Confidential

Northumbria OPCC and partners

Domestic Abuse: A Whole System Approach:
Theme 1 evaluation

July 2019
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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of Domestic Abuse: A Whole System Approach (DAWSA) as they relate to the projects delivered under the programme’s theme 1, effective working within the criminal justice system. The evaluation was commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Northumbria and delivered by Cordis Bright, a specialist independent research and consultancy organisation.

The evaluation was designed in collaboration with key stakeholders across the six force areas involved in DAWSA and input was also received from the Home Office. It was delivered in 2018-19 over two phases:

- **Phase 1.** Evaluation framework development (May-July 2018).
- **Phase 2.** Evaluation framework implementation and report delivery (August 2018-June 2019).

This executive summary and report should be read in conjunction with the overall DAWSA evaluation programme report and similar stand-alone reports for theme 2 and theme 3 of DAWSA.

About DAWSA

DAWSA is an innovative and ambitious programme which has injected resource into local systems in six force areas to enable them to explore and deliver innovative approaches which aim to improve responses to domestic abuse, and therefore the experiences and outcomes of victims.

By attempting to roll out similar projects across six force areas, DAWSA provided an opportunity to test out the feasibility of these projects in different force areas and understand how they might be implemented within differing local structures, cultures and priorities. It also offered a means to investigate effective approaches to implementation and generate evidence about the impact of the projects, and the programme as a whole.

DAWSA was developed by Northumbria OPCC and Northumbria Police, along with partners in the OPCC and police in Cleveland, Durham, Humberside, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire\(^1\). Between April 2016 and March 2019 funding for DAWSA was provided by the Home Office, via the Police Transformation Fund.

DAWSA includes three key themes, which are:

- **Theme 1:** Effective working within the criminal justice system.

\(^1\) Elements of DAWSA are also being implemented by the police and OPCC in Cumbria and South Yorkshire.
• **Theme 2**: Partnership work with civil and family courts.

• **Theme 3**: Multi-agency victim support and offender management.

**Objective and purpose of theme 1**

The overall objective of theme 1 was:

*Ensure that every reported incident of domestic abuse prompts a response that maximises what could be the one and only opportunity to access, engage with and safeguard its victim(s).*

Source: Key programme documentation

Theme 1 was introduced to tackle a number of locally-recognised and inter-connected challenges to delivering high-quality responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system. These included a need to improve the awareness, skills and confidence of police officers/staff, to introduce further specialist domestic abuse input within police responses, and to assess the whole history and picture of abuse for each victim rather than responding to incidents in isolation.

**Projects included in theme 1**

Theme 1 included five specific projects. These were:

• Coercive control training.

• Domestic Abuse Specialist Advisor (DVSA) partnerships.

• Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) workers.

• Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels.

• Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work.

The rationale for including the projects within the theme was clearly articulated in documentation and by stakeholders consulted. The primary focus on improving police response to domestic abuse was a pragmatic and understandable decision in an OPCC- and police-led programme. However, this focus on policing may have limited the extent to which theme 1 projects address the whole criminal justice system, and thus the extent to which it can be seen as a whole system approach in this area.

There was variation in how projects were delivered across the six forces. For instance, different models were used to deliver projects in different force areas. Figure 1 outlines the projects and the different models used to deliver them.
### Figure 1: Projects within theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Model(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive control training</td>
<td>The coercive control training programme aims to enable police officers and other staff to understand the dynamics of coercive control, risk assess effectively and understand the role of the police within a whole system approach. The purpose of this activity was to ensure that coercive control training had been delivered to all relevant police officers and staff by the end of the programme funding period for DAWSA.</td>
<td>Model A (3 force areas): Classroom-style training using products developed in-force Model B (1 force area): Safe Lives Domestic Abuse Matters training Model C (2 force areas): Theatre-based training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Support and Assistance (DVSA) partnership</td>
<td>The DVSA partnership involves the inclusion of advice and support from a specialist domestic abuse support worker as part of the early police response to a domestic abuse incident. The primary aims of the DVSA partnership are to:  - Increase support for victims, at the scene, at the point of crisis and at the time of a reported domestic abuse incident (or as soon as practicable thereafter).  - Increase opportunities for partnership working and shared learning between the police and specialist domestic abuse support providers, in order to improve safeguarding and support</td>
<td>Model A (3 force areas – including one force area operating models A and B): DVSA partnership located in a police car as a second response unit Model B (3 force areas – including one force area operating models A and B): DVSA partnership located in a force control room</td>
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## Project Description

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<tr>
<th>Project</th>
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<th>Model(s)</th>
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| Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) worker | The DACJS worker role which involves the introduction of a specialist domestic abuse worker to work alongside police officers and staff. The primary aim of the role is to enable police teams to better understand and meet the needs of domestic abuse victims. The workers undertake a range of tasks in different force areas, which encapsulate some or all of the following elements:  
- Facilitating joint safeguarding work.  
- Increasing support, referral and engagement of victims and their families.  
- Increasing engagement of perpetrators, to change their behaviour.  
- Enhancing evidence gathering.  
- Improving staff knowledge.  

The purpose of this activity was to introduce a DACJS worker role in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA, or to continue delivery of existing roles. | All participating force areas used the same overarching model to deliver the DACJS worker role. However, there were key local differences in:  
- Whether the role pre-dated the programme funding period.  
- Where in the system the role was introduced, and which police teams worked alongside the role. |
<p>| Independent domestic | Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels involve the establishment and ongoing delivery of an independent panel whose members are currently involved in a role related to domestic abuse. | All participating force areas used the same model for the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel, which |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project</th>
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<th>Model(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>abuse scrutiny panel</td>
<td>The panel’s purpose is to review police case files and provide structured feedback to forces on engagement and evidential issues, as well as highlighting examples of good and poor practice. The purpose of this activity was to introduce an independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA.</td>
<td>involved the establishment of a panel of independent experts to meet quarterly</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work | The good practice standards for domestic abuse case work are a set of standards developed by Northumbria Police to support enhanced supervisory review of domestic abuse cases and continuous professional development for police officers who might be working on domestic abuse cases. The purpose of this activity was to introduce the standards into professional development review (PDR) processes or other performance monitoring and continuous professional development processes in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA. The standards fall into four categories:  
  - Carrying out the initial investigation into a domestic abuse incident.  
  - Developing an investigation into a domestic abuse incident.  
  - Preparing a domestic abuse case file.  
  - Ensuring that victims of domestic abuse are safe and offered relevant support.  
  The full list of standards can be found in appendix B. | Model A (3 force areas): Standards are incorporated into PDR processes for target officers and are used within training and continuous professional development  
Model B (2 force areas)<sup>2</sup>: Standards are not incorporated into PDR processes but are used within training and continuous professional development                                                                 |

<sup>2</sup> One force area did not take this activity forward.
**Milestones achieved**

Evidence outlined in chapters 4 to 8 suggests that the five projects under theme 1 of DAWSA have mainly been successfully set up and implemented, and are achieving or making progress towards all of their intended outputs. In particular:

- **Three types of coercive control training** package have been developed and training has been delivered in all six force areas, though one force area has identified that further training is required locally. Five force areas have plans in place to sustain the training.

- **DVSA partnerships** have been introduced and/or further developed in all six force areas and have enabled them to offer support to victims at the scene and time of incidents or soon afterwards.

- **DACJS workers** have also been introduced or further developed in all six force areas and workers have supported police through joint victim safeguarding work and (in some areas) have supported perpetrator engagement with interventions.

- **Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels** have been set up in all six force areas and are supporting multi-agency scrutiny of police response to domestic abuse.

- **Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work** have been developed. They proved more challenging to implement in some force areas but are being used in some form in four force areas. A fifth force area has plans to incorporate the standards in the near future.

One significant achievement in implementing work under theme 1, particularly given the timescales for implementing and embedding transformation, is that it has injected specialist input and closer multi-agency working at points in the criminal justice system where this was likely to be beneficial for victims and result in improved police responses to domestic abuse. This begins with introducing or enhancing specialist input into the support offered immediately after an incident, via the **DVSA partnerships**. It extends to bringing in or reinforcing specialist input into ongoing victim safety planning and investigation planning, via the **DACJS worker role**. Lastly, it continues into reviewing police responses in the form of specialist multi-agency scrutiny conducted by the **independent, domestic abuse scrutiny panels**.

In addition to building specialism into police responses to domestic abuse, all of the projects within theme 1 also had a focus on improving the understanding, skills and confidence of police officers and staff not specialising in domestic abuse. In the case of **coercive control training** and the **good practice standards for domestic abuse case work**, this took the form of direct training and CPD. **DVSA partnerships** and the **DACJS worker role** delivered this by providing opportunities for specialist workers to advise and share learning with police officers/staff (and vice versa). **Independent domestic abuse scrutiny**
panels delivered this learning via feedback and recommendations for future development.

Theme 1 projects also increased the opportunities for domestic abuse to be disclosed and identified, as well as for more accurate risk assessment on the basis of more detailed disclosures. This was a particular consequence of direct support or contact with victims by specialist workers with enhanced skills in supporting disclosure and conducting risk assessment (e.g. in the DVSA partnerships and DACJS worker projects). However, it was also facilitated by the upskilling of police officers and staff via the coercive control training and shared learning opportunities within the DVSA partnerships and DACJS worker projects.

Approaches to implementation

The most important enablers to the implementation of theme 1 were high levels of support for projects from strategic leaders in the Force Chief Officer Team and the OPCC, as well as strong operational management. Force areas where this was most evident tended to make greater progress in implementing these projects.

The introduction of some of the projects under theme 1 was also facilitated where force areas had other similar models of working in place locally, which both informed the approach to introducing the new project and improved reception of the project amongst relevant staff because they were familiar with a similar model and recognised its value. An example of this is the DVSA partnership; a number of force areas already had specialist victim care or mental health workers based in the control room and mental health street triage teams based in response units which helped to guide the development of local delivery models and gave staff a point of reference.

Approaches to implementing the projects within theme 1 varied across the different force areas participating in DAWSA. In general, key stakeholders in individual force areas selected models which they believed were likely to be more impactful than another in their local context, and prove more feasible to implement locally. Programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that this flexibility to develop or adapt delivery models was important in making projects feasible and effective in their local context.

However, in order to ensure consistency in quality and outcomes, it is important that localised delivery models target the same core SMART intended impacts and outcomes. Delivery models should be developed on the basis of a clearly-articulated theory of change or logic model, which links the inputs, activities and outputs of the model to these SMART impacts and outcomes. In addition, models should be developed based on any existing evidence base or good practice principles for similar interventions.

The most striking examples of this variation are the DVSA partnerships and the DACJS worker roles, though the models used to deliver coercive control training also varied considerably. For instance:
The DVSA partnership was introduced using two main models, a partnership located in a police car and attending incidents as a second response unit (model A) and a partnership based in the force control room making follow-up calls to victims after an incident was reported (model B). When selecting a model, key considerations were: the relative costs and resourcing of implementation (because model A was more expensive and required more police time than model B); the geographical profile of the force area (because more rural areas reported that coverage by a second response unit would not be time-efficient); the numbers of victims who might be reached (because model B allowed scope for contacting more victims in a shorter amount of time); and the perceived likelihood of engagement by victims (because model A involved face-to-face support, which was perceived to increase the likelihood of engaging).

The DACJS worker role was implemented using the same model in all force areas but was situated in different teams and at different points in the system. Decisions on where to situate the role tended to be informed by local judgements about: where there were gaps in specialist input; which teams might most benefit from specialist input to increase their skills but also reduce demands on their time by providing direct input into cases; and which points in the system offered high-quality opportunities for increasing the safeguarding and engagement of victims.

The coercive control training was implemented using three different models, though all involved face-to-face training. Most force areas had delivered or commenced training under one of these models prior to the introduction of DAWSA so to some extent decisions pre-dated this. Model A involved the use of training products developed and delivered in-force and was generally selected on the basis that it delivered similar content at a lower cost than the other models and was easily sustained. Model B involved commissioning SafeLives Domestic Abuse Matters training, which was selected because it is endorsed by the College of Policing and because it was perceived to be of high quality and impactful. Model C involved experiential, theatre-based elements and discussion and tended to be selected because this format was perceived as effective in promoting open discussion and breaking down any negative beliefs about domestic abuse which might be held by some training participants.

Challenges

In fact, encouraging culture change and tackling any negative beliefs about domestic abuse expressed or demonstrated by a minority of police officers and staff was one of the key challenges encountered in implementing theme 1 and maximising its ongoing impact. For example, programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that during the coercive control training a minority of police officers and staff expressed negative views about domestic abuse victims or displayed their misconceptions about the nature of domestic abuse and how the

3 A third model was used in one force area, which involved extending an existing early intervention service to provide follow-up support to victims reporting an incident to the police.
police should respond. Equally, DVSA and DACJS stakeholders reported that they were aware of police officers who had expressed similar views or whom they felt would benefit from additional training inputs in relation to domestic abuse. Most projects were well-received by the majority of police officers, staff and partners but there may still be further changes in culture and understanding required in forces to ensure that all officers and staff are receptive to and supportive of new approaches. This suggests that further assessment of training needs and targeted training for those officers who perform less well in response to domestic abuse might be a useful focus for future activity.

A second significant challenge in theme 1 implementation was ensuring that the large volume of police officers and staff who might participate in training and CPD, respond to scrutiny panel feedback, or support delivery of the DVSA partnership or DACJS worker role were all aware of the projects and their relevance to them. Significant promotional activity was required to overcome this, and this is still ongoing for all projects.

Outcomes achieved

The timescales for delivering theme 1 projects, achieving outcomes and providing evidence of any outcomes achieved were relatively limited. This was in part due to the funding cycles in which the projects were operating, and was compounded by delayed decisions on funding continuation after year 1.

As a result, it is too soon after implementation to reasonably expect evidence of progress against all intended outcomes. However, emerging evidence detailed in chapters 4 to 8 suggests that:

- The coercive control training has increased police awareness, skills and confidence in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control and may have contributed to an increase in the number of crimes recorded as coercive control but has not yet had an impact on the number of offences being charged.

- The DVSA partnerships and DACJS worker roles have increased the number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing support, and have improved victims’ experience of and confidence in police and partners’ response to domestic abuse incidents. In both cases, this has positive impacts for victim safety and wellbeing.

- The DVSA partnership has also increased the number of victims accepting support immediately after the incident.

- The DACJS worker role has also improved the quality of police officer safety and/or investigation planning for domestic abuse victims.

- Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels have enabled high-quality, regular and independent feedback to forces on their response to domestic abuse, though work is ongoing to ensure that feedback results in organisational learning that is acted upon by forces.
There was limited data available to inform judgements about any impact of the **good practice standards for domestic abuse case work**. In reality, it was too early to gauge their impact because they had only been introduced recently or (in two force areas) had not been introduced. Therefore, there was still progress required to ensure that targeted staff had achieved the standards or received training, and it was too early to expect to see any change in outcomes.

Overall, projects under this workstream have had a positive impact on the confidence, skills and awareness of police officers/staff, and to some extent specialist providers who have worked in partnership with the police to deliver projects. This increased understanding is likely to be maintained to some extent, and can be built on in the future in order to bring about further improvements for the benefit of domestic abuse victims involved with the criminal justice system. Examples of projects which have added value in this way are **coercive control training**, **DVSA partnerships** and **DACJS workers**.

In addition, the **DVSA partnerships** and **DACJS worker** roles have increased the specialist input available to victims (and, in some force areas, perpetrators) at different points in the criminal justice system. This has promoted earlier intervention and emerging evidence suggests it is improving victim safeguarding, engagement and perceptions of police and partner response to domestic abuse.

### Areas for development

Consultation during the evaluation indicated that there is inter-connection between a number of the projects within theme 1 of DAWSA. For example, during consultation on the DACJS worker role, it was reported that DACJS workers in some areas were supporting the promotion of the good practice standards.

However, the connections between these projects were less clear within programme documentation. As a result, they could be perceived as a suite of stand-alone projects to tackle specific issues. In addition, in some instances there appeared to be risk of duplication or missed opportunities to build clear pathways through the system as a result of not explicitly recognising or explaining how projects related to each other. For example, it is possible that the same victim could receive support from the DVSA partnership and a DACJS worker in close succession and it was not clear which intervention would be prioritised or prove most effective. Thus the projects might introduce improved multi-agency working in response to specific incidents, within particular teams or at particular points in the system, but the way they have been positioned in relation to one another might not result in more effective working across the system as a whole.

### Variations in impact

At this stage, there is little evidence that theme 1, or specific projects within it, are achieving different levels of impact in different force areas. There is also very limited evidence that different delivery models have resulted in different levels of impact. There was no conclusive evidence that one model was preferable to another for any project and stakeholders in individual force areas tended to believe that the model they had applied was likely to be more impactful than another in their local context.
For instance, monitoring data suggests that the force control room model for the **DVSA partnership** (model B) is indeed enabling force areas to offer support to greater numbers of victims than the second response unit model (model A). However, at this stage and on the basis of the available data it is not possible to determine whether there are differences in the level or quality of initial engagement or ongoing engagement with support under the different models. Equally, there is evidence to suggest that the shared learning opportunities are more frequent and more intensive in model A. If these result in widespread maintained increases in police officers’ levels of awareness, confidence and skills then this model may ultimately prove to be more impactful on outcomes for staff, but again it is too early to make a conclusive judgement about this.

Equally, for the DACJS worker role, key differences in impact relate predominantly to how the role is positioned within the system and its specific remit in each force area. For example:

- In force areas where the role had a specific focus on DVPNs/DVPOs and safeguarding and support were provided during the period covered by an order, stakeholders noted improvements in the quality of DVPNs and DVPO applications, and in the conversion rate from DVPNs to DVPOs.

- In the force area with a greater focus on perpetrator engagement, stakeholders reported that the role had resulted in greater engagement with MATAC and with DAPPs.

**Monitoring longer-term impact**

DAWSA projects and models which are now embedded and which are being sustained beyond the initial DAWSA funding period offer opportunities for further evaluation to explore the longer-term impacts and outcomes which they achieve. It would also be possible to conduct between model impact evaluations using randomised controlled trials or quasi-experimental design approaches to measure and attribute impact. These types of approaches would require additional evaluation funding but would enable stronger judgements to be formed about differential impact of projects and delivery models.

**Sustainability**

There are plans in place to sustain the majority of the theme 1 projects in most of the force areas participating in DAWSA. This suggests that the projects under theme 1 were viewed as both valuable and feasible to deliver. For example:

- All six force areas are sustaining independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels and the **DACJS worker role**.

- Five force areas have concrete plans on sustaining the **coercive control training**.

- Four force areas have continuation funding in place for the **DVSA partnership**, with a fifth force area continuing to deliver specialist follow-up to
victims after a domestic abuse incident using a different model to DVSA partnership.

- Four force areas are continuing use of the **good practice standards for domestic abuse case work** in the ways they have been introduced locally.

With respect to both DVSA partnership and coercive control training, those force areas which do not have continuation in place reported that continuation is desirable or is being explored. This was less clearly the case for the good practice standards.

It is important to note that DVSA partnerships and DACJS workers, the projects which require more extensive ongoing funding commitment, have not yet been mainstreamed in most force areas. Instead they have short-term continuation funding in place to allow for further review of outcomes prior to a longer-term funding decision.

Programme leads had planned for sustainability in the event that projects proved effective by aiming to introduce the project, review its performance and generate a business case for continuation if appropriate. This process took place in a number of force areas but was made more challenging in some force areas by the fact that projects had only been introduced relatively late in the initial funding period, providing a short window in which to implement and embed the role and collate evidence of its performance and impact.

**Examples of good practice**

Theme 1 has resulted in the development of a number of resources and models which could be beneficial for other force areas and partners who are interested in improving effective working within the criminal justice system in relation to domestic abuse. It is important to note, however, that the longer-term application and outcomes of some of these tools and resources have not yet been established within the DAWSA funding period. As such, they constitute emerging good practice rather than good practice for which the evidence base is confirmed. Models and resources include:

- **The coercive control training packages** could be used for police officer and staff training in other force areas.

- **The DVSA partnership car model and force control room model** could be transferred to and localised in other force areas wishing to deliver a similar response. In addition, operating procedures and processes developed within the force areas involved in DAWSA could potentially act as templates to be localised by other force areas.

- **The DACJS worker role** principles could be applied in other force areas to introduce specialist input at points in the local criminal justice system where this was judged to be required.

- **The terms of reference and frameworks for the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels** developed by force areas participating in DAWSA could act
as templates to be localised by other force areas which introduce similar panels.

- In addition, there were similar themes in the feedback and areas for improvement identified by the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels in different force areas. These could act as a starting point for other force areas which would like to use multi-agency feedback to explore and improve the quality of their response to victims of domestic abuse.

- The good practice standards for domestic abuse case work could be adopted by other force areas in the future, although forces may wish to divide the standards up into their constituent sections prior to targeting them to specific roles.

**Recommendations for future development**

Figure 2 summarises the recommendations emerging from the evaluation of DAWS A theme 1. These may be of use in the future development and implementation of work to improve effective working within the criminal justice system, in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of the approach in the future.

It is recognised that a number of these recommendations are challenging to implement, because they are wide-ranging and require input and partnership work from key national and local agencies and stakeholder groups.
### Recommendations emerging from theme 1 evaluation

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>SMART long-term outcomes.</strong> Any future logic model or theory of change for DAWSA should include SMART longer-term outcomes which are directly connected to the inputs, activities, outputs and short-term outcomes included in DAWSA.</td>
<td>Whilst the logic model developed for DAWSA clearly outlined and linked activities, outputs and short-term outcomes, longer-term outcomes could have been more clearly articulated. This includes specifying timescales for their achievement and ensuring that they were directly linked to specific inputs, activities and outputs.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaborative approach with key criminal justice agencies.</strong> Any expansion of work to improve the effectiveness of response to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system should be planned and designed in consultation with representatives from other criminal justice agencies, such as the CPS and criminal courts. This might enable it to encompass responses across the criminal justice system. Funders could support this by increasing the time available between the advertising of funding opportunities and bid submission</td>
<td>The early planning and design of theme 1 of DAWSA was undertaken primarily by stakeholders in the OPCC and police and projects are focused on policing. Closer consultation with wider criminal justice agencies during planning and design might enable the theme to encompass responses across the criminal justice system and hence to more closely resemble a whole system approach in this area.</td>
<td>2.3.2</td>
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4 The numbering of recommendations relates to the order in which they are discussed within this report.
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Articulating interactions between interventions.</strong> Plans and programme documentation for transformation programmes like DAWSA should clearly articulate the ways in which new interventions relate to each other, and to pre-existing services and interventions.</td>
<td>Connections between projects were not always clearly articulated in programme documentation. As a result, they could be perceived as a suite of stand-alone projects to tackle specific issues. In addition, in some instances there appeared to be risk of duplication or missed opportunities to build clear pathways through the system as a result of not explicitly recognising or explaining how projects related to each other. Ensuring the inter-connections between projects are clearly defined should help to avoid siloed working, duplication or inefficiencies across the system.</td>
<td>2.9.1, 6.3.6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Further assessment of training needs.</strong> In force areas wishing to build on or introduce transformation programmes such as DAWSA, additional assessment of training needs should be carried out. This includes understanding the extent to which learning from previous training is being applied, and whether further support and training is required to address any ongoing challenges in applying learning.</td>
<td>Project stakeholders highlighted that the awareness and skills of police officers and staff in relation to domestic abuse is a continued area for development. Additional training needs assessments could help to establish whether targeted training is required to address ongoing gaps in the awareness, skills and confidence of police officers in relation to domestic abuse.</td>
<td>2.9.2</td>
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| 5      | **Balancing regional consistency and local flexibility.** Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. | Force areas often reported that local flexibility was required but there is a tension between this and programmes designed to replicate and test interventions across multiple sites. Reviewing the balance between these two elements might enable solutions which:  
  - Promote the consistent development and application of good practice.  
  - Enable robust evaluation of innovative practice to develop an improved evidence base.  
  - Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the wide range of local contexts and structures into which they might be introduced. | 2.9.3, 5.3.6, 6.3.5     |

**Coercive control training**

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<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Robust training needs assessment and review of training products.</strong> The decision on whether to implement (more in-depth) coercive control training should be preceded by a robust assessment of training need in the force area and a review of existing local training products alongside those available as part of DAWSA.</td>
<td>A thorough assessment of training need and review of any local training product alongside the products included within DAWSA would ensure that forces were in a strong position to judge whether any of these models would deliver learning outcomes over and above those achieved with local products.</td>
<td>4.3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Further training on use of tools.</strong> Further training should focus on the use of tools to respond to incidents of domestic abuse.</td>
<td>Use of tools was an area of lower confidence amongst all respondents to the domestic abuse awareness survey. It was higher in those who had completed the training than those who had not but could improve further.</td>
<td>4.4.3.1</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>DVSA partnerships</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Early involvement of operational stakeholders.</strong> Operational leads and staff should be involved in discussions when planning set-up and developing protocols and procedures for the DVSA partnership.</td>
<td>Including operational leads and staff at this stage could help to smooth the process of introducing the partnership by ensuring that its planned operation is feasible and acceptable to the staff who will be delivering it.</td>
<td>5.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Planning for downtime.</strong> If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with the DVSA partnership should review the most effective uses for any downtime and should specify projects which should be undertaken during downtime within operating procedures, contracts and other key documentation.</td>
<td>As the DVSA partnerships deliver real-time responses to domestic abuse incidents and rely on incidents being flagged by first responders, they may experience periods of lower demand during shifts. Planning for this downtime will increase the efficiency of the partnerships and ensure that other activities undertaken are within the agreed remit of the partnerships.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Continuing promotion of the partnerships.</strong> If they have not already done so, force areas should develop an ongoing communications plan in relation to the DVSA partnership. In particular, this should cover communications activity within the force but it might also be</td>
<td>DVSA stakeholders and programme leads reported that further promotional work is required to ensure that police officers and staff across the force are aware of the DVSA partnership, its function and its potential to engage and support victims of domestic abuse.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing staffing arrangements for specialist providers.</strong> In force areas where the DVSA service is commissioned from or staffed by workers from local domestic abuse service providers, providers, force and OPCC leads for the DVSA partnership should review staffing arrangements for providers to determine whether these are sustainable.</td>
<td>There was some evidence to suggest that in some force areas providers’ staffing arrangements for the partnership may not be sustainable in the longer-term because they rely on specialist workers taking on additional shifts on top of their day-to-day work. A review of these arrangements would determine whether they are suitable to support ongoing provision of the DVSA partnership.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Evidence-led decision-making on performance.</strong> If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with a DVSA partnership should allocate responsibility and expected timescales for regular review of demand and performance of the DVSA partnership.</td>
<td>Regular review of demand and performance could support evidence-led decision-making on any improvements to the partnership.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**DACJS workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing balance between victim and perpetrator work.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between victim and perpetrator focused work.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders and programme leads in most force areas reported that an increase in perpetrator engagement work was an area for development for the DACJS worker role. However, they also highlighted tensions in managing an increase in workload relating to this area.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>to perpetrator work alongside existing functions of the role.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Reviewing balance between direct work with victims/perpetrators and input into training/CPD. Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between direct safeguarding and engagement work and training/upskilling police officers.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders highlighted that the training, coaching and advisory elements of the DACJS role were valuable. However, in some force areas this appeared to be a more minor element of the role, which was focused predominantly on direct safeguarding and engagement work.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Localising the role. Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the extent to which the role is currently localised.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders in the majority of force areas reported that it would be beneficial to further localise the role within districts. However, in a minority of areas consistency across the force area was seen as desirable. Reviewing the localisation of the role would enable key stakeholders to consider whether further localisation is desirable or whether localisation should be reduced in favour of consistency across the whole force area.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Involvement of DACJS workers with DVPNs/DVPOs. Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the role’s input into DVPNs and DVPOs.</td>
<td>Force areas where the DACJS worker role involved input into DVPNs and DVPOs reported that this supported upskilling of police officers and successfully improved the quality and conversion rate of DVPNs and DVPOs. This could potentially be replicated in other force areas.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing volume of information to be shared.</strong> Forces and scrutiny panels should carefully consider the balance of information that will make the most of the scrutiny panel process, the best way of presenting this information, and the capacity among the team to prepare it.</td>
<td>Scrutiny was limited at times by having too little information about cases and at times having too much. The balance of information to include, how this is structured, and the resource available to prepare the information, is important for maximising the impact of the scrutiny panels.</td>
<td>7.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Reiterating terms of reference and framework.</strong> The scrutiny panel chair should reiterate the terms of reference for the panel at the start of each meeting and remind panel members of the scrutiny framework to which the panel is working.</td>
<td>During some panel observations the purpose of the panel was not always clear and at times undermined the focus on scrutinising police responses. Reiterating the terms of reference and framework at each meeting could help to reinforce the panel’s purpose to new and existing members.</td>
<td>7.4.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing panel membership.</strong> Panel membership should be reviewed to ensure that it supports the effective delivery of the panel.</td>
<td>Panels in different force areas included a range of different representatives. Reviewing membership would ensure that panels include the range of perspectives which best enables an understanding of the victim’s journey. This includes exploring whether including panel members with lived experience would be beneficial, in force areas where they are not already included.</td>
<td>7.4.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Focusing on 2-4 cases per session.</strong> Panels with a focus on police response to domestic</td>
<td>Based on observation of panels and feedback from panel members, reviewing 2-4 cases allowed sufficient time to discuss each case in detail, but covered enough</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Using scrutiny frameworks.</strong> Scrutiny frameworks should be used in all panel meetings.</td>
<td>Explicit reference to scrutiny frameworks within panel meetings will enable them to maintain focus, ensure key aspects of the police and/or multi-agency response are considered and give members the confidence to comment on police processes. They should be used flexibly, to direct discussion without being overly restrictive.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>Role of police at panels.</strong> Police representatives should attend scrutiny panel meetings to answer questions around terminology and processes, and to relay feedback to the force. A single police representative at the table is preferable, for a balance where other members are comfortable speaking openly.</td>
<td>Based on observation of panels and feedback from panel members, panels operated more effectively and feedback was more productive when police were represented in order to provide clarification and to receive feedback on behalf of the force, rather than to discuss the response to specific cases.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Enabling police officers to observe meetings.</strong> Police officers should be able to attend meetings for one-off observation.</td>
<td>One-off observations might provide learning opportunities for individual officers, help to spread best practice to the frontline and cement understanding and relationships between the panel and the force.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Including CPS within panel membership.</strong> Panels should include representation from social care and from the CPS, wherever possible. If attendance in person is not</td>
<td>Based on observed panels and feedback from panel members CPS involvement provided a richness of information that was highly valued by other panel</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><strong>Improving case file quality.</strong> Record-keeping and case file quality should be a priority for improvement across all force areas.</td>
<td>Record-keeping and case file quality was commonly identified by scrutiny panels as an area for development. It also made scrutiny more difficult where panel members could not be confident of having the right information.</td>
<td>7.4.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing feedback mechanisms.</strong> Force areas should review mechanisms for panel feedback to be shared with the force and for actions in response to this feedback to be planned, undertaken and monitored. Review findings should be shared across the region in order to determine which mechanisms are most effective.</td>
<td>Ensuring that the most effective feedback mechanisms are in place could maximise opportunities for organisational learning for forces, and increase the likelihood that forces are able to act upon learning from the panels.</td>
<td>7.4.3.2</td>
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</table>

### Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work

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<th>Number</th>
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<th>Report section(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td><strong>Maximising take-up and use.</strong> Force areas wishing to introduce or further roll-out the standards should review how the standards are applied and packaged in order to maximise take-up and use.</td>
<td>Force areas have identified different ways to package and apply the standards. Reviewing and considering each of these approaches could enable forces to combine different approaches to maximise take-up. Existing applications which could be considered are: incorporation into PDR processes, use within training, promotion as good practice guidance tools, use within case file auditing processes. The individual sections of</td>
<td>8.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>the standards could also be presented as separate packages to target officers/staff in different roles.</td>
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Glossary

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic abuse is:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional.”

Key terms

Figure 3 defines key terms relevant to domestic abuse and Domestic Abuse: A Whole System Approach (DAWSA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)</td>
<td>Cafcass represents children in family court cases in England. Cafcass is independent of the courts, social services, education and health authorities and all similar agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Arrangements Order</td>
<td>A court order which defines where a child lives and the contact which they have with each parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare’s Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme)</td>
<td>The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), known as Clare’s Law, provides partners and their friends and family with the “right to ask” if an individual may pose a risk to them. It also enables police to proactively disclose information to the partner without being asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)</td>
<td>Suppliers who provide probation services to offenders who present a low or medium risk of harm, under contracts managed by HM Prison and Probation Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice (DACJS) Worker</td>
<td>A specialist domestic abuse worker who is based in a police team to work alongside police officers and staff. The roles were established or developed as part of DAWSA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP)</td>
<td>A programme designed to support the education and behaviour change of people who commit domestic abuse. These are also sometimes called Domestic Abuse Prevention Programmes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
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<td>Term</td>
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<td>threatening violence against a victim or their child, or intimidating, harassing or pestering them.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation order</td>
<td>A court order which determines who can live in the family home or enter the surrounding area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Encompass</td>
<td>A police and education early information sharing partnership which enables schools to offer immediate support for children and young people after they have experienced or witnessed an incident of domestic abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police disclosure request</td>
<td>Individuals may request information about somebody from the police to support family court proceedings. There may be an administration fee for making the request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Development Review (PDR)</td>
<td>A Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system used by police forces to evaluate and develop the performance of officers and staff. Each staff member completes a PDR with their manager once per year. It is also sometimes known as Professional Development Review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibited steps order</td>
<td>A court order which prevents a parent from carrying out certain events or making specific trips with their children without the express permission of the other parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recency Frequency Gravity (RFG) score</td>
<td>A risk matrix used to identify problematic perpetrators of domestic abuse. In some force areas, an alternative term for this is the Recency Frequency Harm (RFH) score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraining order</td>
<td>A court order which aims to prevent a partner, ex-partner or close family member from causing harm to a victim. It can prohibit direct or indirect contact with the victim, entering a property or premises or entering the surrounding area. It can only be issued during criminal proceedings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary scheme</td>
<td>A multi-agency initiative which aims to enable households at risk of violence to remain in their own homes by proving security measures and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah’s Law (child sex offender disclosure scheme)</td>
<td>The child sex offender disclosure scheme, known as Sarah’s Law, enables individuals who are concerned about somebody who has contact with a child to ask the police if the individual has a record of child sex offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special measures</td>
<td>Steps taken to support a vulnerable witness during police interview or in court. These may include giving evidence in court from behind a screen or using a separate waiting room from the offender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific issue order</td>
<td>A court order which defines specific aspect of a child’s upbringing (e.g. which school they attend).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of Domestic Abuse: A Whole System Approach (DAWSA) as they relate to the projects delivered under theme 1, effective working within the criminal justice system. The evaluation was commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Northumbria and delivered by Cordis Bright, an independent research and consultancy organisation.

1.2 About DAWSA

DAWSA has been developed by Northumbria OPCC and Northumbria Police, along with partners in the OPCC and police in Cleveland, Durham, Humberside, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. Elements of DAWSA are also being implemented by the police and OPCC in Cumbria and South Yorkshire. Funding for DAWSA has been provided by the Home Office, via the Police Transformation Fund.

DAWSA includes three key themes, which are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Key themes of DAWSA

1.3 About DAWSA theme 1

The overall objective of Theme 1 was:

Ensure that every reported incident of domestic abuse prompts a response that maximises what could be the one and only opportunity to access, engage with and safeguard its victim(s).

Source: Key programme documentation

Theme 1 included five specific projects. These were:
• Coercive control training.
• Domestic Abuse Specialist Advisor (DVSA) partnerships.
• Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) workers.
• Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels.
• Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work.

In some instances, different models were used to deliver projects in different force areas. Figure 5 outlines the projects and the different models used to deliver them.
Figure 5: Projects within theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Model(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive control training</td>
<td>The coercive control training programme aims to enable police officers and other staff to understand the dynamics of coercive control, risk assess effectively and understand the role of the police within a whole system approach. The purpose of this activity was to ensure that coercive control training had been delivered to all relevant police officers and staff by the end of the programme funding period for DAWSA.</td>
<td>Model A (3 force areas): Classroom-style training using products developed in-force Model B (1 force area): Safe Lives Domestic Abuse Matters training Model C (2 force areas): Theatre-based training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Domestic Violence Support and Assistance (DVSA) partnership | The DVSA partnership involves the inclusion of advice and support from a specialist domestic abuse support worker as part of the early police response to a domestic abuse incident. The primary aims of the DVSA partnership are to:  
• Increase support for victims, at the scene, at the point of crisis and at the time of a reported domestic abuse incident (or as soon as practicable thereafter).  
• Increase opportunities for partnership working and shared learning between the police and specialist domestic abuse support providers, in order to improve safeguarding and support | Model A (3 force areas – including one force area operating models A and B): DVSA partnership located in a police car as a second response unit Model B (3 force areas – including one force area operating models A and B): DVSA partnership located in a force control room |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Model(s)</th>
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</table>
| Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) worker | The DACJS worker role which involves the introduction of a specialist domestic abuse worker to work alongside police officers and staff. The primary aim of the role is to enable police teams to better understand and meet the needs of domestic abuse victims. The workers undertake a range of tasks in different force areas, which encapsulate some or all of the following elements:  
  - Facilitating joint safeguarding work.  
  - Increasing support, referral and engagement of victims and their families.  
  - Increasing engagement of perpetrators, to change their behaviour.  
  - Enhancing evidence gathering.  
  - Improving staff knowledge.  

The purpose of this activity was to introduce a DACJS worker role in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA, or to continue delivery of existing roles.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | All participating force areas used the same overarching model to deliver the DACJS worker role. However, there were key local differences in:  
  - Whether the role pre-dated the programme funding period.  
  - Where in the system the role was introduced, and which police teams worked alongside the role.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
<p>| Independent domestic                         | Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels involve the establishment and ongoing delivery of an independent panel whose members are currently involved in a role related to domestic abuse.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | All participating force areas used the same model for the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel, which                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |</p>
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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Model(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>abuse scrutiny panel</td>
<td>The panel’s purpose is to review police case files and provide structured feedback to forces on engagement and evidential issues, as well as highlighting examples of good and poor practice. The purpose of this activity was to introduce an independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA.</td>
<td>involved the establishment of a panel of independent experts to meet quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work | The good practice standards for domestic abuse case work are a set of standards developed by Northumbria Police to support enhanced supervisory review of domestic abuse cases and continuous professional development for police officers who might be working on domestic abuse cases. The purpose of this activity was to introduce the standards into professional development review (PDR) processes or other performance monitoring and continuous professional development processes in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA. The standards fall into four categories:  
  - Carrying out the initial investigation into a domestic abuse incident.  
  - Developing an investigation into a domestic abuse incident.  
  - Preparing a domestic abuse case file.  
  - Ensuring that victims of domestic abuse are safe and offered relevant support.  
  The full list of standards can be found in appendix B. | Model A (3 force areas): Standards are incorporated into PDR processes for target officers and are used within training and continuous professional development  
Model B (2 force areas)\(^5\): Standards are not incorporated into PDR processes but are used within training and continuous professional development |
1.4 Evaluation questions

In line with the collaborative approach taken, the key overarching questions which the evaluation addresses were developed and agreed with key DAWSA stakeholders from across the six force areas as part of the first evaluation phase. These focus on both outcomes and process and are presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Evaluation questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key evaluation question</th>
<th>Report sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Does DAWSA achieve its intended outcomes?</td>
<td>3.2, 3.3, 4.4.3, 5.4.3, 6.4.3, 7.4.3, 8.4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. If so, why is this? What factors contribute to achieving these outcomes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. If not, why is this? What factors have inhibited the achievement of outcomes?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Are some projects more successful than others in achieving their intended outcomes? If so, which projects are more successful and why is this?</td>
<td>3.2, 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Where more than one model has been used to deliver the same activity, is one model more successful than others in achieving the intended outcomes? If so, which model(s), why are they more successful and what resources do they require relative to less successful models?</td>
<td>4.4.5, 5.4.5, 6.4.5, 7.4.4, 8.4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) To what extent can improvements in local responses to domestic abuse be attributed to DAWSA and to what extent might they be attributable, wholly or partly, to other factors or activity which falls outside of DAWSA?</td>
<td>3.2, 3.3, 4.4.3, 5.4.3, 6.4.3, 7.4.3, 8.4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Is DAWSA achieving the same level of impact in all force areas? If not, what factors might explain this?</td>
<td>4.4.5, 5.4.5, 6.4.5, 7.4.4, 8.4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6) How has DAWSA been rolled out and implemented in different force areas and how well has the process worked? Within force areas, are there variations in roll-out and implementation in different local authority areas? What factors determine how the approach is implemented locally?</td>
<td>Chapter 2, 4.3, 5.3, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3</td>
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## Key evaluation question

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Report sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7) To what extent has DAWSA delivered its intended outputs for each activity? If it has not delivered one or more intended output, what factors might explain this?</td>
<td>3.2, 4.4.2, 5.4.2, 6.4.2, 7.4.2, 8.4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Can any of the good practice principles identified in the literature on whole system approaches to domestic abuse grounded in health and social care be applied to DAWSA, as it is being implemented by Northumbria OPCC and partners? If so, to what extent does DAWSA conform to these good practice principles? Does the approach support the identification of further good practice principles for future use?</td>
<td>2.10.1, 4.6.1, 5.6.1, 6.6.1, 7.6.1, 8.6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) What are the strengths and areas for improvement of DAWSA? Can these be used to inform policy and practice in delivering whole system approaches to domestic abuse? If so, how?</td>
<td>2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 4.3.3, 4.3.5, 4.3.6, 5.3.3, 5.3.5, 5.3.6, 6.3.3, 6.3.5, 6.3.6, 7.3.3, 7.3.5, 7.3.6, 8.3.3, 8.3.5, 8.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) What are the challenges experienced by force areas developing and implementing DAWSA? Is there evidence of how these challenges can be overcome?</td>
<td>2.7, 4.3.4, 5.3.4, 6.3.4, 7.3.4, 8.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Are there any unexpected consequences of DAWSA? If so, what are these consequences? What factors contribute to them?</td>
<td>3.2, 3.3, 4.4.3, 5.4.3, 6.4.3, 7.4.3, 8.4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Does DAWSA represent added value, in comparison to the approaches that would have been in place without its introduction? Do stakeholders believe that the approach delivers value for money, or would deliver this in the future?</td>
<td>2.10.2, 4.6.2, 5.6.2, 6.6.2, 7.6.2, 8.6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Can DAWSA be sustained in the future? Does it require specific future funding or can it be incorporated into business as usual?</td>
<td>2.5, 4.5, 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 Overview of evaluation methodology

1.5.1 Summary of evaluation approach

DAWSA is an innovative, multi-agency, multi-site, multi-stakeholder transformation taking place in a highly complex system. Our approach aimed to take account of the complexity of DAWSA by taking a collaborative approach to delivering the evaluation. In practice, this meant that we worked collaboratively with key DAWSA stakeholders to:

- Refine the evaluation questions.
- Develop an evaluation framework which outlined how we would address the key evaluation questions. This is available in annex 1.

It also meant that we designed, discussed, agreed and finalised all evaluation approaches and tools with key DAWSA stakeholders before they were used in the field.

1.5.2 Overview of evaluation methodology

Figure 7 summarises the methodology used in the evaluation. Methods which were specifically related to theme 2 are highlighted in orange. The evaluation was delivered over two phases:

- **Phase 1.** Evaluation framework development (May-July 2018).
- **Phase 2.** Evaluation framework implementation and report delivery (August 2018-June 2019).
Figure 7: Summary of evaluation methodologies for Theme 1

**Phase 1: Develop evaluation framework**
- Launch meeting with Northumbria OPCC and Northumbria Police
- Review of programme documentation
- Visits to police and OPCC leads in five force areas
- Sense testing workshop and finalising report and framework
- Production of draft scoping report and evaluation framework
- Literature review on delivering whole system approaches to domestic abuse

**Fieldwork & Desktop review**
- **Domestic Abuse: A Whole System Approach**
  - Documentation review
  - Analysis of key performance metrics
  - Consultation with 33 key programme stakeholders
  - Key stakeholder “whole system” e-survey – 442 responses
- **Theme 1: Effective working within the criminal justice system**
  - Domestic abuse awareness survey – 1,026 responses
  - Interviews with 17 victims
  - Consultation with 45 DVSA partnership stakeholders
  - Consultation with 44 DACJS worker stakeholders
  - Observation of 6 DA scrutiny panels and consultation with 59 attendees
  - Review of DA scrutiny panel feedback and responses
- **Theme 2: Partnership work with civil and family courts**
  - Interviews with 14 victims
  - Interviews with 22 civil and family court stakeholders
  - Review of CFCL officer strategic outputs
  - Domestic abuse, civil and family proceedings awareness survey – 808 responses
- **Theme 3: Multi-agency victim support and offender management**
  - Observation of 6 MATAC and consultation with 60 attendees
  - Interviews with 10 perpetrators
  - Interviews with 21 DAPP stakeholders
  - 2 MASH visits to develop case studies

**Phase 2: Implement evaluation framework**
- Production of draft final evaluation reports
- Sense testing workshop and finalising evaluation reports
1.5.3 Phase 1 evaluation methodology

During phase 1 we delivered the following key activities to collaboratively develop the evaluation framework:

**Evaluation launch meeting**

During this meeting the DAWSA Programme Director, Implementation Manager and Evaluation Coordinator in Northumbria provided:

- A detailed introduction to the programme and its development and implementation in Northumbria.

- An overview of implementation in the other force areas.

- A summary of the planned monitoring data collection in relation to outputs, impacts and outcomes.

In addition, the approach to Phase 1 of the evaluation was confirmed at this meeting.

**Review of programme documentation**

Cordis Bright reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to DAWSA. This included key strategic and operational documentation, logic models, excerpts from the original funding application to the Home Office Police Transformation Fund, progress reports, monitoring returns to the Home Office, service specifications, terms of reference and internal reviews and existing external evaluations.

**Visits to local force and programme leads**

Visits were conducted with local force and programme leads in five force areas other than Northumbria (the sixth). We had covered the issues with Northumbria in the project launch meeting. In each area, a Cordis Bright evaluator met with the police lead, safeguarding lead and OPCC lead for DAWSA. Discussions focused on: (a) local understanding of DAWSA and its aims and intended impacts and outcomes; (b) How the different projects are being interpreted and implemented in the force area; (c) Progress in implementation, and; (d) Developing appropriate and feasible output, impact and outcome measures and evaluation methodologies.

**Literature review on whole system approaches to domestic abuse**

We designed a review protocol which was agreed with key DAWSA stakeholders before we proceeded. The review focused on “what works” in delivering whole system approaches to domestic abuse. As well as informing the development of the evaluation framework, the key findings of the literature review were used during Phase 2 of the evaluation, to benchmark the whole system approach being implemented by Northumbria and partners. The review can also be used to
inform current and future development of whole system approaches locally and elsewhere. The review is available as annex 2.

**Delivery of the scoping report and evaluation framework**

Based on the above steps, we delivered a draft evaluation framework and scoping report. This was circulated to key DAWSA stakeholders. In addition, we facilitated a “sense-testing” workshop with 18 key stakeholders from the OPCCs, force areas and the Home Office. On the basis of this workshop and feedback we finalised the evaluation framework which can be seen in annex 1.

Following the above process and sign-off of the evaluation framework we implemented the evaluation across the programme and its three themes.

#### 1.5.4 Phase 2 DAWSA programme overall evaluation methodology

The phase 2 evaluation methodology included a number of core components as summarised in Figure 6. These were:

**Review of programme documentation**

This included programme and theme documentation generated since the scoping report and evaluation framework was delivered.

**Analysis of key performance metrics**

Analysis was conducted of data provided by each force area in relation to a range of key performance metrics linked to the outputs and outcomes of each programme theme and the projects and interventions within each theme. The metrics were agreed with programme leads in each force area as part of phase 1 of the evaluation and are referenced as indicators in the evaluation framework. They can also be viewed in the evaluation framework in annex 1.

**Consultation with 33 key programme stakeholders**

There were two elements to this consultation, visits to force areas to consult with programme leads and telephone interviews with other senior stakeholders. In total, 33 key programme stakeholders were consulted via these methods. Figure 8 provides a breakdown of the number of stakeholders consulted in each force area.
Visits to local programme leads. One-day visits were undertaken to each of the six force areas to meet with the police lead, OPCC lead and safeguarding lead for DAWSA. These focused on: (a) gathering information about progress in implementing DAWSA, with a focus on each individual project included within the programme, and; (b) seeking views about the implementation of DAWSA and its impact to-date.

16 in-depth interviews with senior stakeholders. This included senior stakeholders such as Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), senior police representatives and the programme director. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an understanding of stakeholders’ views of the local context for DAWSA, implementation of DAWSA, as well as its impact on outcomes.

“Whole system” E-survey

The “whole-system” E-survey was developed to complement the in-depth interviews described above by providing insight into the views of as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. The questions focused on levels of awareness of DAWSA, the impact of specific projects delivered under the three programme themes and implementation of the DAWSA. The E-survey was circulated to relevant local stakeholders via email by local programme leads. A cascade approach to distribution was used because stakeholders were asked to forward on the E-survey link to colleagues with insight into DAWSA. A total of 442 responses to the survey were received. The total numbers of respondents from each force are shown in Figure 9. This shows that there was considerable variation between forces in terms of response. As such, caution should be applied in interpreting findings reported at a regional level in this report as they are likely to be more representative of Force B and D areas in comparison to the other areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Programme leads</th>
<th>Senior stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, the number of responses to the survey also varied regarding the job role of respondents, as shown in Figure 10. For instance, the majority of respondents (62%) were police.

Figure 10: Number of respondents to the "whole-system" E-survey, by job role (n=442)
1.5.5 Phase 2 methodologies specific to theme 1 evaluation

Figure 11 provides a summary overview of the numbers of participants in the methods used during phase 2 for the evaluation of theme 1.

Figure 11: Overview of theme 1 consultation by project and force area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force Area</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Domestic abuse awareness survey for the coercive control training programme</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completed training</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Had not completed training</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>In-depth interviews with victims supported by the DVSA partnership</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Consultation with DVSA partnership stakeholders</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Consultation with DACJS stakeholders</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Consultation with DA panel attendees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following provides more detail about each method.

Coercive Control Training Programme Domestic Abuse Awareness survey

This was circulated to staff across all force areas, regardless of whether they had completed the coercive control training. The survey was conducted online (via SurveyMonkey) and distributed via email. The questions focussed on levels of awareness, confidence and skills across the forces in relation to coercive control.

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6 This included 10 staff members working in the local DACJS worker role.
training programme. A total of 1,026 responses to the survey were received. However, the analysis in the report that follows focuses on responses from:

- 458 respondents who had completed the training
- 341 respondents who had not completed the training

As such the report focuses on answers to the survey from 799 respondents. Other respondents’ data has been treated as missing data as they did not complete this question. Caution should be applied to interpreting the findings from this survey for the following reasons:

- Variation in respondents from across forces meaning that some forces have greater representation than others
- Where we compare findings using percentages between those respondents who have completed and those who did not complete training, caution should be applied as sample size may impact on the percentage.

Interviews with 17 victims who received support from the DVSA partnership

17 in-depth interviews were conducted with victims who had been supported by the DVSA partnership in all six of the force areas. These aimed to gain a greater understanding of victims’ experience of this support and any impact on outcomes for them, as well as how effectively the DVSA partnerships were operating for victims.

Consultation with 45 stakeholders involved with the DVSA partnership

Visits were carried out in the six force areas to conduct a combination of focus groups, small group interviews and 1-to-1 interviews with stakeholders involved with the DVSA partnership. This face-to-face consultation was supplemented by telephone and email consultation with stakeholders who were unavailable on the day of the visit. This included IDVAs and domestic abuse specialist workers from local providers involved in the partnerships, police officers involved in the partnerships or working alongside them, DACJS workers involved in delivery and staff from other agencies with insight into the partnerships. The purpose of these interviews was to explore views on the implementation and impact of the DVSA partnership and to gain a deeper understanding of the different ways in which the partnerships are being delivered in different force areas.

Consultation with 44 stakeholders involved with the DACJS workers

Visits were carried out in the six force areas to conduct a combination of focus groups, small group interviews and 1-to-1 interviews with stakeholders involved with the DVSA partnership. This face-to-face consultation was supplemented by telephone and email consultation with stakeholders who were unavailable on the day of the visit. This included 10 staff members in the local DACJS worker role, police officers and staff working alongside them and representatives from other local organisations working in partnership with them. The purpose of these interviews was to explore views on the implementation and impact of the DACJS
worker role and to gain a deeper understanding of the different ways in which the roles are being delivered in different force areas.

**Domestic abuse scrutiny panel visits and review of feedback and responses**

Evaluators attended and observed a domestic abuse scrutiny panel in each of the six force areas, and in each visit conducted focus groups with scrutiny panel members. The purpose was to gain an understanding of the panel membership and process and to evaluate the extent to which this resulted in a high quality of scrutiny and feedback.

In addition, the minutes of scrutiny panels were reviewed, along with documentary evidence of force areas’ response to scrutiny panel feedback. This aimed to identify the key themes picked up by scrutiny panels and to understand the extent to which scrutiny panel feedback had been taken forward and acted on in the different force areas.

1.5.6 **Evaluation challenges and limitations**

The following outlines some key challenges and limitations to the evaluation:

- **DAWSA is a large-scale complex programme of work**: Within the resource for the evaluation, it was not possible to focus in detail on all DAWSA’s projects. As such, during the collaborative evaluation framework development phase of the evaluation, we worked with key programme and theme stakeholders to prioritise and agree the focus of the evaluation. This means that the evaluation does not cover all aspects of DAWSA, but it does focus on key stakeholders’ priorities in terms of evaluation questions and areas of interest. We have also utilised a mixed multi-method approach so that we are able to triangulate findings to make sense of complexity.

- **Attribution of impact**. DAWSA is a complex programme and the evaluation resource aimed to cover both implementation and impact of three thematic work streams each containing a number of projects. Attribution of impact of DAWSA overall and projects within DAWSA has been challenging for a number of reasons:
  - **Impact of innovation and transformation takes time.** Delays in the release of funding from the Home Office meant that in some instances implementation of DAWSA slipped. This has implications for implementation and embedding change which the fixed timescale for the evaluation could not adapt to, i.e. it can take time for impact to be achieved in change programmes and assessing impact at this stage is very difficult. Projects can often take 2 years or more to implement and embed before they start achieving their desired impact.
  - **Randomised Control Trials and Quasi-Experimental Designs help to assess impact.** It was not possible in this evaluation to design and implement Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) or Quasi-Experimental Evaluation designs of interventions. These are generally acknowledged as strong methods in attributing impact to specific interventions and
should be encouraged in future evaluation. However, due to the nature of the DAWSA evaluation it was not possible to include approaches such as these in the evaluation. Rather, in line with the specification and stakeholders’ priorities we focused on covering DAWSA and its three themes as comprehensively as possible within the evaluation resource. Our approaches include mixed methods and triangulation which allows us to make judgements concerning implementation and also emerging areas of impact and good practice.

- **Data issues.** The evaluation has encountered a range of issues including:
  - **Missing and incomplete data.** This has been the case both for monitoring data and data collected through survey methodology. Missing and incomplete data has been treated as missing, i.e. we have not utilised estimation techniques to address this issue. Where we have encountered these issues, we highlight this in the report so that readers are aware of it and that caution should be applied in interpreting findings as appropriate.
  - **Sample bias.** Monitoring data and survey data in some cases may have sample bias. For example, respondents from some forces are more represented in survey responses than from other forces. This means that survey analysis at a regional level may be prone to sample bias. Where this is the case, we highlight this in the report.
  - **Missing and incomplete data and sample bias have impeded our ability to compare findings between forces, projects and models of delivery.** For example, some forces were unable to provide us with a complete set of monitoring data or facilitate components of fieldwork which means our ability to compare and contrast findings between forces, projects and models of delivery has been impeded. Where this is the case, we have highlighted this in the report. We have also used triangulation of methods and analysis to attempt to mitigate this issue.
  - **Performance management and monitoring data tends to focus on output measurement rather than outcomes measurement.** This is primarily a result of the relatively short timescales available to implement projects, achieve and evidence outcomes, which make it more feasible to gather data on outputs than on outcomes. This means that the evaluation is able to say more about the number of things that the programme has achieved (outputs) rather than the impact on outcomes (i.e. the positive changes in victims’ lives) that DAWSA has achieved. For projects which continued beyond the DAWSA funding period, more time is available to achieve and evidence outcomes. Therefore monitoring data should have a greater focus on outcomes measurement.

### 1.6 Approach to reporting

#### 1.6.1 Related reports

This DAWSA theme 1 report can be read in conjunction with a number of other reports produced as part of this evaluation:
• Overarching DAWSA programme evaluation report.
• Theme 2 evaluation report.
• Theme 3 evaluation report.
• Literature review.
• Evaluation framework.

In order that each report be useful for a range of stakeholders, individually and as a collection, there is some repetition between the overall and thematic reports and, within each report, between individual projects.

1.6.2 Force area anonymity

The evaluation is intended to review the implementation process and impact of DAWSA as a whole, and not the performance of individual force areas. As a result, findings reported at force area level have been anonymised throughout the evaluation reports, using Force A – Force F. The letters have been applied consistently so that they always designate the same force area.

1.6.3 Distinguishing stakeholder groups

This report includes a wealth of data and evidence from a range of stakeholder groups. Consistent terms have been used to refer to the different types of stakeholders consulted during the evaluation, in order to distinguish between feedback where relevant. These terms are presented in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Terms for stakeholder groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme leads</td>
<td>The DAWSA programme director and to the police lead, OPCC lead and safeguarding lead for DAWSA in each force area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stakeholders</td>
<td>Police and Crime Commissioners and members of the Chief Officer Team in each force area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project stakeholders</td>
<td>Stakeholders who were consulted in relation to a specific project within DAWSA. In theme 1, stakeholders were consulted specifically in relation to DVSA partnerships, DACJS workers and independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6.4 Reporting on qualitative consultation

When reporting on qualitative consultation, we have provided an indication of whether views were expressed by a majority or minority of stakeholders within
particular groups, as well as whether themes and findings related to a majority or minority of force areas. This is to enable readers to understand the relative significance of different themes and findings.

In some instances where we report on a majority or minority view, we are not able to provide information on the views of stakeholders who did not express this view. This is because topic guides for consultation were semi-structured and enabled themes to emerge within individual interviews and focus groups. Therefore, topics and themes which were prioritised by stakeholders in some interviews and focus groups were not raised as topics for discussion in others.

### 1.7 Report structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** presents findings about the implementation of theme 1 as a whole.

- **Chapter 3** summarises evidence of the scale at which projects under theme 1 have been delivered and the impact they have achieved so far.

- **Chapters 4 to 8** explore findings relating to the implementation and impact of individual projects under theme 1 as follows:
  - **Chapter 4**: coercive control training.
  - **Chapter 5**: Domestic Violence Support and Assistance (DVSA) partnerships.
  - **Chapter 6**: Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) liaison workers.
  - **Chapter 7**: independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels.
  - **Chapter 8**: good practice standards for domestic abuse case work.
2 Implementation of Theme 1

2.1 Key findings

- Theme 1 was viewed as a crucial theme within DAWSA by programme leads and senior stakeholders, who recognised that there were a number of inter-connected challenges to delivering high-quality responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system. These were also outlined in programme documentation and included gaps in skills and confidence of police officers/staff and an emphasis on responding to incidents rather than considering them alongside a victim’s whole experience of domestic abuse.

- The rationale for including the projects within the theme was clearly articulated in documentation and by stakeholders. The primary focus on improving police response to domestic abuse was a pragmatic and understandable decision in an OPCC- and police-led programme. However, this focus on policing may have limited the extent to which theme 1 projects address the whole criminal justice system, and thus the extent to which it can be seen as a whole system approach in this area.

- Within the theme 1 projects there was a strong focus on introducing specialist input and closer multi-agency working at points in the criminal justice system where this was likely to be beneficial and result in improved police responses to domestic abuse.

- All of the projects within theme 1 had a focus on improving the understanding, skills and confidence of police officers and staff. In the case of coercive control training and the good practice standards for domestic abuse training, this was the primary purpose of the projects.

- Theme 1 projects also increased the opportunities for domestic abuse to be disclosed and identified, as well as for more accurate risk assessment on the basis of more detailed disclosures.

- Amongst stakeholders who had an overview of DAWSA, most of the projects included under theme 1 were among the most highly-valued elements across DAWSA as a whole. Specifically, face-to-face coercive control training, DVSA partnerships, DACJS workers and independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels were viewed as highly valuable.

- The good practice standards for domestic abuse case work were also highly-valued in principle. The content and ethos of the standards were recognised as valuable, but they were also seen as challenging to incorporate into existing CPD processes and structures.

- There are plans in place to sustain the majority of the theme 1 projects in most of the force areas participating in DAWSA. This suggests that the
projects under theme 1 were viewed as both valuable and feasible to deliver. Specifically:

- All six force areas are sustaining independent scrutiny panels and have continuation funding for the DACJS worker role for at least the short-term.
- Five force areas have plans in place to sustain the coercive control training.
- Four force areas have continuation funding in place for the DVSA partnership.
- Four force areas are continuing to use the good practice standards in different ways.

- The resources and models of working under theme 1 serve as tools which could be useful for other force areas and partners who are interested in delivering more effective responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system.

- Force areas where there were high levels of support for projects from strategic leaders in the Force Chief Officer Team and the OPCC, as well as strong operational management and similar models of work already in place, tended to make greater progress in implementing these projects.

- Significant promotional activity was required to raise awareness of new projects which were introduced under theme 1. This was connected to the large volume of police officers and staff who needed to be made aware of projects relevant to their role.

- Most projects were reportedly well-received by the majority of police officers, staff and partners. However, there may still be further changes in culture and understanding required in forces to ensure that all officers and staff were receptive to and supportive of new approaches.

- Areas for development for theme 1 included: clearly articulating the ways in which new interventions relate to each other, and to pre-existing services and interventions; placing an even greater emphasis on training and CPD for police officers and staff; and reviewing the balance between consistent delivery across the region and local flexibility to develop and apply new models.

2.2 Key components

Figure 13 provides an overview of the main components of theme 1. This was produced by Cordis Bright, drawing on a range of sources consulted in Phase 1 of the evaluation, including:
- The logic models which were developed by Northumbria OPCC, Police and partners for each theme.

- Programme documentation.

- Consultation with key stakeholders.

Financial monitoring data shows that a total of £1,663,307 was spent on theme 1 activities across the region, over 2016-2019.

In addition, a total of £1,134,443 was spent on project management costs, spanning theme 1 and the other two themes included in DAWSA.

A detailed account of the outputs and outcomes of each project in theme 1 is given in chapters 4 to 8.
### Figure 13: Key components in Theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Financial inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes</th>
<th>Longer-term outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Coercive control training      | Educate participants on domestic abuse, including coercive control, and possible responses to domestic abuse, including coercive control. | £132,987 across six force areas | - Coercive control training package and training plans.  
- Numbers of staff trained to understand and assess coercive control. | Increase in police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control. | - Standardised approach for staff dealing with coercive control.  
- Increased number of incidents/crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling behaviour.  
- Increased number of offences being charged as coercive control.  
- Increased coercive control convictions.  
- Improved investigative and safeguarding response to |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Financial inputs</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes</th>
<th>Longer-term outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| DVSA partnership | • Increase support for victims, at the scene and at the time of a reported domestic abuse incident (or as soon as practicable thereafter).  
• Increase police understanding of and knowledge of domestic abuse victim support and safety planning. | £897,551 across six force areas | • Number of incidents attended/follow-up calls made by DVSA (or victims visited by North Yorkshire Early Intervention service).  
• Number of victims who engaged with DVSA.  
• Number of onward referrals by DVSA.  
• Number of victims who engaged with support following referral.  
• Opportunities for inter-agency learning. | • Increase in the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support.  
• Increase in the number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing specialist support. | • Improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.  
• Reduction in the number of domestic abuse cases that result in no further action due to evidential difficulties or poor victim engagement.  
• Reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Financial inputs(^7)</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes</th>
<th>Longer-term outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| DACJS workers | Enable police officers to better understand and meet the needs of local victims by offering / facilitating joint safeguarding work that increases victim engagement and referral and enhances evidence gathering. | £606,591 across six force areas | • Numbers of cases where DACJS worker had input into victim safety planning.  
  • Number of DVPNs served.  
  • Number of DVPOs granted in court.  
  • Number of MATAC notices served by DACJS workers.  
  • Number of referrals into perpetrator programmes. | • Increase in the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support.  
  • Improved quality of police officer safety planning for victims.  
  • Improved quality of police investigation plans.  
  • Increased perpetrator engagement with DAPPs/1-to-1 support. | • Improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.  
  • Increased numbers of DVPNs served and DVPOs granted.  
  • Increased number of early guilty pleas in relation to domestic abuse perpetrators.  
  • Reduction in the number of domestic abuse cases that result in no further action due to evidential difficulties or limited victim engagement.  
  • Reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse. |
# Project: Independent Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel

**Aims:** Establish a mechanism for specialist, multi-agency scrutiny of the (police) response to victims of domestic abuse.

**Financial inputs:** £19,500 across six force areas

**Outputs:**
- Number of representatives on the panel.
- Number of panel meetings held.
- Scrutiny framework to guide panel discussions.
- Number of case files scrutinised.
- Quarterly panel reports.

**Short-term outcomes:** High quality, regular and independent structured feedback provided to forces on engagement, case file quality and evidential issues.

**Longer-term outcomes:** Feedback incorporated into organisational learning structures & organisational learning acted upon.

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# Project: Develop Good Practice Standards for DA Case Work & Commence Delivery of the Standards

**Aims:** Establish standards to assess and improve the competencies of police officers involved in domestic abuse case work.

**Financial inputs:** £6,678 across six force areas

**Outputs:**
- DA casework standards and mechanisms for embedding these.
- Number of staff who have achieved the standards.

**Short-term outcomes:** Enhanced supervisory awareness of DA case work standards.

**Longer-term outcomes:** Enhanced supervisory review of DA cases.

**Enhanced quality of DA case work.**
Within programme documentation and on discussion with stakeholders, the relationship between projects and their aims, intended outputs and short-term outcomes was in general clearly articulated. One possible area for improvement was in ensuring that the longer-term outcomes were SMART\(^9\) and could be directly linked to the projects being delivered under theme 1. For example, whilst short-term outcomes were expected to be achieved within the DAWSA funding period, timescales were not attached to the longer-term outcomes. Equally, some longer-term outcomes were relatively wide-ranging in nature and were thus likely to be achieved only if the specific projects within DAWSA were accompanied by local and national progress in a number of other areas.

**Recommendation 1:** Any future logic model or theory of change for DAWSA should include SMART longer-term outcomes which are directly connected to the activities, outputs and short-term outcomes included in DAWSA.

Consultation with key stakeholders during phase 1 of the evaluation indicated that stakeholders were realistic about what might be achieved within the programme funding period. It was therefore agreed to sub-divide the longer-term outcomes into two categories. Those longer-term outcomes highlighted in bold in Figure 13 are ones which key stakeholders and Cordis Bright evaluators believed might feasibly be achieved within the programme funding period\(^10\). The remaining longer-term outcomes are those which would take longer to achieve and evidence, and are therefore unlikely to be achieved within the programme funding period.

### 2.3 Rationale for inclusion

#### 2.3.1 Rationale for theme

Theme 1 was viewed as a crucial theme within DAWSA by programme leads and senior stakeholders, who recognised that there were a number of inter-connected challenges to delivering high-quality responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system. These included gaps in skills and confidence of police officers/staff and an emphasis on responding to incidents rather than considering them alongside a victim’s whole experience of domestic abuse.

These challenges echoed the specific areas for development which were identified in programme documentation, which were:

- The absence of cost-effective domestic abuse training.
- Un- or under-trained staff who lacked confidence in using risk assessment tools.

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\(^9\) SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound.

\(^10\) These outcomes were therefore included in the evaluation framework alongside outputs and short-term outcomes.
• The need to increase officer awareness of and confidence in using local referral mechanisms.

• The need to build and increase capacity for specialist officers to support those in greatest need.

• The need to build on evidence of ‘what works’ in relation to victims and perpetrators.

• The need to shift responses away from focusing on individual incidents of domestic abuse and towards a more rounded assessment of the history and picture of abuse, in order to improve outcomes in criminal proceedings.

2.3.2 Rationale for projects

Programme leads, senior stakeholders and stakeholders with insight into specific projects were able to describe the rationale for including each of the individual projects which made up theme 1 and the objectives they were intended to achieve. This included how they related to the areas for development outlined in programme documentation. In particular, they highlighted that projects were selected either because they were nationally encouraged or because there was emerging evidence that they were effective in one force area and might therefore be good candidates for replication. In addition, they emphasised that a realistic approach was taken in selecting projects which appeared feasible to implement within the programme timescales.

The theme focused primarily on improving police response to domestic abuse. This is both a pragmatic and understandable decision; as an OPCC- and police-led programme it can exert more influence on police processes and practices than on those of other criminal justice agencies and therefore make more headway in implementing policing-focused projects within the programme funding period. In addition, injecting more resource and innovation into policing may be more impactful than spreading resource more thinly across a wider number of criminal justice agencies.

Nevertheless, the decision to focus projects on policing may have limited the extent to which theme 1 projects address the whole criminal justice system, and thus the extent to which it can be seen as a whole system approach in this area. For example, the criminal justice system extends beyond the police to agencies such as the CPS and criminal courts but the theme did not include projects which targeted improvements in these services.

It is, however, important to recognise that extensive and comprehensive consultation in advance of developing a funding bid is often challenging. This is partly a consequence of the often-limited timescales between the advertising of funding opportunities and submission deadlines. It also sometimes results from funding opportunities and bids prioritising the delivery of new projects rather than preparatory work to inform delivery.
Recommendation 2: Any expansion of work to improve the effectiveness of response to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system should be planned and designed in consultation with representatives from other criminal justice agencies, such as the CPS and criminal courts. This might enable it to encompass responses across the criminal justice system.

Funders could support this by increasing the time available between the advertising of funding opportunities and bid submission deadlines, and/or by building in more explicit scope for preparatory work within the timescales for delivering projects after funding is allocated.

2.4 Most valued elements

Amongst stakeholders who had an overview of DAWSA, most of the theme 1 projects were among the most highly-valued elements across DAWSA as a whole. Programme leads and senior stakeholders perceived the projects to be effective methods of upskilling police officers and staff and/or of improving expertise at different points in the system, in order to provide specialist support to victims (and, in some force areas, perpetrators), create more effective opportunities for victim engagement and improved outcomes for victims, and use resources more efficiently within the system.

2.4.1 Coercive control training

Coercive control training was seen as a crucial component of theme 1 by the majority of programme leads and senior stakeholders. The main reason for this was that it addressed a gap in the knowledge, skills and confidence of police officers, which was reported to be negatively impacting on identification and response to coercive control and therefore on criminal justice and safeguarding outcomes for victims. They also noted that it supported a shift towards a broader definition of domestic abuse.

Stakeholders particularly valued the focus on face-to-face training, which they saw as important in encouraging reflection and open discussion in order to break down any negative preconceptions which participants might hold. In some force areas training had already been delivered prior to DAWSA but it was recognised that ensuring that relevant officers had completed the training was a valid and important objective of DAWSA.

2.4.2 Domestic Violence Support and Assistance (DVSA) partnerships

The DVSA partnerships were highly valued by all programme leads and a majority of senior stakeholders for their role in promoting earlier intervention with victims of domestic abuse by offering specialist input and support immediately or closely after an incident is reported. They were also cited as an example of strong partnership work between the police and specialist providers, which was recognised as valuable in providing opportunities for shared learning, engaging victims in support and improving their perceptions of police and partner response to domestic abuse.
2.4.3 Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) workers

The high value of DACJS workers was emphasised by all programme leads and a majority of senior stakeholders. Like the DVSA partnerships they were highlighted as a strong approach to introducing specialist expertise into the system, in order to provide a higher-quality response for victims (and, in some force areas, perpetrators). The role was introduced at different points in the system in different force areas and had different specific functions. In most force areas it was viewed as delivering on its specific functions and contributing to improved safeguarding, support and/or investigation for victims who had been in contact with the police.

2.4.4 Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels

Programme leads and the majority of senior stakeholders reported that the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels were a valuable mechanism for independent and expert scrutiny of police response to domestic abuse, which have generated specialist insight and constructive criticism to support organisational learning. In addition, the majority of programme leads and a senior stakeholder identified that the panels were significantly easier to implement than many of the other projects included in DAWSA and are low-cost and sustainable.

2.4.5 Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work

The good practice standards for domestic abuse case work were also valued in principle, thought they were arguably the least valued project within theme 1. The content and ethos of the standards were recognised as useful as a CPD tool, investigation checklist or guidance but they were also seen as extensive, making it difficult to apply them all in most roles within the police. In the event, they proved difficult to incorporate into existing PDR processes and structures in most force areas, though they were used in other ways.

2.5 Sustainability

There are plans in place to sustain the majority of the theme 1 projects in most of the force areas participating in DAWSA. This suggests that the projects under theme 1 were viewed as both valuable and feasible to deliver. For example:

- All six force areas are sustaining independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels and the DACJS worker role.
- Five force areas have concrete plans on sustaining the coercive control training.
- Four force areas have continuation funding in place for the DVSA partnership, with a fifth force area continuing to deliver specialist follow-up to victims after a domestic abuse incident using a different model to DVSA partnership.
• Four force areas are continuing use of the **good practice standards for domestic abuse case work** in the ways they have been introduced locally (including within PDR processes and/or within training). A fifth force area has plans to introduce the standards into training in the near future.

With respect to both DVSA partnership and coercive control training, those force areas which do not have continuation in place reported that continuation is desirable or is being explored. This was less clearly the case for the good practice standards.

It is important to note that DVSA partnerships and DACJS workers, the projects which require more extensive ongoing funding commitment, have not yet been mainstreamed in most force areas. Instead they have short-term continuation funding in place to allow for further review of outcomes prior to a longer-term funding decision.

Programme leads had planned for sustainability in the event that projects proved effective by aiming to introduce the project, review its performance and generate a business case for continuation if appropriate. This process took place in a number of force areas but was made more challenging in some force areas by the fact that projects had only been introduced relatively late in the initial funding period, providing a short window in which to implement and embed the role and collate evidence of its performance and impact.
### Figure 14: Summary of sustainability of theme 1 projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Number of forces</th>
<th>Force A</th>
<th>Force B</th>
<th>Force C</th>
<th>Force D</th>
<th>Force E</th>
<th>Force F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive control training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVSA partnership</td>
<td>5(^{11})</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACJS worker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.6 Strengths in implementation

Overall, senior stakeholders and programme leads from across all force areas reported that the projects implemented as part of theme 1 were successfully promoting effective working within the criminal justice system.

#### 2.6.1 Injection of additional, specialist resource into the system

Within the theme 1 projects there was a strong focus on introducing specialist input at points in the criminal justice system where this was likely to be beneficial and result in improved police responses to domestic abuse.

Two examples of projects where this was a central principle are the DVSA partnership and the DACJS worker role. In both of these projects, the involvement of specialist workers provided expertise in safeguarding and supporting victims, which in turn promoted increased engagement by victims and improved their perceptions of police and partner responses. Both roles also offered benefits in terms of supporting police officers and staff to deliver improved responses, either by advising and guiding them on specific elements or by

\(^{11}\) In Force E, the arrangements in place to continue specialist contact with domestic abuse victims who have reported an incident to the police are based on a model which differs from the DVSA partnership models because it is incorporated into the victim services response rather than forming part of the police response.
releasing their time to enable them to focus on elements not delivered by the specialist workers.

A third example is the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel. For this project, the experience, expertise and independence of panel members enabled them to offer specialist insight and a range of perspectives on police response to domestic abuse. This generated constructive feedback and therefore provided an opportunity for organisational learning for the police.

2.6.2 Upskilling or improving understanding of police officers and staff

All of the projects within theme 1 had a focus on improving the understanding, skills and confidence of police officers and staff. In the case of coercive control training and the good practice standards for domestic abuse training, this was the primary purpose of the projects. For DVSA partnership and the DACJS worker role, opportunities for shared learning and/or input into continuous professional development were built into the projects in most force areas.

Domestic abuse scrutiny panels did not directly produce improved understanding, but they identified areas of practice on which forces might wish to focus organisational learning efforts.

2.6.3 Increasing opportunities for disclosure and accurate risk assessment

Theme 1 projects also increased the opportunities for domestic abuse to be disclosed and identified, as well as for more accurate risk assessment on the basis of more detailed disclosures. In part, these opportunities were created by the introduction of specialist workers into the police response, who had additional skills and experience in working with victims, to enable them to encourage disclosure and assess risk or to advise police officers and staff on any queries about risk levels and the most appropriate response. They were also created by improvements in police officer’s skills and confidence, which might enable them to engage victims differently, encourage more detailed disclosures and more readily recognise signs of coercive control, which would allow more accurate risk assessment.

2.6.4 Promotion of improved information sharing and multi-agency working

Closer partnership working between the police and specialist domestic abuse support providers or other specialist workers in the DVSA partnership and DACJS worker roles also promoted improved information sharing and multi-agency working. This included direct information sharing and multi-agency working between the police and the providers, but also ongoing information sharing and multi-agency working to deliver safeguarding and support responses for victims. This was not a key focus of all of the theme 1 projects, but it was a significant component in these two projects and also complemented the emphasis on partnership working with theme 3 in particular, as well as elements of theme 2.
2.6.5 Strengths of the programme overall

In addition, there were a number of strengths of the DAWSA programme as a whole, which supported the implementation of theme 1 projects. These were:

- Clear programme objectives.
- Effective branding and promotion of the programme.

2.7 Challenges in implementation

2.7.1 Awareness raising and promotion

Significant promotional activity was required to raise awareness of new projects which were introduced under theme 1. In particular, it proved challenging to ensure that the large volume of police officers and staff who might participate in training and CPD, respond to scrutiny panel feedback, or support delivery of the DVSA partnership or DACJS worker were all aware of the projects and their relevance to them.

2.7.2 Promoting culture change

Most projects were well-received by the majority of police officers, staff and partners. However, programme leads, senior stakeholders and project stakeholders reported that there may still be further changes in culture and understanding required in forces to ensure that all officers and staff were receptive to and supportive of new approaches. One example of this was tackling any negative beliefs about domestic abuse expressed or demonstrated by a minority of police officers. For example, programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that during the coercive control training a minority of police officers and staff expressed negative views about domestic abuse victims or displayed their misconceptions about the nature of domestic abuse and how the police should respond. Equally, DVSA and DACJS stakeholders reported that they were aware of police officers who had expressed similar views or whom they felt would benefit from additional training inputs in relation to domestic abuse. A second example was developing productive relationships between the independent scrutiny panels and the police in some force areas, where initial responses to feedback on areas for improvement were at times defensive if police representatives on panels felt that their individual practice was under criticism or were unsure about the credentials and understanding of panel members conducting the scrutiny.

2.7.3 Challenges for the programme overall

There were a number of challenges for the DAWSA programme as a whole, which also inhibited the implementation of theme 1 projects. These were:

- The time-limited nature of funding and delayed funding decisions by the Home Office, which led to delays in implementing some projects and meant that they only became operational relatively late in the DAWSA funding period.
• Recruiting and retaining staff in DAWSA-funded posts.

• Delivering projects which were contingent upon input from partners outside of the police and OPCC.

• Awareness raising and promotion of DAWSA.

2.8 Factors supporting implementation

2.8.1 Strong strategic and operational support

Force areas where there were high levels of support for projects from strategic leaders in the Force Chief Officer Team and the OPCC tended to make greater progress in implementing theme 1 projects. This was particularly evident in relation to projects which required the participation of police officers, such as the coercive control training and the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work; in force areas where senior leaders agreed to mandate training and CPD elements this made it easier to arrange for officers/staff to be released from their normal duties and increased completion rates. It was also evident for the DVSA partnership using model A12 – i.e. requiring police officers to staff the second response units. In addition, it was a factor in the extent to which feedback from independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels was taken forward with local forces.

Similarly, strong operational management was an enabler to delivering projects. High levels of senior operational buy-in and oversight to projects was seen to improve promotion and awareness of these projects, ensure they were set up and operating efficiently, and enable any challenges to delivery to be tackled more effectively.

2.8.2 Existence of similar service models

The introduction of some of the projects under theme 1 was made easier because there were already similar models of working in place locally, which both informed the approach to introducing the new project and improved reception of the project amongst relevant staff because they were familiar with a similar model and recognised its value. The most obvious example of this is the DVSA partnership; a number of force areas already had specialist victim care or mental health workers based in the control room and mental health street triage teams based in response units which helped to guide the development of local delivery models and gave staff a point of reference.

2.8.3 Factors supporting implementation of programme overall

There were also a number of factors supporting the implementation of the DAWSA programme as a whole, which apply to theme 1 projects. These were:

12 More information on the delivery models for the DVSA partnership is available in section 4.3.
• Regional approach enabling the identification and sharing of good practice and tools across force areas.

• Effective programme oversight and clear project management responsibility in each force area.

• The establishment and use of multi-agency strategic working groups.

2.9 Suggestions for strengthening design and implementation

2.9.1 Clarifying the relationship between projects within theme 1

The evaluation found evidence that it may be beneficial to clearly outline the connections and pathways between some of the individual projects within theme 1, as well as their relationship to other teams within the system.

Consultation during the evaluation indicated that there is inter-connection between a number of the projects within theme 1 of DAWSA. For example, during consultation on the DACJS worker role, it was reported that DACJS workers in some areas were supporting the promotion of the good practice standards. Equally, independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels identified some areas for improvement in relation to coercive control which spoke to the need for the training, or for further CPD on this topic.

However, the connections between these projects were less clear within programme documentation. As a result, they could be perceived as a suite of stand-alone projects to tackle specific issues. In addition, in some instances there appeared to be risk of duplication or missed opportunities to build clear pathways through the system as a result of not explicitly recognising or explaining how projects related to each other. Thus, the projects might introduce improved multi-agency working in response to specific incidents, within particular teams or at particular points in the system, but the way they have been positioned in relation to one another might not result in more effective working across the system as a whole.

**Recommendation 3:** Plans and programme documentation for transformation programmes like DAWSA should clearly articulate the ways in which new interventions relate to each other, and to pre-existing services and interventions. This should help to avoid siloed working, duplication or inefficiencies across the system.

An example of this was the relationship between the DVSA partnership and the DACJS worker role, as well as the relationship of these roles to other secondary safeguarding responses within the force areas. It was not always clear to evaluators how the projects would complement each other in the event that a victim came into contact with both projects. Project stakeholders also expressed concerns about possible duplication or less efficient use of resources resulting from intervening with a victim who had already received, or was scheduled to receive a similar response from elsewhere in the system.
Scenario example concerning sequencing and duplication of support

The following is an illustrative, fictitious, example that describes the issue explained above.

An officer in a neighbourhood policing team might arrange for a DACJS worker to accompany her on a home visit to a victim on Monday morning, in order to support the victim with safety planning and update the risk assessment at a time when the perpetrator was known to be out of the property. The officer might have a good rapport with the victim, who has been known to her for several months. The DACJS worker might also have spoken to the victim by phone to introduce herself in advance of the visit.

Then the victim might call the police on Sunday evening to report an incident and receive a visit from the DVSA partnership second response unit, including a police officer and a specialist worker she has not met before. Whilst the intervention from the DVSA partnership might be successful, it might also be less successful than the planned visit which was scheduled to take place the morning after anyway.

In this instance, it is not clear whether the plan for the visit would be known to the first response unit tasking the DVSA partnership to go out to the victim. In the event that it is known, it is also not clear which activity would take precedence, and be more impactful or resource-efficient.

2.9.2 Increasing focus on training

Although theme 1 included a strong focus on training and CPD in the form of the coercive control training and the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work, a significant number of project stakeholders raised the awareness and skills of police officers and staff in relation to domestic abuse as a continued area for development. These stakeholders usually recognised the high demands on the police and pointed out that many officers and staff are necessarily generalist because of the wide range of issues they encounter. However, they also highlighted that limitations in police officers’ and staff members’ specific knowledge and skills when responding to domestic abuse victims still inhibited their ability to deliver responses that are as high-quality as possible. Some stakeholders saw this as a force-wide issue in their force area, but more frequently they reported that it was limited to a sub-set of police officers who were less skilled in this area or less receptive to existing training as a result of negative beliefs they expressed or demonstrated about domestic abuse or misconceptions about the nature of domestic abuse and how the police should respond. This suggests that further assessment of training needs and targeted training for those officers who perform less well in response to domestic abuse might be a useful focus for future activity.
Recommendation 4: In force areas wishing to build on or introduce transformation programmes such as DAWSA, additional assessment of training needs should be carried out to establish whether targeted training is required to address ongoing gaps in the awareness, skills and confidence of police officers. This includes understanding the extent to which learning from previous training is being applied, and whether further support and training is required to address any ongoing challenges in applying learning.

2.9.3 Reviewing the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility

One of the key suggestions from programme leads and senior stakeholders for strengthening the design of a number of theme 1 projects was in maintaining common objectives for the project but building increased flexibility to allow local areas to develop or adapt delivery models to suit their local priorities, geographical profile, structures, culture and/or service landscape. Whilst this was ultimately achieved, programme leads and senior stakeholders in force areas which used models other than those originally included in the approach reported that it took time to gain agreement from DAWSA leads to implement these models, which had a knock-on effect in delaying planning for implementation.

This flexibility to develop or adapt delivery models may be important in ensuring that projects are feasible and effective in their local context. However, in order to ensure consistency in quality and outcomes, it is important that localised delivery models target the same core SMART intended impacts and outcomes. Delivery models should be developed on the basis of a clearly-articulated theory of change or logic model, which links the inputs, activities and outputs of the model to these SMART impacts and outcomes. In addition, models should be developed based on any existing evidence base or good practice principles for similar interventions.

Recommendation 5: Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. This should seek to:

- Promote the consistent development and application of good practice to achieve common outcomes.
- Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the wide range of local contexts and structures into which they might be introduced.

2.9.4 Suggestions for strengthening overall programme design and implementation

The evaluation found a number of suggestions for strengthening the design and implementation of the DAWSA programme as a whole, which are relevant to theme 1 projects too. These were:
• Ensuring the theories of change and/or logic models include SMART longer-term outcomes, which are which are directly connected to the inputs, activities, outputs and short-term outcomes included in DAWSA.

• The inclusion of a prevention-focused workstream.

• Taking a collaborative, multi-agency approach to developing the programme and projects within it. This should take robust needs assessment as the starting point for determining priority outcomes and activities, include integrated commissioning strategies and outcomes frameworks which are developed in collaboration with key partners.

• Building in longer lead-in time for projects.

• Implementing robust approaches to monitoring ongoing and longer-term outcomes.

• Factoring in collaborative sustainability planning as early as possible in implementation and articulating clear responsibilities for maintaining existing resources and processes.

2.10 Learning

2.10.1 Alignment with good practice principles

**Important note on good practice principles and benchmarking**

There is limited literature and good practice guidance on whole system approaches to domestic abuse which focuses specifically on criminal justice-led approaches.

In contrast, the whole system approach developed by Northumbria and partners takes police systems and practice as a starting point. This means that, whilst some of the principles identified in the literature might still be applicable to this whole system approach, there is currently no clearly identifiable set of good practice principles to use as a benchmark for the domestic abuse whole system approach being implemented by Northumbria OPCC and partners.

A literature review conducted as part of the scoping phase of this evaluation identified seven key principles to consider when designing and implementing a whole system approach to domestic abuse. This is available in annex 2.

The evaluation report relating to the programme as a whole includes discussion of DAWSA’s alignment to these principles. This is because it is more meaningful to consider DAWSA as a whole alongside the principles than the individual themes within DAWSA. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the projects under theme 1 contribute to alignment with a number of the key principles identified in
the literature. In particular, they support the principles relating to the delivery of services and support, which are:

- **Principle 4**: Tailor specialist advice, advocacy and support for different groups and individuals.

- **Principle 5**: Facilitate multi-agency partnership working to provide services.

- **Principle 6**: Facilitate the disclosure of abuse and ensure staff respond appropriately.

These principles are most closely supported by the DVSA partnership and the DACJS worker role. The independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels also support principle 1 of the good practice principles: assess need and plan services on the basis of robust evidence from multiple agencies and from service users.

### 2.10.2 Added value

There were a number of ways in which theme 1, and the specific projects delivered within it, represented added value in comparison to approaches which would have been in place without its introduction.

For instance, projects under this workstream have had a positive impact on the confidence, skills and awareness of police officers/staff, and to some extent specialist providers who have worked in partnership with the police to deliver projects. This increased understanding is likely to be maintained to some extent, and can be built on in the future in order to bring about further improvements for the benefit of domestic abuse victims involved with the criminal justice system. Examples of projects which have added value in this way are coercive control training, DVSA partnerships and DACJS workers.

In addition, the DVSA partnerships and DACJS worker roles have increased the specialist input available to victims (and, in some force areas, perpetrators) at different points in the criminal justice system. This has promoted earlier intervention and emerging evidence suggests it is improving victim safeguarding, engagement and perceptions of police and partner response to domestic abuse.

There are plans in place to sustain a high proportion of the roles and projects which were introduced as part of theme 1 and this offers the opportunity to add further value by contributing to more widespread changes to awareness, skills, processes and practice which might affect domestic abuse victims involved with the criminal justice system.

Equally, resources and training packages which have been developed as a result of theme 1 projects will continue to be available in the future. Such processes and products therefore act as a legacy of the work funded and delivered under the programme.
2.10.3 Identification and sharing of good practice

Programme leads and key stakeholders reported that the regional nature of DAWSA and a spirit of collaboration between force areas enabled learning and good practice to be shared between force areas involved in DAWSA. In addition, theme 1 has resulted in the development of a number of models and resources which could be beneficial for other force areas and partners who are interested in increasing the effectiveness of working within the criminal justice system.

It is important to note, however, that the longer-term application and outcomes of some of these models and resources have not yet been established within the DAWSA funding period. As such, they constitute emerging good practice rather than good practice for which the evidence base is confirmed.

Models and resources include:

- The **coercive control training packages** could be used for police officer and staff training in other force areas.

- The **DVSA partnership car model and force control room model** could be transferred to and localised in other force areas wishing to deliver a similar response. In addition, operating procedures and processes developed within the force areas involved in DAWSA could potentially act as templates to be localised by other force areas.

- The **DACJS worker role** principles could be applied in other force areas to introduce specialist input at points in the local criminal justice system where this was judged to be required.

- The terms of reference and frameworks for the **independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels** developed by force areas participating in DAWSA could act as templates to be localised by other force areas which introduce similar panels.

- In addition, there were similar themes in the feedback and areas for improvement identified by the **independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels** in different force areas. These could act as a starting point for other force areas which would like to use multi-agency feedback to explore and improve the quality of their response to victims of domestic abuse.

- The **good practice standards for domestic abuse case work** could be adopted by other force areas in the future, although forces may wish to divide the standards up into their constituent sections prior to targeting them to specific roles.

There is evidence that some elements of DAWSA theme 1 are already being replicated in other force areas. For example, coercive control training has been introduced in another force area in the region and DVSA partnership has been trialled in a further force area.
2.10.4 Lessons and recommendations for future development

Learning which has derived from the implementation of theme 1 will be useful to the continued development of local work relating to theme 1, and to other force areas or partners wishing to implement similar work. This is detailed throughout this chapter and summarised in section 2.1.

Evaluating the implementation of theme 1 has also resulted in a number of recommendations for the future development and implementation in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of DAWSA in the future. Figure 15 summarises these recommendations.

It is recognised that a number of these recommendations are challenging to implement, because they are wide-ranging and require input and partnership work from key national and local agencies and stakeholder groups.
### Figure 15: Recommendations emerging from Theme 1 evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>SMART long-term outcomes.</strong> Any future logic model or theory of change for DAWSA should include SMART longer-term outcomes which are directly connected to the inputs, activities, outputs and short-term outcomes included in DAWSA.</td>
<td>Whilst the logic model developed for DAWSA clearly outlined and linked activities, outputs and short-term outcomes, longer-term outcomes could have been more clearly articulated. This includes specifying timescales for their achievement and ensuring that they were directly linked to specific inputs, activities and outputs.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaborative approach with key criminal justice agencies.</strong> Any expansion of work to improve the effectiveness of response to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system should be planned and designed in consultation with representatives from other criminal justice agencies, such as the CPS and criminal courts. This might enable it to encompass responses across the criminal justice system. Funders could support this by increasing the time available between the advertising of funding opportunities and bid submission</td>
<td>The early planning and design of theme 1 of DAWSA was undertaken primarily by stakeholders in the OPCC and police and projects are focused on policing. Closer consultation with wider criminal justice agencies during planning and design might enable the theme to encompass responses across the criminal justice system and hence to more closely resemble a whole system approach in this area.</td>
<td>2.3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 The numbering of recommendations relates to the order in which they are discussed within this report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Articulating interactions between interventions.</strong> Plans and programme documentation for transformation programmes like DAWSA should clearly articulate the ways in which new interventions relate to each other, and to pre-existing services and interventions.</td>
<td>Connections between projects were not always clearly articulated in programme documentation. As a result, they could be perceived as a suite of stand-alone projects to tackle specific issues. In addition, in some instances there appeared to be risk of duplication or missed opportunities to build clear pathways through the system as a result of not explicitly recognising or explaining how projects related to each other. Ensuring the inter-connections between projects are clearly defined should help to avoid siloed working, duplication or inefficiencies across the system.</td>
<td>2.9.1, 6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Further assessment of training needs.</strong> In force areas wishing to build on or introduce transformation programmes such as DAWSA, additional assessment of training needs should be carried out. This includes understanding the extent to which learning from previous training is being applied, and whether further support and training is required to address any ongoing challenges in applying learning.</td>
<td>Project stakeholders highlighted that the awareness and skills of police officers and staff in relation to domestic abuse is a continued area for development. Additional training needs assessments could help to establish whether targeted training is required to address ongoing gaps in the awareness, skills and confidence of police officers in relation to domestic abuse.</td>
<td>2.9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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</table>
| 5               | **Balancing regional consistency and local flexibility.** Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. | Force areas often reported that local flexibility was required but there is a tension between this and programmes designed to replicate and test interventions across multiple sites. Reviewing the balance between these two elements might enable solutions which:  
  - Promote the consistent development and application of good practice.  
  - Enable robust evaluation of innovative practice to develop an improved evidence base.  
  - Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the wide range of local contexts and structures into which they might be introduced. | 2.9.3, 5.3.6, 6.3.5 |
| 6               | **Robust training needs assessment and review of training products.** The decision on whether to implement (more in-depth) coercive control training should be preceded by a robust assessment of training need in the force area and a review of existing local training products alongside those available as part of DAWSA. | A thorough assessment of training need and review of any local training product alongside the products included within DAWSA would ensure that forces were in a strong position to judge whether any of these models would deliver learning outcomes over and above those achieved with local products. | 4.3.6 |

**Coercive control training**
### Further training on use of tools

- Use of tools was an area of lower confidence amongst all respondents to the domestic abuse awareness survey. It was higher in those who had completed the training than those who had not but could improve further.

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### Early involvement of operational stakeholders

- Including operational leads and staff at this stage could help to smooth the process of introducing the partnership by ensuring that its planned operation is feasible and acceptable to the staff who will be delivering it.

---

### Planning for downtime

- As the DVSA partnerships deliver real-time responses to domestic abuse incidents and rely on incidents being flagged by first responders, they may experience periods of lower demand during shifts. Planning for this downtime will increase the efficiency of the partnerships and ensure that other activities undertaken are within the agreed remit of the partnerships.

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### Continuing promotion of the partnerships

- DVSA stakeholders and programme leads reported that further promotional work is required to ensure that police officers and staff across the force are aware of the DVSA partnership, its function and its potential to engage and support victims of domestic abuse.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing staffing arrangements for specialist providers.</strong> In force areas where the DVSA service is commissioned from or staffed by workers from local domestic abuse service providers, providers, force and OPCC leads for the DVSA partnership should review staffing arrangements for providers to determine whether these are sustainable.</td>
<td>There was some evidence to suggest that in some force areas providers' staffing arrangements for the partnership may not be sustainable in the longer-term because they rely on specialist workers taking on additional shifts on top of their day-to-day work. A review of these arrangements would determine whether they are suitable to support ongoing provision of the DVSA partnership.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Evidence-led decision-making on performance.</strong> If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with a DVSA partnership should allocate responsibility and expected timescales for regular review of demand and performance of the DVSA partnership.</td>
<td>Regular review of demand and performance could support evidence-led decision-making on any improvements to the partnership.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DACJS workers</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing balance between victim and perpetrator work.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between victim and perpetrator focused work.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders and programme leads in most force areas reported that an increase in perpetrator engagement work was an area for development for the DACJS worker role. However, they also highlighted tensions in managing an increase in workload relating to the DACJS role.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to perpetrator work alongside existing functions of the role.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing balance between direct work with victims/perpetrators and input into training/CPD.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between direct safeguarding and engagement work and training/upskilling police officers.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders highlighted that the training, coaching and advisory elements of the DACJS role were valuable. However, in some force areas this appeared to be a more minor element of the role, which was focused predominantly on direct safeguarding and engagement work.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Localising the role.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the extent to which the role is currently localised.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders in the majority of force areas reported that it would be beneficial to further localise the role within districts. However, in a minority of areas consistency across the force area was seen as desirable. Reviewing the localisation of the role would enable key stakeholders to consider whether further localisation is desirable or whether localisation should be reduced in favour of consistency across the whole force area.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Involvement of DACJS workers with DVPNs/DVPOs.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the role’s input into DVPNs and DVPOs.</td>
<td>Force areas where the DACJS worker role involved input into DVPNs and DVPOs reported that this supported upskilling of police officers and successfully improved the quality and conversion rate of DVPNs and DVPOs. This could potentially be replicated in other force areas.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing volume of information to be shared.</strong> Forces and scrutiny panels should carefully consider the balance of information that will make the most of the scrutiny panel process, the best way of presenting this information, and the capacity among the team to prepare it.</td>
<td>Scrutiny was limited at times by having too little information about cases and at times having too much. The balance of information to include, how this is structured, and the resource available to prepare the information, is important for maximising the impact of the scrutiny panels.</td>
<td>7.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Reiterating terms of reference and framework.</strong> The scrutiny panel chair should reiterate the terms of reference for the panel at the start of each meeting and remind panel members of the scrutiny framework to which the panel is working.</td>
<td>During some panel observations the purpose of the panel was not always clear and at times undermined the focus on scrutinising police responses. Reiterating the terms of reference and framework at each meeting could help to reinforce the panel’s purpose to new and existing members.</td>
<td>7.4.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing panel membership.</strong> Panel membership should be reviewed to ensure that it supports the effective delivery of the panel.</td>
<td>Panels in different force areas included a range of different representatives. Reviewing membership would ensure that panels include the range of perspectives which best enables an understanding of the victim’s journey. This includes exploring whether including panel members with lived experience would be beneficial, in force areas where they are not already included.</td>
<td>7.4.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Focusing on 2-4 cases per session.</strong> Panels with a focus on police response to domestic</td>
<td>Based on observation of panels and feedback from panel members, reviewing 2-4 cases allowed sufficient time to discuss each case in detail, but covered enough</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Using scrutiny frameworks.</strong> Scrutiny frameworks should be used in all panel meetings.</td>
<td>Explicit reference to scrutiny frameworks within panel meetings will enable them to maintain focus, ensure key aspects of the police and/or multi-agency response are considered and give members the confidence to comment on police processes. They should be used flexibly, to direct discussion without being overly restrictive.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>Role of police at panels.</strong> Police representatives should attend scrutiny panel meetings to answer questions around terminology and processes, and to relay feedback to the force. A single police representative at the table is preferable, for a balance where other members are comfortable speaking openly.</td>
<td>Based on observation of panels and feedback from panel members, panels operated more effectively and feedback was more productive when police were represented in order to provide clarification and to receive feedback on behalf of the force, rather than to discuss the response to specific cases.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Enabling police officers to observe meetings.</strong> Police officers should be able to attend meetings for one-off observation.</td>
<td>One-off observations might provide learning opportunities for individual officers, help to spread best practice to the frontline and cement understanding and relationships between the panel and the force.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Including CPS within panel membership.</strong> Panels should include representation from social care and from the CPS, wherever possible. If attendance in person is not</td>
<td>Based on observed panels and feedback from panel members CPS involvement provided a richness of information that was highly valued by other panel</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><strong>Improving case file quality.</strong> Record-keeping and case file quality should be a priority for improvement across all force areas.</td>
<td>Record-keeping and case file quality was commonly identified by scrutiny panels as an area for development. It also made scrutiny more difficult where panel members could not be confident of having the right information.</td>
<td>7.4.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing feedback mechanisms.</strong> Force areas should review mechanisms for panel feedback to be shared with the force and for actions in response to this feedback to be planned, undertaken and monitored. Review findings should be shared across the region in order to determine which mechanisms are most effective.</td>
<td>Ensuring that the most effective feedback mechanisms are in place could maximise opportunities for organisational learning for forces, and increase the likelihood that forces are able to act upon learning from the panels.</td>
<td>7.4.3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td><strong>Maximising take-up and use.</strong> Force areas wishing to introduce or further roll-out the standards should review how the standards are applied and packaged in order to maximise take-up and use.</td>
<td>Force areas have identified different ways to package and apply the standards. Reviewing and considering each of these approaches could enable forces to combine different approaches to maximise take-up. Existing applications which could be considered are: incorporation into PDR processes, use within training, promotion as good practice guidance tools, use within case file auditing processes. The individual sections of</td>
<td>8.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number¹³</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the standards could also be presented as separate packages to target officers/staff in different roles.</td>
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</table>
3 Scale and impact of Theme 1

3.1 Key findings

- DAWSA is an ambitious programme which has injected resources into local systems in six force areas to enable them to explore and deliver innovative approaches which aim to improve responses to domestic abuse, and therefore the experiences and outcomes of victims.

- Evidence outlined in chapters 4 to 8 suggests that the five projects under theme 1 of DAWSA have mainly been successfully set up and implemented, and are achieving or making progress towards all of their intended outputs. In particular:
  
  - Three types of coercive control training package have been developed and training has been delivered in all six force areas, though one force area has identified that further training is required locally.
  
  - DVSA partnerships have been introduced and/or further developed in all six force areas and have enabled them to offer support to victims at the scene and time of incidents or soon afterwards.
  
  - DACJS workers have also been introduced or further developed in all six force areas and workers have supported police through joint victim safeguarding work and (in some areas) have supported perpetrator engagement with interventions.
  
  - Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels have been set up in all six force areas and are supporting multi-agency scrutiny of police response to domestic abuse.
  
  - Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work have been developed. They proved more challenging to implement in some force areas but are being used in some form in four force areas.

- The timescales for delivering these projects, achieving outcomes and providing evidence of any outcomes achieved were relatively limited. This was in part due to the funding cycles in which the projects were operating, and was compounded by delayed decisions on funding continuation after year 1.

- As a result, it is too soon after implementation to reasonably expect evidence of progress against all intended outcomes. However, emerging evidence suggests that:
  
  - The coercive control training has increased police awareness, skills and confidence in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control and may have contributed to an increase in the number of crimes recorded as coercive control but has not yet had an impact on the number of offences being charged.
• The DVSA partnerships and DACJS worker roles have increased the number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing support, and have improved victims’ experience of and confidence in police and partners response to domestic abuse incidents. The DVSA partnership has also increased the number of victims accepting support immediately after the incident and the DACJS worker role has improved the quality of police officer safety and/or investigation planning for domestic abuse victims.

• Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels have enabled high-quality, regular and independent feedback to forces on their response to domestic abuse, though work is ongoing to ensure that feedback results in organisational learning that is acted upon by forces.

### 3.2 Summary of scale and impact

Figure 17 presents a summary of the scale (i.e. outputs achieved) and impact (i.e. outcomes achieved) of the different projects delivered under theme 1. This is based on the intended outputs and outcomes included within the evaluation framework. It indicates that:

- Eight of the 14 intended outputs of theme 1 were fully achieved within the funding period, with progress made towards achieving a further four. One output had not yet been achieved within the DAWSA funding period and it was difficult to judge progress against the final output on the basis of the evidence available.

- Nine of the 15 intended outcomes of theme 1 were fully achieved within the funding period, with progress made towards the achievement of a further two outcomes. Four outcomes had not yet been achieved within the DAWSA funding period but these could not feasibly be achieved and evidenced in the timescales available.

Rows detailing outputs are shaded in white and rows detailing outcomes are shaded in grey in Figure 17, which uses the following ratings to summarise progress against outputs and outcomes:
Figure 16: Ratings used in assessment against the evaluation framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been partially achieved or that there is progress indicating that it is likely to be achieved in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has not yet been achieved and that it was not feasible to achieve this outcome within the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Difficult to make a judgement on the basis of the available evidence about the extent to which this output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detail on the scale and impact of each project is included in chapters 4 to 8.
Figure 17: Summary of scale and impact of theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive control training</td>
<td>A coercive control training package has been developed.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeted staff have received coercive control training commensurate with their role.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coercive control training is embedded in ongoing training plans in each force.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each force has policy and practice guidelines in place for coercive control.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The training has increased police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The training has resulted in an increased number of crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling behaviour.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The training has resulted in an increased number of offences being charged as coercive control.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVSA partnerships</td>
<td>The DVSA partnership has offered support to victims at the scene and at the time of the reported incident or as soon as practicable afterwards.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Output/outcome</td>
<td>Progress rating</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DVSA partnership has provided opportunities for police officers and providers of specialist domestic abuse support services to share learning and observe one another’s practice.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>The DVSA partnership has increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DVSA partnership has increased the number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing specialist support.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DVSA partnership has resulted in improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACJS workers</td>
<td>DACJS workers have supported police officers through joint safeguarding work.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In force areas where this role includes a focus on work with perpetrators, DACJS workers have supported the MATAC and perpetrator engagement process.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DACJS workers have improved the quality of police officer safety planning for victims and/or police investigation plans.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DACJS workers have increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DACJS workers have contributed to improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Output/outcome</td>
<td>Progress rating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In force areas where this role includes a focus on work with perpetrators, the DACJS workers have resulted in increased perpetrator engagement with DAPPs/1-to-1 support.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic abuse scrutiny panels are operational in each force area and have appropriate processes in place to support their operation.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panels support multi-agency scrutiny of the (police) response to victims of domestic abuse.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panels enable high quality, regular and independent structured feedback provided to forces on engagement, case file quality and evidential issues.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback from panels is incorporated into organisational learning structures and learning is acted upon.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good practice standards for DA case work have been developed.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local mechanisms have been developed to adapt the standards for local purposes and incorporate the standards into continuous professional development and/or case work.</td>
<td>·</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local mechanisms have been developed to target relevant staff and encourage achievement of the standards.</td>
<td>·</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeted staff have achieved the good practice standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Output/outcome</td>
<td>Progress rating</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The good practice standards have enhanced supervisory awareness of DA case work standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The good practice standards have enhanced supervisory review of DA cases.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The good practice standards have enhanced the quality of DA case work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Variations in impact

There was only limited evidence of variations in the impact of different projects in different force areas. Where this evidence existed, it was mostly qualitative in nature and related to possible differences in impact of the different models used to deliver a project in different force areas. It by no means provided conclusive evidence that one model was preferable to another but tended to indicate that stakeholders in individual force areas believed that one model was likely to be more impactful than another in their local context.

The most striking examples of this were the DVSA partnerships and the DACJS workers. Force areas had generally used one of two models to implement the DVSA partnership, with one force area trialling both models. The model for the DACJS worker was the same in all force areas but the role was situated in different teams and had different areas of focus in the different force areas. In most cases, force areas reported that their model or approach was more appropriate for their local context but did also share opinions on differences in impact for the different models or approaches.

For the DVSA partnership, the force control room model allowed input to be offered to more victims for less resource, and also provided the option to offer input prior to a first response by police. It also avoided difficulties of coverage in force areas whose geography made it impractical to utilise second response units. However, the second response unit (car) model offered greater opportunities for shared learning between police officers and specialist providers. It also might result in higher engagement with support and impact more positively on victims’ perceptions of police and partner responses to domestic abuse. The evidence on these outcomes is not conclusive, however, because it is based on qualitative consultation with stakeholders who had insight only onto one or the other model.

For the DACJS worker role, key differences in impact relate predominantly to how the role is positioned within the system and its specific remit in each force area. For example:

- In force areas where the role had a specific focus on DVPNs/DVPOs and safeguarding and support provided during the period covered by an order, stakeholders noted improvements in the quality of DVPNs and DVPO applications, and in the conversion rate from DVPNs to DVPOs.

- In the force area with a greater focus on perpetrator engagement, stakeholders reported that the role had resulted in greater engagement with MATAC and with DAPPs.

In some cases, differences in impact or likely future impact were also attributable to the scale or efficacy of implementation of a project in specific force areas. This was determined by specific local priorities and challenges, which do not easily translate into transferable learning to mitigate differences in impact.
3.4 Understanding ongoing impact and variations in impact

DAWSA projects and models which are now embedded and which are being sustained beyond the initial DAWSA funding period offer opportunities for further evaluation to explore the longer-term impacts and outcomes which they achieve. It would also be possible to conduct between model impact evaluations using randomised controlled trials or quasi-experimental design approaches to measure and attribute impact. These types of approaches would require additional evaluation funding but would enable stronger judgements to be formed about differential impact of projects and delivery models.
4 Coercive control training

4.1 Overview

The coercive control training programme aims to enable police officers and other staff to understand the dynamics of coercive control, risk assess effectively and understand the role of the police within a whole system approach.

The purpose of this activity was to ensure that coercive control training had been delivered to all relevant police officers by the end of the programme funding period for DAWSA.

**Definition of coercive control**

The cross-government definition of domestic abuse defines controlling and coercive behaviour as follows:

“Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.”

4.2 Key findings

4.2.1 Progress in implementation

- Three models of face-to-face coercive control training were available prior to the introduction of DAWSA and some form of training had already been delivered in all six force areas.

- DAWSA resource was used to fund substantive training in two force areas and smaller training developments in the remaining force areas.

- Strong progress was made in at least four force areas in delivering training to targeted staff, with data not available for the remaining force areas.

- Plans are in place to continue coercive control training in five force areas, with a plan yet to be developed in the sixth.

- Coercive control policy and practice guidelines are available in all six force areas.
4.2.2 Overview of implementation and impact

Figure 18 summarises the key evaluation findings relating to the implementation and impact of the coercive control training.

Figure 18: Overview of key findings for coercive control training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The training packages were available at the start of the programme funding period and will continue to be of use to forces involved in DAWSA and to other force areas interested in adopting the approach.</td>
<td>- In some force areas, gaining initial agreement to deliver face-to-face training proved challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emphasising face-to-face training and the use of specialist, independent training providers maximised its efficacy in encouraging reflection and open discussion to break down negative preconceptions.</td>
<td>- Abstracting staff to complete the training was a logistical challenge but this is the case with all face-to-face training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The training was well-received by senior stakeholders in the majority of force areas and elicited positive feedback from training participants.</td>
<td>- Changes to culture were required to increase receptiveness to the training and maximise its impact. For some staff and in some force areas, this culture change is ongoing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for development</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- In order to ensure the training is delivered where required, the decision on whether to implement (more in-depth) coercive control training should be preceded by a robust assessment of training need in the force area and a review of existing local training products alongside those available as part of DAWSA.</td>
<td>- Analysis of the domestic abuse awareness survey indicates that police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to coercive control have improved as a result of the training. This includes: responding to different types of domestic abuse, working with victims of domestic abuse and using tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Domestic abuse awareness survey responses suggest that it might be useful to increase the focus on the use of tools within the training content, as well as focusing even further on coercive control in some force areas, as opposed to other forms of abuse.</td>
<td>- Coercive control crime recording rates and consultation with stakeholders suggest that coercive control training may have contributed to an increase in the number of crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling behaviour but has not at this stage contributed to an increase in the number of offences charged as coercive control.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Implementation

4.3.1 Variations in implementation

The coercive control training has been delivered via three different models:

- **Model A: Classroom-style training using products developed in-force.** Face-to-face training is delivered by local trainers\(^\text{14}\) with the aid of PowerPoint slides. Training content is developed locally. This model was used by three force areas.

- **Model B: Safe Lives Domestic Abuse Matters training.** Face-to-face training is delivered directly by SafeLives to participants and includes a train the trainer element\(^\text{15}\). This training is endorsed by the College of Policing. This model was used by one force area.

- **Model C: Theatre-based training.** Training includes experiential, theatre-based elements and discussion. This is delivered by an organisation called Open Clasp\(^\text{16}\). This model was used by two force areas.

Figure 19 summarises the approaches to implementation and the key milestones achieved in the six different force areas.

Figure 20 presents the main stages in implementing the different training models.

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\(^{14}\) In Force A, this included co-delivery by a local subject matter expert.

\(^{15}\) Please see: [http://www.safelives.org.uk/training/police](http://www.safelives.org.uk/training/police) for more information. [Accessed 18 May 2018]

\(^{16}\) Please see: [https://www.openclasp.org.uk/](https://www.openclasp.org.uk/) for more information. [Accessed 18 May 2018]. This training package also included content relating to child contact and family court. It thus supported the aims of theme 2 projects, by enhancing understanding of the civil and family court processes and domestic abuse within these settings.
Figure 19: Implementation of coercive control training in the six force areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA17</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>The initial wave of training under model A preceded the programme funding period. It was delivered to 3,285 officers and staff, which was 100% of the target audience. This was therefore not funded by DAWSA. The training has been adopted into initial training for new officers, detectives, PCSOs and special constables. Materials have been tailored to the specific audiences. An E-learning module has also been developed to reinforce the definition of coercive control and the investigation model and is due to go live in May 2019. This will be mandatory continuous professional development for target staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 Expenditure reported in financial expenditure reports 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>unknown but prior to DAWSA, Model C: October 2018</td>
<td>£51,000</td>
<td>The initial wave of training preceded the programme funding period using a local in-force product that reflected model A. This was therefore not funded by DAWSA. DAWSA resource was used to deliver training under model C. This was mandatory and targeted first responders, neighbourhood policing teams and other specialist officers and staff. As at February 2019, training was ongoing and 750 officers and staff had received or were booked onto the training, which was 81% of the target audience. A train the trainer element was included in model C and the training will be maintained via these trainers. They will deliver 4-5 sessions per year, targeting new recruits, transferees, those who didn’t receive the training and any others who request it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>The initial wave of training preceded the programme funding period. It used model C and targeted frontline staff and supervisors. 309 officers/staff were trained but it is not known what proportion of the target audience this constituted. This was therefore not funded by DAWSA. The training has been adopted into initial training for all new recruits and transferees. E-learning is being considered in order to embed the training in continuous professional development processes and offer refresher training, though a final decision on whether this will be embedded had not been reached as at February 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force area</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Date introduced</td>
<td>Funding by DAWSA</td>
<td>Progress in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Initial wave: Spring 2016</td>
<td>£68,216</td>
<td>The initial wave of training preceded the programme funding period. It used model B and targeted first responders. DAWSA resource was used to expand the training using model B to an additional frontline staff between April and September 2018. In total, 925 current officers/staff and 132 student officers had received training, which is 100% of the target audience. A bespoke package was also developed and delivered to Contact Officers, Enquiry Officers and Early Intervention Team staff. Local trainers (including police officers and staff, and managers within partner agencies) received the train the trainer input in September 2018 and began delivering courses internally from October 2018 to students at the post-foundation stage with 15 sessions completed by the end of 2019. There is a force commitment to maintain the training for student officers as part of the Post Foundation Course and for other new recruits to the force under model C, using local trainers who have received the train the trainer input.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>|               |       | DAWSA-funded expansion: April 2018 |           |                          |
|               |       | Train the trainer: September 2018 |           |                          |
|               |       | Internal course for post-foundation student officers: October 2018 |           |                          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA(^{17})</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>A(^{18})</td>
<td>Model A: unknown but prior to April 2017 and not funded by DAWSA</td>
<td>£8,403</td>
<td>The initial wave of training was not delivered using DAWSA resource. The roll-out date for this training is unknown. It used a locally-developed product addressing coercive control and stalking and harassment, which most closely reflected model A. It targeted all frontline police officers and all subsequent new recruits. The number of people who received the training and the proportion of the target audience that this constituted is unknown. As a result of this, the force determined during the early stages of the programme funding period that this activity had already been delivered and further training was not required. However, in the second half of 2018-19 the force identified that the training content which had been delivered in-force may not have been as extensive as the content included in the three models involved in DAWSA. Therefore, as at February 2019, the force was investigating funding options to commission additional training, with a particular interest in model B. DAWSA resource was used to fund a single training session under model B, which was delivered to police Domestic Abuse Coordinators and Domestic Abuse Officers. DAWSA resource could not be used for wider roll-out of the training because training could not have been delivered within the programme funding period. A longer-term plan for delivering and/or maintaining the training has yet to be developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{17}\) Funding by DAWSA includes the total amount of funding received from DAWSA for the implementation of the whole system approach in the Force area.

\(^{18}\) Model A is defined as a locally-developed product addressing coercive control and stalking and harassment, which most closely reflected model A. It targeted all frontline police officers and all subsequent new recruits.
18 Classroom-style training was developed and delivered in-force and therefore reflected model A. However, the training products used for delivery of this training were not available for review during the evaluation so it was not possible to determine the extent of overlap between the product attached to model A and the local product developed by this force.

19 Classroom-style training was developed and delivered in-force and therefore reflected model A. However, the training products used for delivery of this training were not available for review during the evaluation so it was not possible to determine the extent of overlap between the product attached to model A and the local product developed by this force.

### Table: Force F, Model A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Force F    | A     | Start date unknown but complete by August 2018 | £2,368 | The initial wave of training was not delivered using DAWSA resource. The rollout date for this training is unknown. It used a locally-developed product based on SafeLives and College of Policing materials, which most closely reflected model A. It targeted frontline sergeants and delivery was complete by August 2018. The number of people who received the training is unknown but it was delivered to 100% of the target audience.

As a result of this, the force determined during the early stages of the programme funding period that DAWSA resource was not required to deliver this activity.

The local training package has been adopted into student officer training, at both foundation and post-foundation stage. Materials have been tailored to the specific audiences and it has been delivered to 2,508 student officers.

As at February 2019, work was ongoing to upskill those officers who may not have received the training, and to ensure that the materials developed are included in expanded domestic abuse training for new officers. |
4.3.2 Stages of implementation

*Figure 20: Stages of implementation of coercive control training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Development</td>
<td>Training package developed locally. In some cases, this involved input from subject matter experts.</td>
<td>Training package commissioned from a provider.</td>
<td>Training package commissioned from a provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Delivery</td>
<td>Classroom-style training delivered to officers/staff by local training officers. In some instances, training is co-facilitating by local subject matter experts.</td>
<td>Core training sessions delivered to officers/staff. Train the trainer sessions for a cohort including police and support agency workers.</td>
<td>Performance/training session delivered to officers/staff. Train the trainer sessions for a cohort including police and support agency workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Embedding into ongoing training plans</td>
<td>Updating, expansion and embedding of materials into training courses for new recruits and transferees and/or into refresher training packages for ongoing use.</td>
<td>Continuous internal delivery by local trainers who have received train the trainer input.</td>
<td>Continuous internal delivery by local trainers who have received train the trainer input. Adaption and incorporation into training courses for new recruits and transferees and/or into refresher training packages for ongoing use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.3 Strengths in implementation

Availability of training packages

The existence of the training packages at the beginning of the programme funding period was a strength of the coercive control training. Programme leads reported that this meant that force areas which were aiming to fund training under DAWSA had a range of products to choose from and did not have to develop a product in-force or wait for an external product to become available.

Emphasis on face-to-face training

Programme leads in a majority of force areas underlined the importance of delivering face-to-face training on coercive control. They identified an important element of the training as breaking down preconceptions and myths and rooting out negative beliefs and attitudes which might inhibit successful identification and response to coercive control. As a result, they stressed that face-to-face training was necessary to allow a forum for drawing out preconceptions and beliefs, discussing them openly and challenging them constructively.

Specialist, independent nature of training providers

Programme leads in forces which had elected training under models B and C highlighted the benefits of delivery by specialist providers who were external to the force. These providers brought particular expertise in their subject areas and were reported as being very credible to training participants. In addition, their position outside the force and their skills in reflective practice and encouraging open discussion of challenging topics enabled them to effectively challenge any negative beliefs or misconceptions about domestic abuse and how the police should respond, which were raised by some training participants.

In Force A, which elected training under model A, a local subject matter expert co-delivered training with in-force trainers. The programme lead reported that the injection of additional, external expertise had similar benefits to that in models B and C.

Positive response to training packages

Programme leads in a majority of force areas reported that the training was well-received by senior stakeholders in the force and by training participants themselves. They cited positive feedback from training participants as evidence of their satisfaction and noted that this was particularly significant because coercive control is a behaviour which was not well understood in advance of the training and in some instances there was resistance to attending the training.
4.3.4 Challenges in implementation

Gaining agreement to deliver face-to-face training

All programme leads attached a high value to face-to-face training on coercive control, as opposed to online training. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.3.3. A minority of programme leads reported initial challenges in gaining force-level agreement to deliver the training face-to-face. They recognised that this was because there are high-priority demands on frontline officers and staff members’ time, which make releasing them for training difficult and therefore increased the appeal of online training.

Ensuring staff availability to complete training

All programme leads identified a challenge in arranging for staff to be released from normal duties to enable them to complete the training. They reported that this is a challenge for all face-to-face training and was not restricted to the coercive control training.

Achieving culture change to increase receptiveness to the training

A further challenge to the implementation of the training was negative beliefs about domestic abuse which might be held by some officers and staff and which would limit both receptiveness to the training and its application and impact. For example, programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that during the coercive control training a minority of police officers and staff expressed negative views about domestic abuse victims or displayed their misconceptions about the nature of domestic abuse and how the police should respond.

Whilst the value of the training in addressing these issues was recognised, the majority of programme leads reported that there may still be further changes in culture and understanding required in forces for some training participants to be receptive to the training and its messages.

4.3.5 Factors supporting implementation

Support from senior leaders

Programme leads in force areas where support from senior leadership for the coercive control training was particularly high reported that this was a strong supportive factor in implementing the training. In particular, the agreement of senior leaders to mandate the training was an important factor in gaining agreement from managers to release officers/staff from their normal duties and in increasing attendance.

Multi-agency training sessions

A minority of force areas described multi-agency components to the training they delivered and suggested that this improved the delivery of the training by bringing together participants with a wider range of professional experiences and viewpoints attached to this, which enabled more successful reflection and
challenge within these groups. For example, in one force area some sessions were delivered jointly to participants from the police and the CPS and these were viewed as particularly fruitful.
4.3.6 Suggestions for strengthening design and implementation

Ensuring assessment of training need and review of training models in all force areas

The relatively late realisation in one force area that roll-out of more in-depth coercive control training would have been beneficial suggests that it is important for force areas to ensure that they have assessed training need in their force area prior to making decisions about whether (further) coercive control training is required. In addition, a thorough review of any local training product alongside the products included within DAWSA would ensure that forces are in a strong position to judge whether any of these models would deliver learning outcomes over and above those achieved with existing local products.

Recommendation 6: The decision on whether to implement (more in-depth) coercive control training should be preceded by a robust assessment of training need in the force area and a review of existing local training products alongside those available as part of DAWSA.

4.4 Scale and impact

4.4.1 Assessment against evaluation framework

Figure 22 summarises the evidence for progress against the intended outputs and outcomes of the coercive control training, using the rating system outlined in Figure 21\textsuperscript{20}. It indicates that two intended outputs of the coercive control training were fully achieved during the DAWSA funding period with a third output achieved in all but one force area. It is not possible to judge whether the final intended output was achieved due to gaps in monitoring data. Two intended outcomes of the coercive control training have also been fully achieved. The third intended outcome has not yet been achieved. However, this was an ambitious outcome to achieve within the DAWSA funding period.

\textsuperscript{20} The framework includes only outcomes which might feasibly be achieved and evidenced within the programme funding period. There are also some longer-term intended outcomes, which are discussed in section 4.4.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been partially achieved or that there is progress indicating that it is likely to be achieved in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has not yet been achieved and that it was not feasible to achieve this outcome within the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Difficult to make a judgement on the basis of the available evidence about the extent to which this output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 22: Evidence of progress against intended outputs and outcomes of coercive control training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A coercive control training package has been developed</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• Three models of coercive control training package were already available prior to the introduction of DAWSA. These all involved face-to-face training delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Two packages (models B and C) are commissioned from an external provider and these were used by 3 of the 6 force areas. One package (model A) involves in-force delivery and this was used by the remaining 3 force areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted staff have received coercive control training commensurate with their</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>• Monitoring data indicates that by the end of the programme funding period training had been delivered to 100% of the target audience in three of the six force areas, with ongoing training in a fourth force area reaching 81% of the target audience so far. The size of the target audience in the remaining two force areas was not reported so it is not possible to gauge the proportion of this audience who have received training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive control training is embedded in ongoing training plans in each force</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>• Programme leads and documentation for five of six force areas described ways in which ongoing coercive control training has been embedded in local training plans. The planned reach of the training varied across the different force areas, from targeting specific cohorts such as student officers and transferees, to mainstreaming the training for all relevant officers on an ongoing basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 The local packages delivered using model A were all distinct and locally-developed. Evaluation resource was not used to review and compare the training packages so the evaluation cannot comment on the relative quality of different packages or the extent to which they focus on the same training aims and content.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Each force has policy and practice guidelines in place for coercive control | ✔️ | • In the sixth force area there were currently no ongoing plans described to embed the training, although options for funding roll-out of more in-depth training were being explored as at February 2019.  
• The evaluation found evidence that all six forces have policy and practice guidelines in place for coercive control. In several force areas these are based on reference to Home Office statutory guidance. |

**Outcomes**

| The training has increased police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control | ✔️ | • There was a range of evidence that the coercive control training has increased police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to coercive control. This came from a domestic abuse awareness survey which explored the impact of the training, consultation with programme leads and senior stakeholders and the “whole system” E-survey.  
• For example, of around 450 staff who had received the training and completed the domestic abuse awareness survey, 88% reported that it had improved their confidence in responding to domestic abuse and coercive control, 94% reported that it had improved their awareness, and 87% reported that it had improved their skill levels. |

The training has resulted in an increase in the number of crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling

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22 n=453 (confidence), n=452 (awareness), n=450 (skill).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td>behaviour, although it is not possible to isolate the impact of the training from other changes which took place during this period, such as legislation changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The training has resulted in an increased number of offences being charged as coercive control | -               | • There is little evidence that the coercive control training has contributed to an increase in the number of offences being charged with coercive control as a result of the coercive control training. The number of offences charged as coercive control in each force does not show a clear trend, including when measured as a proportion of crimes recorded.  
• It is important to note, however, that other factors might influence charge rates, such as the likelihood of building a successful case in comparison to other crimes which took place concurrently. |
4.4.2 Scale

4.4.2.1 Training packages have been developed

Three models of coercive control training package were already available prior to the introduction of DAWSA. These all involved face-to-face training delivery. Two packages (models B and C) are commissioned from an external provider and these were used by three of the six force areas. One package (model A) involves in-force delivery and this was used by the remaining three force areas.

4.4.2.2 Targeted staff have received the training

Strong progress has been made towards the achievement of this output in a number of force areas, and it has been fully achieved in three force areas. However, incomplete monitoring data in two force areas means that a judgement cannot be reached about whether it has been fully achieved across the region.

Monitoring data identifying the numbers of people receiving training in each force area is shown in Figure 23. This indicates that by the end of the programme funding period training had been delivered to 100% of the target audience in three of the six force areas, with ongoing training in a fourth force area reaching 81% of the target audience so far. The size of the target audience in the remaining two force areas was not reported so it is not possible to gauge the proportion of this audience who have received training.

The total number of people trained in two of the force areas was not provided so it is not possible to provide an accurate total for the number trained across the six forces. However, based on data for the four forces which provided the number trained, a minimum of 5,269 officers/staff and 7,856 student officers have received training.

Training delivered in four force areas was not introduced or rolled out further under DAWSA so outputs in these areas are not attributable to DAWSA. Nevertheless, the training forms part of DAWSA and its delivery outside of the programme funding period indicates that this element of DAWSA has been delivered in full or in part in all six force areas.

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23 The local packages delivered using model A were all distinct and locally-developed. Evaluation resource was not used to review and compare the training packages so the evaluation cannot comment on the relative quality of different packages or the extent to which they focus on the same training aims and content.
Figure 23: Number and proportion of target audience who received coercive control training in each force area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Primary training funded by DAWSA</th>
<th>Number trained</th>
<th>Proportion of target audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3,285 officers/staff</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>As at February 2019 training was ongoing and 750 officers/staff had completed or were booked onto the training</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>309 officers/staff and 216 student officers</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>925 officers/staff and 132 student officers</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown number of officers/staff</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown number of officers/staff and 2,508 student officers</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2.3 Coercive control training is embedded in ongoing training plans in each force

Programme leads in five of six force areas were able to describe ways in which ongoing coercive control training has been embedded in local training plans. In most cases, they also provided documentary evidence to substantiate this. Details of approaches to embedding the training and the specific audiences targeted by this are outlined in Figure 19 in section 4.3.1. The planned reach of the training varied across the different force areas, from targeting specific cohorts such as student officers and transferees, to mainstreaming the training for all relevant officers on an ongoing basis.

In the sixth force area there were currently no ongoing plans described to embed the training, although options for funding roll-out of more in-depth training were being explored as at February 2019.

A number of force areas also described other tools and approaches which reinforce or complement the training. These included:

- In three force areas, coercive control aide memoires have been produced for officers or are planned for the near future.
- In two force areas, training has been delivered or is planned for wider partners, such as those involved with MASH, in order to improve multi-agency awareness and response to coercive control.
• In two force areas, training has been backed up by the installation of domestic abuse champions, with a commitment to CPD and supporting colleagues.

• In one force area, coercive control is included within a frontline briefing entitled “Safeguarding is Everyone’s Business” and is also referenced in training on modern slavery.

• In one force area, additional materials for supervisors to deliver are being developed (as of February 2019) on the basis of findings of the independent Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panels.

4.4.2.4 Force policy and practice guidelines in place for coercive control

All six forces have policy and practice guidelines in place for coercive control. In several force areas these are based on reference to Home Office statutory guidance. Figure 24 provides a summary of the documentary evidence provided for the different force areas.

Figure 24: Force policy and practice guidelines for coercive control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Documentation reviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>A force procedure document is available for the investigation of domestic abuse, including coercive control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>The force uses statutory guidance from the Home Office. Practice guidelines for building a case are also available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>A force policy and standard operating procedures document is available for domestic abuse, including coercive control. There is also a flow chart for identifying the offence and an aide memoire for building a case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>A ‘guide to vulnerability’ is available for guidance, clarification of the law and operational advice. This includes coercive control in the section on domestic abuse. An aide memoire for police officers is also planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>A force policy is available, which includes reference to Home Office statutory guidance. An aide memoire for police officers has also been produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>A force policy is available for domestic abuse, including coercive control. This includes reference to Home Office statutory guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.3 Impact

4.4.3.1 Training has increased police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to coercive control

There was a range of evidence that the coercive control training has increased police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to coercive control.

The most compelling evidence comes from responses to the domestic abuse awareness survey conducted as part of the evaluation. Responses to this survey suggest that the training increased police awareness, confidence and skills generally and confidence in:

- Responding to specific types of domestic abuse.
- Working with victims of domestic abuse.
- Using tools.

These findings are discussed in more detail below. Survey respondents who had received the training also outlined a number of ways in which their practice had changed as a result which are additionally discussed below.

Evidence from the domestic abuse awareness survey was triangulated with consultation findings from programme leads and senior stakeholders. The majority of programme leads and a minority of senior stakeholders reported that the training had increased awareness and skills, and had also raised the profile of coercive control as a form of domestic abuse which requires a police response (although they also recognised that there is further progress to be made in upskilling police officers and staff in relation to coercive control). This is corroborated by evidence from the “whole-system” E-survey completed by key stakeholders: as shown in Figure 25, 81% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the training had increased police awareness, confidence and skills in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control, while only 5% of respondents disagreed.
Figure 25: Key stakeholder agreement with the statements “The coercive control training has...” (n=227 (awareness, confidence, skills), n=201 (recording), n=191 (charges))

24 Positive responses (in shades of purple) are to the right of 0 and negative responses (in shades of pink) are to the left of 0. Stronger shades of each colour indicate stronger agreement/disagreement in the responses (“strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”). Please note that neutral responses (“neither agree nor disagree”) are not shown in the graph, so the percentages shown do not total 100 for each bar.

Improved awareness, skills and confidence about domestic abuse and coercive control

As shown in Figure 26, evidence from the domestic abuse awareness survey suggests that the coercive control training had a positive impact on police awareness, skills and confidence in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control. Among the respondents to the survey who had completed training:

- 94% reported that it had increased their awareness of the issues.
- 87% reported that it had increased their level of skill in responding to incidents.
- 88% reported that it had increased their confidence in responding to these incidents.

25 Positive responses (in shades of purple) are to the right of 0 and negative responses (in shades of pink) are to the left of 0. Stronger shades of each colour indicate stronger agreement/disagreement in the responses (“strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”). Please note that neutral responses (“neither agree nor disagree”) are not shown in the graph, so the percentages shown do not total 100 for each bar.
Figure 26: Training participants’ agreement with the statements “The coercive control training has...” (n=452 (awareness), n=450 (skill), n=453 (confidence))

- **Increased my awareness of issues relating to domestic abuse and coercive control**
  - Completely disagree: 0%
  - Mostly disagree: 3%
  - Slightly disagree: 2%
  - Slightly agree: 21%
  - Mostly agree: 42%
  - Completely agree: 31%

- **Improved my level of skill in relation to responding to incidents of domestic abuse and coercive control**
  - Completely disagree: 2%
  - Mostly disagree: 5%
  - Slightly disagree: 2%
  - Slightly agree: 23%
  - Mostly agree: 37%
  - Completely agree: 27%

- **Improved my confidence in responding to incidents of domestic abuse and coercive control**
  - Completely disagree: 2%
  - Mostly disagree: 3%
  - Slightly disagree: 5%
  - Slightly agree: 23%
  - Mostly agree: 39%
  - Completely agree: 26%
Improved confidence in responding to specific types of domestic abuse

Evidence from the domestic abuse awareness survey, shown in Figure 27, suggests that training had a positive impact on police confidence in responding to specific types of domestic abuse. For example:

- Overall, 80-93% of people who had completed training reported that they felt well equipped to respond to incidents of different kinds of abuse, compared to 61-79% of people who had not completed training.

- The higher level of confidence was observed for each of the six types of domestic abuse: physical abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, coercive control and financial abuse.

- This included a difference of 19% in the people who were confident responding to coercive control (66% of people who had not completed training and 86% of people who had).

Regardless of training, the area of most confidence was responding to physical abuse (79-94% of participants agreed that they felt well equipped) and the area of least confidence was financial abuse (60-80% of participants agreed). However, the gap between areas of most and least confidence was smaller among people who had completed training, suggesting that training was most effective for the areas where participants were least confident.
Figure 27: Agreement and disagreement among people who have and have not completed the training, with “I feel well equipped to responding to incidents of domestic abuse involving…” (see footnote for n values)\(^\text{26}\)

\(^\text{26}\) (n=341 (physical abuse, no training), n=458 (physical abuse, with training), n=341 (psychological abuse, no training), n=457 (psychological abuse, with training), n=339 (emotional abuse, no training), n=457 (emotional abuse, with training), n=340 (sexual abuse, no training), n=456 (sexual abuse, with training), n=340 (coercive control, no training), n=457 (coercive control, with training), n=340 (financial abuse, no training), n=456 (financial abuse, with training).
Improved confidence in working with victims of domestic abuse

Figure 28 shows that the training appears to have had an impact on improving police confidence in working with victims of domestic abuse. For example:

- Overall, 89-96% of people who had completed training reported that they felt well equipped to work with victims, compared to 75-90% of people who had not completed training.

- This was true across each of the three areas of work: recognising factors that may increase vulnerability, outlining the options available to victims, and navigating the barriers that might prevent someone from accepting support.

Regardless of training, more participants were confident in recognising the factors that may increase a person’s vulnerability to abuse (90-96%) than outlining the options (76-91%) or navigating barriers (75-89% of participants agreed that they felt well equipped). However, the gap between areas of most and least confidence was smaller among people who had completed training, suggesting that training was most effective for the areas where participants were less confident.
Figure 28: Agreement and disagreement among people who have and have not completed the training in coercive control, with "I feel well equipped to..." (see footnote for n values).  

- Recognise factors that may increase vulnerability: 90% (not trained) vs 96% (trained).  
- Outline the options available to victims: 76% (not trained) vs 91% (trained).  
- Navigate factors that might prevent someone from accepting help: 75% (not trained) vs 89% (trained).  

Footnote: (n=341 (recognise vulnerability, no training), n=458 (recognise vulnerability, with training), n=340 (outline options, no training), n=456 (outline options, with training), n=340 (navigate barriers to accepting help, no training), n=456 (navigate barriers to accepting help, with training).
Improved confidence in using tools

Figure 29 shows that the training appears to have had an impact on improving police confidence in using different tools to respond to incidents of abuse. For example:

- Overall, 66-93% of people who had completed training reported that they felt well equipped to use the tools, compared to 43-77% of people who had not completed training.

- This was true for each of the five tools: responding to an incident of domestic abuse using positive action, working with the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH) risk identification and assessment and management model as part of their response to an incident of domestic abuse, guiding a person through making a request for disclosure under Clare’s Law, developing safety plans using the Remove the risk, Avoid the risk, Reduce the risk, Accept the risk (RARA) model and using a DVPN to respond to domestic abuse.

Regardless of training, the tools that participants were most confident with using were positive action (77-93% of participants agreed that they felt well equipped) and the DASH model (66-85% agreed). Confidence overall appeared to be lower than for other elements of the survey, with roughly equal numbers agreeing and disagreeing that they felt well equipped to use some of the tools (Clare’s Law, RARA and DVPNs).

**Recommendation 7:** Further training should focus on the use of tools to respond to incidents of domestic abuse, because this was an area of low confidence across the group, and was seen to improve among people who had completed the training (including expected changes in practice, as discussed below).
Figure 29: Agreement and disagreement among people who have and have not attended training with “I feel well equipped to…” (see footnote for n values)²⁸

²⁸(n=334 (positive action, no training), n=449 (positive action, with training), n=337 (DASH model, no training), n=453 (DASH model, with training), n=338 (Clare’s Law, no training), n=459 (Clare’s Law, with training), n=340 (RARA model, no training), n=454 (RARA model, with training), n=338 (DVPN, no training), n=456 (DVPN, with training).
Changes to participants’ practice

In the domestic abuse awareness survey, 459 respondents had completed training on coercive control, and one third of these gave examples of ways they were working differently as a result. Around 8% reported that they had not changed their practice and 59% did not respond or gave responses that did not answer the question.

Those who reported that it had changed their practice reported the following types of changes:

- **Being more alert to the signs of coercive control, in work with victims and perpetrators** (101 respondents). In particular, participants said they had improved their practice in relation to identifying risk factors, paying close attention to indicators such as body language, verbal language and behaviours e.g. “when someone is answering questions on behalf of their partner”, and knowing what questions to ask in order to find out if coercive control is present. A small number also said the training had improved their awareness that coercive control “can happen to anyone, male or female, young and old”. Participants said their accuracy in risk assessments had improved as a result of greater awareness, including completing DASH and Thrive assessments and when reviewing paperwork.

- **Recognising coercive control as an offence and using it in case building and investigation** (27 respondents). In particular, participants said they had improved their practice in relation to seeking out and recording evidence, knowing what was required for prosecution by the CPS, and considering using coercive control alongside other domestic abuse charges.

- **Improved understanding and work with victims of coercive control** (23 respondents). In particular, this included reassuring victims that the abuse is recognised and they are believed, responding to cases of coercive control through the usual domestic abuse pathways and tools (e.g. MATAC, safeguarding, positive action), being aware that victims themselves may not recognise coercive control as a form of domestic abuse and being able to signpost, “support and advise them accordingly”, understanding why a victim may not want to report incidents and being able to “balance victim needs with evidence-led” prosecution where appropriate without relying on the victim to make a complaint.

This suggests that impact on awareness, skills and confidence may translate into changes in practice. In addition, these changes may be sustained, since respondents reported changes to similar areas of practice regardless of whether they had completed the training less than one month earlier or two or more years earlier.
4.4.3.2 Training has resulted in an increased number of crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling behaviour

A note on recording of crimes and charging of offences as coercive control

Programme leads and senior stakeholders in several force areas highlighted some issues which it is important to understand when interpreting data on coercive control crimes recorded and offences charged.

First, they noted that often coercive control crimes which are recorded have taken place alongside another crime, such as an assault. Both crimes are recorded but the coercive control crime was likely to have been identified as a consequence of a police visit and/or investigation in relation to the other crime. Therefore, an increase in incidents recorded shows an increase in awareness amongst responding and/or investigating officers but not an increase in the reporting of coercive control, as separate from the reporting of other domestic abuse related offences.

Second, the number of crimes recorded is likely to have increased at a significantly higher rate than the number of offences charged and the number of convictions for coercive control. This relates to crimes being identified alongside another crime. Often, a decision is taken to pursue charge and conviction for the other offence because case-building is easier, less time required for detailed review of case histories, CPS thresholds are more attainable and the sentence attached to the other offence is greater (meaning that even if the coercive control conviction was achieved it would be unlikely to add to the severity of the sentence). Therefore, the proportion of coercive control crimes recorded which are then taken forward to charge may remain low.

Figure 30 shows that coercive control training may have contributed to an increase in the number of crimes recorded which include coercive and controlling behaviour, although it is not possible to isolate the impact of the training from other changes which took place during this period, such as legislation changes. The number of crimes recorded rose over time for each force during the period January 2016 to March 2019, particularly in Force F. Some increase in the numbers of crimes recorded was expected from July 2018 as a result of a change to the Crime Recording Standards\textsuperscript{29}, but the upward trend was already in place before these changes were introduced so this is unlikely to explain the increase.

\textsuperscript{29} Two changes were introduced during this period: A) As of 1\textsuperscript{st} July 2018, coercive control should always be recorded as a crime alongside any other crime recorded. Previously, only the most serious crime would usually be recorded. This may have led to an increase in the number of crimes recorded including coercive and controlling behaviour from July 2018. B) As of 1\textsuperscript{st} February 2019, repeated crimes of coercive control are recorded as continuations, not as new crimes (unless the offender has already been dealt with for the original coercive control crime). It is possible that reports were previously recorded as new crimes each time, but are now recorded as continuations, which may have led to a decrease in the number of crimes recorded including coercive and controlling behaviour from February 2019.
It is difficult to assess the impact of the training on this trend because it was not clear from documentation and consultation precisely when the training started in all force areas, and in some cases no data was available from before the training was implemented. In addition, data was not provided in all force areas on the numbers or proportion of relevant staff who received the training. In addition, other factors may also contribute to the trend, such as an increase in the number of coercive control crimes being reported.

Figure 30: Number of recorded crimes which include coercive and controlling behaviour

However, the majority of programme leads reported that the training is likely to have resulted in more crimes being recorded that involved coercive control. Equally, 62% of respondents to the “whole system” E-survey either agreed or strongly agreed that the training resulted in more crimes being recorded that involved coercive control and only 6% of respondents disagreed, as shown in Figure 25 in section 4.4.3.1. This suggests that the training may partially explain the rise in the number of crimes recorded that included coercive and controlling behaviour.

4.4.3.3 Training has resulted in an increased number of offences being charged as coercive control
Evidence relating to an increased number of offences being charged with coercive control as a result of the coercive control training was somewhat less positive. The majority of programme leads and senior stakeholders did not feel able to comment on whether the training has impacted on the number of offences being charged. Similarly, only 40% of respondents to the “whole system” E-survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the related statement whilst 12% disagreed (as shown in section 4.4.3.1).

In fact, the number of offences charged as coercive control in each force does not show a clear pattern, including when measured as a proportion of crimes recorded, as shown in Figure 31.

*Figure 31: Number of offences charged as coercive control, as a proportion of the number of crimes recorded that include coercive and controlling behaviour (data not available for Force C)*

This may demonstrate that the training did not have much impact on how many offences were charged as coercive control, but there are other factors to consider. As noted above, charging decisions are taken for a number of reasons, and it may be that charge rates for coercive control continued to be constrained by considerations such as a greater likelihood of building a successful case around other co-existing offences.

## 4.4.4 Longer-term outcomes

The intended longer-term outcomes of the coercive control training, which were unlikely to be achieved within the programme funding period were:
• Improved investigative and safeguarding response to domestic abuse victims.

• Increased coercive control convictions.

It is unlikely that the coercive control training alone would lead to the achievement of these intended outcomes, but it might be one of a number of factors which could contribute to improvements in these outcome areas. This was recognised by key stakeholders.

The fact that people who had completed the training some time before reported changes in practice suggests that the improved confidence, awareness and skills that they had obtained via the training may translate to sustained changes in practice that could improve investigative and safeguarding response to domestic abuse victims. The most common changes were to investigation (e.g. asking more probing questions, looking out for signs of coercive control, recording evidence of the offence).

An increase in offences charged as coercive control is a necessary precursor to increased coercive control convictions. At this stage, there is limited evidence of an increase in charges. It is difficult to judge whether this will change in the future, and therefore to make comment on whether the longer-term outcome of increased coercive control convictions is likely to be achieved. Ongoing monitoring of the numbers of crimes recorded as coercive control, offences charged as coercive control and convictions for coercive control, as well as conversion rates between these different stages, would enable forces to assess the extent to which improvements are being achieved in the future.

4.4.5 Variations in impact

It was not possible to use domestic abuse survey responses to consider variations in the impact of the training across the force areas involved in DAWSA. This is because the sample sizes of those who completed the domestic abuse awareness survey and indicated that they had completed the training vary substantially between force areas, from 168 responses from Force D to 16 responses from Force E.

In addition, even if such a comparison were possible on the basis of the data available, it would be difficult to determine whether any apparent differences in impact related to the use of different training models, to variations in average pre-training levels of awareness, skill and confidence in different force areas; or to other force-level factors which are not explored in detail within the evaluation.

Consultation with programme leads and senior stakeholders suggests that each training model had different benefits and disadvantages and that it was important that each force area selected the model which best suited their local training plans and needs. For example, programme leads noted that:

• Model A delivered the inputs required and was substantially cheaper to deliver than models B and C, and was also cheaper and arguably easier to sustain because it was based on the use of in-force trainers.
• **Model B** was impactful and delivered high-quality training, but was expensive to deliver because it involves commissioning an external provider and sustaining the model involves significant initial expenditure because the train the trainer element is only delivered by the provider if the provider directly delivers training to 75% of frontline staff in the force.

• **Model C** was impactful and delivered high-quality training and the provider’s values made it particularly well suited to delivering experiential and reflective training. It was more expensive than model A to deliver and slightly more complex to sustain because of the inclusion of the train the trainer element.

### 4.5 Sustainability

Force-level documentation and monitoring reports show that five of the six force areas planned to continue delivering coercive control training in some form, with plans yet to be determined in the sixth force area. This was corroborated through consultation with programme leads. Ongoing training plans included combinations of:

- Adapting and including the training package as part of standard training for student officers, new recruits, transfeerees, detectives, PCSOs and/or special constables.

- Adapting and including the training in a digital continuous professional development module available to all staff, or into “upskilling” training days for all serving officers.

- Using a train the trainer model based on train the trainer sessions delivered as part of the training commissioned under DAWSA.

- Commissioning further refresher training from the same external provider.

### 4.6 Learning

#### 4.6.1 Alignment with good practice principles

The coercive control training aligns with one of the principles of good practice identified within literature on whole system approaches to domestic abuse. This is: **Principle 6: Facilitate the disclosure of abuse and ensure staff respond appropriately.** An important component of this principle is training staff to recognise, screen for and respond to disclosures of domestic abuse, to a level appropriate to their role. This is directly addressed by the training.

#### 4.6.2 Added value

Programme leads, senior stakeholders and training participants reported that all models of training had a positive impact on the confidence, skills and awareness of police officers/staff. Programme leads reported that the training was connected to increases in the numbers of crimes recorded as coercive control. Programme
leads also discussed plans to continue using the training models in the future, suggesting that they will continue to add value to forces in the region.

4.6.3 Identification and sharing of good practice

Programme leads and senior stakeholders highlighted the value of all three training models as good practice which could be adopted by other force areas in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spread to other areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity was also under way in the Cumbria force area to commission and deliver a coercive control training package using funding of £4,790 granted by DAWSA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A series of around 20 sessions were delivered over summer/autumn 2018, to a mixed audience from police, education and other partner agencies, by the provider AltaEgo. In total, over 5,000 people completed the training. The force reported receiving positive feedback, including requests for future events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing plans to expand on this activity include developing further awareness-raising events, a coercive control toolkit, and a police Domestic Abuse Champions event, all in partnership with Lancaster University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.4 Lessons for future development and implementation

Figure 32 summarises the recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the coercive control training. These may be of use in the future development and implementation of work to increase the efficacy of responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of DAWSA in the future.

A further key lesson for future development in other regions or force areas is the value of face-to-face training and specialist, independent input into training on coercive control.
**Figure 32: Recommendations for coercive control training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Robust training needs assessment and review of training products.</strong> The decision on whether to implement (more in-depth) coercive control training should be preceded by a robust assessment of training need in the force area and a review of existing local training products alongside those available as part of DAWSA.</td>
<td>A thorough assessment of training need and review of any local training product alongside the products included within DAWSA would ensure that forces were in a strong position to judge whether any of these models would deliver learning outcomes over and above those achieved with local products</td>
<td>4.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Further training on use of tools.</strong> Further training should focus on the use of tools to respond to incidents of domestic abuse.</td>
<td>Use of tools was an area of lower confidence amongst all respondents to the domestic abuse awareness survey. It was higher in those who had completed the training than those who had not but could improve further.</td>
<td>4.4.3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Domestic Violence Support and Assistance (DVSA) Partnerships

5.1 Overview

The Domestic Violence Support and Assistance (DVSA) partnership involves the inclusion of advice and support from a specialist domestic abuse support worker as part of the early police response to a domestic abuse incident. The primary aims of the DVSA partnership are to:

- Increase support for victims, at the scene and at the time of a reported domestic abuse incident (or as soon as practicable thereafter).
- Increase opportunities for partnership working and shared learning between the police and specialist domestic abuse support providers, in order to improve safeguarding and support for domestic abuse victims and criminal justice outcomes for them.

The purpose of this activity was to establish a DVSA partnership in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA, or to continue delivery of existing partnerships.

5.2 Key findings

5.2.1 Progress in implementation

- DVSA partnerships were operational in all six force areas during the programme funding period and have offered support to domestic abuse victims at the scene and time of the reported incident or soon afterwards.
- The partnerships have provided opportunities for police officers and providers of specialist domestic abuse support services to share learning and observe one another’s practice.

5.2.2 Overview of implementation and impact

Figure 33 summarises the key evaluation findings relating to the implementation and impact of the DVSA partnerships.
Figure 33: Overview of key findings for DVSA partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The partnerships provide an example of strong partnership working between the police and specialist providers.</td>
<td>• Half of force areas experienced challenges in commissioning the specialist provision within the partnerships, which they connected to the short-term nature of the funding attached to delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providers were highly engaged in setting up and delivering the partnerships.</td>
<td>• A minority of force areas outlined challenges in establishing and implementing appropriate information sharing and consent processes to support the operation of the partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The partnerships represent a shift towards providing support and specialist input at an earlier point in victims’ contact with police.</td>
<td>• In some areas, operational set-up proved challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The independence, knowledge and expertise of specialist workers was seen to facilitate victims’ engagement with the partnership’s support.</td>
<td>• Staffing the partnerships on a day-to-day basis proved challenging, especially in the earlier stages of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Victims have provided positive feedback on the support they received from the partnerships.</td>
<td>• Initial and ongoing promotion of the partnership to police officers and staff proved challenging due to the volume of staff who needed to be made aware.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for development</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Force areas which are continuing with the DVSA partnership should review the most effective uses for any downtime and specify projects to be undertaken at these times.</td>
<td>• Monitoring data and consultation with victims and those involved with delivery provides evidence that partnerships have increased the number of victims engaging with at- or post-incident safeguarding and support, and also the numbers of victims engaging with ongoing specialist support, which has had a positive impact on victims’ safety and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Force areas should develop an ongoing communications plan in relation to the DVSA partnership with a particular focus on in-force communication.</td>
<td>• There is also evidence from consultation with victims and stakeholders involved in delivery that the partnerships have improved victims’ perceptions of police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.</td>
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<td>• In force areas where the DVSA service is commissioned from or staffed by workers from local domestic abuse service providers, providers, force and OPCC leads for the DVSA partnership should review staffing arrangements for providers to determine whether these are sustainable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Force areas should allocate responsibility and expected timescales for regular monitoring of demand and performance of the DVSA partnership.</td>
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5.3 Implementation

5.3.1 Variations in implementation

The DVSA partnership has been delivered via three main models:

- **Model A: DVSA partnership located in a police car.** This model involves a response car staffed by a police officer and the specialist domestic abuse support worker, which visits victims in their home following incidents. The car attends as a second response unit after the first response unit has ensured the scene is safe. This model was used in three force areas (with one force area implementing both model A and model B).

- **Model B: DVSA partnership located in a force control room.** This model involves a specialist domestic abuse support worker based in the force control room and making follow-up calls to victims after they have reported an incident. This includes making calls prior to police attendance for incidents which are identified as lower risk and lower priority for police attendance, or following police attendance at higher risk and higher priority incidents. This model was used in three force areas (with one force area implementing both model A and model B).

- **Model C: DVSA partnership is delivered via extension of an existing Early Intervention service.** This model involves extending the contract of an existing Early Intervention service delivered by a specialist domestic abuse support provider. The service is based in the provider's premises (rather than in a police car or force control room) and delivers follow-up calls and joint visits to victims who are referred by the police following an incident. This model was used in one force area.

Figure 34 summarises the approaches to implementation and the key milestones achieved in the six different force areas.

A note on comparison of models

During the scoping phase for the evaluation, key stakeholders expressed a particular interest in understanding any differences in implementation and impact between the different models of the DVSA partnership. Specifically, they were interested to understand whether there were differences between model A and model B.

As a result, this chapter offers commentary on differences in implementation and impact that potentially link to the different delivery models. However, all findings should be treated with caution because we are basing comparisons on only 3 local versions of each model30. This is a small sample from which to draw firm conclusions. It is also important to recognise that other factors

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30 Model A was used in three force areas – forces A, B and F. Model B was also used in three force areas – Force B, C and D (with Force B using both models). Force E used model C.
could have contributed to variation by force areas, such as the number of workers/cars employed, the level of demand in each area and the efficacy of implementation.
### Figure 34: Implementation of DVSA partnership in the six force areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA[^31]</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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</table>
| Force A    | A     | Pilot: 2014-15  | £260,357               | • Dedicated response units consisting of a police officer and a specialist domestic abuse support worker from the voluntary sector were deployed as a secondary response to all incidents of domestic abuse.  
• The specialist workers offered support and advice to engage victims, and police officers completed further engagement relating to the incident and its investigation.  
• The cars were available at peak demand times. These varied by area command but were generally 6pm-2am on Fridays and Saturdays, and in some areas on Sundays as well.  
• A nominated OPCC lead and police strategic lead were responsible for the ongoing delivery and monitoring of the scheme.  
• The specialist worker provision was commissioned from local domestic abuse service providers, with the contract held by the OPCC.  
• The scheme is now embedded in business as usual.  
• The standard operating procedure and peak demand times will be reviewed regularly and amended as required. |
|            |       | Introduced force-wide: December 2016 |                     |                            |
| Force B    | A & B | Model A: January 2018 | £43,111 | Model A  
• Dedicated response units consisting of a police officer and a specialist domestic abuse support worker from the voluntary sector were deployed as a secondary response to incidents of domestic abuse in cases where consent for information sharing was given to the first attending officer(s). |
|            |       | Model B: |                     |                            |

[^31]: Expenditure reported in financial expenditure reports 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.
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<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>September 2018</td>
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- The specialist workers offered support and advice to engage victims, and police officers completed further engagement relating to the incident and its investigation.
- Peak demand times and the availability of first responders determined when cars were available. Initially they were available from 2pm-10pm from Saturday to Tuesday but this was reviewed and reduced to Saturdays and Sundays only.
- Incidents earlier in the day could be ‘tagged’ for the attention of the car and the force control room worker (under model B) could also scan logs and/or call victims and obtain consent, to identify additional opportunities to deploy the car.
- The specialist worker provision was commissioned from local domestic abuse service providers.
- The scheme will not be continued after the DAWSA funding period because support under model B will continue instead.

**Model B**

- A specialist domestic abuse support worker was available in the Force Control Room from 2pm-9.30pm on Saturdays and Sundays, covering peak demand times and coinciding with the car scheme availability (see model A).
- The worker:
  - Scanned all call logs for incidents which had not yet received a first response to assess risk and confirm or alter the priority rating.
  - Made phone calls to victims if appropriate, to offer advice and support, and updated the logs with any new information.
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<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Force C    | B     | September 2018  | £39,792          | • Took calls directly from call handlers for victims who reported an incident whilst they were on shift.  
• Made calls after first response, in advance or instead of the second response unit attending.  
• The specialist worker provision was commissioned from local domestic abuse service providers.  
• Funding has been identified to continue this scheme for a further 12 months, to enable monitoring of its effectiveness before a longer-term funding decision is made.  
• A specialist domestic abuse support worker was available in the Force Control Room from 1pm-7pm from Monday-Friday. (Initially the worker was available from 2pm-6pm but the hours were extended).  
• Availability was informed by demand analysis, which suggested that peak demand times were in the late afternoon and early evening.  
• The worker:  
  • Scanned call logs for incidents which had not yet received a first response to assess risk and confirm or alter the priority rating, with a focus on incidents with lower priority ratings.  
  • Reviewed calls flagged to them by control room staff.  
  • Made phone calls to victims if appropriate, to offer advice and support, and updated the logs with any new information. |
### Progress in implementation

- The specialist worker provision was commissioned from the local victims’ services provider.
- There is a possibility of mainstreaming the service via the OPCC victim services commissioning but no decision has yet been made on continuation funding, pending the findings of this evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA[^1]</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>£67,486</td>
<td>A specialist domestic abuse support worker was available in the Force Control Room from 4pm-12pm from Sunday-Thursday and from 4pm-2am Friday-Saturday.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Availability was informed by demand analysis but also by the coverage offered by the provider during an open procurement process.</td>
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<td>The worker:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Reviewed call logs and records which had been flagged to them by control room staff or first responders following victims’ consent to a follow-up call. This included incidents which had not yet received a first response as well as those which had.</td>
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<td>• Made phone calls to victims if appropriate, to offer advice and support, and updated the logs with any new information.</td>
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<td>• Assessed risk and confirmed or altered the priority rating for the incident.</td>
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<td>The specialist worker provision was commissioned from a local domestic abuse service provider.</td>
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[^1]: DAWSA = Domestic Abuse Services Provider
### Progress in implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA(^{31})</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>£142,678(^{32})</td>
<td>• Funding has been identified via the OPCC to continue this scheme for a further 12 months, to enable monitoring of its effectiveness before a longer-term funding decision is made.</td>
</tr>
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\(^{31}\) Includes funding re-allocated from underspend in other activities.

\(^{32}\) Includes funding re-allocated from underspend in other activities.
### Force F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| A     | January 2016 (2 districts) January 2017 (1 district) February 2018 (2 districts) | £344,127 | • Dedicated response units consisting of a police officer and a specialist domestic abuse support worker from the voluntary sector were deployed as a secondary response to all incidents of domestic abuse (except under exceptional circumstances e.g. the victim was in hospital).  
• The specialist workers offered support and advice to engage victims, and police officers completed further engagement relating to the incident and its investigation.  
• The cars were available at peak demand times. These varied by district but were generally 6pm-12pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and in one district on Saturday and Sunday instead.  
• The specialist worker provision was commissioned from local domestic abuse service providers.  
• Funding has been identified to continue this scheme for a further 12 months, to enable evaluation of its effectiveness before a longer-term funding decision is made.  
• The standard operating procedure and peak demand times will be reviewed regularly and amended as required. |
5.3.2 Stages of implementation

Figure 35 summarises the main stages in implementing the DVSA partnerships, which are described in further detail below.

**Figure 35: Stages of implementation of DVSA partnerships**

1. **Step 1: Select delivery model**
   - Force areas selected the delivery model which they felt best suited their local geography, resources and priorities.

2. **Step 2: Establish peak demand times**
   - Force areas analysed incident data to determine peak call times for domestic abuse-related incidents and used this to determine the times at which the DVSA partnership response would be available.
Step 3: Engage specialist providers

Service specifications or person specifications were developed to support commissioning or recruitment to the role. The main approaches taken were: open and competitive tender processes, extensions to existing contracts, direct approaches to providers (where the value of services to be commissioned was beneath procurement thresholds). Primarily the roles were covered by existing staff in the providers but in one force area a worker was recruited specifically to fill the post.

Step 4: Develop procedures and protocols

Standard operating procedures were developed and agreed for the partnership, along with any other protocols and processes which were required for its operation. In the case of model A, this included arrangements for ensuring police officers were available to staff the response unit.

Some force areas were able to adapt and localise procedures which had been developed in other force areas. This provides an example of the benefit of taking a regional approach to DAWSA, because time was saved and tools and practice shared across different force areas.

Step 5: Carry out induction for specialist domestic abuse support workers

The specialist domestic abuse support workers were provided with an induction prior to their first shift. Training was generally about a day in length and included training on police systems which they would need to use and update as part of their role.33 In model B, the specialist domestic abuse support workers were generally accompanied on their first shift by a police officer with oversight of the partnership, or were able to shadow another worker who had already completed shifts.

Step 6: Promote the partnership to police officers and staff

Communications and promotional work were undertaken with police officers, control room staff and other police staff who would be working alongside the partnership. This included delivering face-to-face briefings, creating guidance and briefing sheets for officers and control room staff, posters and reminders in the control room, on the intranet or on police systems. In a number of force areas, much of this promotional work took place after Step 7.

Step 7: Begin delivering the partnership

The partnership began contacting victims and offering the service.

33 An exception was the force area in which one worker was recruited to deliver the role. Here, the induction period was approximately three weeks.
Step 8: Monitor performance and adjust delivery

Operational and strategic leads monitored performance and adjusted the partnership’s operation if needed. Performance monitoring processes varied across force areas but they tended to be a combination of: analysis of demand data; monitoring the outputs and (where possible) outcomes of the partnership; consulting staff about the operation of the partnership; and consulting victims about their experience of the support. Examples of adjustments included changing the hours of operation or the process by which relevant cases were flagged or tasked to the partnership.

In some force areas, an initial pilot was conducted before the project was expanded to cover the whole force area.

5.3.3 Strengths in implementation

Strong partnership work between the police and providers

DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in the majority of force areas cited the DVSA partnership as an example of strong partnership working between the police and the voluntary and community sector. They perceived such partnerships to be particularly important in ensuring that high-quality services are available to victims in a climate of limited resources and high demand.

Buy-in and participation from providers

Programme leads and DVSA stakeholders in all four force areas which had commissioned specialist workers from domestic abuse service providers stated that high levels of provider buy-in to the DVSA partnership scheme had supported set-up and delivery of the scheme.

This was exemplified at a number of stages of implementation. First, it was evident in discussions when commissioning and setting up the scheme. For instance, in a force area which commissioned the service through open procurement, the provider had offered coverage to enable the service to be available every evening. In another force area where providers were approached directly, there was limited time between the initial request to participate and launching the scheme but providers “made it work” by being responsive and ready to deliver at short notice.

It was also evident in discussions between the domestic abuse service providers and the police about improving the operation of the scheme. In addition, it was demonstrated by the specialist workers delivering the partnership, in their willingness to take on shifts on top of their day-to-day work and to make improvement suggestions and adjust their practice to improve delivery of the partnership.

Shifting emphasis towards early intervention

DVSA stakeholders, programme leads and senior stakeholders in all force areas recognised that a key strength of the scheme was its role in ensuring that victims
received specialist support at an earlier point in their contact with police than they would have done otherwise. For some victims who had reported multiple incidents previously, this did not necessarily equate to intervention early on in their experience of domestic abuse. For victims contacting the police for the first time, on the other hand, this meant that they were receiving an offer of support at the first point that police became aware that support might be needed.

**Independence of specialist workers**

DVSA stakeholders in all five force areas with DVSA partnerships involving independent specialist providers cited the independence of the domestic abuse specialist workers as a key strength of the DVSA partnership. A number of programme leads also identified this as a strength. Specialist workers involved in delivery reported that they stressed their independence from the police when making contact with victims, but also made it clear that their call was part of the response to them contacting the police. They reported that this encouraged victims to engage with them during the visit or call, to accept advice and support, and potentially to disclose information which would change the assessment of risk and subsequent response.

**Knowledge and expertise of specialist workers**

The knowledge and expertise of the specialist workers was also recognised by DVSA stakeholders in all force areas as an important strength of the DVSA partnerships. This included their expertise in engaging and supporting victims of domestic abuse, but also their knowledge of the local service landscape, civil and family law and other topics which were of importance to victims.

**Positive feedback from victims**

DVSA stakeholders in all force areas and programme leads in the majority of areas cited positive feedback from victims as a sign that the DVSA partnership provided a service which was of value to them. This feedback had been sought formally in some force areas and in all force areas specialist workers provided examples of victims who had expressed their appreciation for the service.

**Consultation with victims**

17 victims were consulted concerning DVSA partnerships and all reported a positive experience of the service. They highlighted a number of factors which contributed to this experience, such as:

**Timeliness of initial contact**

Victims consulted identified the speed of contact by the DVSA partnership as a positive aspect of their experience. In addition, the majority of victims reported that the timing of support offered by the DVSA partnership at, or post, incident was a key factor in them engaging with this initial support, as they were more receptive when contacted promptly, and it was at a point in time where they needed advice and guidance the most.
Positive relationship building

The skill of the specialist workers and police within the DVSA partnership in building trust and offering reassurance to the victim and their family was also identified by almost all victims who were interviewed as a positive aspect of their experience with the DVSA partnership services. For example, one victim stated:

“I trusted them [the DVSA partnership service], my children and I feel comfortable with them.”

In particular, two victims who were interviewed were particularly impressed by the positive relationships the police officer (who responded as part of the DVSA partnership) built with their children. One reported:

“The relationship between the kids and the police [is something that has worked well]. They only previously saw the police as the bad ones that had taken their dad away. Things are now so much better.”

Mode of first contact

Victims were generally satisfied with the mode of first contact with the DVSA partnership and suggested it was appropriate for them. For example, one victim reported that the specialist support worker coming to their home was a contributing factor to them engaging with the support, as they appreciated contact in person and would have been unwilling to travel to the service themselves. Another commented that the use of a telephone call was important, as they would not have engaged if the support worker had come to their home. This suggests that either model might suit different victims, depending on their preferences.

Advice and guidance

The majority of victims interviewed identified the advice and signposting offered by the DVSA partnership (by both the police officers and specialist workers) as a key strength of the service.

5.3.4 Challenges in implementation

Commissioning challenges

Programme leads and DVSA stakeholders in half of the force areas identified challenges in commissioning the specialist provision for the DVSA partnerships. They connected this to the short-term nature of the funding available, and the need to establish DVSA partnerships quickly in order for them to be operational and able to demonstrate impact during the programme funding period.

This challenge took a different form in different force areas. For example, in force areas which approached existing providers and used spot purchasing the time between approaching providers and launching the partnership was limited, which
made it difficult to plan in detail and iron out any concerns prior to launch. On the other hand, in a force area which commissioned the service via open procurement, delays with procurement processes resulted in the scheme only launching towards the end of the programme funding period.

**Information sharing and consent**

Programme leads and DVSA stakeholders in a minority of force areas reported encountering challenges with information sharing and consent from victims to be contacted by the DVSA partnership. This included difficulties in determining the circumstances in which explicit consent would be required. In areas where models were based on advanced consent from victims, it also included ensuring that police officers and staff had taken consent prior to flagging incidents to the DVSA partnership.

**Operational set-up**

DVSA stakeholders in a half of force areas outlined some delays and challenges in setting up the DVSA partnership at an operational level. Whilst the operating procedures and protocols had been agreed at a strategic level, on some occasions staff at an operational level had not been fully consulted about the practicalities of setting up the partnership. This led to delays in, for example, system access for specialist workers or the need to develop additional processes or amend existing ones.

**Recommendation 8:** Operational leads and staff should be involved in discussions when planning set-up and developing protocols and procedures for the DVSA partnership. This could help to smooth the process of introducing the partnership by ensuring that its planned operation is feasible and acceptable to the staff who will be delivering it.

**Staffing the partnership**

DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in all four force areas which had commissioned specialist workers from domestic abuse service providers highlighted challenges in organising the rota for specialist workers, responding to changes in worker availability, and finding cover in the event of sickness. They reported that this was mostly successfully managed, but that it required careful planning and time to ensure the smooth-running of the partnership.

Similarly, DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in force areas using model A (and therefore requiring police officers to staff the response unit) reported challenges in arranging staffing. Specifically, it was sometimes difficult to encourage supervisors to release staff for the shift and some officers appeared reluctant to cover the response unit. However, stakeholders noted that these were mostly early problems and have mainly been resolved as the partnerships became more embedded.

DVSA stakeholders in force areas using model A also reported that the understanding, skill and interest level of police officers staffing the response unit
could vary quite substantially. Again, stakeholders reported that this had improved as the partnership became more embedded because for many officers it was a result of being new to the task and their understanding and buy-in improved once they had been on shift in the partnership and seen it in action.

Mixed views were expressed during the evaluation by police officers in the force areas using model A. The majority reported that they enjoyed working on the second response unit and could see the value of the DVSA partnership for both victims and the police. Nevertheless, a significant minority stated their belief that staffing the second response unit was not a good use of police officers' time, given the wide range of competing demands placed upon them.

Stakeholders also reported that some officers held negative beliefs or misconceptions about domestic abuse and the value of this work, which were harder to shift. In the most extreme cases stakeholders reported that police officers perceived their role to be “a glorified taxi service”.

Awareness raising and promotion

DVSA stakeholders in all force areas cited raising awareness of the partnership amongst police officers and staff as one of the biggest challenges for the role. The large volume of control room staff and first response officers who needed to be made aware and the fact that the service was only available at specific times presented a dual challenge in ensuring that all relevant staff were aware of the partnership and were flagging or tasking relevant cases to it. One police officer explained this as follows:

“As it’s only weekends and you’ve got response teams rotating, you’re effectively only getting it on 20% of your shifts”

A minority of programme leads noted that this challenge was compounded by the short-term nature of the initial funding, which meant that they were promoting a service which might soon be discontinued.

DVSA stakeholders described a number of approaches to tackling this challenge, and generally reported that awareness had improved, resulting in increased numbers of incidents being flagged or tasked to the partnership. Examples of ways in which the partnership had been promoted in different force areas included delivering face-to-face briefings, creating guidance and briefing sheets for officers and control room staff, and posters and reminders in the control room, on the intranet or on police systems. In addition, specialist workers who were based in the control room explained that on each shift they would check in with supervisors and team managers at the start of the shift to remind them that the DVSA partnership was available. Team managers and supervisors reported that this was a useful prompt for them to remind staff on shift and monitor the use of the partnership throughout the shift.

Responding to fluctuating demand

DVSA stakeholders in most force areas described challenges in using the resource efficiently in the face of fluctuating demand levels. This included having
adequate resources to be able to react and increase provision at times of expected high demand (such as putting on an extra second response unit at points in the year when domestic abuse incidents can spike). It also included the opposite challenge of making sure the existing resource was well-used in the event that there are a lower number of incidents reported (or flagged) during a shift.

5.3.5 Factors supporting implementation

Strong strategic and operational management

Programme leads in the majority of force areas emphasised that close oversight by strategic leads and operational managers was important in ensuring that the response units were deployed effectively and in addressing any problems in individual area commands or districts. This was particularly referenced by force areas using model A. Reported ways to achieve this included allocating a strategic lead in the force and single points of contact at each area command, and arranging regular meetings between operational managers, staff and providers to iron out any issues.

Timing of support

DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in all force areas reported that providing support soon after the reported incident was a significant factor. This was echoed by a minority of senior stakeholders. However, there were mixed views on whether support was necessarily best offered immediately after an incident or the following day.

Those who advocated for support immediately after an incident were of the opinion that this promoted engagement with the support by reaching the victim at a moment when they most recognised that support might be needed. They also reported that it was then closer to the initial contact with police, maximising the chances of the victim connecting it to police response and therefore having a positive view of this response. They pointed to safeguarding and investigative benefits of a specialist and secondary response within a very short timeframe.

Conversely, those who advocated for support slightly longer after an incident stated that this was a better time to encourage engagement because victims have had more opportunity to recover from the immediate aftermath of the incident and reflect on what they might need. These stakeholders were of the opinion that support offered at this point in time might elicit a more detailed and considered discussion, which would therefore produce a better safety and support plan and higher quality information to support investigation. In relation to model A, these stakeholders also highlighted that victims might be more receptive to a second visit from a police officer if this was not as close to the first visit, which might have benefits for their perception of police response.

Provider continuity

DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas stated that having the same domestic abuse service provider(s) delivering the DVSA partnership role and
local community-based domestic abuse services resulted in more streamlined processes for ongoing engagement and support for victims. For example, DVSA stakeholders in two force areas where there are multiple providers of domestic abuse services noted that referral processes, information sharing and the speed of any follow up contact were better in districts where the local community provider also delivered the DVSA partnership. In addition, where victims being contacted by the DVSA partnership were already engaging with local services, specialist workers from that provider often already had insight into their circumstances and history, which informed their conversation during the DVSA partnership contact.

Co-location of providers and police

DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas reported that the co-location of the specialist workers and police officers, either within the control room or in response units, facilitated smoother-running of the partnership and increased opportunities for shared learning between police officers/staff and specialist workers.

Access to systems and equipment

DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in the majority of force areas highlighted access to the right systems and equipment as crucial to the effective implementation of the DVSA partnership. The main examples provided were access to police systems and provider case management systems, and access to laptops or similar equipment to enable these systems to be accessed and updated remotely. This reportedly improved the DVSA partnership’s ability to proactively identify incidents where their input might be required, access incident logs and case history to better plan and deliver services on initial contact, and update systems in a timely way to streamline information sharing, referrals and onward engagement processes.

Existence of similar service models

Programme leads and DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in most force areas noted that the introduction of the DVSA partnership was made easier than it would otherwise have been because there were already similar models of working in place locally. Examples included specialist victim care or mental health workers based in the control room and mental health street triage teams based in response units. These pre-existing services both informed the approach to introducing the local DVSA partnership and also improved reception of the DVSA partnership amongst relevant staff because they were familiar with a similar model and recognised its value.

5.3.6 Suggestions for strengthening design and implementation

Reviewing the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility

As with a number of the other projects included within DAWSA, one of the key suggestions for strengthening the design of the DVSA partnership was in maintaining common objectives for the DVSA partnership but building increased
flexibility to allow local areas to develop or adapt delivery models to suit their local priorities, geographical profile, structures, culture and/or service landscape. Whilst this was ultimately achieved, programme leads and senior stakeholders in force areas which used models other than those originally included in the approach reported that it took time to gain agreement from DAWSA leads to implement these models, which had a knock-on effect in delaying planning for implementation.

This flexibility to develop or adapt delivery models may be important in ensuring that projects are feasible and effective in their local context. However, in order to ensure consistency in quality and outcomes, it is important that localised delivery models target the same core SMART intended impacts and outcomes. Delivery models should be developed on the basis of a clearly-articulated theory of change or logic model, which links the inputs, activities and outputs of the model to these SMART impacts and outcomes. In addition, models should be developed based on any existing evidence base or good practice principles for similar interventions.

**Recommendation 5:** Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. This should seek to:

- Promote the consistent development and application of good practice to achieve common outcomes.
- Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the wide range of local contexts and structures into which they might be introduced.

**Planning for “downtime”**

DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in a number of force areas provided examples of projects carried out by DVSA partnerships during a time when they were not responding to incidents which had been flagged or tasked to them for that shift. For model A, these included conducting drive-bys and check-ins at victim’s addresses, visiting victims who were known to providers but were not currently engaging or visiting victims to take statements. For model B, they included scanning all call logs (rather than only those which had been flagged) or reviewing incidents with priority ratings that were not normally the focus of the role.

**Recommendation 9:** If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with the DVSA partnership should review the most effective uses for any downtime and should specify projects which should be undertaken during downtime within operating procedures, contracts and other key documentation.
Increasing awareness across the force

Linked to the challenges in awareness-raising and promotion discussed in section 5.3.4, DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas and a minority of programme leads reported that further promotional work was required to ensure that police officers and staff across the force were aware of the DVSA partnership, its function and its potential to engage and support victims of domestic abuse.

**Recommendation 10**: If they have not already done so, force areas should develop an ongoing communications plan in relation to the DVSA partnership. In particular, this should cover communications activity within the force but it might also be beneficial to cover communications activity with external partners which might be involved in multi-agency work with the partnership.

Longer-term provider staffing arrangements

Consultation with DVSA stakeholders suggests that specialist domestic abuse support providers staffing the partnership need to give careful consideration to the longer-term staffing arrangements for this. In three of the force areas which had commissioned specialist workers from domestic abuse service providers, specialist workers were taking on shifts for the DVSA partnership alongside their day-to-day work. In some instances, arrangements were described for workers for overtime or pro rata caseload reductions but it was not clear whether workers were taking up these options. In addition, DVSA stakeholders in a minority of areas reported that specialist providers do not have time on-shift to complete all of the follow-up required, such as onward referrals. This resulted in them completing this work in their own time or during their normal day-to-day work.

This may impact on the effectiveness of the partnerships if workers experience burn-out. Equally, overtime arrangements and caseload reductions are unlikely to be sustainable for provider organisations, which are not seeing a reduction in demand for their core services and are providing the DVSA partnership in addition to this.

**Recommendation 11**: In force areas where the DVSA service is commissioned from or staffed by workers from local domestic abuse service providers, providers, force and OPCC leads for the DVSA partnership should review staffing arrangements for providers to determine whether these are sustainable.

Extending availability of service

DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas suggested that extending the days or times at which the DVSA partnership was provided would enable the partnership to reach more victims and would increase the equitability of provision for victims reporting incidents at different times of day. This was echoed by a minority of programme leads and senior stakeholders. It was recognised,
however, that this would only be feasible if additional funding and resource were available.

**Changing hours of operation**

DVSA stakeholders in the four force areas where the partnership operates in the evenings reported that it may be useful to bring the finish time for the DVSA partnership shifts forward. They noted that engagement with the service tends to reduce towards the end of the shift for a range of reasons, such as victims not wanting to accept visits or calls too late and higher proportions of incidents involving alcohol or drugs taking place later at night which then precluded meaningful engagement.

**Regular review of demand and operation**

Programme leads, senior stakeholders and DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas emphasised that close monitoring of peak demand times and of the performance of the DVSA partnership will be crucial to their longer-term efficacy and success.

**Recommendation 12:** If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with a DVSA partnership should allocate responsibility and expected timescales for regular review of demand and performance of the DVSA partnership. This could support evidence-led decision-making on any improvements to the partnership.

**Incorporating into wider victims’ services or domestic abuse commissioning**

One force area has incorporated a follow-up service for victims (though not using a DVSA partnership model) into its main domestic abuse commissioning contract. Two further force areas are considering a similar approach to continuation. This may prove to be a useful model if mainstreaming the DVSA partnership because delivering out-of-hours services alongside the police could be written into primary contracts with providers.

### 5.4 Scale and impact

#### 5.4.1 Assessment against evaluation framework

Figure 37 summarises the evidence for progress against the intended outputs and outcomes of the DVSA partnerships, using the rating system outlined in Figure 36\(^{34}\). It illustrates that DVSA partnerships have successfully achieved all of their intended outputs and outcomes. In addition, the partnerships achieved

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\(^{34}\) The framework includes only outcomes which might feasibly be achieved and evidenced within the programme funding period. There are also some longer-term intended outcomes, which are discussed in section 5.4.4.
positive outcomes in improved victim safety and wellbeing, which was not included within the evaluation framework but was achieved in all force areas.

Figure 36: Ratings used in assessment against the evaluation framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been partially achieved or that there is progress indicating that it is likely to be achieved in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has not yet been achieved and that it was not feasible to achieve this outcome within the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Difficult to make a judgement on the basis of the available evidence about the extent to which this output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 37: Evidence of progress against intended outputs and outcomes of the DVSA partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The DVSA partnership has offered support to victims at the scene and at the time of the reported incident or as soon as practicable afterwards. | ✓               | • There is evidence from monitoring data and consultation with a range of stakeholders that the DVSA partnerships in all force areas have offered support to victims at the scene and at the time of the reported incident or as soon as practicable afterwards during the times that the partnership operated.  
  • Monitoring data shows that across the six forces the DVSA partnership offered direct support to victims in a total of at least 10,258 domestic abuse incidents since 2016\textsuperscript{35}. Without the DVSA partnership, none of these victims would have been offered post-incident support in this way. |
| The DVSA partnership has provided opportunities for police officers and providers of specialist domestic abuse support services to share learning and observe one another’s practice. | ✓               | • There is evidence that DVSA partnerships provided opportunities for police officers/staff and providers of specialist domestic abuse support services to share learning and observe one another’s practice. The evidence is mostly from consultation with DVSA stakeholders and programme leads, but there was also documentary evidence that these opportunities were deliberately built into the partnerships. In addition, monitoring data from one force area provided a snapshot of the partnership delivering shared learning opportunities.  
  • The evidence was strongest for DVSA partnerships delivered using model A, because this model is predicated on joint visits by police officers and specialist workers who are working out of second response units and therefore have the most opportunities to observe one another’s practice and seek advice from one another. |

\textsuperscript{35} This represents an under-estimate because data on initial contacts was only available for four of five districts in one force area (Force F).
### Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The DVSA partnership has increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support. | ✓               | • There was a wide range of evidence that the DVSA partnership has increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support. Monitoring data shows that across five of the six force areas the DVSA partnership resulted in at least 5,877 victims engaging with at-incident or post-incident safeguarding support.  
• Consultation with DVSA stakeholders, victims and programme leads confirmed that a reasonable proportion of victims accepted the support offered by the partnership, and also provided examples of the nature of the support on offer. Whilst some of these victims may have already been engaged with support services or may have gone on to engage with services at a later date without this intervention, none of the victims would have received this specific element of support without the DVSA partnership. |
| The DVSA partnership has increased the number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing specialist support. | ✓               | • There was a range of qualitative evidence that the input of the DVSA partnership is encouraging victims who would not have done so without the partnership to engage or re-engage in ongoing specialist support, although engagement rates could not be determined from the monitoring data.  
• Interviewed victims who have begun engaging with ongoing support since their contact with the DVSA partnership attributed this engagement to the information and the support they had received during contact with the DVSA partnership. |

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36 This represents an under-estimate because complete data on initial engagement was unavailable for one force area (Force F) and so any victims engaged in this force area are not included in the total.
Output/outcome | Progress rating | Evidence of progress
--- | --- | ---
DVSA stakeholders, programme leads and respondents to the “whole system” E-survey reported their belief that the partnerships have resulted in an increased number of victims engaging in ongoing support, and were able to provide examples of victims who had been engaged.

The DVSA partnership has resulted in improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.

The evaluation found evidence from a range of stakeholder groups that DVSA partnerships have resulted in improved experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.

For example, the majority of victims who were interviewed and DVSA stakeholders in all force areas using model A or B reported that the DVSA partnership has a positive impact on victim experience of and confidence in police and partner agencies’ response to domestic abuse incidents. 37

This was echoed by a minority of programme leads and corroborated by the “whole system” E-survey. In general, DVSA stakeholders reported that the DVSA partnership was more valuable in changing negative perceptions of police response than it was in changing perceptions of partner response.

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37 DVSA stakeholders in the force area using model C did not comment on this outcome area.
5.4.2 Scale

5.4.2.1 Offering support to victims at the scene and at the time of the reported incident or as soon as practicable afterwards

There is evidence from monitoring data and consultation with a range of stakeholders that the DVSA partnerships in all force areas have offered support to victims at the scene and at the time of the reported incident or as soon as practicable afterwards during the times that the partnership operated.

Numbers of victims offered support

Monitoring data summarised in Figure 38 shows that across the six forces the DVSA partnership offered direct support to victims in a total of at least 10,258 domestic abuse incidents since 2016\(^38\). Without the DVSA partnership, none of these victims would have been offered post-incident support in this way. These figures reflect the number of victims who were contacted, as opposed to the numbers of victims who accepted support, which is discussed in section 5.4.3.1.

Figure 38: Number of victims offered support in each force area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Total victims contacted</th>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Average victims contacted per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2,907</td>
<td>December 2016 - March 2019</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>January 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>September 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>September 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>November 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>April 2016 - February 2019</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2,356(^39)</td>
<td>January 2017 - December 2018</td>
<td>98(^39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,258</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{38}\) This represents an under-estimate because data on initial contacts was only available for four of five districts in one force area (Force F).

\(^{39}\) Data was only available for four of the five districts in this force area so the numbers of clients offered support is likely to be higher than this.
Numbers of victims offered support by different partnership models

If data for the force control room model (shaded in grey in Figure 38) is compared with data for the car model (shaded in light blue in Figure 38), this suggests that the force control room model enables a higher number of victims per month to be offered support. It is important to recognise, however, that other factors could have contributed to variation by force areas, such as the number of workers/cars employed, the level of demand in each area and the efficacy of implementation.

Timing of support in relation to the incident

DVSA stakeholders and programme leads described two main ways in which victims were identified to be offered support. These were:

- Being identified by first responders to an incident and flagged or tasked to a second response unit or specialist worker in the control room for a second response.
- Being identified by call handlers receiving the report of the incident and flagged to the specialist worker in the control room for phone contact, either in advance of the first response or following it (depending on the time at which the call was received, the first response time and the priority rating of the incident).

In model C a different method was used, because victims were referred to the Early Intervention Service as part of a secondary safeguarding response which was provided by staff in the DACJS worker role.40

DVSA stakeholders in all force areas using model A or B reported that contact was normally made to offer support either on the same day as the incident or the following day.41 The majority of victims who were interviewed for the evaluation corroborated this, reporting that they were offered support from the DVSA partnership on the day following the domestic abuse incident or within the following few days. Victims also indicated that police at the scene mentioned the service to them, suggesting that in these instances first responders were identifying that the victim might benefit from the service and flagging it up to them as an option for support.

In the majority of force areas which do not have a daily DVSA partnership service, stakeholders did point out that this meant that the support is only offered to victims who report incidents on days when the partnership is operating.

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40 An evaluation of this role is presented in chapter 6.
41 DVSA stakeholders in the force area using model C did not outline the time period within which support was offered.
5.4.2.2 Provision of opportunities for police officers/staff and providers of specialist domestic abuse support services to share learning and observe one another’s practice

There is evidence that DVSA partnerships delivered provided opportunities for police officers/staff and providers of specialist domestic abuse support services to share learning and observe one another’s practice. The evidence is mostly from consultation with DVSA stakeholders and programme leads, but there was also documentary evidence that these opportunities were deliberately built into the partnerships. In addition, monitoring data from one force area provided a snapshot of the partnership delivering shared learning opportunities.

Co-location with control rooms or in second response units themselves was described by DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in the majority of force areas as important in promoting shared learning opportunities. This was because police staff/officers and workers could observe one another’s practice and approach each other on an ad hoc basis for advice or clarification. A DVSA stakeholder provided an example:

“There have been a lot of new recruits in the force and now they have a better understanding of what services can be offered. This is likely to increase how well they engage with victims.”

Shared learning opportunities for police officers/staff

All three models of DVSA partnership delivery built in opportunities for shared learning for police officers/staff and DVSA stakeholders confirmed that this took place. The evidence was arguably strongest for model A, though specific examples of shared learning were provided in model B and, to a lesser extent, model C.

DVSA stakeholders in a minority of force areas reported that whilst many police officers and staff have been very receptive to the input of the specialist workers, some have proved resistant. This was especially the case when specialist workers challenged their judgement about a case. This provides an example of challenges of culture change which have also been evident in some of the other DAWSA projects, and which some of the projects aim to encourage.

Model A

In force areas using model A, DVSA stakeholders, programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that the learning opportunities for police officers staffing the response units were significant. Indeed, sharing knowledge on these visits to help police officers develop their understanding of the victim’s perspective was an explicit part of the support worker job role in one force area (although it is not known to what extent this occurred). The most common areas of learning were identified as:

- Gaining more knowledge about support services and civil orders which were available to victims.
• Learning new ways of engaging with victims through observing the skills of the specialist staff in their discussions with victims. As one police officer put it:

“**You learn how to speak with the victims – tone, pace, wording. It’s also knowing about what services are out there and what they can do… I’ve been on the DA car and then gone back to the victim the next day in uniform and been able to use my knowledge to get the right tone.”**

In the main, this learning was restricted to officers who were directly staffing the car but DVSA stakeholders reported that they had observed some evidence of some of the information and approaches filtering out more widely into teams where these officers were based. Stakeholders reported that there is a balance to be struck between drawing police officers from as wide a pool as possible in order for them to experience staffing the response unit, and restricting the pool to those officers who have experience, interest and skill and are therefore more able to provide a high-quality service to the victim.

**Model B**

DVSA stakeholders in force areas using model B identified individual examples of call handlers approaching the specialist worker for advice or information but noted that this is relatively infrequent. They reported that the incidence is increasing as the DVSA partnership becomes more embedded and that they expected it to increase further in the future. Monitoring data provided by one of the three force areas using model B indicates that the worker had indirect input into the police response (i.e. advised police colleagues) in 157 incidents between September 2018 and March 2019. Similar data was not available for the other force areas.

**Model C**

In the force area using model C, specialist workers were intended to “work closely with Police Domestic Abuse Officers and PCSOs both in terms of accessing referral suitability and carrying out home visits”42. Specialist workers reported that joint visits with the police provided useful opportunities to share learning but they did not indicate how frequently these visits took place as part of the DVSA partnership work.

**Shared learning opportunities for specialist workers**

Specialist workers involved in delivering DVSA partnerships also reported that their work in the partnership had enhanced their understanding of police processes. One specialist worker explained:

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42 Early Intervention Service Summary.
“I really see the potential of the role and how much this can make a difference to our experience and development. It’s good to see what happens at the beginning of the process and get an understanding.”

They also reported that it had changed their outlook on police attitudes and response to domestic abuse. They explained that working alongside police officers and staff had highlighted both the pressures they were under and the efforts made by the majority of staff and officers to provide a high-quality service to victims. They pointed out that their role in supporting and advocating for victims had understandably led their view of the police response to be influenced by victims’ accounts of their contact with police. One specialist worker stated:

“I now understand the challenges faced by police officers. Before it had all been filtered through the victims.”

5.4.3 Impact

5.4.3.1 Increased number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support

There was a wide range of evidence that the DVSA partnership has achieved its intended outcome of increasing the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support. Monitoring data provides information about the number of victims who engaged with support, and consultation with DVSA stakeholders, victims and programme leads confirmed that a reasonable proportion of victims accepted the support offered by the partnership, and also provided examples of the nature of the support on offer.

Numbers of victims engaging with support

Figure 39 shows that across five of the six force areas, the DVSA partnership resulted in at least 5,877 victims engaging with at-incident or post-incident safeguarding support43. Due to missing data on victims’ initial engagement in one force area, overall engagement rates across the DVSA partnership in all six force areas could not be calculated.

43 This represents an under-estimate because complete data on initial engagement was unavailable for one force area (Force F) and so any victims engaged in this force area are not included in the total.
Figure 39: Number of victims contacted and engaging with support under the DVSA partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Number contacted</th>
<th>Number engaging</th>
<th>Engagement rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>December 2016 - March 2019</td>
<td>2,907</td>
<td>2,907&lt;sup&gt;44&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>January 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>September 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>September 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>1511</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>November 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>April 2016 - February 2019</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Jan 2017 - Dec 2018</td>
<td>2,350&lt;sup&gt;45&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>unknown&lt;sup&gt;46&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,258</td>
<td>At least 5,877&lt;sup&gt;47&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst some of these victims may have already been engaged with support services or may have gone on to engage with services at a later date without this intervention, none of the victims would have received this specific element of support without the DVSA partnership.

The findings from the monitoring data analysis were confirmed by findings from consultation. All DVSA stakeholders and programme leads reported that the

<sup>44</sup> Force A reported that all the victims who were contacted by the DVSA partnership engaged during the initial contact. This provides a 100% engagement rate, which is at odds with the rates in the other force areas. It may be that this relates to particularly effective implementation in Force A. It may also be that Force A is conceptualising engagement differently to the other areas and using a lower threshold to determine this.

<sup>45</sup> Data was only available for four of the five districts in this force area so the numbers of clients offered support is likely to be higher than this.

<sup>46</sup> Engagement rates across the force area were not known. Whilst contact data was provided for four of five districts, engagement data was only provided for two of these districts. This data indicates that engagement rates across the two districts were 58% (780 clients contacted and 452 clients engaging with the first contact).

<sup>47</sup> Excluding Force F, for which complete data on initial engagement was not available.
DVSA partnership had resulted in an increased number of victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support.

All victims who were interviewed also reported that the contact from the DVSA partnership had resulted in them accepting the support offered during the home visit or by phone. This was echoed by senior stakeholders who commented on the activity. Figure 40 shows results from the “whole system” E-survey which also corroborates this finding. 71% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support had increased as a result of the DVSA partnership. Only 3% of respondents disagreed.

Figure 40: Key stakeholders’ agreement with the statements “The Domestic Abuse Support Cars and Control Room worker role have...? (see footnotes for n)"48

Engagement levels with different DVSA partnership models

A comparison of data for model B (shaded in grey in Figure 39 above) with data for model A (shaded in light blue in Figure 39 above) suggests that model A might result in higher engagement rates at initial contact.49 It is important to recognise, however, that other factors could have contributed to variation by force areas,

48 n= 161 (safety planning), n=160 (victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support), n=154 (perpetrator engagement) and n=165 (improved victim experience and confidence). Positive responses (in shades of purple) are to the right of 0 and negative responses (in shades of pink) are to the left of 0. Stronger shades of each colour indicate stronger agreement/disagreement in the responses (“strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”). Please note that neutral responses (“neither agree nor disagree”) are not shown in the graph, so the percentages shown do not total 100 for each bar.

49 Model C was not included in this comparison because it is only operating in one force area and therefore it is more difficult to determine whether differences in outcomes relate to the model or to local factors.
such as the number of workers/cars employed, the level of demand in each area and the efficacy of implementation.

In addition, data was unavailable on the overall initial engagement rate in one force area which is using the car model (Force F) and the reported 100% engagement rate in another force area using the car model (Force A) may have been calculated based on a lower threshold for determining engagement, which would skew the results in favour of the car model.

It was not possible to triangulate this finding with evidence from consultation because programme leads, senior stakeholders and DVSA stakeholders tended to be able to comment on the engagement benefits of the model used in their force area, but not to compare this with other models.

**Engaging victims who would not otherwise have accessed support**

DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas stated that the DVSA partnerships were of particular benefit because they are providing an effective means of engaging with victims who would not otherwise have accessed support. This was also highlighted by a minority of programme leads and senior stakeholders. Examples included victims who:

- Had reported an incident to the police for the first time.
- Had reported an incident which had been recorded as criminal damage or anti-social behaviour, rather than a domestic incident.
- Had not previously engaged with local services.

**Example from practice**

The MARAC chair in one force area explained:

“I am aware of two victims who were repeat referrals to MARAC, who have recently engaged with specialist workers and who had not done so previously. In both cases, this was where the specialist worker in the control room then took on their case after speaking with them [via the DVSA partnership contact].”

- Had been risk assessed as standard risk, and would therefore not be proactively contacted by other support services under existing safeguarding and referral pathways.
- Did not recognise that they were experiencing domestic abuse, or were experiencing less commonly-identified forms of abuse. Examples here included male victims, parents experiencing domestic abuse from their child, older couples where one partner had dementia and had become physically violent.
• Would only be likely to engage during home visits (model A only). Here, examples included victims experiencing multiple and complex needs and some victims from some BAME communities in which stakeholders reported that attending services outside of the home was not usually expected. This might also extend to victims of coercive control, if an element of this controlling behaviour involved monitoring or limiting movements.

Nature of support offered

The types of support offered by the specialist provider were broadly similar across all six force areas and were consistent across operating procedures and protocols. The same types of support were also outlined by both DVSA stakeholders in all force areas and the majority of victims who were interviewed. They included:

• Emotional support and a listening ear.
• Reassurance that the victim “did the right thing” in reporting the incident to the police, and affirmation that the police were taking the incident seriously.
• Safety planning and helping victims to find refuge places.
• Advice and guidance relating to a range of issues, such as:
  • Recognising abuse and the cycle of abuse.
  • Non-molestation, restraining, prohibited steps and occupation orders.
  • Bail conditions.
  • Family law.
  • Child contact, parental responsibility and custody rights.
  • Safeguarding responses and involvement of children’s services.
  • Housing.
  • Benefits.
• Checking that a client is already engaged with support services, and offering to update the service about the recent incident and the outcome of the conversation with the DVSA partnership.
• Signposting and onward referral to support services.
• Provision of equipment, such as safety phones or bags of toiletries for victims wishing to leave their home (model A only).
• Support with making statements (model A only).

Example from practice

One force area using model A shared feedback that had been collected from staff involved in delivering the DVSA partnership. One police officer offered a description of the support offered:
“The DA Support Car were able to obtain an additional statement from the suspect’s niece and complete remaining safeguarding. Lock change was requested, alarm fitted, housing referral and referral for continued support [from a domestic abuse service]. The victim was provided with a first-class service from officers and support agencies within 24 hours of report… Teamwork and results like this make it all worthwhile.”

The duration of support offered was primarily dictated by the victim’s wishes and needs. DVSA stakeholders reported that initial visits and phone calls could last from just a few minutes to up to 90 minutes. In a minority of force areas using model B it was reported that the specialist worker might also make a follow-up call after the initial call, if there was additional signposting or referral information to pass on to the victim. In most force areas, however, any follow-up support was offered by agencies to which the DVSA partnership referred the victim (usually the local domestic abuse service provider) or with which the victim was already engaging.

Factors promoting engagement with support

The majority of victims who took part in evaluation interviews reported that the reason they accepted at-incident or post-incident support was because they felt that they were being taken seriously by the specialist worker from the DVSA partnership service. A minority also reported that they felt they were taken seriously by the police officer who attended alongside the specialist worker. Victims also indicated that the timeliness of the initial contact, the skills of the specialist workers and/or police officers in building relationships, and the mode of initial contact were important factors in them accepting support. These elements are discussed in more detail in section 5.3.3.

5.4.3.2 Increased number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing specialist support

There was a range of qualitative evidence that the input of the DVSA partnership is encouraging victims to engage or re-engage in ongoing specialist support who would not have done so without the partnership, although engagement rates could not be determined from the monitoring data. Interviewed victims who have begun engaging with ongoing support since their contact with the DVSA partnership attributed this engagement to the information and the support they had received during contact with the DVSA partnership.

DVSA stakeholders, programme leads and respondents to the “whole system” E-survey reported their belief that the partnerships have resulted in an increased number of victims engaging in ongoing support, and were able to provide examples of victims who had been engaged.
Difficulties determining engagement rates

It was widely acknowledged that only a proportion of victims go on to engage with ongoing support but programme leads and DVSA stakeholders in the majority of force areas pointed out that they could not comment on the rates of ongoing engagement which were attributable to the DVSA partnership for a number of reasons:

- They did not have access to complete monitoring data on referral outcomes, which would require follow-up with all referral agencies to request and record data on engagement outcomes for victims who were referred.
- They could not know how many of the victims who were signposted to services, but did not wish to be referred directly by the DVSA partnership, had now engaged with services.
- They did not know the numbers of victims who would have come into contact, or re-engaged with services via some other means, even without the input of the DVSA partnership.

Victims engaging with ongoing support

Monitoring data summarised in Figure 41 shows that across five of the six force areas the DVSA partnership resulted in a minimum of 2,427 victims being referred for ongoing specialist support. This represents an under-estimate because incomplete data on referrals was provided by two force areas.

Although engagement rates are not known, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of these victims would not have been referred to and/or taken up specialist support without the actions of the DVSA partnership, or not until a later time.
**Figure 41: The number of domestic abuse victims referred to, and engaging with, ongoing specialist support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Number referred to ongoing specialist support</th>
<th>Number engaging</th>
<th>Engagement rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>December 2016 - March 2019</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>January 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>at least 150</td>
<td>at least 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>September 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>November 2018 - March 2019</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>April 2016 - February 2019</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>Jan 2017 - Dec 2018</td>
<td>172 in one district (others unknown)$^{50}$</td>
<td>84 in one district (others unknown)</td>
<td>49% in one district (others unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | **2,427**                     |                                               |                 |                          |

DVSA stakeholders in all force areas reported that they believed that the DVSA partnership had resulted in victims engaging with ongoing specialist support who may not have done so without contact from the DVSA partnership. Programme leads in most force areas were of the same opinion.

This was corroborated by the “whole system” E-survey, in which 67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the number of domestic abuse victims engaging in ongoing specialist support had increased as a result of the DVSA partnership and only 3% disagreed. This is shown in Figure 40 in section 5.4.3.1.

Evidence from evaluation interviews with victims confirmed that this was the case: 7 victims reported that they were now accessing ongoing support and had not been accessing this prior to contact with the DVSA partnership. The majority of these victims reported that they wouldn’t have engaged with these services if the DVSA partnership had not made contact at or post incident.

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$^{50}$ Data on onward referrals and engagement with specialist support was only available for one of the five districts in this force area.
Some DVSA stakeholders were able to provide examples of individual victims who had gone on to engage with ongoing support.

**Example from practice**

A specialist worker delivering the DVSA partnership called a victim who was pregnant and who described abuse which put her and her unborn child at high risk. She accepted a referral to the local domestic abuse service provider and is now engaging with ongoing support there.

Four victims reported that they were already accessing ongoing specialist support. In these instances, it was not particularly evident that victims were more engaged with this support because of the visit from the DVSA partnership.

However, DVSA stakeholders could identify examples of victims who had re-engaged with services after a period of non-engagement. One specialist worker stated:

“I went to a house once and then understood why someone was not engaging in the support she was already offered, and I was able to refer her to outreach. It helps with non-engagement.”

**Nature of services engaged with**

DVSA stakeholders identified a range of different types of service to which victims were referred and with which a proportion engaged. The most commonly-referenced referral option was specialist domestic abuse support services. Beyond this, referral and signposting options were determined by the specific needs and wishes of the victim. Indeed, victims who took part in interviews provided a number of examples of services they had engaged with, including: counselling services (although some victims were on waiting list for these); creative projects, such as dance or arts and crafts; information, advice and guidance services (such as Citizens Advice Bureaux); refuges; the Freedom Programme51.

**Factors supporting ongoing engagement**

**Information about services available**

DVSA stakeholders generally attributed ongoing engagement to the fact that the DVSA partnership informed victims about services about which they would not otherwise have known and made referrals to services if requested by the victim. As one DVSA stakeholder explained:

“A lot of victims feel trapped and like they can’t do anything. Services provide them with options.”

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51 See: [https://freedomprogramme.co.uk/](https://freedomprogramme.co.uk/) for more information. [Accessed 18 May 2019].
This was confirmed by victims who were interviewed; the majority of those who had engaged in ongoing support reported that without the input from the DVSA partnership staff, they would not have known that such support and services existed or how to access them. For example, one victim said:

“I didn't know where to turn or get help from. I was feeling very depressed and frightened.”

**Timeliness of support offer**

As with the initial contact from the DVSA partnership, victims also felt that the support was offered at a time when they needed it most and when they were most receptive to it, i.e. immediately after the domestic abuse incident, and that this also explained why they had chosen to engage. One victim reported that this was the overriding factor in their ongoing engagement with specialist support:

"I don't think I would have [accessed specialist services without a visit post-incident]. I would have just closed down. It was good to get support at that time."

**Engagement skills of specialist workers**

DVSA stakeholders also noted that the skills of the specialist worker in listening and talking to victims sometimes shifted victims’ perspectives positively on the value of getting support.

**Experience of ongoing support services**

Victims also highlighted a number of strengths that related to the ongoing specialist support, and which encouraged them to engage and remain engaged. This element is not directly attributable to the DVSA partnership but illustrates the value of high-quality services across the system in supporting engagement. These strengths included:

- A flexible and personal approach tailored to the victim’s needs.
- The availability of specialist workers (often the same one who made contact as part of the DVSA partnership response) as and when needed by victims.
- The range of support on offer and liaison between agencies.

This suggests that the knowledge of specialist workers about the other local services and support options was extensive, as victims felt a wide range of needs were being supported. (The nature of this support will be discussed in more detail in section 6.4.3.1.). Indeed, one victim said:

“Everything I needed was on offer. Every question I asked, she had an avenue that could achieve a positive outcome.”
Victims not engaging with ongoing support

As discussed above, it is not possible to determine ongoing engagement rates of victims who were supported by the DVSA partnership because of difficulties in collecting monitoring data on this outcome. However, for the two force areas which provided partial data on ongoing engagement, no more than half of victims were engaging with services to which they had been referred (at least 40% were engaging in Force B (under model A) and 49% were engaging in one district in Force F (also under model A)).

Of the victims who were interviewed, a minority (6) were not engaging with ongoing support. Half of these victims reported that they were not referred or signposted to further support by the DVSA partnership. These victims had been contacted by phone by a DVSA partnership using model B or C and reported that the contact was relatively brief. A small number of DVSA stakeholders did qualify these comments, however. They stated that victims’ readiness is a significant factor in them choosing to engage with services on an ongoing basis and that the single contact from the DVSA partnership could not necessarily move victims into a state of readiness.

Value of DVSA partnership contact alone

The majority of victims who were interviewed stated that the support offered during the contact from the DVSA partnership was of value in and of itself. DVSA stakeholders in all force areas also reported that even if victims did not engage with ongoing specialist support, the contact from the DVSA partnership could still have been valuable and impactful. This was partly because the advice and support provided during the contact itself might have enabled the victim to make any changes they wanted to make or access other information and support they needed (such as getting in touch with a family lawyer). It was also because the contact was an opportunity to make victims aware of options for support, which they might choose to access in the future.

5.4.3.3 Improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents

The evaluation found evidence from a range of stakeholder groups that DVSA partnerships have resulted in improved experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents. For example, the majority of victims who were interviewed and DVSA stakeholders in all force areas using model A or B reported that the DVSA partnership has a positive impact on victim experience of and confidence in police and partners agencies response to domestic abuse incidents52. This was echoed by a minority of programme leads and corroborated by the “whole system” E-survey, in which 70% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents had improved as a

52 DVSA stakeholders in the force area using model C did not comment on this outcome area.
result of the DVSA partnership. Only 3.5% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 40 in section 5.4.3.1.

In general, DVSA stakeholders reported that the DVSA partnership was more valuable in changing negative perceptions of police response than it was in changing perceptions of partner response.

Factors supporting improved experience and confidence

Most often, interviewed victims and DVSA stakeholders reported that this improved perception came from a sense that the police had taken their reporting of an incident seriously and had been able to offer a specialised response, and that the DVSA partnership staff had really listened to and understood them. One DVSA stakeholder phrased this as follows:

“It gives victims the sense that somebody cares. People feel that they have been taken seriously by the police and that the police can help them.”

This was a particularly strong theme in force areas which had used model A because a police officer was directly involved in the face-to-face contact with victims. One worker from a local support service stated:

“Young people feed back that they really value it. Having the non-uniformed officer coming through the door. They reported that they really like it.”

However, DVSA stakeholders in a minority of force areas also pointed out that specialist workers could use their increased understanding of the police response (gained through working on the DVSA partnership) to explain this response to victims, which also helped to tackle misunderstanding and negative perceptions of police response.

Several victims who were interviewed emphasised the difference between the communication and support from the DVSA staff and previous contacts they had had with the police. For example, one victim reported:

“The specialist worker talked to me and sat down. Police officers have stood with their notebook as if they want to go. I knew he was there supporting me. I could open up.”

They also outlined three other factors which led to their improved perceptions of police response, which were:

- Helpful emotional and practical advice and support offered.
- Follow-up action/support that they received.
- The DVSA partnership provide a discreet response to decrease risk (e.g. an unmarked car parking across the road so as not to alert the perpetrator that the victim was being offered support).
In relation to perceptions of partner response, the majority of victims who were interviewed had a positive perception of partner agencies for the reasons outlined in sections 5.4.3.1 and 5.4.3.2. For victims who had already engaged with services, it was not always clear whether the DVSA partnership had improved this perception or whether it was already as positive.

**Factors inhibiting improved experience and confidence**

The majority of victims who were interviewed were satisfied with the response they received from police officers involved in the DVSA partnership itself. However, a minority of victims reported that their experiences of the police response outside of the DVSA partnership meant that they continued to lack confidence in the police’s ability to respond to domestic abuse incidents. Examples of these experiences were:

- Police officers not taking them seriously in the initial response to an incident (prior to the DVSA partnership visit or call).
- Police action during the subsequent investigation being viewed as poor, e.g. when the case was dropped against a perpetrator and not explained to the victim.
- Previous negative experiences with police officers.

This suggests that the DVSA partnership can have a positive impact on victims' perceptions of police response, but that this might be limited to their perceptions of specialist responses unless police officers/staff involved in first response or investigative work can also be supported to communicate and engage as effectively as possible with victims.

It is also notable that in the minority of cases where interviewed victims said they did not have improved experience or confidence in the police, most victims had been contacted by a specialist worker only, rather than alongside a police officer. This suggests that victims do not perceive the specialist input as connected to police response when contacted by the specialist worker separately, and that a joint response may have more of an impact on victims’ perceptions of the police.

A minority of victims who were interviewed reported that there had been a lack of follow up from police and/or the DVSA partnership services.

When discussing perceptions of partner responses, a minority of victims reported that their perceptions had been negatively affected by incidents where they had felt let down by a service. These tended to be issues related to contact with services outside of the DVSA partnership. As with police response, this suggests that the ability of the DVSA partnership to positively impact on victims’ perceptions of support may be limited unless victims’ experiences of other services are equally positive.
5.4.3.4 Increased victim safety and wellbeing

This outcome area was not included within the evaluation framework but is discussed here because the qualitative consultation conducted as part of the evaluation suggested that DVSA partnerships are have a positive impact on victim safety and wellbeing.

Almost all of the victims who were interviewed reported feeling safer as a result of the support they received, both from the DVSA partnership services, and from the support they accessed subsequently as a result. In addition, the majority of victims interviewed felt that they had increased independence and freedom as a result of the support they received and almost all victims reported feeling respected and listened to. For example, one victim said of the DVSA partnership response:

“I felt reassured and safe…Nothing like it had ever happened to me before, but I would know [if it happened again] it would be dealt with and listened to.”

DVSA stakeholders in all force areas reported that the DVSA partnership had a positive impact on victims’ safety and wellbeing. They identified three ways in which safety and wellbeing was increased, which were aligned with reports from victims about their improved safety and wellbeing. These were:

• The advice and guidance offered by the specialist worker improved victims’ safety and wellbeing. For example, safety planning advice, home safety improvements, emotional support and information about their rights and options ensured that victims felt heard and understood, were aware of their choices and understood ways to maximise their safety.

• Onward referral and multi-agency work that was completed as a result of the discussion with the victim contributed to safeguarding the victim and ensuring that they had the option of further support to improve their wellbeing. Examples included referral or updates to MARAC, to local domestic abuse service providers and other types of support service.

Almost all victims who had engaged with ongoing support reported their sense that improvements in their safety and wellbeing would last in the long term. For example, a majority of victims who were interviewed reported that they were more cautious when entering into relationships, more resilient, and more understanding of what unacceptable behaviour looks like. Some victims also reported having a specialist worker to contact and feeling that they are not alone have also contributed to long-term improvements in safety and wellbeing.

• Reviewing risk assessments enabled specialist workers to re-assess the risk in light of their additional expertise and of information disclosed by the victim during their conversation with the specialist worker. DVSA stakeholders in all force areas using model A or B provided examples where they identified higher risk levels for victims. As one police officer explained:
“Coming in in no uniform is better. We certainly found that we were taking a backseat to keep it more informal. They definitely disclose a lot more than they do when you go out in the first response car”.

They reported that this enabled them to update police systems with more accurate information to inform future safeguarding and investigation. In force areas using model B, this also sometimes impacted on the speed of first response from the police; specialist workers could speak to team managers to ask them to alter the priority rating of victims who had not yet received a first response from police officers (such as when victims had been offered an appointment with police officers), resulting in officers being dispatched sooner.

Examples from practice

A specialist worker delivering the DVSA partnership in one force area called a victim who had been assessed as low risk and therefore given a low priority response from the police. She was therefore awaiting a first response from the police to discuss the incident. During the call with the specialist worker she disclosed additional details about the domestic abuse and was subsequently re-assessed as being at high risk. She was referred to MARAC and was thus the focus of multi-agency discussion to plan safeguarding and support.

A specialist worker delivering the DVSA partnership in one force area called a victim who was already known to her as she had been accessing local support services. The victim was additionally vulnerable because she had learning difficulties and mental health issues. During the phone call with the specialist worker, the victim disclosed that a number of men were staying at her property and described circumstances which suggested she was being exploited. The specialist worker was able to log this and raise it with the control room team manager so that police response could be escalated.

In addition to these three factors, a minority of victims who were interviewed also reported that action taken against the perpetrator of domestic abuse had improved their safety and wellbeing. This suggests that victims feel both support for them and action against the perpetrator is necessary to effect long-term improvements in their safety and wellbeing.

5.4.4 Longer-term outcomes

The intended longer-term outcomes of the DVSA partnership, which were unlikely to be achieved within the programme funding period were identified by stakeholders to include:

- Reduced numbers of domestic abuse cases that result in no further action due to evidential difficulties or poor victim engagement.
- Reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse.
It is unlikely that the DVSA partnerships alone would lead to the achievement of these intended outcomes, but it might be one of a number of factors which could contribute to improvements in these outcome areas. This was recognised by key stakeholders. For example, in one force area the introduction of the DVSA partnership coincided with increased use of body-worn cameras by responding officers and this may also have had a positive impact on evidence-gathering and case building, and therefore on case outcomes.

**Reduced number of domestic abuse cases resulting in no further action**

There is some evidence that DVSA partnerships are contributing to progress towards this outcome for victims who are supported by the partnership, though at this stage there is no conclusive evidence that this outcome will be achieved or will be attributable to the DVSA partnership alone.

A key first step in progression towards this outcome is improvements in victims' ongoing engagement with the police. DVSA stakeholders and half of programme leads identified that increased engagement with the police was a knock-on effect of victims’ improved perception of police response (which is discussed in section 5.4.3.3).

For example, DVSA stakeholders provided examples of victims they had contacted who had outlined plans not to engage further with the police about the incident they had reported, but who had then agreed to follow-up contact from the police after they had finished speaking with the specialist worker or police officer as part of the DVSA partnership contact. There were also examples of victims who had disclosed further abuse during a visit from a second response unit and agreed to provide a statement to the officer staffing the partnership.

However, this was not observed across the board and a minority of senior stakeholders and DVSA stakeholders in a number of force areas – particularly police officers – reported examples where initial engagement with the DVSA partnership was positive but this had no impact on encouraging victims to provide a statement or otherwise support an investigation.

Following improved engagement with the police, the next step in reducing the number of domestic abuse cases resulting in no further action would be victims providing evidence and supporting a prosecution. One force area provided a case study example which illustrated that an evidence-led prosecution had been pursued as a consequence of evidence gathered via Body Worn camera during a visit by the DVSA partnership, and had resulted in conviction. This related to a victim with multiple and complex needs who was subject to MARAC and who had been a victim in 26 previous incidents reported to the police, none of which had resulted in a conviction.

The same force area shared locally collected monitoring data which indicates that no further action outcomes on domestic crimes were lower for crimes that had been attended by the DVSA partnership than for all crimes. This could indicate that support from the DVSA partnership increases the likelihood of victims engaging in police investigations.
Figure 42 presents this data, which summarises the outcomes of all domestic incidents and the outcomes of those attended by the DVSA partnership (using model A) over two separate time periods. In both time periods the proportion of domestic crimes resulting in any no further action outcome and no further action due to the victim not supporting police action (outcome 16) were lower for crimes that had been attended by the DVSA partnership than for all crimes. Between 1 January and 30 September 2017, they were around 10% lower and between 1 January and 30 June 2018 they were around 4-5% lower.

On the basis of this data, a causal connection cannot be made between the DVSA partnership input and the lower proportions of no further action cases because there are wide-ranging factors which could have affected the outcome. In addition, there is a large discrepancy in sample size because the numbers of incidents with DVSA contact are small in relation to the total number of incidents.

It will be important to monitor these outcomes on an ongoing basis in order to determine whether there is a trend of lower no further action outcomes in cases where there was DVSA contact.

*Figure 42: Comparison of no further action outcomes for domestic incidents which are crimed – all incidents vs incidents with DVSA contact (Force F)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All incidents</th>
<th>Incidents with DVSA contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time period: 1 January 2017 – 30 September 2017</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total crimes</td>
<td>33,099</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no further action (Outcomes 9-21)</td>
<td>21,050</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no further action due to victim not supporting police action (Outcome 16)</td>
<td>12,523</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time period: 1 January 2018 – 30 June 2018</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total crimes</td>
<td>24,908</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no further action (Outcomes 9-21)</td>
<td>16,078</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse

At this stage and on the basis of the data available to the evaluation it is not possible to comment on progress towards this outcome. As recognised by programme leads and senior stakeholders, a longer follow-up period would be required after victims have been supported by the partnership in order to ascertain whether:

- Victims have been involved in further incidents of domestic abuse.
- Those victims who have been involved in further incidents have been involved in fewer incidents than they were in a comparable time period prior to their contact with the DVSA partnership.
- Those victims who have been involved in further incidents have been involved in incidents of greater or lesser severity than the incidents prior to their contact with the DVSA partnership.

Collecting and reviewing data on these indicators on an ongoing basis should enable force areas to consider any changes in victims’ reported experience of domestic abuse, and to examine any changes in numbers or proportions of repeat victims.

#### 5.4.5 Variations in impact

There is more evidence of variations in impact across the DVSA partnerships in different force areas than for most of the other projects delivered under DAWSA. This evidence was mostly qualitative in nature and related to possible differences in impact of the different models used to deliver the partnerships, and specifically to differences between model A and model B. It by no means provides conclusive evidence that one model is more impactful than another but indicates that stakeholders in individual force areas believed that one model was likely to be more impactful than another in their local context. One senior stakeholder explained this as follows:

> “I think the thing about this is that each force will have implemented a model based on what already exists, the structures, and the demand. The benefit is we’ve taken the themes and the idea and been able to adapt and modify to our local approach.”
It is important to note that any potential differences in impact or likely future impact may also be attributable to the scale or efficacy of implementation of the DVSA partnership in specific force areas, rather than to the delivery model used.

In general, stakeholders in force areas using model A reported that they selected it because they believed that face-to-face contact with victims would promote higher levels of engagement and impact more positively on perceptions of police response. They also reported that joint working on a response unit was thought to provide greater opportunities for shared learning between police officers and specialist domestic abuse support workers. These beliefs were borne out by the qualitative consultation conducted as part of the evaluation, but monitoring data was not available to conclusively establish the improved engagement outcomes under model A.

Stakeholders in force areas using model B reported that this was because the size or rurality of their geographical area precluded coverage using model A, and because they believed that a control room model would enable earlier intervention for lower risk cases (where victims could be contacted prior to first response) and facilitate contact with a larger number of victims for less resource. This latter reason was borne out in the analysis of monitoring data across the force areas and models, discussed in section 5.4.2.1.

All DVSA stakeholders in force areas using model B reported that they thought the partnership should continue using this model, whereas a minority of DVSA stakeholders in areas using model A stated their belief that it would be more efficient and impactful to switch to delivery using model B, or to introduce a hybrid model involving a force control room worker and a second response unit. This was because they believed that it would be possible to provide support to a greater number of victims using model B.

5.5 Sustainability

Sustainability plans and consultation with programme leads showed that four of the six force areas had continuation funding in place to continue the DVSA partnership in some form.

In one force area the DVSA partnership has been mainstreamed and will continue as business as usual. This force area uses model A, the second response unit in a car.

Three force areas have secured a 12-month funding extension for their DVSA partnership. This was to allow time for the partnership to become more embedded and to enable outcomes to be monitored to determine its effectiveness prior to decisions on mainstreaming or longer-term funding. Two force areas are using model B, a worker in the Force Control Room, and one force area is using model A, the second response unit in a car.

A fifth force area also has arrangements in place to continue specialist contact with domestic abuse victims who have reported an incident to the police. However, this does not use a DVSA partnership model because it is incorporated
into the victim services response rather than forming part of the police response. Early intervention work has been included in newly configured and jointly commissioned domestic abuse services from 2019-20.

One force area is awaiting the findings of this evaluation prior to making a decision on continuation funding. If the DVSA partnership is sustained, it would be mainstreamed via the OPCC victim services commissioning. This area used model B, a worker in the Force Control Room.

One force area using model A was exploring ways of reducing delivery costs, such staffing the response unit with special constables rather than paid police officers.

5.6 Learning

5.6.1 Alignment with good practice principles

The DVSA partnership aligns with three of the principles of good practice identified within the literature on whole system approaches to domestic abuse. These are:

- **Principle 4: Tailor specialist advice, advocacy and support for different groups and individuals.** The DVSA partnership is an example of a specialist service providing advice, advocacy and support tailored to individual victims who report a domestic abuse incident to the police. Consultation with stakeholders suggests it may have particular benefits for victims who would not otherwise engage with services, including (in the case of the car model) victims who would only engage in their own homes.

- **Principle 5: Facilitate multi-agency partnership working to provide services.** The DVSA partnership is an example of a partnership between specialist domestic abuse support providers and the police, in order to provide a service to victims and encourage them to engage with other services as needed.

- **Principle 6: Facilitate the disclosure of abuse and ensure staff respond appropriately.** Consultation with stakeholders highlighted that victims commonly disclosed further abuse to the specialist domestic abuse support workers during their visits or follow-up calls, or provided more details about the incident which had initiated contact from the DVSA partnership. In addition, the expertise of the specialist domestic abuse support workers increased the effectiveness of the response to disclosures.

5.6.2 Added value

DVSA stakeholders, programme leads and senior stakeholders consistently reported that the DVSA partnership added value, when compared to previous provision. They pointed to the partnership’s promotion of earlier intervention and joint working between police and partners, as well as positive feedback from victims and the early outcomes that they believed the partnerships were
delivering for victim safeguarding, engagement and perceptions of police and partner response to domestic abuse. However, they were also cautious about over-stating the impact of the partnerships, recognising that it is too early in their implementation in most force areas to make judgements about their impact on victim engagement with police investigations or levels of repeat victimisation.

In addition, DVSA stakeholders and programme leads in a majority of force areas stated that the approaches developed to fill downtime ensured that the DVSA partnerships were using their capacity and had added unexpected value by enabling the DVSA partnership to be used for risk assessment, engagement and safeguarding activity which was not originally envisaged within the models.

DVSA stakeholders also reported that the introduction of the partnership was reducing the workload of police officers and staff, or had the capacity to do so in the future. This was mainly because specialist workers (in all models) and police officers (in model A) delivering the partnership contacts were able to identify and act upon safeguarding concerns or early investigative opportunities which would otherwise have fallen to secondary safeguarding teams within the police, or to officers in investigation teams.

5.6.3 Identification and sharing of good practice

There is evidence of the early impact of the DVSA partnerships and the majority of force areas are planning to continue with a partnership under model A or B, suggesting that both models are viewed as deliverable and impactful in these force areas. Therefore, other force areas who are interested in developing a DVSA partnership might wish to consider transferring and localising one of these two models. In addition, operating procedures and processes developed within the force areas involved in DAWSA could potentially act as templates to be localised by other force areas.

It is important to note, however, that the longer-term application and outcomes of these models have not been fully established within the DAWSA funding period. As such, they constitute emerging good practice rather than good practice for which the evidence base is confirmed.
Spread to other areas

Alongside the force areas discussed above, work was ongoing (as at February 2019) to explore opportunities to place an IDVA in the South Yorkshire Police control room.

In addition, a total of £6,280 of funding from DAWSA was granted to South Yorkshire police for provision of additional IDVAs in DVSA Partnerships over the Christmas and Valentine’s Day periods in December 2018 and February 2019. Over Christmas 2018, this resulted in:

- In Barnsley, 21 additional clients supported and 4 high risk clients identified and referred to IDVA support.
- In Sheffield, 7 high-risk joint visits and 2 engagements with medium-risk victims.
- In Rotherham, 11 victims engaged, including people who were initially reluctant to engage with police, and direct support provided such as rehousing and providing enhanced safeguarding.

The outputs of the Valentine’s Day provision were not yet available at the time of reporting.

5.6.4 Lessons for future development and implementation

Figure 43 summarises the recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the DVSA partnerships. These may be of use in the future development and implementation of work to increase the efficacy of responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of DAWSA in the future.
### Figure 43: Recommendations for DVSA partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5      | **Balancing regional consistency and local flexibility.** Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. | Force areas often reported that local flexibility was required but there is a tension between this and programmes designed to replicate and test interventions across multiple sites. Reviewing the balance between these two elements might enable solutions which:  
• Promote the consistent development and application of good practice.  
• Enable robust evaluation of innovative practice to develop an improved evidence base.  
Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the wide range of local contexts and structures into which they might be introduced. | 5.3.6 |
<p>| 8      | <strong>Early involvement of operational stakeholders.</strong> Operational leads and staff should be involved in discussions when planning set-up and developing protocols and procedures for the DVSA partnership. | Including operational leads and staff at this stage could help to smooth the process of introducing the partnership by ensuring that its planned operation is feasible and acceptable to the staff who will be delivering it. | 5.3.4 |
| 9      | <strong>Planning for downtime.</strong> If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with the DVSA partnership should | As the DVSA partnerships deliver real-time responses to domestic abuse incidents and rely on incidents being flagged by first responders, they may experience | 5.3.6 |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Continuing promotion of the partnerships.</strong> If they have not already done so, force areas should develop an ongoing communications plan in relation to the DVSA partnership. In particular, this should cover communications activity within the force but it might also be beneficial to cover communications activity with external partners which might be involved in multi-agency work with the partnership.</td>
<td>DVSA stakeholders and programme leads reported that further promotional work is required to ensure that police officers and staff across the force are aware of the DVSA partnership, its function and its potential to engage and support victims of domestic abuse.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing staffing arrangements for specialist providers.</strong> In force areas where the DVSA service is commissioned from or staffed by workers from local domestic abuse service providers, providers, force and OPCC leads for the DVSA partnership should review staffing arrangements for providers to determine whether these are sustainable.</td>
<td>There was some evidence to suggest that in some force areas providers’ staffing arrangements for the partnership may not be sustainable in the longer-term because they rely on specialist workers taking on additional shifts on top of their day-to-day work. A review of these arrangements would determine whether they are suitable to support ongoing provision of the DVSA partnership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Evidence-led decision-making on performance. If they have not already done so, force areas which are continuing with a DVSA partnership should allocate responsibility and expected timescales for regular review of demand and performance of the DVSA partnership.</td>
<td>Regular review of demand and performance could support evidence-led decision-making on any improvements to the partnership.</td>
<td>5.3.6</td>
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6 Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice System (DACJS) workers

6.1 Overview

The DACJS worker role involves the introduction of a specialist domestic abuse worker to work alongside police officers and staff. The primary aim of the role is to enable police teams to better understand and meet the needs of domestic abuse victims. The workers undertake a range of tasks in different force areas, which encapsulate some or all of the following elements:

- Facilitating joint safeguarding work.
- Increasing support, referral and engagement of victims, perpetrators and their families.
- Enhancing evidence gathering.
- Improving staff knowledge.

The purpose of this activity was to introduce a DACJS worker role in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA, or to continue delivery of existing roles.

6.2 Key findings

6.2.1 Progress in implementation

- DACJS workers were introduced into all force areas, or existing roles were maintained, during the DAWSA funding period.
- The DACJS workers supported police officers through joint safeguarding work and also delivered safeguarding and support work independently of police officers.
- The DACJS workers were involved in the MATAC and perpetrator engagement process to some extent in all force areas. However, in most areas this involvement was a fairly recent development in a role that had initially focused on victims and was therefore still relatively limited at this stage.

6.2.2 Overview of implementation and impact

Figure 44 summarises the key evaluation findings relating to the implementation and impact of the DACJS worker role.
Figure 44: Overview of key findings for DACJS workers

**Strengths**

- The role illustrates the benefits of injecting specialist input into police teams.
- The independence, knowledge and expertise of the workers was seen to facilitate victims' engagement with the workers and to contribute to higher-quality safeguarding responses.
- The integration of DACJS workers into police teams, or their co-location with these teams, enabled them to build relationships with police officers and understand gaps in the system. It also promoted shared learning opportunities.
- Support from the role was well-utilised by police officers and staff, once it was embedded.
- DACJS workers were able to increase the focus on multi-agency working within police responses for victims of domestic abuse.
- The role reduced the workload of police officers and staff by taking on tasks which otherwise would have been completed by police officers and staff.

**Challenges**

- There were delays in recruiting to the role in some force areas, which were linked to the short-term nature of the initial funding, delayed decisions on the second tranche of funding, and the slow pace of HR processes.
- Initial and ongoing promotion of the role to police officers and staff proved to be challenging due to the volume of staff who needed to be made aware and to initial scepticism amongst some police officers about the benefits of the role.
- Force areas experienced a variety of different challenges when planning and introducing work with perpetrators within the role, including balancing work with perpetrators and work with victims.
- The potentially demanding nature of working with victims and perpetrators is an inherent challenge in roles involving supporting and engaging them.

**Areas for development**

- In most force areas, it would be useful to consider increasing the involvement of DACJS workers in work with perpetrators, or developing parallel roles focused on work with perpetrators.
- Increasing the focus on training and upskilling police officers would build on a valuable element of this role.
- It may be useful to further localise the DACJS worker roles to districts, to reflect local gaps, structures and referral pathways.
- The involvement of DACJS workers in preparing and presenting DVPNs and DVPOs, and in supporting victims during the period covered by a DVPO, has been a successful element of the role in some force areas. Other force areas may wish to consider replicating this.
- It is important to clearly articulate the ways in which the DACJS worker role relates to other services and interventions, in order to avoid duplication and maximise efficiency.

**Outcomes**

- Evidence from consultation indicates that the DACJS worker role has improved the quality of safety planning for victims of domestic abuse in all force areas into which it was introduced, and has also had a positive impact on investigation planning. This also led to improvements in victims' safety and wellbeing.
- There is also evidence that the DACJS worker role increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting safeguarding input and support after an incident was reported to the police.
- Evidence from consultation also suggests that DACJS workers have improved victims' perceptions of police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.
- The perpetrator engagement element of the DACJS worker role was less well-developed in most force areas than the victim support and safeguarding elements and so was less impactful at this stage. However, there is evidence from consultation that the DACJS worker role was beginning to impact positively on perpetrator engagement in the force area where this aspect of the role was most developed.
6.3 Implementation

6.3.1 Variations in implementation

All participating force areas used the same overarching model to deliver the DACJS worker role. However, there were key local differences in:

- Whether the role pre-dated the programme funding period.
- Where in the system the role was introduced, and which police teams worked alongside the role.

Figure 45 summarises the approaches to implementation and the key milestones achieved in the six different force areas.
Figure 45: Implementation of DACJS worker role in the six force areas

<table>
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<th>Force area</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA 53</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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</table>
| Force A    | 2014: 1 area command | £120,950 | • Two workers were in place (one per area command). They were commissioned from two local victims’ services providers.  
• Two workers were based alongside neighbourhood policing teams; one worker was based in a custody suite.  
• The role included:  
  • Supporting police officers with victim safety plans and harm reduction plans (and, in one area command, DVPNs).  
  • Direct contact with victims to review risk assessment and offer safety planning, advice and signposting.  
  • Direct contact to engage perpetrators who were subject to MATAC and/or who were in custody.  
  • Promoting multi-agency working and providing relevant updates to the police in relation to victims and perpetrators.  
  • Input into police training and CPD.  
  • Coordinating the DVSA partnership activity.  
  • Workers had input into safety planning in a total of 107 cases involving 111 individuals, between July 2018 and March 2019.  
  • 44 perpetrators were engaged with while in custody, and workers engaged with over 100 perpetrators identified through MATAC. |

53 Expenditure reported in financial expenditure reports 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.
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<th>Force area</th>
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<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£66,303</td>
<td>- Funding has been identified to continue this role for a further 12 months, with plans to review the findings of this evaluation before a longer-term funding decision is made.</td>
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| Force B    | March 2018     |                  | - One worker was in place, who was seconded from a local domestic abuse service provider.  
- The worker was based in the prisoner handling team in custody, working between this team and the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) team.  
- It was originally anticipated that the role would focus on work with perpetrators but this proved challenging to set up and the role therefore ultimately focused more on work with victims.  
- The role included:
  - Reviewing cases in the custody suite to confirm or alter the initial risk assessment, and liaising with the PVP team as required.
  - Supporting police officers with victim safety plans and police protection notices.
  - Direct contact with victims in medium and standard risk cases to review risk assessment, offer safety planning, advice and signposting, and encourage engagement with the police.
  - Limited direct contact to engage or intervene with perpetrators who are in custody.
  - Input into police training and CPD.
  - Coordinating and monitoring the DVSA partnership activity.
- 80 victims were supported with safety planning between October 2018 and March 2019.  
- Funding has been identified to continue this role for a further 12 months, to enable monitoring of its effectiveness before a longer-term funding decision is made. |
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<th>Force area</th>
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| Force C    | 2017            | £66,303          | - Four workers were in place. They were recruited directly to the force, from backgrounds in policing or support provision.  
- The workers were based in neighbourhood policing teams, with strong links into MASH and safeguarding teams.  
- The role included:  
  - Direct contact with medium risk victims or victims who are connected to multiple incidents, to review risk assessment, offer safety planning, advice, signposting and support and encourage engagement with the police. Victims are identified from the previous day’s Prisoner Handling Team cases or via MASH or threat and risk meetings.  
  - Joint working with neighbourhood policing teams to engage and support victims and perpetrators.  
  - Supporting police officers with Clare’s Law applications and DVPNs, though this support is relatively infrequent.  
  - Limited direct contact to engage perpetrators who are subject to MATAC.  
  - Promoting multi-agency working and providing relevant updates to police officers in relation to victims and perpetrators.  
- A total of 5,250 victims were supported with safety planning between the start of the activity in 2017 and March 2019.  
- The role is now embedded in business as usual. |
| Force D    | May 2018        | £108,355         | - Two workers were in place. They were recruited directly to the force, from backgrounds in domestic abuse and safeguarding work.  
- Workers were based in investigation teams. |
The role included:

- Supporting police officers with DVPNs.
- Presenting DVPNs at court (as a reserve for the usual presentation officer, whose role was also funded by DAWSA during the programme funding period).
- Input into police training and CPD.
- Direct contact with victims who are connected to an ongoing investigation or where the perpetrator is in custody, to offer advice and signposting, and encourage engagement with the police.
- Supporting police officers with investigation plans.
- Attending MATAC and working with investigation teams to support the investigation of perpetrators subject to MATAC.
- Promoting multi-agency working and providing relevant updates to police officers in relation to victims and perpetrators.
- Providing guidance and training to officers.

- 672 victims were supported with safety planning between May 2018 and March 2019.
- The workers provided input/support to more than 500 investigations between May 2018 and March 2019.
- Success rates at court for DVPN applications rose to 95% (although the base rate is not known).
- Funding has been identified to continue this role for a further 9 months, during which time it is hoped that a sustainable model utilising existing resources within the PVP team will be developed.
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| Force E    | Introduced prior to start of DAWSA. Precise dates not provided but DAO role in place since approx. 2004. | £214,679 | • 10 workers (Domestic Abuse Officers (DAOs)) were in place. They were already in post, having been previously recruited directly to the force.  
• The DAOs are supervised by 4 Domestic Abuse Coordinators (DACs) and operate as a stand-alone team within the police. They cover different geographical areas.  
• The DAO role included:  
  • Reviewing initial risk assessments and safeguarding responses following an incident, to confirm or alter the initial risk assessment and provide a secondary safeguarding response.  
  • Direct contact with victims as a second response following a reported incident, to review risk assessment, offer safety planning, advice, signposting and support, and encourage engagement with the police. This includes telephone and face-to-face contact with an aim to conduct face-to-face visits with high risk victims and joint visits with children’s services in cases involving children.  
  • In some areas, direct contact to engage perpetrators.  
  • Promoting multi-agency working and providing relevant updates to police officers in relation to victims and perpetrators.  
  • Some input into police training and CPD (with more input being provided by DACs).  
• A court presentation officer role was also introduced during the programme funding period.  
• DAOs reviewed over 11,000 incidents between April 2016 and Sept 2018. Data from Oct 2018-19 was not available as the remit of incidents/crimes reviewed changed at this time.  
• The role was already embedded in business as usual prior to the programme funding period but during the programme funding period some changes were made to structures |
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<th>Force area</th>
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<th>Funding by DAWSA£33</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>£30,000</td>
<td>and role profiles, including altering the portfolios of DACs to base them on themes rather than geography; and plans for one DAO to take on a court presentation role to assist with the progression of DVPNs and other domestic abuse related orders.</td>
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- One worker was in place, who was seconded from a local domestic abuse service provider.
- The worker was primarily based in an existing DVPO team with strong links into MARAC, MASH, IOM and local support providers.
- The role included:
  - Direct contact with victims when a DVPN is issued to the perpetrator, to review risk assessment, offer safety planning, advice, signposting and support, and encourage engagement with the police.
  - Supporting case workers in the DVPO team to prepare for court presentation (e.g. by liaising with the victim and other agencies to gather supporting evidence).
  - Input into police training and CPD, and training for other agencies.
  - Promoting multi-agency working and providing relevant updates to police officers and systems in relation to victims and perpetrators.
- The worker directly supported 145 victims between August 2018 and April 2019. They also provided indirect support for 16 cases (e.g. liaising with partner agencies to coordinate contact and support for the victims).
- Case studies provided in the monitoring data showed a positive impact on victim engagement with DVPOs and support services and subsequent reductions in risk.
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<th>Force area</th>
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<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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- The worker also produced a report setting out the types of interventions that had been effective for victims and changes to the system, and proposing further changes to embed the service.
- Funding has been identified to continue this role for a further 6 months, with plans under consideration to extend for a further 6 months until March 2020. By this time, a full review of the DVPO team will have been completed and will inform a longer-term funding decision.
6.3.2 Stages of implementation

Figure 46 summarises the main stages in implementing the DACJS worker role, which are described in further detail below. These stages apply to force areas which introduced the role as part of DAWSA (rather than those where the role was a longstanding one).

Figure 46: Stages of implementation of DACJS worker role

Step 1: Determine where to position the role

Different force areas positioned the role in different parts of the system. This included attaching workers to safeguarding teams, neighbourhood policing teams, prisoner handling teams, investigation teams and DVPO teams.

Step 2: Develop role description

Role descriptions were developed. These all included a focus on joint working with police officers to improve responses for victims of domestic abuse. In some force areas, they also included work relating to perpetrators.

Step 3: Recruit to the role

All forces successfully recruited staff to the role. There were between one and four workers filling the role in each force area.

Step 4: Begin delivering the role

The DACJS workers commenced in post. They tended to cover normal working hours, though a number of DACJS stakeholders highlighted that they could work flexibly if earlier morning or later evening work was required. DACJS workers who took a role in preparing and/or presenting DVPO applications often started earlier to enable them to review and respond to the day’s court schedule as needed.
Step 5: Promote the role to police officers, staff and partner agencies

Communications and promotional work were undertaken with police officers and other police staff who would be working alongside the role. In addition, the role was promoted to other local services which might work in partnership with DACJS workers.

6.3.3 Strengths in implementation

Specialist input into police teams

The DACJS worker role offered an opportunity to introduce additional specialist input into police teams. This was introduced into different parts of the system in different force areas. For example, workers in individual force areas were attached to safeguarding teams, neighbourhood policing teams, prisoner handling teams, investigation teams and DVPO teams. Wherever the role was introduced, it was recognised by DVSA stakeholders and programme leads as injecting additional specialism into the police response to domestic abuse.

This appeared to be particularly important when the role was primarily based alongside teams which necessarily need to be generalist in nature because they are dealing with a wide range of offences (such as neighbourhood policing teams or prisoner handling teams).

Knowledge and expertise of DACJS workers

The specialist skills and knowledge of the staff in the DACJS worker role were a key strength of the project. These included empathy, active listening and other skills in engaging victims, knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and the range of safeguarding and support responses available, knowledge of the local service landscape and referral pathways, and relationships with other services in order to facilitate referrals and multi-agency working. They also included an ability to review the history and context of a victim’s experience of domestic abuse, and to detach themselves from the specific incident which might have triggered the current police response. DACJS stakeholders highlighted that these skills resulted in earlier and more proactive identification of risk, as well as additional safeguarding and support opportunities.

Independence from police investigation

The DACJS workers’ independence from any police investigation was also a strength of the role. DACJS stakeholders reported that this enabled the workers to focus on victims’ safety, experience and needs (and perpetrators’ experiences and needs in force areas where the role involved perpetrator engagement work). They also reported that victims (and perpetrators) were more likely to engage with the worker because they recognised their specialism and understood that the worker did not have any agenda in relation to ongoing investigations.
Integration or co-location

The integration of DACJS workers into police teams, or their co-location with these teams, was also a strength of the project. This was important for building relationships with police officers and staff, which made it more likely for them to seek advice and input from the DACJS workers. It was also important in enabling DACJS workers to gain an understanding of current processes, in order to recognise areas for improvement and therefore see where their input would be most efficient and impactful. In addition, it enabled information to be shared in person and in real time between police officers/staff and the DACJS workers, which contributed a more streamlined and effective response for victims of domestic abuse.

Promoting shared learning opportunities

DACJS stakeholders in force areas where DACJS workers were recruited from a background in local specialist services reported that the role also offered opportunities for DACJS workers themselves to gain a greater understanding of police processes and practice. This was beneficial because it enabled workers to convey this to victims, providing them with a more accurate picture of police response.

Uptake of input by police officers and teams

Although there were challenges in raising awareness about the role (which are discussed in more detail in section 6.3.4), input from the DACJS worker was well-utilised by police officers and staff once it became embedded. Programme leads and DACJS stakeholders in the majority of areas reported that police officers and staff approached the DACJS worker for input into specific cases and were also increasingly aware of the core functions of the role and how this could complement their own investigative or safeguarding work. This indicates that there was demand for the role.

Facilitating multi-agency working and information sharing

DACJS workers were able to increase the focus on multi-agency working within police responses for victims of domestic abuse. There were a number of reasons for this. First, their specialist knowledge meant that they had a stronger sense of multi-agency referral pathways and support options than police officers with whom they were working. Second, they could dedicate more of their time to coordinating multi-agency responses than police officers could. Third, they often had existing relationships with agencies outside of the police and could broker relationships and more timely information sharing between the police and these services, which could play a role in safeguarding and support for domestic abuse victims. This was identified as a particular strength in force areas where the DACJS workers had been recruited or seconded from a background in local support agencies, or had longstanding relationships with these agencies as a result of previous roles.

Despite this increased emphasis on and improvements to multi-agency working, there was evidence that there is further progress to be made in this area. For
example, one force area highlighted that they could work more effectively with housing providers in order to support victims wishing to move house or to promote evictions of perpetrators.

**Reducing workload of police officers and staff**

The DACJS worker role often involved taking on and extending elements of work which would previously have been undertaken by police officers and staff in the teams with which the role was involved. This therefore released time for these officers and staff, enabling them to focus on other elements of their role, such as investigative work.

6.3.4 Challenges in implementation

**Delays in introducing the roles**

There were delays in recruiting to the role in some force areas, particularly those where decisions on longer-term funding would not be made until after the role was piloted under DAWSA. Programme leads reported that the short-term nature of the central funding and delayed decisions on the second tranche of funding for years 2 and 3 made it difficult to recruit to the roles until towards the end of the second year, by which point there was potentially only just over a year remaining before the end of the DAWSA funding.

In some force areas, delays in decisions to recruit were then compounded by the slow pace of vetting and other HR processes, which further delayed the start date for the role.

The delays also meant that staff had to be recruited on short-term contracts, which might be less appealing to prospective candidates. Some force areas seconded workers from local domestic abuse providers as a solution to this problem.

**Awareness raising and gaining buy-in**

One of the biggest challenges in introducing the DACJS worker role was raising awareness of the role amongst police officers who might work alongside the role. The large volume of police officers involved in teams with which the role was designed to work presented an initial challenge in ensuring that all relevant officers were aware of the role and its purpose, which was tackled in most areas by the use of shift briefings and other face-to-face promotional work.

A minority of programme leads noted that this challenge was compounded by the short-term nature of the initial funding, which meant that they were promoting a role which might soon be discontinued.

A second challenge then followed in encouraging police officers to make use of the workers’ skills and knowledge by seeking advice on cases. DACJS stakeholders reported that this shifted once relationships had been built and officers in relevant teams had begun working with the DACJS worker and could see the benefits in delivering a better service for the victim whilst also saving
them time and providing them with expert advice. For example, one police officer said:

“The longer [the DACJS worker] has been here, the more they have got to know what she can do and what she brings to the game. So now they are approaching her directly for input.”

However, in some force areas this was preceded by scepticism from some officers, who were potentially resistant to input from staff recruited from outside the police.

Going beyond this, stakeholders also reported that some officers held negative beliefs or misconceptions about domestic abuse and the value of increased work to safeguard and support victims, which were harder to shift and required both persistent challenge and assertiveness from DACJS workers.

Establishing processes for work with MATAC and perpetrators

Force areas experienced a variety of different issues when planning and introducing work with perpetrators within the role. For instance, in three force areas where the primary focus of the work had initially been on victims it proved challenging to alter the focus to include perpetrators too and to balance these two aspects within the role. One force area encountered the opposite issue; the role was originally intended to focus on perpetrators and was based in the prisoner handling team. Challenges in agreeing risk management and information sharing protocols, however, led to a decision to shift the focus to victims.

Demanding nature of work with victims and perpetrators

DACJS stakeholders recognised that working with victims and perpetrators can be challenging in itself, although they also emphasised that staff in the DACJS worker role have the skills and resilience to manage this. Particular challenges which were identified here were: managing the immediacy and complexity of some victims’ and perpetrators’ needs and wishes in the context of working with multiple victims and perpetrators at the same time; and persisting in trying to engage victims and perpetrators if they do not initially wish to take up the offer of support.

6.3.5 Factors supporting implementation

Balancing regional consistency and local flexibility

As with a number of the other projects included within DAWSA, one of the key suggestions for strengthening the design of the DACJS role was in maintaining common objectives for the role but building increased flexibility to allow local areas to develop or adapt the role to suit their local context. Whilst this was ultimately achieved, programme leads and senior stakeholders in force areas where the role differed to the original role profile reported that it took time to gain agreement from DAWSA leads to configure the role differently, which had a knock-on effect in delaying planning for implementation.
This flexibility to develop or adapt delivery models may be important in ensuring that projects are feasible and effective in their local context. However, in order to ensure consistency in quality and outcomes, it is important that localised delivery models target the same core SMART intended impacts and outcomes. Delivery models should be developed on the basis of a clearly-articulated theory of change or logic model, which links the inputs, activities and outputs of the model to these SMART impacts and outcomes. In addition, models should be developed based on any existing evidence base or good practice principles for similar interventions.

**Recommendation 5:** Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. This should seek to:

- Promote the consistent development and application of good practice to achieve common outcomes.
- Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the wide range of local contexts and structures into which they might be introduced.

### 6.3.6 Suggestions for strengthening design and implementation

#### Increase in direct work with perpetrators

“In all honesty, the skills to engage the perpetrator are the same skills we are using to engage with victims. If we did more of this, we would be looking at 100% of the issue instead of just 50%.”

Programme leads and DACJS stakeholders in most force areas suggested that increasing the involvement of DACJS workers in direct work with perpetrators was a key future area for development of the role. In some force areas, this was already taking place to some extent but in other force areas it would represent a shift in the focus of the role. The main reasons that more work with perpetrators was seen as beneficial were:

- The initial engagement of perpetrators in support is still an area for development in most force areas and the skills required for the DACJS worker role would likely transfer to delivering this engagement support. In force areas where DACJS workers are based alongside prisoner handling teams, this would also offer an opportunity for early engagement with perpetrators whilst they are in custody following an incident.

- The DACJS workers could support a whole family approach to domestic abuse if they were involved in coordinating responses for victims, children and perpetrators in households where the perpetrator was still living or in a relationship with the victim.
• In carrying out initial engagement work with perpetrators, DACJS workers could support the early engagement of perpetrators who are subject to MATAC. This would then enable 1-to-1 workers linked to MATAC and/or to DAPPs to focus on longer-term engagement and behaviour change work.

However, a minority of DACJS stakeholders suggested that a separate role should be created for work with perpetrators. They recognised the importance of this function but expressed concern that the volume of work would not be manageable if existing DACJS workers were required to take on a role with perpetrators as well as victims.

**Recommendation 13:** Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between victim and perpetrator focused work. If more work with perpetrators is desirable, consideration should be given to whether this can be delivered as a function of the existing DACJS worker role or whether additional roles are required to manage the volume and/or nature of this work alongside functions of the role focusing on victims.

**Increase in training and upskilling of police officers and staff**

DACJS stakeholders in a majority of force areas reported that the training and advisory elements of the DACJS role were valuable in increasing the confidence, skills and awareness of police officers and staff in responding to domestic abuse. As a result, it may be beneficial to place a greater emphasis on these aspects of the role in the future.

**Recommendation 14:** Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between direct safeguarding and engagement work and training/upskilling police officers.

**Localising the role to districts**

A number of force areas employed more than one DACJS worker during the DAWSA programme funding period. Generally, these workers covered a specific area command and their roles had been localised to reflect specific gaps and structures in their locality. Programme leads and DACJS stakeholders in force areas which did not have this localised approach reported that further localisation would be beneficial, particularly in terms of enabling DACJS workers to build and maintain relationships and referral pathways with the wide range of local agencies delivering support in particular localities.

It is important to note, however, that programme leads and DACJS stakeholders in one force area reported the opposite view. They suggested that DACJS worker roles were too localised in their force area, which led to inconsistencies in delivery and therefore to support available to victims.

**Recommendation 15:** Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the extent to which the role is currently localised and consider
whether further localisation is desirable or whether localisation should be reduced in favour of consistency across the whole force area.

**Relationship to DVPOs**

DACJS workers in two force areas were closely connected to the process of preparing and presenting DVPO applications at court. Both roles involved direct contact with victims to inform the preparatory stages. In one force area, this was combined with direct input/support to officers with preparation, and presentation at court when the main presentation officer was not available. In the second force area, the main focus for the DACJS worker was in direct support and safeguarding of victims where a DVPO application had been made.

DACJS stakeholders, programme leads and senior stakeholders in both of these force areas reported that this was a useful application of the role, resulting in improved rates of DVPOs being granted, improved victim experience of the DVPO process, and improved safeguarding and support for victims during the time period covered by the DVPO. Programme leads and senior stakeholders in other force areas expressed an interest in exploring similar applications of the role in their force area, though this tended to be alongside existing DACJS worker roles rather than instead of them.

However, programme leads also highlighted that the efficiency of this involvement would be closely linked to the number of courts at which DVPO applications could be heard for that force area. For instance, in force areas where all DVPO applications would be heard by a single court there were economies in setting up a specialist DVPO team located close to the court to prepare and present the applications. On the other hand, in force areas where applications could be heard at a number of courts both in and outside of the force area, a single team structure might prove less efficient if team members were travelling between courts to present. In addition, they suggested that it is more efficient to include the DACJS worker role alongside a separate court presentation role because the volume and unpredictable timings of DVPO presentation make it difficult to combine this with other input into victim support, safety and investigation planning.

**Recommendation 16:** Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the role’s input into DVPNs and DVPOs.

**Clarifying remits and avoiding duplication**

In the majority of force areas there appeared to be areas of potential overlap between the DACJS worker role, other police roles and/or other specialist services. For example, in some force areas the relationship between the DVSA partnership and the DACJS worker role was not always clear to all stakeholders, with some expressing concerns that the same victims might receive input from both projects without this input being coordinated. Equally, in some force areas potential overlap was highlighted between the role and services for high-risk victims, or indeed generic victims’ services. DACJS stakeholders pointed out that
the risk of duplication was exacerbated by the fact that many of the different agencies use their own case management systems, which are not connected to one another. Therefore, direct communication between agencies is the only way to establish whether victims have received input.

It may limit the extent to which new projects can enhance multi-agency working if the remits of all services are not clearly delineated, or if local stakeholders are not aware of these remits and pathways though the different services.

**Recommendation 3:** Plans and programme documentation for transformation programmes like DAWSA should clearly articulate the ways in which new interventions relate to each other, and to pre-existing services and interventions. This should help to avoid siloed working, duplication or inefficiencies across the system.

### 6.4 Scale and impact

#### 6.4.1 Assessment against evaluation framework

Figure 48 summarises the evidence for progress against the intended outputs and outcomes of the DACJS worker role, using the rating system outlined in Figure 47. It indicates that one intended output was fully achieved during the DAWSA funded period and progress was made towards the second output. Three intended outcomes of the DACJS worker role have been fully achieved and progress was made towards the fourth. In addition, the role achieved positive outcomes in improved victim safety and wellbeing, which was not included within the evaluation framework but was achieved in all force areas.

**Figure 47: Ratings used in assessment against the evaluation framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⚫</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been partially achieved or that there is progress indicating that it is likely to be achieved in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⏹️</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has not yet been achieved and that it was not feasible to achieve this outcome within the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❓</td>
<td>Difficult to make a judgement on the basis of the available evidence about the extent to which this output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The framework includes only outcomes which might feasibly be achieved and evidenced within the programme funding period. There are also some longer-term intended outcomes, which are discussed in section 6.4.4.
### Figure 48: Evidence of progress against intended outputs and outcomes of the DACJS worker role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| DACJS workers have supported police officers through joint safeguarding work. | ✓ | • There is evidence from monitoring data and consultation with a range of stakeholders that the DACJS workers in all force areas have undertaken safeguarding work that forms part of the police safeguarding response to victims of domestic abuse. For example, DACJS workers had input into safety planning for at least 6,528 victims during the DAWSA funding period.  
• This has included supporting police officers through joint safeguarding work, but has also included taking on safeguarding work which would otherwise have been the responsibility of police officers, enabling them to focus on other elements of the police response to an incident. |
| In force areas where this role includes a focus on work with perpetrators, the DACJS workers have supported the MATAC and perpetrator engagement process. | • | • The DACJS worker role was involved in the MATAC and perpetrator engagement process to some extent in all force areas.  
• However, in most areas this involvement was a fairly recent development in a role that had initially focused on victims and was therefore still relatively limited at this stage. |
<p>| <strong>Outcomes</strong>   |                 |                      |
| The DACJS workers have improved the quality of police officer safety planning for | ✓ | • Evidence from consultation indicates that the DACJS worker role has improved the quality of safety planning for victims of domestic abuse in all force areas into which it was introduced. In some instances, this involved joint safety planning with police officers or training and support to police officers to enable them to safety plan more effectively. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| victims and/or police investigation plans. | | In some cases, however, it entailed DACJS workers producing safety plans instead of police officers.  
- There is also evidence that the DACJS worker role has improved the quality of police investigation plans, although these improvements appear to be less widespread than improvements to safety planning. |
| The DACJS workers have increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support. | ✓ | - The evaluation found evidence that the DACJS worker role increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting safeguarding input and support. This was post-incident support rather than at-incident support.  
- This was primarily delivered by the DACJS workers themselves, during direct contact with victims which was undertaken either as part of standard secondary safeguarding procedures, as part of a designated service for victims at a particular point in the system (e.g. in the case of the DACJS worker attached to the DVPO team), or on a more ad hoc basis as part of joint safeguarding or investigative work with police officers. |
| The DACJS workers have contributed to improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents. | ✓ | - Consultation with DACJS stakeholders and “whole system” E-survey responses suggest that DACJS workers have resulted in improved experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents.  
- The primary reasons for improved perceptions were that DACJS workers were able to use time and expertise to explain police processes and the rationale behind police responses to incidents, and increase victims’ sense that the police had taken their reporting of an incident seriously and had been able to offer a specialised response soon after the incident. |
<p>| In force areas where this role includes a focus on work with perpetrators, the DACJS | * | - The perpetrator engagement element of the DACJS worker role was less well-developed in most force areas than the victim support and safeguarding elements. As a result, there was less scope for the role to impact on perpetrator engagement with domestic abuse perpetrator programmes or 1-to-1 support. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>workers have resulted in increased perpetrator engagement with DAPPs/1-to-1 support.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• However, there is evidence from consultation that the DACJS worker was beginning to impact positively on perpetrator engagement in the force area where this aspect of the role was most developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4.2 Scale

6.4.2.1 Supporting police officers through joint safeguarding work

There is evidence from monitoring data and consultation with a range of stakeholders that the DACJS workers in all force areas have undertaken safeguarding work that forms part of the police safeguarding response to victims of domestic abuse. This has included supporting police officers through joint safeguarding work, but has also included taking on safeguarding work which would otherwise have been the responsibility of police officers, enabling them to focus on other elements of the police response to an incident.

Numbers of cases with DACJS worker involvement

Figure 49 indicates that since April 2016 (the beginning of the DAWSA funding period) DACJS workers had input into safety planning for at least 6,258 victims. This is drawn from monitoring data provided by the force areas. It is potentially an under-estimate because it does not include data for Force E.

In several force areas, the workers’ remit covered medium risk victims in the first instance, and sometimes standard risk victims too. This was not the case for all force areas, however, because in some instances DACJS workers were also involved in high risk cases. DACJS stakeholders noted that the emphasis on medium and standard risk cases increased the level of safeguarding input available to victims in these cases, in comparison to arrangements in place prior to the introduction of the role.

Figure 49: Number of cases with DACJS worker involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Number of DACJS workers when team at full capacity</th>
<th>Number of victims where DACJS worker had input into safety planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>July 2018 – March 2019</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>October 2018 – March 2019</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>2017 – March 2019</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>May 2018 – March 2019</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

56 Force C reported higher numbers of victims receiving input than the other force areas. This may be a consequence of particularly effective implementation in Force C. It may also be that Force C is conceptualising input into safety planning differently to the other areas and using a lower threshold to determine this.
Nature of joint safeguarding work

There were differences in the nature of safeguarding work undertaken by DACJS workers in the different force areas, and in the extent to which this was jointly undertaken with police officers rather than directly undertaken by the DACJS workers themselves. In general, DACJS workers in each force area took one or more of the following approaches to identifying the safeguarding work:

- In four force areas, police officers contacted DACJS workers directly to ask for their input into specific cases, including those which were proving more complex or in which victims were not currently engaging with the police. This approach tended to result in more joint action by DACJS workers and police officers.

- In three force areas, DACJS workers were responsible for reviewing incident forms or police protection notices to assess the initial safeguarding response and provide additional input as required. This approach tended to result in more direct delivery of safeguarding work by DACJS workers, though workers approached police officers to suggest joint working in some cases.

- In two force areas, DACJS workers were involved in the preparation of DVPNs/DVPOs and/or making contact with victims to inform them of the DVPO outcome and offer support and safeguarding input. In this approach, the initial support and safety planning tended to be delivered by DACJS workers but the collaboration with police officers around DVPNs/DVPOs constituted joint safeguarding work.

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57 A total of 11,109 incidents were reviewed by the DACJS workers in this force area from 1st April 2016-30th September 2018, but it is not known how many victims received input into safety planning as a result. This includes incidents at all risk levels. Data was not available from 1st October 2018 onwards because the role changed and no longer covered standard risk incidents but it was not possible to breakdown the data to isolate incidents rated at different risk levels.

58 Excluding force area E, for which data on the number of victims supported was not available.
The nature of the safeguarding work was determined by the risks and needs associated with individual cases but included:

- Reviewing risk assessments and initial safeguarding responses and providing additional safeguarding input as needed.

- Joint visits to victims/families/perpetrators by DACJS workers and police officers, to explain procedures, offer support, take statements and encourage victims to engage with police investigations.

- Joint visits to victims/families/perpetrators by DACJS workers and other agencies, such as children’s services or support services, to offer support.

- Working alongside police officers to develop safety plans and harm reduction plans.

- Providing advice, reassurance and acting as a sounding board for police officers seeking input on safeguarding.

- Offering challenge to police officers in cases where victim engagement and safeguarding responses could have been improved.

- Reminding and supporting police officers to consider DVPNs and Clare’s Law applications as options in appropriate cases, and supporting them to pursue these if needed.

- Generating intelligence through contact with victims and updating police officers to inform investigations and additional safeguarding decisions.

- Issuing orders to perpetrators in custody and enforcing orders by identifying and acting on breaches.

**6.4.2.2 Supporting the MATAC and perpetrator engagement process**

The DACJS worker role was involved in the MATAC and perpetrator engagement process to some extent in all force areas. However, in most areas this involvement was a fairly recent development in a role that had initially focused on victims and was therefore still relatively limited at this stage.

The perpetrator engagement role was more developed in one force area, and monitoring data indicated that the DACJS workers in this force area had engaged with 44 perpetrators whilst they were in custody and an additional 100 perpetrators identified via MATAC.

In this force area the role’s engagement with perpetrators included:

- Involvement in notifying perpetrators that they were subject to MATAC and offering support and input at this point.
• Attending MATACs to participate in multi-agency planning of interventions with perpetrators, and feeding back to police officers about relevant MATAC updates and decisions.

• Serving orders and/or offering support to offenders whilst they are in the custody suite, including advice, signposting and referrals. Increasingly, this work also involves offering follow-up meetings to offenders once they have left custody to plan and broker ongoing support for them.

• Working with other offenders who are flagged to them by neighbourhood policing teams or first response teams.

DACJS workers had recently become involved in either MATAC or perpetrator engagement work in three force areas and in a fourth force area there had been limited involvement with perpetrators whilst in custody. This generally entailed one or more of the following activities: joint visits with police officers or other agencies to engage with perpetrators; attendance at MATAC; feeding back to police officers on MATAC nominals involved in active investigations and recommending any additional safeguarding action as required; and serving orders whilst perpetrators were in custody.

In the final force area, the DACJS worker role did not involve direct contact with perpetrators but did involve liaison with the IOM team about perpetrators subject to a DVPO to pass on information about any needs of the perpetrator identified via contact with the victim, and to support the enforcement of DVPOs.

6.4.3 Impact

6.4.3.1 Improved quality of police officer safety planning for victims and/or police investigation plans

Evidence from consultation indicates that the DACJS worker role has improved the quality of safety planning for victims of domestic abuse in all force areas into which it was introduced. In some instances, this involved joint safety planning with police officers or training and support to police officers to enable them to safety plan more effectively. In some cases, however, it entailed DACJS workers producing safety plans instead of police officers. This latter approach arguably had less of a positive impact on the quality of safety planning by police officers themselves.

There is also evidence that the DACJS worker role has improved the quality of police investigation plans, although these improvements appear to be less widespread than improvements to safety planning.

Figure 50 shows that 63% of respondents to the “whole system” E-survey either agreed or strongly agreed that DACJS officers had improved the quality of police officer safety planning for victims and/or police investigation plans. Only 3% of respondents disagreed.
Safety planning

DACJS stakeholders and programme leads in all force areas reported that the input of the DACJS workers increased the quality and consistency of safety planning and safeguarding responses, although in some force areas they indicated that this was contained to responses generated by staff in the role itself and had not impacted on the wider quality of safety planning by police officers. They identified three main ways in which DACJS workers contributed to improved safety planning. These were:

- Leading on producing safety plans.
- Working alongside individual officers to produce safety plans and undertake safeguarding actions.
- Providing training input to police officers/staff to increase their awareness, skills and confidence in relation to domestic abuse and/or possible safeguarding responses to it.

Where they were directly involved in safety planning for individual victims (either taking the lead or jointly with police officers), DACJS workers were able to

59 n=161 (quality of police officer safety planning), n=160 (victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support), n=154 (perpetrator engagement), n=165 (improved victim experience and confidence in police and partners). Positive responses (in shades of purple) are to the right of 0 and negative responses (in shades of pink) are to the left of 0. Stronger shades of each colour indicate stronger agreement/disagreement in the responses (“strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”). Please note that neutral responses (“neither agree nor disagree”) are not shown in the graph, so the percentages shown do not total 100 for each bar.
improve this in a range of different ways. First, they were able to review the history of abuse for that victim in more detail, alongside the most recent incident (which might be the subject of current police investigation) and therefore gain a more nuanced understanding of the victim's experience and the risks posed to them and their family, to inform the safeguarding response. Second, they were able to increase the voice of the victim within safety plans and investigation plans, because they were able to speak to victims directly for their input and to do so more rapidly and/or in more detail than would have been possible if the role were not in place. Third, they were able to gain additional information from their discussions with the victim, which might inform a re-assessment of risk and in turn inform safeguarding and enforcement responses. Fourth, their expertise in safeguarding and support enabled them to draw on a wider range of safeguarding tools and responses than might have been familiar to police officers involved with the case.

Input into training and 1-to-1 coaching or advice for police officers also enabled DACJS workers to support improvements in safety planning by upskilling officers and/or increasing their confidence to deliver high-quality safety planning. As one DACJS stakeholder noted:

"Officers in charge now have a much better understanding of partnership working and joint safeguarding. As a result, the safeguarding element of an investigation is now at the forefront of people’s thinking, as opposed to them purely focussing on the evidential elements of an investigation, which they had done previously."

This took place to some extent in all force areas, but the scale varied from infrequent one-to-one input with police officers to involvement in daily briefings. DACJS workers in the different force areas were involved in briefings, training and 1-to-1 input for specific teams or roles, such as investigation teams, first response teams and PCSOs. Examples of training topics include:

- DVPNs and DVPOs.
- Domestic abuse risk assessment.
- Domestic abuse and coercive control.

DACJS stakeholders also highlighted that working alongside DACJS workers provided police officers with opportunities to learn through observing them in action and also to approach them for specific advice and guidance.

**Example from practice**

In force areas where DACJS workers had direct input into DVPNs and DVPO applications or worked with victims alongside a dedicated DVPO team, DACJS stakeholders and programme leads reported that their role impacted on safety planning by raising the profile of DVPNs with officers, either through more formal briefings and training or through discussion of specific cases with
individual officers. They reported that this ensured that DVPNs were considered as an option in a greater proportion of eligible cases. Their role in preparing and/or presenting DVPO applications at court, or in providing information to support this, was also reported to improve ongoing safety planning by increasing the success rate of DVPO applications and thus providing a 14-28 day window in which to engage with the victim whilst the perpetrator was not present. However, this outcome was not attributable to the DACJS worker role alone, because in both force areas there were other roles with direct input into the DVPN/DVPO process. In one force area, this was a dedicated DVPO team which prepared and presented the DVPOs at court. In another force area, this was a solicitor acting in a court presentation role.

In the force area where the DACJS worker maintained contact with victims whilst the DVPO was in operation, DACJS stakeholders reported that this also supported the enforcement of breaches because the DACJS worker could gain intelligence about breaches via conversations with the victim and then report this to police officers so that they could enforce them.

Investigation plans

DACJS stakeholders in all force areas identified ways in which the input of the DACJS workers increased the quality of investigation plans. For example, DACJS workers in one force area provided input/support to more than 500 investigations between May 2018 and March 2019.

In most force areas, this tended to be a secondary outcome of the input into support and safeguarding, rather than a primary outcome of the role.

The first way in which the DACJS workers supported effective investigation planning was in generating additional intelligence through direct contact with the victim or through multi-agency information sharing with other service providers (such as via MARAC or MATAC), which could then feed into the investigation. Examples included victims disclosing further abuse to DACJS workers or providing additional detail about the incident which had triggered the current police investigation.

The second way was in encouraging victims to engage with police investigations. DACJS stakeholders emphasised that workers were led by the victim and did not push them to support investigations if they expressed a wish not to. However, they also noted that workers could provide reassurance about the process and also discuss victim’s involvement in the investigation as one of the options available to them and enable them to weigh up the potential consequences of a decision to support the investigation (or not). On balance, they reported that this increased the likelihood of victims supporting investigations.

In a number of force areas, DACJS stakeholders provided examples of DACJS workers undertaking joint visits with police officers to take statements from victims. This encapsulated both of the ways in which DACJS workers could support improved investigations because it likely encouraged the victim to make...
the statement and also enabled the police officer and worker to obtain a higher-quality statement as a result of the worker’s specialist skills in supporting the disclosure of domestic abuse.

**Example from practice**

A DACJS worker supported a victim where a DVPO was in place concurrently with the perpetrator being investigated for assault. The victim had retracted her statement but following a phone call with the DACJS worker to discuss the potential reasons for making a statement she agreed to provide a statement. She also accepted a referral to a local specialist domestic abuse support service and has been allocated a support worker there. As part of the handover to this support worker, the DACJS worker was able to relay the content of her conversations with the victim, including her desire to apply for a non-molestation order.

**6.4.3.2 Increased number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding and support**

The evaluation found evidence that the DACJS worker role increased the number of domestic abuse victims accepting safeguarding input and support. This was post-incident support rather than at-incident support.

As discussed in section 6.4.2.1, DACJS workers had input into safety planning for at least 6,258 victims across all force areas. These victims therefore received additional post-incident safeguarding input which they would not have received (or not in this specific form) without the DACJS worker role. It is not known how many of these victims were contacted directly by DACJS workers and/or police officers and offered post-incident safeguarding and support, or what proportion accepted this support. However, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of these victims would not have been referred to and/or have taken up support without the actions of the DACJS workers, or not until a later time.

DACJS stakeholders and programme leads in all force areas reported that the DACJS worker role led to an increased number of victims engaging with post-incident safeguarding and support. This was primarily delivered by the DACJS workers themselves, during direct contact with victims which was undertaken either as part of standard secondary safeguarding procedures, as part of a designated service for victims at a particular point in the system (e.g. in the case of the DACJS worker attached to the DVPO team), or on a more ad hoc basis as part of joint safeguarding or investigative work with police officers.

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60 This is drawn from monitoring data provided by the force areas. It is potentially an under-estimate because it does not include data for Force E.
Example from practice

A police officer described a victim who was jointly supported by the officer and a DACJS worker.

“We were working together to try to get her to a safe place. We could do repeat visits to try to see her when [the perpetrator] was not around. We were tackling every angle – the alcohol use, housing, safety planning – it was much more holistic. In the end we were able to signpost her to [a local alcohol support service]. We would not have got to this stage if the DACJS worker was not involved. The victim didn’t want to engage with the police but ended up trusting the officer as well as the DACJS worker.”

DVSA stakeholders identified examples of victims who had gone on to engage with ongoing support services which they had been introduced to by the DACJS worker. However, they also provided examples of victims who had not taken up the offer of ongoing support but who had still received post-incident input from the DACJS workers or police officers themselves.

This was to some extent corroborated by the “whole system” E-survey, in which 60% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that DACJS officers had resulted in an increased number of domestic abuse victims accepting at-incident or post-incident safeguarding support. Only 4% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 50 in section 6.4.3.1.

Engaging victims who would not otherwise have accessed support

DACJS stakeholders reported that DACJS workers have successfully engaged victims who would not otherwise have accessed support at this time. In Force F, for example, only 16 of the 145 victims (11%) were already accessing support from local agencies at the point when they were contacted by the DACJS worker. Equally, DACJS stakeholders provided examples of victims who had disengaged from previous support and who opted to re-engage following contact from the DACJS worker.

DACJS stakeholders attributed this to the fact that DACJS workers have both the time to make repeated attempts to contact the victim and the specialist skills and expertise to engage them once contact is made. They also highlighted the importance to victim engagement of the workers not being police officers, and therefore being perceived as independent from police investigations.

Example from practice

The police had received a high volume of calls relating to the same victim and perpetrator, which mostly involved verbal abuse and minor assaults.

The DACJS worker contacted the victim by phone and was able to talk through the circumstances in more detail. During the phone call, the victim highlighted a number of difficulties she was experiencing, including a history
of trauma, alcohol misuse, financial problems, unemployment, social isolation and difficulties with contact with her child from a previous relationship. The DACJS worker was also able to check previous police records to supplement this more detailed picture of the victims’ circumstances and engagement.

The victim expressed motivation to change her circumstances. The DACJS worker was then able to offer her face-to-face meetings on a fortnightly basis to provide emotional and practical support. This included reminding the victim about appointments to enable her to engage with other services and attending joint meetings with her at services.

After engaging with the DACJS worker for several appointments, the victim identified that she would like to engage with alcohol support services. She was referred to alcohol support services and peer support and has now progressed through detox and a rehabilitation programme. She has now taken on a volunteering role.

The victim has remained in contact with the DACJS worker and there have been no reported domestic abuse incidents for the past six months.

They also highlighted that DACJS workers could contact victims who had not initially consented to safeguarding and support referrals to discuss this again with them and, in many cases, obtain this consent. This was possible because the DACJS workers are attached to the police response to incidents and can therefore contact victims in instances where other support agencies would not make contact without explicit consent from the victim, such as victims in medium and standard risk cases.

In force areas where direct input from a DACJS worker was sustained over a period of time or until victims engaged with support services in the community, DACJS workers could also provide a consistent point of contact for victims. This was also important in supporting engagement, and in enabling victims to re-engage at a later point in time by contacting the worker. As one DACJS stakeholder said:

“It is easier for the victim to open up to one person. The role reduces the number of different people involved and the number of times victims have to tell their story.”

Nature of support offered

The types of support offered by the DACJS worker were broadly similar across all six force areas. In most force areas, contact was made by phone in the first instance, though workers were also involved in joint home visits with the police, children’s services or other agencies, and in some areas they could meet with victims on a one-to-one basis to offer support in person. However, the balance of different types of support and the duration and intensity of support varied across the roles. As one DACJS stakeholder explained:
“We might initiate a joint visit with a neighbourhood policing team and the victim, maybe including the family. Sometimes it is just about holding out an olive branch and letting people in the household know that others are worried about their welfare or – in the case of perpetrators – are seeing their behaviour as a problem.”

The types of support offered were very similar to those offered by specialist workers in the DVSA partnership and included:

- Emotional support and a listening ear.
- Reassurance that the victim “did the right thing” in reporting the incident to the police, and affirmation that the police were taking the incident seriously.
- Safety planning.
- Advice and guidance relating to a range of issues, such as:
  - DVPNs/DVPOs and what these mean for victims and perpetrators.
  - Recognising abuse and the cycle of abuse.
  - Non-molestation, restraining, prohibited steps and occupation orders.
  - Bail conditions.
  - Family law.
  - Child contact, parental responsibility and custody rights.
  - Safeguarding responses and involvement of children’s services.
  - Housing.
  - Benefits.
- Checking whether a client is already engaged with support services, and offering to liaise with and update these services as needed.
- Signposting and onward referral to support services.

**Example from practice**

In one force area where the DACJS worker was attached to a specialist DVPO team, victims were contacted by telephone by the DACJS worker once a DVPN was issued and offered support as required throughout the period covered by the DVPO and follow-up support afterwards if needed. The DACJS worker could also undertake safeguarding work with victims where a DVPN was issued but a DVPO was not granted.

Support offered to the victim included providing information about the DVPN/DVPO, safety planning advice, reviewing the DASH risk assessment if required, advice and signposting on issues relevant to the victim, and signposting and referral to ongoing support.

The DACJS would then coordinate any multi-agency safeguarding and support needed by the victim. During this time victims were encouraged to engage with specialist services offering ongoing support and if they engaged
then the DACJS worker would hand over responsibility for coordinating support to this service.

At the end of the DVPO, the DACJS worker would contact the victim to ask for their feedback on the DVPO and whether they found it helpful, whether they had accessed support and whether they were happy with the police response. If necessary, the DASH risk assessment was also reviewed at this stage.

In addition, the DACJS worker contacted the victim again 3, 6 and 9 months after the expiry of the order to check in with them and find out whether they required any further support. The worker was also able to access police records at these times to review any further reported incidents of domestic abuse and to update the records based on information shared by the victim.

**6.4.3.3 Improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents**

Consultation with DACJS stakeholders suggests that DACJS workers have resulted in improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents. This was to some extent corroborated by the “whole system” E-survey, in which 63% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that DACJS officers had contributed to improved victim experience of and confidence in police and partner response to domestic abuse incidents. Only 5% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 50 in section 6.4.3.1.

The most commonly-identified factor in improving victims’ perceptions was that DACJS workers were able to use time and expertise to explain police processes and the rationale behind police responses to incidents. DACJS stakeholders reported that victims had fed back that this improved their understanding of what actions police had taken and why, as well as what the next steps would be. These explanations could also soften perceptions of police responses. For example, one DACJS stakeholder stated:

> “Sometimes victims see the police as acting against their wishes, like pursuing an investigation without a statement [from the victim]. If you can explain that the police are doing this because they want the best for the victim then it helps them to see that the police are acting with their safety in mind.”

Another important factor in this improved perception was victims’ sense that the police had taken their reporting of an incident seriously and had been able to offer a specialised response soon after the incident.

> “Victims are reassured and feel that the police are prioritising their safety. [The DACJS worker] is amazing at changing victims’ minds who would not engage with an officer. I hear a lot that victims feel it’s difficult to engage with the police – the worker has the skills for this.”
6.4.3.4 Increased perpetrator engagement with domestic abuse perpetrator programmes/1-to-1 support

The perpetrator engagement element of the DACJS worker role was less well-developed in most force areas than the victim support and safeguarding elements, as discussed in section 6.4.2.2. As a result, there was less scope for the role to impact on perpetrator engagement with domestic abuse perpetrator programmes or 1-to-1 support.

This is confirmed by responses to the “whole system” E-survey; only 39% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that DACJS workers had resulted in an increase in perpetrator engagement with domestic abuse perpetrator programmes/1-to-1 support whilst 13% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 50 in section 6.4.3.1.

However, there is evidence from consultation that the DACJS worker was beginning to impact positively on perpetrator engagement in the force area where this aspect of the role was most developed. As one DACJS stakeholder noted:

“For some offenders, knowing that there is somebody there who is focussed on support for them can really help them to engage.”

Examples of this positive impact provided by DACJS stakeholders in this force area were:

- A 50% increase in the number of perpetrators engaging with MATAC since DACJS workers had become involved in issuing MATAC letters to perpetrators.
- Increased engagement of perpetrators with 1-to-1 support provided as a component of DAPPs since DACJS workers have been making joint visits with 1-to-1 DAPP workers to introduce and offer the support to perpetrators.

In addition, a number of other force areas highlighted that DACJS workers have recently begun to make direct contact with perpetrators and/or feeding back information about perpetrators’ needs which were gained through discussions with victims. They noted that this has resulted in referrals to DAPPs and other support services, though at this stage impact on engagement is not yet known.

6.4.3.5 Increased victim safety and wellbeing

This outcome area was not included within the evaluation framework but is discussed here because the qualitative consultation conducted as part of the evaluation suggested that DACJS workers are having a positive impact on victim safety and wellbeing.

61 Engagement rates prior to and after the DACJS workers became involved in issuing MATAC letters were not provided so it is not possible to report on the specific engagement rates at either point in time.
DACJS stakeholders in all force areas reported that the role had a positive impact on victims’ safety and wellbeing. They identified four ways in which safety and wellbeing was increased:

- The advice and guidance offered by the DACJS worker and/or police officer working with the DACJS worker improved victims’ safety and wellbeing. For example, safety planning advice, home safety improvements, emotional support and information about their rights and options ensured that victims felt heard and understood, were aware of their choices and understood ways to maximise their safety.

- Signposting, onward referral and multi-agency work that was completed as a result of the discussion with the victim contributed to safeguarding the victim and ensuring that they had the option of further support to improve their wellbeing. Examples included referral or updates to MARAC, to local domestic abuse service providers and other types of support service.

- Additional information or abuse disclosed by victims to DACJS workers and/or to police officers working with the DACJS worker supported re-assessment of risk and further safeguarding action as a result. In some cases, new information became evident during an initial discussion with the victim. In other cases, ongoing contact with the victim provided additional opportunities for them to provide updates to support ongoing safeguarding, risk management and enforcement.

- In some force areas, the input of DACJS workers resulted in increased DVPNs and increased successful conversion of DVPNs to DVPOs. This increased the use of a specific safeguarding response available to the police.

DACJS stakeholders provided specific examples of victims whose safety and wellbeing had increased. They cited direct feedback from victims and other agencies working with them, reductions in repeat DVPNs for the same perpetrator and victims, and reductions in reported incidents involving the same perpetrator and victim as evidence of this improved safety and wellbeing.

**Example from practice**

Police officers attended the address of a victim who was known to them from previous reported incidents of domestic abuse. The current attendance was in response to a reported incident which was not connected to domestic abuse. On attending, they had concerns about the victim’s safety and wellbeing. They reported this to the DACJS worker and were able to jointly visit the victim whilst the perpetrator was in custody for a separate offence.

During the visit, the victim disclosed a range of abuse and provided a statement. The perpetrator was then arrested in relation to the abuse and a DVPN was served and a DVPO granted. The victim then had a 28-day window to reflect and look into options for support and alternative accommodation.
6.4.4 Longer-term outcomes

The intended longer-term outcomes of the DACJS worker role, which were unlikely to be achieved within the programme funding period were:

- Increased numbers of DVPNs served and DVPOs granted.
- Reduced numbers of domestic abuse cases that result in no further action due to evidential difficulties or poor victim engagement.
- Reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse.
- Increased numbers of early guilty pleas in relation to domestic abuse perpetrators.

It is unlikely that the DACJS worker roles alone would lead to the achievement of these intended outcomes, but it might be one of a number of factors which could contribute to improvements in these outcome areas. This was recognised by key stakeholders.

Increased numbers of DVPNs served and DVPOs granted

In force areas where DACJS workers had direct input into DVPO applications or worked with victims alongside a dedicated DVPO team, it appeared that this outcome was already being achieved. Programme leads and DACJS stakeholders reported that the quality of, and success rate for, DVPO applications had increased since the introduction of the DACJS workers and that this translated into better safeguarding of victims in cases where a DVPO was issued. However, this was not attributable to the DACJS worker role alone, because in both force areas there were other roles involved in achieving these outcomes. In one force area, this was a dedicated DVPO team which prepared and presented the DVPOs at court. In another force area, this was a solicitor acting in a court presentation role.

Reduced number of domestic abuse cases that result in no further action due to evidential difficulties or poor victim engagement

There is some evidence that DACJS workers are contributing to progress towards this outcome for victims who receive input from them, though at this stage there is no conclusive evidence that this outcome will be achieved or will be attributable to the DACJS workers alone.

A key first step in progression towards this outcome is improvements in victims’ ongoing engagement with the police. DACJS stakeholders identified that increased engagement with the police was a knock-on effect of victims receiving input from the DACJS worker (which is discussed in section 6.4.3.1 and 6.4.3.4).

Following improved engagement with the police, the next step in reducing the number of domestic abuse cases resulting in no further action would be victims providing evidence and supporting a prosecution. DACJS stakeholders provided a small number of examples of cases where this had happened, but at this stage
these appear to be examples of particularly impactful work rather than representative of the outcomes in all cases with DACJS worker involvement.

Reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse

At this stage and on the basis of the data available to the evaluation it is not possible to comment on progress towards this outcome. As recognised by programme leads and senior stakeholders, a longer follow-up period would be required after victims have received input from the DACJS worker in order to ascertain whether:

- Victims have been involved in further incidents of domestic abuse.
- Those victims who have been involved in further incidents have been involved in fewer incidents than they were in a comparable time period prior to the input of the DACJS worker.
- Those victims who have been involved in further incidents have been involved in incidents of greater or lesser severity than the incidents prior to the input of the DACJS worker.

Collecting and reviewing data on these indicators on an ongoing basis should enable force areas to consider any changes in victims’ reported experience of domestic abuse, and to examine any changes in numbers or proportions of repeat victims.

Increased number of early guilty pleas in relation to domestic abuse perpetrators

At this stage and on the basis of the data available to the evaluation it is not possible to comment on progress towards this outcome. In order to measure whether it is being achieved it would be necessary to gather data on:

- Pleas put forward by perpetrators in all domestic abuse cases which are taken forward for prosecution, for time periods before and after the introduction of the DACJS workers.
- Which cases taken forward for prosecution had input from a DACJS worker.

This would enable analysis to understand whether there was an overall increase in the number of guilty pleas put forward since the introduction of the DACJS workers; and whether there were differences in the proportions of guilty pleas put forward in those cases which had DACJS input and those cases which did not.

6.4.5 Variations in impact

There was no detailed performance data to enable judgements about variations in the impact of the DACJS worker role in different force areas. However, some key differences were highlighted via consultation and these relate predominantly to how the role is positioned within the system and its specific remit in each force area. For example:
• In force areas where the role had a specific focus on DVPNs/DVPOs and safeguarding and support provided during the period covered by an order, stakeholders noted improvements in the quality of DVPNs and DVPO applications, and in the conversion rate from DVPNs to DVPOs.

• In the force area with a greater focus on perpetrator engagement, stakeholders reported that the role had resulted in greater engagement with MATAC and with DAPPs.

6.5 Sustainability

Sustainability plans and consultation with programme leads demonstrated that all six force areas have continuation funding in place for the DACJS worker role, though the time period covered by this funding varied.

Four force areas had short-term continuation funding in place to extend the role for between 6 and 12 months. In all cases, ongoing monitoring of the role was planned to continue to determine its efficacy prior to longer-term funding decisions. In three of the force areas, there were also plans to review wider provision during this period to determine whether and where to embed the DACJS role or an equivalent function.

The role was embedded as core business in the other two force areas. In one force area, the role was already core business prior to the programme funding period and in the other this represented a mainstreaming of the role. In both areas, reviews of the role and/or closely related provision were in process or planned, suggesting that the role may change in the future.

There were mixed views on whether the role should primarily focus on direct contact with victims and/or perpetrators or on upskilling and supporting police officers/staff to engage with victims/perpetrators directly. However, in either case stakeholders tended to report that they saw the role as long-term rather than time-limited. In the case of roles focused on direct contact with victims and/or perpetrators, this was because the direct contact was reducing the workload of police officers/staff and would be required on a long-term basis. In the case of roles with a focus on upskilling other staff members, this was because the turnover of police officers/staff within teams would mean that there was a continual flow of police officers/staff requiring this input.

A minority of programme leads and DVSA stakeholders identified threats to the sustainability of the role in terms of managing future demand as it becomes more embedded. They reported that demands on DACJS workers time had increased in line with awareness of the role and its benefits. Were this to continue, they pointed out that demand could not be met by the existing number of roles in each force area. Indeed, in those force areas where the role is focused on medium risk cases DACJS stakeholders pointed out that the volume of cases is already too great for DACJS workers to review and input into all cases.
6.6 Learning
6.6.1 Alignment with good practice principles

The DACJS worker role aligns with three of the principles of good practice identified within literature on whole system approaches to domestic abuse. These are:

- **Principle 4: Tailor specialist advice, advocacy and support for different groups and individuals.** The DACJS worker role is an example of a specialist worker providing advice, advocacy and support tailored to individual victims and perpetrators who are involved with the police.

- **Principle 5: Facilitate multi-agency partnership working to provide services.** The DACJS worker role is an example bringing in staff with specialist knowledge of domestic abuse to work alongside the police in order to provide better services to victims and, in some cases, perpetrators. This includes services provided by the police and support services. In addition, the DACJS worker can facilitate multi-agency partnership working to enable victims and perpetrators to engage with other services as needed.

- **Principle 6: Facilitate the disclosure of abuse and ensure staff respond appropriately.** Consultation with stakeholders highlighted that victims commonly disclosed further abuse to DACJS workers, or provided more details about incidents which they had already reported to the police. This enabled an improved understanding of the nature of the abuse and risk levels associated with it. In addition, direct input by DACJS workers into safety and investigation planning by police officers is likely to have improved police response to domestic abuse.

6.6.2 Added value

DACJS stakeholders, programme leads and senior stakeholders consistently reported that the DACJS worker added value, when compared to previous provision.

In particular, they reported that it improved the quality of safeguarding and support responses for domestic abuse victims who are in contact with the police.

They also highlighted that the role created efficiencies by reducing the workload of officers and staff in the police teams with which DACJS workers worked.

Programme leads and DVSA stakeholders in a minority of force areas also emphasised that the role is inexpensive, given the amount of specialism it introduces and the fact that one worker can reduce the workload of a relatively large number of police officers.
6.6.3 Identification and sharing of good practice

The DACJS worker role principles could be applied in other force areas to introduce specialist input at points in the local criminal justice system where this is judged to be required.

It is important to note, however, that the longer-term application and outcomes of the roles have not been fully established within the DAWSA funding period. As such, they constitute emerging good practice rather than good practice for which the evidence base is confirmed.

6.6.4 Lessons for future development and implementation

Figure 51 summarises the recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the DACJS workers. These may be of use in the future development and implementation of work to increase the efficacy of responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of DAWSA in the future.
### Figure 51: Recommendations for DACJS worker role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Articulating interactions between interventions.</strong> Plans and programme documentation for transformation programmes like DAWSA should clearly articulate the ways in which new interventions relate to each other, and to pre-existing services and interventions.</td>
<td>Connections between projects were not always clearly articulated in programme documentation. As a result, they could be perceived as a suite of stand-alone projects to tackle specific issues. In addition, in some instances there appeared to be a risk of duplication or missed opportunities to build clear pathways through the system as a result of not explicitly recognising or explaining how projects related to each other. Ensuring the inter-connections between projects are clearly defined should help to avoid siloed working, duplication or inefficiencies across the system.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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| 5      | **Balancing regional consistency and local flexibility.** Regional programmes aiming to replicate activity across multiple sites should review the balance between regional consistency and local flexibility in the delivery models for the different projects. | Force areas often reported that local flexibility was required but there is a tension between this and programmes designed to replicate and test interventions across multiple sites. Reviewing the balance between these two elements might enable solutions which:  
- Promote the consistent development and application of good practice.  
- Enable robust evaluation of innovative practice to develop an improved evidence base.  
Recognise the need for local flexibility to ensure that projects are both feasible and beneficial across the | 6.3.5             |
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing balance between victim and perpetrator work.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between victim and perpetrator focused work.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders and programme leads in most force areas reported that an increase in perpetrator engagement work was an area for development for the DACJS worker role. However, they also highlighted tensions in managing an increase in workload relating to perpetrator work alongside existing functions of the role.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing balance between direct work with victims/perpetrators and input into training/CPD.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the balance between direct safeguarding and engagement work and training/upskilling police officers.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders highlighted that the training, coaching and advisory elements of the DACJS role were valuable. However, in some force areas this appeared to be a more minor element of the role, which was focused predominantly on direct safeguarding and engagement work.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Localising the role.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the extent to which the role is currently localised.</td>
<td>DACJS stakeholders in the majority of force areas reported that it would be beneficial to further localise the role within districts. However, in a minority of areas consistency across the force area was seen as desirable. Reviewing the localisation of the role would enable key stakeholders to consider whether further localisation is desirable or whether localisation should be reduced in favour of consistency across the whole force area.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Involvement of DACJS workers with DVPN/DVPOs.</strong> Force areas continuing with the DACJS worker role should review the role’s input into DVPN and DVPO.</td>
<td>Force areas where the DACJS worker role involved input into DVPNs and DVPOs reported that this supported upskilling of police officers and successfully improved the quality and conversion rate of DVPNs and DVPOs. This could potentially be replicated in other force areas.</td>
<td>6.3.6</td>
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7 Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel

7.1 Key findings

7.1.1 Progress in implementation

- Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels were established in all six force areas during the programme funding period and have been supporting multi-agency scrutiny for between six and 17 months.

- Local terms of reference, scrutiny frameworks, and confidentiality agreements were developed to support their operation.

- Between two and six meetings have been held per force area, reviewing an average of 2.6 cases per meeting.

- All six force areas plan to sustain the panels beyond the programme funding period.

7.1.2 Overview of implementation and impact

Figure 52 summarises the key evaluation findings relating to the implementation and impact of the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels.
Figure 52: Overview of key findings for independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels

**Strengths**

- The panels proved relatively easy to set up and maintain and are low-cost to implement.
- The independence and expertise of panel members has enabled panels to offer specialist insight and constructive criticism when scrutinising cases.
- Panel members were highly engaged with panels, valuing the opportunity to improve police response and further their own understanding of it.
- There was a culture of continuous learning and development in the panels.

**Challenges**

- It proved challenging to agree information sharing processes and establish the best approach to sharing information on cases scrutinised, in order to provide adequate detail but a manageable volume of information.
- Panels in several force areas encountered early challenges in building productive and non-defensive relationships with forces.
- The key ongoing challenge is ensuring that feedback is translated into organisational learning and change in the forces.

**Areas for development**

- Feedback mechanisms are in place in each force area to convey learning to the force but could be honed in some force areas to ensure that feedback is reaching the right learning structures and decision-makers.
- Force areas where the CPS is not involved in panels reported that their inclusion would strengthen panels, both in terms of attendance at meetings but also provision of case file information to enable victims’ journey through the whole criminal justice system to be scrutinised.

**Outcomes**

- Minutes from the meetings and consultation with panel members and programme leads demonstrate that the panels are generating high-quality, regular and independent structured feedback, which covers engagement, case file quality and evidential issues.
- There is early evidence that forces are acting on learning at case level and individual officer level, but there is still progress to be made in taking action on force-level learning.
7.2 Overview

Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels involve the establishment and ongoing delivery of an independent panel whose members are currently involved in a role related to domestic abuse. The panel’s purpose is to review police case files and provide structured feedback to forces on engagement and evidential issues, as well as highlighting examples of good and poor practice.

The purpose of this activity was to introduce an independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA.

7.3 Implementation

7.3.1 Variations in implementation

All participating force areas used the same overarching model for the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel, which involved the establishment of a panel of independent experts to meet quarterly. Any variations in implementation therefore relate mainly to local approaches to recruitment, the panel’s operation or feedback mechanisms.

Important note on the focus of the panels

In Force D, a deliberate decision was taken to widen the focus of the panel beyond police response to include wider multi-agency response to domestic abuse. The led to differences in the implementation and early outcomes of the panel.

Some findings and recommendations in this chapter are relevant only to those scrutiny panels with a focus on police response because this was the approach taken in five of the six force areas included in DAWSA. Where this is the case, it is made clear within the text.

Figure 53 summarises the approaches to implementation and the key milestones achieved in the six different force areas.
### Figure 53: Implementation of independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels in the six force areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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</table>
| Force A    | Originally introduced in March 2017 but only one meeting took place at this time. Re-introduced in March 2018. | £0 | • The panel is led by the OPCC.  
• As of January 2019, there were seven members of the scrutiny panel, each from a different organisation. The members were: Outreach Service Manager (refuge/support service), Service Manager (refuge/support service), Deputy Director (refuge/support service), Manager (children’s support service), Team Manager (perpetrator programme provider), Community Safety Lead (local authority), and Business Manager for Domestic Abuse (housing service).  
• Panel meetings take place roughly every quarter.  
• As of March 2019, five meetings had taken place, scrutinising a total of 11 cases.  
• The OPCC lead is responsible for summarising the findings of the panel. These are fed back to the force via the Protecting Vulnerable People operational delivery group and are then tasked to the most appropriate lead officer to take forward and report back. To date, a number of relevant actions have been added to the local domestic abuse improvement plan.  
• The panel is now embedded as core business so will be sustained beyond the programme funding period. |
| Force B    | January 2018 | £6,000 | • The panel is led by the OPCC.  
• There were between five and 17 members of the panel between January 2018 and March 2019, with nine members in March 2019. Core members |

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62 Expenditure reported in financial expenditure reports 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.
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<th>Force area</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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| Force C    | July 2017      | £6,000          | - The panel is led by the OPCC.  
- As of April 2019, there were 12 members of the scrutiny panel. An open recruitment process was used. A current membership list was not available for review, but the “Background and Guidance” document stated that membership would include “a fair representation of organisations with an interest or working with victims of domestic abuse throughout [the force area].” In the panel session observed, attendees were from: OPCC representatives, workers from specialist domestic abuse support services, a safety manager from a local housing association, an NHS safeguarding team member, a service user representative and a lay member who was a retired magistrate. The panel includes representation from people with lived experience of domestic abuse.  
- Panel meetings take place roughly every quarter.  
- As of March 2019, five meetings had taken place, scrutinising a total of eight cases. |

- Panel meetings take place roughly every quarter.  
- As of March 2019, six meetings had taken place, scrutinising a total of 18 cases.  
- Panel findings are collated into a single set of action points which are discussed with the chief inspector who attended the panel, who has responsibility for feeding back into the force as required.  
- The panel is now embedded as core business so will be sustained beyond the programme funding period.
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<th>Force area</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
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| Force D    | September 2018 | £4,500          | • Recommendations from the panel are collated and fed back to an agreed single point of contact in the force, who is a Chief Inspector.  
• The panel is now embedded as core business so will be sustained beyond the programme funding period. |
| Force E    | July 2018      | £1,500          | • The panel is led by the OPCC. It has an independent chair who was appointed through an external recruitment process.  
• As of April 2019, there were 21 members of the scrutiny panel. These included representatives from: support services, a housing provider, a mental health service provider, local authority children’s and adult safeguarding services, local authorities, a university lecturer.  
• Panel meetings take place roughly every quarter.  
• As of April 2019, two meetings had taken place, scrutinising a total of two cases (one per meeting).  
• The OPCC lead is responsible for collating any actions emerging from the panel. These are fed back to the force and any relevant actions are added to the force performance plan.  
• The panel is now embedded as core business so will be sustained beyond the programme funding period. |
### Progress in implementation

- Panel meetings take place roughly every quarter.
- As of April 2019, three meetings had taken place, scrutinising a total of nine cases.
- Immediate actions are taken forward by the Detective Superintendent attending the meeting. As at February 2019, an outcome sheet was being prepared to reflect the panel's thoughts and feedback and demonstrate the actions to be taken.
- The panel is now embedded as core business so will be sustained beyond the programme funding period.

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<th>Force area</th>
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<th>Funding by DAWSA £</th>
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<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
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- As of April 2019, there were 12 members of the scrutiny panel, supported by a police detective inspector acting as an advisor, and a police researcher. Each member was from a different organisation and together they covered each district of the force area. The members were: OPCC Safeguarding advisor (chair), Senior Prosecutor (CPS), Head of Social Care (LA Children's Services), Special Education Advisor (LA Children's Services), Male victim specialist (3rd sector), LGBT+ victim specialist (3rd sector), Designated Nurse for Safeguarding (CCG), Service Manager (Women's Aid), MARAC Manager (LA, Community Safety), Community Safety Partnership Manager (x2), NHS England Women's Services Commissioner.
- Panel meetings take place roughly every quarter.
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<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>• As of April 2019, four meetings had taken place, scrutinising a total of 17 cases.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Findings from the panel meetings are shared with the force Strategic Safeguarding board and supervisors of individual officers, are included in the PCC Annual Report, and have also featured in OPCC media work and on the police intranet.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• The panel is now embedded as core business so will be sustained beyond the programme funding period.</td>
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7.3.2 Stages of implementation

Figure 54 summarises the main stages in implementing the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels, which are described in further detail below.

Figure 54: Stages of implementation of independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels

Step 1: Development of key documentation

Key documentation to support the development and implementation of the independent domestic scrutiny panel was developed and agreed. In most force areas, this included:

- Terms of reference.
- Scrutiny framework.
- Information sharing agreement or confidentiality agreement.

Some force areas also developed a role description to support recruitment to the panel.

In some force areas, development of some elements of documentation took place after the recruitment of the panel.
Step 2: Recruitment of panel members

Two main approaches were taken to recruit panel members:

- **Recruitment via agencies.** In the majority of force areas, DAWSA programme leads or OPCC leads responsible for establishing the panel approached specific agencies which they wished to include on the panel, asking them to nominate a representative. As a minimum, this included specialist domestic abuse support providers and local authorities (including adult services, children’s services and/or community safety). In some force areas, it also extended to NHS partners such as clinical commissioning groups, housing services and probation.

- **Open recruitment.** In a minority of force areas an open recruitment process was used, in which applications to become a panel member were invited.

Step 3: Determining police representation at panels

In addition to recruiting the independent panel members force areas also made local arrangements for police representation at the panels. In a minority of force areas, police representatives are considered to be panel members. In most force areas, however, they are attendees whose role is to provide clarification on police process, obtain access to additional case documentation on request, and/or receive feedback from the panel to take back to colleagues in force.

Some force areas distinguish between the support and clarification role, and the feedback and action role. The former tends to be delivered by a police constable or sergeant in the domestic abuse team. The latter is someone at Detective Chief Inspector or more senior rank.

The majority of force areas also reported benefits in rotating attendance around the different area commands to ensure that the profile and significance of the panel is recognised in all area commands.

In one force area, there is no police representation at the panel. Police attendance was trialled but panel members reported that the dialogue between the police representative and the panel members was at times defensive and therefore a decision was made to feedback to police representatives outside of the meeting. However, the panel includes a former police officer who is in a position to provide clarification about police process as needed.

Step 4: Training for panel members

In some force areas, training sessions for panel members took place as part of the process of establishing the panel and building panel members’ understanding of police and other criminal justice processes.

Step 5: Selection of cases

Cases are selected in advance of each panel meeting. In general, force areas initially elected to focus on cases which resulted in a no further action decision by
the police or by the CPS. The rationale for this focus was two-fold. First, there is a desire to reduce the number of no further action cases if possible and independent scrutiny of such cases might provide insight into how police response could have been improved to reduce the likelihood of a no further action outcome. Second, in cases involving no further action the core case information would be held by the police and therefore scrutiny could be undertaken without need for information sharing of files from other organisations, such as the CPS.

The majority of force areas also described thematic elements to case selection, which were added at a later date or would be added in the future based on suggestions by the panel or OPCC and police leads. Themes included: cases involving substance misuse, domestic abuse in BAME relationships and cases with male victims.

Some force areas described processes for selecting cases at random from all eligible cases from the last quarter, whereas in other force areas OPCC leads and police leads selected cases by hand which were felt to provide useful examples of practice and victim journeys.

**Step 6: Preparation of documentation**

Documents were prepared for each meeting. In some force areas, these were wholly or partially redacted. The documentation shared varied across force areas.

In all but one force area, documents were made available to the panel members on the day of the meeting, with time built in for reading them prior to discussion. In one force area, they were made available in advance but panel members could only view them by appointment at police or OPCC premises and hard copies or electronic documents were not shared with members outside of police or OPCC premises. In another force area, although documentation was only shared in the meeting, the names and dates of birth of perpetrators and victims were shared by secure email in advance to enable agencies to gather information from their own databases before the meeting.

**Step 7: Holding meetings**

Panel meetings are held quarterly. Minutes are taken, including recommendations or action points to feed back to forces.

**Step 8: Feedback to forces**

A range of different feedback mechanisms are used in different force areas but they usually involve collation of feedback by the OPCC lead and feedback to a Single Point of Contact in the police, who is then responsible for cascading this information within the force as required, e.g. to relevant strategic level boards and/or individual supervisors or officers’ staff.
Step 9: Response from forces

Forces provide a response to the panels’ action points and recommendations. This includes force-level decisions about whether and how recommendations and action points will be taken forward, and by whom. It also includes feedback to the panel about the force’s responses.

Step 10: Continuous development of panel processes and membership

Processes and membership are adjusted or expanded in line with feedback from the panel members. Examples include: the expansion of membership over time, streamlining of case selection and discussion processes, and expanding the focus of the panel to include information provided by partners as well as that contained in the police files.

7.3.3 Strengths in implementation

Ease of set-up and maintenance

The majority of programme leads and senior stakeholders highlighted the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels as one of the most successfully implemented projects within DAWSA. In particular, all force areas except one reported that it had proved relatively easy to set up. In addition, programme leads pointed to the low costs of implementation, because preparation for the panels can be absorbed into an existing role within the OPCC and/or police and the panel members give their time for free, having been released from their organisations to do so. However, they recognised that this means that maintaining the panel relies on relationships and the continued support of panel members and their organisations.

Independence and expertise of panel members

The experience and expertise of panel members was also a strength in the implementation of this project. Members were drawn from organisations specialising in domestic abuse, or in elements of safeguarding and support which would enable them to offer specialist insight and a range of perspectives on police response. In some force areas, they also included people with their own lived experience of domestic abuse.

Programme leads also emphasised the independence of the panel members from the police, reporting that they were able to take a critical but constructive approach to case scrutiny, which was victim-focused.

Panel members acknowledged that the changes they would like to see were unlikely to happen “overnight”, but were positive about their ability to provide useful feedback to forces.

Strong buy-in and participation

Programme leads and panel members reported that the panels are well attended and popular with members and the observed panel meetings were broadly well
attended. They attributed this to the fact that members recognise the value of the
panels in identifying ways to improve responses to domestic abuse, but also in
providing an opportunity for members to build their understanding of police and
criminal justice processes relating to domestic abuse.

**Culture of continuous learning**

There was a culture of continuous learning and development in the scrutiny
panels. Observations saw evidence that panels made efforts to improve their
understanding of police processes, including scheduled visits from police officers
to explain elements such as THRIVE risk assessments. Two panels also
discussed improvements to their ways of working, e.g. revisions to channels for
feedback from the police force or changes to the structure of the panel meeting.
In one panel where CPS representatives were present, panel members reported
that this had been introduced in response to discussions in the previous quarterly
panel meeting. This was confirmed by consultation with panel members and
programme leads, who reiterated examples of adjusting processes and
membership in light of learning from previous panels.

**7.3.4 Challenges in implementation**

**Information provided as a basis for scrutiny**

A key challenge in implementing the scrutiny panels was finding the best way of
sharing information on the cases scrutinised, to ensure the right information is
available to panel members at the right moment. Forces in different areas shared
different amounts of information with the panel, but the observed meetings
showed that the right amount to share for productive scrutiny needs careful
consideration.

**Volume of information shared**

Access to information in police case files was essential for discussion in scrutiny
panels, but finding the right balance between including too little and too much
information presented a challenge for several forces.

- When case files did not include enough information, for example when witness
  statements were not included, this limited the panel's ability to scrutinise the
cases.

- Scrutiny was also limited by not knowing what information to expect to be
  included in the case files, for example when it was not clear whether a lack of
  witness statements was due to police actions (i.e. statements had not been
taken) or case file preparation (i.e. statements had been taken but were not
  included in the file).

- When too much information was included, without enough structure, files
  became repetitive, dense and difficult to read.

- Preparing information for the scrutiny panels was a time-consuming task, and
  this was completed by a staff member alongside their day-to-day role.
The scrutiny panel coordinators in each area had responded to this challenge to try and optimise the volume of information shared in each meeting. Programme leads and observations found that effective approaches included:

- Providing a summary sheet for each case, giving an overview of the incidents and individuals involved, to help panel members make sense of the large and sometimes dense case files. If sufficient resource was available, this could be even more developed, to provide an overview of the individuals involved (including children), the relationships between them, and the timeline of the case.

- Reducing the volume of hard copy information by providing essential information in hard copy alongside a schedule of information which was available electronically. Panel members could then review this electronic information on screen as needed.

Programme leads also reported that providing additional information about whether victims were engaging with support services helped panel members understand whether support needs were being met. This was particularly important for the panel with a focus on wider multi-agency responses. However, for panels with a focus on police response it is not clear what impact this had on the panel's ability to scrutinise police actions.

**Recommendation 17:** Forces and scrutiny panels should carefully consider the balance of information that will make the most of the scrutiny panel process, the best way of presenting this information, and the capacity among the team to prepare it. Key considerations include:

- Which pieces of evidence need to be included, and how to make it clear when these pieces of evidence do not exist.

- Whether some kinds of information could be made available for reference electronically, rather than included in the hard copy essential files.

- Whether a summary sheet is needed to help panel members quickly make sense of case files, and what capacity is available to prepare this.

- Whether additional information, giving a fuller picture of the case, is necessary to enable scrutiny of wider multi-agency response and/or will contribute to scrutiny of the police response.

**Timing of information shared**

In the panels with a focus on police response, printed case files were shared at the start of the meeting and panel members were given time to read through the information.

In the force area where the panel focused on wider multi-agency responses, members also had access to the names and dates of birth of the victim and
perpetrator, via secure email, in advance of the meeting. The members of this panel valued this approach, saying that being able to research the individuals in their own records before the meeting brought an additional level of detail, resulting in a broader multi-agency discussion about how to ensure that victims' needs were met. However, this advanced sharing of information may only be necessary in panels where the focus is wider than police response.

**Approaches to redaction**

Programme leads described challenges in determining the best approach to redacting case files. In a number of force areas an initial decision was taken to redact files. This was mainly based on concerns about the suitability of sharing personal and sensitive information with panel members without victims’ consent, and implications this would have for vetting panel members and the ability to share information in advance of the meeting.

However, programme leads reported that redacted information proved more difficult for panel members to follow when trying to build up a picture of the case. It also precluded the use of footage from body-worn cameras, which was useful in enabling panel members to review interactions with victims and unpick the events behind written case file notes. In addition, it added significant time to the preparation of files.

As a consequence of these early experiences of redaction, agreement was sought in most force areas to present unredacted information to panel members at the meeting itself. Information sharing and confidentiality agreements were put in place to support this.

The panel in one force area continued to use files where personal information was redacted, based on their interpretation of the GDPR.

**Building relationships with the police force**

Panels across several areas had encountered difficulties, to a greater or lesser extent, in working productively and collaboratively with the relevant police force. The consistency with which this was reported suggests that this challenge relates to the model of the scrutiny group, rather than to details of implementation in any one area.

Panel members and programme leads in several areas described “teething problems” in working with the police, although it appeared these had been largely overcome. In particular, panels described how the purpose of the panel had not initially been clear to police forces, which had reacted ‘defensively’ to what they perceived as criticism from the panel members whose expertise was not necessarily known to officers. Adjustments to the model that have helped overcome this challenge are discussed in section 7.4.2.2.
Ensuring feedback results in organisational learning

A further challenge identified by panel members and programme leads was developing effective mechanisms to ensure that feedback was incorporated into organisational learning in the police.

Programme leads explained that this goes beyond agreeing the feedback channels into the police because it is a question of how this feedback is then taken forward, and whether the right organisational structures are leveraged to agree, implement and monitor actions. In general, programme leads were relatively confident that feedback which requires immediate action (such as a safeguarding response) or relates to individuals’ practice (such as concerns about the practice of a specific officer) was being acted upon. At this stage, they tended to be less confident that the best mechanisms were in place to facilitate action based on longer-term or force-wide recommendations and to marry up learning from the panels with learning from other projects, such as inspection and audit findings. However, they also reported that this is a work in progress and mechanisms will be further honed as the panels become more embedded.

7.3.5 Factors supporting implementation

Independence of chair

Programme leads identified that allocating the lead for the panels to the OPCC and appointing an OPCC chair or other independent chair was important in ensuring that the panel is independent and able to hold the police to account on recommendations made.

7.3.6 Suggestions for strengthening design and implementation

Extension of scrutiny panels to include CPS

Programme leads in the majority of force areas stated that the inclusion of the CPS at scrutiny panels could strengthen both their implementation and their impact.

One element of this was to include CPS representatives on the panels themselves. They were in attendance in one force area but in several other areas were not able to attend due to capacity issues. Programme leads reported that their attendance would bring additional expertise to the scrutiny, particularly in relation to charging decisions and thresholds. They also reported that it might have benefits because the CPS representative could explain CPS processes to other panel members in more detail, thus informing their judgements during case scrutiny.

A second element was to include scrutiny of CPS files within the panel’s remit. Programme leads reported that this would make it more feasible to offer scrutiny across all stages of the criminal justice process and to understand victims’ experiences across the system.
The involvement of CPS representatives is discussed in more detail in section 7.4.3.2.

### 7.4 Scale and impact

#### 7.4.1 Assessment against evaluation framework

Figure 56 summarises the evidence for progress against the intended outputs and outcomes of independent scrutiny panels, using the rating system outlined in Figure 55\(^6\). It indicates that the two intended outputs of the panels were fully achieved during the DAWSA funding period. One intended outcome was also fully achieved, and progress was made towards achieving the second outcome, with work ongoing towards this because the panels will continue to operate in all six force areas.

![Figure 55: Ratings used in assessment against the evaluation framework](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been partially achieved or that there is progress indicating that it is likely to be achieved in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has not yet been achieved and that it was not feasible to achieve this outcome within the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Difficult to make a judgement on the basis of the available evidence about the extent to which this output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) The framework includes only outcomes which might feasibly be achieved and evidenced within the programme funding period.
Figure 56: Evidence of progress against intended outputs and outcomes of domestic abuse scrutiny panels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Domestic abuse scrutiny panels are operational in each force area and have appropriate processes in place to support their operation | ✔               | • By the end of the programme funding period, independent domestic scrutiny panels were operational in all force areas and had been running for 6-17 months.  
• There was a wide range of evidence that panels had developed appropriate processes to support their operation. This included evidence from review of documentation, monitoring data, observation of panel meetings and consultation with panel members and programme leads. |
| Panels support multi-agency scrutiny of the (police) response to victims of domestic abuse | ✔               | • As at April 2019, 65 cases had been reviewed during 25 meetings across the region, resulting in an average of 2.6 cases per meeting.  
• There was strong evidence from observation of panel meetings that panels in all force areas support multi-agency scrutiny of the police response to victims of domestic abuse. This was corroborated by consultation with panel members, programme leads and senior stakeholders. The quality of the observed scrutiny varied across force areas but in all force areas it provided insight, learning and action points for the force. |
| **Outcomes**                                                                   |                 |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Panels enable high quality, regular and independent structured feedback provided to forces on engagement, | ✔               | • There was a range of evidence that the panels have resulted in high-quality, regular and structured feedback to forces on engagement, case file quality and evidential issues.  
• In particular, this was evident in the minutes of scrutiny panel meetings and during the observation of panel meetings. During consultation, panel members, programme leads and respondents to the “whole system” E-survey confirmed that the panels were |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>case file quality and evidential issues.</td>
<td>generating feedback to forces. Programme leads reported that identifying and feeding back on areas for development was the main outcome of the panels to-date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Feedback from panels is incorporated into organisational learning structures and learning is acted upon. | • At this stage, there is evidence from documentation and consultation with programme leads and panel members that mechanisms have been developed in the different force areas to ensure that the panel’s feedback is conveyed to the force. However, the extent to which the feedback is reaching relevant learning structures and decision-makers varies across force areas.  
• As a result of this, and because any actions in response to learning may take time to agree and implement, there was limited evidence that organisational learning has yet been acted upon. However, this is understandable given that panels have only been operating for between six and 17 months in each force area. |
7.4.2 Scale

7.4.2.1 Operation and process of domestic abuse scrutiny panels in each force area

By the end of the programme funding period, independent domestic scrutiny panels were operational in all force areas and had been running for between six and 17 months. There was a wide range of evidence that panels had developed appropriate processes to support their operation. This included evidence from review of documentation, monitoring data, observation of panel meetings and consultation with panel members and programme leads.

Number of panel meetings held

Figure 57 indicates that individual forces had held between two and six panel meetings by the end of the programme funding period. All the scrutiny panels met quarterly. Panel members across the six areas agreed that this was the right level of frequency, saying that they would not be able to commit to more frequent meetings.

Figure 57: Number of scrutiny panels held, up to March 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Date of first meeting</th>
<th>Number of meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>March 2018⁶⁴</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terms of reference and scrutiny frameworks

Terms of reference for the scrutiny panel were in place in all six force areas. These were developed individually in each force area. A review of these terms of reference found that the most common topics included were:

- Commitments required from panel members.
- Information about training (if this was provided).
- The frequency and duration of panel meetings.

⁶⁴ The panel was first introduced in March 2017 but only one meeting took place at this time.
• The chosen approach to sampling and preparing cases for scrutiny.
• The chosen approach to scrutinising cases.
• Mechanisms for feeding back to the forces and/or other bodies.
• Regulations around travel expenses and other costs.

The terms of reference were not discussed during any of the six meetings observed, so it was not clear whether members were aware of these.

Producing a scrutiny framework was another key output of the scrutiny panel project. There was evidence from observation and consultation that these were in use in at least five of the force areas; their use was observed at panel meetings in four areas and panel members in a fifth force area reported that a framework had been developed. It was not clear whether there was a framework in place in the sixth force area.

The aim of most meetings appeared to be clear, but in some cases (especially where frameworks were not used) the purpose was less clear. Panels where frameworks were not used also seemed more hesitant to make one panel this was not the sole agreed focus of one of these panels, which focused instead on wider multi-agency responses to domestic abuse.

It is possible that greater use of terms of reference and/or scrutiny frameworks would help to clarify the purpose of the scrutiny panel meetings at the start of each meeting, which would help to reinforce this for existing panel members and introduce it to any new members.

**Recommendation 18:** The scrutiny panel chair should reiterate the terms of reference for the panel at the start of each meeting and remind panel members of the scrutiny framework to which the panel is working.

**Number and role of representatives on each panel**

Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels had a varied make-up, ranging from seven to 24 members, as shown in Figure 58. The meetings we observed included between five and 15 members attending on the day.
In general, panel members reported that they were happy with the size of their local panel. Members of the smallest panel said that the small size was beneficial for the collaborative work. On a larger panel, on the other hand, panel members said they had “cast the net as wide as possible” because they “wanted to have lots of expertise involved”.

All the observed panels included representation from the OPCC and from voluntary and community sector agencies offering support to adult victims and, in some cases, children. All but one included representatives from the police force and four of the six had members from other statutory agencies such as social services. Other organisations that were represented in different combinations across the areas were housing associations, the NHS, the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company, local authorities, Youth Offending Teams and the CPS.

Two panels explicitly included people with lived experience of domestic abuse and had lay members, although at observed meetings these members tended to be less involved in discussions. Given the potential for people with lived experience providing a different perspective from professionals, this appeared a positive step but work was still needed to ensure this contribution was maximised.

More details of the representation on each panel are available in Figure 53 in section 7.3.1.

**Recommendation 19**: Panel membership should be reviewed to ensure that it supports the effective delivery of the panel and includes the range of perspectives which best enables an understanding of the victim’s journey. This includes exploring whether including panel members with lived experience...
experience would be beneficial, in force areas where they are not already included.

7.4.2.2 Support for multi-agency scrutiny of the police response to victims of domestic abuse

There was strong evidence from observation of panel meetings that panels in all force areas support multi-agency scrutiny of the police response to victims of domestic abuse. This was corroborated by consultation with panel members, programme leads and senior stakeholders. The quality of the observed scrutiny varied across force areas but in all force areas it provided insight, learning and action points for the force.

Number of cases scrutinised

As shown in Figure 59, the scrutiny panels in each force area had reviewed between two and 18 cases in the period from their introduction up to March 2019. The average number of cases reviewed per meeting in each force area ranged from 1.0 to 4.3.

Across all of the force areas, 65 cases had been reviewed during 25 meetings, resulting in an average of 2.6 cases per meeting.

Figure 59: Number of cases scrutinised, up to March 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Number of meetings</th>
<th>Number of cases scrutinised</th>
<th>Average cases per meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each scrutiny panel had tried different numbers of cases to review per meeting and most had settled on reviewing two to four cases per session. In the panel with a focus on wider multi-agency responses only one case was scrutinised and panel members did not wish to increase this. In a meeting observed in another area, too many cases were selected and more interesting cases were not prioritised, so the most interesting cases could be missed in each session.
Recommendation 20: Based on feedback from scrutiny panel members, panels with a focus on police response to domestic abuse should aim to review 2-4 cases per session. This allowed sufficient time to discuss each case in detail, but covered enough cases to examine different themes and examples of abuse.

Use of scrutiny frameworks

As discussed above, scrutiny frameworks were used in four of the six panel meetings observed. These were useful. Panels that referred to scrutiny frameworks were more likely to consider all aspects of the police response in detail and appeared more confident in offering recommendations. Frameworks were most successful when used flexibly, to structure and record feedback while still allowing for free-flowing discussion (where relevant to the scrutiny). Panels that used scrutiny frameworks had the most comprehensive range of areas for improvement they had identified, although these also tended to be the panels that had been established for longer and covered the most cases.

Recommendation 21: Scrutiny frameworks should be used to maintain focus, ensure key aspects of the police and/or multi-agency response are considered and give members the confidence to comment on police processes. They should be used flexibly, to direct discussion without being overly restrictive.

Support for multi-agency scrutiny

While all panels included members from support organisations, representation from statutory agencies was also key to multi-agency scrutiny in the meetings we observed. In particular, the police, the CPS and social care should all be represented on panels where possible.

Police were present at all but one of the observed panel meetings. The most common, and most successful, format was when a single police officer attended to answer questions and provide access to police information, and to relay feedback to individuals or a single point of contact in the force, but who was ‘neutral’ i.e. not personally involved in the cases under scrutiny. This role was filled by a range of police officers working in safeguarding and domestic abuse teams and other teams such as the control room, sometimes on a rotating basis.

The police presence appeared beneficial in the meetings observed; panels frequently made use of the police presence to answer clarifying questions about police processes and terminology. In the area where police were not represented, these questions were not answered until written feedback was shared at the next quarterly panel meeting, which impeded and delayed the scrutiny process, and participants did not think the exchange of recommendations in writing was ideal for building a collaborative relationship.

Where police were too heavily represented, however, this appeared to restrain representatives from other agencies from voicing their opinions fully. This was
apparent in one meeting where police were almost as heavily represented as other agencies, including by officers who had been involved in the cases under scrutiny. In another area with a more balanced and longer-established panel, however, this problem was not apparent.

**Recommendation 22:** Police representatives should attend scrutiny panel meetings to answer questions around terminology and processes, and to relay feedback to the force. A single police representative at the table is preferable, for a balance where other members are comfortable speaking openly.

In one meeting, an additional police officer attended in a purely observational role, sitting away from the table to minimise their impact on the discussion. One-off observations of this nature might help to improve police understanding of the purpose of the scrutiny panel, thereby improving relationships with the force, as well as sharing learning around domestic abuse with the police officers that attend.

**Recommendation 23:** Police officers should be able to attend meetings for one-off observation, in order to help spread best practice to the frontline and to cement understanding and relationships between the panel and the force.

CPS involvement provided a richness of information that was highly valued by other panel members and which enhanced the panel’s ability to scrutinise police actions. CPS colleagues were able to provide information about decisions that directly contributed to feedback to the police forces, which other panel members said was valuable. On panels where the CPS were not represented, this impeded scrutiny in cases where CPS judgements were not understood, and in some panels limited the cases that were selected for scrutiny as those with CPS involvement were avoided. Several members of those panels said that CPS involvement would be helpful.

Social care was not always represented on the panels: children’s and/or adults’ services were included in the membership in three of the six force areas. Furthermore, in the panels that included representatives from social services, other panel members reported that they did not always reliably attend meetings. Panel members said that children’s services, in particular, brought “a very welcome element” to the discussion when they were able to attend. Panels with representation from social care also appeared to have more productive relationships with police forces, suggesting that the involvement of social care added to police perceptions of the panel.

**Recommendation 24:** Independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels should include representation from social care and from the CPS, wherever possible. If attendance in person is not possible, a feedback mechanism should be put in place to share CPS information with the panel.
The other agencies whose absence negatively affected discussion, according to panel members, were mental health and substance misuse services and children’s services and education (including higher education, which was represented at one panel).

7.4.3 Impact

7.4.3.1 Presence of high quality, regular and independent structured feedback from panels to forces on engagement, case file quality and evidential issues

There was a range of evidence that the panels have resulted in high-quality, regular and structured feedback to forces on engagement, case file quality and evidential issues. In particular, this was evident in the minutes of scrutiny panel meetings and during the observation of panel meetings. During consultation, panel members, programme leads and respondents to the “whole system” E-survey confirmed that the panels were generating feedback to forces. Programme leads reported that identifying and feeding back on areas for development was the main outcome of the panels to-date.

Independence, quality, regularity and structure of feedback

Feedback from the panels was generated by panel members outside of the police and was therefore independent. A review of the minutes of scrutiny panel meetings found that feedback was provided quarterly, following every panel meeting. In general, this was of high-quality. In four of six force areas, feedback was structured by a scrutiny framework and this resulted in highly structured feedback, but in the remaining force area for which minutes were reviewed structured feedback was also produced.

During consultation panel members and programme leads confirmed that structured feedback was provided following every scrutiny panel meeting. Panel leads also recognised the quality of the feedback, as well as its constructive nature.

This was further substantiated by responses to the “whole system” E-survey because 58% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that implementation of the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel enabled high, quality, regular and structured feedback to forces on engagement, case file quality and evidential issues. Only 1% of respondents disagreed.

Coverage of engagement, case file quality and evidential issues

During consultation panel members reported that themes of good practice were difficult to identify (especially when record-keeping needed improvement), although deliberate effort was made to ensure that good practice was considered. Indeed, the panel minutes and feedback generally focused on areas

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65 Minutes were available for five out of six force areas. Force D was unable to provide minutes for review.

66 n=145.
of improvement for police practice, although initial call handling was identified as a strength in four of the six force areas.

The panel minutes and feedback\(^6\), observation of meetings and consultation with panel members indicated that themes for improvement in the cases they scrutinised generally covered the areas of case file quality, engagement and evidential issues, although the focus varied between areas. The findings are summarised in Figure 60. Further information from the review of minutes and feedback from the panels is provided in appendix A.

Overall, panels identified the greatest number of areas for improvement in relation to engagement. This is perhaps unsurprising given the make-up of panels and their collective expertise in engaging and supporting victims. In particular, ensuring response was victim focussed, risk assessment and child safeguarding were common themes across the majority of force areas.

The most common areas for improvement in case file quality related to accurate and consistent record-keeping and recording of risk assessments. The quality of records also impacted on the quality of scrutiny discussion itself, since panels could not always be confident that they had access to all the relevant information, such as witness statements or records of what support was offered or ‘advice given’ to victims.

**Recommendation 25:** Record-keeping and case file quality should be a priority for improvement across all force areas. This was commonly identified by scrutiny panels, as well as making scrutiny more difficult where panel members could not be confident of having the right information.

In terms of evidential issues, the most frequently-identified areas for improvement related to maximising opportunities for evidence-gathering, the use of Body Worn Camera and picking up on signs of coercive control.

*Figure 60: Key themes of good practice and areas for improvement identified by the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback theme</th>
<th>Force area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good practice: engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panels praised initial call handling. This included timeliness and appropriate identification of risk levels and priority.</td>
<td>✔️ ✔️ ✔️ ✔️ ✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panels commended individual officers whom they considered to “shine”. Participants described “seeing”</td>
<td>✔️ ✔️ ✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) Minutes were available for five out of six force areas. Force D was unable to provide minutes for review.
### Feedback theme

*the thread of a really good officer who comes up again [in multiple cases].*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panels judged police first responses to be timely and appropriate.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panels found evidence of officers’ skills and efforts in engaging the victim on first response to the incident.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panels reported that they had seen improvements where recommendations had been made around use of language, interactions with victims and focus on victims.</th>
<th></th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Good practice: Evidential issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panels identified good use of body worn video in some force areas, though it was also a common area for improvement.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<th>E</th>
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</table>

### Areas for improvement: Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim focus was lacking, including demeanour towards victims, consideration of their safety and drive to follow through opportunities to engage, protect and support them.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child safeguarding was not adequately considered, including considering the impact on children and following protocols to improve child safeguarding.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk assessments were not always accurate and it was not always clear what evidence had been used to inform them and how decisions had been reached.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First response to incidents was delayed in some cases, which left victims and children in an unsafe situation.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DVPNs did not appear to have been considered in cases where they might have been appropriate.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs assessments were inaccurate or contained insufficient detail to enable assessment of need.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<th>Special measures did not appear to have been considered.</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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</table>
Restraining orders were put in place but the parameters and breach process for these orders was not well explained to victims.

Response to male victims did not involve an adequate level of support.

Officers’ demeanour towards perpetrators was inappropriate.

### Areas for improvement: Case file quality

Record-keeping was inconsistent or incomplete, with insufficient detail and/or conflicting intelligence about the people involved (including children) and a lack of clarity in records of actions taken.

The recording of risk assessments was inadequate, including gaps in forms; for instance, in one force area a blank response to any question would be recorded as a ‘no’.

The language used in police records was judgemental or victim-blaming.

### Areas for improvement: Evidential issues

Opportunities for gathering evidence were missed. This included following up with witnesses and family members, exploring the background of the offender, following up on worries expressed by the victim, and making use of other evidential opportunities where victims did not wish to give a statement.

The use of Body Worn Video could be improved to enable more effective evidence-gathering.

Coercive control was not identified in some cases where it was apparent.

Taking statements could be improved to enable more effective evidence-gathering.

New incidents and records of historical incidents needed to be linked together as soon as possible after the first response, in order to understand patterns of abuse and accurately assess risk.
7.4.3.2 Incorporation of feedback from panels into organisational learning structures, and extent to which learning is acted upon

At this stage, there is evidence from documentation and consultation with programme leads and panel members that mechanisms have been developed in the different force areas to ensure that the panel’s feedback is conveyed to the force. However, the extent to which the feedback is reaching relevant learning structures and decision-makers varies across force areas. As a result of this, and because any actions in response to learning may take time to agree and implement, there was limited evidence that organisational learning has yet been acted upon. However, this is understandable given that panels have only been operating for between six and 17 months in each force area.

Incorporation of panel feedback into organisational learning structures

On balance, the available evidence suggests that this outcome is being achieved. A range of different feedback mechanisms are used in different force areas, in order to ensure that panel feedback is incorporated into organisational learning structures. These are outlined in Figure 53 in section 7.3.1 but usually involve collation of feedback by the OPCC lead and feedback to a Single Point of Contact in the police, who is then responsible for cascading this information within the force as required, e.g. to relevant strategic level boards and/or individual supervisors or officers. More information on the feedback process from scrutiny panel meetings is available in appendix A.

Documentary evidence of feedback being taken forward from the single point of contact into organisational structures was provided in three force areas, and offered examples of three different approaches. These were:

- One force area provided redacted minutes from an operational delivery group which illustrated that panel feedback was reported into this group for action planning.

- A second force area shared an action log which has been developed in response to the learning points from panel meetings. This included a description of the action, an action owner, the timeframe for completion, any updates on the action, and the status of the action.

- A third force area provided an example of an email trail in which positive feedback and learning points were fed back via their supervisor to individual officers involved in a scrutinised case.

Similar approaches were described by programme leads in other force areas, especially with reference to the development of action logs or plans specifically for actions emerging from the panel, or the incorporation of action points into existing force performance improvement plans. In addition, programme leads and documentation provided evidence that the majority of force areas are collating annual reports of key findings which will be shared with the force. In some cases, these will be made widely available via the intranet or the OPCC website.
Almost half of respondents to the “whole system” E-survey also reported that this outcome had been achieved, because 49% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that implementation of the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panel had resulted in feedback being incorporated into organisational learning structures, and this learning acted upon. Only 2% of respondents disagreed.\(^{68}\)

**Learning acted upon by forces**

The available evidence suggests that there is further progress to be made in achieving this second outcome. Whilst there are examples of learning being acted upon in some force areas, these tend to relate primarily to action points and learning relating to individual cases or officers, rather than wider organisational learning and practice change across the force.

Consultation with programme leads and observation of panel meetings indicated that there are three distinct types of feedback to consider:

1. Feedback requiring immediate action, such as identified safeguarding concerns.
2. Feedback for specific officers and supervisors involved in the cases scrutinised.
3. Feedback on learning points, actions and recommendations which might be relevant across the force.

Programme leads described mechanisms for ensuring that types 1 and 2 are acted upon and the majority were confident that these mechanisms were functioning so that safeguarding actions were completed and feedback reached officers and supervisors to be followed up individually as needed.

In the case of type 3, wider learning for the force, programme leads in the majority of force areas stated that it was not yet clear to what extent the learning points identified by panels would be acted upon by forces. Similarly, analysis of the qualitative questions within the “whole system” E-survey suggest that a minority of key stakeholders believed that it was too early to tell whether or not feedback had been incorporated into practice.

The only documentation provided which enabled evaluators to track the identification and achievement of actions was the action log provided by one force area. This confirms the finding that immediate and individual-level actions tend to be achieved whilst force-level actions are still pending.

However, panel members in a minority of force areas did provide examples of action taken by the force in relation to force-level learning points, which had been fed back to them at subsequent panel meetings. Members of one panel, which was well established with a positive relationship in place with the force, said that feedback was reaching the frontline, including where good practice had been identified. Updates they had received had reassured them that “things actually

\(^{68}\) n=145.
“happen” and that the panel was not “like ticking a box”. Examples provided by panel members were:

- In one force area, police officers had been given developmental training in line with their recommendation from a previous meeting.
- In another force area, training around use of language was being reviewed and reiterated for police officers in response to the panel’s comments.

In other force areas, members were not so confident that feedback was being acted upon. Some panel members reported that the responses they received from the force were occasionally defensive, justifying behaviour rather than acknowledging the panels’ recommendations. To address this, one panel was in the process of adjusting their feedback mechanisms to include more face-to-face interaction with the police, to help build the relationship and facilitate a collaborative exchange of information and recommendations.

**Recommendation 26**: Force areas should review mechanisms for panel feedback to be shared with the force and for actions in response to this feedback to be planned, undertaken and monitored. Review findings should be shared across the region in order to determine which mechanisms are most effective.

### 7.4.4 Variations in impact

There was no detailed evidence about variations in impact of the individual scrutiny panels. In the longer-term, impact may vary depending on the efficacy of feedback mechanisms into individual forces, and the appetite and ability of forces to act upon organisational learning. At this stage, however, it is too early in the implementation of the panels to make judgements about such differences in impact.

### 7.5 Sustainability

Sustainability plans showed that the scrutiny panels would continue in all six force areas, having been embedded as core business in five areas and committed to for at least another year in the sixth force area. This was welcomed by the panel members who participated in focus groups, although panel members from the OPCC in one area highlighted that the panel format might change to make resourcing the panel as efficient as possible.

Programme leads and a minority of senior stakeholders reported that the scrutiny panels are easier to sustain than a number of the other projects included in DAWSA. This is mainly because preparation for the panels can be absorbed into an existing role within the OPCC and/or police and the panel members give their time for free, having been released from their organisations to do so.
7.6 Learning

7.6.1 Alignment with good practice principles

The independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels are aligned with one of the principles of good practice identified within literature on whole system approaches to domestic abuse. This is: **Principle 1: Assess need and plan services on the basis of robust evidence from multiple agencies and from service users.** One element of this principle is utilising the expertise of the specialist domestic abuse sector to inform needs analysis and service design and the panel provides a forum for this specialist expertise to be focused on police responses to domestic abuse.

7.6.2 Added value

Members of scrutiny panels and programme leads consistently reported that they thought the model represented added value, as did a minority of senior stakeholders. However, panel members and programme leads highlighted that, for panels in the early stages of implementation, “the jury is out” with respect to measuring impact.

Stakeholders reported that domestic abuse was a new focus for independent scrutiny, even in force areas which had independent scrutiny panels in place in relation to other crimes (such as rape). They also noted that the learning identified by the panels is of value to the host force areas but also to other force areas interested in improving their response to domestic abuse.

**Additional benefits of the panels**

One interesting unintended consequence of the panels which was identified by a minority of programme leads was its impact on improving perceptions of police response amongst panel members. Exposure to the detail of police case work had reportedly enabled panel members to better understand the challenges facing police officers and provided them with evidence of good practice by the police. If this improved perception is cascaded into panel members’ organisations, it may have benefits for shared understanding of one another’s roles and hence for partnership working. In this way, the panel might complement some of the other DAWSA projects which include this shared learning amongst their intended outcomes.

In addition, a minority of programme leads had added additional and unexpected value by identifying learning for organisations other than the police.
7.6.3 Identification and sharing of good practice

The terms of reference and scrutiny panel frameworks developed by force areas participating in DAWSA could act as templates to be localised by other force areas which introduce similar panels.

In addition, there were similar themes in the feedback and areas for improvement identified by the panels in different force areas. These are described in detail in section 7.4.3.1. These could act as a starting point for other force areas which would like to use multi-agency feedback to explore and improve the quality of their response to victims of domestic abuse.

7.6.4 Lessons for future development and implementation

Figure 61 summarises the recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels. These may be of use in the future development and implementation of work to increase the efficacy of responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of DAWSA in the future.
### Figure 61: Recommendations for independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing volume of information to be shared.</strong> Forces and scrutiny panels should carefully consider the balance of information that will make the most of the scrutiny panel process, the best way of presenting this information, and the capacity among the team to prepare it.</td>
<td>Scrutiny was limited at times by having too little information about cases and at times having too much. The balance of information to include, how this is structured, and the resource available to prepare the information, is important for maximising the impact of the scrutiny panels.</td>
<td>7.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Reiterating terms of reference and framework.</strong> The scrutiny panel chair should reiterate the terms of reference for the panel at the start of each meeting and remind panel members of the scrutiny framework to which the panel is working.</td>
<td>During some panel observations the purpose of the panel was not always clear and at times undermined the focus on scrutinising police responses. Reiterating the terms of reference and framework at each meeting could help to reinforce the panel’s purpose to new and existing members.</td>
<td>7.4.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing panel membership.</strong> Panel membership should be reviewed to ensure that it supports the effective delivery of the panel.</td>
<td>Panels in different force areas included a range of different representatives. Reviewing membership would ensure that panels include the range of perspectives which best enables an understanding of the victim’s journey. This includes exploring whether including panel members with lived experience would be beneficial, in force areas where they are not already included.</td>
<td>7.4.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Focusing on 2-4 cases per session.</strong> Panels with a focus on police response to domestic</td>
<td>Based on observation of panels and feedback from panel members, reviewing 2-4 cases allowed sufficient time to discuss each case in detail, but covered enough</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>Report section(s)</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Using scrutiny frameworks. Scrutiny frameworks should be used in all panel meetings.</td>
<td>Explicit reference to scrutiny frameworks within panel meetings will enable them to maintain focus, ensure key aspects of the police and/or multi-agency response are considered and give members the confidence to comment on police processes. They should be used flexibly, to direct discussion without being overly restrictive.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Role of police at panels. Police representatives should attend scrutiny panel meetings to answer questions around terminology and processes, and to relay feedback to the force. A single police representative at the table is preferable, for a balance where other members are comfortable speaking openly.</td>
<td>Based on observation of panels and feedback from panel members, panels operated more effectively and feedback was more productive when police were represented in order to provide clarification and to receive feedback on behalf of the force, rather than to discuss the response to specific cases.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Enabling police officers to observe meetings. Police officers should be able to attend meetings for one-off observation.</td>
<td>One-off observations might provide learning opportunities for individual officers, help to spread best practice to the frontline and cement understanding and relationships between the panel and the force.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Including CPS within panel membership. Panels should include representation from social care and from the CPS, wherever possible. If attendance in person is not possible.</td>
<td>Based on observed panels and feedback from panel members CPS involvement provided a richness of information that was highly valued by other panel members.</td>
<td>7.4.2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
possible, a feedback mechanism should be put in place to share CPS information with the panel.

### Rationale

members and enhanced the panel’s ability to scrutinise police actions.

### Report section(s)

- 7.4.3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Improving case file quality.</strong> Record-keeping and case file quality should be a priority for improvement across all force areas.</td>
<td>Record-keeping and case file quality was commonly identified by scrutiny panels as an area for development. It also made scrutiny more difficult where panel members could not be confident of having the right information.</td>
<td>7.4.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing feedback mechanisms.</strong> Force areas should review mechanisms for panel feedback to be shared with the force and for actions in response to this feedback to be planned, undertaken and monitored. Review findings should be shared across the region in order to determine which mechanisms are most effective.</td>
<td>Ensuring that the most effective feedback mechanisms are in place could maximise opportunities for organisational learning for forces, and increase the likelihood that forces are able to act upon learning from the panels.</td>
<td>7.4.3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 Good practice standards for domestic abuse casework

8.1 Overview

The good practice standards for domestic abuse casework are a set of standards developed by Northumbria Police to support enhanced supervisory review of domestic abuse cases and continuous professional development for police officers who might be working on domestic abuse cases. The purpose of this activity was to introduce the standards into professional development review (PDR) processes or other performance monitoring and continuous professional development processes in each force area during the programme funding period for DAWSA. The standards fall into four categories:

- Carrying out the initial investigation into a domestic abuse incident.
- Developing an investigation into a domestic abuse incident.
- Preparing a domestic abuse case file.
- Ensuring that victims of domestic abuse are safe and offered relevant support.

The full list of standards can be found in appendix B.

8.2 Key findings

8.2.1 Progress in implementation

- Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work have been developed centrally and made available to all force areas.
- Four force areas have adapted and incorporated the standards into CPD processes. One force area plans to incorporate them in the near future.
- The main mechanisms for incorporation are via PDR processes (in three force areas) and via training to new recruits/student officers (in five force areas).
- The standards were targeted to specific staff but by the end of the programme funding period it was not known how many staff had achieved the standards.
- Five force areas plan to sustain the use of the standards beyond the DAWSA funding period. Plans in the remaining force area are still under discussion.
8.2.2 Overview of implementation and impact

Figure 62 summarises the key evaluation findings relating to the implementation and impact of the independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels.

Figure 62: Overview of key findings for good practice standards for domestic abuse casework

**Strengths**
- The standards are now available and will continue to be of use to forces involved in DAWSA and to other force areas interested in adopting the approach.
- Flexible approaches were used in different force areas to ensure the standards were incorporated in some way if feasible.
- The standards complement other DAWSA projects, such as coercive control training and the theme 2 projects relating to improvements in the civil and family courts.
- The roll-out of inclusion in PDR processes in force areas which used this model was achieved via support from senior leaders and additional promotional work.

**Challenges**
- Attaching the idea of accreditation to the standards in the early stages negatively impacted on how they were received by senior leaders in some force areas.
- The large number of standards included in the list made them challenging to implement in some force areas, as did their lack of specificity to domestic abuse and difficulties in achieving all standards within many individual roles in the force.
- Gaining agreement to include the standards in PDR processes proved difficult in most force areas, and was not achieved in 3.
- Capacity issues meant that officers and supervisors were not as receptive to achieving the standards as they might have been if they had more time available to them.

**Areas for development**
- Dividing the standards up into their constituent parts may make them more closely applicable to individual roles within force areas.
- Presenting the standards as a checklist or investigation support list may increase the chances of their inclusion in training and guidance.

**Outcomes**
- It is not possible to make judgements about the impact of the standards at this stage. As there was still progress to ensure that targeted staff had achieved the standards or received training, it was too early to expect to see any change in outcomes attributable to the roll-out of the standards.
8.3 Implementation

8.3.1 Variations in implementation

This work is being carried out via two models:

- Model A: Standards are incorporated into PDR processes for target officers and are used within training and continuous professional development. This model was used in three force areas.

- Model B: Standards are not incorporated into PDR processes but are used within training and continuous professional development. This model was used in two force areas.

One force area did not take this activity forward. Figure 63 summarises the approaches to implementation and the key milestones achieved in the six different force areas.
The standards were incorporated into PDR for a target of approximately 2,600 officers. Responsibility for ensuring roll-out was allocated to the senior management team, with the lead taken by Chief Inspectors with responsibility for harm reduction.

Of the targeted staff, it was estimated that around 90% had included the standards in their PDR for 2018-19. As at April 2019, it was not known how many people had achieved the standards so far.

If officers did not achieve the standards by the end of the current PDR year (April 2019), standards would roll over into their PDR for the following year, to encourage their achievement.

The standards were also incorporated into training for new recruits, initial investigator training and a local Raising Investigative Standards campaign.

Plans are in place to maintain use of the standards now that they have been introduced.

The standards were adapted for local use. They were incorporated into PDR for approximately 250 officers and staff in a range of teams (the Protecting Vulnerable People Team, Prisoner Handling Team, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Integrated Offender Management teams, Police Staff Investigators, probationers, control room, and front desk).

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Figure 63: Implementation of good practice standards in the six force areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>The standards were incorporated into PDR for a target of approximately 2,600 officers. Responsibility for ensuring roll-out was allocated to the senior management team, with the lead taken by Chief Inspectors with responsibility for harm reduction. Of the targeted staff, it was estimated that around 90% had included the standards in their PDR for 2018-19. As at April 2019, it was not known how many people had achieved the standards so far. If officers did not achieve the standards by the end of the current PDR year (April 2019), standards would roll over into their PDR for the following year, to encourage their achievement. The standards were also incorporated into training for new recruits, initial investigator training and a local Raising Investigative Standards campaign. Plans are in place to maintain use of the standards now that they have been introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>PDR: early 2019</td>
<td>£2,339</td>
<td>The standards were adapted for local use. They were incorporated into PDR for approximately 250 officers and staff in a range of teams (the Protecting Vulnerable People Team, Prisoner Handling Team, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Integrated Offender Management teams, Police Staff Investigators, probationers, control room, and front desk).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

69Expenditure reported in financial expenditure reports 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.
As at April 2019, there was an expectation that staff would achieve the standards within the current PDR cycle (i.e. by early 2020). No staff were yet recorded as having achieved the standards.

Supporting work was undertaken to support the roll-out of the standards, including shift briefings by a Detective Inspector in the Protecting Vulnerable People team and force wide promotion of the standards.

The standards were also incorporated into training for probationers.

Plans are in place to maintain use of the standards now that they have been introduced.

The force did not adapt and incorporate the standards into PDR because it was felt that the existing local investigative standards and case quality standard monitoring systems achieved the same intended outcomes.

Therefore, previous work continued, with a ‘dip sample’ of individual case files being reviewed by inspectors against national Case Quality File standards as part of feedback to officers for their monthly performance reviews.

The standards were not incorporated into training for new recruits because the force learning and development department reviewed them and confirmed that they were already covered within the training. However, a possible gap was identified for frontline officers who received their new officer training prior to the standards being covered by this training. Discussions are ongoing about how to assess and address this gap but there are no concrete plans in place to use the standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Date introduced</th>
<th>Funding by DAWSA</th>
<th>Progress in implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force C</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£2,339</td>
<td>As at April 2019, there was an expectation that staff would achieve the standards within the current PDR cycle (i.e. by early 2020). No staff were yet recorded as having achieved the standards. Supporting work was undertaken to support the roll-out of the standards, including shift briefings by a Detective Inspector in the Protecting Vulnerable People team and force wide promotion of the standards. The standards were also incorporated into training for probationers. Plans are in place to maintain use of the standards now that they have been introduced. The force did not adapt and incorporate the standards into PDR because it was felt that the existing local investigative standards and case quality standard monitoring systems achieved the same intended outcomes. Therefore, previous work continued, with a ‘dip sample’ of individual case files being reviewed by inspectors against national Case Quality File standards as part of feedback to officers for their monthly performance reviews. The standards were not incorporated into training for new recruits because the force learning and development department reviewed them and confirmed that they were already covered within the training. However, a possible gap was identified for frontline officers who received their new officer training prior to the standards being covered by this training. Discussions are ongoing about how to assess and address this gap but there are no concrete plans in place to use the standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force area</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Date introduced</td>
<td>Funding by DAWSA $6^{9}$</td>
<td>Progress in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Student officer portfolios: October 2018</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>The force did not adapt and incorporate the standards into PDR. This decision primarily related to the fact that PDR processes and related IT platforms were under review during the programme funding period. The first section of the standards was embedded into student officers' learning and assessment portfolio and as at February 2019 50 student officers had achieved the standards. Plans are in place to maintain use of the standards in student officer training. As at February 2019, discussions were still underway about how to incorporate the standards for investigative roles (although this was unlikely to involve inclusion in PDR) and also into existing case file quality assurance processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force E</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>The force did not adapt and incorporate the standards into PDR because it was felt that the existing local investigative standards provided the same standard of guidance and that achievement levels of these standards were adequate. As at February 2019, there was a local commitment to incorporate the standards into training for student officers, although details of any specific plans to achieve this were not available for review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>The standards were adapted for local use. The first section of the standards was incorporated into PDR for officers in patrol teams, with the understanding that they apply to all investigations, rather than those only involving domestic abuse. As at April 2019, the number of officers targeted was not known and nor was the number of officers who have achieved the standards so far.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As at February 2019, discussions were still underway about the possibility of incorporating other elements into PDR for other teams (i.e. safeguarding teams), although detail of any specific plans to achieve this were not available for review.

The standards were also incorporated into training for student officers.

Plans are in place to maintain use of the standards now that they have been introduced.
8.3.2 Stages of implementation

Figure 64 summarises the main stages in implementing the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work, which are described in further detail below.

Figure 64: Stages of implementation of good practice standards for domestic abuse case work

Step 1: Development of the standards

The initial standards were developed by Northumbria Police. An external consultant was commissioned to produce formal best practice standards framework and associated materials, drawing on sources such as the College of Policing.

Step 2: Local review of standards and decisions on incorporation

In each force area, the standards were reviewed by local DAWSA programme leads and relevant local teams, including learning and development teams, in order to determine whether and how to incorporate them into local PDR, training and CPD mechanisms. Four force areas decided to roll-out the standards in some form, with a fifth planning to do so in the near future and a final decision pending in the remaining force area. The most common mechanisms selected were:

- Incorporation of all or some of the standards into PDR processes for targeted officers.
- Inclusion of all or some of the standards in training for target groups of officers or student officers.
Step 3: Rolling out use of standards

The standards were rolled out to target officers in the force area.

For inclusion in PDR, this generally involved including their achievement as a PDR objective for target officers, who then had individual responsibility for collating evidence that they have achieved the standards. In the two force areas which described arrangements for ensuring the PDR objective was set for target officers, responsibility was allocated either to Chief Inspectors with responsibility for harm reduction or to a Detective Inspector in the Protecting Vulnerable People team.

For inclusion in training, roll-out including creating and updating training materials and lesson plans for the target audiences.

Step 4: Monitoring uptake and achievement

The achievement of standards or receipt of training was monitored. In one force area, arrangements were described to roll over achievement into the following year’s PDR for those officers who had not achieved the standards by the end of the year.

8.3.3 Strengths in implementation

Development of standards which leaves a legacy

The development of the standards themselves was a strength of this project. As with other resources and training packages developed as part of DAWSA, programme leads and senior stakeholders noted that the standards provide a tool for future use by the force areas involved in DAWSA, as well as other force areas who might wish to adopt it. Programme leads stated that the content and ethos of the standards were useful, although the majority of programme leads also noted that they were a lengthy list and many of them were applicable to investigation of all types of crime and that they were not necessarily specific to domestic abuse. In one force area, this was seen as a strength because use of the standards for other crimes was supported by the learning and development team. In other force areas, the more generic nature of the standards was generally seen as creating challenges for local buy-in to the standards and this is discussed in more detail in section 8.3.4.

Flexibility in incorporating standards

Another strength of the implementation was the level of effort and persistence in the face of difficulties incorporating the good practice standards as planned. Almost all force areas reported efforts to include the standards in some form, even if this could not be as part of the PDR process. Alternative models used included incorporation into training, guidance and existing case file quality assurance processes.
Standards as a complement to other DAWSA projects

The standards provide an example of the links between different projects within DAWSA. A minority of programme leads and senior stakeholders commented that the standards acted as a complement to the coercive control training by building on some of the themes introduced in the training and providing a mechanism for monitoring the application of the training in practice. In addition, a minority of programme leads drew connections between the standards and theme 2 projects because the standards aim to ensure that case file recording is accurate and appropriate and therefore enables the best use of this information in civil and family court proceedings.

8.3.4 Challenges in implementation

Initial conceptualisation of the standards as accreditation

In the early stages of the programme funding period, it was intended that the standards would include accreditation. This appears to have negatively impacted on early reception of the standards in the different force areas. Programme leads in most force areas reported that senior leaders in the Police and OPCC expected accreditation to be time- and resource-intensive and were therefore cautious about signing up to any accreditation scheme. In the event, when formal accreditation was explored via a robust options appraisal it proved to be cost-prohibitive and therefore good practice standards were pursued instead. However, it is possible that the early use of the term accreditation reduced early buy-in to the standards by senior leaders.

In some force areas, it was the view that the standards were too much like a checklist and they preferred to use their own quality assurance processes. In other force areas, they were viewed as a good generic starting point for best practice in domestic abuse cases.

Length and content of the standards

The length and content of the standards appears to have presented a challenge in some force areas. Programme leads and senior stakeholders noted that the individual standards were all sensible and useful and could not be disputed. On the other hand, they reported that the combined total of 42 standards was too lengthy to be feasibly included as a single PDR objective or to be covered in targeted training.

A majority of programme leads also reported that:

• There were few roles in force in which the whole range of standards would be applicable and achievable.

70 Programme leads and senior stakeholders acknowledged that if forces all had dedicated domestic abuse investigation teams, accreditation of officers within these teams might be a beneficial approach. Without these dedicated teams, however, accreditation was viewed as infeasible and inadvisable.
Many of the standards were not specific to domestic abuse case work and could equally apply to other types of crime.

**Gaining agreement to include in PDR processes**

All force areas apart from one reported initial difficulties in gaining agreement to include the standards in PDR processes and this ultimately proved achievable in only three of the six force areas. Where there were challenges, these tended to relate to: whether senior leaders in forces considered the standards as suitable and appropriate for inclusion; the extent to which local PDR processes were fit-for-purpose; concerns about adding to PDR objectives and placing further demands on the capacity of staff and supervisors; and/or logistical and IT issues.

**Supporting roll-out of inclusion in PDR processes**

In those force areas where a decision was made to include the standards within PDR processes, there were some challenges in supporting roll-out. Programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that the main issue was the capacity of officers and supervisors; this meant that, although they might see the value of the standards in principle, their initial response was to view them as another piece of work to complete and as a lower priority than much of their day-to-day work.

**Factors supporting implementation**

**Support from senior leaders**

Force areas where there had been the greatest progress within incorporating the standards into PDR processes tended to be those where there was strong support for the standards from senior leaders in the force. In particular, making the PDR objective mandatory was seen to send a clear message about the importance of achieving the standards. Equally, gaining the support of local leads at area command level was seen to facilitate roll-out of the standards in PDR.

**Promotional work to coincide with roll-out**

Programme leads and senior stakeholders in one force area which had incorporated the standards into PDR processes also emphasised the importance of additional promotional work to promote the standards. This included: detailed instructions on how to introduce and evidence the standards, shift briefings delivered by a Detective Inspector in the Protecting Vulnerable People team and force-wide promotional work.

**Suggestions for strengthening design and implementation**

**Structure and content of standards**

The main suggestion for strengthening the design and implementation of the standards related to the structure and content of the standards themselves. The majority of force areas identified that sections of the standards applied to different roles in force but that few or no roles involved practice covering all of the standards. Therefore, programme leads suggested that it might have been
beneficial to divide the standards up into different packages and make it clear that these were applicable to different roles. They reported that this might have helped to allay some of the concerns of senior leaders, supervisors and staff that the standards were too lengthy and detailed to be feasibly achieved.

In addition, a minority of force areas indicated that it may have been useful to present the standards as a checklist or investigation support list. This might have facilitated initial discussions about including the standards in training and guidance (rather than PDR processes) by presenting them more as a CPD tool and less as a monitoring tool.

**Recommendation 27:** Force areas wishing to introduce or further roll-out the standards should review how the standards are applied and packaged in order to maximise take-up and use. Existing applications which could be considered are: incorporation into PDR processes, use within training, promotion as good practice guidance tools, use within case file auditing processes. The individual sections standards could also be presented as separate packages. Officers/staff could then be encouraged to complete one or more packages, as relevant to their role.

### 8.4 Scale and impact

#### 8.4.1 Assessment against evaluation framework

Figure 66 summarises the evidence for progress against the intended outputs and outcomes of the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work, using the rating system outlined in Figure 65\(^71\). It indicates that one of the intended outputs was fully achieved within the DAWSA funding period with progress made towards achieving two other outputs. The available information suggests that the final intended output has not been achieved as yet because those force areas which incorporated the standards generally did so within the last six months of the programme funding period and within the current PDR cycle, meaning that there has only been a short amount of time available for officers to achieve the standards and provide evidence of this.

It is not possible to make judgements about the impact of the standards at this stage. As there was still progress required to ensure that targeted staff had achieved the standards or received training, it was too early to expect to see any change in outcomes attributable to the roll-out of the standards.

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\(^{71}\) The framework includes only outcomes which might feasibly be achieved and evidenced within the programme funding period. There are also some longer-term intended outcomes, which are discussed in section 8.4.4.
### Figure 65: Ratings used in assessment against the evaluation framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has been partially achieved or that there is progress indicating that it is likely to be achieved in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−</td>
<td>Evidence that the output/outcome has not yet been achieved and that it was not feasible to achieve this outcome within the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Difficult to make a judgement on the basis of the available evidence about the extent to which this output/outcome has been achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 66: Evidence of progress against intended outputs and outcomes of accreditation/standards for casework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice standards for DA case work have been developed.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>• The initial standards have been developed centrally, having been commissioned by Northumbria Police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• They have been reviewed by programme leads, learning and development teams, senior leaders and other relevant staff in the remaining five force areas participating in DAWSA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local mechanisms have been developed to adapt the standards for local purposes and incorporate the standards into continuous professional development and/or case work.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of this project varied between force areas, resulting in different plans to incorporate the standards. Four force areas have adapted and incorporated the standards in some form, with a fifth planning to do so in the near future and a final decision pending in the remaining force area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local mechanisms have been developed to target relevant staff and encourage achievement of the standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring reports and consultation with programme leads indicated that mechanisms were in place in four of six force areas to target one or more groups of relevant staff, either via PDR processes or training or both. In these force areas the mechanisms through which targeting and encouragement took place were described in varying levels of detail, meaning that it wasn't always possible to judge the efficacy of local approaches to targeting and promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output/outcome</td>
<td>Progress rating</td>
<td>Evidence of progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted staff have achieved the good practice standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• There was a plan to target student officers in a fifth area and the possibility of targeting relevant staff was still being explored in the remaining force area. The best mechanisms for this had not yet been established in either of the two force areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Due to gaps in the monitoring data provided by force areas, it was not possible to establish how many or what proportion of targeted staff had achieved the standards at the end of the programme funding period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• However, the available data and consultation with programme leads suggests that this output is unlikely to have been achieved in most force areas at the end of the programme funding period because work is ongoing to encourage targeted staff to achieve the standards or receive training on them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output/outcome</th>
<th>Progress rating</th>
<th>Evidence of progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The good practice standards have enhanced supervisory awareness of DA case work standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• There was very limited data available to inform judgements about the impact of the standards to-date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Programme leads and the minority of senior stakeholders who commented on this activity reported that it was too early to gauge the impact of the standards because they had only been introduced recently or (in two force areas) had not yet been introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Therefore, there was still progress required to ensure that targeted staff had achieved the standards or received training, and it was too early to expect to see any change in outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The good practice standards have enhanced supervisory review of DA cases.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output/outcome</td>
<td>Progress rating</td>
<td>Evidence of progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The good practice standards have enhanced the quality of DA case work.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.4.2 Scale

8.4.2.1 Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work developed

The initial standards have been developed centrally, having been commissioned by Northumbria Police. They have been reviewed by programme leads, learning and development teams, senior leaders and other relevant staff in the remaining five force areas participating in DAWSA.

8.4.2.2 Local mechanisms have been developed to adapt and incorporate the standards into CPD or case work

Implementation of this project varied between force areas, resulting in different plans to incorporate the standards. This is summarised in Figure 67. Four force areas have adapted and incorporated the standards in some form, with a fifth planning to do so in the near future and a final decision pending in the remaining force area.

In force areas where standards have been incorporated, the main adaptation has entailed breaking the standards down into their four constituent parts and incorporating particular sections into PDR or training for specific target audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorporate standards into Professional Development Review process (PDR).</th>
<th>Number of force areas where planned</th>
<th>Number of force areas where achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate standards into training for new recruits and student officers.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate standards into training for investigators.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4.2.3 Local mechanisms have been developed to target relevant staff and encourage achievement of the standards

Monitoring reports and consultation with programme leads indicated that mechanisms were in place in four of six force areas to target one or more groups of relevant staff, either via PDR processes or training or both. In these force areas the mechanisms through which targeting and encouragement took place were described in varying levels of detail, meaning that it was not always possible to judge the efficacy of local approaches to targeting and promotion.

There was a plan to target student officers in a fifth area and the possibility of targeting relevant staff was still being explored in the remaining force area. The
best mechanisms for this had not yet been established in either of the two force areas.

Complete monitoring data relating to the standards was not available from all force areas. As a result, it was not possible to establish the total number of staff who had been targeted by PDR processes or training.

The available data showed that around 2,850 staff were targeted through PDR across force areas A and B (with the vast majority of these being in force area A). The size of target audiences in other force areas, and for other kinds of CPD involving the good practice standards, were not specified. As at April 2019:

- In Force A, an estimated 2,340 officers (90% of the target audience) included the standards in their PDR.
- In Force B, it was not known how many of the officers had included the standards in their PDR.

8.4.2.4 Targeted staff have achieved the good practice standards

Due to gaps in the monitoring data provided by force areas, it was not possible to establish how many or what proportion of targeted staff had achieved the standards at the end of the programme funding period. However, the available data and consultation with programme leads suggests that this output is unlikely to have been achieved in most force areas at the end of the programme funding period because work is ongoing to encourage targeted staff to achieve the standards or receive training on them.

For example, it was not known how many staff in any force area had achieved the standards incorporated into their PDR processes. However, in all three force areas the current PDR year was ongoing at programme end so officers who had been targeted via PDR processes still had time to complete the standards within the planned window.

Similarly, Force D provided data indicating that 50 student officers have achieved the standards but it is not known how many student officers were targeted in other force areas. No other data on the numbers of staff who had received training was available.

8.4.3 Impact

A note on the evidence for outcomes

There was very limited data available to inform judgements about the impact of the standards to-date. Programme leads and the minority of senior stakeholders who commented on this project reported that it was too early to gauge the impact of the standards because they had only been introduced recently or (in two force areas) had not been introduced. Therefore, there was still progress required to ensure that targeted staff had achieved the
standards or received training, and it was too early to expect to see any change in outcomes.

Nevertheless, existing evidence is explored in sections 8.4.3.1 to 8.4.3.3.

8.4.3.1 Enhanced supervisory awareness of domestic abuse case work standards

A minority of programme leads reported that the promotion of the standards to supervisors for use in CPD had enhanced supervisory awareness of the existence and potential use of the standards. This was in force areas where the standards had been incorporated into PDR processes.

Respondents to the “whole system” E-survey were more positive that this outcome had been achieved, because 59% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the implementation of the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work had enhanced supervisory awareness of domestic abuse case work standards. Only 6% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 68.

Figure 68: Key stakeholder’s agreement with the statements “The good practice standards for domestic abuse case work have...”72

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced supervisory awareness of DA case work standards</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced supervisory review of DA cases</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced the quality of DA case work</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4.3.2 Enhanced supervisory review of domestic abuse cases

72n=151 (Awareness), n=149 (Review of DA cases), n=151 (Quality of DA casework). Positive responses (in shades of purple) are to the right of 0 and negative responses (in shades of pink) are to the left of 0. Stronger shades of each colour indicate stronger agreement/disagreement in the responses (“strongly agree” or “Strongly disagree”). Please note that neutral responses (“neither agree nor disagree”) are not shown in the graph, so the percentages shown do not total 100 for each bar.
Programme leads reported that it was too early to expect this outcome to be achieved because the introduction of the standards into PDR and other CPD processes had only taken place in the last year at most, and in most cases within the last six months of the programme funding period.

Respondents to the “whole system” E-survey were more positive that this outcome had been achieved, because 54% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the implementation of the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work had enhanced supervisory review of domestic abuse cases. Only 6% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 68 in section 8.4.3.1.

8.4.3.3 Enhanced quality of domestic abuse case work

As with the previous outcome area, programme leads reported that it was too early to expect this outcome to be achieved because the introduction of the standards into PDR and other CPD processes had only taken place in the last year at most, and in most cases within the last six months of the programme funding period.

Respondents to the “whole system” E-survey were more positive that this outcome had been achieved, because 53% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the implementation of the good practice standards for domestic abuse case work had enhanced the quality of domestic abuse case work. Only 6% of respondents disagreed. This is shown in Figure 68 in section 8.4.3.1.

Analysis of the qualitative questions incorporated into the survey suggest that a minority of stakeholders were of the opinion that awareness had improved but were unsure whether this had been translated into better quality domestic abuse case work amongst frontline staff.

The standards are unlikely to be the only activity which could contribute to improvements in these outcome areas. Rather it is likely to be one of a number of factors, including other elements of training and specialist support and advice involved in DAWSA. This was recognised by key stakeholders.

8.4 Longer-term outcomes

The longer-term intended outcome identified for the standards was continued enhanced quality of domestic abuse case work. As discussed in section 8.4.3.3, it is too early to make judgements on the achievement of this outcome, or progress towards it. The short timeframes available to targeted officers to achieve the standards during the programme funding period and the limited data on the numbers who have achieved them so far mean that at this stage we cannot estimate how many people have achieved the standards, or are likely to achieve them in the future. This is a necessary precursor to the standards impacting on case work.

Continued monitoring by forces of the number of staff targeted to achieve the standards via PDR or training, as well as the numbers who achieve them, will
enable ongoing review of the scale at which the standards have been delivered. This will make it easier to determine whether it is reasonable to link them to any change in the quality of domestic abuse case work.

In terms of monitoring the quality of domestic abuse case work itself, this could be achieved through existing case file audit practices in force or by an audit of files against the standards themselves. Audits would need to be conducted at regular intervals to capture information about changes in the levels of quality. Consultation with supervisors at regular intervals might also afford insight into the extent to which case work quality has improved. Equally, consideration could be given to including a focus on relevant case file standards within independent domestic abuse scrutiny panels, in order to receive independent feedback on performance against these standards.

8.4.5 Variations in impact

No specific evidence was available about variations in impact across the different force areas participating in DAWSA, or across the different models used to implement the standards.

8.5 Sustainability

There was evidence from force-level documentation and monitoring reports that four of the six force areas planned to continue with the incorporation of the standards in the ways in which they have been embedded locally (including within PDR processes and/or within training). A fifth force area has plans to incorporate the standards in the near future and plans are yet to be determined in the remaining force area. This was corroborated through consultation with programme leads. At this stage, incorporation into PDR processes appeared unlikely in the three force areas in which the standards have so far not been incorporated in this way, although programme leads in one force area commented that this could be subject to change in the future.

However, since the process of incorporation was ongoing in some force areas, the sustainability of the project was not assured.

8.6 Learning

8.6.1 Alignment with good practice principles

The good practice standards align with elements of one of the principles of good practice identified within literature on whole system approaches to domestic abuse. This is: Principle 6: Facilitate the disclosure of abuse and ensure staff respond appropriately. An important component of this principle is providing ongoing supervision and training for staff in relation to domestic abuse, which is supported by the standards being used as a form of CPD for relevant officers and staff.
As the impact of the standards is largely unknown at this stage, it is difficult to comment on the extent to which they represent added value. Whilst it made it more difficult to promote the standards to senior leaders in some force areas, the generalisability of the standards to the investigation of other crimes also potentially added value by enabling them to be used for wider work to improve investigative practice.

8.6.3 Identification and sharing of good practice

Programme leads and senior stakeholders reported that the standards could be adopted by other force areas in the future, although the majority emphasised that it would be useful to divide the standards up into their constituent sections prior to targeting them to specific roles.

8.6.4 Lessons for future development and implementation

Figure 69 summarises the recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the domestic abuse and family proceedings resources. These may be of use in the future development and implementation of work to increase the efficacy of responses to domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, in both force areas which participated in DAWSA and other force areas which might adopt elements of DAWSA in the future.
Figure 69: Recommendations for good practice standards for domestic abuse case work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Report section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td><strong>Maximising take-up and use.</strong> Force areas wishing to introduce or further roll-out the standards should review how the standards are applied and packaged in order to maximise take-up and use.</td>
<td>Force areas have identified different ways to package and apply the standards. Reviewing and considering each of these approaches could enable forces to combine different approaches to maximise take-up. Existing applications which could be considered are: incorporation into PDR processes, use within training, promotion as good practice guidance tools, use within case file auditing processes. The individual sections of the standards could also be presented as separate packages to target officers/staff in different roles.</td>
<td>8.3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 Appendix A: Review of domestic abuse scrutiny panel minutes

9.1 Overview

This appendix presents the results of the review of minutes from the scrutiny panels for meetings up until 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2019. In total, five of the force areas provided minutes from panels. Some of these minutes detail the feedback process between the panel and the police force and provide evidence of feedback and whether this has impacted on organisational learning and culture.

The number of cases covered by each panel meeting varies by force area but in total the analysis of minutes covered panel discussions of 42 cases, including:

- Force area A – 5 meetings covering 11 cases in total
- Force area B – 2 meetings covering 6 cases in total
- Force area C – 5 meetings covering 3 cases in total
- Force area E – 4 meetings covering 7 cases in total
- Force area F – 4 meetings covering 15 cases in total

Force area D has been unable to provide minutes to date.

The review of minutes considered key themes and recommendations which panels raised about the police response in the cases considered, particularly where these concerns were raised across multiple cases. Often, very similar issues and action points emerged across multiple force areas. There were some areas of good practice which the panel noted but often the discussion focused on how police response and practice could be improved.

9.2 Key themes

The analysis of the minutes found a number of key issues which emerged across several cases and often these were shared between multiple force areas. Figure 70 provides a breakdown of these issues according to the key themes and issues outlined in the scrutiny frameworks used by panels to guide their discussions. The following key themes emerged across force areas:

- The initial response of the police was praised by the panel across four force areas, in particular the call handling was felt to be appropriate and the police response timely and proportionate to the level of risk. However, in one force area, the panel were concerned that a victim and children had been left with the perpetrator for several hours.
• In four force areas and across multiple cases, the panel noted that the police missed opportunities to collect all available evidence. In two of the force areas this was concerned with not taking witness statements from key witnesses. Some of the opportunities missed by the police were considered unfavourable to the victim, including not following up on worries expressed by the victim and not searching for alternative sources of evidence where victims refused to make witness statements.

• A lack of consideration of historic police records was an area of concern in three force areas. In one force area, this was an issue raised for two cases which were both one of a number of repeat offences and the panel were concerned that the police did not seem to take this into consideration in their assessment of the case and risk. In the other two force areas, the panel felt that the police did not consider previous incidences to establish whether the current case was part of a wider pattern of behaviour or to inform their current risk assessment.

• In four of the force areas, panels fed back that some forms were not completed satisfactorily. Some forms had incomplete sections, missed crucial details and contained information that contradicted information elsewhere in the case files. In one force area, this led the panel to feel that they could not adequately comment on the police response to a case.

• In three force areas, risk assessments across multiple cases were questioned by the panel. In particular, in two force areas the panel were concerned that the risk to victims and children had not been adequately considered and reflected in the risk statement.

• The contact between the police and IP (Injured Party) was a concern raised by panels for three of the force areas. In two areas, this was described as a lack of victim focus by the police and in one area this was demonstrated through a lack of awareness by the police of victim behaviour, resulting in inaccurate labelling of the victim and suspect and the use of language which came across as victim-blaming.

• Four of the force areas did not consistently put in adequate safeguarding measures for children and adult victims involved in the cases, including through referrals to other agencies.

• Across three force areas there were instances of controlling and coercive behaviour apparent in the cases which were not recognised or followed up by the police.
Figure 70: Common overarching themes emerging from analysis of scrutiny panel minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Initial response to incident(s) | Call handling and first response | B | • Across several cases, the panel praised the initial handling of the call from call takers.  
• The panel noted some evidence from body worn cameras of good attempts to engage victims at the incident. |
| | | C | • Across all cases, the panel praised the initial call handling, which was considered timely and to accurately reflect the risk priority.  
• The panel questioned whether the timing of officer attendance was appropriate – in two cases this could not be determined from the form which contradicted itself at points and in once case it appeared to be outside the two-hour original priority rating. |
<p>| | | E | • The panel noted that the police generally attended incidents in a timely manner and reacted to incidents appropriately by contacting those involved where possible. |
| | | A | • Generally, the panel did not comment on the initial response but in one notable example the delayed response of the police left the victim and children vulnerable and exposed to the perpetrator for several hours. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The call handling and response time of the police was considered appropriate by the panel in the majority of cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DVPN/DVPO</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>• The panel noted that DVPOs and DVPNs were not widely used in the cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime investigation/case building</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>• Opportunities for gathering evidence were missed, including exploring the background of the offender; taking a witness statement from all witnesses present at the incident; and following up on worries expressed by the victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities for gathering evidence were missed, including not making use of other evidential opportunities where victims refused to be witnesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny panel question theme</td>
<td>Key issue</td>
<td>Force area</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of all police records</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>• Opportunities to use body worn camera footage to provide evidence were missed and not sent to the CPS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>• A small number of cases were one of a series of repeat incidents over a period of time but the panel noted that the police did not appear to have noted this or explored this further.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victim retraction             | A         | F          | • The panel were concerned that risk assessments made by the police did not take account of previous risk assessments which may have been available and so were treating incidents in isolation and not considering previous incidences.  
  • This led the panel to conclude that the police were not making an overall analysis of offending between incidents and across relationships to establish wider patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour.  
  • The panel were unsure whether the police considered previous history relevant to incidents, particularly when assessing risks and gathering evidence. |
<p>|                               | A         | A          | • The panel noted a reliance on pocket notebook entries to record the withdrawal of complaints, which they considered could potentially undermine future investigations, limit organisational memory and were indicative of a ‘victim-led’ rather than evidence-led approach. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case summary/progression</td>
<td>Restraining orders</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>• In several cases, restraining orders were put in place but not communicated appropriately to victims, leading to victims being put under the impression that any breach of the order was their responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special measures</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>• The panel noted a lack of discussion about special measures by the police.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                              | Satisfactory case file recording and completion of forms | B          | • The panel noted that the DASH risk assessment was not always used accurately to reflect the situation.  
• In a small number of cases, statements by officers were noted to have insufficient detail on the incident scene and individuals involved. |
<p>|                              |                                 | C          | • The panel noted inconsistent and incomplete recording, including incomplete dates in the investigative report; and incomplete recording in the crime report, domestic abuse report and witness report. In one case, the inconsistencies seemed to favour the defendant rather than the victim. |
|                              |                                 | E          | • During one panel meeting, the panel struggled to discuss cases appropriately as information was lacking or filled out insufficiently, including the 253 form, CPS checklist, initial response log and safeguarding referral. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                              |           | F          | - Opportunities to use evidence from the body worn camera were missed and not sent to the CPS.  
- The panel noted that DASH statements did not always contain relevant information that was recorded elsewhere. |
| Safeguarding victims          | Risk and needs assessment | B          | - The panel were concerned that the police did not accurately assess the risk level and that there was often a lack of detail recorded in the cases to support their decision. |
|                              |           | C          | - The panel questioned how the assessment of risk and need assessment was carried out and how the police had come to their decision.  
- In cases involving children, the panel felt that the police did not consider the safeguarding needs of children in their risk assessment. |
|                              |           | A          | - The panel were consistently concerned by the risk assessment process.  
- For example, in one case the panel felt the police’s assessment of risk was inappropriate and did not reflect a proper understanding of the risk posed to the victim, ignoring issues such as threats by the suspect, mental health and substance misuse concerns.  
- The panel were also concerned that needs assessment forms were not filled out in a way which could facilitate correct needs assessment e.g. in one case the ethnicity of the victim was not recorded even though it was relevant to the support they could receive. |
### Contact with the victim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact with the victim</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>- Overall, the panel felt there was a lack of focus on the victim, particularly as the police did not consistently follow up with victims to put protective measures in place following incidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact with the victim</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>- Across all cases, the panel considered there to be a lack of victim focus, including through a lack of balance in the information collected and recorded about victims (often this seemed to favour the suspect); the appropriateness of the location and structure of the victim interview; and in one case there was even a question mark over whether the victim was spoken to by the police.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                              | Contact with the victim | A          | - In the majority of cases, the panel noted that the police showed little awareness or understanding of victim behaviours.  
- This meant that the police did not place the behaviour of victims in the context of their wider situation. As a result, in one case the language used by the police in the case sounded victim-blaming and in another the aggression of the victim was misunderstood and misrepresented.  
- The panel also noted problematic labelling practices by the police in which victims were labelled as suspects. This obscured victim-perpetrator relationships and dynamics and minimised the impact of this behaviour on the victim. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist support referral</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>• The panel were concerned that the police did not ensure long-term safeguarding measures were in place by informing victims about support services and refuges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                              |          | E           | • The panel were concerned with whether victims were consistently appropriately supported by the police and whether safeguarding was considered.  
• In some cases, victims were provided with a number to contact following the incident if they wanted extra support and in others it did not appear that any safety protocols were put in place.  
• In two cases, the panel questioned whether the police displayed gender bias in how they dealt with the case, particularly where the victim was male and not offered what the panel considered to be an appropriate level of support. |
|                              |          | A           | • The panel noted that there were limited referrals to other agencies and opportunities for referrals and safeguarding were missed.  
• Instead, the police relied on follow-up telephone calls with victims but the panel considered that home visits would have been more appropriate. |
<p>|                              |          | F           | • The panel noted several cases where referrals of adult victims could have been made and were missed e.g. to substance misuse services. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult/child protection</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>• Across cases, the police did not recognise the vulnerability of children involved, including missing opportunities for safeguarding of children and checking their safety following an incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>• There were inconsistencies in whether safeguarding referrals were made for children. While they were made in some cases, opportunities for this were missed in other cases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                              |                         | A          | • The adequacy of child protection measures varied across cases.  
• CCNs (child concern notifications) were generally either not made, made late or were lacking in detail. However, in one case the panel did praise the CCN made.  
• Overall, the panel were concerned that there was no record of advice given by the police to those involved in cases and were unclear if officers had given appropriate advice |
|                              |                         | F          | • The police did not capture the ‘voice of the child’ and in some cases the panel were unsure if appropriate safeguarding referrals for children had been made.  
• In one case where a safeguarding referral was made, the panel were unsure if they were followed up on.  
• Some cases lacked information on the DASH about the risks to children. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny panel question theme</th>
<th>Key issue</th>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coercive control</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>• The panel were concerned that in a small number of cases psychological harm and issues of controlling and coercive behaviour were clear to the panel but were not considered by the police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>• The panel noted the police did not further explore information on coercive control where this was present in statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>• In three cases there was information that led the panel to believe that the perpetrator was exercising coercive and controlling behaviour but there was no record of this being considered as a potential offence or a pattern of behaviour to be addressed in referrals for intervention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3 Feedback process, key recommendations and action taken

9.3.1 Feedback process

Analysis of the minutes of scrutiny panel meetings and meetings in which feedback is reported shows that there is variation in how feedback from the panel meetings is incorporated and acted upon across force areas. For example:

Two force areas plan to include their feedback in annual reports for review by the police force. The annual reports are not yet available. In addition to the annual report, a summary of panel comments will be discussed at a meeting between the Chair of the Panel and senior police representatives. Minutes from panel meetings in one of these force areas show that highlight reports will also be developed at the end of each meeting to be made available to the relevant members of the police force, including the supervisors of teams involved in the cases reviewed. These reports will also be made available on the police intranet site.

One force area provided the minutes of meetings held by an internal delivery group of the police in which comments from the panel meetings were fed back. The minutes are redacted for confidentiality reasons but they show that the meetings were attended by police of varying levels of seniority and from a variety of departments relevant to domestic abuse cases, although it is not clear how the officers present relate to the teams involved in the cases reviewed. It is understood from panel meeting minutes that issues raised by the panel will also be included in the Domestic Abuse Implementation Plan and that Chief Inspectors and Area Commanders have been tasked with implementing minor actions from the panel.

Another force area keeps a running action log of the learning points which emerge in each meeting, including a description of the action, an action owner, the timeframe for completion, any updates on the action, and the status of the action.

One force area provided evidence of an email sent to officers involved in a case discussed at a panel meeting in which they were advised of the learning points raised in the meeting and also praised for good performance displayed in how a victim’s distress was recorded in the case files.

There was no documentation on the feedback process in the sixth force area at the time of writing.

9.3.2 Key recommendations by panels

The recommendations and areas for improvement suggested by panels varied across the force areas. There were some common themes to what panels noted, including:

- Better representation of the victim and their voice in case file reports (three force areas)
• Improving child safeguarding measures (four force areas)
• Reflecting controlling and coercive behaviour in case files (three force areas)
• Improving victim welfare measures following an incident (three force areas)

9.3.3 Planned action in response to feedback

There is no evidence from the minutes of scrutiny panel meetings of how feedback from meetings has informed actions in four of the force areas. However, it is understood from the minutes of panel meetings in one of these force areas that recommendations made to officers after an early meeting were not received well. Following this, it was decided that all recommendations would be fed back through an annual report.

Analysis of the action log produced by a fifth force area shows that a number of action points have been completed, including providing feedback to individual officers involved in cases, while others are still under review include circulating best practice standards and reminding teams to fill out DASH forms appropriately. This suggests that some learning from the panels is being embedded, or will be embedded in the future, in police practice. However, the review of the log also shows that a number of action points do not necessarily relate to police practice but are concerned with safeguarding actions the panel plans to take.

Figure 71 describes the feedback process of each force area and the recommendations which have emerged from panel meetings, where these have been made available.
Figure 71: Feedback process and recommendations emerging from the analysis of scrutiny panel minutes by force area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Feedback process</th>
<th>Panel recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A          | • Two internal police meetings held in which comments from the panel meetings were fed back.  
• Issues raised in the panels will be included in the Domestic Abuse Implementation Plan.  
• Chief Inspectors and Area Commanders to implement minor actions arising from the panels.  
• It is not known whether issues raised in the panel have yet been fed back to the police and whether they have impacted on organisational learning and practice if so. | • Feedback related to four panel meetings.  
• Positive feedback was provided for the work taken to pursue a prosecution and safeguarding actions.  
• Recommendations include:  
  • understanding victim behaviour  
  • use of less judgemental language  
  • completion of child concern notices (CCNs)  
  • correct identification of victim and suspect where this is not immediately apparent |
| B          | • Following one panel meeting, an email was sent to the officers involved in one of the cases discussed with a summary of feedback raised by panel members, including learning points and good practice.  
• It is not known what impact the issues fed back to the police have had on organisational learning and practice.  
• It is not clear what the feedback process has been for other meetings. | • The email praised the photographs of victim’s injuries, the arresting officer’s statement and the pocket notebook entry from the victim.  
• Recommendations include:  
  • ensuring that all officers with body worn cameras are recording during an incident  
  • recording the reason for victims not wanting to go to court  
  • collecting all witness statements  
  • reflecting power and coercive control in reports |
**Force area** | **Feedback process** | **Panel recommendations**
--- | --- | ---
**C** | • The panel will produce an annual report with feedback from the meetings.<br>• The police force will then produce an action plan based on this.<br>• A summary of questions, issues, concerns and comments raised in panel meetings will be discussed in a meeting between the Chair of the Panel and two force representatives.<br>• The decision to feedback through a report and meeting was made following a negative police response to feedback provided by the panel after an early meeting. | • Recommendations are available from the minutes of all panel meetings.<br>• Recommendations include:<br>• reflecting the victims’ voice in statements and DASH forms<br>• improved use of child safeguarding measures<br>• signposting victims to available help and information<br>• The panel requested a review of one case which they felt showed a lack of concern for coercive control, safeguarding and vulnerability issues. |
**D** | • No documentation on the feedback process has been provided. | • No documentation on the feedback received has been provided. |
**E** | • A running action log is updated and circulated following each panel meeting and includes a description of the action agreed in the meeting, an action owner, the timeframe for completion, any updates on the action, and the status of the action.<br>• The log shows that some of the actions have been completed or are in the process of being completed, including: | • The action log includes feedback from three panel meetings.<br>• Recommendations include:<br>• improving investigative standards<br>• consideration of how including opinions in case files may affect their review by CPS<br>• checking the welfare of children involved in cases<br>• completing DASH forms, PC statements and the CPS checklist correctly |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force area</th>
<th>Feedback process</th>
<th>Panel recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• circulating best practice standards across the force&lt;br&gt;• officer training&lt;br&gt;• exploring opportunities for information sharing&lt;br&gt;• direct feedback to an officer</td>
<td>• sharing information with DAOs when someone is on probation&lt;br&gt;• reflecting welfare concerns about victims in case summaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F

- An action plan is to be prepared by the OPCC safeguarding advisor for inclusion in an annual report.
- In addition, a highlight report will be developed at the end of each meeting and shared with the PCC, safeguarding board of the force and police supervisory staff of officers on the cases reviewed by the panel.
- The highlight reports, learning summaries and other resources will also be available on the force’s intranet.
- It is not known whether issues raised in the panel have yet been fed back to the police and whether they have impacted on organisational learning and practice if so.

- Feedback is available from the minutes of two panel meetings.
- Recommendations include:
  - providing further guidance to officers on considering previous history when assessing incidences for risk and gathering evidence
  - reinforcing training and advice around controlling and coercive behaviour
  - providing training around the welfare and safety needs of victims’ children
  - a review of the DASH form to make it easier to record information about children outside the household relevant to an incident
  - a process for following up with victims in ‘standard’ risk cases
Appendix B: Good practice standards for domestic abuse case work

Performance Criteria Element 1: Carrying out the initial investigation into a Domestic Abuse incident

1.1 Obtain relevant information about this and previous incidents to enable initial risk assessment prior to arrival at the scene

1.2 Make an immediate assessment of the need for first aid or other medical assistance for any person

1.3 Identify any vulnerable person and submit appropriate referral

1.4 Identify any children at the scene and ensure they are safe and well

1.5 Secure, preserve and control the scene until the situation can be adequately assessed

1.6 Assess the need for a CSI to attend and record the reasons why a CSI was not called or did not attend

1.7 Ensure the scene is photographed or visually recorded as soon as possible

1.8 Secure and preserve CCTV evidence

1.9 Secure and preserve mobile phones or computer equipment for evidential purposes

1.10 Secure a first account from the victim ensuring it is captured via body-worn video

1.11 Complete a detailed statement as the first responder to a domestic abuse incident

1.12 Complete a comprehensive and detailed risk assessment form with the victim

1.13 Take photographs of victim injuries or otherwise record them at the scene

1.14 Develop a short-term safety plan which allows the victim to remain in their home

1.15 Consider whether the current incident forms part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour

1.16 Arrest a perpetrator of domestic abuse or record the reasons for not making an arrest where a power of arrest exists
Performance Criteria Element 2: Developing an investigation into a Domestic Abuse incident

2.1 Prepare an investigation plan

2.2 Record the review of the initial investigation and identified follow on actions

2.3 Record consideration of an evidence-led case which does not rely on the support of the victim

2.4 Use hearsay evidence to develop a prosecution case

2.5 Complete an assessment of the children as evidential witnesses

2.6 Obtain a detailed account from the victim including the history of the relationship and any previous incidents of abuse

2.7 Complete an assessment of the victim to identify if they are vulnerable or intimidated

2.8 Research intelligence systems to identify any potential controlling or coercive behaviour in the relationship

2.9 Conduct house to house enquiries to seek further witnesses to domestic abuse in the household

2.10 Gather evidence of domestic abuse from other agencies

2.11 Research evidence of social isolation

2.12 Obtain a victim personal statement

2.13 Obtain records of communication between the victim and perpetrator to assist in identifying any controlling or coercive behaviour

2.14 Gather evidence from services which shows that the perpetrator adopts a dominant role in the relationship

2.15 Complete a suspect interview plan for a perpetrator of Domestic Abuse

Performance Criteria Element 3: Preparing a Domestic Abuse case file

3.1 Include all relevant evidence and offence details

3.2 Include all relevant current and historical information about the relationship

3.3 Include all relevant information around risk of offending and bail conditions

3.4 Include all relevant information and potential bad character evidence

3.5 Include all relevant victim/witness care and safeguarding issues
3.6 Include all relevant details to assist the CPS to assess if there is a realistic prospect of a conviction

Performance Criteria Element 4: Ensuring victims of Domestic Abuse are safe and offered relevant support

4.1 Obtain a DVPN/DVPO to protect the victim from violence or threat of violence by the suspect

4.2 Record outlining emergency injunctions or orders which can be obtained in the Civil Courts to the victim

4.3 Keep the victim informed of the investigation including bail decisions and any relevant bail conditions

4.4 Record discussing with the victim the domestic abuse disclosure scheme

4.5 Prepare a safety plan with a victim of Domestic Abuse