested based on 229 feedback forms completed by participants of the intervention. The University of Essex provided the research team with a summary analysis of these feedback forms. The following improvements were most commonly suggested:

1. **Better time management:** A number of the intervention participants felt that they did not have enough time to complete the tasks in the session. Other participants felt that the session was too long. This suggests that better time management in general is required in the sessions, to keep participants engaged, and to give them enough time to complete the required tasks.
2. **Practical skills:** Intervention participants suggested that the sessions could involve more practical skills and techniques that they could use in real-life scenarios to intervene safely. There was also suggestion that the sessions could provide more engaging and interactive activities that would help to foster these skills.
3. **More relevant examples:** Intervention participants felt that the sessions could be tailored to include more local and relevant example from the local area and the UK more broadly. This was supported by qualitative data from stakeholder interviews.

'I think some feedback has also been that they'd like more scenarios, more UK-based ones. A lot of the examples that are given in the course are instances of sexual violence occurring on campuses in America' Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

Furthermore, it was felt by both intervention participants and stakeholders that examples should include those relevant to the LGBTQ community.

'We also don't have any focus on LGBTQ Plus communities either. The examples are based on straight examples, and we have actually had feedback from the LGBT Society saying, "Actually, it could include some more examples of how it can affect us"' Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

4. **Compulsory sessions:** A fairly common suggestion was that the intervention should be made compulsory to students. The University of Essex have made steps towards this by suggesting completion by at-risk groups to prevent the escalation of inappropriate behaviours following allegations.

5. **Consent training:** Some intervention participants and a stakeholder suggested that more should be included in the training around consent. Indeed, the University of Essex have added the 'Tea and Consent' video produced by Thames Valley Police⁴ to the Bystander Intervention.

'I think that we need to include more about consent in the programme. I think it's predominantly linked to being a good Bystander and intervening, but I think it's so closely linked with what consent is, and our students' conception of consent and yet, I think we don't then give a summary about what consent is' Bystander Intervention Stakeholder 1.

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ>

The Bystander Intervention – Anglia Ruskin University

At the point of this evaluation, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) had been unable to implement the Bringing in the Bystander® intervention, for a number of reasons outlined below. Instead, ARU now intends to use the VAWG funds to implement Self Defence classes on its Chelmsford Campus, following the success of these on its Cambridge Campus.

Obstacles and limitations

ARU initially intended to implement the intervention following discussion with the University of Essex and the success of their roll out. However, **difficulties were experienced** in replicating the intervention to the ARU Chelmsford Campus. The following obstacles were identified from qualitative interview data regarding the implementation of the Bystander Intervention at the ARU Chelmsford Campus:

1. **Staff concerns:** Despite initial enthusiasm for the intervention, changes in staffing within ARU's Student Union resulted in a change of focus to broader campaigns around sexual violence and student safeguarding, and concerns around the content of the course being too limited. As Student Union staff would be central to the implementation of the programme, it was felt that there wasn't enough support for this particular intervention.
2. **Student engagement:** Difficulty in engaging students out of standard course hours was identified as a particular concern. This was seen to be specific to the Chelmsford Campus, in which there was a history of students signing up but not attending out of hours sessions. Relatedly, it was felt that the framing of sexual violence in the Bystander Intervention may be seen by students as a political move by the university to control behaviour, rather than a community effort to reduce risk.
3. **Facilitator expertise:** It was felt that the expertise to run the intervention was not available, and that a better model would be one in which external specialist expertise was brought in to the university to tackle issues around consent and sexual violence.

An Alternative Model – Self-Defence Classes

Following the success of self-defence classes on the ARU Cambridge campus, ARU intends to implement these on the Chelmsford campus as an alternative to the Bystander Intervention. The course is structured over **10 sessions**, one per week, and covers self-defence in challenging situations. The course also incorporates components of bystander training and includes discussion around **witnessing and intervening in risky situations**. Since being launched in Cambridge in September 2018 there has been good attendance for each of the sessions (around 10-15 students). It is hoped that

these sessions will prove to be empowering for students, and may also have a positive impact on any students who have been affected by sexual violence.

Potential to achieve the aims of the VAWG Service Transformation Fund

Self-defence classes incorporating components of bystander training have the potential to meet the aims of the VAWG perpetrator pathway in the following ways:

1. **Identifying opportunities to prevent harm:** The initiative has the potential to equip students with the skills to safely intervene in situations in which there is a risk or harm to themselves or others, using self-defence and/or bystander intervention techniques.
2. **Reducing the risk presented to victims of VAWG:** Again, this initiative supports the potential for those who have been victims or witness harm to others to intervene safely in risky situations.

CHOICES Prison-based Intervention

The Initiative

CHOICES is an educational (unaccredited) **strengths-based programme** delivered in prison to perpetrators of DA (for which DA may or may not be the convicted crime) to help them build safe and healthy relationships. CHOICES is based on the **Good Lives Model**, which was first developed in New Zealand and then re-adapted to different national contexts (Ward & Stewart, 2003). The Good Lives Model has a strong focus on human dignity, rights, well-being and freedom. The basic premise is that offenders place great importance on certain states of mind, personal characteristics and experiences, which are defined “primary goods” (Ward & Brown, 2004). The Good Lives Model takes into consideration offenders’ particular abilities, interests and desires and aims to equip offenders with the appropriate skills and resources to fulfil their life values without harming others (Ward & Syversen, 2009).

CHOICES is a **voluntary programme** where participants need to sign up to the CHOICES commitment prior to their involvement, and commit to the following:

- **Contribute respectfully;**
- **Hear and be heard;**
- **Open minded to others;**
- **Integrity;**
- **Commitment to change;**
- **Engage actively;**
- **Self-reflection.**

Following recognition that new programmes were needed to work with perpetrators during short-term custodial sentences, the CHOICES manual was written for Her Majesty’s Prison/Youth Offender Institution (HMP/YOI) Chelmsford for adult male service users and/or un-convicted intimate partner violence as an identified concern. CHOICES has the following aims:

- To equip participants with an **understanding of the impact of their behaviours**, to challenge their beliefs and to develop the skills to enable them to make choices to support healthy relationships;
- To **support partners and victims** while the perpetrator is in prison through the outreach of a Partner Link Worker;

- To **better prepare** perpetrators, victims and their families for release from custody, with post programme recommendations for follow up work and post-release licence conditions.

The actual programme is an evolution of a previous existing CHOICES programme, which was re-customized in terms of number of sessions, content and an enhanced emphasis on the environmental factors affecting DA perpetrators. The initiative consists of **12 sessions** that can be delivered as either group-based or on a one-to-one basis.

Criteria for eligibility to CHOICES are as follows:

- DA perpetrators (including carer/parental abuse), although this may not be the crime for which they were convicted;
- Sign up to the compact agreement, committing to respectful behaviour and engaging with programme material;
- Provide details of current (or former) partners and children.

Engagement and delivery figures

From April 2018 to March 2019 6 group-based CHOICES interventions were delivered by the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company Limited (CRC) in partnership with Full Circle. Two facilitators alternated the facilitation of the programme on a weekly basis.

Table 4. Engagement and delivery figures for CHOICES.

Apr 2018 - Mar 2019	Expected client engagement	Client engagement in intervention	Client completions	Client non- completions
Group 1	7	6	6	0
Group 2	7	6	3	3
Group 3	7	6	2	4
Group 4	7	7	5	2
Group 5	7	7	3	4
Group 6	7	5	4	1
Total	49	37	23	14

As shown in Table 4, the service providers delivered six groups with an expected client engagement of up to 49 clients (maximum 7 clients per group). This number is due to the capacity of the HMP/YOI Chelmsford room where the group sessions were delivered. The completion rate of perpetrators who

engaged with the intervention was 62.2%. Client non-completion rate was 37.8%. Most common causes of non-completion were release from custody (6 clients) and transfers to other prisons (5 clients). As CHOICES is a voluntary programme, clients can decide to withdraw at any time following commencement. Withdrawal was not a significant cause of non-completion: only 3 clients withdrew, 1 due to mental health issues and the remaining 2 did not specify the reason.

The user experience

Two case-studies were used to explore the perpetrator's journey through CHOICES from the beginning to the end.

Case Study 1: Male client, still in custody

The client has always been around violence since he was young. With a traveller background, he was given a custodial sentence for assaulting another man. He has a history of drug and alcohol abuse as well as previous records of DA against his partner (pregnant at the time of the data collection). The client was a vocal group member. During the first session the client appeared to be very defensive and irrational, but this behaviour had changed by the end of the initiative:

'He got to a point where you could literally see him thinking before he spoke' CHOICES Stakeholder 1.

His change was visible from session 6 (half-way through the programme), as he started to understand the power of his choices and that he could react in a non-violent manner. The client learnt more about how to enhance his self-esteem and self-confidence, which were both very low at the beginning of the programme. Both stakeholders highlighted how the group gave the client the strength to be open about his feelings and fears:

'The more he opened up, the more he made himself vulnerable, the more the other guys showed support and respect' CHOICES Stakeholder 2.

At the end of the initiative the client realised the impact of his choices on his partner and seemed very aware of the consequences of his precedent behaviours. The stakeholders recommended the client for Building Better Relationships Programme (aimed at long term behavioural changes to promote healthy relationships and reduce risk of future DA) and the Thinking Skills programmes (aimed at reducing reoffending by developing new cognitive and problem solving skills and recognition of consequences) once he back into the community.

Case Study 2: Male, self-referral, still in custody

This client was not a vocal group member, but he was engaged during the sessions, participating when he felt strongly about the topic. With an Afro-Caribbean background, the client was transferred to Chelmsford HMP from a London prison due to violence on the wing. In a one month period, the client received seven negatives (reported bad behaviours) and this is what motivated him to start the programme.

The client's main problem concerned his emotional management: he became aggressive when others expressed opinions that he did not share. The client showed a rigid set of beliefs that included 'eye for an eye', the role of men as providers, and the moral duty of women to take care of their men.

During the CHOICES sessions, the facilitators worked with his beliefs, trying to understand their origin. The client realised his difficulty in managing anger, but also grief. Session 9 was essential for him to explore the 'five stages of grief' as he had recently experienced the loss of his father. After that, the client started to use drugs and to be involved into gang activities. As in Case Study 1, the client was very open about his past and his weaknesses within a group of peers, within which he felt he could be honest.

The change in the client's behaviour was visible from Session 6, about half-way through the programme. The client became aware of the impact of his decisions on his relationship with his partner, family and friends. The client vocalised self-reflection: he shared how he had applied some of the material delivered in his daily life, in some situations he experienced at Chelmsford HMP and also in his relationship with his partner.

Contribution to VAWG aims and objectives

The implementation of CHOICES has contributed to the overall aims of the VAWG perpetrator pathway in the following ways:

1. **Identifying opportunities to prevent harm & reducing the risk of escalation:** CHOICES gave the opportunity to clients serving shorter sentences to start the programme before being released into the community. CHOICES participants have acquired new skills and new benefits from the programme that should help them avoid making the same mistakes of the past.

Figure 3 summarizes the results of data analysis conducted on **15 clients' feedback forms** and the connected **facilitators' reports**.

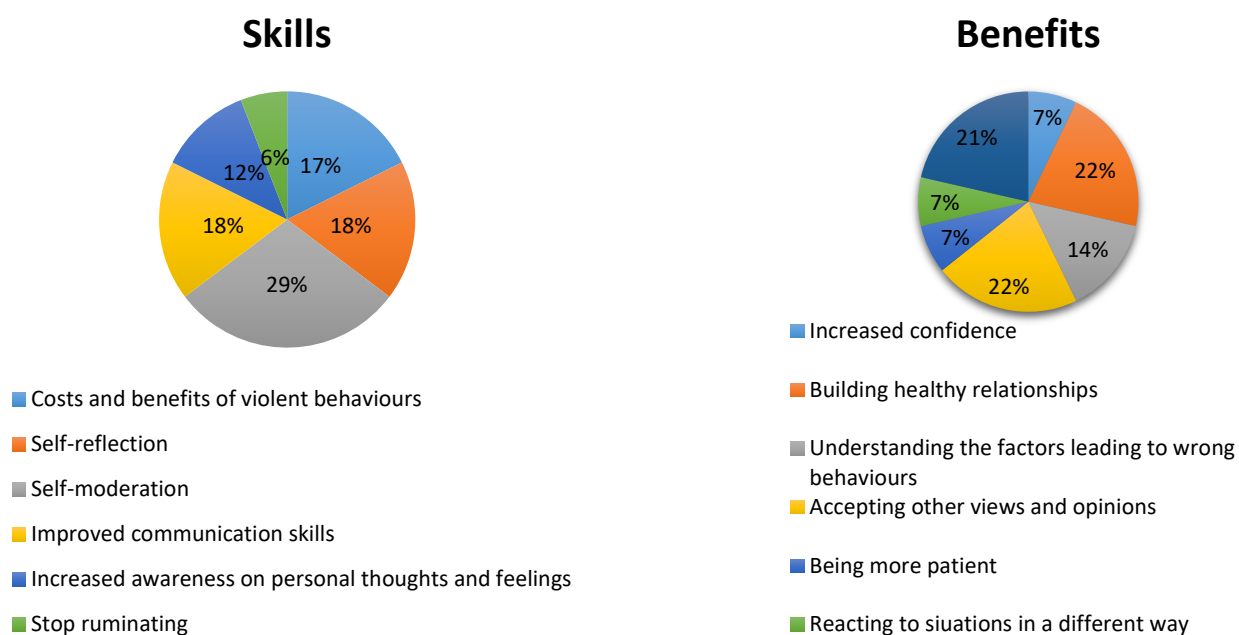


Figure 3. Perpetrators' Skills and Benefits - CHOICES

The facilitators' reports revealed that **13 out of 15** participants were 'engaged group members, who verbalized learning from programme sessions while being very committed'; One participant was 'engaged but quieter' and only one person was identified as a 'quiet group member, not engaging and reticent'. All 14 engaged participants expressed their great appreciation of CHOICES not only in terms of **skills learnt**, but also in terms of **benefits**. With regard to new skills, self-moderation (29%), together with self-reflection (18%) and improved communication skills (18%), were identified as the most useful skills to avoid going back to aggressive behaviours. Clients expressed their intention to use these new skills in their relationships to avoid repeating the same failures of the past. Clients were more aware of their personal feelings (such as grief and anger) and how to manage them (12%). Clients were also aware of the negative consequences of violent behaviours for their loved ones (17%) as well as of the need to stop ruminating (6%).

Clients mentioned the benefits they acquired from taking part in CHOICES. They became more aware of how to build healthy relationships (22%) and of the importance of accepting other views (22%) without perceiving them as a threat. Clients affirmed their confidence had increased after CHOICES (7%), as well as their awareness of the impact of their thoughts and emotions on their behaviours (21%). Clients vocalised their understanding of the factors leading to wrong/violent behaviours, such as the absence of emotional management (14%)

and they became aware of the choices they can make to react to situations in a different way. Lastly, clients acknowledged their need to be more patient and to think before they speak or/and act (7%).

CHOICES was successful in **challenging dangerous (masculine) beliefs** mostly against women, helping the participants to feel free and comfortable to share their vulnerability within the group as well as to drive them towards a full emotional opening:

'I think it is to tackle those beliefs, those core beliefs about identity, the roles that men play in relationships. Beliefs surrounding women as well, and how a woman should behave in a relationship.... That awareness of the impact that those belief systems have on their emotions and their behaviour, again, emotional management is key. To identifying external as well as internal triggers as well that trigger those emotions within themselves, and the awareness of those triggers when they are starting to happen, so that the individual can look to start to address those and use the tools learnt' CHOICES Stakeholder 1.

2. **Raising awareness of appropriate interventions:** As a voluntary programme, CHOICES had numerous recommendations from previous participants that generated a positive word-of-mouth and increased perpetrators' attendance while in custody:

'I think that's a massive thing the fact we are getting so many more self-referrals now, where the prisoners know what CHOICES is in the prison, they know the programme is available' CHOICES Stakeholder 2.

After completing (or during) the programme, clients are able to speak with their peers about the benefits and skills learnt, increasing the awareness of initiative while in custody. Perpetrators started to put themselves forward by self-referring and being willing to engage with CHOICES. Awareness about CHOICES is also promoted by the posters around the prison advertising the initiative.

3. **Enabling multi-agency working and collaborative leadership with a range of local partners:** CHOICES has a number of collaborations both in custody and within the community. Stakeholders highlighted their collaboration with the resettlement team of the Offender Management Unit in prison and with Inside Out Ventures as a partner providing jobs to prisoners by connecting them with local businesses.⁵ Partner Links workers were defined 'vital

⁵ <https://www.insideoutventures.co.uk/our-work>

partners' by the stakeholders interviewed, as they actively collaborate with CHOICES in providing support to the offenders' partners and families while the programme is on. Lastly, Full Circle was also identified as an important partner in providing support to individuals to access CHOICES in order to reduce re-offending rates in Essex.⁶

4. **Improving clarity and consistency of pathways and access into appropriate interventions:**

CHOICES provides both a direct intervention for perpetrators while they are in custody and signposting to other support services once the perpetrators are released. Clients believed that CHOICES helped them to change their way of thinking and their behaviour, and vocalised their commitment to continue working on their emotions once out in the community:

'My goals are to be more assertive and not aggressive. The steps I'll take to achieve these goals are to think about the repercussions of my actions and the impact they have on my life...I will not put myself in high risk situations around drugs and pubs with certain individuals... I need support to achieve this goals from my family, friends but also from probation and social services after my release' CHOICES Participant 1.

'I want to be a better father for my children and to build a healthy relationship with my partner... I want to become a better person and I do not want to go back to prison...to do so I need the support of my family, probation and programmes in the community once I am released' CHOICES Participant 2.

The most common programmes participants were referred to after CHOICES were the Resolve Programme, Thinking Skills Programme and Building Better Relationships Programme.

Obstacles/Limitations

A few elements were identified by service providers as **obstacles** that they had encountered while implementing the intervention:

⁶ <http://www.essexfuture.org.uk/prevention/public-health/full-circle/>

1. **Participants' displacement:** some clients were either transferred or released before they could finish the programme. In some cases, clients were not even able to start the programme because they moved prior the beginning of the sessions.
2. **Working in prison:** the prison was described as very **hard to access**:

'There's an about three-stage process. First of all, you put the application in and then you have to provide evidence. Then they'll put you through vetting and clearance. Then you have to do training. Then you have to do a key talk. It's probably about a four-day process to get someone in, if you looked at hours and stuff, and then probably a day to complete the paperwork, so you are looking at a week to get someone into the prison' CHOICES Stakeholder 1.

Stakeholders highlighted the strict process of access established by the prison as well as the effort – in terms of time, paperwork and training – they need to face in order to get in.

Besides access, **changes in job roles** was identified as another obstacle concerning the implementation of CHOICES in the prison. Changes in job roles has an impact on the communication between the prison and the service providers, which often directly affects the delivery of the service. Service providers are not always sure who is responsible for what: job change therefore creates a vacuum, leaving them without anyone to contact when issues arise prior or during the delivery of CHOICES.

Finally, **information sharing** with the prison was mentioned as an obstacle, given the confidential nature of the data involved. Data might be encrypted, email addresses keep changing and this poses several problems as it is vital that *'the right data goes to the right person'*, CHOICES Stakeholder 2.

3. **Short term funding:** stakeholders highlighted that the limited duration of the funding impacts their ability to think about the future of CHOICES. The stakeholders expressed their satisfaction for what they had achieved over last year and highlighted the need for further funding to continue delivering CHOICES in prison.

'I think it will be a real shame if it doesn't continue, but then the funding stream is for two years... You know, we'll just have to see what the future holds', CHOICES Stakeholder 2.

Innovative aspects

The most innovative aspects of this initiative concern its **flexibility** and the fact that it can be tailored to the needs of the users. CHOICES is updated according to the evaluation forms of the users in order to provide a better service:

'We are using the live feedback from the men to make it the best possible programme that we can do', CHOICES Stakeholder 1.

Because CHOICES is not accredited, service providers have more space for flexibility, to be more responsive to the clients' needs and suggestions to improve the design and the delivery.

Another innovative aspect of CHOICES was the **inclusive** way in which the sessions were conducted. Facilitators used daily life examples and visual material that were also suitable for people who struggle to read or write:

'Again, it's about the awareness of how little or how much you use. Just because they can't read or write doesn't mean they don't want to read or write. It's about, "Do I not? Do I?" It's about a happy medium. It's about language. It's about the way in which we introduce terminology', CHOICES Stakeholder 1.

Sessions were characterised by very little paperwork and a lot of examples, images and visual representations. Facilitators tried to deliver the programme in the simplest way as possible and they succeeded: 14 out of 15 clients' forms analysed depicted CHOICES learning methods using the following adjectives: 'clear, easy, effective and great'.

Future Improvements

The following improvements were suggested by the stakeholders' interviewed and by the 15 feedback forms analysed:

1. **Continue tailoring the programme in response to the clients' suggestions:** stakeholders are willing to implement changes in the way the contents of specific sessions are delivered. The delivery of session 9 of CHOICES ('The 5 Stages of Grief') was used as an example of this:

'We would look at the cycle of change and then we would look at the five stages of grief. A client suggested that we started with the five stages of grief so that we are finishing on something a little bit lighter, rather than the heavy thing', CHOICES Stakeholder 1.

Another suggestion deriving from participants and welcomed by the service provider was to offer a booklet with all the skills learnt throughout the module so that participants have something to refer after the completion of the programme.

2. **Delivery in the community environment:** stakeholders felt that CHOICES should be implemented not only in prison but also in the community in order to reduce risk and reoffending:

'There is a purpose in doing it, which is to support the men... so they may behave in a different way', CHOICES Stakeholder 2.

Both stakeholders and participants stressed the need to enhance support programmes (like CHOICES) for perpetrators once out of custody. In their feedback forms, 34% participants wished CHOICES would be extended, while 20% added the need to have more support in the community through precise initiatives focused on emotional management and rumination.

The Good Man Project

The **Good Man Project** is a male mentoring programme for young men aged 13-18 years who are at risk of entering into abusive relationships. The programme was initially written by youth workers and has developed using staff, young people and referrers' feedback.

The Good Man is a **5-week programme** that can be delivered on either a group work or one-to-one (1:1) basis, according to the specific case. Delivery of group work is carried out in schools across Essex, Southend and Thurrock, where young males displaying alarming behaviours towards female peers or staff are referred. A group can host up to 10 participants.

Before the actual delivery takes place, Youth Workers meet with the safeguarding lead at the school and discuss what the Good Man can offer. Youth Workers also check the school links with social care and youth offending service to target the group for the intervention. After checking that the suggested delivery times are conducive to the school timetable, Youth Workers give the school the necessary documentation and referral forms, various promotional literature that helps them share with parents to get appropriate consent.

The main **aim** of the Good Man Project is to educate participants to show respect in relationships, and what differentiates a healthy relationship from an unhealthy one.

For this reason, the programme is delivered covering the following areas:

- Making relationships work;
- Relationships in a digital world;
- Confidence;
- Manners and respect;
- Consequences;
- Healthy relationships.

The Good Man provides the participant with the necessary skills to develop and maintain healthy relationship, how to break up in an appropriate way and keep communication when necessary.

In addition to being male and aged 13-18 years, **criteria for eligibility** for the Good Man are as follows:

- Living in Greater Essex;

- Willing to take part in group work or 1:1 interventions;
- Displaying signs of unhealthy relationships / coercive behaviours (can include signs such as lack of empathy, dishonesty, dismissive of others views).

The age group can be considered flexible as the Good Man was also delivered to younger clients in primary schools. The service providers received some referrals outside the pre-set age group and decided to deliver the programme anyway, on a 1:1 basis, in order to respond to the early intervention nature of the project. Individual sessions usually last an hour.

Engagement and delivery figures

Table 5. Engagement and delivery figures for the Good Man Project

Apr 18- Mar 19	Expected client engagement	Intervention offered		Client engagement in intervention	Client completions	Client non- completions
	60-80	Group work 15	1:1 91	212	198	14

Table 5 suggests that the number of clients engaged was much **higher than expected**. There is a long waiting list for schools who wish the Good Man to be delivered and also for 1:1 interventions. Since April 2018 the project was delivered in 15 schools across Essex, Thurrock and Southend and all delivery slots are fully booked until July 2019 term. The majority of clients were referred from social care, youth offending team and community family support services. Two Youth Workers delivered the project in the schools: 15 groups were delivered with a maximum of 10 participants per group. The completion rate was very high (93%), with 43% of clients engaged in a 1:1 delivery mode. Although the programme is voluntary and participants can withdraw whenever they wish, the non-completion rate was low (7%).

No follow up is in place after the Good Man completion. The service provider does not maintain any link with the participants who are subsequently signposted to NHS online support.

The user experience

Case Study 1: individual sessions, under 13 years old (12), primary school

A young man showing '*warning signs of perpetrator behaviour both at home and at school*', (Good Man, Stakeholder 3) was referred by a community family support service. This service requested that the Good Man was delivered below the 13-18 pre-determined age range as it was considered vital to offer an early intervention to this specific client to. This case was referred as urgent and it was given an urgent response: the service was offered within a month from referral. The school was welcoming and hospitable and the Youth Workers were able to meet the boy (henceforth, "S") at school.

S displayed sexualised behaviours, such as wanting to be close to females and see them naked. This behaviour caused an incident at school: S sent a photograph of his penis to a female pupil at school and requested she send him a picture of herself which she did and the Police became involved. S came from an abusive household: his parents' relationship is over, the father has a new relationship and S' contact with him are not frequent.

Over the 5-week period S was very much keen to talk about his concerns:

'He allowed himself to be challenged on certain behaviours that were inappropriate. And, at the same time, was happy to engage with some of the resources that just started to raise his awareness around what a close relationship is, what a healthy relationship looks like', Good Man, Stakeholder 1.

The school noticed a beneficial impact of the programme on the pupil's attitudes and behaviours. Gradually, S started to share opinions and to show more awareness of skilful and unskilful behaviours.

After the delivery of the Good Man, the school reported that S had no further inappropriate interactions and/or conversations at school. On the contrary, S acted as a very respectful pupil and has achieved several awards, such as being chosen to represent his school in sports events.

Multi-agency work was effective in S' case: The family support service referred the pupil, suggesting the need for early intervention, Essex Youth Service offered the programme to the pupil and the school allowed the delivery within their estate, trying to maximise the holistic support to the pupil.

Case Study 2: group work, 2 SEN schools

Two special educational needs (SEN) schools requested Essex Youth Service to deliver the Good Man to their pupils with SEN, i.e. autism, universal delay and cognitive delay. The two Youth Workers first met with the SEN coordinator who pointed out the presence of some alarming behaviours: inappropriate sharing of information, gender stereotyping, sexist and homophobic comments.

Youth Workers prepared and adapted some of the resources to meet the special educational needs of the pupils. Both Youth Workers delivered the Good Man in the SEN schools as the pupils involved often required an SEN assistant.

The project was delivered using role play and the participants were all very engaged:

'Yes, that was a real joy... the boys became engaged very quickly. Really responded to role play, really responded to sharing opinions, being challenged', Good Man, Stakeholder 1.

The pupils learnt to listen to each other and respond in a mature manner, respecting different opinions. Both schools reported that the pupils' confidence has grown after the programme: the sessions gave them the opportunities to learn new things and discuss about their feelings. The participants were very enthusiastic of the Good Man and some of them wished they could do more:

'It was a chance to talk about what you think about relationships...we could discuss different opinions and views...wish we could do more....we got together and had fun....I like sharing my thoughts....it helped me with my confidence...it taught me to be kind to my friends...it was good to express our feelings in a group', Good Man, Participant 1.

As in Case Study 1, multi-agency work was effective: the schools referred the pupil, hosted Essex Youth Service for the delivery of the Good Man and supported the pupils involved.

Contribution to VAWG aims and objectives

The implementation of the Good Man has contributed to the overall aims of the VAWG perpetrator pathway in the following ways:

1. **Identifying opportunities to prevent harm & reducing the risk of escalation:** The Good Man was specifically designed as an early intervention programme aimed at preventing the escalation of young men showing signs of potential for DA perpetration, to actual DA perpetration.

'We're educating young people and challenging perspectives...when you are challenging perceptions, you're changing attitudes' Good Man, Stakeholder 2.

The majority of participants who completed the feedback forms were extremely satisfied with the project, rating the Good Man as "great" (n=57) and "good" (n=42). Only 1 participant out of 102 rated the Good Man as "not so good". Participants who took part in the intervention all felt that the intervention had a **positive impact** on their behaviour:

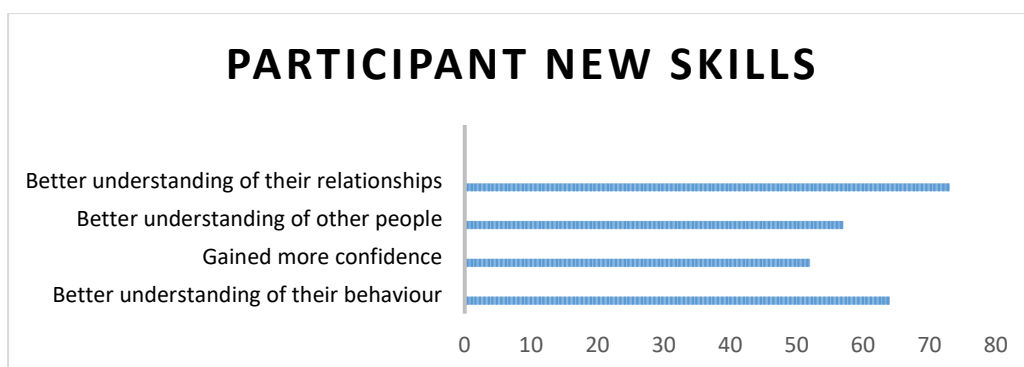


Figure 4. Participant New Skills after the Good Man Project.

Figure 4 shows the new most relevant skills acquired by the pupils participating in the Good Man project. These skills were drawn from an analysis of 102 feedback forms filled by the Good Man participants. The project helped them to better understand their relationships (n=73) and other people having different ideas (n=57), as well as becoming more confident (n=52) and being more mindful of their behaviour (n=64).

Participants also highlighted how the Good Man project taught them how to manage anger, to get on with their family, and learn more about appropriate behaviour. By equipping young men with these **new skills**, the chances that they will become DA perpetrators in the future should decrease.

2. **Raising awareness of appropriate interventions:** Essex Youth Service experienced a much higher demand for the Good Man intervention than expected. **Positive word-of-mouth** among schools contributed to the increase in demand, expanding the existing waitlist for the Good Man delivery. All schools where the programme was delivered are willing to repeat it for other groups. Schools identified the Good Man as an appropriate intervention to address alarming behaviours in young men and pointed out the benefits of the programme on their pupils:

'The Good Man enabled students to view situations differently', Good Man, School 1.

'The students have demonstrated improved relationships amongst their peers and with staff', Good Man, School 2.

The Good Man also raised awareness about appropriate interventions amongst young men: after the delivery, 55 participants found out where to get further help and 72 got more information on how they could be supported.

3. **Enabling multi-agency working and collaborative leadership with a range of local partners:** the Good Man was delivered by Essex Youth Service in partnership with the schools in Essex, Thurrock and Southend hosting the programme and social services referring participants. Multi-agency working has been particularly useful in helping to define the Good Man target group:

'At the beginning, we set up such close relationships with social care teams and youth offending service, we've been able to target those lads who I believe we really need to be targeting, Good Man, Stakeholder 1.

Furthermore, multi-agency worked well in identifying significant behavioural change in the participants:

'I then evaluate each case with the referrer, I ask them to complete an impact evaluation study, which is essentially behavioural...it's looking at significant changes, positive changes, if any, with young men', Good Man, Stakeholder 1.

Additionally, information sharing worked particularly well amongst partners, after signing the appropriate 'Consent to Share' form, referrers would share important information with Essex Youth Service for both group interventions and 1:1.

Obstacles/limitations

Only one element was identified by service providers as a significant obstacle encountered while implementing the Good Man: **higher demand than expected**. Requests for delivering the Good Man far exceeded the service provider capacity to supply intervention:

'Because we're covering Essex, Southend and Thurrock, we have an incredible waiting list for schools...the challenge has been trying to match resources to provision', Good Man, Stakeholder 1.

The significant demand for the Good Man originated almost exclusively by the positive word of mouth among schools. The Youth Worker, the Lead Targeted Youth Advisor and the Service Manager

interviewed experienced the frustration of not being able to deliver the Good Man when requested, lacking the resources to supply intervention for a great need (as highlighted by the high demand) within the community.

Innovative aspects

The innovative aspects of the Good Man concern:

- **Delivery.** Based on role play and heavy interaction between the participants and the facilitators, young men are referred to as ‘ambassadors’ for their school:

‘By calling them “ambassadors” we try and give them a sense of empowerment and that seems to have worked really well’, Good Man, Stakeholder 2.

Participants loved their high status role and they were willing to talk about challenging personal subjects and to fully engage. The delivery of the Good Man is also based on an **inclusive approach** where all participants and facilitators sit in a circle as equals, doing all activities together.

- **Simplicity.** Accessing the Good Man as a referrer is simple:

‘We have an online form, so it’s clear, it’s consistent across, so it’s accessible to everybody. So, we’ve really done a lot digitally in terms of our offer there’, Good Man, Stakeholder 2.

The access to the initiative was designed in a very simple way in order to eliminate further barriers to the requests and meet community needs rapidly.

- **Measurable progress.** As the Good Man is delivered, participants’ progress is constantly monitored:

‘At the beginning of the week, week one, we do an outcome-based tool. We use that again at week five to show the journey, what progression has been made. So, there is clear evidence of the progression that participants are making through the five weeks’, Good Man, Stakeholder 1.

Progress is also measured by interaction with participants, who are asked for their feedback throughout the initiative. At the end of 5 weeks, participants are also asked to fill in their feedback form ('Have Your Say' form) where they are asked about the skills learnt and how they have benefitted from the programme.

Future improvements

Stakeholders pointed out the need for more resources for future deliveries of the Good Man. **More personnel** are required to meet the needs of the schools and to clear the current waiting list.

In addition, stakeholders stressed the need to **lower the age of the target group** in order to deliver to students of primary school, when required. Evidence for this need is the first case study discussed for this initiative, where the Good Man was delivered to a 12-year-old boy.

Discussion is open for **a female version of the Good Man** (probably 'The Good Woman') that could be developed in the future to address potential female perpetrators of DA. Stakeholders have also mentioned a possible future 'joint delivery mode'. Youth Workers hope to be able to include the school staff in the delivery of the project for group sessions. The presence of school staff would enrich the project with a variety of professionals with whom pupils are familiar.

DISCUSSION

Stakeholders generally provided positive feedback on the implementation of the **Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway**. As shown by the analysis of the stakeholder survey presented in this report, the majority felt that the VAWG perpetrator pathway had achieved its strategic aims and objectives. Most stakeholders expressed satisfaction towards the ability of the VAWG perpetrator pathway to promote **partnership working** between different agencies, to implement **early intervention** and to provide **adequate training** for professionals. This positive assessment of the pathway has been confirmed by evaluation of the single interventions, e.g. The Change Project, The Bystander Intervention, CHOICES and the Good Man Project.

Delivery

Between April 2018 and March 2019 four interventions were delivered, with the exception of the Bystander Intervention at Anglia Ruskin University. The Good Man and the Change Project reached more beneficiaries than expected,⁷ the Bystander Intervention at the University of Essex met its engagement goal (280 participants), while CHOICES has been delivered to less beneficiaries than expected (37 instead of 49). Rather than being lower in demand, CHOICES did not meet its delivery expectations due to some targeted beneficiaries being unable to start the programme. This was either because they were moved to other prisons or because they were released prior to the start of the programme.

Although all interventions were voluntary and participants were allowed to withdraw whenever they wished, the completion rate was generally high: the Good Man and the Bystander Intervention exceeded 80%, followed by the Change Project at 76% and CHOICES with 60%.

Aims

The aims of the individual interventions were in line with those of the **Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway**. Results in this report showed that all interventions were able to achieve the following common aims:

1. **To equip participants with new skills:** participants' self-confidence increased as they became more aware of their emotions, their communication skills improved, they became more

⁷ The Good Man was expected to reach up to 80 clients, but has been delivered to 212. The Change Project was expected to reach 125 beneficiaries, but has been delivered to 145.

assertive and more considerate about the consequences of their behaviours as perpetrators, potential-perpetrators and as bystanders.

2. To **challenge the attitudes, values and beliefs that underpin their DA-related behaviours**: macho-centred and sexist beliefs were strongly challenged as well as all those attitudes and cultural-related values that might encourage (or tolerate) VAWG-related offences in schools, at university, or in the community.
3. To **support victims**: while having a strong focus on perpetrators, the four initiatives also included specific support for victims. Partners and families were supported by referrals to appropriate partner agencies providing the service(s) they need. Furthermore, all interventions aimed at encouraging hidden victims to speak up and ask for help.

VAWG Goals

All interventions examined in this report worked towards the achievement of the following goals set out by the **Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway**:

1. **Preventing harm & reducing the risk of escalation.** While the Good Man and the Bystander Intervention were specifically conceived as early intervention programmes to prevent harm, CHOICES and the Change Project focused on perpetrators by providing them with adequate skills that will help them manage their present/future relationships without resorting to violence (both verbal and physical);
2. **Raising awareness of appropriate interventions and improving access to them.** Involving a cohort of different beneficiaries, the four interventions managed to increase awareness of the range of interventions available among:
 - *Perpetrators*: more perpetrators are aware of what services are available to provide support for VAWG-related issues both while in custody and in the community;
 - *Schools*: as highlighted in the results sections, positive word-of-mouth from participants increased the number of schools willing to take part in the Good Man project to tackle concerning behaviours among their male students;
 - *Bystanders*: were trained on how to spot abusive behaviours and where to report them.

- *Agencies*: professionals working with DA cases were upskilled on their work with perpetrators. They also became more informed on the services available and were therefore able to perform a more effective signposting.

3. **Enabling multi-agency working and collaborative leadership with a range of local partners.**

Service providers worked together with a range of partners including the probation service, schools, university, and social service agencies. Multi-agency work was a core aspect of all interventions examined and although some agencies were highlighted as hard to engage, this did not cause any major obstacles in the delivery of the services.

4. **Achieving transformative change.** All interventions actively contributed to transformative change by challenging the culture behind VAWG by working with young males, perpetrators and bystanders.

Innovative Aspects

The first innovative aspect common to The Change Project, CHOICES and the Good Man was their **flexibility**:⁸ programmes could be tailored on the beneficiaries' needs and were adjusted during delivery, if necessary. In addition, the Bystander Intervention could be tailored with local examples and case studies. All programmes were structured to be **inclusive**: they fostered peer-group strength and mutual learning from past experiences. Programmes were based on heavy interaction between the participants and the facilitators and judgemental attitudes were strongly discouraged. Another common innovative aspect was **simplicity**: during delivery, facilitators used plain language, examples from daily life, role play, visual images and very little paperwork which encouraged informal learning. As outlined in the results section, feedback from participants were extremely positive. Lastly, **progress was measurable**: participants were provided with feedback forms at the end of the programme. They were asked to think about the benefits acquired thanks to the programme, how they felt after the programme and what they hoped to achieve in the near future.

Future improvements

There were a number of common future improvements suggested by stakeholders and participants of the four interventions:

⁸ We were not provided with sufficient data to allow an extensive discussion on the innovative aspects of the Bystander Intervention.

1. **Better awareness of the perpetrator pathway:** Responses to the stakeholder survey made it clear that there could be wider awareness of the perpetrator pathways amongst health and social care professionals across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Furthermore, engaging with other agencies was reported as an obstacle by the Change Project facilitators. Future development of the pathway would benefit from wider awareness amongst relevant agencies and those likely to come into contact with case that involve DA.
2. **Improved information sharing and collaborative working between agencies:** Both the stakeholder survey and the facilitators of the Change Project felt that information-sharing between agencies could be improved. None of the interventions were able to effectively collect or access data on reoffending, which made it difficult to assess the impact of the perpetrator pathway on recidivism. Furthermore, practical barriers were reported in terms of accessing building and secure servers when working with other agencies.
3. **Targeting hard-to-reach and at-risk communities:** Facilitators of both the Change Project and the Bystander Intervention indicated that targeting hard-to-reach and at-risk communities was a priority for future development. This included communities such as travellers, BAMER, and LGBTQ, considered at a higher risk for DA, for whom the current interventions had struggled to reach.
4. **Increased funding and resources:** The stakeholder survey indicated that not all stakeholders felt that the current perpetrator pathway had addressed the demand for DA services in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Furthermore, a number of the interventions indicated that increased funding and resources would be required to meet demand. In particular, the Good Man project had experienced very high demand, providing services to over double the number of clients anticipated. Increased funding may also enable better follow-up of clients, and assessment of impact.

Limitations

Some limitations are of note. The aim of this evaluation was to determine whether the four interventions that constituted the Essex VAWG perpetrator pathway met the aims and objectives of the VAWG Service transformation fund. As such, it was not within the scope of the project to carry out an in-depth evaluation of each intervention in relation to their independent aims and objectives. Furthermore, this evaluation project provided only a **cross-sectional snapshot** of the interventions and their participants. **Longitudinal follow-up** in relation to outcomes, such as reoffending, was not possible, as most interventions did not collect, or were not able to access this data. This limits our ability to link participation in the interventions to improving outcomes directly.

We were unable to carry out an **economic evaluation** of the perpetrator pathway, as data was not available to enable this. As such, we cannot comment on the economic impact of the VAWG perpetrator pathway, and whether the interventions funded offer value for money. However, it was clear that for each intervention, support was provided to more clients than was expected, and thus provided **better value for money than originally predicted**.

Difficulties were experienced during the **recruitment of participants** for some of the interventions. This was for a number of reasons. Regarding the CHOICES prison-based intervention, whilst initially it was suggested that access to participants in the community would be possible, all intervention participants were either still in custody or under the National Probation Service (NPS) at the time of recruitment. The short time span of the evaluation at this point did not allow for the researchers to go through the process of gaining access to the prison or NPS clients. The Good Man project engages with participants who are under 18, and often in a school group-based setting. As such, it was not possible for the Good Man facilitators to identify and contact the individual children who took part in these group sessions. However, both the CHOICES and Good Man projects provided extensive anonymised feedback forms completed by their clients, which provided rich data for the evaluation.

Difficulties were experienced in **accessing participants** and data for the Bystander Intervention at the University of Essex, due to staff changes during the evaluation project. This meant that focus groups with participants, confirmed at the beginning of the project, were not able to take place. Furthermore, the researchers were not provided with access to data regarding feedback and outcomes, but were provided with a summary of the analyses carried out on these by the intervention staff. As such, the researchers were unable to carry out any independent analyses of the impact of this intervention.

Conclusions and recommendations

Feedback provided by stakeholders and participants of the VAWG perpetrator pathway was **largely positive**. It was felt that the pathway had successfully met the aims of the VAWG transformation fund in preventing harm and reducing the risk of escalation, enabling multi-agency working, improving access to intervention, and achieving transformative change by challenging the culture that underpins DA. It was beyond the scope of this project to provide in-depth evaluations of the individual interventions. However, all four interventions contributed to equipping their clients with **new skills, challenging attitudes, values and beliefs** that contribute to DA, and **supporting victims** where possible.

Following analysis of the stakeholder survey and the data provided by the individual interventions, we recommend that the Essex PFCC should:

- **Continue to fund perpetrator-based VAWG interventions beyond the end of the VAWG Service Transformation Fund.** The feedback from participants and stakeholders was very positive for the individual interventions and the pathway as a whole, and interventions experienced higher demand than expected. Furthermore, participants and stakeholders reported behavioural change as a result of the interventions.
- **Work to promote a wider awareness of VAWG perpetrator pathway, beyond services that are involved in the pathway.** A common criticism of the overall VAWG perpetrator pathway, was that many professionals and agencies were not aware of the interventions, and so did not refer their clients.
- **Work to promote better partnership-working and information-sharing between agencies.** Stakeholders indicated that partnership-working was not always easy, and that practical restrictions, such as access to buildings and information sharing, was not always enabled by other agencies. This made it difficult for stakeholders to follow up on clients referred to other agencies and to access information regarding reoffending. A better understanding and awareness of the VAWG perpetrator pathway throughout relevant agencies in Essex may help to remove this barrier.
- **Support interventions that aim to engage with hard-to-reach communities and at risk groups.** Stakeholders for some of the interventions indicated that they had struggled to engage with what they considered the harder-to-reach clients, such as the LGBTQ, travellers and BAMER communities. These communities may have particular needs and vulnerabilities in relation to VAWG, that the current pathway has not addressed.
- **Carry out a longitudinal evaluation of VAWG perpetrator interventions.** Longitudinal data would be required to fully assess the impact of perpetrator interventions on DA-related outcomes (i.e. reoffending, repeat victims, victims' feelings of safety) and wider health and social outcomes for perpetrators and victims (i.e. well-being, physical and mental health).

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Appendix 1. Online stakeholder survey.



Online surveys

Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway Evaluation Survey (copy2)

Showing 0 of 0 responses

Showing **all** responses

Showing **all** questions

- 1 Any personal data gathered will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Requirement. All the information collected from you will be securely stored and destroyed after three years. Your participation is confidential, and your contribution will be anonymised.

No responses

Overview

Instructions

About you

- 2 What is the name of the organisation you work for?

No responses

- 3 Please provide a description of your role within this organisation?

No responses

- 4 What area of Essex do you predominantly work in?

No responses

- 5 Please describe your involvement with the Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway

No responses

How effective do you think the Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway has been in the following areas:

- 6** Achieving its overall strategic aim that 'perpetrators and potential perpetrators of VAWG are prevented from (re)offending'?

No responses

- 7** Identifying opportunities to prevent harm?

No responses

- 8** Implementing early intervention and reducing the escalation of risk of Domestic Abuse?

No responses

- 9** Enabling multi-agency working and collaborative leadership with a range of local partners?

No responses

- 10** Improving information-sharing between partners?

No responses

- 11** Improving the clarity and consistency of pathways into appropriate interventions?

No responses

How effective do you think the Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway has been in the following areas:

- 12** Improving access to appropriate interventions?

No responses

- 13** Raising awareness of appropriate interventions?

No responses

- 14** Achieving transformative change in the approach to perpetrators of abuse across Essex?

2 / 4

No responses

-
- 15** Reducing the risk presented to victims of VAWG through collaborative working?

No responses

-
- 16** Increasing capacity within support services to manage increased (knock-on) demand?

No responses

-
- 17** Helping professionals better identify appropriate cohorts of service users?

No responses

How effective do you think the Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway has been in the following areas:

- 18** Improving professionals' preparedness to challenge abusive and coercive behaviours?

No responses

-
- 19** Helping develop specialist knowledge around VAWG issues?

No responses

-
- 20** Informing professionals about evidence-based good practice?

No responses

-
- 21** Facilitating the production and dissemination of shared learning materials?

No responses

-
- 22** Raising awareness amongst professionals and partners of available perpetrator services?

No responses

-
- 23** Ensuring pathways of support are consistent, clear and well understood?

No responses

24 In your view, what has worked well in the delivery of the perpetrator pathway?

No responses

25 In your view, what has not worked well in the delivery of the perpetrator pathway?

No responses

26 What do you think the perpetrator pathway's greatest achievement has been to date?

No responses

27 Do you have any recommendations for how the perpetrator pathway might be improved? Please describe below.

No responses

Appendix 2. Interview protocols

Service providers and facilitators.

1. Can you give us an overview of the intervention and your role in its delivery?
2. Could you walk us through a beneficiary's journey, from start to finish, focusing on a particular case study that you have prepared?
3. What do you think are the interventions main achievements?
4. What has worked particularly well/contributed to the achievements of the [intervention name]?
5. What has worked less well/held back the achievements of the [intervention name]?
6. What obstacles (if any) did you face in carrying out your tasks for the [intervention name]?
7. Do you have any recommendations/thoughts on how the [intervention name] could be improved in the future?
8. How has this intervention contributed to:
 - Preventing future harm and reoffending?
 - Implementing early intervention and reducing the escalation of risk of Domestic Abuse
 - Enabling multi-agency/collaborative working with local partners
 - Improving information-sharing between agencies and partners
 - Improving the clarity and consistency of pathways into appropriate intervention`

Perpetrators/service users

- Why were you referred to/did you access the service?
 - What were the reasons for you volunteering to take part?
- Please walk us through your journey/experience of the intervention.
 - What has been your experience of working with [service provider]?
 - What have you done in your sessions with [service provider]?
 - Have you completed your sessions with [service provider]?
- What have been the outcomes/changes/impact you have experienced as a result of taking part in the [intervention]?
 - If in a relationship, has your relationship changed as a result of the [intervention]?
 - Have you made any other significant changes as a result of taking part? i.e. behaviours, attitudes, beliefs.
- What did you like/not like about the [intervention]?
- Do you have any suggested improvements for the future?

Appendix 3. Mode and median responses to the stakeholder survey questions.

	Question	Statistic	Involved in/aware of VAWG pathway (n=18)
	How effective do you think the Essex VAWG Perpetrator Pathway has been in the following areas:		
Improving outcomes	Achieving its overall strategic aim that 'perpetrators and potential perpetrators of VAWG are prevented from reoffending'?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Identifying opportunities to prevent harm?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Extremely effective
	Implementing early intervention and reducing the escalation of risk of Domestic Abuse?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Reducing the risk presented to victims of VAWG through collaborative working	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
Partnership working	Enabling multi-agency working and collaborative leadership with a range of local partners?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Improving information sharing between partners?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Facilitating the production and dissemination of shared learning materials?	Median	Very/Moderately effective
		Mode	Very/Moderately effective
Improving Access	Improving the clarity and consistency of pathways into appropriate interventions?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Improving access to appropriate interventions?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Raising awareness of appropriate interventions?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Achieving transformative change in the approach to perpetrators of abuse across Essex?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Increasing capacity within support services to manage increased (knock-on) demand?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Raising awareness amongst professionals and partners of available perpetrator services?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective

	Ensuring pathways of support are consistent, clear and well understood?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Extremely/Very effective
Upskilling professionals	Helping professionals better identify appropriate cohorts of service users?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Improving professionals preparedness to challenge abusive and coercive behaviours?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Helping develop specialist knowledge around VAWG issues?	Median	Very effective
		Mode	Very effective
	Informing professionals about evidence-based good practice?	Median	Very/Moderately effective
		Mode	Very/Moderately effective

Appendix 4. The Bystander Efficacy Scale.

NAME:

REGISTRATION NUMBER:

BYSTANDER EFFICACY SCALE

Please read each of the following behaviors. Indicate in the column *Confidence* how confident you are that you could do them. Rate your degree of confidence by recording a whole number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
can't do	quite uncertain					moderately certain				very certain

		CONFIDENCE
1	Express discomfort/concern if someone makes a joke about a woman's body or about gay people/lesbians or someone of a different race.	%
2	Express my discomfort if someone says that rape victims are to blame for being raped.	%
3	Call for help (i.e. call 999) if I hear someone in my accommodation yelling "help."	%
4	Talk to a friend who I suspect is in an abusive relationship.	%
5	Get help and resources for a friend who tells me they have been raped.	%
6	Able to ask a stranger who looks very upset at a party if they are ok or need help.	%
7	Ask a friend if they need to be walked home from a party.	%
8	Ask a stranger if they need to be walked home from a party.	%
9	Speak up in class if a professor is providing misinformation about sexual assault.	%
10	Criticize a friend who tells me that they had sex with someone who was passed out or who didn't give consent	%
11	Do something to help a very drunk person who is being brought upstairs to a bedroom by a group of people at a party.	%
12	Do something if I see a woman surrounded by a group of men at a party who looks very uncomfortable.	%

REGISTRATION NUMBER:

Please read each of the following behaviors. Indicate in the column *Confidence* how confident you are that you could do them. Rate your degree of confidence by recording a whole number from 0 to 100 using the scale given below:

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
can't quite						moderately				very
do uncertain						certain				certain

		CONFIDENCE
13	Get help if I hear of an abusive relationship in my dorm or apartment.	%
14	Tell an RA or other campus or community authority about information I have that might help in a sexual assault case even if pressured by my peers to stay silent.	%
15	Speak up to someone who is making excuses for forcing someone to have sex with them.	%
16	Speak up to someone who is making excuses for having sex with someone who is unable to give full consent.	%
17	Speak up to someone who is making excuses for using physical force in a relationship.	%
18	Speak up to someone who is calling their partner names or swearing at them.	%