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**'Perceptions of domestic abuse victims to police disposals  
post-arrest by conditional caution, simple caution or no further  
action'.**

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## **Abstract**

*Measurement of victim satisfaction with the police response to domestic abuse cases has always been complicated. Differences in the nature of reporting and classification of domestic abuse; inherent complexities within a relationship together with victims' individual expectations has made it difficult to adopt a consistent approach to these cases.*

*The police service in England and Wales has frequently attempted to apply consistency to domestic abuse cases, with positive arrest policies being the current response to such offending. However, there is debate as to whether this is the most appropriate approach as it does little to empower victims, which in turn could affect their confidence in the criminal justice system.*

*This study investigates whether victims of domestic abuse are satisfied with the response provided by Hampshire police when a domestic incident occurs. It also explores whether satisfaction and confidence are related to both interaction with the police and the criminal justice outcome.*

*Findings from this study indicate that the most important predictor of satisfaction is the quality of interaction between the police and victim, with victims being more satisfied when the police meet their expectations and keep them informed of the outcome of the case. These factors were shown to be of more importance to the victim than the disposal itself in determining victim confidence and satisfaction.*

*Further examination of the views of these victims show that only a minority want the offender arrested and would support a prosecution. This finding is in conflict with the present positive arrest policy and indicates that a positive arrest and positive prosecution approach may not necessarily be the most effective way to deal with cases of domestic abuse from the point of view of victim preference.*

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## **Introduction**

The issue of domestic abuse offending is of significant importance and whilst the legal response to, and police handling of such abuse has shifted considerably over the last few decades, it is crucial to recognise the continuing difficulties in dealing with these offences. Domestic abuse offending can vary significantly with regard to the underlying issues and also the manifestation of these issues by subsequent offending behaviour. The reluctance on the part of victims to report such offences, leads us to believe that a substantial amount of offending remains hidden despite its visibility in the routine workload of the police, social services and casualty departments (Stanko, 2001). This 'hidden offending' makes it more difficult to research the nature, prevalence and impact on the victim of such offending behaviour.

As a result, research into domestic abuse has often been difficult as it is not clear about the proportion of crime that is 'visible' and that which remains 'hidden'. This, coupled with issues around the labelling of 'offender' and 'victim', a lack of understanding of certain areas of domestic abuse, and ambiguity around 'what works' with offenders and victims, leads to an uneasy and sensitive landscape upon which to base empirical research. It is unsurprising, therefore, that there is limited research in the area of victim satisfaction in cases of domestic abuse.

Despite these difficulties, it must be recognised that domestic abuse offending forms a significant proportion of the total workload identified within the criminal justice

system. To ignore such a high profile and resource intensive issue would be ethically and politically unacceptable. In order to fully appreciate the underlying complications with these offences, it is important that victims are kept at the centre of policy development that addresses these issues. It could be argued that only long-term meaningful engagement with victims of domestic abuse will provide a clearer understanding of the issues they face. This understanding is crucial in ensuring that the criminal justice system provides a focused response, which ensures the service provided is in keeping with the wishes of the victim. A criminal justice system that makes assumptions about victims' wishes has the potential to alienate victims still further, leading to even fewer offences being reported.

### **Aims & objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore and attempt to define the factors that determine whether victims are satisfied with the police response to a specific incident of domestic abuse. This will be achieved by reporting on a survey of the views and attitudes of victims of domestic abuse incidents that have been dealt with by a conditional caution, simple caution or no further action (NFA). It will consider the victims' expectations compared to the police action, the victims' perceptions of the final disposal and their likelihood of reporting future incidents of domestic abuse. Comparison of the responses to the survey will assist in providing practical guidance about the most appropriate way to deal with victims of domestic abuse, as well as providing a critical evaluation of the current policing methods used for cases of this nature.

This study will aim to fulfil the following objectives:

- To review existing literature and provide an understanding of the evolution of the domestic abuse agenda from an academic and practical perspective;
- To discuss the current position in terms of policing domestic abuse offences and highlight areas for consideration that relate to victim care and appropriate outcomes;
- To provide a comprehensive framework for collecting data which allows a greater understanding of victims' views and wishes to be obtained;
- To discuss the findings of victim surveys, providing a framework upon which further study can be undertaken, and exploring future areas of research which could potentially encourage increased reporting of domestic offences from victims.

This study will consist of the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 will review the existing literature relating to the rise of the domestic abuse agenda, and provide an understanding of the difficulties that can be encountered when attempting to carry out research within this area. It will also explore and comment on relevant areas where evidence is lacking.
- Chapter 2 will outline the methodology that has been employed by this study, provide baseline data with regard to the geographic area being studied, and also

comment on the development of the data collection process to provide an understanding of the key issues within this study.

- Chapter 3 will present the results of the surveys, and allow for comparisons of victim satisfaction to be made depending on the final outcome of the studied cases.
- Chapter 4 will highlight relevant findings from previous chapters, and provide a discussion of the results presented in the previous chapter.
- Chapter 5 will endeavour to draw evidence-based conclusions and provide recommendations for future research which will serve to further increase the satisfaction of victims subject to domestic abuse offences.

# **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

## **Literature Review**

### **1.1 Context of the research**

Although many victims of domestic abuse seek assistance from the criminal justice system, little is known about why victims call the police on some occasions and not on others. Whilst there has been significant research on how cases of domestic abuse are handled, there is less evidence of studies relating to the examination of victims' satisfaction, or research into how useful victims find the police response.

Domestic abuse is an emotive subject and there are research findings indicating that one in four women will experience at least one physical assault by an intimate partner during their lifetime (Mirrlees-Black, 1999). The Council of Europe (2002) likewise reported in a summary of ten studies from European countries that one in four women will be subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime and one in eight women will experience it annually. In 2000 research by Stanko audited the contact by victims of domestic abuse in the UK with a wide range of public services, refuges, helplines and the police over a 24-hour period and findings suggested that police receive a call for assistance every minute, (Stanko, 2001). Although many women do not report this abuse, others turn to the criminal justice system for help in ending the violence against them, which in turn has led to a significant increase in the number and range of interventions to address domestic abuse.

Whilst there is limited empirical evidence as to the success of these interventions, data relating to the views of the victims is conspicuous by its absence. In order to ensure the success of policies and interventions, it is essential to ascertain what factors influence victim satisfaction with the police response to domestic abuse (Fleury, 2002). The experiences and satisfaction of victims can alter whether or not they seek help in the future (Lewis *et al*, 1997). An understanding of these experiences is essential to encourage both the future participation of victims in the criminal justice system, and their willingness to contact police for assistance in the future (Robinson & Shroshine, 2005). For victims who live with offenders, the threat can be constant and therefore, their willingness to contact police when they are subject to abuse is particularly important (Jenkins & Davidson 2001).

Research in the US has shown that victims who are not satisfied with the police response may be less likely to participate in the legal process (Lerman, 1992) and to contact the police in future if they view their response as unhelpful (Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Smith, 2000). In contrast, surveys carried out with victims of domestic abuse by both Buzawa & Austin (1993) and Yegidis & Renzy(1994) indicated that victim satisfaction and likelihood of further reporting was related to the quality of interaction between the victim and attending police officers and the ability of the police to meet the victim's needs. It must be noted that in both studies, fewer than 100 victims were surveyed, which could potentially cause bias to exist within the sample.



## 1.2 Definition, extent and nature of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious problem in the UK, cutting across all boundaries of race, gender, ethnicity, wealth and education (Johnson, 2007). It is often part of an on-going pattern of behaviour which can include threats, isolation, intimidation, psychological and verbal abuse. It is also recognised that the predominant victims of domestic abuse in terms of severity, impact and repetition are women and children (Harwin, 2006).

One of the challenges in improving the response to domestic abuse in the UK is ensuring there is a joint understanding of what is meant by the term and which forms of abuse are included in any definition. Although previously there was no standard definition in use across the UK, government departments adopted a definition that recognised *'Any incident or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'* (Home Office, 2011).

Whilst this definition recognised wider relationships and was also gender neutral, in March 2013, the Home Office, recognising the wider scope of abuse, released the following definition of domestic violence and abuse:

*'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:*

- *psychological*

- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional'*

Despite significant changes to policy, police response and awareness over the last few decades which have led to an increase in reporting of incidents of domestic abuse, it is still considered to be chronically under-reported with a Home Office study in 2002 (Home Office, 2002) suggesting that only 35% of incidents are reported.

More recent British Crime Surveys have consistently identified women as being more likely to be repeat victims, receive threats to kill, be seriously injured and continue to be assaulted after separation. Women are recognised to be at greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving an abusive relationship (Lees, 2000) with statistics showing that 88 women in the UK were killed by their partner or ex-partner in 2011/2012 (Home Office, 2013). A survey of 200 victims seeking help from Women's Aid outreach services found that 60% reported that they left because they were fearful of being killed and 76% were still being stalked and harassed after they left (Humphreys & Thiara, 2002).

The implications for the safety and wellbeing of children are considerable; a review of literature in 2008 found that children and adolescents living with domestic abuse are at an increased risk of experiencing emotional, physical and sexual abuse (Holt *et al*,

2008) and it is estimated that 25,000 children stay in shelters each year in the UK (Women's Aid, 2013).

The physical and emotional cost of abuse to women and children through the loss of friends, family, home and possessions is significant and has been evident for many years. However, it is only within the last 10 years that the monetary costs have been estimated (Harwin, 2006). These are considered to be huge although a government report (Walby, 2004) which estimated the cost of domestic abuse to be the sum of £22.8 billion per year was updated in 2009 and revised down to £15.7 billion. Walby (2009) attributes this reduction to a decrease in the rate of domestic abuse, greater reporting and better public services leading to a reduction in the cost of lost economic output. It is of note, however, that whilst Walby identifies the measurable costs to services including the criminal justice system, health, social services, housing and the loss of economic output due to time off work, she also includes £9.9 billion as 'human and emotional cost'. This cost is based on the notion that victims of domestic abuse would pay something in order not to suffer the human and emotional cost of being abused and the appropriateness of its inclusion is subject to debate (Walby, 2009).

### **1.3 Criminalization and rise of the victim agenda**

Historically, the police response to victims of domestic abuse was characterised as one of indifference and victim blaming attitudes (Belknap, 1995; Hart, 1993). Violence in the home was not viewed as a serious social problem (Erez, 1986) but perceived as a private act and largely ignored with arrest generally being the last resort (Bard & Zacker, 1971).

However during the 1970s, domestic abuse started to move up the political agenda and the rise of victim advocacy, feminist organisations and shelters for battered women encouraged the recognition of domestic abuse as part of the broader social structure (Erwin, 2006; Kelly, 2003). Violence against women became a national issue and highly publicised cases across the US of women being repeatedly abused and a surge of civil action lawsuits claiming police officers failed to provide equal protection to women, resulted in legislative and policy changes that promoted a criminal response to domestic abuse (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003).

In the early 1980s, an influential piece of research in the US: the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Sherman, 1992) was the first study to evaluate the effectiveness of arrest in cases of domestic abuse. It was found that arrest reduced the rate of re-offending against the same victim by half within the following six months (Sherman, 1992). Although subsequent findings in replicate studies (Berk *et al*, 1992; Dunford, 1992) were not consistent with those found in Minneapolis, the findings encouraged police agencies to adopt a 'pro-arrest' or 'positive action' policy.

These policies reduced or removed the discretion of police and criminal justice officers by specifying, or even mandating arrest and prosecution as the preferred response to incidents of domestic abuse. For some feminists and victim advocates, such a response was welcomed. The criminalisation of domestic abuse served a symbolic purpose that demonstrated the moral unacceptability of such violence (Edwards, 1989; Stark, 1993). It also acted as a general deterrent enabling the state to intervene to ensure punishment, provide further deterrence and a possible reduction in further offending (Dobash *et al*, 1996). Criminalization sends the message that domestic abuse is a crime that will not be tolerated by society (Stanko, 1992).

However, domestic abuse can be viewed differently from most other crimes and punishment may well be found to be counterproductive (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). The relationship between a victim and an offender is often complicated and there are wide ranging social processes through which women's experiences of violence are invalidated (Hester *et al*, 1996). There has been a history of blame attached to the victim asking questions like "why didn't she leave?", "how did she make him so angry?" (Meloy & Miller, 2001). Women have tended, and been encouraged, to minimise the violence experienced by men. Many women have an investment in not defining men's behaviour as abusive as a result of being financially dependent or having children together. Other women dismiss their experiences as not being real and can take a long time to recognise they are victims of domestic abuse (Hester *et al*, 1996).

Despite the moderate instrumental benefits of prosecution, further studies in the US suggested that pro arrest policies could cause women to become antagonistic to a system that ignores what they want (Smith, 2000) and could be viewed as a mechanism to restrict or reduce the decision making power of women (Johnson, 2007). Such policies can create a hostile relationship when wishes or expectations are not met resulting in victims being reluctant to call the police for future help (Ford & Regoli, 1992). The enforcement of the policies themselves presented problems as some victims, in fighting back, defending themselves or subject to false accusations, were also arrested and many victims were fearful of calling the police in case they too were arrested (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1993).

Mandatory arrest policies also make the assumption that the police and policy makers know what is best for such a diverse group as victims of domestic abuse and that they are unable to satisfactorily make their own choices (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000). In the UK, research from charities such as Respect reports that many victims do not want their partner arrested and convicted (Respect, 2011). They find that their preference is for an intervention that brings about an improvement in the relationship and helps the perpetrators to understand the impact of their abuse (Westmarland *et al*, 2010).

Victims may choose not to cooperate with the police for a number of reasons including fear of further violence, a desire to rescue the relationship, concern for the children and the monetary cost to the whole family of financial penalties.

## **1.4 Police and Government response in England and Wales**

For many years, despite the rise of the feminist agenda and challenge to the non-interventionist approach, policing of domestic abuse in the UK was relatively ineffective. Legislation passed in 1976 and 1978 provided for protection, injunction and exclusion orders, but there was no significant change to the way police officers dealt with domestic incidents (McWilliams & Spence, 1996).

A number of studies in the 1980s criticised the police response to domestic abuse (Edwards, 1986; 1989; Hamner *et al*, 1989; Pahl, 1985) claiming they viewed it as a civil matter rather than a criminal one (Grace, 1995). Incidents were not seen as 'real crime', police officers did not want to deal with 'domestics' and were slow to respond to such calls (Richards, Letchford & Stratton 2008). When police did attend, they were criticised for their reluctance to intervene and failure to arrest and prosecute offenders, even in cases of serious injury (Harne & Radford, 2008). On occasions they were perceived to side with the aggressor or attempt reconciliation and a lack of recording meant that it was not possible to obtain a true picture of domestic abuse (Edwards, 1986). The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is reported to have suggested that such disputes 'should be hived off to the social services' (Hague & Malos, 2005).

Both the police and Home Office recognised the need to need to improve their response to domestic abuse and in 1986, a Home Office Circular (69/1986) requested that chief officers review their approach to domestic violence. Whilst this

was a significant step, it relied on local forces to use their discretion and did not require them to adopt a rigorous or consistent approach. Research suggested that the new direction of policy did not fit with the traditionalist masculine culture of the police, was not popular and consequently did not translate to a shift in policy on the ground (Harne & Radford, 2008).

Work by women's groups and feminists continued in the field of domestic abuse and during the late 1980s and early 1990s there were a number of government funded initiatives and programmes that supported women who were escaping such abuse. This change in direction was further supported by the publication of a second Home Office Circular (60/1990) which was devoted to the policing of domestic abuse. Amongst its recommendations were that police give priority to the protection of the victim from the immediate threat of further abuse and this protection, together with support, was to continue throughout the criminal justice process. It promoted the use of other support agencies for the protection of women and their children and encouraged the formation of specialist units to deal with victims of domestic abuse. Significantly, it recommended that the police develop their policy and practice to take a more interventionist approach with a presumption in favour of arrest and consider pursuing prosecution even if a victim withdraws her support. Although not going as far as advocating a pro arrest policy, this enabled a significant change to the historic working rule shared by police and prosecutors that if a victim withdrew support or co-operation, it marked the end of the case (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000).



Despite the Circular, the police response was still inconsistent across the country and a Home Office study in 1995 found that only half of all forces had introduced specialist domestic violence officers and units. Frontline officers still had a mixed understanding of the policy with over half saying it was a low priority issue (Harne & Radford, 2008). A further Home Office evaluation, conducted three years later, directed more criticism towards the police citing poor standards, weakness in supervision and a lack of specialist training (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 1998).

The issue of abuse by men against women continued to be thrust into the public eye and in 1999 the government's strategic approach was set out in a publication entitled 'Living without Fear' (Cabinet Office, 1999). Led by the Home Office this encouraged action to address domestic abuse across a number of key government departments (Harwin, 2006) and brought about some significant improvements, namely:

- work that had started at local police force level was consolidated at a national level across the country including the development and training of a national police policy on domestic violence
- more than 200 specialist multi-agency services developed strategic and innovative intervention initiatives
- the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) issued new policy and guidance as well as creating specialist domestic violence coordinators
- research projects and funding initiatives addressed the impact of domestic abuse in areas of law, health and housing
- the government introduced domestic violence specialist criminal courts.

Implementation of these recommendations, specifically the use of dedicated domestic abuse teams working within the wider public protection departments and with a variety of agencies developed a coordinated and more effective response (Hague & Mullender, 2006).

In 2003, the government passed the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Bill with the central aim of encouraging good practice in the treatment of victims and witnesses. Partly in response to the government's white paper Safety and Justice, (Home Office, 2003) a 3-pronged approach was confirmed to tackling domestic abuse including prevention, protection, justice and support to victims. Finally, after years of neglect, the on-going focus of public attention resulted in a dramatic shift in the response to domestic abuse through policy guidance, legislation and police action.

### **1.5 Disposals and the Hampshire experiment**

With a more focused police response to incidents of domestic abuse and the widespread use across the UK of a positive action policy, it is important to consider the options available to the police to deal with offenders. Following arrest, the police, working with the CPS will decide the most appropriate course of action which can range from prosecution to a variety of 'out-of-court disposals' or no further action (NFA).

Although the positive action policy has resulted in a significant increase in arrests, the majority of these cases are subsequently disposed of by way of no further action.

In 2012, across the Hampshire force area, police made 10,264 arrests for incidents of domestic abuse of which 5,700 (55%) were dealt with as NFA (Hampshire Constabulary Performance team personal communication, 2013). The aim of out-of-court disposals is to divert a significant number of cases from the court process, thereby reducing and streamlining prosecutions for contested cases and more serious offending. Provided the disposals are used effectively, these schemes may be a reliable and effective way of ensuring a proportionate response to minor offences.

The most commonly used out-of-court disposals for adults include

- Cannabis warning
- Simple caution
- Conditional caution
- Penalty notice for disorder

For the purposes of this study, the two relevant disposals are:

**Simple Caution** – A simple caution is effectively a ‘telling off’ by the police and guidance from the Ministry of Justice (2013) details the aims and purpose as

- offering a proportionate response to low level offending where the offender has admitted the offence;
- delivering swift, simple and effective justice that carries a deterrent effect;
- recording an individual’s criminal conduct for possible reference in future criminal proceedings or in criminal record or other similar checks;

- reducing the likelihood of re-offending;
- increasing the amount of time officers spend dealing with more serious crime and reduce the amount of time police officers spend completing paperwork and attending court, whilst simultaneously reducing the burden on the courts.

This form of disposal is not encouraged by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) who issued the following guidance:

**ACPO Guidance on Adult Cautions for Domestic Violence (2008)**

- There is some evidence that it is a first domestic abuse offence and there have been no other reports or intelligence of previous abuse to the victim or previous partners/family members.
- The defendant has no previous police record for violence.
- The case has been reviewed by the CPS and they have taken the decision not to progress a prosecution.
- The investigation has been reviewed and the Investigating Officer is satisfied that there is no further potential for investigation development.
- Any other criminal justice sanctions have been examined and progressed.

**Figure 1: ACPO guidance on adult cautions for domestic abuse**

The ACPO guidance, in requiring a review by the CPS, could be viewed as contradictory to the Home Office guidance issued in 2008 (Circular 16/2008) which states 'the police retain the authority to issue a simple police caution in all cases other than cases involving indictable-only offences' (HO 16/2008 :1). The CPS follows the Home Office guidance and therefore police officers do not refer domestic abuse cases to the CPS for a simple caution and the decision remains with the police.

This disposal, which offers no opportunity of an intervention to address the offending behaviour could be considered to be of limited value in cases of domestic abuse and is unlikely to address the needs of the victim.

Recently, the Ministry of Justice published additional guidance on the use of simple cautions that clarified their use for indictable-only offences. This guidance has been issued in the wake of much criticism, and stipulates that simple cautions can only be used as a disposal for serious offences in exceptional circumstances and only with CPS permission (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

**Conditional Caution** - This is a caution with one or more conditions attached. The conditions that can be attached must be rehabilitative, reparative, or a punitive financial penalty. Rehabilitative conditions can include attendance at a treatment course, and reparative conditions can include apologising to the victim, paying compensation and making good any damage (CPS, 2013). In the event of the conditions being breached, the offender may be prosecuted which necessitates any conditions set being achievable within a timeframe to allow for statutory limitations.

Guidance from the Ministry of Justice, (2013) states that Conditional cautions provide the opportunity:

- to offer a proportionate response to low level offending;
- for offenders to make swift reparation to victims and communities;
- for offenders to be diverted at an early opportunity into rehabilitative services thereby reducing the likelihood of re-offending;

- to punish an offender by means of a financial penalty.

However, when conditional cautions were introduced in 2003, their use in cases of domestic abuse was specifically excluded (see Director's guidance s3.1). Although not explicitly stated, it is considered that this was due to the sensitivities, risks and complexities associated with domestic abuse cases.

Although a simple caution is recorded on an individual's criminal record, there is no requirement or incentive for the offender to take any action to address the offending behaviour. This, in turn, allows them to continue to neutralize their behaviour as they have no need to take responsibility for the offence (Sykes & Matza, 1957). It could be argued that the exclusion of conditional cautions for domestic abuse incidents misses an opportunity to make the offender take responsibility for their action and address their offending behaviour. With this in mind, Hampshire Constabulary proposed an experiment in the use of conditional cautions in certain low level cases of domestic abuse.

## **1.6 The Hampshire conditional caution experiment**

In January 2011, the Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary formally requested permission from the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) to conduct a trial which used conditional cautions for domestic abuse (Jarman, 2011). Permission was subsequently received from both the DPP and the Home Office giving approval for the trial use of conditional cautions for offences of domestic abuse within the following boundaries:

“...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...” (K. Starmer, personal communication, 2011).

Following extensive consultation with local and national stakeholders, preparation for the trial progressed and in August 2012, Hampshire Constabulary began a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) known as project CARA 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’ (Chilton, 2012). Within the project test area, simple police cautions were suspended for eligible domestic abuse cases and offenders were instead randomly assigned to one of two groups: a control group with a four month non-reoffending condition and a treatment group which in addition to the four month non-reoffending condition, was assigned the condition of attending two treatment workshops.

A ‘dry run’ of the trial was launched in April 2012 during which time, all cases were entered into the Randomiser tool but without random assignment taking place and all cases being assigned to the workshop. This ‘dry run’ period enabled a robust test of the research design, the identification of any difficulties between the agencies working together and the planning, administering and processes for the workshops.

During the design phase, careful attention was paid to determining the eligibility criteria taking into account consideration of the risk to victims, legislative

requirements and CPS practices. Following a number of iterations, the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the trial were finalised as at Appendix A. The design and implementation of the workshop was given equally careful consideration. It would not have been possible to deliver two one-day workshops that replicated the outcomes of longer term perpetrator programmes and the workshops were designed to provide a 'diversionary' outcome rather than be viewed as 'treatment' (Chilton, 2012). The content and construction of the workshops was widely consulted with women's groups and victims of domestic abuse. Workshop design and delivery was provided by Hampton Trust, a local charity accredited in delivering therapy programmes.

Throughout the development and design of the trial, the victim was considered as the priority and the issue of victim support and focus was paramount. A Victim Contact Officer (VCO) was required to contact each victim within 24 hours of the arrest and offer safeguarding. A further call was made halfway through the four month period to identify whether any risks had increased, to encourage the reporting of any breaches and to provide additional safeguarding if required. After a period of 4 months testing, the trial went 'live' on 13 August 2012.

### **1.7 Victim satisfaction and victim choice**

The response of the police and the criminal justice system, particularly through the prosecution of offenders, is often the first step towards reducing crime. Victims of many crimes are often not concerned whether prosecution works as their situation



will rarely be worsened by it. This is not the case, however, with domestic abuse where prosecution can result in significant repercussions for victims including further violence and financial hardship (Hoyle and Sanders, 2000). Studies examining why victims do not call the police show a myriad of reasons; lack of police help, fear of future acts (Anderson *et al*, 2003), financial dependence, lack of support (Davis & Smith, 1995) or fear of escalation (Felson *et al*, 2002).

Research shows that victims want and expect many different things from the criminal justice system and whether police make an arrest is only one of the factors that significantly impact on satisfaction (Robinson & Shroshine, 2005). Early US studies appear to indicate that the majority of women who called the police wanted the offender arrested. Abel & Suh (1987) in a study on the use of police services by 300 women residing in shelter, found a total of 60% of victims wanted an arrest but police only arrested in 28% of cases. This incompatibility of victims' expectations and police action was also observed by Saunders & Size (1986) who found that much of victim dissatisfaction was based on the failure of police to act as social control agents. Later studies, however, identified the relationship to be more complex with high levels of victim satisfaction being recorded, despite low rates of arrest, Yegidis & Renzy (1994) found that over 80% of respondents (from a sample of 44) were happy with the police despite only 1 in 4 offenders being arrested. In a larger survey Coulter *et al* (1999) found that from a sample of 500 women, only one third reported that the offender had been arrested, yet most were satisfied.

A study by Ford in 1991 examined data from 25 women in Indiana who were seeking to file charges against their partner. The study identified that many women in calling the police used it as a power resource deciding whether to pursue or drop charges depending on whether the offender did certain things. It further showed that victims who called the police themselves and who allied themselves to the criminal justice system to gain power had a much higher level of satisfaction than when the police were called by someone else. Buzawa *et al* (1992) found that victims' perceptions and experiences vary with the extent to which their preferences are followed and victims whose expectations were met were more likely to rate the response positive and satisfying (Robinson & Shroshine, 2005).

Martin (1997) conducted a study in a mandatory arrest state in the US using a self – administered questionnaire mailed to a state-wide random sample of victims 3 months after the arrest incident. The study, albeit with a response rate of 13% (58 victims), found two key factors influenced the level of victim satisfaction. The first was the degree to which victims' expectations of the police were met and the second was the police demeanour and attitude towards the victim, specifically taking time to listen to the victim and showing concern for her welfare. Byrne *et al* (1999) compared the satisfaction of victims of violent crimes committed by intimate male partners with those committed by non-partners and found victims of intimate violence to be significantly less satisfied with the police response. The key factor was identified as the treatment by the police.

The widespread use of positive arrest policies makes the need for victim satisfaction with the police response even more essential and can be considered a key component of positive arrest policies (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). As explored above, however, the satisfaction of victims is influenced by many factors including in some cases, being given the choice of what happens to the offender. Any consideration of the removal of these policies and returning choice to the victim has to be viewed with caution. Victim choice presupposes that women will make the right decision without support, advice and information. It assumes their choices are made as free agents and are not subject to manipulation by family, offenders or even the police. Police in the past have been seen to use victim choice as a means to cover their own reluctance to treat domestic abuse in the same way as other crimes (Edwards, 1989). Such choices and decisions are often made in the context of a controlling relationship and fail to consider the impact of non-prosecution on other victims and offenders (Friedman & Shulman, 1990).

### **1.8 The need for further research**

Johnson (2007) noted that victims' perceptions of police responses have long been ignored. With victims having the most to gain from an effective policing response, it is crucial to examine their views and experiences in order to inform and guide policy.

In reviewing the victim satisfaction studies, it is apparent that they do not show consistent findings. Whilst some victims were satisfied by the police response (Buzawa & Austin, 1993; Yegidis & Renzy, 1994) others were not. Some considered

that police practice did not match expectation (Roy, 1977; Schechter, 1982) and others felt the police did not respond or they took the husband's side (Schechter, 1982). The escalation of pro arrest policies and surrounding controversy makes it vital to find out how arrest practices influence satisfaction (Wilson & Jasinski, 2004) yet it is uncertain whether satisfaction is greater when arrest is made or not.

Buzawa & Austin (1993) found victim satisfaction, regardless of arrest, depended on police demeanour and a further study found a link between victim satisfaction and officer demeanour (Hamilton & Coates, 1993). Victims who are satisfied with the police response may be more likely to seek future criminal justice interventions in future violent incidents (Brown, 1984) whereas according to Fleury *et al* (1998) the opposite is likely to occur when women are dissatisfied. This may well result in long term and significant negative consequences for women and children living in and witnessing violent relationships.

It can be very difficult for victims to speak freely about their experiences. They can experience feelings of blame and feel silenced or stereotyped. Instead of using their experiences to learn and inform policy development and service delivery, they can feel stigmatized through the perception of statutory agencies that either do not consult, or engage in a cosmetic consultation (Hague & Mullender, 2006). It is important that society considers to what extent views of victims of domestic abuse are taken into account in developing policy and service delivery. There is a powerful need to listen to the voices of domestic abuse victims so that all agencies can improve their services and become more accountable to those who need them.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

## **Methodology**

Various data gathering methods are available to social scientists including questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentary analysis (King & Wincup, 2007). In deciding the most appropriate methodology, particular attention must be given to both the rigour of the method, and also the level of resource required for the data collection process to be successful. Survey data can be collected in a variety of ways with a postal or internet method being the least labour-intensive, but equally attracting the lowest expected response rate. Telephone surveys usually achieve a higher response rate, but require significantly more work to complete in terms of resource while face to face interviews are generally the most successful of the approaches although the most problematic in terms of administration, given travel and appointment times (Robson, 2011). There is very limited research on methods of surveying victims of domestic abuse although Smith (1989) examines the strengths and weaknesses of telephone versus face-to-face surveys and reaches a tentative conclusion that telephone surveys compare favourably with face-to-face surveys. For the purposes of this study, a structured questionnaire is the preferred method for obtaining information from participants and allows a quantitative collation of responses, from which descriptive data can be obtained.

This study was conducted as a telephone survey and examined the views of 216 women who had been involved in a domestic abuse incident that resulted in the arrest of the perpetrator. It is recognised that whilst surveys do not allow

establishment of causal relationships, they will however, demonstrate the strength of statistical association between variables (May, 1997).

## **2.1 Research questions**

As outlined in the introduction, the survey focuses on the victims' experiences with the police and wider criminal justice system and is designed to provide an insight into the following questions.

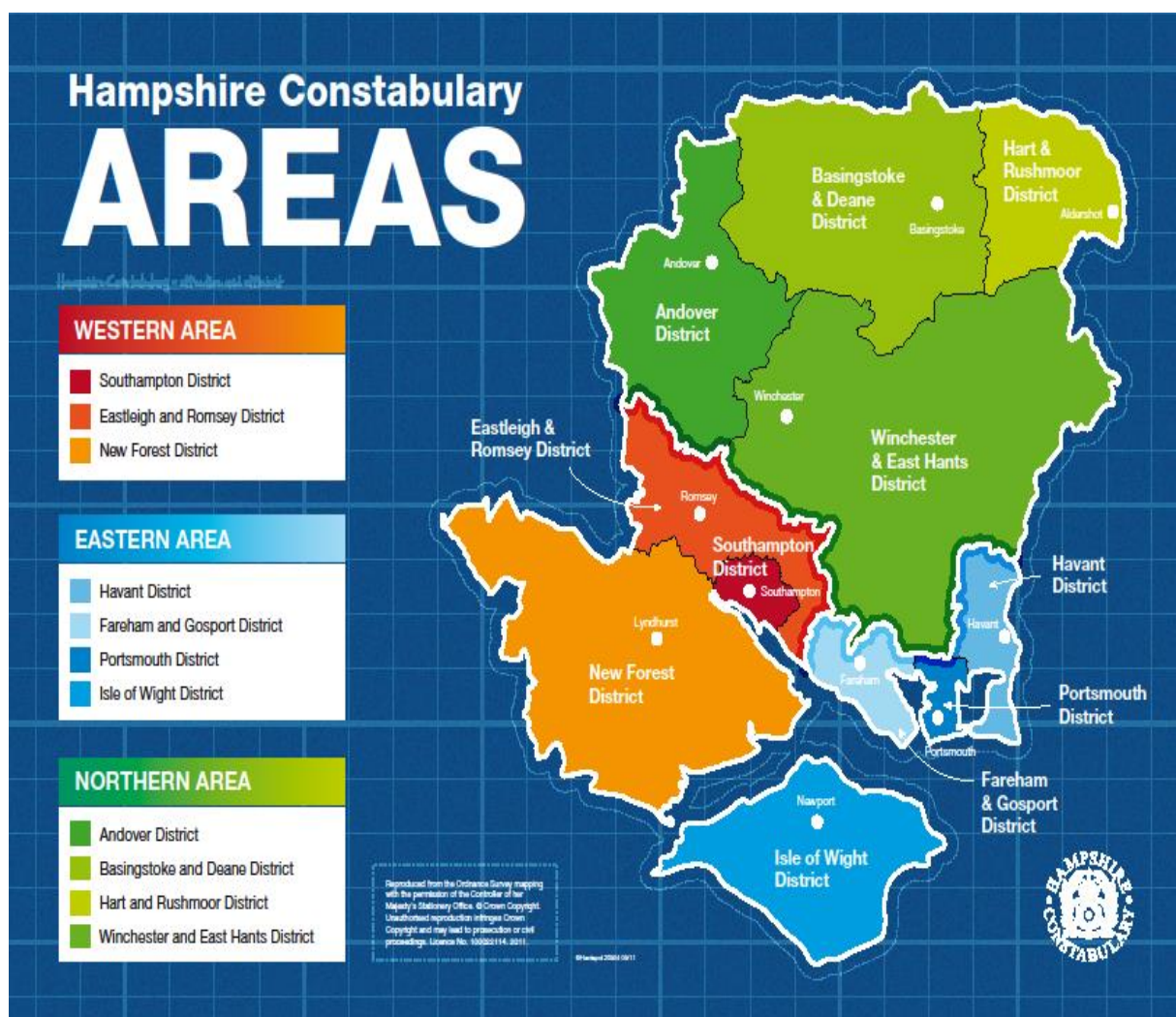
- What are victims' expectations of the police when they attend incidents of domestic abuse?
- To what extent do police actions match those expectations?
- What is the impact of the police action and criminal justice disposal on the subsequent satisfaction of the victim?
- What is the impact of the victims' level of satisfaction on the likelihood of reporting future incidents of domestic abuse?

This chapter will discuss the way in which the data were collected to answer the above questions. It will describe the design and content of the interview instrument and the manner in which eligible victim respondents were identified and approached.

## **2.2 Geography & domestic offending**

Hampshire is a county on the south coast of England with an approximate population of 1.8M in some 730,000 households covering an area of 1,600 square miles (Hampshire County Council, 2012). Hampshire Constabulary is the second largest non-metropolitan police service in England and Wales and is divided into three

Operational Command Areas: Northern, Western and Eastern which also covers the Isle of Wight, with the two major cities sited in the West (Southampton) and the East (Portsmouth). The City of Winchester is at the heart of the county which also includes a number of rural villages, several market towns and larger urban centres, such as Basingstoke, Aldershot and Farnborough. An organisational map of Hampshire can be viewed in figure 2 below:



**Figure 2: Map of Hampshire police areas** (internal publication, Hampshire Constabulary, 2012)



In 2012, there were 28,944 calls for service to domestic incidents across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. These are subdivided into area in table 1.

2012	East	North	West	Other
Calls for Service	11,516	7,203	8,975	1,250

**Table 1: Domestic calls for service in Hampshire 2012**

There were 10,264 arrests for domestic offences within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in 2012, and table 2 divides these into disposals for domestic offences by area. This data has been obtained from Hampshire's Records Management System (RMS), but it may contain errors for inaccurate data entry. However, for the purposes of explaining general trends it is adequate, and when compared with calls for service, shows that a significant proportion of calls were resolved without an arrest taking place.

	East	North	West
Charge	1575	847	1168
No Further Action	2652	1327	1647
Simple Caution	387	252	156
Conditional Caution	1	3	123

**Table 2: Domestic disposals in Hampshire, 2012**

As Project CARA has been running in since March 2012, it has significantly altered the proportion of simple and conditional cautions issued within Western Hampshire in

comparison with the other two policing areas. It must also be noted that in all three areas, the number of incidents that are resolved through NFA are greater than the other disposals combined, which may be indicative of the high evidential standard required for prosecution to proceed.

## **2.3 Participants and data collection**

A number of external organisations that act as lobby and support agencies for victims of domestic abuse are hugely experienced and, as such, can inform and influence national policy. Due to the sensitivities of contacting and surveying victims of domestic abuse, it was important to canvass opinion and obtain 'buy-in' both from these external organisations as well as internal stakeholders.

The experience and views of these key stakeholders were sought at a very early stage in the development of CARA and several meetings and discussions were held with representatives from Respect, Victim Support, Women's Aid, CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse), Crown Prosecution Service and the Hampton Trust in which they were able to comment on the survey and the proposed methodology. Meetings were also held with internal stakeholders including officers within the Public Protection Department and Custody Interview teams of Hampshire Constabulary and staff from the Research and Performance Teams.

When project CARA started running, data collected between March and August 2012 were used for a trial run period to ensure any problems were identified and resolved. "Live" data collection began on 13th August 2012 and using the number of cases

projected to be included in CARA, the initial proposal was to survey all victims included within the study where disposal had occurred between August 2012 and April 2013. This would not only maximise the sample size and provide greater validity to the findings but also capture valuable information for the CARA team providing them with the opportunity to measure victim satisfaction with the intervention, as well as the effectiveness of the intervention.

In the early stages of CARA a number of problems were identified and the predicted case flow was not achieved. Despite a number of interventions to address various procedural deficiencies, there still remained a significant number of randomised and eligible cases for which the CPS refused to allow a conditional caution. This resulted in approximately one-third of cases being 'lost' from the experiment with case flow averaging just over 12 per month (Chilton, 2012). This difficulty, coupled with an initial poor response rate to the survey led to consideration of how the victim sample size could be enhanced and the survey expanded without jeopardizing the validity of the research.

CARA is a slightly unusual RCT as it is comparing two experimental groups rather than comparing an experimental group with a control group. Neither group is receiving 'treatment as usual' i.e. a simple caution, instead, eligible offenders receive a conditional caution that involves either a workshop or non- workshop group. As will be discussed later, following failed attempts to increase the response rate, the victim survey was subsequently expanded beyond the CARA cases to include victims of domestic abuse where the offender had received, what could be argued to be a more

‘traditional’ disposal, - a simple caution in Eastern Hampshire or NFA in Western Hampshire.

CARA is being trialled in the Western Area of Hampshire only: this includes Southampton, and data gathered in 2010 showed that the three districts located within Southampton City had the highest number of offences reported per 1,000 population compared with the other Districts across the Constabulary and clearly had the highest reporting rates of domestic violence (Jarman, 2011). The second highest reporting rates were from the Eastern Area of Hampshire which includes Portsmouth City. Therefore, details of all simple cautions for offences of domestic abuse were captured from the Eastern Area for the same time period as the CARA data, from 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012. It was essential that these cases matched the CARA cases as closely as possible and the details were scrutinised to identify those in which the conditions and circumstances would have made them eligible to be included in CARA had they been in the Western Area. Those that met the eligibility criteria were then included within the survey.

Having made the decision to expand the study beyond the conditional caution experiment and include victims’ views where a simple caution had been applied, it seemed opportune to increase the research even more widely and capture the views of victims where the outcome was NFA. This would not only provide a significantly larger sample size but would also enable analysis of victim satisfaction with the experimental interventions compared to a ‘traditional’ criminal justice disposal and an outcome that resulted in no sanction. Details of victims where the offender had

received NFA were obtained from the Western Area and were effectively the cases that would have been included in CARA but either the offender had not admitted the offence or the CPS did not agree that the case reached the evidential threshold.

A population was therefore identified which consisted of victims of low level domestic abuse over a 12 month period (August 2012 – July 2013) where the disposal consisted of conditional caution, a simple caution or NFA.

## **2.4 Ethics and risk**

Conducting a survey with victims of domestic abuse carries an inherent risk as participants are vulnerable not only from their own emotions but also at risk from their partners (Dickson-Swift *et al*, 2008). It is important to minimise these risks as well as work within an ethical framework to avoid misleading participants and breaching any agreements relating to confidentiality.

It was recognised prior to the survey process that the risk would possibly be heightened if offenders became aware that victims were assisting the police with a research project. As stated in the British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics (2006, pg. 2) 'Researchers should recognise that they have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of an individual participating in research is not adversely affected by participation in the research'. It was therefore necessary to formulate a protocol which clearly outlined responsibilities of those involved in the survey, and a copy of this can be found in Appendix B.

Staff from a specialist domestic abuse charity CAADA were tasked with carrying out the surveys and this allowed a degree of confidentiality to be maintained, especially when victims disclosed behaviour that could be classed as further abuse. The police would be bound by their responsibility to formally investigate any further allegations made, regardless of the views of the victims, and this was seen to be detrimental to the survey process. However, as will be explained later, it subsequently became necessary to extend the process of data collection to include police officers. Whilst in a number of cases, victims did disclose further abuse to these police officers, there were no incidents where the further allegations were referred for investigation against the victim's wishes.

The CAADA process was based on the Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2010) which stipulates that confidentiality should be maintained unless there is a 'serious risk of harm to the victim or others'. If this is the case, disclosure of the risk should preferably be with the consent of the individual. This duty of care to the victim formed the basis of the agreement between Hampshire Constabulary and CAADA, and is detailed within the protocol in Appendix B.

In order to minimise risk to the victim, individuals undertaking the surveys used police telephones and were provided with individual phone numbers to ensure that any responses from victims were not directed to the police. No messages were left with the partners of the victims, and contact was only made directly to the victim.

As part of the process, victims were informed that participation in the survey was completely voluntary and that they could refuse to participate. In addition to this an explicit commitment was communicated to victims about the process by which collated data would be used, namely that no personal or identifiable details would be used during data analysis or presentation, therefore maintaining confidentiality and satisfying the requirements of the general responsibilities for researchers in the field of criminology (British Society of Criminology, 2006).

## **2.5 Instrument design & process**

May (1997) asserts that as surveys measure facts, attitudes or behaviours, it is vital in the design of the survey, that the hypotheses or research questions be articulated in a way that the respondents can understand and be able to answer, and those answers need to be capable of categorization and quantification. Good survey research will adopt a rigorous approach to ensure the removal of as much bias as possible and should have these characteristics:

- Standardization – this specifies the exact questions to be asked, how they will be asked and how the responses will be recorded and scored
- Replicability - the ability for other researchers to replicate the survey using the same type of sampling or questionnaire
- Reliability – the aim is to achieve the same result from the same measurement
- Validity – it measures what it is intended to measure
- Representativeness – sample is representative of the population

(May, 1997)

The questionnaire gathered quantitative and qualitative data via closed and open – ended questions and was sequenced to logically follow the events of the incident to which the police were called. In addition to this, 5-point Likert (summated rating) scales were used to gain an impression of the satisfaction, safety and confidence of the victim as a result of action taken by the police.

The beginning of the questionnaire provided details of the interviewer, confirmed why the victim had been contacted and included checking that the victim was safe and willing to talk to the interviewer. The victim was reassured of the confidentiality of her responses and told that information she provided could help improve how Hampshire Police deal with future case of domestic abuse.

The first part of the instrument dealt with the incident including:

- details of who called the police
- expectations of the police
- actions of the police
- anything more the victim wanted the police to do
- whether the victim wanted the offender arrested / prosecuted at the time of the incident
- feelings of safety following police attendance
- whether the victim was advised of the final outcome

The second part of the instrument examined previous behaviour of the offender and the behaviour since the incident including:

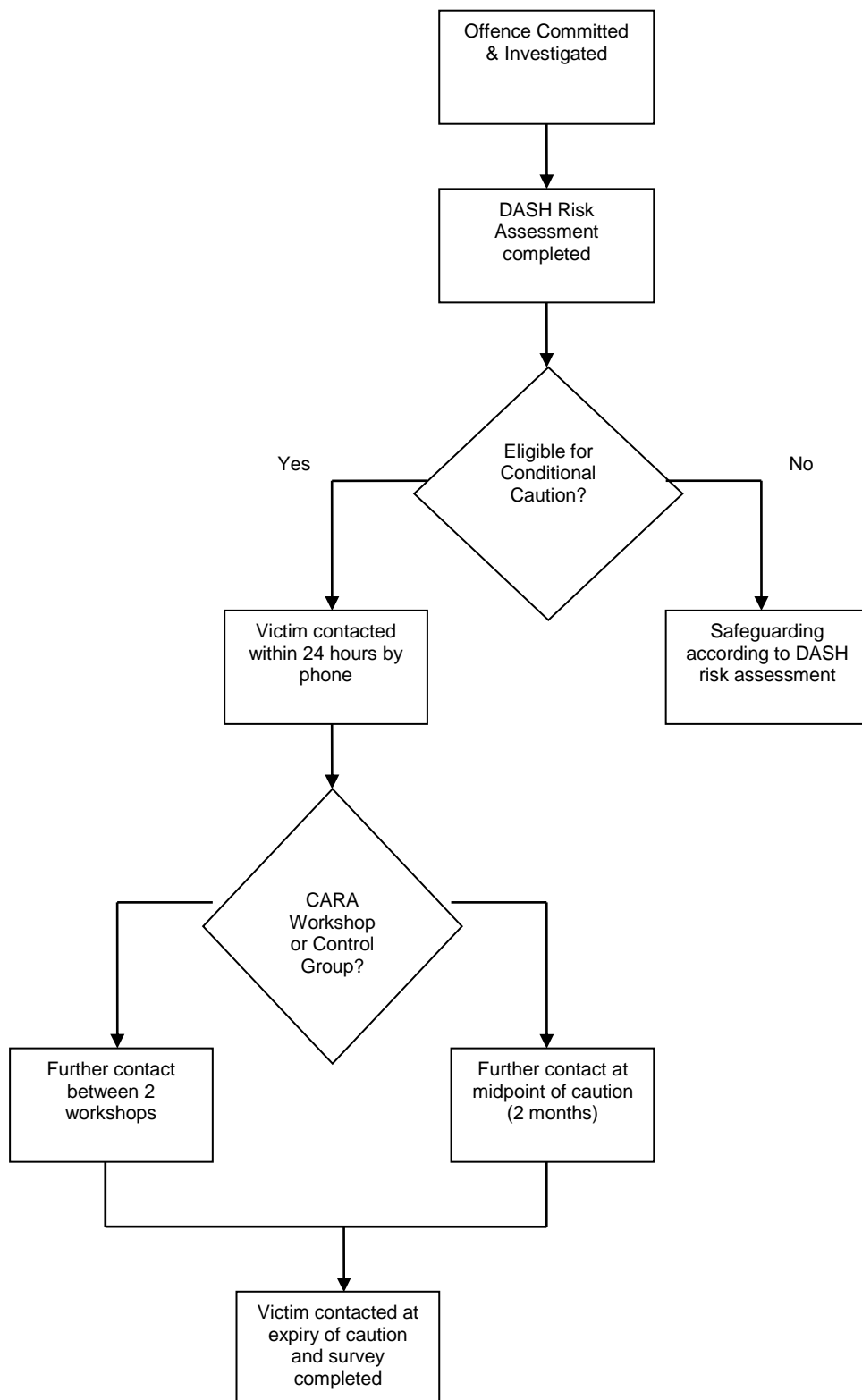


- whether the offender had acted in this way before
- if yes, how many times and over what period
- how the offender has behaved towards the victim since the incident
- how the offender has behaved towards the victim since the workshop (if appropriate)
- views on the impact of the workshop attended (if appropriate)

The final part of the instrument explored the victims' views on the legitimacy of the outcome, confidence and likelihood of future reporting including:

- whether the victim considered the outcome fair to her
- whether the victim considered the outcome fair to the offender
- whether the victim would have been prepared to attend court
- likelihood to report future incidents
- impact on future confidence based on the action of the police

Following consultation with key stakeholders, the draft questionnaire was tested using 52 cases that had formed part of the trial period of CARA (March – August 2012). During this period, the length of time to complete the survey was assessed and feedback sought from both the interviewer and the interviewee. The feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire and further standardisation of responses took place based on the completed surveys, therefore enabling researchers to categorise the majority of responses which would allow for more accurate coding and analysis. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen at Appendix C and a flowchart indicating process can be seen at Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Flowchart illustrating survey process**

As previously mentioned, an employee of CAADA was tasked to conduct the survey. Brush (1990) argues that the most important factor in producing accurate data on woman abuse through surveys is the quality of the interaction between interviewer and interviewee, in particular, the ability of the interviewer to infuse a sense of "trust, safety, and intimacy" into the interviewing relationship. It was considered that the experience of CAADA and particularly the previous experience of this interviewer researcher of working with victims of domestic abuse would provide both the skills to encourage the victims to talk as well as the experience and knowledge of how to act in the event that there were concerns for the safety of the victim. It was also considered best practice to avoid the survey being conducted by police officers who could be seen to be surveying themselves and potentially influence the responses.

## **2.6 Procedure**

The procedure for conducting the surveys presented challenges. Data protection and information assurance requirements imposed by the Constabulary required the researcher to conduct the interviews from police premises or premises that met the same security standard. As the interviewer did not live locally and could not access constabulary premises and her own office and home environment did not meet the required standard, an alternative solution was required. This was identified with the assistance of a police colleague who arranged for the researcher to work from her local police station in Norfolk with transmission of victim details being made through the secure police system and storage of data within the police station.

Contact was made with the victim at the end of the four month conditional caution period, which was considered the appropriate time to assess the victim's perception of the intervention/disposal. The interviewer would attempt to make contact with the victim at various times of the day and evening in order to maximise response rates. It was initially proposed that there would be a maximum of six failed attempts to contact each victim but that was subsequently changed and the number of attempts at contact became limited only by interviewer availability.

The progress of the survey was reviewed and monitored on a weekly basis and as previously mentioned, it quickly became clear that the lower than expected case flow from CARA combined with a poor response rate would not provide enough data on which to undertake a meaningful analysis. As the opportunity to influence the CARA case flow was very limited, attention was focused on maximising the response rates with the following obstacles identified and addressed:

- accurate records – a number of contact details were not accurate or no longer active and whilst it is recognised that victims of domestic abuse will often change phone numbers making contact difficult, all victim contact details were re-checked on the force system to ensure that the original record was accurate or in the event of the victim having further contact with the police, whether an updated number was available. Victim contact officers who spoke to the victim at the time of the initial incident were also tasked with asking victims for alternative contact details such as a relative or friend
- provision of mobile phone to the interviewer – the use of a phone from a police station meant that all calls came from a 'blocked' number which may

well have deterred victims from answering the calls. The use of a mobile phone not only provided a visible number but also meant that a victim who may have missed a call could choose to ring back

- increase interviewer resources – the amount of research time commissioned was not enough given the high volume of no-response calls so this was increased to include a second interviewer
- relax the information security requirements – the issue of a force mobile phone provided the opportunity to make calls from premises other than a police station. Although the data were still required to be transmitted securely, the interviewers could collect the victim contact details from the local station and then make calls at varying times in their own home or office, subject to all data being stored securely prior to being returned to the station

However despite these amendments being put in place, close monitoring of the response rate still showed it to be less than 30% and further urgent action was required to increase it. Whilst no specific response rate has been set as necessary, in order to reduce non-response bias whereby non-respondents could have significantly differing views from those complying with the survey, most commentators consider a minimum rate of 60% to be required (Robson, 2011).

It was at this point that the decision was made to not only expand the survey to cover victims where disposal had been a simple caution or NFA but also to use police officers as interviewers. As previously stated, this presented concerns about both the perception of the police surveying themselves and the potential for victims to refuse to co-operate or disclose information. However it was essential to increase the

response rate and it was, therefore, decided to trial the use of police officers whilst mitigating the concerns through specific actions. These included:

- the selection of police officers who had significant previous experience of working with victims of domestic abuse
- providing the officers with the script used by CAADA and a clear briefing on how the interviews had been conducted
- ensuring a full understanding of the protocol adopted
- close monitoring, supervision and early evaluation of the victims' reactions

The officers then began the process of surveying the simple caution and NFA cohorts whilst CAADA continued to contact victims where disposal had been a conditional caution. Early evaluation of the use of the officers demonstrated that initial concerns were not valid. The response rate to police officer contact compared to those victims contacted by CAADA was significantly higher. Victims were very willing to talk to a police officer about their experiences and those who disclosed further offending were satisfied and in some cases very pleased with referrals for further investigations. Positive feedback from victims stated the interview was 'cathartic' and a 'positive experience'.

The questionnaire had minor adjustments made to reflect the specific disposal as well as seek the views from the NFA group as to whether a domestic abuse diversion course was something they would support. The simple caution group was contacted following the same time period as the conditional caution group i.e. after four months, whereas the NFA group was contacted within a two to six month time period.

The final number of completed surveys and response rate was:

- Conditional Caution 63 completions from 85 attempted 74%  
(Workshop – 33 Control – 30)
- Simple Caution 93 completions from 110 attempted 84%
- No Further Action 60 completions from 72 attempted 83%

Copies of the simple caution and NFA questionnaires are contained within appendices D and E of this study.

## **Chapter 3: Results**



### 3.1 Overview of all disposals

Following completion of the victim surveys, findings were analysed from a range of perspectives. Specific questions and responses were examined such as who called the police and what were the expectations of victims. Analysis was undertaken on the views of the victims by disposal type, relationship status, extent and length of previous abuse as well as separate analysis of the conditional caution trial. The relationship between victims' satisfaction, calling the police, legitimacy of outcome and decision to arrest were tested and regression analyses explored predictors of victims' satisfaction and likelihood of future reporting. In total, 216 victim surveys were completed and can be divided according to disposal as shown in table 3 below:

Disposal	n	%
Simple Caution	93	43.1
Conditional Caution -Workshop	33	15.3
Conditional Caution – Non-reoffend	30	13.9
No Further Action	60	27.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Number of responses to surveys by disposal**

In terms of the general views of all victims, regardless of disposals, almost half of victims (49.1%) reported that abuse had occurred previously. A noteworthy proportion of participants were satisfied with the police response to the incident, with 76.4% stating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the police response. Only 8.3% of all surveyed victims stated that they were dissatisfied with their treatment by

the police, and 78.2% stated that they were more likely to report further offences to the police.

### **3.2 Calling the police and victims' expectations**

More than half (126) of the victims made the decision to call the police with the remainder of calls being made by relatives (including 9 children), neighbours, friends or members of the public as can be seen in table 4 below:

Who called the police	n	%
Victim	126	60.0
Family member	8	3.8
Child	9	4.3
Other	33	15.7
Friend	10	4.8
Neighbour	24	11.4
Total	210	100.0

**Table 4: Table showing individual who called the police to report the domestic incident**

Regardless of the informant, the most frequent expectation, held by 85 victims (39.4%) was that the police would calm the situation. This was followed by 79 (36.6%) who wanted the police to warn the offender and 66 (30.6%) who wanted the police to get the offender to leave. It is of particular note that only 61 (28.2%) of victims wanted the offender arrested – an activity that is traditionally considered to be

a police officer's core role - and even fewer, 50 (23.1%) wanted him prosecuted. Of those victims who called the police themselves, only 45 (35.7%) wanted the offender arrested with the most frequent expectation held by 53 (42.1%) victims who wanted the police to warn the offender. Of those victims who did not call the police themselves, only 16 (19%) wanted the offender arrested with the most frequent expectation held by 37 (44%) victims who wanted the police to calm the offender.

It is unsurprising, given the positive action policy adopted by the police that in 201 cases, (93.1%) the offender was arrested at the time of the incident. In those cases where an arrest was not made, it was because the offender was not present and an arrest subsequently occurred. As can be seen in the following table, the police met victims' expectations in the majority of cases with the notable exception of arrest.

Police Action	Victim expectation	n	%
Calm the situation	Expectation match	141	65.3
	Expectation mismatch	75	34.7
Get offender to leave the premises	Expectation match	148	68.5
	Expectation mismatch	68	31.5
Warn offender	Expectation match	133	61.6
	Expectation mismatch	83	38.4
Arrest offender	Expectation match	62	28.7
	Expectation mismatch	154	71.3

**Table 5: Match between victim expectation and police action**

Victims where disposal was a sanction, such as simple or conditional caution, were also asked whether in calling the police, they were hoping to access help for the

offender to address drug, alcohol or anger management issues. A total of 86 victims (56.9%) said they were hoping to access help for the offender with the percentage of victims who expressed such a hope being similar in two of the groups - 52% (46) in the simple caution cohort and 57% (19) in the conditional caution workshop group but far higher in the conditional caution control group at 70% (21). This finding presents an interesting perception of the role of the police by victims of domestic abuse as it appears to indicate a shift in expectations from the traditional role of law enforcement to one more akin to other support agencies.

As can be seen in table 6 below, of the total sample contacted, 23.1% (50) of victims wanted the offender to be prosecuted, and 68.5% (148) did not support a prosecution. Of the small number who did want the offender to be prosecuted, 84% (42) would have been prepared to give evidence at any subsequent court appearance, compared with only 35.8% (53) of those who did not support a prosecution.

In terms of the subsequent behaviour of the offender after the initial incident, 58.3% of victims indicate that the offenders' behaviour improved since the incident, with only 10.6% stating that behaviour had worsened. However, this figure varies according to the disposal given, and this will be discussed in more detail below.

### 3.3 Victims' views by disposals

As this study encompasses various types of disposal, it would be logical to expect differing views from victims according to the disposal type imposed. As a result, the table below provides descriptive figures relating to victim satisfaction, and allows comparisons to be made between disposal types.

Question		Simple Caution		Conditional Caution – non-reoffend		Conditional Caution – Workshop		No Further Action	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Still in a relationship with offender		48	51.6	14	46.7	18	54.5	21	35.0
Victim called the police		50	53.8	19	63.3	23	69.7	34	56.7
Satisfied with police response		75	80.6	27	90.0	23	69.7	48	80.0
Wanted offender arrested		36	38.7	5	16.7	7	21.2	13	21.7
Wanted offender prosecuted		17	19.3	7	23.3	7	21.2	19	32.2
Police took all action expected by victim		59	63.4	25	83.3	24	72.7	39	65.0
Would prefer future offences to be charged		33	35.5	21	70.0	13	39.4	26	43.3
Would want caution if further offences		11	11.8	1	3.3	10	30.3	13	21.7
More likely to call police		75	80.6	25	83.3	22	66.7	47	78.3
Behaved this way previously		33	35.5	19	63.3	19	59.4	35	59.3
Behaviour since incident has been	Better	55	59.1	13	43.3	26	78.8	32	53.3
	Worse	8	8.6	7	23.3	2	6.1	6	10.0
Previous similar behaviour	Once	4	4.3	6	20.0	3	9.1	4	6.7
	1 – 5 times	16	17.2	5	16.7	9	27.3	21	35.0
	More than 5	13	14.0	8	26.7	7	21.2	10	16.7
Over	6 months	6	6.5	16	53.3	5	15.2	14	23.3
	12 Months	10	10.8	1	3.3	0	0.0	13	21.7
	24 Months	4	4.3	1	3.3	3	9.1	2	3.3
	>24 Months	13	14.0	1	3.3	11	33.3	6	10.0

**Table 6: Victims' views by disposal**

As table 6 shows, a smaller percentage (35%) of victims are in a relationship with the offender after an incident has been resolved through no further action with the highest percentage (54.5%) of victims remaining in a relationship following a conditional caution workshop disposal. All groups show a high level of satisfaction with the police response to the incident although the two conditional caution groups show the greatest disparity with the conditional caution non-reoffend group showing 90% satisfaction and the conditional caution workshop group showing just under 70% satisfaction.

The majority of victims in all groups have stated that they are more likely to call the police in the event of future incidents. It is of note that the conditional caution workshop group has a lower percentage (66.7%) of victims who consider they are more likely to call the police in the future than the other disposal groups (78.3% – 83.3%). However, further examination reveals that this group has a far higher percentage of victims (18.2%) who consider they are ‘as likely’ to call the police in the future. This compares to an average of 6% of the same response for other disposal groups.

With regard to subsequent abusive behaviour since the incident, with the exception of the conditional caution non-reoffend sample, the majority of victims report that behaviour has improved. The group with the largest number of victims reporting improved behaviour (78.8%) is the conditional caution workshop group whereas the highest percentage of offenders reported to be exhibiting worse behaviour is the conditional caution non-reoffend group (23.3%). It is unsurprising therefore that the

highest percentage of victims (70%) who wanted future offences charged related to this group.

### 3.4 Victims' views by relationship status

Question	Still in Relationship			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Wanted offender arrested	19	31.1	42	68.9
Wanted offender prosecuted	12	24	38	76
Offender acted this way previously	38	35.8	68	64.2
Behaviour better since incident	79	62.7	47	37.3
Behaviour worse since incident	1	4.3	22	95.7
More likely to report future incidents	73	43.2	96	56.8
Willing to give evidence if prosecuted	29	27.9	75	72.1
Prefer prosecution in future	25	26.9	68	73.1
Prefer caution in future	24	68.6	11	31.4

**Table 7: Victims' views by relationship status**

According to table 7, the views of victims who are no longer in a relationship with the offender are markedly different to those who remain in the relationship. A far higher percentage wanted the offender arrested (68.9%) and prosecuted (76%) at the point of contacting the police and would have been willing to give evidence had the offender been prosecuted (72.1%). This could be due to the fact that a higher percentage of this group had previously experienced abuse by the offender (64.2%).

Of particular note is that of the 23 victims across all disposals who reported that the offender's behaviour had been worse since the incident, 22 (95.7%) of them were no longer in the relationship.

Each disposal type will have an impact on victims depending on whether they are still in a relationship with the offender. Disposals that do not involve a court appearance (NFA, simple and conditional cautions) may well be preferable to victims who remain with their partner. The case is dealt with in a short period of time, and does not involve a protracted court process which has the potential to lengthen the period of conflict between victim and offender. This may be of less importance to those who have chosen to end their relationship with the offender, as contact is likely to be less frequent and therefore the impact of court proceedings is not as significant. A chi-square analysis of these two variables shows there to be a substantially significant result ( $p=.000$ ) in the victim's preference of future disposal and whether the relationship is ongoing or ended, with 73.1% of victims no longer in a relationship, preferring prosecution in future (table 8).

Preferred future disposal	Still in relationship					
	Yes		No		Chi- Sq.	Sig.
	n	%	n	%		
Prosecution	25	26.9	68	73.1	19.88	.000
Caution	24	68.6	11	31.4	4.82	.028
Other	47	57.3	35	42.7	1.75	.185

**Table 8: Relationship status and victim preference for future disposal**



### 3.5 Victim's views by number of previous incidents

The following three tables record:

- the number of previous incidents by the offender against the victim according to subsequent disposal type
- experience of previous abuse by victims who wanted arrest
- views of the victims according to the number of previous incidents

Number of previous incidents	Simple Caution		Conditional Caution – Non-reoffend		Conditional Caution – workshop		No Further Action	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
0	55	59.1	10	33.3	13	39.4	24	40.0
1	4	4.3	6	20	3	9.1	4	6.7
1-5	16	17.2	5	16.7	9	27.3	21	35.0
>5	13	14.0	8	26.7	7	21.2	10	16.7
Missing	5	5.4	1	3.3	1	3.0	1	1.7
Total	93	100	30	100	33	100	60	100

**Table 9: Number of previous incidents within disposal category**

As table 10 shows, in three of the disposals the vast majority of victims who wanted an arrest had been subject to previous abuse by the offender. In the conditional caution non-reoffend group, all the victims who wanted arrest had been subject to previous abuse. The exception is the simple caution group where 69.4% of victims who wanted an arrest had not been subject to previous abuse.

Victims wanted the offender arrested	Had offender acted this way previously?			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Simple Caution	11	30.6	25	69.4
Conditional Caution – non re-offend	5	100	0	0.0
Conditional Caution - workshop	5	71.4	2	28.6
NFA	10	76.9	3	23.1

**Table 10: Previous incidents of abuse and victim arrest preference**

As table 11 below details, there is a drop in the percentage of victims still in a relationship with the offender when more than one offence has been committed against the victim and the lowest proportion of surviving relationships between victims and offenders are those with more than five incidents recorded. It is of note that whilst only 50% of the victims who had not experienced previous incidents of abuse from the offender called the police themselves, 80.4% of that group reported to be more likely to call the police in the future. It can be seen that the percentage of victims who call the police rises significantly as the episodes of abuse increase with 73.7% of victims who had been subject to more than 5 previous incidents calling the police. For those offenders who have been involved in more than five incidents, there is a marked decrease in the proportion of victims that report improved offender behaviour with reported deteriorating behaviour remaining high.

Questions		No previous Incidents		1 previous incident		1 – 5 previous incidents		More than 5 previous incidents	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Still in a relationship with offender.		56	54.9	11	64.7	19	37.3	8	21.1
Victim called the police		51	50.0	10	58.8	32	62.7	28	73.7
Satisfied with police response		82	80.4	14	82.4	39	76.5	32	84.2
Wanted offender arrested		30	29.4	1	5.9	17	33.3	13	34.2
Victim felt action taken by police matched their wishes		73	71.6	15	88.2	30	58.8	21	55.3
Preferred future disposal – prosecution		36	35.3	8	47.1	25	49.0	24	63.2
Preferred future disposal – caution		18	17.6	1	5.9	8	15.7	7	18.4
More likely to call police		82	80.4	15	88.2	42	82.4	28	73.7
Behaviour since incident	Better	66	64.7	10	66.7	30	58.8	15	42.9
	Worse	7	6.9	4	26.7	4	7.8	8	22.9

**Table 11: Victims' views by previous incidents**

### **3.6 Project CARA: workshop and non-reoffend conditional cautions**

As detailed previously, Project CARA is comparing the effectiveness of the conditional caution with and without the additional condition of the workshop to address offending behaviour. Victims of offenders who received a conditional caution were invited to comment on the offender's behaviour since the incident and their own

preference for future disposal. For those offenders who were assigned to the workshop condition, 26 respondents (81.3%) stated that the behaviour of the offender had improved since the offender's attendance at the workshop, compared with only two victims who said that the offender's behaviour had worsened. This suggests that, from the victim's perspective, the workshop is beneficial in addressing the behaviour of the offender within the relationship.

As can be seen from the following tables, only 13 victims (44.8%) from the non-reoffend group stated that behaviour was improved and 7 victims (24.1%) stated that the behaviour had been worse – the highest percentage across all disposal types. This could account for a significantly higher percentage of victims from the non-reoffend conditional caution preferring prosecution as a future disposal than in any of the other disposal types.

Disposal	Since the incident has the offender's behaviour been:							
	Better		Same		Worse		Prefer not/unable to say	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Simple Caution	55	59.8	26	28.3	8	8.7	3	3.3
Conditional Caution - workshop	26	81.3	4	12.5	2	6.3	0	0.0
Conditional Caution- non-reoffend	13	44.8	8	27.6	7	24.1	1	3.4
No Further Action	32	55.2	18	31.0	6	10.3	2	3.4

**Table 12: Offender behaviour post arrest by disposal type**

Future incident preferred disposal						
Disposal	Caution		Prosecution		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Simple Caution	11	12.4	33	37.1	45	50.6
Conditional Caution - workshop	10	30.3	13	39.4	10	30.3
Conditional Caution- non-reoffend	1	3.4	21	72.4	7	24.1
No Further Action	13	22.0	26	44.1	20	33.9

**Table 13: Victim preference for future disposal by disposal type**

Victims who indicated 'other' as a preferred future disposal were asked for further information and presented a mixture of views. A number said it depended on the circumstances, however the majority expressed the view that some form of anger management or domestic abuse course would be beneficial and their preferred option. Victims who were involved in a domestic incident that resulted in NFA being taken were also surveyed with regard to their views on offender workshops, and 43 (71.7%) of those surveyed stated that they would want the opportunity for their partner to attend a workshop. However, when asked if their partner would be likely to attend a workshop if one was offered, only 21 (35.0%) thought that attendance would occur in these circumstances. This information gives a valuable insight into the possible effectiveness of voluntary workshops for offenders released from custody without any action being taken against them, a project that is currently being considered.

### 3.7 Victim satisfaction & legitimacy

The responses to the surveys allow analysis to be carried out of the primary issues that give rise to victims being satisfied with the service provided by the police and the final disposal of the criminal case. These individual components will be addressed separately below.

- Did the victim think that the outcome was fair to her by disposal type? Did one disposal type have greater legitimacy in the perception of the victims than the others? A chi-square test was utilised to examine this and showed that there was no significant relationship between these two variables ( $p=0.825$ ).
- Is there a relationship between the decision by the police to arrest the offender and victim satisfaction? This is of particular interest given the significant difference between the police action matching victim expectation relating to arrest (28.7%) and the occasions where the action does not match the expectation (71.3%). The results of the chi-square shows that there is no significant relationship between the arrest of the offender and subsequent victim satisfaction ( $p = 0.801$ ).
- Is there a relationship between who called the police and victim satisfaction? Are victims who call the police, more likely to be satisfied with the police than those who did not call them and possibly do not want them to attend? Results

showed that there is no significant relationship between these two variables ( $p=0.152$ ).

### 3.8 Future likelihood of calling the police and victim satisfaction

Two multiple regression analyses were conducted to predict the likelihood of future reporting by the victim and victim satisfaction. The first analysis evaluated the likelihood of future reporting based on six predictors; the match of victim expectation and police action in three areas; overall actions by the police; keeping the victim informed of the outcome and improvement in the behaviour of the offender. The regression equation was significant with the linear combination of police actions significantly related to the likelihood of future reporting,  $R^2=.11$   $F(8.7,83.6)=3.77$ ,  $p=.001$ . As table 13 shows the significant predictors were whether the police had done all expected and that the victim was kept informed of the final outcome.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	.375	.226		1.660	.099
Expectation match – calm situation	.068	.095	.050	.719	.473
Expectation match – get offender to leave	-.013	.098	-.009	-.136	.892
Expectation match – arrest offender	-.080	.099	-.056	-.811	.419
Police did all expected	.297	.096	.213	3.105	.002
Police advised of final outcome	.334	.126	.182	2.652	.009
Offender's behaviour has improved	.089	.065	.095	1.376	.170

**Table 14: Regression analysis: Likelihood of future reporting**

The second analysis was conducted to predict victim satisfaction based on five predictors; the match of victim expectation and police action in two areas; overall actions by the police; keeping the victim informed of the outcome and improvement in the behaviour of the offender. The regression equation was significant,  $R^2=34F(70.5,204.9)=20.3, p=.000$  and Table 14 shows the significant predictors were whether the police had done all that was expected and the victim was kept informed of the final outcome.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.776	.287		-2.701	.008
Police did all expected	1.052	.128	.483	8.231	.000
Police advised of final outcome	.724	.168	.252	4.300	.000
Offender's behaviour has improved	.128	.086	.087	1.481	.140
Expectation match – calm situation	.198	.125	.092	1.576	.117
Expectation match – arrest offender	-.017	.132	-.008	-.131	.896

**Table 15: Regression analysis: Victim satisfaction**

A final regression analysis was conducted to predict likelihood of future reporting based on six predictors; overall actions by the police; keeping the victim informed of the outcome; improvement in the behaviour of the offender, match of expectation of the victim and action of the police in two areas and satisfaction with the police. The regression equation was significant,  $R^2=.22F(18.2,83.6)=8.9, p=.000$  and as shown in



Table 16, the single most significant predictor of whether a victim will report future abuse is her satisfaction with the police.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.571	.205		2.788	.006
Police did all expected	.019	.104	.014	.184	.854
Police advised of final outcome	.144	.123	.078	1.166	.245
Offender's behaviour has improved	.055	.061	.058	.900	.369
Expectation match – calm offender	.014	.088	.010	.158	.874
Expectation match – arrest offender	-.075	.092	-.052	-.807	.420
Satisfaction with police	.265	.050	.415	5.273	.000

**Table 16: Regression analysis: Likelihood of future reporting**

## **Chapter 4: Findings & Discussion**

## **Findings and Discussion**

The aim of this study was to undertake an exploratory analysis in an attempt to define the factors that determine the satisfaction of victims with the police response to incidents of domestic abuse together with the factors that influence the likelihood of reporting future incidents. As previously discussed, past research has shown that victims' satisfaction with the police is a function of the extent to which expectations are fulfilled together with the demeanour of the officers. These findings are reinforced by the data obtained as a result of this study.

In considering the findings and implications of the survey, it is important to express a note of caution and recognise the limitations of both the sample size and the kinds of victims. The survey was conducted with 216 female victims of low level domestic abuse over a 12 month period (August 2012 – July 2013) and sought their expectations and perceptions of the police response to a call for service in that incident. It must be recognised that victims will have a wide and different range of experiences and beliefs. They may have different expectations of police behaviours or varying previous and current experiences with the police through cases being disposed of in different ways. Their needs and therefore expectations may be very different and equally police behaviour may vary depending on differing characteristics of victims and offenders and of the offence.

The research in this study, whilst addressing many issues surrounding domestic abuse incidents is limited to information relating to the wishes of the victim at the time of the offences, as opposed to their expectations, which would have resulted in

hypothetical questions being asked. This, however, does create a gap in the understanding of the relevant issues. The expectations of the victim may differ from their wishes, namely that they expected an arrest to take place, even though they did not want this course of action. This disparity between 'wishes' and 'expectations' is of importance, and would be a key consideration in any further research in this area.

Results indicate that the single most influential factor on the likelihood of future reporting is the level of the victim's satisfaction with the police. This in turn is influenced by the two key measures - police doing all that was expected of them and keeping the victim informed of the final outcome.

#### **4.1 Simple Caution**

This group had the lowest percentage of victims who had experienced previous abuse by the offender (35.5%) and just over half (51.6%) were still in a relationship with the offender which is the second highest of all disposals. Both satisfaction (80.6%) with the police and future likelihood (80.6%) of calling the police was high despite recording the lowest percentage of police taking all the action expected (63.4%). This group had a much higher percentage (38.7%) of victims who wanted the offender arrested compared to the other groups although this only translated into 19.3% who actually wanted the offender prosecuted. Of those victims who wanted the offender arrested, 69.4% had not been subject to previous abuse by the offender, much higher than in all the other groups. Over half (59.1%) of victims reported that the offender's behaviour had been better since the incident with verbatim comments from victims (below) indicating that simply the involvement of the police had a

positive effect on the relationship and future behaviour of the offender:

- *Feels that experience is a deterrent as the offender is aware the victim is prepared to call the police*
- *'As a result of the incident, he has voluntarily sought out drug rehabilitation'*

#### **4.2 Conditional Caution – non-reoffend**

Less than half of the victims (46.7%) in this group were still in a relationship with the offender which is the second lowest of all disposals. Satisfaction with the police was the highest of all groups (90%) as was future likelihood of reporting (83.3%) and victims who considered the police took all the action expected (83.3%). As this group had the highest percentage of previous abuse victims (63.3%), it may be surprising that it had the lowest percentage of victims who wanted the offender arrested (16.7%), all of whom had experienced previous abuse by the offender. It is of note that, at the time of the offence, a higher percentage of victims (25.5%) wanted the offender prosecuted than wanted him arrested which reinforces the need for victims to be given more information about the criminal justice processes. In terms of behaviour following the incident, this group had the lowest percentage of improved behaviour reported (43.3%) and the highest percentage of worse behaviour (23.3%). It may therefore be unsurprising that this group contained the highest percentage (70%) of victims who wanted future offences to be charged. It is of note that 3 victims in this group identified that the offender was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which she considered to be a factor in the incident (verbatim comments from victims below). This accounts for 33% of offenders identified as suffering with PTSD across the whole survey despite the group only consisting of 13.8% of the victims surveyed.

- *The offender has many issues since service in NI. He has PTSD and the way this incident was handled prompted him to get medical assistance while waiting for an assessment by the military. Victim was very appreciative of the sensitivity of the police*
- *'He suffers from PTSD from the army and would have benefited from a DV course and counselling'*

#### **4.3 Conditional Caution – workshop**

This group had the highest percentage of victims who remained in a relationship with the offender (54.5%), possibly because the promise of seeking assistance with the offending behaviour influences the victim, persuading them to continue in the relationship. This group also has the largest percentage (78.8%) of victims reporting improved behaviour, far higher than in other disposal groups which suggests that the content of the workshops is having a positive effect on the offender, and is indicative of the effectiveness of Project CARA, a view supported by comments from victims below:

- *'The police were great to me – the workshops helped him recognise the drinking was triggering his violence. They were a wake-up call for him. He had to say what he did in front of others. The workshops made it possible for us to get back together safely. The police kept in touch with me all the way – they were amazing'*
- *'Workshop has led to him applying to an Adapt programme. He starts tonight, I am delighted with the police response'*
- *'Following the workshop, he knows how to deal with our anger'*
- *'The workshops made him think and he now leaves when he gets angry'*
- *'He is more open about himself and now talks about how he feels. The course scared him a little because he saw men that were really violent and he didn't want to become like them'*
- *'The workshop helped him look at the way he deals with his anger'*

It is also important to note that this group has the highest proportion of victims that would be satisfied with a caution for a future offence (30.3%). This concept of the offender receiving 'treatment' would appear to be a preference for victims rather than undergoing the somewhat traumatic court experience. However this group had the lowest satisfaction with the police (69.7%) despite the police doing all expected in the large majority of cases (72.7%). It also showed the lowest likelihood of future reporting (66.7%) compared to the other disposal groups although had a far higher percentage of victims (18.2%) who consider they are 'as likely' to call the police in the future.

#### **4.4 No Further Action**

This group shows a smaller percentage of victims are in a relationship with the offender after an incident than in any of the other disposals. This may be due to the fact that either a decision had been made by the victim to end the relationship with the offender instead of giving evidence, or that the victim felt, by the lack of admission on the part of the offender (a requirement of the other three disposals), that there was no reason to continue in the relationship. However, it was noted by the interviewers during the collection of data that, unlike other disposals, 14 (23.3%) victims with an NFA disposal related to domestic abuse incidents that occurred following the breakdown of the relationship and appeared to be a pattern of ongoing harassment. Both satisfaction with the police response (80%) and likelihood of reporting future incidents (78.3%) was high. This group also had a higher percentage of victims who, at the time of the incident, wanted the offender prosecuted (32.2%) than wanted him arrested (21.7%). In terms of future disposal, this group had the second highest percentage of victims who wanted future offences to be charged

(43.3%) although substantially fewer than the conditional caution, non-reoffend group.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

All groups showed a high level of satisfaction with the police response to the incident, which is largely independent of the final disposal given. This is to be expected as the police response should be consistent regardless of the differing factors that can be involved within a case. Examples of some of the positive comments from victims can be seen below:

- *‘The police were fantastic – there is someone out there to help me’*
- *‘This experience has restored my faith in the police after it was damaged by a previous one’*

However, these data illustrate that victims are more concerned with their treatment as opposed to the disposal, a conclusion that is largely supported by the fact that very few victims would prefer a caution in future, but still remain satisfied with the overall process.

It is important to note that 78.2% of victims stated that they were more likely to report further offences to the police. This statement is of particular importance in relation to the overall numbers of reported domestic abuse incidents. As explored previously in this study, domestic abuse has historically been under-reported for a variety of reasons, but significantly attributed to the inadequacy of the police response. If, following an intervention by the police, a victim is more motivated to report future abuse; it may appear over time that there is an increase in domestic abuse offending, as opposed to an increase in domestic abuse reporting. In addition, victims who are



satisfied and identify as 'more' or 'as likely' to report future incidents of domestic abuse indicate a high level of confidence in the response of officers attending the incident which, from an organisational perspective, provides important feedback.

Only 23.1% of victims wanted the offender to be prosecuted, and 68.5% did not support a prosecution. Of the small number who did want the offender to be prosecuted, 84% would have been prepared to give evidence at any subsequent court appearance, compared with only 35.8% of those who did not support a prosecution. Given that the only disposal types that have been reviewed in this study are NFA or cautions (simple or conditional), the response of the police to these incidents is broadly in line with the wishes of the victim. It is recognised that victims who do not want a prosecution are less likely to engage with the police in terms of evidence-gathering and as a result more of these cases would result in an NFA disposal on the basis of a lack of evidence. The willingness or otherwise of victims to assist with a prosecution is of utmost importance in domestic abuse cases, many of which depend on the victim as the sole provider of evidence against the offender.

With regard to subsequent abusive behaviour since the incident, with the exception of the conditional caution control (non-reoffend) sample, the majority of victims report that behaviour has improved. As the data details, there is a drop in the percentage of victims still in a relationship with the offender when more than one offence has been committed against the victim, and the lowest proportion of surviving relationships between victims and offenders are those with more than five incidents recorded. This is to be expected, as these victims appear to be prepared to accept a limited number of offences, providing the offender receives or promises treatment of some

description, but if this is not successful, victims may, if possible, leave a relationship, viewing it as irreparable. In contrast to this, the proportion of victims who contacted the police about an incident of domestic abuse, and also prefer prosecution to be the end result rises according to the number of previous incidents committed. This suggests that victims are less likely to endure abuse beyond a specific level and possibly have greater confidence in calling the police and are reassured by police action and attendance.

For those offenders who have been involved in more than five incidents, there is a marked decrease in the proportion of victims that report improved offender behaviour with reported deteriorating behaviour remaining high. This could indicate that offenders who have perpetrated such acts a number of times beforehand are unlikely to change their behaviour as a result of the disposal imposed, therefore having a possible effect on the decision of the victim to remain in a relationship with the offender.

Fewer than 9% of victims reported that they were dissatisfied with their treatment by the police with the reasons primarily fitting into two categories:

1. victims who did not consider an offence had been committed, did not want the police to attend, felt the police over-reacted and did not agree with the sanction
2. victims that felt that the sanction was too lenient, the police were rude, did not listen, were not sympathetic or did not keep the victim informed.

In exploring what the victim wanted when she called the police, preference was not narrowly defined to arrest versus non-arrest considerations but addressed a wide range of alternative outcomes. One of the key areas requiring scrutiny is the positive action policy which substantially translates into a pro-arrest policy. Although a large majority of victims did not want the offender arrested, an arrest was carried out in the majority of cases and yet this did not translate into a significant reduction in satisfaction with the police. It could be argued that for some victims the positive action resulting in arrest was a very beneficial outcome.

There has been a significant policy debate on the use of positive arrest policies and how they restrict police discretion and remove the opportunity to consider other victim preferences. Whilst it could be argued that giving active consideration to victim preferences might result in increased reporting, supporters of positive arrest policies would cite concerns about the vulnerability of victims. Presently, the positive arrest policy also removes any decision required from the victim about what they perceive as being the best option for them, and this is a sacrifice made in order to allow the police to provide a consistent response to domestic abuse offences. A further sacrifice concerns the additional reluctance of victims who definitely do not want an arrest to call the police at all, knowing that in doing so, there is a very high likelihood of arrest. However, it can be dangerous to assume that the attending police officers are conversant with all of the issues that can influence the victim's decision about whether an arrest is suitable, but the 'safety-first' approach of a positive arrest policy does provide a structure to any police response to domestic abuse.

As a result, it is important to understand in more detail the nature of the interaction between officer and victim when the police initially respond to an incident of domestic abuse. The key question in relation to this is whether the victim is empowered to make a decision about the resolution to 'their' offence, or whether the police adopt a 'risk-averse approach and adhere to the outdated, albeit consistent positive arrest policy. The culture of blame, and nature of subsequent internal investigations could suggest that this safety-first approach is adopted to deal with the potential that the one case that did not result in arrest was the one that subsequently went on to become a domestic murder.

This culture of adopting a risk-averse approach to domestic abuse is not only confined to the police service. Data obtained from Project CARA suggests that the CPS are often unlikely to allow a conditional caution to be issued for a domestic abuse case that appears to be eligible for the project (personal communication, R. Braddock 16 November, 2013). This overarching environment of unease that surrounds domestic abuse clearly inhibits innovation and could be seen to disregard the views of the victim in order to provide a consistent approach to offences of this nature. Initiatives such as restorative justice are frequently seen as unsuitable for domestic abuse offences, but the rationale behind these decisions are not based on evidence; they are more concerned with the issue of consistency and fear of an adverse incident.

Whilst it appears that a positive arrest policy is not overly beneficial as a tool to assist with domestic abuse offenders, it must also be recognised that other approaches could also be flawed. If policy was amended to allow attending officers complete

discretion to deal with cases as they saw fit, differences in experience of dealing with domestic abuse on the part of police officers, coupled with other factors including training, policies and possibly knowledge of resources available such as cell space or number of officers available to deal with other calls, may also have to be taken into consideration. The removal of constraints on an officer's decision making capacity such as positive action may well produce unequal protection – more experienced police officers may make their decisions based on evaluation of the situation and the risk of harm to the victim from the offender. Less experienced officers may be more inclined to follow the procedure and demonstrate a more risk-averse response regardless of the views of the victim. Therefore, in order to allow more discretion in decision-making, it is important to situate this within a support framework of domestic abuse specialists.

Findings from this study indicate that victim satisfaction is closely linked with the consistent and timely provision of information. Failure to do this can result in secondary victimisation, a process by which a victim is further victimised by the lack of understanding of any subsequent criminal justice process, or a feeling of helplessness due to the criminal justice system taking ownership of the offence and treating the victim simply as a provider of evidence.

Initial calls for service are handled within the police call management department, who make the decision with regard to the relevant course of action. It is therefore important that these calls are treated appropriately, any action promised on the part of the police actually occurs, together with the provision of necessary support. This

issue of support is a key theme alongside the necessity to provide accurate and timely information, and should therefore be continued by police officers when attending a call for service. In addition to this, appropriate safeguarding functions should aim to provide ongoing support to victims of domestic abuse offences, and provide 'signposting' to relevant partner agencies. It is even possible that specialist domestic abuse advisors could be sited within the control room environment providing a triage service and liaising with other partner agencies to deliver a personal service directly at the point of need. This would support the finding that victims are most satisfied with the police response when they feel it meets their expectation.

Victims participating in this study had mixed awareness about the limitations of the police and potential outcomes. They were clearly aware of the differing roles of criminal justice agencies, and as can be seen from comments below, could differentiate between decisions made by the police and CPS. This, in turn, translated into satisfaction with one organisation as opposed to another.

- *'Happy with the police but CPS said insufficient evidence to prosecute – he was trying to throttle me. My daughter came in and begged him to “stop killing mummy”'*
- *'He breached his caution but CPS would not pursue the case. Police were very good – just CPS were not good'*

However there were mixed expectations about the role of the police officer with some victims considering the police provide a role other than law enforcement. An expectation that was reinforced by the police action in a number of incidents

- *'The police boarded up my window for me'*

- *'The police drove me to my mum's to pick up my son'*

Although not in others;

- *'I wanted the police to mend my back door but they didn't'*

There did not appear to be a general dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system as a composite entity, but satisfaction or dissatisfaction was expressed on the basis of decisions made by a specific criminal justice authority. This indicates that generally victims are aware of the structure and responsibilities of the various criminal justice agencies, or this is explained adequately to them by the attending or investigating police officers.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions**



## **Conclusions**

The nature of domestic abuse offending is typically diverse, and can be underpinned by a number of issues, such as debt, childcare, relationship issues and substance abuse. A 'one size fits all' strategy is inappropriate for offending of this nature and it is therefore important that these offences are dealt with by a variety of different means that cater to the relevant issues within individual relationships. This requires a comprehensive multi-agency approach as it is simply not possible for police officers, given their training, skills, background and resources to address the underlying causes of domestic abuse. The primary function of the police is to prevent crime and bring offenders to justice. It is neither possible nor appropriate for the police to provide a service that meets all the needs of victims for domestic abuse offences that may have many contributory factors.

Police actions are perceived as legitimate when victims consider that their varying needs are being met and whilst police officers frequently will do far more than can be expected of them, they are neither equipped nor resourced to deliver a personalised response. Findings from this survey indicate that the expectations of the victims often far exceed the traditional role of the police officer and yet despite the limitations in what the police can offer, it is clearly demonstrated that the police intervention was a valued outcome. As the results of this study indicate, the single most influential factor on the likelihood of future reporting is the level of the victim's satisfaction with the police. This in turn is influenced by the two key measures - police doing all that was expected of them and keeping the victim informed of the final outcome.

Given these findings, it is clear that the current policy may not necessarily be the most effective way to deal with cases of domestic abuse from the point of view of victim expectation. The police service should take the opportunity to review the present positive arrest policy and consider allowing officers greater discretion when dealing with these offences. Relationships with domestic abuse charities and partner agencies need to be further developed so that they can provide a range of responses that are aimed to support the victim. This approach could assist victims to make reasoned decisions and allow for greater victim involvement. This, in turn, may enhance their confidence in the criminal justice system and lead to increased reporting of domestic abuse offences.

It is important that victims receive effective and sensitive treatment, specific to their circumstances, in order to enhance satisfaction. This can only be achieved by a consistent multi-agency approach, coupled with appropriate training and guidance for police officers and increased public awareness of the police officer's role. Appropriate safeguarding functions should aim to deliver ongoing support to victims of domestic abuse offences, and provide 'signposting' to relevant partner agencies that have specialist knowledge of the issues underpinning domestic abuse offending. This should form part of a multi-agency approach which is delivered from the initial point of contact and is flexible enough to cater for the diverse needs of victims. Hoyle & Saunders (2000) reinforce the importance of a framework of support, available from the point of arrest, as this provides an opportunity for the victim to retain a degree of 'ownership' of their conflict and therefore a measure of control over proceedings.

## **5.1 Recommendations for further research**

In order to fully understand the interaction between the police and victims, it would be beneficial to investigate the views of police officers and how they perceive their role when dealing with domestic abuse offences. Preconceptions of domestic abuse offenders, victims and offences are likely to influence behaviour when attending incidents of this nature and a greater understanding of how police officers approach such incidents could influence future policy development and officer training. Police officers need to be fully aware of the impact of their interaction with victims and the relationship between victim satisfaction and future reporting of domestic abuse.

Further research could also explore how the role of the police officer is perceived by the public. With unprecedented budgetary reductions within the police service, it is no longer possible to sustain the same level of discretionary service as in previous years. The police service, more than ever, needs to improve public awareness of the role and limitations of its officers.

# **Appendices**

**Appendix A: Eligibility criteria for domestic abuse conditional cautions**

**Appendix A: Eligibility Criteria for Project CARA Cases**

**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 past or present 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 behaviour, domestic theft related offences

**Admission and/ or CPS agree that 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/order.

**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.

## Appendix B: Protocol for victim contact: legitimacy & victim satisfaction

### 1. Process

- 1.1 Victim Contact Officer (VCO), upon initial contact with victim, to obtain contact details and consent to future contact for the purposes of satisfaction/legitimacy questionnaire. Victim contact checklist (attached) to be completed.
- 1.2 Victim contact checklist to be added to RMS.
- 1.3 Victim Contact Officer to contact victims between workshops (for workshop group) or at mid-point of caution (control group) to carry out safeguarding duties.
- 1.4 When caution is completed, victim to be contacted for satisfaction survey to be completed. Only victims who have given consent to be contacted.
- 1.5 Questionnaires to be collated for the purposes of analysis. Spreadsheet to be kept to track respondents.

### 2. Roles

- 2.1 Victim Contact Officer: To make initial contact with victim within 24 hours of caution being issued. To contact victim during the duration of the caution to carry out safeguarding.
- 2.2 CAADA contact officer: To administer and carry out victim surveys.
- 2.3 Project CARA Research Manager: To collate responses and maintain spreadsheet.

### 3. Ethical Considerations<sup>1</sup>

- 3.1 Victims should be informed about the content and purposes of the survey. CAADA Contact Officer should obtain adequately informed consent from the victim and respect a victim's right to choose whether to participate.
- 3.2 Victims should be informed that all data obtained as a result of the survey will be treated anonymously and no identifiable data will be disclosed without explicit consent.
- 3.3 Confidentiality should be maintained between all parties. In the event that information disclosed suggests the possibility of serious harm to the victim or any other person including children, a decision will be made about whether this is disclosed to the appropriate authorities. The Victim will be made aware of this decision and the rationale behind it. This decision will be made by the CAADA contact officer and their line manager and will be fully recorded on a monitoring form.
- 3.4 If further offences are disclosed during contact with the victim, consent to be sought to notify the appropriate authorities. Explicit consent must be obtained in order for this to take place, unless the circumstances detailed in para. 3.3 apply.
- 3.5 If explicit consent to report further offences is not given (unless para. 3.3. applies), this will need to be noted.

<sup>1</sup>From: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2010) *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling & Psychotherapy* (Revised Edition). Lutterworth: BACP  
[http://www.bacp.co.uk/admin/structure/files/pdf/9479\\_ethical%20framework%20word%20feb2010%20\(revised\).pdf](http://www.bacp.co.uk/admin/structure/files/pdf/9479_ethical%20framework%20word%20feb2010%20(revised).pdf)

## Memorandum of Understanding

Contributors; Hampshire Constabulary and Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA)

- Hampshire Constabulary will provide to CAADA names of consenting victims of domestic abuse incidents whose perpetrators are subject of conditional cautioning under project CARA
- CAADA will contact all of these victims and ask a set of questions contained in a set questionnaire to assess legitimacy and customer satisfaction for Project CARA on behalf of Hampshire Constabulary.
- CAADA will make 6 attempts to complete the questionnaire and will record all details on the monitoring form
- CAADA and Hampshire Constabulary will work within the boundaries of the agreed protocol
- CAADA will use only suitable trained and skilled persons to carry out the CAADA contact officer role as stated in the protocol and unless impossible due to sickness or other irresolvable reason those carrying out the role will have police officer experience
- This work will continue for 6 months after which a review will take place
- Hampshire Constabulary will pay CAADA £500 per month for 16 hours of work as outlined in the protocol.
- Either Hampshire Constabulary or CAADA can withdraw from this agreement with 30 days notice.
- CAADA will not be employed by Hampshire Constabulary but will act as consultants to Hampshire Constabulary

Signed .....(CAADA)

Date.....

Signed.....(Hampshire Constabulary)

Date.....

### Victim Contact Checklist

Occurrence Ref	
Victim Name	
Assigned group	Workshop/control

1. Victim contact details	Landline	
	Mobile	
Preferred time of contact		
2. Does victim consent to further contact to ascertain satisfaction?	Yes	
	No	
Date consent received		
3. Notes/Observations		

**\*\* Please advise victim upon initial contact that a safe word is to be used. If Melani or Sarah leave a message from 'Innovation Market Research', this relates to the victim satisfaction survey being conducted \*\***



## Appendix C: Victim Questionnaire – CONDITIONAL CAUTIONS

### Case Details

Occurrence Reference:

Date Conditional Caution Issued:

Date of workshop completion (if applicable):

Conditional Caution issued (tick one)

Workshop + Non-reoffend  
Non-Reoffend only


*I am contacting you about an incident between you and (name) that the police attended on --/--/--.*

*This questionnaire is completely voluntary and your personal details will not be used when this information is reviewed.*

1. Is it safe for you to talk to me about the incident you reported?

Yes  
No


2. If not, when can I ring you back?

--

3. Are you still in a relationship with (name)?

Yes  
No


**First I'd like to ask you some questions about what happened at the time of the incident:**

**4. Who called the police? (tick one)**

You (victim)  
(name)

Family member:

Child  
Other (specify)

Other

Friend  
Neighbour  
Other (specify)

Don't know


**5. Was it an adult or a child that called the police?**

Adult (o18)

Child (u18)


**6. At the time of the incident, what did you want the police to do? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) Nothing
- (b) Try to calm the situation
- (c) Get (name) to leave the premises
- (d) Warn (name)
- (e) Arrest (name)
- (f) Other - specify


--

**7. What did the police actually do at the time of the incident? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) Tried to calm the situation
- (b) Suggest that *(name)* leave the home
- (c) Talked to you separately from *(name)*
- (d) Talked to you and *(name)* together
- (e) Warned *(name)* about future behaviour and what might happen if there is a further incident
- (f) Provided you with advice about how to get assistance
- (g) Provided you safety equipment such as a door brace or alarm
- (h) Assessed the risk to you/your children
- (i) Arrested *(name)*
- (j) Can't remember
- (h) Other (specify)


--

**8. Regarding the police response – was there anything that you wanted them to do that didn't occur?**

- (a) Nothing
- (b) No choice of disposal
- (c) Mediation
- (d) No action to be taken
- (e) Clearer explanation of 'what happens next'
- (f) Other (specify below)


--

**9. Did you want to access help for *(name)* to change his behaviour towards you or to get help with things such as alcohol, drugs, anger management or mental health?**

Yes  
No


**10. Who did you turn to for advice or support after the incident?**

- (a) Family
- (b) Friends
- (c) Government agency or charity (specify below)
- (d) No one


--

**11. If the police offered advice about assistance, which agencies were suggested?**

- (a) Domestic Abuse Services
- (b) Children's Services
- (c) Victim Services
- (d) Any other government agency or charity (specify below)
- (e) None
- (f) Can't remember
- (g) Would like assistance but none offered


--

**12. At the time of the incident, did you want (*name*) to be prosecuted?**

Yes  
No  
Don't know


**13. Did you later change your mind?**

Yes  
No


**14. Did the police advise you of the final outcome?**

Yes  
No


**15. How satisfied are you with the police response to the incident? (circle one)**

Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Quite unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
1	2	3	4	5

**16. How safe did you feel after the police left? (circle one)**

Very Safe	Quite Safe	Neither safe or unsafe	Not very safe	Very unsafe
1	2	3	4	5

***I would like to ask you a question regarding previous incidents***

**17. Prior to this incident, has (name) acted in this way to you?**

Yes – go to q18

No – go to q20


**18. If yes, how many times?**

Once

1 – 5 times

More than 5  
times


**19. Over what length of time?**

Past 6 months

Past 12 months

Past 2 years

Longer than 2  
years


***Now I would like to ask you about how you think what happened as a result of this incident has affected (name's) behaviour towards you.***

**20. Since the incident, has (*name's*) behaviour been**

Better – go to q22

Worse – go to q21

Same – go to q22

Prefer not to say – go to q22


**21. If worse, did he**

Hurt you?

Scare you?

Threaten you?


**22. Are you likely to report future incidents to the police?**

More likely

Less likely

The same


**23. If less likely, why?**

(a) Conditional Caution was not the preferred option

(b) Insufficient information was provided to me

(c) Didn't want any action to be taken

(d) Other (specify below)


--

**24. If (*name*) had been prosecuted, would you have been willing to attend court to give evidence?**

Yes

No

Don't know


**25. Do you think what happened to  
(name) was fair to you?**

Yes – go to q. 27  
No – go to q. 26  
Don't know


**26. Why not? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) Conditional Caution was a 'soft option'
- (b) Offender felt that he had 'got away with it'
- (c) No compensation or reparation
- (d) Didn't feel that offence had been committed
- (e) Didn't want him arrested
- (f) Caution wasn't sufficient given history of abuse
- (g) Other (specify below)


--

**27. Do you think what happened to  
(name) was fair to them?**

Yes – go to q. 29  
No – go to q. 28  
Don't know


**28. Why not? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) No incentive to change behaviour
- (b) Didn't feel that offence had been committed
- (c) Didn't want him arrested
- (d) Didn't want any action to be taken
- (e) Other (specify below)


29. If (name) attended a workshop, was their behaviour after the workshops	Better – go to q31	
	Worse – go to q30	
	Same – go to q31	
	Prefer not to say – go to q31	

30. If worse, did (name)	Hurt you?	
	Scare you?	
	Threaten you?	

31. Do you feel that the workshops were beneficial?	Very	
	Quite	
	Not at all	

32. If not, why?

33. Has the way that the police have dealt with this incident made you more or less confident in reporting incidents in future? (Circle one)

Much more confident	More confident	No change	Less confident	Much less confident
1	2	3	4	5



**34. If a similar incident occurred in future, what outcome would you prefer?**

Conditional Caution  
Prosecution  
Other (specify)


**35. Is there anything else you would like to say about the way the police handled this incident or about the response of the justice system to it?**

## Appendix D: Victim Questionnaire: Simple Cautions

### Case Details

Occurrence Reference:

Date Caution Issued:

*I am contacting you about an incident between you and (name) that the police attended on --/--/--.*

*This questionnaire is completely voluntary and your personal details will not be used when this information is reviewed.*

1. Is it safe for you to talk to me about the incident you reported?

Yes – go to q. 4  
No


2. If not, when can I ring you back?

--

3. Are you still in a relationship with (name)?

Yes  
No


*First I'd like to ask you some questions about what happened at the time of the incident:*

**4. Who called the police? (tick one)**

You (victim)  
(name)

Family member:

Child  
Other (specify)

Other

Friend  
Neighbour  
Other (specify)

Don't know


**5. Was it an adult or a child that called the police?**

Adult (o18)

Child (u18)


**6. At the time of the incident, what did you want the police to do? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) Nothing
- (b) Try to calm the situation
- (c) Get (name) to leave the premises
- (d) Warn (name)
- (e) Arrest (name)
- (f) Other - specify


--

**7. What did the police actually do at the time of the incident? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) Tried to calm the situation
- (b) Suggest that (name) leave the home
- (c) Talked to you separately from (name)
- (d) Talked to you and (name) together
- (e) Warned (name) about future behaviour and what might happen if there is a further incident
- (f) Provided you with advice about how to get assistance
- (g) Provided you safety equipment such as a door brace or alarm
- (h) Assessed the risk to you/your children


- (i) Arrested (*name*)
- (j) Can't remember
- (h) Other (specify)


--

**8. Regarding the police response – was there anything that you wanted them to do that didn't occur?**

- (a) Nothing
- (b) No choice of disposal
- (c) Mediation
- (d) No action to be taken
- (e) Clearer explanation of 'what happens next'
- (f) Other (specify below)


--

**9. Did you want to access help for (*name*) to change his behaviour towards you or to get help with things such as alcohol, drugs, anger management or mental health?**

Yes  
No


**10. Who did you turn to for advice or support after the incident?**

- (a) Family
- (b) Friends
- (c) Government agency or charity (specify below)
- (d) No one


--

**11. If the police offered advice about assistance, which agencies were suggested?**

- (a) Domestic Abuse Services
- (b) Children's Services
- (c) Victim Services
- (d) Any other government agency or charity (specify below)
- (e) None
- (f) Can't remember
- (g) Would like assistance but none offered


--

**12. At the time of the incident, did you want *(name)* to be prosecuted?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know


**13. Did you later change your mind?**

- Yes
- No


**14. Did the police advise you of the final outcome?**

- Yes
- No


**15. How satisfied are you with the police response to the incident? *(circle one)***

Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Quite unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
----------------	-----------------	--	----------------------	---------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

**16. How safe did you feel after the police left? *(circle one)***

Very Safe	Quite Safe	Neither safe or unsafe	Not very safe	Very unsafe
-----------	------------	---------------------------	---------------	-------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

***I would like to ask you a question regarding previous incidents***

**17. Prior to this incident, has (name) acted in this way to you?**

Yes – go to q18

No – go to q20


**18. If yes, how many times?**

Once

1 – 5 times

More than 5 times


**19. Over what length of time?**

Past 6 months

Past 12 months

Past 2 years

Longer than 2 years


***Now I would like to ask you about how you think what happened as a result of this incident has affected (name's) behaviour towards you.***

**20. Since the incident, has (name's) behaviour been**

Better – go to q22

Worse – go to q21

Same – go to q22

Prefer not to say – go to q22


**21. If worse, did he**

Hurt you?

Scare you?

Threaten you?


**22. Are you likely to report future incidents to the police?**

More likely  
Less likely  
The same


**23. If less likely, why?**

- (a) Did not want caution as a disposal
- (b) Insufficient information was provided to me
- (c) Didn't want any action to be taken
- (d) Other (specify below)


--

**24. If (*name*) had been prosecuted, would you have been willing to attend court to give evidence?**

Yes  
No  
Don't know


**25. Do you think what happened to (*name*) was fair to you?**

Yes – go to q. 27  
No – go to q. 26  
Don't know


**26. Why not? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) Caution was a 'soft option'
- (b) Offender felt that he had 'got away with it'
- (c) No compensation or reparation
- (d) Didn't feel that offence had been committed
- (e) Didn't want him arrested
- (f) Caution wasn't sufficient given history of abuse
- (g) Other (specify below)


**27. Do you think what happened to (name) was fair to them?**

Yes – go to q. 29  
 No – go to q. 28  
 Don't know

**28. Why not? (tick all that apply)**

- (a) No incentive to change behaviour
- (b) Didn't feel that offence had been committed
- (c) Didn't want him arrested
- (d) Didn't want any action to be taken
- (e) Other (specify below)

**29. Has the way that the police have dealt with this incident made you more or less confident in reporting incidents in future? (Circle one)**

Much more confident	More confident	No change	Less confident	Much less confident
1	2	3	4	5

**30. If a similar incident occurred in future, what outcome would you prefer?**

Caution  
 Prosecution  
 Other (specify)

**35. Is there anything else you would like to say about the way the police handled this incident or about the response of the justice system to it?**



Appendix E: NFA Victim Questionnaire

Case Details

Occurrence Reference:

Date of Arrest:

Date of NFA (if different from above):

*I am contacting you about an incident between you and (name) that the police attended on --/--/--.*

1. Is it safe for you to talk to me now?

Yes  
No

2. If not, when can I ring you back?

*We are collecting information about the police response to incidents and the information that you provide to us could help us make changes in how we respond in the future. This questionnaire is completely voluntary and your personal details will be kept strictly confidential. It should only take about 10 mins*

3. Are you still in a relationship with(name)?

Yes  
No

*First I'd like to ask you some questions about what happened at the time of the incident:*

**4. Who called the police? (tick one)**

You

(name)

Family member:

Child

Other (specify)

Other

Friend

Neighbour

Other (specify)

Don't know


**5. At the time of the incident, what did you want the police to do? (tick all that apply)**

(a) Nothing

(b) Try to calm the situation

(c) Get (name) to leave the premises

(d) Warn (name)

(e) Arrest (name)

(f) Other – specify


--

**6. What did the police actually do at the time of the incident? (tick all that apply)**

(a) Tried to calm the situation

(b) Suggest that (name) leave the home

(c) Talked to you separately from (name)

(d) Talked to you and (name) together

(e) Warned (name) about future behaviour and what might happen if there is a further incident

(f) Provided you with advice about how to get assistance

(g) Provided you safety equipment such as a door brace or alarm

(h) Assessed the risk to you/your children

(i) Arrested (name)

(j) Can't remember

(h) Other (specify)


--

7. In dealing with this incident, do you consider that the police treated you with courtesy and respect?

Yes

No


8. Regarding the police response – was there anything that you wanted them to do that didn't occur?

- (a) Nothing
- (b) No choice of disposal
- (c) Mediation
- (d) No action to be taken
- (e) Clearer explanation of 'what happens next'
- (f) Other (specify below)


--

9. At the time of the incident, did you want (*name*) to be prosecuted?

Yes

No

Don't know


10. Did you later change your mind?

Yes

No


11. Did the police advise you of the decision to take no further action?

Yes

No


12. How satisfied are you with the police response to the incident? NOT the decision to take no further action. (*circle one*)

Very Satisfied      Quite Satisfied      Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied      Quite unsatisfied      Very Unsatisfied

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

**13. How safe did you feel after the police left? (circle one)**

Very Safe	Quite Safe	Neither safe or unsafe	Not very safe	Very unsafe
1	2	3	4	5

**14. How satisfied are you with the decision to take no further action?**

Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Quite unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
1	2	3	4	5

**15. How safe did you feel when (name) returned home? (circle one)**

Very Safe	Quite Safe	Neither safe or unsafe	Not very safe	Very unsafe
1	2	3	4	5

***I would like to ask you a question regarding previous incidents***

**16. With reference to this incident, has (name) acted in this way to you previously?**

Yes– go to q.17  
No– go to q.19  
Prefer not to  
say – go to q.  
19


**17. If yes, how many times?**

Once  
1 – 5 times  
More than 5  
times


**18. Over what length of time?**

Past 6 months  
Past 12 months  
Past 2 years  
Longer than 2  
years


***Now I would like to ask you about how you think the police response to this incident has affected (name's) behaviour towards you.***

**19. Since the incident, has (name's) behaviour been**

Better – go to q.21

Worse – go to q.20

Same – go to q.21

Prefer not to say – go to q.21


**20. If worse, did he**

Hurt you?

Scare you?

Threaten you?


**21. If (name) had been prosecuted, would you have been willing to attend court to give evidence?**

Yes

No

Don't know


**22. Do you think the NFA decision was fair to you?**

Yes – go to q.24

No – go to q. 23

Don't know – go to q.24


**23. Why not? (tick all that apply)**

(a) He felt he 'got away with it'

(b) You felt he 'got away with it'

(c) No compensation or recognition of what had happened

(d) Other (specify below)


--

<b>24. Do you think the decision to arrest (name) was appropriate in the circumstances?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>25. Do you think the NFA decision was fair to (name)?</b>	Yes – go to q. 27	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No – go to q. 26	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Don't know – go to q. 27	<input type="checkbox"/>

**26. Why not? (tick all that apply)**

(a) Nothing happened to help him change his behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Didn't feel that offence had been committed	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Didn't want him arrested	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Didn't want any action to be taken	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Other (specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Hampshire Constabulary has recently been trialling a new scheme to help reduce incidents of domestic abuse. We have often been told by women that they want their partner to change his behaviour but they don't want him prosecuted or punished. Therefore, we have been working with a local charity and have designed a workshop held over 2 days that challenges abusive behaviour and supports men in changing their behaviour***

<b>27. If (name) had been offered one of these workshops, would you have wanted him to attend?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>28. If (name) had been offered one of these workshops, do you think he would have attended?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

**29. Has the way that the police have dealt with this incident, NOT the outcome, made you more or less confident in reporting incidents in future? (Circle one)**

Much more confident	More confident	No change	Less confident	Much less confident
1	2	3	4	5

**30. Has the outcome of this incident made you more or less confident in reporting incidents in future? (Circle one)**

Much more confident	More confident	No change	Less confident	Much less confident
1	2	3	4	5

**31. If a similar incident occurred in future, what outcome would you prefer?**

Caution  
Prosecution  
Other (specify)


**32. Is there anything else you would like to say about the way the police handled this incident or about the response of the justice system to it?**

**Thank you for taking part in this survey. Please remember the information you have provided is completely confidential and that if you have any concerns in the future, please do contact us.**

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