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**Title**

**Implementing a Randomised Controlled Trial using  
Conditional Cautioning as a response to Domestic  
Abuse**

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## **Abstract**

*The police service in England and Wales is facing its toughest challenge in modern times in having to reduce its public spend while improving service provision. This operating environment will test the skills of police leaders and government policy makers alike, who must consider how best to balance criminal justice outcomes with the resources available.*

*The idea of using evidence based policing to tackle crime and use resources efficiently is not a new phenomenon and has been used effectively in the US and UK, but only in a limited capacity. The majority of this research has been led by criminologists who have worked tirelessly to engage strategic and operational support for field experiments. The idea that UK police leaders can plan, lead and undertake such research, supported by academic institutions, presents an exciting opportunity for this new era.*

*This study examines the challenges and implications of undertaking such research, led by a UK police leader. It examines the trials and tribulations of undertaking a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) involving one of the most emotive and sensitive kinds of criminal behaviour, namely domestic abuse. The experiment seeks to test the effectiveness of conditional cautioning with behaviour intervention workshops compared to a non-workshop (control) group.*

*The study itself explores the challenges associated with that RCT. These include the need to engage stakeholders at every level, build teams, select appropriate pilot sites, manage risk, design processes, and collect and analyse data. These challenges are all set against the backdrop of the police and criminal justice operating environment, police culture and the plethora of interest from domestic abuse voluntary groups. The results are yet to be analysed as the experiment is still very much live but the issues associated with designing and implementing the experiment are the subject of this thesis.*

*These issues although complex in nature demonstrate that successful RCT's can be undertaken by police leaders. The future of criminal justice policy and how best to tackle criminal behaviour can be best informed by undertaking high quality research within the police organisations and this report provides the insight into that journey of research.*

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## **Introduction**

Historically there has been a significant amount of debate surrounding the investigation and resolution of domestic abuse cases by police. Difficulties exist with regard to the definition and classification of domestic abuse, and this, coupled with the variation in reporting and high rates of attrition has provided a hostile environment in which to analyse patterns of domestic abuse offending.

Domestic abuse is a sensitive and emotive topic and the handling of these cases within the criminal justice system is subject to scrutiny. There is no clear indication of 'what works' with regard to initiatives that aim to effectively deal with these cases. Little research exists into the best way to introduce new initiatives that seek to tackle these issues.

Whilst various processes and schemes are presently available within the criminal justice environment to address these offences, they primarily fall into two specific categories. These are either rehabilitative, involving workshops to tackle causes of offending, or punitive, whereby 'traditional' criminal justice sanctions are used in order to deter the offender from further offending. The relatively few cases that actually end up being prosecuted through courts provide little consideration for the needs of victims or offenders. Significant problems also exist with regard to the prosecution of domestic abuse offending. Cases of this nature often cannot be dealt with by the criminal justice system as there is insufficient evidence for a prosecution to be



successful, or, due to the personal nature of these cases, statements are withdrawn by victims resulting in the original offence being dismissed. Victims are frequently not interested in punishment for offenders, preferring that the offender receives some treatment to address their underlying behaviour. What is unclear is how effective this treatment is in preventing offences re-occurring.

On this basis, further investigation is required in order to ascertain whether the introduction of offending workshops can assist with the prevention of reoffending. The only intervention that is presently available for minor domestic abuse offending which does not involve court proceedings is the simple caution, which only allows the police to warn the offender. Conditions cannot be attached to a simple caution, so it does not provide any incentive to prevent reoffending. However, the conditional caution scheme is similar to a simple caution, but allows for conditions to be imposed in order for the caution to be completed. Failure to complete these conditions can result in subsequent prosecution for the original offence.

The RCT (Randomised Controlled Trial) is an ideal research design to test whether workshops can reduce reoffending. This is because the random nature of allocation to either a workshop or non-workshop group reduces any intrinsic bias present in non-randomised experiments. However, it must be noted that the implementation of such an experimental design requires tight controls to ensure that the offender receives the intervention that is provided by the process of randomisation.

There are relatively few examples of successful RCT's within police organisations and those that have been undertaken have largely been led by academics and not always with the full commitment of police organisations. However the pressure on the public purse requires strategic police leaders to find ways to deliver better criminal justice outcomes in a more efficient way. This RCT demonstrates how police leaders can undertake such field experiments and how the challenges of research can be overcome to deliver evidence based policing. It will seek to explore not only the need to work through the practical elements of research design but will discuss the wider issues associated with influencing other agencies in supporting the field experiment.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of Hampshire Constabulary is to undertake a RCT to determine whether offenders of domestic abuse who are randomly allocated a workshop as part of a conditional caution indicate a reduction in reoffending compared with offenders who receive a conditional caution without a workshop. The thesis will primarily focus on reporting the challenges associated with the design and implementation of the RCT. Given the timescales involved with data collection and analysis, this thesis will not report on findings from the study.

The aim of the study will be to fulfil the following objectives:

- To review literature on domestic abuse definition, classification and interventions;
- To evaluate the conditional caution as a valid method to implement offending workshops for domestic abuse offenders;
- To discuss the use of RCT's as suitable methodology and the benefits and drawbacks of such a method;
- To highlight and explain the various issues that require resolution in order for a RCT to be successfully implemented within a police organisation

The study will consist of the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 will review the existing literature surrounding domestic abuse, conditional cautions and RCT's. It will provide the theoretical basis and evidence base for the implementation of the subsequent experiment.
- Chapter 2 reviews existing preparatory work regarding the implementation of this study and provides a chronological appraisal of pre-implementation functions and responsibilities.
- Chapter 3 details the development of the study from the theoretical feasibility study to implementation of the RCT and discusses the strategies adopted in achieving the engagement of all concerned parties.

- Chapter 4 details the intervention to be applied and how the issues relate to the experiment.
- Chapter 5 details the experimental data collection framework and the underlying decisions required to ensure that the hypothesis can be effectively tested.
- Chapter 6 details the final outstanding decisions and the processes that led to the experiment being fully implemented.
- Chapter 7 draws discusses the key themes highlighted throughout the challenges of implementing the RCT in a police organisation and draws conclusions with regard to the future effectiveness of the trial.

# **Chapter One**

## **Literature Review**

### **Setting the Context for Research**

Domestic abuse is an emotive topic and therefore difficult to investigate due to the unique position that it occupies within the criminal justice system. Problems with the classification of domestic abuse, coupled with uncertainties related to treatment programmes and police tactics, have posed testing questions to researchers within this field. The issues surrounding 'what works' is a much debated but frequently misunderstood phenomenon. As domestic abuse is more concerned with the offender-victim relationship, opposed to the criminal activity itself, it presents significant challenges to the criminal justice system (Robinson, 2010). Methods of reducing recidivism for domestic abuse offenders have proved problematic. Various initiatives are presently cited as being effective, but meta-analysis of domestic violence treatment has shown only a small benefit in terms of reducing reoffending (Babcock, Green and Robie, 2004).

The scale of domestic abuse is difficult to quantify, but it is recognised to be a global issue and believed to be chronically under-reported (Buzawa and Buzawa, 2002). It is claimed by a Canadian study (Jaffe, Wolfe, Telford and Austin, 1986) that on average women have been assaulted 35 times before the police are contacted. It is also believed that many victims choose not to report domestic crimes or withdraw support for prosecution before cases reach court (Paradine and Wilkinson, 2004).

Despite this high prevalence of criminal activity it is clear that the criminal justice system is yet to effectively tackle the problem. Although the quality of literature available on this subject is vast there appear to be few conclusive findings as to 'what works'. Despite the fact that one cannot easily separate police action, criminal justice processes or the effectiveness or otherwise of treatment programs, they all play a major role in addressing the continuance of this crime. An important element of this is captured within the varying definitions of domestic abuse, which will be discussed below.

### **Defining Domestic Abuse**

Prior to discussing the necessity to undertake further experimental research in this field it is important to highlight the complexities in establishing a common view as to what exactly constitutes 'domestic abuse'. This is a relevant factor for individuals to consider in terms of current and future research, and clearly highlights the difficulties in studying a topic that is inherently complex.

One of the most confusing issues when examining the societal classification of domestic abuse is that the term has different meanings to different audiences. The phrase 'domestic abuse' is often used as an alternative to 'domestic violence'. It is not entirely clear how these terms differ from one another.

Dobash (2003) discusses how people can refer to domestic violence simply as intimate partner violence or woman abuse. Another term is that of 'family

violence' which can be interpreted as violence between intimate partners; while others refer to it as any violence that is between those who live in a domestic dwelling and/or between those who live within a family or household. Domestic abuse can also include controlling behaviour such as limiting a woman's contact with friends and family, close scrutiny of her actions, threats of violence, rape or even murder (Edwards 1986; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis, 1996).

Presently, the UK government departments (including police and CPS) inform policy by interpreting domestic violence as;

*'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse [psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional] between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'* (Home Office 2011). It is this common definition that is applied in this research although it will only apply to spousal relationships, not all family members.

### **Domestic Abuse as a Public Issue: From the background to the forefront.**

This lack of clarity with regard to classifying domestic abuse is not surprising if one were to consider that in policing and criminal justice terms it could be regarded as a relatively modern challenge. It was not until the 1970's when feminist groups actively sought to raise and challenge the criminal justice



system that the then passive approach to domestic abuse became evident in the public arena. This momentum of raising awareness continued into the 1980's although a confused picture remained as to what the criminal justice response would be. Women's groups in the UK carried out their own research into the policing of domestic violence and the police were heavily criticised for their failure to respond effectively (Hammer and Saunders, 1984).

Despite this criticism it appears that policing domestic abuse in the UK during the 1980's appeared to be a low priority. It was reported in 1983 that the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police suggested that such disputes "should be hived off to the social services" (Hague and Malos, 2005). During the early 1980's groundbreaking research was undertaken in the US in the form of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Sherman, 1992) whereby the effectiveness of various police responses to domestic violence calls were evaluated. It was found that arrest reduced the rate by half of re-offending against the same victim within the following six months (Sherman, 1992). This research was later used in replicate studies and the results were not consistent with those found in Minneapolis, however Sherman's findings very much influenced a 'pro-arrest' policy in US and later the UK.

The UK continued to monitor overseas developments and this research along with increased pressure from women's groups impacted on the publication of a Home Office circular (69/1986), which requested chief officers review their practices and approach to the dealing of domestic violence. Although this was a significant step forward, the police in the UK continued to fail to apply a

rigorous or consistent approach. However during the late 1980's and into the early 1990's a number of funded initiatives were implemented in order to provide women with support and assistance in fleeing from or otherwise coping with domestic violence. Crisis intervention strategies whereby women were supported after reporting incidents to the police were found to be effective but in different ways for each individual (Parmar and Sampson, 2007). In 1990 the Home Office produced a further circular (60/1990). This circular required a pro-arrest and pro-prosecution policy, promoted the use of support agencies in the protection of children and women and encouraged the formation of specialist domestic violence units.

Despite this and the efforts of many police forces a Home Office evaluation conducted in 1998 directed considerable criticism towards the police. It highlighted lack of specialist training, weakness in supervision and poor policing standards (Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998). However in recent years the police and wider criminal justice system appears to have undertaken a more focused and accountable approach to the policing of domestic abuse. This has taken the form of the introduction of specialist teams working in public protection units, the use of 'positive arrest' as a performance measure and strong working practices in partnership with the third sector and other voluntary organisations. Despite this feeling of a more 'joined up' approach, some studies continue to find inconsistencies in arrest rates, recording of such crimes and poor investigation standards (Hester *et al* 2003).

Arrest as a single act has received a huge amount of attention from policy makers and researchers. Differing views are held as to whether or not arrest is indeed a deterrent, a punishment in itself or whether it is an intervention that is incomplete unless followed by other actions that address this form of offending, such as offender intervention programmes (Dobash, 2003).

Research from established charitable organisations such as Respect report that many women do not want their offenders to be punished. They view the solution as not necessarily introducing their partner to the criminal justice system and potentially receiving a conviction in a court of law (Respect, 2011). They suggest that most female partners and ex-partners of perpetrators wanted outcomes linked to some improvement of the relationship including enhanced parenting, reduction or cessation of abuse and they want their men to understand the impact of their abuse (Westmarland, Kelly, and Chalder-Mills, 2010). In the US it was found that alternatives to conviction, such as court mandated intervention programmes were favoured: rather than offenders being convicted, women felt safer in such programmes where offenders were engaged in trying to change their behaviour (Frederick and Lizdas, 2003).

As discussed later, this study will involve testing the mandatory attendance at a domestic abuse diversionary workshop as part of a requirement under the conditional cautioning scheme. The use of offender based 'treatment programmes' or diversionary workshops is not a new phenomenon but has been in place for several years either voluntarily or as part of a court imposed

sentence. In order to understand this in the context of the criminal justice system, it is important to outline the various programmes of this kind available to offenders.

### **Offender Based Programmes**

Many of the more established intervention programmes are based around the Duluth Model. This model was devised by Ellen Pence (Gondolf, 2010) and centres on challenging the beliefs of offenders, enhancing social skills and promoting victim empathy. This was incorporated into a 24-week non-violence programme designed to reduce reoffending (Bilby and Hatcher, 2004). This is commonly held to be the precursor to many initiatives in the US and UK.

The most significant intervention utilised within the US is the Batterer Intervention Project (BIP). These are different programmes of varying lengths where often a feminist educational approach is used, sometimes combined with cognitive-behavioural or psychotherapy. It is reported that the field of batterer intervention and the criminal justice system are becoming increasingly intertwined (Healey, Smith and O'Sullivan, 1998). The BIP intervention within the US Criminal Justice System tends to occur as part of a court-mandated process, whereby an offender is referred to a BIP after a preliminary hearing in court, or as part of a sentence post-conviction (Healy, Smith and O'Sullivan, 1998). Despite the apparent widespread use of BIP within the US, evidence from experimental evaluations and a host of articles, it is asserted that they 'don't work' or at least 'don't work very well' (Corvo, Dutton and Chen, 2008). In terms of any diversionary programmes or

intervention prior to the court process, there is no literature that suggests that this is an option in the US.

In the UK, there are two principal responses to domestic abuse from an offending perspective, both of which are based on the Duluth Model. The DVPP (Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme) is a community-based group work programme, which aims to assist offenders to change their behaviour, therefore discouraging further abuse from occurring (Respect, 2011). This scheme operates outside the criminal justice system, with referrals being received from family courts, social services, voluntary sector agencies and the offenders themselves (Respect, 2011). It is claimed that this initiative showed that victims of abuse were less likely to be assaulted after this intervention (Respect, 2011).

In terms of interventions as part of the criminal justice process, the primary response is referral to an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP), Community Domestic Violence Programme (CDVP) or Healthy Relationships Programme (HRP) (NOMS, 2010). Very little evidence is available to identify the benefits of these interventions, and, given the differences in implementation in the various UK areas, it is difficult to make comparisons between programmes (Select Committee on Home Affairs, 2008). There is widespread concern with regard to the resourcing of these programmes, with many areas reporting staff shortages and a lack of available places for offenders (Select Committee on Home Affairs, 2008). All of the initiatives detailed above apply in cases post conviction, as part of a sentence or

conducted whilst in prison (Select Committee on Home Affairs, 2008). There is no provision for interventions for cases involving minor offending and offenders with little or no offending history.

### **Conditional Cautions**

The experiment undertaken within this study will examine the as yet untested method of applying conditional cautions as opposed to the 'simple caution'. These are to be imposed at the point of release from a police station as opposed to a court imposed sanction. It is therefore appropriate to briefly examine the position conditional cautions hold within the criminal justice system in England and Wales.

In England and Wales, there are several options for dealing with offenders who have committed minor offences without the necessity of a time-consuming and costly court process. These are known as 'out of court disposals'. In 2009, 38 per cent of the 1.29 million offences 'solved' by police were out of court disposals (CJJI, 2011). Included in this category of disposal is the 'simple caution', which is used when an individual is responsible for a minor offence and providing an admission of guilt is evident they can be formally warned. Out-of-court disposals are designed to:

'...provide simple, swift and proportionate ways of responding to antisocial behaviour and low-risk offending and to save courts the time of listening to minor and undisputed matters. They also support rehabilitation and reparation, especially by young people, provide quick resolution to victims and

free up time for the police and courts to focus on more serious offending' (*Hansard*, 14 Dec 2009 col. 60WS).

A recent addition to out-of-court disposals is the conditional caution, which was introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and later amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006. This is designed for minor crimes, and aims to 'provide an opportunity to achieve an early response to low-level offending behaviour for those persons willing to admit their offending and to comply with certain conditions' (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2009)

The conditional caution scheme allows the police, with the consent of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), to issue a caution that contains conditions that have to be completed in order for the caution to be completed. These can be rehabilitative, reparative or punitive (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2009). Conditional cautioning aims to provide simple, swift and proportionate ways of responding to antisocial behaviour and low-risk offending.

At present certain offences are not eligible for a conditional caution. These include indictable-only offences and hate crime such as homophobic or racially aggravated offences. Also, except for cases coming into this experiment, domestic abuse offences are also excluded from such a disposal option.

Prior to the development and introduction of this trial there the only available outcome for low-level domestic abuse cases were the imposition of a simple caution, no further action (NFA) or a court appearance. Whilst a simple

caution is recorded for the purposes of an individual's criminal record, it does not require any actions to be undertaken to address the offending behaviour or provide support to the victim. Therefore any cases deemed not serious enough to necessitate a court appearance entail outcomes that do little to address offending behaviour and allow the offender to continue to neutralize their behaviour as they have no need to take responsibility for the offence (Sykes and Matza, 1957).

The lack of available evaluations of the effectiveness of the use of conditional cautions, along with the fact that the use of conditional cautions within the domestic abuse arena has not yet been tested, presents an opportunity for further research. The manner in which this study is conducted is critical in terms of being able to draw valid conclusions and the next section of this report discusses the use of a RCT as the preferred methodology for research.

### **Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT)**

It is clear from the information above that little is known about 'what works' in the field of domestic abuse. The apparent failure of social scientists to provide a widely accepted answer to this question in part may be due to the lack of investment with regard to RCT's (also known as 'true experiments'). The use of RCT's plays a central role in the evidence-based movement, which is highly influential in many fields of social research (Robson, 2002). Sherman (1998) states that police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best. 'The highest and best use of experimental criminology is to



develop and test theoretically coherent ideas about reducing harm, rather than just “evaluating” government programs’ (Sherman, 2006, 2007).

While it is acknowledged in the field of criminal justice there are many more non-experimental evaluations than RCT’s, RCTs are influential and have grown in number significantly over the last decade (Weisburd, 2010). Weisburd (2010) cautiously predicts that there are close to 450 RCT’s in crime and justice. However the use of RCT’s in the field of domestic abuse is fairly limited with the most the notable experiment being the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Sherman and Berk, 1984).

The lack of RCT’s within the field of domestic abuse may be understandable. Not only the implementation of RCT’s are a challenge in themselves, but domestic abuse is extremely emotive and there are considerable risk issues associated with it. The combination of these factors present challenges for both academics and practitioners alike. It is necessary though to understand some of the mechanics and essential requirements that underpin successful RCT’s.

It is claimed that true experiments must have three components (Bachman and Schutt, 2003), namely;

1. Two comparison groups – one that received an experimental condition (e.g. treatment or intervention) and one other that does not.
2. Random assignment to the two (or more) comparison groups.

3. An assessment in the change in the dependent variable for both groups after the experimental condition has been applied.

One of the essential elements in the experimental design of this study will be to ensure that it has strong internal validity. Randomized experiments, if successfully implemented, generally hold greater internal validity than non-experimental studies (Skogan and Frydl, 2003). Internal validity, also known as causal validity, can be defined as the extent to which a study establishes that a factor or variable has actually caused the effect that is found (Robson, 2002). Importantly, strong internal validity will be able to scientifically exclude rival causal factors (Hagan, 2006).

Internal validity is the extent to which a research design can eliminate competing explanations of a correlation. The more plausible rival hypotheses about a correlation that a study can eliminate, the more likely it becomes that the surviving explanation is the true cause of the observed correlation (Sherman, 2010). It is also argued that experimental research design provides the most powerful design for testing causal hypotheses about the effect of treatment (Bachman and Schutt, 2003).

However, the expectations imposed on randomized experiments are sometimes unrealistic, sometimes unreasonably positive and sometimes unreasonably negative (Berk, 2005). Weisburd (2010) recognises that most influential experimental criminologists have identified barriers to the

implementation of RCT's but they recognise that these should be regarded as a learning tool for the advancement of the science of evaluation methods.

In some cases ethical and methodological problems that are unique to experimental designs have led some researchers to question their relative value in some circumstances (Clarke and Cornish, 1972). The most significant methodological concerns include: cases whereby experimental units receive a different treatment than the one assigned (Gondolf, 2001), restricted sampling frames that delay case intake which will in turn impact on the applicability of findings to a larger population (Goldkamp, 2008) and attrition from treatment following assignment that may mean the evaluator choosing between assessing intention to treat and assessing treatment on the treated (Sherman and Strang, 2004). Berk (2005) reinforces some of these methodological issues that present risks. He discusses how poor design and implementation can lead to case attrition that can seriously affect the statistical power, thus impacting on the generalizability. Issues can exist with random treatment not occurring or the treatment assigned not being the treatment implemented.

One of the additional challenges to implementing RCT's within the police environment is the complex operating environment in which they are undertaken. Reporting on those challenges is limited in terms of case studies. Strang (2012) describes her experience of managing relationships within experiments is critical. Strang asserts that the 'fundamental issue in successful experiments is the relationship between operational and research entities'. Other crucial factors include the need to consider the conditions in

which they are undertaken, the leadership challenges, the social networks, formal memorandums of understanding and ultimately how important it is that temporary coalitions between researchers and police should try and manifest themselves into true research partnerships.

This issue of ensuring police and researchers engage in strong partnerships and collectively work through issues was also recognised by Sherman (1992) when undertaking the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment. Sherman describes the challenges of undertaking an RCT in a very tough environment in the early 1980's. He spells out the journey of the experiment in terms of the police and research leadership challenges, how the pipeline study was undertaken, the selection of officers to participate, research design, bonding teams and fundamentally how to keep an experiment going. These issues identified by Strang (2012) and Sherman (1992) articulate well the challenges that need to be overcome if successful well run RCT's are going to be undertaken within the operational policing environment.

### **Summary – The Need for an Experiment**

This literature review establishes that the field of research on domestic abuse is varied and inconclusive; the use of conditional cautions in the area of domestic violence is untested and we believe that the use of one-day offender focused diversionary workshops has not been used within this context. The bringing together of these facts allow for an opportunity to develop and design

an experiment that may show a new and innovative way of tackling a global problem.

The approach of implementing a RCT to provide an evidence-based understanding of these issues is the best way to show what works or what does not work. This report will examine and discuss those challenges that are faced when designing and implementing such an experiment within such a testing environment. This will allow others to consider these experiences when considering undertaking similar experiments in police organisations.

## **Chapter Two**

**Concept to Reality**

With effect from September 2011 the project lead for the implementation of the RCT was transferred from Robin Jarman, a Superintendent in Hampshire Constabulary, to the author of this thesis. Jarman (2011) discusses the progress made to date, highlights some of the potential issues and provides a general framework in which a concept of the RCT can be taken to reality. However many of the issues progressed to this point needed to be carefully revisited and developed. This chapter will briefly discuss some of the key elements of Jarman's work and set the context for the multitude of challenges that were present in taking 'concept to reality'.

## **Feasibility**

In late 2010 Chief Constable Alex Marshall requested that Jarman, Head of Criminal Justice, develop a proposal whereby the use of conditional cautions for certain cases of domestic abuse could be trialled in Hampshire. This discussion resulted in a business paper being tabled at the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010 requesting that the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) be formally approached in order to determine the viability of such a trial. The LCJB formally approved the concept and correspondence was sent to the DPP. The request outlined a proposal that stated the benefits of utilising the conditional caution scheme for low-level domestic abuse offences. Following this, Chief Constable Marshall communicated the proposal to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead for domestic abuse.

Several months passed by during which no official response was received although indications at a national level were favourable. Jarman continued to develop the proposals by continuing local negotiations. This involved the introduction of a multi-agency steering group that was tasked with reporting to the LCJB on the development of the concept, in preparation for national formal approval. This group became identifiable as the Domestic Abuse Conditional Caution (DACC) steering group. The steering group membership consisted of senior local representatives from CPS, Court Services, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups directly involved in offenders and victims of domestic violence, the local Area Police Commander and criminal justice managers. Several meetings took place but no formal agreement at a national level for a trial had been received.

A significant breakthrough was achieved on the 8th July 2011 when a letters were received from the DPP and the Home Office (G. Jaspert personal communication, July 2011, K. Starmer, personal communication, July 8, 2011). The letter from Starmer stated;

*“the objective of the pilot should be to improve justice outcomes for victims by addressing offender behaviour...I would also seek assurance that the pilot seeks to achieve a reduction in the use of simple cautions rather than in the number of prosecutions...”*

This allowed Jarman on behalf of the LCJB to develop the initial concept into a more meaningful proposal. It was not until August of 2011 that Jarman

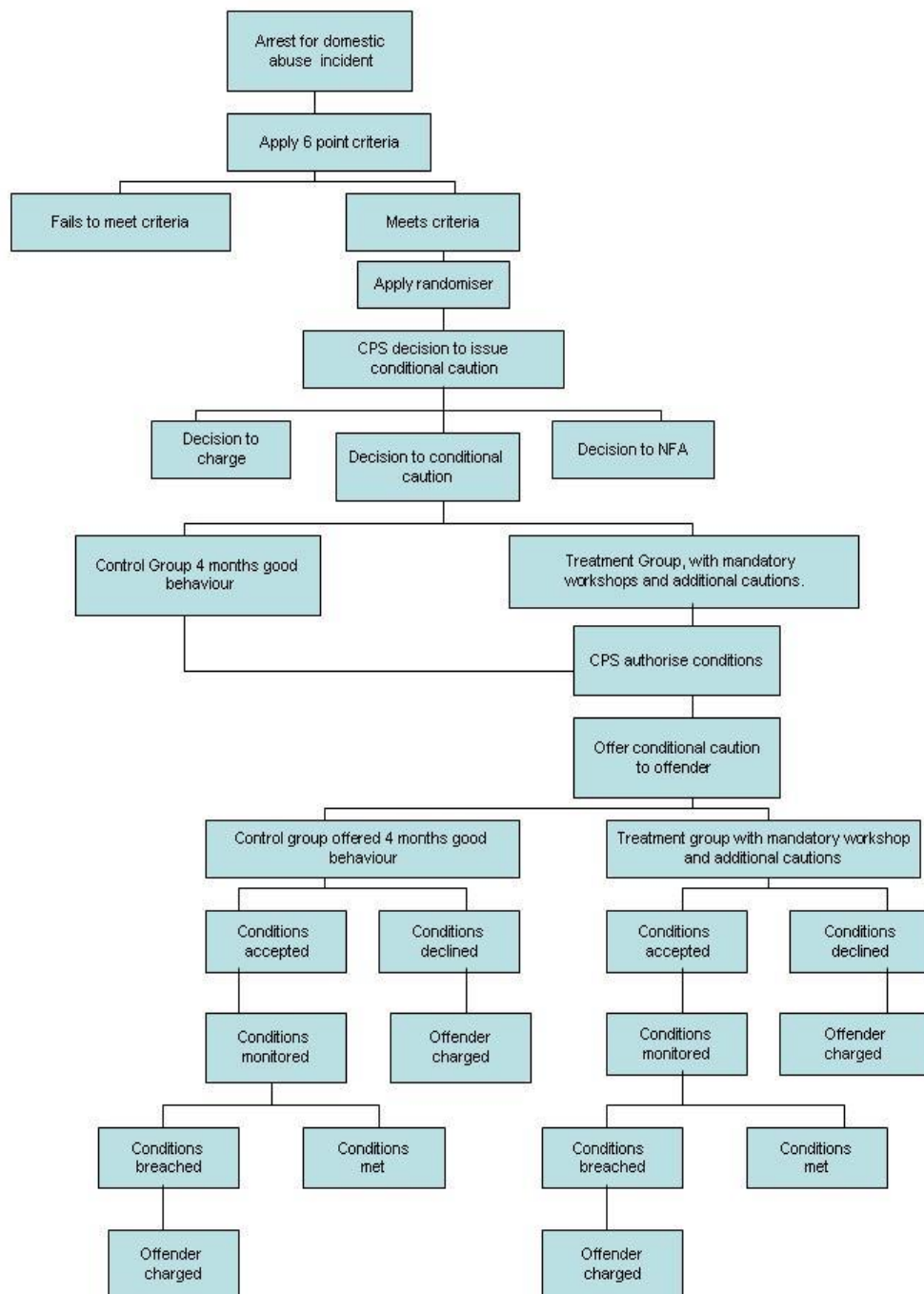


finally tabled the proposed use of an RCT to the wider steering group. Various parties raised a number of concerns and these types of challenge became key themes throughout the implementation of the trial. It was eventually agreed that the hypothesis to be tested would be;

*‘whether offenders who are subject to a workshop are less likely to reoffend than those subject to a conditional caution that does not contain the workshop component’*

Jarman took this hypothesis, developed the discussions and agreed interim proposals as to the process and methodology for the RCT to the LCJB. The following schematic describes the RCT process agreed as at September 2011 (Jarman 2011). (see figure 1 overleaf)

**Figure 1: Initial RCT Process Flowchart September 2011 (Jarman, 2011)**



On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011 a meeting was held with Chief Constable Marshall, Jarman and myself during which the Chief Constable formally reassigned the strategic lead for the experiment to me. This handover of control and responsibility was later formally ratified at the LCJB and then introduced at the DACC on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

What was clearly evident was the 8 months preparatory work to reach this point had proved invaluable in laying the foundations for the RCT although there were an inordinate number of issues that needed considerable attention if the RCT was to be undertaken successfully. It was recognised very early on that the task of negotiation, design, implementation and reporting of the experiment would require considerable operational support and review of the original experiment design. From a research perspective a crucial decision was to identify a suitable site in which to undertake the experiment.

### **Selection of Experiment Site**

Although earlier proposals had suggested the selection of Western Area as the experimental site, it was necessary to reconsider this proposal in order to ensure it met the requirements for the RCT. Boruch (1997) describes several highly relevant factors that were considered in this case. These include

- Is the sample size of likely eligible recipients sufficiently large enough to sustain a RCT?

- Is the composition of the eligible target population suitable, relative to policy objectives, in terms of economic, ethnic, racial or other representation?
- Is the capacity of the service delivery unit sufficient to maintain programmes and records?
- Is the service delivery unit willing to engage in a RCT and under what conditions?
- Is on-site coordination feasible?
- Can staff for data collection be developed on-site?

Hampshire Constabulary has geographic responsibility for the two counties of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. With a population of over 1.87 million people it is one of the largest non-metropolitan counties in England and Wales. The three areas consist of a total of eleven districts and present slightly differing policing challenges. All three areas have city, rural and urban communities to serve. It was recognised in early discussions that the pilot site would need to identify an overall police Area as opposed to a District as otherwise the sample size and case flow would be restricted. The following map provides a visual representation of the Area structure

**Figure 2: Map of Hampshire Police Areas** (internal publication, Hampshire Constabulary, 2012)



The three areas have a similar population spread and broadly similar mix of diverse ethnic communities. However the Western Area has slightly higher proportion of non-white individuals. The table below provides the population data for the three areas.

**Table 1: Population figures for Hampshire** (Adapted from Office for National Statistics, 2011)

		Population	% Total Western Area	% Total Hampshire & Isle of Wight population
<b>Hampshire &amp; Isle of Wight</b>	<b>Total</b>	1 870 000		100%
<b>Western Area</b>	<b>Southampton</b>	236 700	40.7%	12.7%
	<b>Eastleigh</b>	120 800	20.8%	6.5%
	<b>New Forest</b>	176 400	30.3%	9.4%
	<b>Romsey</b>	48 000	8.2%	2.6%
	<b>Total</b>	581 900	100%	31.1%
<b>Eastern Area</b>	<b>Total</b>	651 700		34.8%
<b>Northern Area</b>	<b>Total</b>	636 870		34.1%

As discussed, one of the key determining factors when considering the selection of the pilot site for the RCT is the sample size. There has to be sufficient cases or instances of domestic abuse so that the experiment can draw statistically significant conclusions. The last available data for the calendar year 2011 for reported to police domestic abuse incidents for the three areas is shown below. In addition the data set provides the percentage of arrests carried out following the reporting of those incidents. Some caution ought to be applied when interpreting this data, as some inconsistencies may exist in the accuracy of the recording processes by the police officers that dealt with the incident.

**Table 2: Domestic abuse figures for Hampshire, 2011** (R. Braddock, Personal Communication, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012)

	<b>Domestic Incidents</b>	<b>Domestic Arrests</b>	<b>% Incidents resulting in arrest</b>
<b>Western Area</b>	7855	2388	30.4
<b>Eastern Area</b>	10273	3394	33.0
<b>Northern Area</b>	6137	1843	30.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	24265	7625	31.4

Any one of the three police areas potentially could have been selected as a site for the experiment. However the various factors needed to be considered.

The Northern Area is more rural and has less reported cases of domestic abuse. This could limit the case flow and present difficulties in terms of statistical power. The Eastern and Western Policing Areas are similar in many respects but the Western Area has a large custody centre in the city and a smaller one in a rural setting, with a dedicated CIT team that deal with all domestic abuse arrests. The custody and CIT model in the Eastern Area is different and significant changes to operating procedures would be needed if the experiment was implemented. The Western Area is also under the command of the lead for the experiment and therefore any changes to procedures are more easily achieved than other areas. It is therefore logical to select Western Area as the most appropriate site in which to undertake the experiment.

Once the site for the experiment had been established it was necessary to build a team to develop the 'concept to reality'.

## **Building a Team**

The lead for this study's core role is as the Western Area Crime and Operations Commander. This means that the role as the strategic lead and 'implementer' of the RCT is a function over and above the core daily responsibilities of Area Command. The nature and complexity of the issues already highlighted meant it was necessary to recruit staff to the project that possessed suitable skills, experience and motivation.

It was recognised early in October 2011 that the likely policing area to be used for the pilot would be the Western Area of Hampshire Constabulary. The rationale for the selection of this site is explained further in this chapter. However it was identified that that the newly formed Custody Investigation Teams (CIT) would play a key role in the handling of domestic abuse cases in the future. These two important 'assumptions' meant it was possible to identify the key people that would inform and be the 'developers' of the RCT.

In November 2011 discussions took place between Professor Sherman and Dr Strang from the University of Cambridge, and myself regarding the need to employ a full time Research Manager to the experiment. The purpose of this role was not only to support implementation practically but also to ensure that the data collection is appropriately managed and that sufficient academic rigour is applied. Some doubt existed to the viability of this recruitment due to cost and availability of the right type of individual.



The experiment enjoyed a remarkable degree of coincidence when an individual was recommended to Dr Strang as a potential suitable Research Manager. Robert Braddock had recently completed an MSc in Criminology from Portsmouth University. His research was based on the 'Restorative Potential of the Conditional Cautioning Scheme' for which he received the 'Vathek Publishing Dissertation Prize' for his contribution to academic research. Braddock also had worked in the Hampshire Constabulary Criminal Justice Department for 14 years and had a sound understanding of how the organisation operated. Following interviews and further discussions between the relevant parties it was decided to offer Braddock a 2-year secondment to work full time as a Research Manager. Braddock started his appointment on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012, and this appointment was a key addition to an already established core team.

Having determined that it was likely that the CIT would be responsible for the handling of the cases it was appropriate to add to the project Detective Inspector Rimmer, Head of CIT. As a police manager with a broad experience in policing, criminal justice and project delivery he was ideal appointment. The role and importance of the CIT is discussed further in Chapter 6.

One area that I had had limited experience on was that of public protection, specifically the ongoing management of domestic abuse offending. Sergeant Melani Morgan, an officer with 29 years experience and a reputation as the most knowledgeable officer in the field domestic abuse in Hampshire Constabulary was approached. Morgan's services were secured 2 days a

week to develop the processes around victim focus, safeguarding, workshop treatment programmes and to ensure that I was appropriately briefed when engaged at the strategic level with domestic-abuse related 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations.

Communication both internally and externally was anticipated as a major area of focus for the experiment. The discussion regarding this important aspect is addressed in more detail later on in this chapter. As a senior officer for the Western Area it was possible for me to secure the services of a Corporate Communications officer, Liz Pusey, who played a key role in advising the team of communication issues as well as designing and managing the communication plan.

To complement this small but focused team it was necessary to consider the introduction of an independent advisor. Lena Samuels, an independent member of the Police Authority, was invited into the team to consider how external parties may view the development of the RCT and also provide professional guidance and judgement. The extensive experience of Samuels as a director of marketing and public relations was critical in providing an external perspective.

In addition to this core team it was necessary to have regular dialogue with Dr Strang and members of the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge. This 'one team' approach provided an excellent focused platform

in which the balance of skills, experience and academic expertise could work together to address the myriad of future challenges.

## **Hearts and Minds**

Although the selection of the core team proved to be a major step forward in enabling the development of the RCT there still remained one key factor that would potentially comprise the success of the experiment. The risk was the lack of 'buy in' from those members of the core team and in particular the potential difficulties in grasping the fundamental requirements of undertaking an RCT. As Strang (2012) highlights 'police officers involved in experiments need to be convinced in the same ways any other operational party of the value of cooperation'. As a student of the University of Cambridge Police Executive Programme I was familiar with the fundamental processes of running an RCT and the necessity to apply academic thinking to the design and implementation of such an experiment. However none of the core team (with the exception of Braddock) had any experience of academic research. There was in effect a knowledge gap that needed addressing.

From December 2011 it was decided to hold weekly meetings to discuss and develop the 'concept into reality'. These meetings were attended by members of the core team and actions raised. Despite the obvious commitment of staff, some concerns were held that the process felt task driven and was a rather 'top down' approach. Although many actions were generated and progress was being made it was not necessarily at the pace desired or with the whole-

hearted commitment of those involved. This led to a rethink of a strategy to develop 'buy in' and a greater understanding of the scientific element of the experiment.

In January 2012 a series of informal briefings took place with the team both in Hampshire and at the University of Cambridge. Members of the team visited the university and met Professor Sherman, Dr Strang and other members of the faculty. They provided the opportunity to ask questions and develop their understanding of criminological research. Members of the university visited Hampshire and met the team to further enable a mutual understanding of each others working environment and build personal relationships. Professor Sherman and Dr Strang conducted 'field' visits that included observational patrols with police response teams. They spent time visiting the custody centre and meeting the officers that ultimately would be tasked for ensuring that cases were handled in accordance with the experimental protocols.

One of the most important pre-implementation meetings was held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 when a briefing was given to university faculty, the core Hampshire police team, CPS and other partners. This meeting covered a considerable number of experimental design issues and allowed for police staff and the university staff to question and challenge thinking around the construct and proposed implementation of the study.

The winning of the 'hearts and minds' coincided with the full time appointment of Braddock. A revised meeting structure was in place with a different tone of

inclusivity where the team shared ideas and generated debate as to the challenges involved. The role of the Research Manager allowed for a central point of contact for all key people to direct queries and report progress or difficulties, which in turn constituted part of the informal agenda at the weekly meetings. I could then determine the strategic direction of the experiment and address some of the more critical elements of the experimental design.

## **Governance**

In the early stages of the development of the study proposal it was necessary to gain the approval of the LCJB. The LCJB made a requirement that the development of the pilot ought to be overseen by the DACC Steering Group, chaired by the Head of Court Services. As the development of the RCT proposal had moved forward considerably from a fairly conceptual approach to that of significant planning and design, it was necessary firstly to review the governance structure and secondly the level of scrutiny any such governance process need apply.

From December 2011 as the development of the RCT moved forward with some impetus, so did the level of interest from government bodies, 3rd sector organisations and ACPO. However this increased level of interest and scrutiny required a reassessment of the governance and support process.

The role of the DACC Steering Group needed to be reviewed to reflect the current status of the project and the anticipated challenges ahead. Prior to

December 2011 the group had been essential in order to develop the discussions, undertake research and provide agreements as to the 'proposal' for the trial (Jarman, 2011). It was felt that the confirmation of approval to run the trial, along with the introduction of the project team itself meant the group's terms of reference needed to be reviewed. There was a potential risk that unnecessary scrutiny at the partner practitioner level could hinder or confuse the progress of the RCT. There was still a need to seek the support and guidance from non-police practitioners but not necessarily for them to examine in detail every decision.

In discussions with the chair of the group it was decided to set terms of reference that reflected the objectives required of this group by the LCJB. Membership was refined to include only the key enablers and contributors to the RCT and the date scheduling was amended from monthly to bi-monthly. The agenda was changed so that it became a standing item that the lead officer would present on progress and key outstanding issues. These issues would be tasked to individuals or resolved hence more direct and focused outcomes were achieved.

## **Engaging Organisations**

From the outset it was apparent that the success of the experiment would rely on the complex web of inter-agency relationships and the personal 'buy in' of leaders and practitioners. This was not a police owned area of business; it involved many organisations and was also likely to capture the public interest.

It was therefore common sense to assume that the methodology employed and outcomes sought were likely to be met with a degree of scepticism and caution.

Strang (2012) describes how top down support from the Chief Executive of an agency is necessary but sufficient co-operation is needed from all levels. The starting point was to review the statutory central government agencies that needed to be sighted on detail and personally brief them. These included the national leads for domestic abuse from the ACPO, Ministry of Justice, Home Office and CPS. Very early discussions took place with these important partners as to how the experiment would be developed and a route map to implementation laid out and discussed. One of the enduring features of implementing this RCT was the difficulties in getting the CPS to change their operating practices. This reluctance to change was the cause of many delays and difficulties and is discussed further in Chapters Four and Six.

In many respects, identification of key figures within the police and central government organisations is the more straightforward task. The greater challenge was knowing who else to engage, how best to engage them and how to ensure ongoing engagement. The challenge may be viewed by some as being more significant given the sensitivities of domestic abuse. It was quickly recognised that additional support in terms of media engagement would be necessary to ensure that the appropriate messages were disseminated and target audiences identified. It was therefore important to select somebody to advise, develop and manage the communications and

engagement strategy. Pusey, a respected and experienced Hampshire Constabulary corporate communications officer was seen as an ideal part time appointment to the team. Pusey had experience of providing strategic corporate communications to the Chief Constable, worked closely with officers and also had a very good understanding of multi-agency communications projects.

Pusey worked with the team to identify the branding and marketing approach as well as the identification of internal and external stakeholders. Pusey immediately introduced the name Project CARA (Cautioning and Relationship Abuse) as the recognisable brand in order to give the experiment its identity to partners and police staff. As part of the team that met regularly Pusey was able to understand the specifics of what the experiment was seeking to achieve as well as working alongside her counterparts from different organisations to agree 'joint messages'. Internal communications tactics were employed such as briefings, intranet sites, newsletters and computer screensavers. External strategies were very much targeted at key audiences, and developed under the strategic direction given by myself. A comprehensive communications plan was developed and can be viewed within **Appendix A**.

However the role of corralling communications issues through the corporate communications officer does not fully capture the exhausting but crucial requirement to engage organisations at the strategic level. Within the arena of domestic abuse it became apparent that the influence on national policy



from charitable groups was significant. The relationships between those groups and government departments meant that in order to obtain universal interest and engagement they had to understand Project CARA. Similarly the team needed to listen to their experience and factor these considerations in the design, implementation and analysis of the experiment. To be dismissive of non-statutory groups would simply be reckless and may well have led to early failure.

Several discussions and briefings were held with representatives from Women's Aid, CAADA and Respect. These groups were seen by Home Office Ministers, the CPS and the Ministry of Justice as hugely experienced and able to inform and influence national policy on domestic abuse. The groups formed part of central government meetings and gave cautious support to the experiment once their views and ideas had been discussed. In order to achieve their confidence, personal visits were made and their views and thoughts incorporated into various aspects of the experiment, later presented to the DPP, Ministry of Justice and Home Office. This engagement and communications approach remains a constant requirement throughout the experiment and underpins successful implementation.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Design**

As discussed, the preferred research method for this study is the RCT. This is because this research method allows direct comparison between two variables. In this case the control group, being offenders subject to a four month non-reoffending condition in comparison to the treatment group of offenders receiving a workshop attendance condition, in addition to the four month non-reoffending. The RCT should therefore allow the effectiveness of the intervention to be tested.

What is critical to the validity of the experiment is the detailed deliberations and thought applied to the experimental design. Boruch (1997) describes how the design of an experiment involves the specification of the study population and units, the sampling method, sample size, the interventions and methods for their observation, methodology for random assignment, and methods adopted to check its integrity. An experiment also includes the response or outcome variables and their measurement, analysis and reporting. These key elements of the experiment were all matters of considerable discussion for the team and were subject of much debate, testing and intentional challenge both from within and through the governance process.

A huge catalogue of decisions and considerations were recorded in the design phase and are too great in number to report in this document. Only the most relevant aspects of the experimental design are discussed in this section.

I was very focused on designing and implementing an experiment that provided strong internal validity and therefore would not seek to compromise this for the sake of expediency or without very careful consideration to each aspect of its design. The occasional inclusion of a Senior CPS lawyer at meetings was critical to ensuring the design processes, legality and criminal justice issues could all be considered within context of each other. This input proved invaluable as the team developed and refined the experiment design prior to test and later full implementation. As Strang (2012) states 'ingenuity and problem solving skills, as well as good relations at every level, are required to navigate these issues'.

One of the most important considerations was to ensure that case throughput was maximised. Although no specific number of cases eligible for the experiment was set, adequate statistical power was dependent on having sufficient cases. The integrity of the experiment is maintained by minimising the number of cases randomly assigned to the experiment but not receiving the intended treatment. This eligibility criteria set was necessary to identify appropriate cases to be included in the experiment.

Determining the eligibility criteria was complex due to the need to consider risk to victims, existing CPS practices and legislative requirements. But this simplistic description does recognise how much negotiating and influencing was necessary to move different organisations together to achieve agreement and therefore ensuring that the internal validity of the experiment was

maintained. The below section of the report seeks to give an indication of the complexity of some of the issues that required resolving.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

The initial eligibility criteria specified by Jarman (2011) was as follows:- (see Figure 3 overleaf)

**Figure 3 - Initial Eligibility Criteria**

**1) Adult:**

Offenders must be aged 18 years or over.

**2) First Offence of a Domestic Violence concern:**

Offences to include minor assaults categorised by law as Common Assault & Battery, Criminal Damage, Harassment, Threatening Behavior, domestic burglary and theft related offences.

Offenders have not previously been arrested for any offence linked to domestic violence. The relationship between offender and victim is restricted to cohabiting partners, or, those who have previously cohabited within the past 2 years. It does not include wider inter-familial disputes.

**3) Admission or CPS agrees that overwhelming evidence is present:**

Offender admits to committing a related domestic violence offence or following submission of evidence to the CPS, for example, a victim's statement, other witness statements, 999 emergency call transcript, photographic evidence, police body worn video extract, it is accepted that overwhelming evidence is present

**4) Past minor convictions permitted but not for violence and/or currently serving a community based sentence/order:**

The offender must not be on police or court bail for any other unrelated matters or currently serving an existing sentence/order.

**5) Victim supports this form of action/disposal:**

Prior to submission of evidence to the CPS the victim's views in relation to prosecution and possible disposal by way of conditional caution are sought by the police.

**6) Risk Assessment within parameters of Low and Medium:**

Police risk assessment comes within these measures.

Whilst this provided a coherent starting point, this criteria was based on a theoretical understanding of the process, and as a result required refining based on the practical implications of the experiment. In terms of permitted

offences, burglary was not deemed suitable for conditional caution by the DPP, due to offences of this nature being ineligible for a conditional caution under the present scheme (CPS, 2010). This offence was therefore removed.

A variation was also made to previous offending, as the previous definition was not specific enough to allow staff involved in the experiment to ascertain eligibility and would also exclude a number of cases that would, in practice, be eligible for the experiment. Whilst it was important to exclude offenders with a significant offending history, individuals with a history of minor offending would be suitable for conditional caution under the present scheme. Guidance from the DPP (CPS, 2010) stipulated that 'the existence of a history of convictions does not rule out the possible use of a conditional caution'. A decision was made to time-limit previous violent offences to two years for eligibility purposes, in order to exclude offenders with recent violent offending. When later testing the procedures this became a major challenge and required some careful negotiation with CPS.

With regard to significant offending histories prior to two years, or serious offences not falling within the two year period, offenders with offending histories of this type should be classified as high risk, and as a result be ineligible on this basis. An additional area of confusion lay within the classification of 'victim-offender relationship'. Whilst the original eligibility criteria stated that any relationship had to be within the past two years in order for it to be deemed eligible, this was at odds with the present definition of

domestic abuse as published by ACPO (2008). Therefore, this timescale was removed in order to reduce the possibility of error from staff processing cases.

The issue surrounding victim consent was also carefully considered, as presently, according to the DPP guidance (CPS, 2010), there is no need for a victim to actively consent to the imposition of a conditional caution unless conditions are imposed that directly involve the victim, such as restrictive conditions or compensation. If this criterion in its original iteration was adhered to, a number of cases could be lost from the experiment that would otherwise be eligible. It was, however, imperative that any existing risk factors were not exacerbated by the application of the conditional caution, and as a result, victims would be asked their opinion about risk rather than consent being specifically requested.

It was recognised early on that wherever possible existing processes or terminology should be used. As the experiment's processes had an impact on several organisations, a risk existed that new or amended practices could create confusion or an unnecessary distraction. The consequence would naturally be that the inconsistent practices would lead to unnecessary bias or variables being introduced. After considerable negotiation and discussion with relevant stakeholders the below revised eligibility criteria was approved by the DACC governance board. The amended eligibility criteria can be viewed below:-



**Figure 4 – Amended Eligibility Criteria**

**Adult**

Offender is 18 years or over

**No previous convictions or cautions for violence in the previous two years**

**Relationship between parties**

The relationship between the offender and victim is restricted to present or past intimate partners, regardless of gender, and does not include inter-familial relationships

**Eligible Offences**

Offences will include minor assaults categorised by law as common assault and battery, criminal damage, harassment, threatening behavior, domestic theft related offences

**Admission and/or CPS agree overwhelming evidence is present**

Offender admits to committing the offence or the CPS make the decision to apply the conditional caution following submission of, for example, a victim statement, other witness statements, the emergency call transcript, photographic evidence or a police body worn video extract, it is accepted that overwhelming evidence is present.

**Past minor convictions permitted unless offender is currently serving a community based sentence or order**

The offender must not be on police or court bail for any other unrelated matters or currently serving an existing sentence or order.

**DASH risk assessment assesses risk to victim as standard or medium**

**Victim contacted and identifies no specific risk for the conditional caution to be issued**

Whilst coherent and consistent eligibility criteria forms the foundation for a successful RCT, this initial guidance has to be transferred into a practical application to ensure that cases categorised as eligible are effectively randomised into the appropriate group. This was achieved by the use of the Cambridge Randomiser, and development of this is discussed below.

## **The Cambridge Randomiser**

Strang (2012) discusses how the integrity of the experiment is only as good as the integrity of the randomisation process and this process must remain in the hands of the research team. Therefore, work was carried out with the University of Cambridge who provided the 'Cambridge Randomiser' as the software to randomly assign cases to either the control or workshop groups. This is a web-based application that will assess eligibility and provides '...an alternative mechanism for the random allocation of cases' (Ariel, Sherman & Vila, 2012). Advice and guidance was received from Dr Ariel, University of Cambridge regarding how to ensure that the Randomiser could be integrated into existing police IT systems.

In order to ensure that the Randomiser is capable of accurately assessing eligibility, it has been necessary to develop and amend the original eligibility criteria (as outlined above) so that simple yes/no responses can be given to each question.

**Figure 5: Screenshot of the Randomiser.**

**The Hampshire DV RCT Project**  
**Male Portal**

**Cambridge Gateway - Eligibility Questions for the Hampshire CARA Experiment:**

Occurrence Ref:   
Custody Ref:   
Collar Number of Officer entering:

1. Offender is over 18? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the offender have previous convictions or cautions for violence in previous 2 years? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Does the DASH risk assessment classify the offender as high risk? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Has the offender admitted the offence, or is there overwhelming evidence of the offender's guilt? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Is the offender presently subject to a community-based court order? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Is the offender on court or police bail for other offences? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Is the offence classified as one of the following: Common Assault/Battery, Criminal Damage, Harassment, Threatening Behaviour, domestic theft?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Does the offence involve abuse against a past or present partner or spouse? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Does the offender speak English at a level that is sufficient to undergo treatment and is he capable of attending the Workshop without and appropriate adult? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Has the victim indicated that the conditional caution would place them at significant risk? ☐ Yes ☐ No

This application allows users to ascertain eligibility by answering the questions. If eligible, cases are randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group. As the user has no influence over which group that the offender is assigned to, no bias can occur, and the integrity of the experiment can be easily maintained.

The determination of the questions defined in the Randomiser was a major step forward and allowed the team to further examine the experiment design process. Once the questions had been set a few minor hurdles had to be overcome regarding ensuring connectivity and confidentiality. The team considered how randomisation would be overcome if IT systems failed but this

was easily resolved as the strength of the Randomiser is its web based access through any internet portal. Similarly, the concern of the internal IT department regarding the transference of confidential material was negated as personal details are not recorded.

One of the unforeseen consequences of the use of the Cambridge Randomiser was the overwhelming concern from stakeholders of how it could be perceived by the public. Some nervousness existed that random allocation processes were being used at all. Many stakeholders voiced concern over the name 'Cambridge Randomiser'. It was therefore decided to use the name 'Cambridge Gateway' in an attempt to avoid it becoming a focal point of concern and an unnecessary distraction.

### **Conditional Cautioning – The Application of Relevant Conditions**

With conditional cautions for non-domestic offences, a range of conditions can be imposed. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 allowed for reparative or rehabilitative conditions to be imposed. The Police and Justice Act 2009 amended the initial conditions, allowing also the imposition of punitive conditions (Office for Criminal Justice Reform, 2009).

The initial framework of this experiment allowed for the imposition of various conditions, including compensation, geographic exclusion and non-contact with the victim (Jarman, 2011). This gave a wide scope for the use of the

conditional caution and significantly increased the flexibility and discretion of police officers when imposing the conditional caution.

However, this flexibility caused significant problems with regard to the process by which the disposal was to be applied, and in terms of the experimental design, introduced a degree of uncertainty with the subsequent analysis of any data collected. If a number of different conditions were available, it would be difficult to judge exactly which conditions influenced the future offending behaviour of the individual subject to the conditional caution.

In addition to this, many of these conditions would be difficult to monitor and enforce if breached, therefore making the administration of the process extremely difficult. For example the practicalities of introducing a non-contact condition may, at the time of the imposition of the caution, be a logical step. However experience shows that relationships between victim and offender change often and the criminal justice system often fails to support the prosecution of such breaches.

The matter was discussed at some length at a meeting with Professor Sherman and Dr Strang on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012. The decision was made to concentrate specifically on the workshop and the non-reoffending conditions, which are both capable of being monitored and also enforceable in terms of any possible breach. Other proposed conditions would not feature in the experiment.

## **Chapter Four**

## **The Intervention**

### **The Workshop**

The necessity for a mandatory workshop was pivotal in order to test the hypothesis of the experiment. However the existence of a workshop created a significant amount of interest and challenge from a range of stakeholders. A considerable amount of time was undertaken by the project team in addressing these issues both in terms of ensuring the experimental processes were carefully thought through and by reassuring those who questioned such an approach from an ethical and risk perspective. Below are some of the queries that were raised from stakeholders that were discussed and addressed during the design and implementation of the experiment.

- What was the purpose of the workshop?
- How can two one-day workshops reduce reoffending? Where is the research to support this?
- Do the workshops themselves present an increased risk to the victim?
- Can the internal validity of the experiment be maintained with so many outcomes possible from a workshop programme?
- Who pays for the workshops?
- Who provides the workshops and how can confidentiality be addressed?
- How will the public perceive offenders attending a workshop opposed to alternative criminal justice outcomes?

It was important to reiterate from a research perspective that the experiment is not seeking to specifically examine or draw conclusions based on the content of the workshop. But what proved to be crucial was that the design and implementation of the workshop was consistent and any potential bias was removed from the processes. The simple existence of the workshop itself was so different from any other research on domestic abuse that in order to engage organizations a considerable amount of time was spent addressing the issues as highlighted above.

During the Literature Review I discussed how in the UK and US the emphasis has been to invest in lengthy court-imposed offender-based treatment programs. These programs to date have not been aimed at the standard or medium risk cases but have been more concerned with offenders who pose a greater to risk to victims. From the very start the view was taken that the workshops should not be viewed as 'treatment', but as 'diversionary'. It would have been foolhardy to promote a view based on no research that two one-day workshops could replicate exactly the same outcomes as lengthy perpetrator programmes. It was essential however that the design and construct of the workshop should be based on views of victims and undertaken with the support of those organisations with experience and knowledge in the field of domestic violence offending.

Prior to selecting a service provider, police officers and CPS personnel carried out focus groups with victims from Women's Aid outreach and women's groups of survivors along with those working with these groups. The aim was



to ask about the needs and concerns of victims in order to establish a basis for diversionary workshops. A common theme that emerged from these groups was that victims wanted the abuser to change their abusive behaviour but did not want to be held responsible for any punishment their abuser received. They agreed that any workshops that challenged this behaviour would need to consider the risks this would present to victims and children. The idea of 'helping' the offender change his/her behaviour appeared favourable in comparison with lengthy court processes or receiving a simple caution. This research does not claim to be based on strong empirical evidence but was important in demonstrating to victims and stakeholders that the idea and later design of a workshop was not led by the police but rather by considerations of a victim's perspective. This also provided the identification of additional significant issues such as designing additional processes, victim contact and managing risk.

### **Workshop Provider**

An early consideration was whether a diversionary workshop could be provided and delivered by the police. This was felt inappropriate for a number of reasons including the lack of skills to undertake the role, logistical constraints, the potential for offenders not to engage, ethical considerations and the necessity of impartiality when addressing breach matters. There was also a need to have experienced professionals who were conversant with dealing with domestic abuse offenders. This would provide greater credibility

to the experiment not from only the criminal justice stakeholders but also the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups who influence the national domestic abuse agenda.

It was important that Hampshire Constabulary and the CPS could work with a service provider that had a proven track record locally and were already engaged in providing therapy programs that held national credibility. One such provider was Hampton Trust. Hampton Trust is a charity formed in 1996 that provide services in Hampshire and more recently in Jersey, Devon and Gloucestershire. Their services include:

- Domestic violence training to service providers
- Training for ISVA services (Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy)
- LINX, a therapeutic service for young people at risk of becoming violent
- Turnaround, a therapeutic service for young people who are experiencing domestic violence
- Youth empowerment service, for those at risk of social isolation.
- Parenting classes and parenting support.

Their work is varied but importantly they bring knowledge in therapeutic services to those experiencing domestic abuse and those carrying out abuse. When deciding which service provider would devise and run the workshops it was their experience, knowledge of the locality and understanding of offender and victim's needs which were invaluable.

It was therefore recommended by the team and later agreed by the DACC and the LCJB that Hampton Trust were to be selected to be the workshop provider. Funding was agreed through the LCJB and contractual arrangements were made that the Hampton Trust would provide two one-day workshops for all offenders who were subject to the workshop condition. Hampton Trust was tasked along with Melani Morgan to develop the aims and objectives of the program and design the course materials. I ensured the processes were consistent with the integrity of the RCT and effectively 'signed off' the pilot course prior to implementation. A copy of the aims and objectives are presented in **Appendix B**.

Once Hampton Trust had designed the course a number of issues were raised. One was the confidentiality aspect of a non-police organisation having access to confidential data regarding course attendees. This issue was further complicated by the need to electronically transfer such confidential details as part of the administrative process between Hampshire Constabulary and Hampton Trust. After several weeks and difficult negotiations between legal and IT personnel, a confidential information exchange protocol was signed between organisations and a bespoke IT solution designed to ensure data integrity.

What appeared to be a minor issue but required very careful consideration was the locality and selection of a venue to hold the workshops. Although Hampton Trust was responsible for delivery of the workshop including provision of accommodation, it was evident that I would need to agree and

direct this. One of the essential requirements for the experiment was to avoid introducing variables within the 'allocation to workshop' process. In simple terms, if the workshop attendance itself was not equally possible for all offenders then potential risk existed that offenders would fail to attend and cases would be deemed as a breach, distorting any subsequent conclusions. Additional concerns were cost of hiring a site, safety of facilitators and how the public would perceive the workshops.

In terms of the offenders themselves it was important to provide somewhere that would allow their basic needs to be met in terms of ease of transport, break areas, suitable furniture, IT equipment and refreshment. Equally important was the need to provide an environment that allowed offenders to believe the workshops were professional, reputable and therefore deserving their fullest attention and engagement. Consideration had to be given to the safety of the facilitators of the workshop, given that they were potentially in a room with up to fourteen violent offenders who could be a threat to those challenging their behaviour. With this regard it was important to provide somewhere with either in-house security or in a public location where help could be summoned quickly.

In terms of public perception I was very concerned that anywhere chosen would have to fit with public expectation. How would the public feel about violent offenders being given "two days in a nice hotel" in response to them being arrested for domestic violence? This last point was subject of much consideration amongst the team and with the help of Hampton Trust a

decision was made to use a local mid-priced hotel. The hotel provided the basic needs of the course and the offenders and with in-house security, offered the protection needed. The CARA team were able to negotiate the cost of the hotel meeting room with a block booking, to fit in with budgetary considerations.

## **Breach Process**

Prior to the test phase of the experiment certain processes and procedures were already in place to deal with 'traditional' conditional cautions. These processes are carried out by designated staff within the Criminal Justice Department (CJD) who have responsibility for the administration of all breaches. This work entails liaison with offenders and CPS to ensure that all breaches are dealt with and the conditions are completed, or the offender is prosecuted for the original offence.

It was acknowledged at an early stage that the work carried out by this unit would be beneficial to the experiment. However the constraints of standard office hours worked by this team meant that the manner in which breaches were dealt with needed to be reviewed. In order to tackle breaches robustly, the decision was made to pass this work to the CIT who could provide resources for this function on a 24-7 basis. Discussions took place with the supervisors of CJD Breach team to explain the change in their responsibilities.

As stipulated above, the CJD and CIT have specific functions in the breach process. In addition to this, Hampton Trust, which is responsible for administering and delivering the workshops, are also directly involved. The CPS are also responsible for making a decision on whether a charge is appropriate for the original offence should the conditions be breached.

In order to ensure that the CPS are able to make a decision on whether to charge an individual, based on non-compliance with conditions, it is important that any interaction with the offender with regard to the conditions imposed is recorded appropriately. The CPS will not allow a charge to be laid against an offender due to a breach unless they are convinced that there has not been a good reason for this. The CPS also require that the offender is given every chance to complete their conditions and will only consider a charge if non-compliance is evident despite efforts being made by the police to assist the offender with completing the conditions (CPS, 2010). This CPS stipulation was heavily debated between the CIT Team, the CPS lead and myself. The desire from a policing perspective was to ensure that any breaches should feel the full weight of the sanction, notably to be arrested and be charged with the original offence as soon as non-compliance occurred. However the reality was the CPS wanted to ensure that offender was given every chance to complete the caution. There was a clear difference of opinion that required careful negotiation from myself with the CPS. The position has subsequently been resolved through revised protocols and guidance as below.

Action will subsequently be instigated according to the type of breach that occurs. These can be one or more of the following:-

1. Breach by re-offending (all offenders)

If the offender reoffends and is charged within the 4 months stipulated on the conditional caution, breach processes will be commenced.

2. Breach of workshop by non-attendance (workshop group only)

In accordance with the DPP's Guidance on Conditional Cautioning, reasonable steps have to be made to assist the offender to complete the conditions imposed (CPS, 2010). Therefore breaches of this condition have been subdivided according to whether the offender has engaged with the appropriate authorities and if non-attendance is likely. Reasonable steps will be taken to rebook the offender on a different workshop if prior contact is made and there are valid reasons for non-attendance. If offenders make no attempt to engage with the police or Hampton Trust regarding non-attendance, breaches of this nature are dealt with more robustly.

## **Safeguarding - The Victim is the Priority**

In early 2012 several meetings were held with Respect, Women's Aid and CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse). These organisations were felt to be important 'critical friends' and would be very useful in providing the non-police or CPS perspective on the experiments design.

During these discussions the issue of victim focus and victim support was repeatedly raised. The dilemma faced concerned the obvious need to ensure victim safety whilst ensuring the trial maintained internal validity and bias was minimised. The concern held by some of these organisations was that the introduction of two workshops for the offender could potentially present a greater risk to the victim. The reality of the situation was that, prior to the experiment, no standard safeguarding support was provided for standard or medium risk cases. What was being proposed was enhanced safeguarding from existing arrangements. Whilst there was total agreement in the need to develop evidence-based practice these concerns needed to be worked through.

The concern would be how much the effect on recidivism from offenders could be attributed to increased support to victims. However not to offer support to victims at a time when their abusers are being challenged as to their behaviour would be seen as unsafe practice. It was essential to provide consistent advice for victims regardless of whether their offender was in the control or treatment group.



After much debate and consultation it was decided that a Victim Contact Officer (VCO) would contact each victim within 24 hours of their perpetrators arrest and offer the stipulated minimum standard of safeguarding for medium risk cases. An additional call would be made to all victims, timed to be in between the two workshops or for those where the workshops were not given, at the half-way point of their four month conditional caution. This call would be for both standard and medium risk victims and its purpose would be to establish whether the risks had increased and if so additional safeguarding offered. This was appropriate to meet the needs of the victim, to encourage the reporting of any breaches of the conditional caution and offer safe practice, whilst ensuring the consistency of the experiment.

The selection of the VCO was important, as the skills needed to offer safeguarding to victims of domestic abuse are specialist. The persons chosen to carry out the role needed to have excellent communication and empathy skills and have a significant amount of self-reliance, resilience and emotional intelligence. Melani Morgan, the experienced Domestic Abuse co-ordinator identified a number of individuals from the Public Protection Safeguarding Team and provided specific guidance and training for this role. This guidance and 'professional oversight' was essential so that victims received a similar level of support and the validity of the experiment remained strong.

# **Chapter Five**

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

Throughout the experimental design process I ensured that the data collection methodology was consistent and systematic. It is unlikely that reliable conclusions could be achieved if data is not collected in a consistent fashion. There was also a necessity to avoid the retrospective collection of data as this would fail to allow the team to monitor the progress of the experiment and would also be an inefficient use of the Research Manager's time.

A number of discussions were held with the team and University of Cambridge as to how the data could be captured so that there would be confidence in monitoring and to enable future analysis to be undertaken without later having to search complex databases for missing data. This has formed a key element of the Research Managers work, establishing a comprehensive data collection plan, cross checking data and presenting weekly updates to both the project team and University of Cambridge. This process ensured that all involved in design and implementation of the experiment could 'keep a grip' on case flow, identify design improvements in the development phases and report on any emerging problems.

Prior to commencement of the test phase it was important to establish a projected case flow figure, in order to ensure that sufficient workshops were available and track the experiments the statistical power. The figures reported by Jarman in his work in delivering a concept could not be regarded as accurate, as there was a need to apply the most recent eligibility criteria against recorded cases and take into account force boundary changes. As a

result a time intensive data research process was undertaken to establish the projected case flow. This work was essential for assessing the effectiveness of the development phases, planning the likely life of the experiment and also for providing information for stakeholders, who queried the number of cases likely to be involved. Once it had been established that anticipated case flow would be approximately four per week, a predictive power analysis was carried out by Dr Barak Ariel (**Appendix C**). This analysis is essential for the purposes of future consideration as to whether or not sufficient statistical power can be achieved a realistic timeframe. The case flow and projected statistical power would need to be monitored carefully through the life of the experiment. However discussions with the University of Cambridge suggest a minimum of 18 months period for the experiment should be planned for.

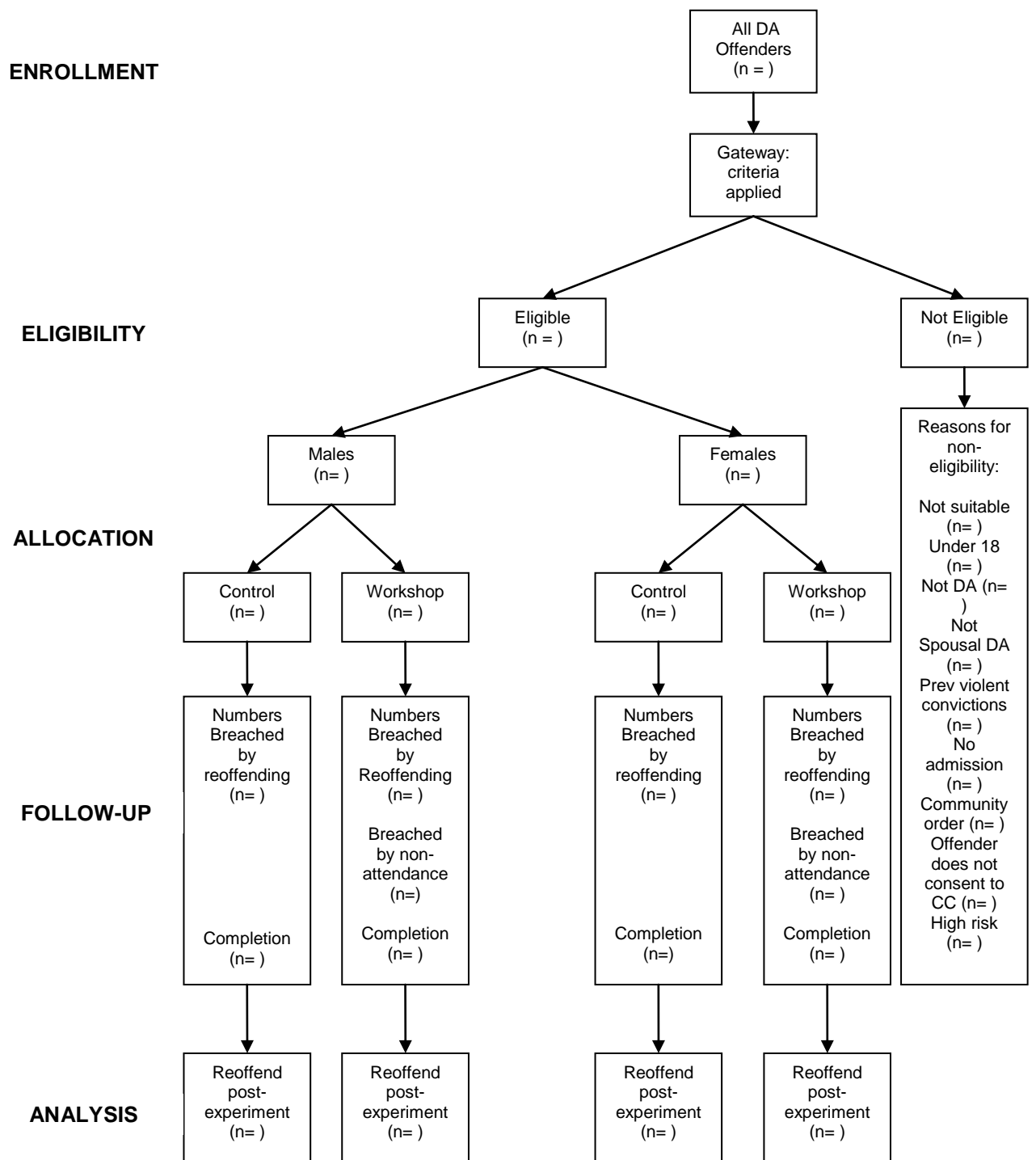
As discussed above the benefit of providing weekly updates allowed the team and the University of Cambridge to 'manage the pipeline' of case flow. The data updates, which are provided every Monday, give an overview of all cases entering the scope of the experiment, and the outcome decision (e.g. charged, no further action, conditional caution, bail). The updates also provide the throughput and later drop out rates of those cases randomised as eligible but not receiving a conditional caution, a problem potentially fatal to the integrity of the experiment. These weekly updates allow for an updated assessment of progress and issues. They are essential in signalling patterns of procedural flaws in operational procedures. Some of these issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 entitled 'Testing to Implementation'.

### **Future Monitoring and Analysis**

To test the hypothesis, it is important to ensure data quality is maintained and therefore any reoffending or breaches are addressed immediately. The process by which all domestic abuse cases entered into the Randomiser allows for comprehensive data collection and is cross-checked for accuracy by the Research Manager. Similarly, periodic checks are made of the police Records Management System (RMS) and Police National Computer (PNC) to determine if breaches have occurred.

The future method of analysis will be a t-test to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference between the non-workshop (control) group and the workshop (treatment) group in re-offending. The t-test compares the mean and standard deviations of these two groups and the mean number of offences committed by each group will be calculated. An independent sample t-test will be used as the two sample groups are not related to each other, and changes in one group will in no way influence the other group (hence independent). The results from the workshop group are in no way related to the results from the control group. It is therefore appropriate that future analysis will use a 2-tailed t-test as this will test for both an increase and decrease in reoffending within both the treatment and control group. The following diagram gives a visual indication of the flow of data through the process:

**Figure 6 - Data Flow Diagram**



Adapted from original : Shulz, K., Altman, D. & Moher, D. (2010)

During the decision making processes regarding data collection and analysis, it was felt important to capture as much relevant data as possible. The systematic approach adopted allows for data from Western Area domestic abuse arrests, during the period of the RCT, to be easily reviewed and interrogated. The data being collected relates to offender demographics, offence types, victim details and disposal type (charge, conditional caution or no further action). This approach may allow for a domestic abuse pipeline study over a significant period looking at some of the wider patterns of offending and criminal justice outcomes.

## **Chapter Six**



## **Testing to Implementation**

### **Formal Change of Guidance**

The regular weekly team meetings continued to be held throughout the experimental design and development phase. In the weeks of January through to early March 2012 (the proposed start of the test phase) there was a requirement to broaden the meeting attendees to include the Senior Area Crown Prosecution Service representative, John Montague. As the date of proposed implementation was nearing, there were still several key strategic issues that needed resolving. One of the significant advantages of being able to personally influence the CPS at the strategic level and rapidly resolve issues was that unnecessary bureaucracy could be avoided, thus keeping the experiment on track. These relationships proved hugely valuable at addressing the critical issue of full approval from the DPP. This important issue is discussed below

The approval for the experiment from the DPP and Home Office granted in July 2011 did not give freedom to simply go ahead and implement the RCT. It was discovered as late as February 2012 that there was a need to formally amend the CPS guidance to legally allow conditional cautions for domestic abuse, as previous guidance did not include these offences. This required a full presentation to the DPP Policy Advisory Team. Some concerns were being voiced from Respect and the CPS Violence Against Women Unit, that there was a need to keep the victim prioritised and not overly focus on

offender outcomes. Although these concerns in themselves did not alter the experiments methodology, without these concerns being addressed it was unlikely that full approval would be given. The communications teams from the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and police needed to agree joint messages, to demonstrate the agreed cross-organisational view. There was clearly still a degree of nervousness regarding the implementation of the experiment and how this could be perceived within organisations and also by the public.

It was therefore decided that before the DPP was presented with the full proposal a meeting would be held between all the key strategic stakeholders. On the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012 a meeting was held in the Ministry of Justice in London. Attendees included senior representatives from CPS Policy Unit, the CARA team, Ministry of Justice, Women's Aid, Respect and the Home Office. Corporate communications officers from these organisations were also present. I presented the current status of the experiment and key issues that needed to be resolved.

Following a lengthy and challenging meeting, there was full agreement that the experiment should run in accordance with the proposed eligibility criteria and methodology that had been presented. Very little compromise was needed as the concerns raised regarding victim focus and risks were considered and mitigation put in place prior to the meeting. The personal investment in meeting key stakeholders prior to the meeting proved invaluable. One of the key issues from this meeting was the ongoing

requirement and expectation that stakeholders must be kept updated and engaged throughout the process.

The following day the CPS Policy Advisory Unit presented the formal change request to the DPP. He agreed the change to guidance that in effect gave me permission to commence the experiment from the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012. It was now therefore necessary to agree exactly how the phased implementation would be undertaken.

### **Phased Implementation**

The development of the research design had naturally identified revised processes that should allow for the experiment to achieve the aims. However the complexity of managing the strict requirements of an RCT along with practicalities of needing to design and develop new user processes became a major challenge. Even though process maps identified operational procedures to be followed, it was recognised very early on that humans operated and interpreted these procedures differently and therefore potential for error existed. There would be real time issues that had not been considered or could even have been predicted. This is emphasised by Boruch (1997) who states, “no design for a randomized field test can anticipate all the issues or obstacles that may emerge in its execution”.

It was therefore decided to undertake a period of ‘dry run’ whereby cases were entered into the Randomiser but random assignment did not take place.

All cases involved would be assigned to the workshop group. The data captured would not be used in later analysis and in effect this was an opportunity to put the research design and all the data collection processes under the microscope. Specifically this phase would allow for closer examination of how the different organisations from the CPS, police and Court Services would interact and in doing so test for tight and consistent working practices. There was a need to test not only the relationships between the statutory criminal justice agencies but also test the Hampton Trust workshops. Confidence was needed that the workshops were planned properly, well administered and there were no issues with the process.

This period of examination was also essential to check whether police officers 'stuck to the script' and did not deviate away from the process agreed about how to handle domestic abuse cases that fell within the remit of the experiment. Those cases deemed to be eligible must not be lost post-randomisation once a case is accepted for the experiment as it will always remain in the experiment, so any substantial loss of cases would significantly undermine the integrity of the experiment. Leadership both within the organisation and externally remained crucial to keeping the experiment focused and also to enable some of the implementation barriers that were becoming evident.

## **Preparing for the Test Phase**

In the period leading up to and the days following the agreement to amend the formal CPS guidance there was considerable effort to ensure that practitioners were ready for the implementation. Although many staff within the CIT had been involved in the design of the new working practices the pace of the changes meant that a risk existed that some were not as informed as they should have been. This issue could not be underestimated, and having gone to the lengths of securing the trust and confidence of stakeholder strategic leaders it would be a major setback if the delivery of the experiment failed as a result of poor preparation at the practitioner level. Several initiatives were implemented to reduce this risk.

Firstly the development of the User Guide was accelerated so that all staff within the CIT had in effect a 'Standard Operating Procedures' manual to refer to. This manual in its development had already been updated 7 times and would continue to be a living document. This was made electronically available for staff to access. A series of training exercises were held jointly with the CIT, CPS lawyers, members of Hampton Trust and the Safeguarding Team. These were scenario based exercises where those involved were asked to reproduce the processes that would be adopted in real time and identify potential problems the processes as written. This was a hugely successful exercise as not only did it allow practitioners to work through the new ways of working but also forged better individual relationships across

organisations and focused the minds of those involved. Several minor issues were identified, all of which were quickly resolved by the Project CARA team.

The communications strategy was revisited and a number of the agreed tactical options were implemented. An internal communications feed was disseminated across the Western Police Area. This consisted of newsletters, briefings to officers and updates on the intranet site. Custody officers were briefed on their role and the purpose of Project CARA and a need to refer cases to the CIT. Letters were sent out to defence solicitors advising them of the introduction of conditional cautioning for offences of domestic abuse. This was a particularly important communication as offender consent to the caution was required in order to impose this sanction, so failure to gain consent would mean reduced case flow. It was important for defence solicitors to be informed of the new processes before advising their clients. I personally briefed all police supervisors involved in the process with regard to expectations and their role in making the experiment work. Without the drive and commitment from these officers then poor application of the processes would likely mean increased loss of cases, a potential lack of confidence in the police and ultimately a poor service to victims of domestic abuse.

The strong relationship built up with the head of local CPS ensured that both locally and nationally updated internal communications outlining the new processes and introduction of Project CARA were achieved. This was important as the information flow to CPS Direct (the out of hours decision makers) had been deliberately guarded until the guidance was changed in

order to avoid confusion. Failure to engage national CPS Direct lawyers could bring the experiment to a halt.

## **The Test Phase**

The experiment became operational on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012, this being a major milestone following months of hard work, negotiation and preparation. As discussed earlier the phased implementation would consist of a period whereby the randomisation process would assign cases only to the workshop group.

In order to capture any flaws or glitches in the experiment it was important to keep a close grip and identify issues as they were raised. Immediately the Research Manager located himself full time in the CIT offices. He ensured he was on hand to guide staff and answer any questions as they arose. The purpose was also to ensure that data tracking was consistent with what had been agreed and to capture issues that would be later discussed at the team meetings. This period of close scrutiny lasted for several weeks by which time key themes were emerging. These were predominately concerned with case flow and a lack of agreement between CPS lawyers and CIT investigators.

As a result of several weeks of issues being identified and an increasing concern that the predicated numbers of eligible cases were not being achieved, a meeting was held between CIT supervisors, CPS lawyers, local

head of CPS and the team. The meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 allowed for concerns to be tabled and solutions identified.

One of the significant outcomes of this meeting was the need to have not only the Research Manager permanently working within the CIT but also a Police Sergeant who perhaps had a greater understanding around how the CIT operated and line management of the officers dealing with the cases. Sergeant Tony Maggs was relieved of his daily duties in order to work with the Research Manager, to drive the consistent application of CARA processes and share the responsibility that Research Manager had been tasked with. This decision proved extremely important as in the coming weeks many of the issues were resolved and ensured a better position in terms of case flow and the reduction of case drop out. The subsequent figures in the period following the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 proved that the construct of the experiment was largely fit for purpose and the major issue was indeed the interpretation by CPS of when cases were eligible and when they were not. This in part was due to the working practices of the CPS whereby a degree of subjectivity is introduced into their decision-making and no process can capture each and every circumstance that could be presented. The team were determined to maintain the rigour of the experiment and ensure that the internal validity of the experiment was not affected by the subjectivity and continued to firm up guidance for both police and CPS.

Despite the significant progress in 'ironing out' procedural deficiencies, by June 2012 there still remained a significant number of cases randomised as



eligible that the CPS refused to allow a conditional caution to be imposed. Approximately one-third of cases randomised as eligible were being 'lost' from the experiment. This was a major concern, as the loss of cases would mean a threat to the internal validity of the experiment and any future results from analysis would be challenged. However all other aspects of the experiment were progressing well. The safeguarding processes were consistent and informal feedback from victims was positive. Defence solicitors and offenders were engaging in the process, breach processes had been tested and were working with minor issues addressed. The Hampton Trust workshop had been well attended and the delivery had so far been provided without complication. However there was again a need to revisit the case flow issue and make some significant changes to attempt to improve this situation.

### **Tackling the Case Flow**

As several weeks had passed and the measures that had been implemented to improve case flow had not resolved the issue it was still necessary to take stock and reconsider how exactly the issue of case flow could be improved.

Part of the difficulty remained that in order for the CPS to approve a conditional caution the level of evidence to be presented had to meet the standard that would allow for a successful prosecution. This is understandable, as a breach of the conditional caution would mean an offender likely being charged with the original offence. However this was a deviation away from the simple caution whereby this level of evidence is not

required. The situation is exacerbated by the nature of domestic abuse whereby victim support for prosecution is often difficult. Furthermore CIT officers have a desire to make Project CARA work and are often overly keen and present incomplete evidential cases to the CPS.

With this backdrop of understanding of the situation and how this impacted on case flow a meeting was arranged on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012 between the project team and Professor Sherman and Dr Strang at the University of Cambridge. The key requirement was to ensure that only when CPS felt cases were eligible should randomisation occur. Several options were discussed but ultimately a solution was agreed, that involved the randomisation process taking place while the CPS lawyer was actually on the telephone having agreed to the imposition of a conditional caution. This meant slight changes in working practices for the CPS and would require an amendment of their operating procedures. As strong relationships existed between police and CPS at the executive level meant these changes could be quickly made. Following this decision the necessary amendments were made to process maps and the User Guide. Early indications are that this has proved successful in overcoming this major hurdle.

### **The Next Phase - Full Randomisation**

Following 18 weeks in the test period the team felt confident that it was appropriate to move to full implementation, randomising to both the control and treatment group from the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012. This meant a technical change

to the Randomiser software and a need to further brief the CIT teams that either workshop or non-reoffend conditions would be possible post randomisation.

The project team continued to meet regularly and to provide updates to the LCJB and DACC steering group. The method of data collection and monitoring continued in accordance with the earlier agreed format and provided reassurance that consistency of case flow was occurring. Similarly this data was invaluable in advising stakeholders of how many cases had been involved and provided confidence that the experiment was being undertaken with the utmost transparency. Some minor issues arose during the next 4 weeks until finally the experiment could be regarded as fully operational. Confidence now existed that all the 'gremlins' in the system had been addressed and therefore all cases handled from the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012 could be reported on in later analysis. The case flow was in accordance with the predicted number prior to the commencement of the experiment. This major milestone had taken exactly 4 months of testing and but the experiment could now be regarded as 'fully live'.

## **Chapter Seven**

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

To undertake a successful RCT in policing is not straightforward but neither is it impossible. The body of experience in undertaking this type research largely emanates from academics that have worked tirelessly to engage police organisations in field experiments. To date very limited numbers of RCT's have been led by police leaders and the experiences involved are not widely reported.

This, and other studies undertaken by criminologists, demonstrates that there are common challenges that any experimenter leading RCT's must consider and address in order to be successful. Strang (2012), a criminologist with experience of managing over twelve experiments with police agencies, discusses the array of barriers involved with the effort to keep the experiment on track and therefore ensure the validity of any findings. Much of Strang's experiences were replicated in this study but any RCT provides further opportunities for others to learn by and inform the body of knowledge.

Developing the original concept of this RCT to actual design and implementation was torrid, emotional but hugely rewarding. There is no clear rule book to follow nor are there many police leaders who have conducted similar research to draw experience from. There are very strategic matters to address along with very tactical decisions to be made, both of which can have a fundamental impact on how the research will be received following analysis and evaluation. However when one does reflect on the journey of this study

there are some 'stand out' features that were crucial in determining successful research. The journey of the research itself threw up some surprises, some perceived threats never materialised and other unforeseen problems became major hurdles. These key issues, although referred to earlier, are highlighted below.

One such threat would have been the failure to get the support and commitment from all the stakeholders involved, as the experiment would never have got started without their approval. The proposal to introduce conditional cautioning as a criminal justice outcome for domestic abuse cases immediately ignited the interest of the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, ACPO, the LCJB, the DPP and very importantly 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups. But this interest was cautious and often sceptical. Regularly, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector executives made comments regarding how many times the police had started and failed to follow through research into domestic abuse. However this interest in many respects was helpful as senior stakeholders become involved and therefore significant decisions could easily be made regarding legal matters and resourcing of the study. The approach undertaken was to ensure that personal relationships were forged with key people very early on and therefore the complexities of joining up cross organisation processes was less bureaucratic. There had to be very clear benefits sold to organisations and confidence given that this experiment was professional and carefully thought through.

Another threat to the RCT was the risk that randomising to workshops would be resisted by offenders, defence solicitors and potentially some partners. If offenders did not attend the workshops then the experiment could not be undertaken. The reality was that these concerns were never realised and the offenders and solicitors to date have fully engaged in the process. Similarly I held a concern that the existence of workshops could be interpreted as a 'soft touch' by journalists and negative reporting could undermine the experiment. This to date has not been an issue and the carefully constructed communication plan has been designed to address this if it occurs.

The experiment would have failed if the right individuals were not selected to be part of a core team. Selecting gifted and determined individuals all of whom genuinely wanted to improve the criminal justice outcomes for domestic abuse provided a common determination to undertake the experiment as professionally as possible. The role of a good communications manager, the CIT manager, a hugely experienced public protection officer, a senior CPS lawyer and guidance from the University of Cambridge provided the perfect blend of experience and knowledge.

However the most crucial appointment was that of the Research Manager. Early discussions between the governance board and myself questioned the need for a field based Research Manager. The decision to recruit was the difference between the experiment failing and being designed and delivered successfully. An RCT must have an individual whose primary responsibility is to manage the daily operational activity of the experiment, ensure data quality,

capture and present data and identify early on when issues arise. The Research Manager benefits from spending time at the sharp end, working with officers, coaching and guiding them in new practices. Braddock's understanding and knowledge of the RCT evolved through months of hard work and in effect he became an advisor to both the university and myself with regard to progress, monitoring and recommendations.

The overarching threat to the validity of the experiment is case throughput and the need for absolute minimal attrition post randomisation. The original timescales for full implementation moved considerably mainly due to case attrition in the test phase. This was predominantly due to failure to correctly apply protocols agreed between police officers and CPS. Despite clear instructions, training and strategic oversight from both organisations, individuals failed to follow the procedures agreed. A conscious decision was made that the experiment would not move to the next stage until the team were absolutely satisfied that the processes adopted would ensure that the quality of the research would stand up to scrutiny. Painstaking work was done to provide confidence that the data quality was correct, procedures were followed, cross-organisational protocols were working, communication messages were clear, training undertaken and very importantly that case flow would be maximised. This meant initial deadlines for completing a 'dry run' and in effect testing the experiment design were extended from the initial anticipated four weeks duration to four months. The intention never to compromise on the quality of research was strictly adhered to.



## **The Next Steps**

This study simply reports on the development of the concept of an RCT to the point of full implementation. The actual objective of the experiment, to test the effectiveness of the use of differing types of conditional cautioning, will be delivered in due course. The study findings will be reported in late 2013 or early 2014 and will inform national thinking around domestic abuse and criminal justice outcomes.

The methodology adopted in the experiment of case tracking and data recording will provide a significant picture of many thousands of cases of domestic abuse in Hampshire. This data will certainly inform the criminal justice thinking on the issue. The debate on 'what works' with domestic abuse will at the very least be better informed as a result this study. Until the results are realised one must be cautious about any claims, however what is clear is the police leaders and academic institutions can together undertake RCT's and tackle the most challenging areas of social concern.

## **Appendix A**

### **Communications Strategy: conditional cautions**

## **Introduction**

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This document outlines the aims, objectives and tactics that will be used in communicating the trial involving conditional cautions in certain cases of domestic abuse. The trial has been called Project Cara.

It is a research project in partnership with Cambridge University to determine whether assigning domestic abuse offenders to workshops as part of a conditional caution reduces offending, in comparison to those without this condition. It also aims to analyse whether this disposal is an effective way to deal with the aftermath of domestic abuse offences.

The trial will be effective in the Western Area of Hampshire (Eastleigh, Southampton and the New Forest) for an initial period of twelve months. The simple police cautions that are currently used as disposals in these cases will be replaced with conditional cautions, if the case meets the six criteria points for eligibility.

The project lead is Superintendent Scott Chilton. The other primary agencies involved in the trial are the Crown Prosecution Service, the Home Office, the Hampton Trust, the Respect charity and Cambridge University. The communications lead is Liz Pusey, who will act as a conduit for communications between all relevant agencies.

This strategy will detail work to be delivered in the next twelve months, and is subject to regular review and restructure, where necessary.

## **Background**

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Research has revealed dissatisfaction amongst many victims of 'minor' domestic abuse incidents, where either no police action is taken or the offender is given a simple caution, and there are few effective early interventions in use. A controlled trial has been designed with the intention of testing the theory that using conditional cautions provides a form of intervention that will reduce the likelihood of reoffending in certain cases.

The Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight has agreed that police cautions for certain domestic violence cases will be suspended in Western Area in favour of conditional cautions, for the period of the trial.

The trial is being carried out in order to

- improve the service for victims of relationship abuse,
- reduce the risk of reoffending, and
- examine the effectiveness of intervention against current methods used by the police

Offenders must meet a set of eligibility criteria to be deemed eligible for the conditional caution. They must be an adult, have been arrested for a first time minor offence of a domestic abuse concern, either make an admission of guilt or the CPS agree that overwhelming evidence is present. The relationship between the offender and victim should be intimate and either present or past regardless of gender (this does not include inter-familial relationships), the offender must have no previous convictions or cautions for violence in the last two years, the victim must support this form of action in relation to the risks posed to them and any children, and a risk assessment must be within the parameters of low and medium.

Offenders eligible for the trial will enter into a 'randomiser', known as the Cambridge Gateway, to determine which of two options will be offered; either they will be offered the condition of maintaining good behaviour for four months, or they will be required to take part in two workshops. Refusal to accept their offer or a breach of either will result in a criminal charge.

### **Research summary (see appendices for further details and SWOT analysis)**

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Good practice advice is to build trust and confidence by creating communications channels that are not necessarily used continuously, but can be activated as and when needed.

Communications are effective when used properly and will support the trial in ensuring relevant stakeholders are engaged and informed, so that a strong partnership approach can be taken at all stages of the pilot. Key messages will be agreed and made available, enabling all agencies to respond to queries in an appropriate manner.

There are risks if people do not fully understand the intention or processes involved in the trial, and so it is essential we ensure all lines of communication are clear, strong and joined up.

### **Aim**

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The overarching aim of this communications strategy is to raise awareness of the conditional caution pilot, its processes and principles, for all stakeholders, and provide them with information relevant to their role throughout the trial.

### **Objectives**

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The objectives of the communication methods used and the messages of this strategy are measurable and specific, to ensure we have a clear direction and the ability to monitor progress, evaluate and modify our messages and channels where appropriate.

- Raise awareness of Project Cara, its intentions, processes and ongoing results, for all relevant officers and staff in Western Area

*(this objective is measurable by monitoring communications methods used and, where possible, their effectiveness in reaching the relevant audiences through dip sampling, intranet hit counts and use of conditional cautions)*

- Inform key partners around all aspects of the project, in order that a joint commitment to improving the service for victims of relationship and domestic abuse can be agreed and effectively communicated

*(this objective is measurable by the achievement of agreed joint responses)*

- Raise awareness by providing information on Project Cara to all relevant agencies (primary and interested parties) in order to build support and encourage dialogue

*(this objective is measurable by closely working with all partners to monitor their feedback)*

- Promote the trial and results to external audiences using chosen media outlets at identified points throughout the trial

*(this objective is measurable by being able to provide evidence of proactive engagement with local and specialist media outlets for articles/interviews)*

- Prepare for and pre-empt any negative responses by ensuring all necessary information is clear and readily available at all stages of the trial.

*(this objective is measurable by the availability of information and coordinated responses and how successfully they are used, if necessary)*

## **Risks and mitigation**

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This trial involves not only a change of process for police, but also a change from traditional methods of intervention for domestic abuse offenders, in that the workshops offered are much shorter than those currently in use in other sectors. There are clear reasons for this, however without detailed information there is a significant risk of the intentions of this trial being misinterpreted or wrongly assumed, and it is therefore vital that we ensure communications are clear, consistent across all agencies, and continuous. By maintaining a flow of information about the trial (from planning, through to implementation and evaluation) and responding quickly to queries and questions we can ensure the integrity of the trial and the agencies involved is maintained.

In addition, there is a risk of criticism for the use of a randomiser, and misunderstanding of what the process is, so we may invite high level questions about the decision making process for allocating offenders to the

control group or the treatment group. This process must be clear and transparent from the outset to minimise this risk and enable an effective response to any queries.

## Stakeholder analysis (also see Appendices)

This section of the strategy examines the audiences who will be communicated with. Following stakeholder analysis, the receivers of our messages can be split into three main groups:

**1. Core partnership agencies** – We must ensure that the primary partner agencies involved in the trial are fully aware of the pilot and its aims, so that the messages given by any party are consistent between all six. This is also important in relation to any press queries.

Audience	Why target	Considerations	Desired effect
Home Office / Respect charity / Hampton Trust / CPS / Cambridge University / Ministry of Justice / Respect	To ensure a consistent and joined up approach to all necessary communications.	Main messages, FAQs and literature to come from central point (police) to assist in maintaining consistency	All agencies are well briefed on the project aims for the core group as well as themselves, and know exactly what messages are important and how to respond to queries

**2. Secondary interested parties** – There are a number of other groups who are clearly audiences for the purposes of communications around the trial but do not form part of the core group. These will need to be kept informed on a less intensive and coordinated level.

Audience	Why target	Considerations	Desired effect
DA charity organisations / LCJB / those working in affected roles / defence solicitors / magistrates / Hampshire Probation Authority / Children's Services	All these groups have people who have a vested interest in the trial, either because it will affect their working practices or because it will form part of the issues they deal with	These groups will need specific material tailored to them to ensure they get the right level of detail delivered in a meaningful way	Full awareness and buy in to the project from all interested agencies, with enough knowledge to be able to state the aims of the trial and know where to go for further information, as well as open support
Victims / offenders	Need to know the process of the trial and purpose of	Will need clear and direct information to avoid confusion	Full awareness of the trial and how it will affect them

	having two groups, why their case has been allocated and involved etc		
HPA / ACPO / Western Area senior officers / public facing staff	Need a basic level knowledge of what the trial involves in case of any queries	Will need short and clear information that can be easily read and understood	Achieve a basic level awareness of the trial and who to contact for more information where necessary
Other forces / local authorities	There will be an interest in the results of this trial amongst other forces and LAs – some have already contacted us	We should not release anything we would not be happy to be made public – we cannot control the information once it is out.	Maintain interest by keeping informed

**3. Media** – The engagement of the media will be necessary in order to inform wider audiences on the pilot and its progress. We must continue to build trust, take forward previous good working practices and address misconceptions about police action in tackling domestic abuse. An important consideration for all the groups mentioned here is not to raise the fear of domestic abuse, but instead build confidence in our ability to tackle it together.

Audience	Why target	Considerations	Desired effect
Local press	There will be an inherent interest in this project locally and the media can help us educate residents	We need to keep people informed with regular updates to prove intentions and show progress – good or bad.	Raise awareness for victims/offenders/families and friends of each/wider communities about project and build interest and support
Regional and national press	DA is a national issue and an emotive one, so work to improve police handling of minor cases will be of interest, especially with the large scale partner involvement we have	Will attract more attention by using real life case studies. Will look to speak to charities etc not just police. Must be clear about intentions of courses.	Draw attention to need for improvement in current simple caution system and Project Cara group's work to explore better options
Specialist media (police and research)	The partnership between Hants police and Cambridge Uni is a significant one	Will require specialist information rather than overview provided for some	Publicise Hampshire Constabulary's forward thinking approach to providing long term solutions to domestic

	and will be of interest in the research and education sectors, and by maintaining a profile in police publications we can sustain interest and promote the project and its aims for victims and offenders	other groups.	abuse for offenders and victims
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## Communication methods

A range of communication methods will be utilised internally and externally in order to 'drip feed' messages, which will both cater for a range of preferred communication styles and ensure the messages are sustained.

### Internal

- **Intranet:** a channel will be created within the Custody Investigation Team section of the intranet which will provide an introduction from Supt Chilton, a project overview, details of the process (with a focus for CIT officers processes), info on the partners involved and frequently asked questions, as well as updates which will be posted as the project moves on through the year
- **Newsletter insert:** an insert in the Western newsletter will give brief details of the project and invite interested parties to visit the intranet channel for more information
- **Intranet homepage article:** an intranet article introducing the project and providing a link to the dedicated intranet channel will be posted at the start of the project, and this will be used to publicise updates as they are made available from the team
- **Frontline article:** articles will be placed at the beginning of the project, at the mid way point and after it finishes. To help raise awareness of the project, its aims and processes, as well as progress, learning points, changes and results
- **Email for senior officers:** email from Supt Scott Chilton advising senior officers of the beginning of the pilot and directing them to the intranet for further information.

### External (partners)

- **Visits:** members of the Project Cara team will make visits to relevant charity organisations in order to brief them on the trial and what is involved in order to answer any questions, build support and ensure that those agencies are equipped with the information to answer queries they may receive themselves



- **Website page:** a page will be created on the force website that gives details of the project and who interested organisations can contact for further information – it will be clear this is not an enquiry service for individuals
- **Booklet:** a detailed document will be produced that gives full details of the projects, the processes involved and the responsibilities of each of the six core organisations
- **Briefing sheet:** a one page document that gives a brief outline of the project to be provided as an introduction for interested parties
- **Newsletter text:** a small amount of text that will provide details to be used internally within the core organisations and any secondary interested parties
- **Letter:** a letter will be sent to all solicitors advising them of the pilot and who to contact in case of queries

#### **External (press)**

- **Briefing sheet:** a two page document that gives a brief outline of the project and its aims, as well as details on each of the agencies involved and their roles
- **Press releases:** introduction to the project and updates will be provided to the media by press release, which will lead to further planned interaction as required (interviews, conference, case studies etc)

**Victims and offenders:** victims and offenders involved in incidents that form part of Project Cara will each be communicated to directly to advise them of the outcome for the offender and what it means for the future (with no reoffending or workshop attendance). Victims will also receive contact the following day and weeks later from a dedicated contact office, ensuring they are fully informed and any additional risks are considered.

**Media enquiry response:** It is a certainty that all agencies will receive individuals media enquiries and therefore unrealistic to expect that they can all be channelled through one agency. It is agreed that a series of standard responses will be provided to answer any general fact based queries from members of the press. In case of any request that cannot be answered this way, the agency concerned will advise Supt Chilton or the communications lead in order to keep an overview of potential press coverage.

The default 'talking head' has been agreed as Supt Scott Chilton.

#### **Key messages**

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This pilot is being carried out in order to improve the service provided for victims of domestic abuse, reduce the risks of reoffending. Examine the effectiveness of intervention against current police methods.

#### **Internal**

The Project Cara processes are carried out by CIT officers and the initial response to domestic abuse incidents should not change. In order to maintain

the integrity of the project and ensure we continue to provide an excellent service, all domestic abuse detainees will be processed by CIT officers; and frontline officers and staff will operate on a business as usual basis.

### **Internal and external**

The main aim for all agencies involved in Project Cara is to improve current processes for the long term benefit of victims and offenders.

This project is a long term trial intended to inform the future handling of low level domestic abuse incidents for police forces in England and Wales. It is open to modification within the set research requirements in order to achieve meaningful results.

The processes employed as part of this trial are fair and unbiased in order to ensure reliable and practical results that can effectively inform future developments in the police service.

All offenders are considered as part of Project Cara, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

### **Evaluation**

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There are a number of methods we can use to measure the effectiveness of the communications tactics used as part of the pilot, and the level of success in meeting the communication strategy objectives, whether they be raising awareness, shaping attitudes and changing behaviours.

- **Effectiveness of process:** simply if the processes are carried out effectively will give a measure of the success of the direct communications employed for those in CIT roles
- **Dip sampling:** by carrying out simple random questionnaires we can measure how many relevant people have an awareness of the pilot as required, both within the core partner agencies and other interested groups
- **Hit counts:** by measuring the hit counts on intranet pages and the web pages used to display information about the trial we can give an indication of the scale of audience the information has reached, and also the interest in the project
- **Enquiries:** the number of external enquiries for information that we receive collectively as a project group, both for their internal consumption and for them to disseminate further, will show the level of public interest and provide a good suggestion of any heightened interest from specific sectors or organisations
- **Press coverage:** the amount of media coverage will provide evidence of both proactive and reactive engagement with media outlets, and we can also use this to measure dialogue with external audiences by which publications provide coverage, the tone they use and their audience response (via their website responses or follow up coverage)

## Milestones

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There are a number of milestones throughout the pilot that provide the opportunity to review the communications used to date and their effectiveness, in order that they can be modified if deemed necessary.

- Pilot is launched (March 2012)
- Three month review (June 2012)
- Six month review (September 2012)
- Nine month review (December 2012)
- Post pilot communications review (April 2013)

## Appendices

### Research

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#### SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Randomiser ensures integrity and fairness of process</li><li>• Support of Hampton Trust and Respect – leading opinion formers and experts in offender intervention</li><li>• Partnership approach – strengthens validity of trial</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unconfirmed number for involvement in trial means we cannot give definite end date</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish better service for victims of relationship abuse</li><li>• Lead the way for other forces in domestic abuse intervention</li><li>• Partake in leading research project</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negative assumptions made about trial, affecting opinion</li><li>• Misconceptions around the use of a randomiser</li><li>• Backlash from victims of those placed into control group</li></ul>

#### Stakeholder analysis

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The following table will separate all possible audiences into group, in order that they can then be further segmented according to their interest and influence on the pilot. This will show which key groups should be the focus of the communications methods.

Customers	Victims Offenders
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Internal	Those working in affected roles Senior officers (Western) ACPO Public facing officers and staff (SEO, Call Management, SNT)
Influential groups	DA charity organisations Probation Trust Cambridge University Defence solicitors CPS Hampton Trust Respect charity LCJB
Trade/Industry	Police publications Research publications Other forces
Government	Home Office Local authorities Hampshire Police Authority
Media	Specialist media/websites Local press

Stakeholder mapping key:

A – Minimal effort, keep informed

B – Directly affected, active engagement and information

C – Maintain interest, keep satisfied

D – Key players and opinion leaders, maximum effort for strong buy in

		Stakeholder interest	
		Low	High
Stakeholder influence	Low	Research publications Police publications Local authorities Public facing officers and staff (SEO, Call Management, SNT) Other forces Hampshire Police Authority Probation Trust Senior officers (Western)	Specialist media/websites Defence solicitors Those working in affected roles Offenders LCJB Victims
	High	<b>A</b> <b>C</b> ACPO Local/regional/national press	<b>B</b> <b>D</b> Home Office Respect charity Hampton Trust

		CPS Cambridge University DA charity organisations
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## **Appendix B**

**Project CARA**  
Conditional Cautioning and Relationship Abuse



# Project CARA

## Cautioning and Relationship Abuse

## **Introduction**

This document provides a background to Project CARA, highlighted with snapshots from Hampshire Constabulary Communications Strategy. The Hampton Trust has designed, written and will deliver two workshops to a minimum of 200 offenders during a 12 month period. Project CARA is a research project led by Hampshire Constabulary in partnership with Cambridge University to determine whether assigning domestic abuse offenders to workshops as part of a conditional caution reduces offending, in comparison to those without this condition.

The trial will be effective in the Western area of Hampshire for an initial period of 12 months. The simple police cautions historically used will be replaced with conditional cautions subject to meeting the following criteria:

- ❖ Adult (over 18)
- ❖ No previous domestic abuse convictions
- ❖ Abuse between spouses/partners only
- ❖ Admission or CPS agree overwhelming evidence
- ❖ Past minor convictions permitted but not for violence and/or currently serving a community based sentence/order
- ❖ Victim contacted regarding additional risk factors
- ❖ Risk Assessment within parameters of low and medium

The lead agencies involved in the trial including The Hampton Trust are Hampshire Constabulary, Local Criminal Justice Board, Crown Prosecution Service, Home Office and Cambridge University. Respect is aware of Project Cara and support both content and delivery of the workshops. Concerns have been expressed by Respect and other agencies such as Women's Aid seeking assurance that adequate provision is put in place to obtain victim feedback in respect of the impact of the workshops. The Hampton Trust fully supports this and aims to keep it on the agenda throughout the pilot.

## **Background**

During the last 12 months 1500 domestic abuse cases in Hampshire coming to the attention of the police received a 'simple caution'. This basically means that due to insufficient evidence other than a caution no further action was taken. The Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) for Hampshire and Isle of Wight has agreed that police cautions for certain domestic abuse cases will be suspended in the Western Area in favour of conditional cautions. This pilot is being carried out in order to improve the services provided for victims, reduce the risk of reoffending and to examine the effectiveness of the intervention against current police methods. Project CARA is a long term trial intended to inform the future handling of low level domestic abuse incidents for police forces in England and Wales. The trial aims to:

- ❖ Improve the service for victims of relationship abuse
- ❖ Reduce the risk of reoffending
- ❖ Examine the effectiveness of intervention against current methods used by the police



Cambridge is using a randomised control trial methodology. Offenders eligible for the trial will enter into a 'randomiser' known as the Cambridge Gateway, to determine which of two options will be offered; either they will be offered the condition of maintaining good behaviour for four months, or they will be required to attend two workshops. This will provide a control group and a treatment group. Refusal to accept their offer or a breach of either will result in a criminal charge

### **Domestic Abuse Workshops**

Ensuring material and delivery style remains relevant to such a broad target audience is essential. These workshops differ to traditional perpetrator programmes whereby abusive behaviour and treatment viability has been [clearly] identified. A high proportion of offenders will [have a history of abuse and] be demonstrating signs of exerting power and control over their partners, however there will also be individuals who are not serial abusers and have come to the attention of the police in a situational environment not typical of their relationship. Emphasis is placed on awareness raising - providing domestic abuse context, aimed at insight providing a stepping stone to change. Facilitators are required to roll with resistance and use motivational techniques that enable participants to recognise personal weaknesses leading to abuse and establish strengths required for change.

### **Delivery style**

The broad spectrum of participants taking part in the pilot and mandatory attendance suggests high levels of resistance and low motivation will be displayed. For this intervention to have a significant impact we are aiming for optimum levels of engagement from attendees. These workshops must be delivered with emphasis on motivational technique. *"Directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence"*. (Miller & Rollnick. Motivational Interviewing. Preparing people for change – 2002)

Motivational interviewing techniques are very appropriate for CARA workshops based on the concept that we are attempting to 'sell' the workshop as a positive intervention to participants. By providing insight and understanding of domestic abuse at a societal level we aim to increase awareness. This has been evident in early workshops, used as an opportunity to finalise content. Men expressed surprise at the prevalence and escalation of domestic abuse. By engaging in a dialogue about domestic abuse we provide a space to reflect on behaviour. It is important that motivation to change is '*elicited from*' participants rather than '*imposed on*' by facilitators.

Workshops are based on creating a positive interpersonal atmosphere. Sessions delivered to date evidence high levels of anxiety and even participants that asked to be charged rather than have to attend a group. Experienced facilitators delivering perpetrator programmes will be required to be as mindful of their style as their less experienced counter-parts. The former will have a knee jerk reaction to challenging denial, minimisation and other negative attitudes, however delivery of CARA workshops requires a

softer approach and a leaning towards rolling with resistance. This technique uses a guiding style to clarify personal strengths and workshop B focuses on enabling participants to identify what strengths they have that they can draw on in the future to prevent a further police call out and move towards change. The underlying theme is for participants to leave feeling positive and motivated to seek further help and/or to look at what preventative measures they need to put in place. The following examples illustrate the use of these techniques in a CARA workshop.

❖ **Develop a guiding rather than directing style**

*“Is there anything else we can help you with or are there any other services that you think would be of use?”*

❖ **Develop strategies to elicit a client’s own motivation to change**

*“It sounds as though you want things to be different and you said that a goal is to be a family man therefore I assume your new baby boy gives you motivation to do things differently?”*

❖ **When engaging in dialogue with a client respond by encouraging ‘change talk’**

*“So what can you do differently to avoid the police coming out next time you find yourself in a conflict situation at home?”*

### **Motivational Interviewing Principles**

Applying MI principles when delivering CARA material will help to develop a positive learning environment whereby participants feel motivated to change. These tools allow individuals to identify their own motivation rather than a motivation that has no relevance or personal meaning to them. Motivation is meaningless unless one can take ownership of it. There are four guiding principles that underlie motivational interviewing and below are examples specifically taken out of previous CARA workshops.

❖ **Express empathy – Through skilled listening the facilitator seeks to understand the client’s feelings and perspectives without judging.**

*“It sounds as though waiting in the cells over night and not knowing what the outcome was going to be was difficult for you”*

❖ **Develop discrepancy – When behaviour is seen as conflicting with one’s goals**

*“You say when you drink things build up and it leads to arguments so I’m wondering how this is going to impact on you being able to resolve things more positively”*

❖ **Roll with resistance – Resistance that a person offers can be turned or reframed slightly to create a new momentum towards change**

*“You say you have to be in charge of the finances because of your partner’s mental health problems yet your arguments repeatedly seem to be about your partner not having access to money so what do you think you could do to resolve this difficulty for both of you?”*

- ❖ **Support self efficacy – This refers to a person’s belief in his or her ability to carry out and succeed with a specific task**  
*“It sounds as though things have been really positive for you since the last workshop and that’s about you been willing to take on board some of things we talked about and to use a different approach*

### **Aims and Objectives of CARA workshops**

- ❖ To reflect on personal incident leading to police call out
- ❖ To recognise abusive behaviour in a domestic abuse context
- ❖ To be introduced to Duluth Wheels
- ❖ To explore impact of domestic abuse on self and victims such as partners and children
- ❖ To develop a sense of self awareness in relation to abuse
- ❖ To identify personal goals
- ❖ To understand Time Out strategies
- ❖ To identify personal strengths and weaknesses
- ❖ To identify personal risk factors and risk management
- ❖ To offer signposting to other appropriate services

### **Learning Outcomes of CARA workshops**

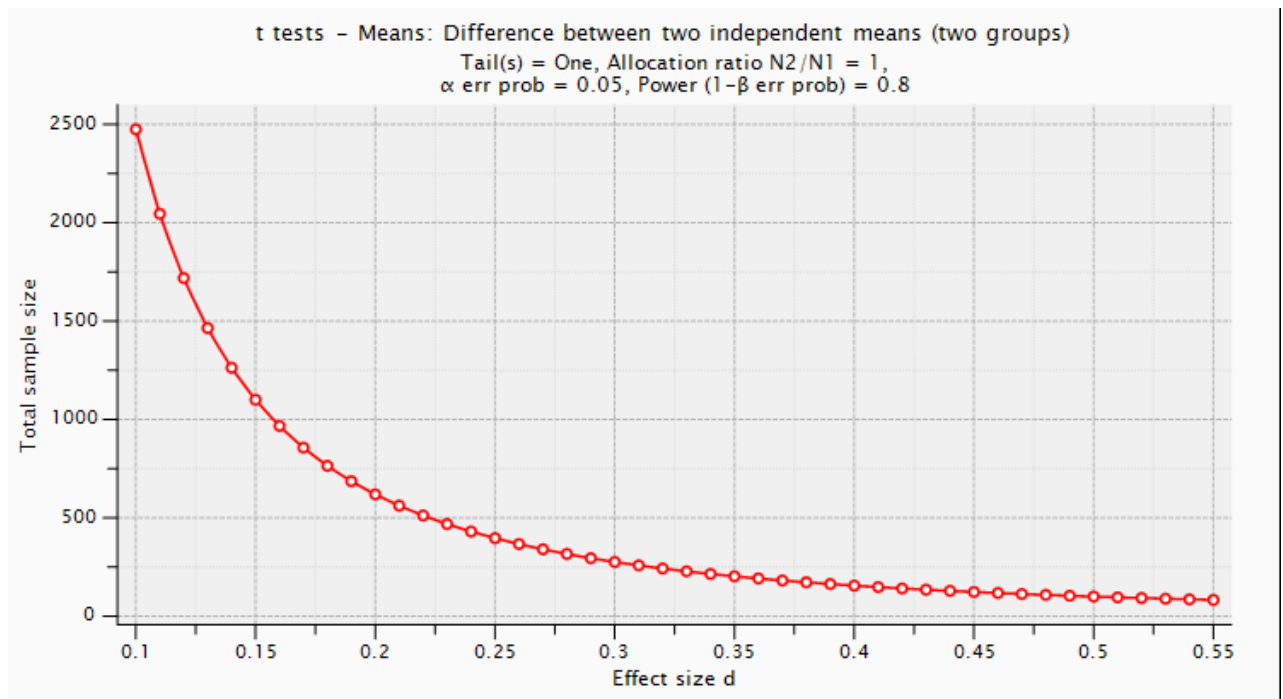
By the end of the workshop participants will:

- ❖ Be familiar with course aims & objectives
- ❖ Have established a clear & safe learning environment
- ❖ Have used a drawing technique to reflect on the incident leading to a conditional caution
- ❖ Start to recognise abusive behaviour within a domestic abuse context
- ❖ Be introduced to the Duluth wheels
- ❖ Understand what constitutes domestic abuse
- ❖ Explore the impact of domestic abuse on self and victims such as partners and children
- ❖ Developed a self awareness in relation to abusive behaviour
- ❖ Have an understanding of strategies such as time out
- ❖ Identify personal goals
- ❖ Identify personal risk factors in relation to their behaviour
- ❖ Identify personal risk management strategies
- ❖ Identify other services/interventions required to sustain change and prevent further police call outs

Project CARA is a trial being evaluated by Cambridge University; therefore it is important that all workshops are delivered using the same format and material. To ensure programme integrity all sessions of each workshop must be delivered. Failure to do this will invalidate the evaluation.

## **Appendix C**

## Predictive Power Analysis Project CARA (Dr Ariel 2012)



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