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Early stages in the development of the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP): implementing the Duluth Domestic Violence pathfinder

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Home Office Online Report 29/04

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Summary

- The Duluth project started in Duluth, Minnesota, United States in the 1980s. The project was a comprehensive, community-based programme designed to intervene in domestic violence cases. It attempted to co-ordinate a response with the many agencies and practitioners who typically respond to domestic violence cases in the community.

- An additional component of the project was the 24-week non-violence programme, designed to reduce the likelihood of their reoffending, that offenders who were court-ordered to the programme would attend. The programme focused on challenging attitudes and beliefs associated with domestic violence and teaching social skills and enhanced victim empathy. The project also contacted the partners of the men and offered a women's support group. Women who were arrested for using violence were also ordered to attend non-violence classes.

- The 'Duluth Domestic Violence' Programme was modelled on the original project and was developed in the United Kingdom as the first probation-led pathfinder to treat domestic violence offenders and support the victims of these offenders. (It is now known as the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) operating in an infrastructure of inter-agency risk management and accredited in October 2003 by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel.)

- In 2001 the National Probation Directorate (NPD) and the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate commissioned a process and outcome evaluation of the Duluth Domestic Violence Programme as a pathfinder.

- The programme was designed to challenge the attitudes and beliefs of perpetrators, and it consisted of eight modules, each containing three, two-hour sessions. The modules challenge belief systems relating to this type of offending and require offenders to take responsibility for their actions and the effects on others by addressing offence minimisation and victim blaming.

- The research aims to describe priorities for effective implementation of the programme within England and Wales.

- A research team from the Universities of Leicester and Liverpool carried out a process evaluation, considering the nature of programme delivery and management, in the summer of 2002. The outcome study will be produced later this year.

- The team interviewed staff directing, managing, delivering, supporting and administering the Duluth programme from two probation areas. National Probation Directorate staff managing the implementation of the programme were also interviewed.

- The research identified a number of issues key to the effective management and delivery of the programme. Amongst the findings, the research team identified key areas for action; acceptable staffing responsibilities and levels; appropriate communication and information sharing channels between and within agencies; programme management issues, and data monitoring and collection.

- This report summarises the findings of this process evaluation and offers a number of recommendations to inform the management and delivery of future programmes.

Introduction and background to the research

The Duluth project started in Duluth, Minnesota, United States in the 1980s. The project was a comprehensive, community-based programme designed to intervene in domestic violence cases. It attempted to co-ordinate a response with the many agencies and practitioners who typically respond to domestic violence cases in the community. An additional component of the project was the 24-week non-violence programme, designed to reduce the likelihood of their reoffending, that offenders who were court-ordered to the programme would attend. The programme focused on challenging attitudes and beliefs associated with domestic violence and teaching social skills and enhanced victim empathy. The project also contacted the partners of the men and offered a women's support group. Women who were arrested for using violence were also ordered to attend non-violence classes. In various adaptations the project has been delivered in many areas, within the UK and internationally, since 1983.

The 'Duluth Domestic Violence' Programme was modelled on this original project and was developed in the United Kingdom as the first probation-led pathfinder to treat domestic violence offenders and support the victims of these offenders. It is now known as the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) operating in an infrastructure of inter-agency risk management and accredited in October 2003 by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel.

In 2001, on behalf of the National Probation Directorate (NPD), the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS) commissioned a process and outcome study by the Universities of Leicester and Liverpool, as part of a larger scale evaluation of pathfinder programmes. The delivery of this programme is being tested to assess the efficacy of the treatment provided to perpetrators of domestic violence. The research aims to provide evidence for any future submissions to the Correctional Services Advisory Panel (CSAP). This report presents the findings from the process evaluation. The outcome evaluation will be produced later this year.

Two probation areas are currently delivering the developmental programme to domestic violence perpetrators on Community Rehabilitation Orders (CRO) and Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Orders (CPRO) with conditions to attend. These are:

- West Yorkshire; and
- London.[1]

The process evaluation for the Duluth Domestic Violence Programme aims to determine the conditions necessary for the effective implementation and delivery of the programme. This was carried out in the same way as the previous process evaluations, but with additional elements, due to the broader community nature of the programme. The process evaluation is anticipated to continue throughout the duration of the research contract offering a narrative on the continuous development of the programme delivery and implementation rather than a snapshot of working practices at a given time.

One of the key aspects of the development and delivery of the programme is the manner in which the police and probation work together. Within the programme delivery areas, information sharing protocols have been developed to ensure that violent incidents involving programme participants are reported to the Programme Deliverers in a timely and regular manner. The process evaluation investigated how this information sharing occurs and whether the practice of information sharing matched the plans set out by the programme steering groups.

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[1] The initial arrangement with London reflected the pre-amalgamation structures. The original bid from London was agreed on the basis that they would deliver the programme from three areas: South East, South West and North East. However, North East London was excluded from the pilot as the area had not started to implement the programme by April 2002 and would therefore not be able to produce adequate numbers of completions within the research period. London is therefore discussed within this report as two separate areas, South East and South West.

Methodology

This research was carried out via a series of approximately 30 face-to-face interviews with members of staff from the two probation areas and other related agencies during the summer of 2002. Within each of the areas, the following staff groups were approached for interview:

- programme managers;
- treatment managers;
- programme deliverers;
- case managers;
- programme trainers;
- victim liaison officers.
- pre-sentence report (PSR) writers;
- administrative staff;
- magistrates;
- women's groups representatives;
- police officers; and

The aim of the interviews was to obtain information on the staffing levels, staff experience, staff training, accommodation, communication internally and externally, programme material, delivery style and techniques, dosage and intensity, duration of the programme and the compliance with monitoring and integrity procedures. In addition the interviews asked about the structure of organisations and the processes through which the programme is being developed.

The Evaluation Team were also asked to investigate the process of programme development and implementation from the point of view of those with responsibility for the Duluth programme working within NPD. The aim of this section of the research was to gain a better understanding of programme implementation from the perspective of those with responsibility for the Duluth programme working within Central Government and to offer learning points that may help with the development and implementation of future programmes. With this in mind, the Evaluation Team sought the views of those who had held the role of Programme Implementation Manager for the Duluth programme during the period up until January 2003.

Findings

Implementation

These questions aimed to identify the impact of staffing issues, including staff experience on the delivery of the programme.

Staffing levels for the Duluth programme were not even across the areas piloting the programme. There were differing numbers of delivery staff (which were not necessarily proportional to the number of offenders on the programmes), varying levels of administrative support and different responsibilities for case managers working with domestic violence offenders. The areas also had different arrangements for the management of the programme and staff within the delivery team; treatment manager roles were implemented differently, although it was unclear whether this had an effect on programme delivery.

In one area, South West London, the programme was delivered by combinations of the Treatment and Programme managers and sessional workers, employed and trained to run the Duluth programme. The high turnover of sessional staff in this area was particularly problematic, resulting in a lack of continuity of programme deliverers and questions as to whether managers of the programme and treatment were fulfilling their roles effectively. In West Yorkshire, whilst the number of programme delivery staff was of concern, the gender make-up of the delivery team was perceived as more of a problem by staff; with the shortage of male programme deliverers meaning that the programme was not always delivered by a male and female tutor together. A mixed gender delivery team, according to those delivering the programme, allowed offenders to see pro-social modelling of male/female relationships. In one area a member of the senior management team commented that the staffing resources were inadequate and that the programme was being run by, '*dedicated enthusiasts on either an overtime basis, sessional basis or out of (the) good will, in addition to their other duties … And I want to do something about that in the months to come, so that the good practice that has been built up can be retained and increased'.* (Assistant chief officer, ACO)

It was clear that the nature of the Duluth programme meant that it had the capacity to demand a lot of administrative support: collecting and collating programme data, police call-out data, information from victim support workers, and supporting the multi-agency working relationships, as well as the usual tasks associated with supporting an offending behaviour programme. Within the NPD there was an understanding that the programme might require a level of administrative support, and that Duluth is, *'resource hungry in terms of administration too'* (Programme implementation manager, PIM). Administration support was an issue that has raised conflicting opinions within the services, with some considering the support available to be adequate, whilst others felt it was not adequate or sufficient. *'[Half-time]… is just not enough time. People do not appreciate how much time it takes up'*, (Victim worker). *'…everything that needs to be done seems to be done, so yes [there is enough administrative support for the programme]'* (Case manager).

The number and role of case managers differed across the services, with case managers being named a specialist case manager, dedicated to DV offenders, and those with other case loads to manage. In one area, the use of specialist case managers meant that the programme was seeing an increasing number of referrals; *"since we have specialised as case managers we have more referrals. We now have more waiting than there are on a group."* (Programme tutor).

The role of the victim worker was seen as imperative to the Duluth programme. The involvement of the victim within the service was a new concept, however it was welcomed by staff; *"this is new work for us, and so it is a learning experience. It is something we should have done a long time ago"* (Programme tutor). Alongside this awareness, it was acknowledged that the victim workers' role was very time consuming, with some of those fulfilling the role finding the work very difficult to complete within the allocated hours. On average it took an hour to prepare for a visit to the victim and approximately three hours per

interview (which have to be completed four times during the length of the support work). Also the victim worker was responsible for liaising with case managers, social services and women's services with relevant information, when it was necessary to do so. It was clear that the views of those working within the probation areas did not coincide with the views of those from within the NPD about the nature of the victim support workers' roles. '*The victim support worker manual shows that there should be limited contact with the victims and that they should be there to signpost, but they want to do it all. So from their point of view, they are not given enough time to do all the work that they would like to do. But it's not part of the programme.'* (PIM).

Training

Programme delivery staff had varying experience of the programme training processes, and commented on whether they believed that the training equipped them to deliver Duluth effectively. The training of other staff involved in the programme was carried out locally and there were different experiences of these processes.

Within London, the programme training was generally described by programme tutors as acceptable, although not as comprehensive or detailed as it might have been. The tutors felt that more information on the processes of delivering Duluth could have been provided; tutors felt that the training was theoretical and historical in focus. *'It certainly wasn't a training of new skills, and I think it was not enough for tutors who are not familiar with the programme'* (Treatment manager*); '…it just gives you a theoretical underpinning and a flavour, but it needs to be more'* (Programme tutor).

In contrast, West Yorkshire programme deliverers seemed delighted with the quality of the training and described the trainer as *'brilliant'* and *'inspiring'*. A trainer from Duluth had been recruited to carry out the initial training sessions for both areas. Again, the training was noted as consisting of three days of training for the deliverers, but they stated that a longer training period would have been beneficial. The main concern about this training was that there was limited time in which they could practice sessions and '*try out*' the exercises that they had learned. Consequently staff felt that they were '*learning on the job*' and that it took a number of programme deliveries before they were comfortable with delivering the programme sessions.

The training of case managers, victim support workers and staff involved in the Duluth project from other agencies became an issue. Some staff stated that collective training for probation staff and partnership agency staff would be beneficial to identify and understand more clearly the roles of different personnel involved with the programme.

Staff also suggested areas for future training. Case managers, in particular, highlighted the need for motivational interviewing training, because they felt this was vital to the pre-programme work that they carry out, but one noted, *'the training is not always available to assist you to develop all the skills required for the programme.'*

The areas were praised by NPD for holding joint training days, which might have been problematic considering the geographical distance between the areas, but had been overcome by the sharing of resources and experiences. Despite comments about differing forms of training event, there was no evidence to illustrate the effectiveness of different forms of training.

Communication

A number of different communication models were evident in the three areas. The most common element was the use of informal communication techniques.

The implementation of the Duluth Domestic Violence programme within West Yorkshire was carefully thought out. The case manager was seen as the central figure with regard to the case and all information and correspondence about an individual was done via the case

manager. Within South West and South East London the holding of information is not so systematic, with both programme deliverers and case managers having different pieces of information about the same individual.

Staff in all areas thought it was necessary to illustrate to offenders that all those involved in their supervision and treatment were aware of any potential issues. In South West London, case managers were informed about problems highlighted in the sessions by the programme deliverers. For example, one case manager commented that, *'It is important for the perpetrators to know that we are communicating because there is a huge danger of collusion…and they do try to play you off against each other.'*

From interviews, there was an impression that communication was limited amongst more senior management. In South East London this was explicitly linked to a *'management gap'* which meant that communication problems within the programme management level were also affecting the communication between operational and management levels. The area was, however, dealing with this issue.

Staff also raised concerns about the nature of information and data confidentiality in relation to the programme; how should information relating to the progress of the offender or the needs of the victim be shared within the probation teams. Questions were raised as to how, or whether, the victim worker should pass and act on information from probation colleagues about offenders' behaviour and progress, or from the victims about offenders' behaviour outside of the programme. Guidelines for victim workers on such matters were, however, provided within the programme manual.

Both the senior management teams and those working within the NPD were asked about communication with the National Probation Service. From both aspects, the methods of the Steering Group (which managed the development and administration of the Duluth programme) and the Reference Group (used to identify issues related to the delivery of the Duluth programme and domestic violence issues in general) were mentioned as being useful. Whilst the Steering Group format seemed to have worked effectively, one Project Implementation Manager questioned whether it was a mistake not to have included a representative from those with responsibility for case management. This may have helped ensure that there was an understanding about the communication needs between case management and programme delivery in the developing programme.

The Evaluation Team also tried to ascertain whether it would have been appropriate for partnership agencies to become involved in the Steering Group. PIMs stated that they did not believe that this was the right forum for the development of partnership relationships, that it was simply a project management group, and that advice from partners (police, social services, Women's Aid, Respect, health, education, as well as other voluntary and statutory organisations) was sought in the Reference Group. Despite these comments, other staff noted that by not including partnership groups in the development of the programme, they were open to the accusation, raised by some partnership agencies, that probation were not 'qualified' to be delivering a programme which addresses the needs of victims and perpetrators.

In addition to speaking to probation based staff in relation to the external communication, the Evaluation Team sent out questionnaires to magistrates and the police and also spoke to representatives of magistrates, the police and women's groups.

The Evaluation Team received mixed reports on the subject of communication with partnership agencies. Within London, probation staff reported that links with social services and the women's support agencies were good but in the early stages of development. However, others who were not so directly involved with the programme reported that they were confused about who had responsibility for communicating which pieces of information to whom.

At the time of the evaluation, the collection of police call-out data within London was on an ad hoc basis and was by no means systematic. It was hoped that there would be access to this information on a micro level and a macro level. The micro level of access would involve working with local police officers – probation would compile lists of those offenders on the programme and submit this to the police at regular intervals. The police would then be able to provide local information concerning any call-out relating to the offender on the programme. The macro level of access would utilise the Police National Computer in order to provide a more global view of any call-outs relating to the offenders.

However, this system was still very much in development within London. The micro level of data collection operated intermittently. However, there were doubts as to whether the macro level of data collection would be functional at all: Staff informed the evaluation team that it had been '*bogged down with discussions about what we can have access to and I think that money comes into it.*' This was supported by a senior manager, who stated that there should be communication via senior management levels within each organisation; but he was sceptical about the efficacy of this working.

Within West Yorkshire there were protocols being developed with the police and social services for the sharing of information. Information is shared most effectively with social services in relation to child protection issues and police call-out information was received regularly. The protocol was set up during the developmental stage of the programme and it was agreed that the police would supply the probation service with information concerning the offenders on the programme on a weekly basis. This arrangement, however, was resource intensive as it involved a member of administrative staff searching through the IAPS database on a case-by-case basis in order to retrieve the names of those offenders with a Duluth condition.

West Yorkshire probation area also invited outside agencies to a Reference and Evaluation Group which met on a regular basis. From the outset, the aim was to provide a forum for all of those agencies involved in the issue of domestic violence. On the whole the response was very good. However, staff spoke of disappointment concerning the non-attendance of a representative of social services.

All magistrates were invited to attend a context-setting day, which had been provided by the probation areas. However, both London and West Yorkshire magistrates commented that perhaps only ten per cent of magistrates attended this type of training. The probation areas had also provided information leaflets and posters in order to attempt to inform those that were not able to attend the context setting events.

A large number of staff, both within the probation service and from outside agencies, commented that there was some disappointment about the limitations of the project. The original Duluth model proposes a Co-ordinated Community Response that includes not only a programme for perpetrators but also information and support in the form of a programme for the victims of domestic violence. As yet, there have been no resources provided centrally for the development of a complementary women's programme. This was a major disappointment for many of the staff involved. However most recognised the problem concerning the lack of consensus about whose responsibility it was to provide this service for women and the inappropriateness of '*criminalising the women by bringing them in (*to probation*), when they are not under orders, to very close proximity to the criminal justice system'*.

Within West Yorkshire, and due to historical reasons, the relations with women's groups were very good, especially within Leeds. A very recent development within West Yorkshire was that money had been made available from a Service Area underspend to fund some work with the victims of the men on the perpetrator programme.

Effective working relationships with outside organisations and highly developed information sharing protocols were important for the implementation of the programme. In order for the programme deliverers and the victim support workers to direct their work, they needed information from the police about call-outs to offenders' homes or incidents within which they had been involved. However, the lack of data sharing, collection, collation and analysis may

also have had an impact on the evaluation process, which may ultimately have skewed the results as to the effectiveness of the programme.

Programme delivery

The Evaluation Team aimed to discover how the current programme is being delivered, and whether the length and content of the course was considered by the programme teams to be appropriate. Questions in this area aimed to identify how offenders were referred to the programme and if this procedure was working effectively. Group sizes and delivery style were also considered in order to assess the optimal group size and any difficulties that existed in the delivery of material. Questions on programme integrity aimed to identify the rigour with which the programme was delivered in this area. Monitoring arrangements were also considered in order to ascertain if appropriate information was being collected in order to inform the further evaluation of the programme.

Offenders were referred to the programme through pre-sentence reports (PSRs) and the recommendations of PSR writers to magistrates, which was in line with the referral processes for other offending behaviour programmes. However, as there was no identifiable offence of domestic violence, the PSR and the associated test batteries held an additional importance. Despite this, it was considered that not enough staff were trained to complete the psychometric test battery, which may have led to offenders not being referred to the programme, when they potentially may have benefited.

Staff reported that some cases were being plea-bargained and reduced sentences meant that fewer cases were overtly considered to have domestic violence elements. This was problematic as it meant that offenders were able to deny that they had a problem with domestic violence and thus when such offenders did secure a place on the programme, this fed in to their ability to deny their problem. However, in all areas, the vast majority of referrals were considered appropriate, they had been convicted of a violent offence against an intimate partner, their psychometric test scores fell within the target and they were assessed as being suitable for a group programme.

Regarding the issue of when the groups should be delivered, both probation areas had groups running during the day and evening. This made it easier for offenders to fit the programme around their jobs, family commitments and so on. It was also the consensus of opinion by delivery staff in both areas that the most effective group size was around eight offenders. This was due to the feeling that working with eight people was an acceptable number; each offender had the 'space' in the group to take part and it also meant that they were encouraged and supported in taking part if reluctant or unwilling. Staff were unwilling to take on larger groups. This opinion, about the nature of group size and its effect on programme success, is yet to be supported or challenged by quantitative data.

The make-up of groups was also questioned and in West Yorkshire, variations in the age of group members were seen as a positive thing. Programme deliverers claimed that such age variations produced a *'positive change in the dynamics of the group',* where different viewpoints and experiences from different ages were shared. However, in South East London, programme deliverers noted that the 'paternal' relationships between older and younger group members might have an adverse effect on the programme delivery, with pro-offending ideas being reinforced by older men. Again, this is yet to be supported by quantitative evidence.

Minority ethnic groups were under-represented within the staff working on the Duluth programme. For example, there were no black or Asian staff programme deliverers, which according to programme deliverers was a major disadvantage and sometimes a barrier when delivering the programme, in areas where groups included numbers of offenders from minority ethnic groups. However, the programme was considered flexible enough to meet the needs of different offenders, although it was felt that the videos used could usefully incorporate more offenders from different ethnic backgrounds to make them more relevant for group members.

The programme deliverers noted that the programme was appropriate in its content, but some questioned whether it was long enough to challenge ingrained thoughts and beliefs and to address related behaviours. Staff commented on difficulties in changing such belief systems and the need for further work to reinforce and expand on what the programme offers; '*I think this could be a lot longer. We are working with entrenched attitudes and I think this is the bare minimum'* (Programme tutor). Others noted that offenders found the programme repetitive, but this repetition was viewed as necessary by the facilitators, in order for offenders to learn and grasp the points made. Facilitators agreed that the programme needed to be long in order to cover all the issues. Some suggested that work on denial was necessary; others commented that extending the programme would help to establish those offenders who were manipulating their own outcome by participating in the programme to complete their sentence but not internalising the aims and objectives of it*; 'I think a lot of them would benefit from work to deal with their denial before they go onto the programme' (Case manager).*

The delivery manuals were considered adequate, though it was suggested that these could be improved and expanded. This process is already ongoing; because of the pilot status of the programme, the manuals are continuously under review.

Staff from the NPD felt that the programme was not suitable for those with literacy problems or without a sound grasp of English. However, when questioned as to whether the programme was suitable for minority ethnic offenders, slightly differing, but complementary, views were noted. One PIM suggested that the programme was written in a manner so that it was culturally sensitive, and that it had been used in a number of countries and had been altered to fit the needs of the offenders (this may, however, rely on the skill and understanding of those delivering the programme to meet these needs, rather than offering information in the programme manuals). Another PIM noted that in order for the programme to meet the needs of minority ethnic offenders, focus groups should be set up in order to inform the programme about the needs of these offenders.

Whilst the nature of the Duluth programme was different to other offending behaviour programmes being delivered by National Probation Service staff, the issue of programme integrity and treatment management was still vital to the effective implementation of the programme.

As was found in other offending behaviour programmes, the role and activity of the Treatment Manager took time to bed down; it was not clear whether the probation areas were meeting the targets for video recording or treatment management. The lack of appropriately qualified staff to carry out this role in the early stages of implementation may always be a problem when introducing to probation areas.

Problems associated with the rollout of national offender and programme monitoring arrangements, in either the paper version or the back office version, were also evident in the implementation of Duluth. What was not entirely clear was whether the systems put in place to counteract any pitfalls in the data gathering procedures were effective. Managerial staff were of the opinion that the continued involvement of a research officer in the development and delivery of the programme aided the clarity and completeness of the data collected, which in turn would strengthen the integrity of the data when analysed.

Strategic programme implementation issues

The Evaluation Team was asked to investigate the nature of the development and implementation of the Duluth programme from the point of view of the NPD. The aim of the information gathered was to give an illustration as to the effectiveness of this process. The NPD identified that there was a gap in meeting the needs of DV offenders in the suite of programmes for offenders. The Duluth programme was chosen for development because it was based on evidence of practice and had been evaluated in a number of countries. Former probation services were invited to tender to develop the programme, and bids were accepted from West Yorkshire, South East, South West and North East London. London identified the

project as one that would help the unification of their DV provision. Despite this, the programme was only implemented in two probation areas in London.

There was resistance to the development of the programme in a number of quarters. Staff with strategic roles within probation who felt that the involvement of a wide set of stakeholders would be problematic, including trying to balance the roles of statutory and voluntary agencies; probation staff who were already delivering DV programmes; voluntary victim support workers, who felt that probation did not have the skills to be providing support to victims and the Prison Service which had general concerns about offending behaviour programmes being delivered in the community. Whilst this resistance has dissipated to some extent, the nature of the programme was still regarded as political, and one senior management team member stated, '*it's the most political programme… There are critics of the way we're working. There are competitors, saying, 'we can do this work and we're doing it better'… So I think that our work is under extra pressure".*

It may be suggested that the Reference Group, the working group consisting of probation and partnership organisations, may have gone some way towards addressing these issues. But as noted above, there was some concern about the make-up of the group and the power and resource relationships within it.

The Steering Group seemed to have worked soundly as a management and issues forum for those managing and implementing the programme.

The areas which took on the development and implementation of the programme gained funding for specific aspects of the work, including funding to support staff who were developing materials, staff training events, consultation with a trainer from Duluth, travel and subsistence expenses when travelling to group meetings, the production of materials and costs for the development of the victim support worker. Areas were not provided with funds to run the programme however, as this was seen as part of their core duties.

Linked to resources, it was clear from the interviews in the areas, as well as those within NPD, that the resources for collecting, collating and analysing data were not uniform across the areas. Staff from the probation areas noted that it was a burden on administrative staff, but it was also noted that one area did not have the systems in place that would aid the collection and analysis of the materials. There was a general consensus of opinion amongst those interviewed that if the aim of the Research Pathfinder is to develop a programme and to begin to provide an evidence base on which to build, then it is imperative that the data collection tools are fit for this purpose.

The proposed lead-in time for the Duluth programme did not seem to match the time needed for the areas to ready themselves for the programme delivery. The programme was due to start in April 2001, but programme delivery did not start until September 2001. It was recognised by NPD staff that those with strategic responsibility for the development of programmes should be aware of the potential problems in operational areas, which might lead to project slippage, and be ready to be flexible with plans as well as identifying longer time periods in which tasks should be completed. One of the issues that may have contributed to time delays was the amalgamation of the London service.

The NPD is currently developing a national strategy for addressing DV issues, and this is due to be published shortly. Whilst the timetable for the creation of a national service and the associated realignment in producing strategy papers, cannot be helped, this may provide an important learning point for future programmes. One PIM has indicated that the development of a national strategy for probation work in the area of DV would have aided the implementation of the Duluth programme.

Discussion

This paper summarises the issues that have been raised by those delivering and managing the implementation of the Duluth Domestic Violence programme; a number of important issues were highlighted and should be considered in future development and implementation plans.

Staffing issues are, perhaps unsurprisingly given the concerns raised by senior staff in areas relating to recruitment and retention, areas of concern. The research indicated that roles and responsibilities of staff delivering programmes and related activities provoked a great deal of discussion, both within probation areas and with external bodies. This linked clearly to discussion of information sharing within teams, and the creation of formal protocols. Not only does this help the continuation of programme delivery, but also addresses questions of public protection; as a successful programme will, ultimately, lead to a reduction in reoffending.

The continued development of offending behaviour programmes depends upon the collection and analysis of programme, offender and victim data; therefore the monitoring of information needs to be consistent across probation areas and programmes, and to be of an appropriate quality for it to be useful for research purposes.

Conclusion

From this process evaluation of the Duluth Domestic Violence Programme, a number of important issues have emerged as being pertinent to effective implementation and delivery of this programme within probation areas. These are summarised below:

Context to facilitate successful implementation

- Probation areas should give special consideration to staffing issues. Particular attention should be paid to resourcing, the model of delivery and the management structures to be employed, ensuring that the model selected is the optimum model given local area characteristics and resources.

- Areas should ensure that adequate resourcing is made available for the administration of this programme, as it is administratively intensive.

- Consideration should be given to the gender of programme deliverers to ensure that a balance is achieved as a mixed gender delivery team, according to those delivering the programme, allowed offenders to see pro-social modelling of male/female relationships.

- The extent of the role of the victim support worker, in relation to the programme, should be carefully considered at a local level. The manual advises limited contact with the victim and to act as a signpost to appropriate agencies. Feedback from victims should also be considered in developing this role.

Training

- All staff related to the project, including administrators, would benefit from attending context-setting days, which highlight the main aspects of the programme and the nature of inter-agency communication.

- In the light of these findings (and similar findings concerning other programmes), it is suggested that additional support, either in the form of locally organised workshops or extended national training events, would be beneficial to newly trained programme deliverers. This would build on, and develop, the skills and knowledge gained during the Duluth Domestic Violence Programme training.

- Motivational interviewing training for case managers should be considered.

- This research highlighted the need for programme deliverers who have detailed knowledge of domestic violence and related issues. Staff selection for this role should reflect this finding and/or training events (in addition to the programme delivery training) should be available to those working within this capacity. Treatment Managers would benefit from having specialist knowledge of domestic violence and should provide regular feedback and practice supervision to programme deliverers.

Communication

- A clear, and formal, protocol of communication, both within probation and between probation and outside agencies, should be established before implementation of the programme. This model should be specific and include police, women's groups and social services. In particular, arrangements for the transfer of police call-out data to probation and the sharing of relevant information with social services should be established. Information on the nature of the programme needs to be made available to sentencers, so that they are aware of the programmes available to probation.

- Probation staff should work closely to ensure that all necessary information is shared with relevant staff in order to limit the possibility of collusion or manipulation by the offenders on the programme.

- Programme manuals should be available and read by all involved in the programme to ensure that all staff members are knowledgeable about the aims, objectives and methods of the programme. This will help to ensure that the programme aims are not inadvertently undermined.

- Programme Management senior staff should ensure that Case Management senior staff are involved and consulted before and during the implementation phase of the programme to ensure that they are aware of the demands of the programme.

- Locally organised awareness or context setting training events for all involved in the delivery of the programme, including local agencies (police, magistrates, women's groups, social services), would allow for the dissemination of information in relation to the programme. They would also provide a forum for the clarification of lines of working, both within probation and with outside agencies. It is strongly urged that these events be held within probation areas delivering the Duluth Domestic Violence Programme.

- Probation area management teams must be made aware that funds made available by the Probation Service for locally provided context setting or awareness days for wider agencies, including police, magistrates and women's groups, must be used effectively and meet the needs identified in any evaluation.

- Early notification of the implementation of the programme should be communicated to all relevant outside agencies. Consideration should be given to the possibility of regular Reference Group meetings, which would include representatives from the outside agencies. This will ensure that all necessary parties are involved and are aware of developments in relation to the implementation of the programme.

- Leaflets and posters should be available for all outside agencies (police, magistrates, women's groups, social services) to inform them of the programme, its aims and the process.

Programme delivery

- Pre-sentence report (PSR) writers should be provided with the appropriate training with regard to domestic violence issues and psychometric test administration in order to ensure appropriate proposals to the programme.

- Evening and weekend programmes should be timetabled, as a significant proportion of domestic violence offenders are likely to work during the day.

- The optimum group size for this programme was reported to be approximately eight offenders. However, further research is needed in order test this opinion.

- Consideration should be given to the make-up of the groups, specifically in relation to age and minority ethnic individuals in order to prevent discriminatory practice.

- Programme deliverers should be aware of the issue of denial and the impact on the rest of the group. Depending on available resources, the possibility of a separate group for those offenders could be explored.

- Programme deliverers should also be responsive to the needs of the offenders, especially in relation to cultural issues. Deliverers should be aware of the potential diversity within the offenders' backgrounds and should be sensitive to how this diversity may impact on their attitudes towards domestic violence.

- Probation areas should consider the offenders' potential needs for further work (in addition to attendance on the programme) to reinforce and expand on the programme aims.

- The implementation plan should include realistic planning in terms of resources allocated to Treatment Management, in terms of personnel, equipment and arrangements for storage.

- Probation areas must not by-pass the role and activity of the treatment manager at any stage of programme development and implementation, as the effectiveness of the programme may rely on the integrity of programme implementation.

- Consideration should also be given to the provision of clinical supervision and guidance for programme deliverers.

- In the absence of Interim Accredited Programme Software (IAPS), systems for the storage of information relating to the programme and the individuals on the programme should be specified within the Area implementation plan and should be communicated to all involved.

Strategic programme implementation issues

- National strategy documentation should be in place before a programme is developed.

- A lead-in time that is of longer duration than seen in this case should be factored into the programme timetable and this should be flexible enough to meet the needs of the areas as well as the Probation Service.

- Resource implications of taking part in programme development need to be made more explicit to probation area staff. This will aid in the planning and implementation of the programme.

- Documentation about the make-up of management groups should be provided to all involved in the implementation and all parties should try to ensure continuation of membership and level of seniority.

- The Probation Service should consider the membership of the programme development Steering Groups thoroughly, ensuring that all interest groups are represented, but that the group does not become unwieldy in its nature.

- With regard to the funding of Pilot Pathfinder programmes, the Probation Service should provide probation area senior management with a detailed breakdown of the resources that need to be made available for the effective, joint development of a partnership programme.

- Data collection, collation and analysis tools and resources should be in place, fit for purpose and clearly identifiable to the Probation Service before being awarded programme development projects.

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