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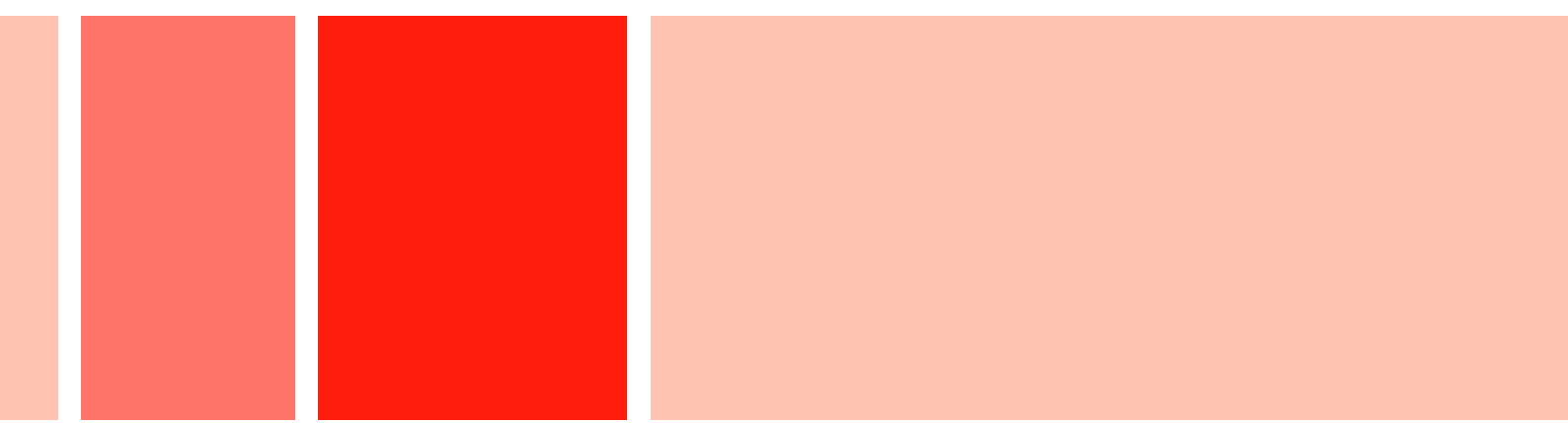
Number: 12/2010



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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A review of the role of Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales



**Review of the role of Domestic Abuse Coordinators in
Wales**

**KM Research and Consultancy Ltd
October 2010**

Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Assembly Government.

For further information please contact:

Siân Jones

Social Research Division

Welsh Assembly Government

Merthyr Tydfil Office

Rhyd-y-Car, Merthyr Tydfil

CF48 1UZ

Tel: 01685 729126

Email: sj&lgresearch&information@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Welsh Assembly Government Social Research, 2011

978 0 7504 5943 0

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Glossary of acronyms

CCR	Coordinated Community Response
CJAR	Coordinated Joint Agency Response
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DAC	Domestic Abuse Coordinator
DAF	Domestic Abuse Forum
DAWG	Domestic Abuse Working Group
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advocate
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court

Summary

Introduction and methods

This review of the role of Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government in January 2010. The purpose is to review and evaluate the work of the Domestic Abuse Coordinators (DACs) in Wales and to make recommendations for the future development of the role.

The research was based mainly on qualitative data from a range of respondents with working knowledge of the work of DACs. The research involved: a literature review to establish the policy context; an E-survey with Domestic Abuse Coordinators and their line managers and senior stakeholders from the Domestic Abuse Working Group in Wales (DAWG); follow up in depth interviews with DACs, line managers and members of the DAWG; focus groups with all respondents; and desk research to review DAC job descriptions and performance indicators.

Key findings

From the literature review:

- Domestic Abuse is a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government, as outlined in the 2005 Domestic Abuse Strategy and The Right to be Safe, (2010a)
- Domestic Abuse Coordinators were introduced across England and Wales from the early 1990s and the posts have been funded directly by the Welsh Assembly Government since 2005
- The Right to be Safe (2010a) incorporates all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse, into an overarching priority
- Since the introduction of Domestic Abuse Coordinators, their role has been developed at a local level with varying job descriptions and critical objectives however;
- Domestic Abuse Coordinators have a central function, which is to facilitate a coordinated partnership response to domestic abuse.

- The DAC role is important to help deliver on high level policy directives and strategies at a local level

From qualitative and quantitative field research:

- The large majority of DAC respondents have been in post for over 2 years (n=10, 62.5%). 31% (n=5) have been in post for over 5 years. 75% are in full-time posts and the majority of line managers are located within Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)
- A large proportion of DAC time is spent organising training and awareness sessions for other organisations on the issue of domestic abuse
- A major focus of the work of DACs currently is on organising and developing the Domestic Abuse Forum and local Domestic Abuse Strategy
- There is no evidence of duplication between the work of DACs and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates
- A small proportion of time is spent by DACs in organising the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference; the time is spent on monitoring its progress and gaining information to help inform local priorities
- Job descriptions have some commonalities, particularly around ensuring that the Local Domestic Abuse Strategy is developed
- There is a need for a more consistent picture of what DACs should and should not do; in particular,
- There is a need to ensure that DACs do not personally provide services to address gaps but work towards identifying those gaps and agencies to address them
- The current level of seniority of the DAC post is felt to be appropriate. Lines of accountability and influence are important for ensuring that actions from the local action plans are taken forward.

Key recommendations

For Domestic Abuse Coordinators and line managers

- Ensure that the DAC's work focuses on raising awareness of domestic abuse across large service areas and agendas, and identify service gaps and what action can address these
- Domestic Abuse Training activities should be developed as a partnership action and DACs should focus on mainstreaming these actions going forward, not provided by DACs themselves
- Line management should be sufficiently engaged with the work of the DACs and committed to the domestic abuse agenda
- Line managers should have a reasonable working knowledge of domestic abuse to effectively engage with DACs in supervision.

Suggested short to medium term work objectives for DACs, resulting from this review include:

- Review the structure and purpose of the Domestic Abuse Forum
- Deliver updates on domestic abuse services and local research and proactively distribute to interested parties
- Liaise with the IDVA/MARAC Co-ordinator to identify lessons/issues arising from MARAC cases to be able to inform the Domestic Abuse Forum
- Research and develop a strategy for mainstreaming training activities
- Undertake a review of service gaps and reasons why these exist
- Develop an information plan in partnership with line manager, for identifying how and where to obtain data on victimisation and repeat victimisation
- Regularly review DAF attendance with particular reference to consistency of attendance
- Write an action plan for identifying appropriate Health colleague to attend the DAF and agree this with line manager.

For Strategic policy officials, including Welsh Assembly Government and local area policy officials

- The performance management for DACs should be more consistently developed; thus the existing Wales 'KPIs' or 'performance standards' should include the work objectives identified in this review (see Section 5)
- Review and develop the purpose and structure of Domestic Abuse Forums (DAF), as a matter of urgency, to ensure that attending partners take forward actions arising from DAF meetings. These actions should be undertaken at a local level but monitored and guided by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Main Report

1 Introduction

This review of the role of Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government in January 2010. The purpose of the project is to review and evaluate *“the work of the Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales, with specific regard to how they support the delivery of the Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy at a local and national level. The work will provide recommendations and action points for taking the work of Domestic Abuse Coordinators forward, including developing key performance standards.”* (Welsh Assembly Government specification, 2009).

The specific objectives of the research were:

- To review how Domestic Abuse Coordinators have been integrated into community safety structures, or elsewhere, and differences in their remit. This includes: roles and responsibilities of Domestic Abuse Coordinators; salary differences between areas; and key performance indicators and/or targets set locally for and by Domestic Abuse Coordinators
- To identify if, and how, WAG funding for Domestic Abuse Coordinators has been used to secure additional funding to enhance this role
- To examine in what ways Domestic Abuse Coordinators are working with Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) in their local area
- To examine the ways in which Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales interact with Police, Domestic Abuse Forums, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) in their local area
- To evaluate if, and how, Domestic Abuse Coordinators are contributing to the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for Wales on a local level

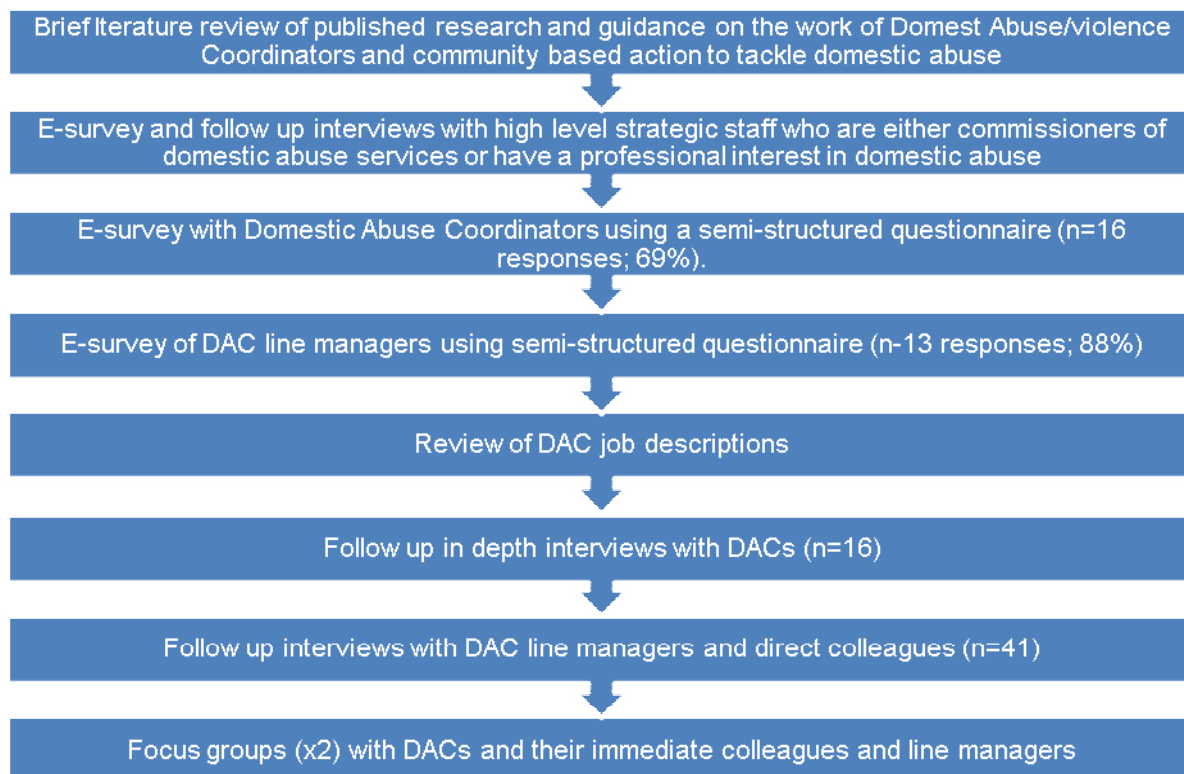
- To inform the development of a set of key performance standards for Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales

(Research specification, Welsh Assembly Government, 2010)

2 Methods

The review was approached in the spirit of ‘Appreciative Enquiry’ to help understand the potential benefits of the DACs’ work and the ways they are supporting the delivery of the national Domestic Abuse Strategy. With this approach, we sought to identify areas of good practice that could be developed and proposals for improving ways of working. Figure 1 describes the main research steps.

Figure 1) research methods summary



Topic guides and the E-surveys are attached at appendix 3. The research was based mainly on qualitative data from a range of respondents with working knowledge of the work of DACs. Much of the detail about day-to-day workload was

gathered from DACs themselves, and their line managers. Interviews with stakeholders who work with DACs or who have a professional interest in their work, or with domestic abuse more generally, were also conducted. These respondents were able to provide information on policy context and future challenges for the domestic abuse agenda. A range of respondents was selected to triangulate the information provided by each, so that an objective picture of the current and potential future role could be established.

A brief literature review was conducted, using a systematic approach, guided by systematic review principles (CRD, 2001). The purpose was to provide a policy context for the challenges DACs face and the guidelines they work within. A number of search terms were identified as having relevance to the inquiry, including terms specific to 'Domestic Abuse Coordinator' and community-based action on domestic abuse more generally. Bibliographic databases of published research as well as government and Welsh Assembly guidelines were then searched for relevant documents, using the search terms agreed by the research team. We examined articles published in English in the UK and abroad in the last ten years. Search terms were both specific to Domestic Abuse Coordinators ('Domestic Violence Coordinators', in England), and more general, relating to coordinated action in tackling domestic abuse.

An electronic survey (E-survey) was distributed to members of the Domestic Abuse Working Group (DAWG), a group of senior stakeholders working across Wales and supported by the Welsh Assembly Government to help shape policy around domestic abuse and monitor progress on the Domestic Abuse Strategy. The purpose was to gauge the current policy context for DACs and identify preferences amongst the DAWG for the future scope and direction for the DAC role. The DAWG E-survey generated 10 responses out of 36 members contacted (a response rate of 27%). The E-survey was distributed three times, the second and third time with a reminder message to try to improve response rates. From these initial responses we conducted six in depth interviews with members of the DAWG to explore their responses more fully.

A similar E-survey to the DAWG version was distributed to all 22 Domestic Abuse Coordinators and their line managers. These surveys were semi structured. The purpose was to generate data on the current work and future challenges for DACs and to identify recurrent issues for further exploration in qualitative research. All respondents to the E-surveys were asked to take part in a follow-up interview. 16 responses to the DAC E-survey were received, a response rate of 84%. 13 responses were received from DAC line managers (response rate, 68%).

Follow-up interviews were conducted with DACs (n=16), their line managers (n=9), and people who regularly interact with DACs on a professional basis and whose contact details were provided by DACs (for example, Partnership managers and IDVAs; n=32). These interviews were open-ended. A discussion guide was developed, based on findings from the literature review, the research specification and emerging findings from the on-line surveys. Additionally, a focus group discussion was organised to explore the issues in-depth with DACs and their close colleagues in two areas in Wales - mid and South Wales, with six and eight participants respectively. These were attended by Domestic Abuse Coordinators, their line managers, senior colleagues from voluntary sector organisations and staff from statutory services, including Police, Supporting People, housing and education. The IDVA working in the two areas where focus groups were conducted also attended. The focus groups explored in more detail the issues raised in the other elements of the research, and generated discussion between different respondent groups; this was particularly useful for exploring issues around partnership working and interagency cooperation.

Desk research which examined DAC job descriptions and action plans was undertaken to compare similarities and differences across DAC roles, and to identify the extent to which national priorities have been addressed. However, in many cases, the documents examined did not provide an accurate picture of the work DACs actually do, given the sometimes dynamic nature of the work. Job descriptions and information on DAC pay scales was made available by 11 of the original 16 respondents to the E-survey.

All E-survey responses were analysed for descriptive statistics, using Excel. Qualitative interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were coded and analysed using specialist software. The coding tree was agreed by two researchers.

A list of agencies that DAC colleagues work for and who agreed to be interviewed are provided at Appendix 2.

Structure of the report

The following report presents findings from the different elements of the research. First, the findings of the literature review provide context and background; then the findings are presented in thematic form, although emphasis is placed on specific research steps where necessary.

Chapter 3 outlines findings from a literature review to provide policy context to the DAC role

Chapter 4 outlines the current situation of the DACs work; key points are highlighted in text boxes throughout this section

Chapter 5 addresses performance management recommendations for DACs and related issues for partner agencies

Chapter 6 outlines the main challenges for Domestic Abuse Coordinators and good practice points

3 Literature Review

3.1 Background – domestic abuse and the role of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator in Wales

In recent years the UK Government and Welsh Assembly Government have passed a series of legislative, strategic, and policy initiatives to combat domestic abuse. This

has raised the issue of domestic abuse as a priority across a number of statutory agencies. The now well-known statistic that one in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime in the UK is underscored in a number of strategy and guidance documents aimed at tackling the problem. These include Home Office guidance on multi agency responses (Home Office, 2000), the Welsh Assembly's Domestic Abuse Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2005), and updated 'The Right to be Safe' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010a) and, in 2004, the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, which involved the biggest overhaul of domestic violence legislation for 30 years (Joseph, 2006). These initiatives were a response to strong evidence on the extent of the problem. Research indicates that one out of every six homeless families is escaping domestic violence (Home Office, 1999). There are children living in half of the households where domestic violence is an issue (Home Office, 2001). Walby (2004) estimates that domestic violence is costing Britain nearly £23 billion a year. 'The Right to be Safe' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010a) recognises that domestic violence affects women disproportionately, whilst also noting that men may also experience domestic violence. Furthermore, British Crime Survey data has consistently shown that victims of domestic violence are more likely to experience repeat victimisation than victims of other types of crime. Repeat victimisation accounts for three-quarters (76%) of all incidents of domestic violence, according to the 2009/2010 Survey (Home Office, 2010).

Domestic Abuse Coordinators (DACs) were introduced across England and Wales from the early 1990s and the posts have been funded directly in Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government since 2005. In Wales, Domestic Abuse Coordinators' (DAC) objectives have been shaped by the publication of the 2010 Strategy, 'The Right to be Safe', which integrates all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour crimes (including murder) and female genital mutilation. Hitherto, the key strategy document for DACs has been the 2005 Domestic Abuse Strategy, which addresses domestic abuse specifically, and which is defined as: 'the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self confidence, sexual violence or the threat of

violence, by a person who is or has been in a close relationship'¹ (Welsh Assembly, 2005).

However, the absence of a standard definition of the DAC role has been highlighted as a development need by the inquiry into domestic abuse in Wales conducted by the Communities and Culture Committee (2008), which found 'significant variation in the role and position of local authority domestic abuse coordinators'. This need is also identified in the recent implementation plan for Wales - 'Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010b), which has prompted the present review. Thus, this review seeks to address a key gap by providing a definition of the overall purpose for the Domestic Abuse Coordinator role. This is a necessary first step before addressing another key objective for the research, to 'inform the development of a set of key performance standards' for DACs.

A recent conference of the Standing Together Trust, a national domestic violence policy organisation, describes the DAC role as being 'vital' to the coordinated community response to domestic violence by encouraging 'coordinated partnership' in which agencies 'cede power to the greater purpose of the partnership'(Standing Together, 2008a). This goal is the responsibility of all partners involved and not just of the DAC however, the description provides a strong indication of the direction in which the role is being focussed at a UK-wide level.

Since the introduction of Domestic Abuse Coordinators, their role has been developed at a local level, with varying job descriptions and critical objectives across areas (Diamond et al 2004). Despite this variety researchers have identified the potential positive impact of a domestic abuse coordinator within a community safety partnership setting, indicating that the presence of a DAC 'has an association with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships meeting targets over a 12 month period'.

¹ For the full definition see Welsh Assembly Government (2005) Tackling Domestic Abuse: The All Wales National Strategy

(Diamond et al, 2004). There is an acknowledgement that the DAC role will be important to help deliver on high level policy directives and strategies at a local level (Home Office, 2004, Welsh Local Government Association website). The present review seeks to elucidate the potential good practice for DACs, areas for improvement and linkages with other elements of good practice in domestic abuse policy at a local level. A key task is to identify what should be the overarching objectives of the role and then set out how these may be achieved on a daily basis.

3.2 Domestic abuse in Wales: relevant policy direction

Overarching policy direction for organisations in Wales working to address domestic abuse is provided in the first of the Welsh Assembly Government's 2005 Domestic Abuse Strategy's objectives. This calls for a 'coordinated joint agency response' (CJAR); this encompasses all strands in the 2005 Strategy: victim services, perpetrator accountability and educational preventative work. CJAR is an approach for addressing domestic abuse which is sometimes referred to as the 'Coordinated Community Response' model (CCR). CCR is now widely recognised as the best approach for reducing domestic violence (Hague and Bridge, 2008)². An important aspect of a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model is that it seeks to create an infrastructure to facilitate systems-level, and ultimately societal-level, change (Salazar et al, 2007). This approach originated in Duluth, Canada where a number of other innovative approaches to domestic abuse have been pioneered, particularly that of working with perpetrators. The CCR/CJAR model promotes joint agency working to hold perpetrators to account and improve safety for victims and their families. These initiatives usually have some specific funding, and an active commitment to achieving both institutional change in the relevant agencies to effectively address domestic abuse, as well as wider social change, to help prevent abuse in the future (Hague and Bridge, 2008). The research evidence on CCRs is, on balance, supportive, suggesting that they result in better agency cooperation. Clark et al (1996), for example, studied six CCRs in the US and found that the

² The term 'Coordinated Joint Agency Response' traditionally refers to an approach that differs from CCR in that the latter includes a wider range of community services, such as schools and hospitals, rather than just criminal justice and victim support agencies; it also encompasses primary, as well as secondary, prevention. The Joint Agency Response developed in the Welsh Strategy is closer to the CCR model in that it includes primary prevention and emphasises the cross-agency relevance of the problem

approach is often effective in encouraging increased coordination. In their review of evidence on evaluations of CCRs, Shepard (1999) reports that while the successes of individual components of a coordinated response have been modest – such as criminal justice-linked perpetrator programmes – there is evidence that combining approaches and agency responses in a coordinated approach reduces future incidents of violence. In their quasi experimental study of the impact of CCR, Post et al (2010) found that women in communities with 6-year CCRs (as opposed to 3-year CCRs) are less likely to report any aggression against them in the past year. However, the CCR models did not change community members' knowledge of domestic abuse nor of available services (Posts et al, 2010).

Researchers point to an important potential pitfall for CCRs in that they may reproduce existing power imbalances between agencies – meaning, for example, that agencies which do not contribute something to the collaborative effort are shielded from scrutiny of their role through their association with other more active partners (Gamache and Asmus, 1999).

3.3 Policy context and guidance for the role of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator

The key objectives within both the 2005 and 2010 Welsh Assembly Government Strategies addressing domestic abuse are:

- To facilitate the development and implementation of a quality, coordinated joint-agency response
- To improve the current service provision for all victims and to particularly increase the safe choices for women and children/young people who experience domestic abuse
- To hold abusers accountable for their behaviour
- To increase public awareness as to the issues

surrounding domestic abuse

- To challenge the notion that domestic abuse is acceptable
- To protect children and young people in Wales from the negative impact of domestic abuse
- To educate and inform children/young people to enable them to make informed choices

Further, the 2005 Strategy sets out the expectation for local policy implementation to take a holistic approach, in which Community Safety Partnerships develop as part of their statutory responsibility to reduce crime and disorder, an 'audit' of and strategies for tackling domestic abuse at a local level. This presents particular challenges for the issue of domestic abuse, as incidents are often hidden; making the identification and monitoring of domestic abuse incidents in the local area a priority. 'The Right to be Safe' (2010a) national priorities include: prevention and raising awareness of violence against women and domestic abuse; providing support for victims and children; improving the response of criminal justice agencies; improving the response of health services and other agencies. These priorities correspond with the 2005 strategy, albeit with a wider definition of abuse and violence.

Expectations for the role of the DAC are also indicated by the Welsh Local Government Association checklist for partnership working on domestic violence (WLGA, 2005), part of which is specific to the role of the DAC including:

- permanence and continuity of the job and funding
- location of the role in relation to budget holding and strategic posts/organisations
- high level accountability and line management

3.4 Recent relevant policy developments

The literature review returned information on a number of key initiatives relevant to local policy implementation. These are likely to affect the DAC role and daily workload. They are summarised in box one below.

Box one) key recent policy developments affecting the work of Domestic Abuse Coordinators.

- **The development of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)**

SDVCs were introduced from 2004 and involve specially trained judiciary, victims' advocates and witness support. The purpose of SDVCs is to better support victims and increase the number of prosecutions for domestic abuse.

- **The introduction of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)**

A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, probation, health and child protection services, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

- **The introduction of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs)**

IDVAs were introduced in 2006 to provide independent advice and support for victims of domestic abuse. Specifically, IDVAs support victims in their journey through the criminal justice process.

- **The introduction of Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs)**

ISVAs have similar responsibilities to IDVAs but work with victims of sexual violence to assist them in accessing appropriate support, and advocating on their behalf with criminal justice processes.

- **Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act, 2004**

The Act created changes in legislation, including making common assault an arrestable offence, triggering multi-agency reviews in murder cases, and making breaching non molestation orders an arrestable offence.

- **Development of programmes to rehabilitate perpetrators of domestic violence**

Perpetrator programmes have been in existence for over 30 years. However, there

has been a growing emphasis recently on their implementation, in an effort to re-balance action on domestic violence to enhance perpetrator accountability and emphasise the need for behavioural change.

Key points

- There is no single definition for the role of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator however, current good practice evidence and UK and Welsh Assembly Government policy points directly at the need to develop a co-ordinated joint agency response to domestic abuse and of the Coordinators' central importance in delivering this objective
- Domestic Abuse is a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government, as outlined in the 2005 Domestic Abuse Strategy and 'The Right to be Safe', (2010a)
- Domestic Abuse Coordinators (DACs) were introduced across England and Wales from the early 1990s and in Wales the posts have been funded directly by the Welsh Assembly Government since 2005
- The Right to be Safe (2010a) incorporated all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse, into an overarching priority
- Since the introduction of Domestic Abuse Coordinators, their role has been developed at a local level with varying job descriptions and critical objectives

4. Findings from the E-surveys and qualitative research

In this section, findings from E-surveys and qualitative interviews with a range of respondents are presented. The data describes the current activities DACs undertake, explores the barriers they experience in meeting their work objectives and presents suggestions for how the role should be in the future. Also presented is evidence on pay scales and job descriptions.

4.1 The current and desired focus of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator role

E-survey responses from 16 Domestic Abuse Coordinators provide details about their post. Tables one, two and three below detail these. The tables show the large majority of DACs have been in post for over 2 years, and 31% in post for over 5 years. 75% are in post full time and the majority are located within Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and are line managed by senior staff within CSPs.

Table 1) Length of time DAC respondents have been in post

Length of time in post (years)			
Less than 1	1 to 2	2 to 5	More than 5
3 (18%)	3 (18%)	5 (31%)	5 (31%)

Table 2) Terms of employment for DAC respondents

Part time	Full time
4 (25%)	12 (75%)

Table 3) Organisation where DAC line management is located

Line manager location			
CSP	Police	Voluntary Sector	Other statutory service
9 (56%)	1 (6%)	2 (12%)	4 (25%)

The figures in the above tables vary somewhat from those of a recent UK-wide survey of Domestic Abuse/Violence Coordinators, conducted by Standing Together (2008b), which issued a survey to all Domestic Violence/abuse Coordinators in the UK. Of the 85 respondents to the Standing Together survey, 19% had been in post for more than 5 years, compared to the 31% of respondents to this research. A larger number of respondents to this research had posts located within Community Safety Partnerships, compared to those responding to the Standing Together survey (56% compared to 2%). The large majority of respondents to the UK wide-survey were located within the 'Local Authority' (n=66, 78%). Although the Standing Together survey is two years older than the present research, the differences in some findings between the two surveys indicate some potentially different ways of working between Welsh DACs and UK wide counterparts.

E-survey responses from DACs' line managers and members of the Domestic Abuse Working Group revealed some discrepancies in understanding about the focus of the DAC role currently. Respondents provided a score for what they felt was the most important focus of the DAC role at the moment. Scores were given for a set of task 'areas' on a scale of 1 to 5, '1' being 'the most applicable' and '5' being 'the least applicable'. Table 4 below provides DAC responses; this shows the most important current focus is on acting as a change agent in local partnerships. The least important focus is on working directly with victims and their families. This concurs with qualitative feedback from DACs, which suggested an important focus for the work currently includes developing and enhancing the work of domestic abuse forums, to improve the representation and accountability of the forums' structures. Line manager responses to the same question on the E-survey concurred that working directly with victims and families is the least important focus; however, it was felt that *'increasing awareness and knowledge about domestic abuse amongst statutory agencies, for example through training'* was currently the most important focus.

Table 4) DACs', line managers' and members of the DAWG average rating for importance of activity in DACs' work currently (1= current focus, 5 = not the current focus).

	DAC	Line manager	DAWG members
To act as a change agent in local partnerships, in order to improve services for victims and work with perpetrators	1	1.6	1.6
To work directly with victims and their families to ensure they receive effective support	5	4.2	4.2
To increase awareness and knowledge about domestic abuse amongst statutory agencies, for example through training	2	1.1	2.6
To research and develop new services by responding to local needs	3	1.7	3
To work with statutory and voluntary partners to improve information sharing and responsiveness to the needs of victims.	3	1.5	2.4

Members of the Domestic Abuse Working Group (DAWG) in Wales were asked for their interpretation of the current focus of DAC work. These responses correspond more closely with the DAC responses; however, all interview respondents from the DAWG commented that they had only limited knowledge of the current work focus for DACs.

Qualitative research provided more insight into the current role that Domestic Abuse Coordinators fulfil. A key focus reported across respondent groups was on ensuring that the local Domestic Abuse Forum (Forum) is able to identify and address priorities for domestic abuse. Forums were at different stages of development across regions. For example, Forums in some areas needed to identify strategic leads for each policy area – such as housing, education or health – in order to ensure that actions identified in Forum meetings could be taken forward effectively. Thus, some DACs' current focus was on organising and rewriting action plans to ensure a better focus on delivery:

'I'm in the process of reviewing what they do and how each partner is addressing the priorities on the local Strategy' (DAC, South Wales)

'We need to strengthen our DAF because there are political issues at the moment; we need to identify strategic leads [within the Forum] so that people can make decisions.' (DAC line manager)

Other ways of working to change agencies' response to domestic abuse involve ensuring that domestic abuse is captured on other departments' strategies and objectives – for example, by attending key partnership meetings or offering advice and information about the range of services available in the local area.

'The DACs' main success for me was raising the profile of DA through the DA Forum. Also, helping to organise a Safeguarding Children conference. And it helped the partnership working, bringing all the agendas together.' (DAC line manager, North Wales)

'The DAC provided me with an overview of what services there were, and what help was available.' (Children's Services manager, mid Wales)

E-survey responses provided a breakdown of the time currently allocated by DACs to a number of tasks, from the perspective of DACs themselves and their line managers. Table 5 below details the responses. This shows that the largest proportion of time is given to organising training events for professionals. The finding is interesting, given the assessment that 'acting as change agent' was considered the most important current focus of the role by DACs themselves.

Table 5) percentage of time allocated to specific tasks, according to DAC responses and line manager responses

tasks	<i>% of total DAC time allocated to tasks according to DACs</i>	<i>% of total DAC time allocated to tasks according to DAC line managers</i>
organising/overseeing the MARAC	3	2
active project management of specific services	13	9
collating/analysing management information on domestic abuse services	3	8
developing /working with local media	1	3
organising training events for professionals	14	14
organising training/awareness raising events for the community (excluding media work)	8	8
organising/overseeing the Domestic Abuse Forum	10	8
providing strategic advice to partner agencies	3	11
developing local domestic violence strategies	6	9
consultation and liaison with domestic violence service providers	7	9
providing advocacy support to domestic abuse victims and their families	4	0
organising/overseeing the MAPPAs	0.0	0.6
attending partnership meetings	12	9.2
applying for funding	8	5.3
creating intelligence data on domestic abuse need in the community	3	3.2
developing processes for joint working with partners such as information sharing protocols	3	2.8

4.2 The provision of training and awareness raising

Qualitative data shows that the role of training and awareness-raising is seen as very important by a significant proportion of both DAC and non-DAC respondents,

particularly in areas where it is felt that the domestic abuse agenda has not taken hold and is not treated as seriously as it should be.

Respondents were asked through focus groups and one-to-one interviews about the point at which training and awareness raising should be 'mainstreamed', given that much work has already been put into raising the profile of domestic abuse across agencies over the last few years, as frequently highlighted in interviews with both DACs and line managers. This question received very mixed responses: on the one hand, training and awareness raising is seen as an activity of central importance:

'You can never stop raising awareness because there's always something new to learn about domestic abuse'. (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

'There are always new agendas and initiatives that mean different agencies have to raise their level of knowledge.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, Mid Wales)

'There is such a large degree of staff turnover that it's important to keep updating the training.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents who were either line managers or external partners, felt that training is a function that other agencies should take more responsibility for:

'The DAC seems to do all the training. We allow her to do some of it but we have to be careful that her time doesn't get swallowed up by all the different demands from different agencies.' (DAC line manager, North Wales)

'It seems that the role was at first much more about boosting the profile of domestic abuse, but now there should be better understanding across partners so the role should perhaps move on.' (Senior Partnership Manager, mid-Wales)

'I really don't think that providing training should be the focus of the DAC's work. If there is a lack of training the job should be making sure that domestic abuse is addressed in other agencies' training activities.' (Senior Stakeholder, voluntary sector)

These views are underlined in E-survey responses by line managers, where 69.2% strongly agreed that 'To increase awareness and knowledge about domestic abuse amongst statutory agencies, for example through training' *should* be the main focus of DACs' work, compared to 83.3% who felt the activity *was currently* the main focus – a difference of 14.1%.

This issue of whether DACs *should* provide training on domestic abuse issues goes to the heart of what it means to work in partnership to deliver joint agency responses. Clearly, training activities form a large part of DACs' activities, and they are often seen as an important means of raising the profile of domestic abuse. However, the total amount of time spent on this varies from area to area. During in depth interviews, DACs reported that they respond to local circumstances and need. If there is a poor level of understanding around domestic abuse at the front line, more training is needed, it is argued. However, there was little evidence emerging from our conversations across respondent groups that training was being mainstreamed by partner organisations; particularly in areas where training forms a large part of the DAC's focus. Working with partners to ensure that training around domestic abuse is mainstreamed may prove an area for future work development, and line managers may need to provide further guidance around this. The balance of the evidence provided by qualitative responses suggests strongly that the development and provision of training to staff on operational issues connected with domestic abuse, unless as part of a programme to improve the standing of the issues at a senior strategic level, should be delivered by other agencies.

4.3 Working with Domestic Abuse Forums

Domestic Abuse Forums (DAF) provide the main source of direction and action-setting for DACs in most areas. As Table 4 shows, a great deal of time is allocated to

organising and attending DAF meetings and in-depth interviews with DACs show that Forums typically do the following:

- Review and agrees local Domestic Abuse Strategies
- Develop action plans for delivering priorities on local Strategies
- Review progress against targets contained within local action plans
- Discuss issues arising from reports and updates from Forum members and the Domestic Abuse Coordinator
- Agree and allocates action to address issues arising in Forum discussions

Domestic Abuse Coordinators provide Forums with updates on services and raise issues which have emerged from their routine contact with agencies such as the MARAC, Police and IDVAs, in particular. Forums will discuss blockages and barriers in agencies' responses to domestic abuse and discuss ways of addressing them during their meeting. However, DACs frequently reported that when it came to taking action on specific points raised in the Forums they were almost always the ones allocated with the task:

'It usually comes down to me to do any actions.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

DAC respondents and colleagues frequently reported in qualitative research a perception that DACs were spread too thinly on occasion and were overly relied upon to deliver actions or address issues arising through Forum discussions. Tasks that DACs take forward from Forum meetings range from developing funding applications to developing services. That DACs take forward a great deal of the actions arising from DAF meetings has advantages and disadvantages. For many DAC respondents, having a single person accountable for an action is important to ensure that it happens – but there was also an acknowledgement that dependence on any one individual for delivery always carries with it a risk if that person were to leave their post. However, given the breadth and depth of domestic abuse as an issue, many respondents commented how important it is that other agencies commit time to taking actions forward. On balance, qualitative responses from DACs, their

line managers and other colleagues reveal a consensus that the DAC should not be the only resource for taking forward actions on domestic abuse; rather, more emphasis needs to be placed on partner agencies supplying resources and time to delivering on actions agreed through DAF meetings.

'It is really important that we get domestic abuse on the agenda of other major departments' strategies.' (DAC line manager, South Wales)

There was significant variation between the views of DACs in qualitative interviews about their responsibility for addressing specific service gaps. For a large majority (14 out of 16 respondents), it was reported that the local Forum lacked the resources to take forward actions that were agreed and that this put pressure on the DAC to fill this gap. However, there was less agreement between DACs about whether they should in fact take this step and fill the gap. For example, the following DAC respondent indicated the importance of personally taking forward actions:

'If I don't do it, it won't get done.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

Another respondent pointed out that longer-term strategies for ensuring actions concerning domestic abuse are addressed, are more important:

'If the DAC does all of the work there will be no one there to make sure the gap doesn't get filled in the future' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, mid Wales)

A consensus broadly exists across DAC respondents and their line managers, that although DACs are the main port of call and resource for addressing issues connected with domestic abuse at a local level, more needs to be done to build longer term strategies for actions to be sustainable so that the DAC is not so heavily relied upon to address domestic abuse in the future:

'Basically, if it's to do with domestic violence then – who do you go to? – you go to the coordinator, which is a good thing and a bad thing. We do need

other agencies to step in. [The DAC] can't do everything.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator line manager, mid Wales)

Moreover, a minority of DAC respondents provided examples of where they felt the need to step in to deliver actions not normally considered part of their role. These included taking over the coordination of a MARAC when there was no MARAC coordinator in post, and taking the lead on developing a training programme for a statutory agency.

Again, the balance of qualitative evidence from both line manager and DAC respondents is that this type of practice should be avoided:

'If I filled the gaps where this service should be then we would never get the funding for one.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

'If there is a gap on an agencies' training strategy, then the DAC should be working to know why there is a gap and making sure that the gap is addressed in the longer term.' (DAC line manager, South Wales)

4.4 Working with IDVAs and MARACs

There was a clear distinction between the work of the DACs and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) (see box 1 above), as consistently reported by a number of respondent groups, including line managers, DACs themselves, IDVAs and other DAC colleague respondents. Two DAC respondents to the qualitative research reported line managing the IDVA in their local area. This involved offering advice and support on specific cases if necessary and ensuring the processes involved in supporting victims, including through the MARAC process, were working well. There was no suggestion throughout the research that the work of the IDVA and DAC duplicated each others. However, it was felt that the presence of the IDVA was important in delivering on local priorities; for ensuring that victims are supported well in the local area. Thus, a significant proportion of DACs reported

being instrumental in applying for funding for the IDVA role. Where the IDVA is not line managed directly by the DAC, IDVAs and DACs communicate, typically, on a weekly basis. This is to share information about current challenges and service blockages and also to gather data on local needs and to monitor the work of the IDVA. The DAC will provide advice and support to the IDVA as necessary.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are also considered a separate function to the work of the DAC:

'There is absolutely no crossover between what the MARAC does and the DAC The MARAC is police led and should be police coordinated.' (DAC line manager, South Wales)

'I will go to the MARAC to see what is going on from time to time in order to keep my ear to the ground, but I am not involved to a great extent with organisation of the MARAC – that is the MARAC coordinator's job.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, mid-Wales)

The above responses are typical of the DAC's relationship with the MARAC. However, it was reported in one case that in the absence of a MARAC coordinator, the DAC had provided coordination support. In many job descriptions for DACs (see section below) ensuring that the MARAC functions and is monitored is the responsibility of the DAC. Given this, there is a risk that when there are shortages in staff to oversee the process, the DAC will be under pressure to step in. However, a consensus exists across respondent groups that this should not be the case and the work of the DACs was primarily seen as providing oversight and advice to the MARAC, not direct support.

4.5 Particular issues and barriers facing Domestic Abuse Coordinators

Information sharing and monitoring

A key barrier that was frequently mentioned by DACs, line managers and other colleague respondents was the difficulty of obtaining accurate information on victimisation and repeat victimisation from various agencies that collect such data.

The main source of information on victimisation currently is police data; however a number of DAC respondents reported difficulties in ensuring the police provide this data in a timely fashion. The problem of obtaining accurate information on domestic abuse victimisation is well known, as many incidents are unreported³. Furthermore, there is no single 'crime' of domestic abuse, and where violence towards an intimate partner is suspected by an arresting police officer, reporting of that aspect is inconsistent across areas. For example, in one police area officers may tick a pre-programmed 'box' indicating 'domestic abuse'; in another, officers may write free text, when completing custody records.

Ensuring that DACs have a good relationship with the police, particularly within Community Safety Units, and with police information analysts, is important to ensure that anonymised data is made available for monitoring by DACs. Similarly, with voluntary sector organisations who work with victims, DACs frequently reported reticence amongst these agencies about sharing anonymised data on victims who are accessing their services. Good practice suggestions from some DAC respondents concerning the issue of data collection include ensuring that a senior police officer of at least Inspector rank regularly attends domestic abuse Forum meetings. This would improve access to police decision makers and the appropriate line of command. Similarly, ensuring that voluntary sector bodies are informed of the work of the Domestic Abuse Forum on a regular basis and consulted on issues that arise from Forum meetings, has been felt to improve information sharing and trust between the DAC and voluntary sector bodies.

Increased remit to address all forms of violence against women

DAC respondents frequently reported anxiety over the potential increased workload resulting from the inclusion of other forms of violence against women within a single strategic priority, since the publication of *The Right to be Safe* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010a), which integrates domestic violence with other forms of violence against women. It was reported that responsibility for addressing the other

³ In Britain, domestic violence is the least likely violent crime to be reported to the police, and just under one-third of incidents were reported. On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before she reports it to the police (Home Office, 2001).

forms of violence included in The Right to be Safe, such as sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour crimes (including murder) and female genital mutilation was being given to domestic abuse coordinators, although at the time of this research, not all DACs reported this. These anxieties were not shared by line managers and it is too early to detect if workload pressures will be substantially increased. However, it is an issue that will need monitoring in the near future.

4.6 Pay scales and job descriptions

It was frequently reported in both qualitative and E-survey responses that Domestic Abuse Coordinators have very varying job descriptions and pay scales.

Our analysis of job descriptions also showed this to be the case, although we acknowledge that job descriptions are often ‘dead’ documents’ that do not necessarily reflect the actual work DACs do. Indeed, there was a remarkable degree of consistency across DAC respondents to both the E-survey and qualitative research, about the amount of time spent on a range of activities, despite variation in job descriptions. However, an important point about job descriptions is that they reflect the *intended* standing of the role within an organisation and set the tone of the types of work and level of engagement expected with other key partners. Thus, we found some job descriptions were more operational in tone whilst others have a more strategic approach.

11 of the 16 respondents to this research provided information on their job descriptions and pay scales. Table 6 below provides information about Domestic Abuse Coordinators’ line management and accountability and general responsibilities, taken from job descriptions. It is important to note that the job descriptions do not provide an accurate reflection of the work that DACs actually undertake, although they serve to illustrate the variety in lines of accountability and responsibilities. Table 6 shows that only three of the 11 job descriptions specify responsibilities for directly-reporting staff. There is variation in the level of seniority of

line manager, although the majority of DAC respondents are managed by a lead officer for community safety. Most job descriptions specify responsibility for strategic development of domestic abuse policy. Responsibility for the development of strategy and policy around domestic abuse is a consistently reported focus for DACs. Despite this, specific tasks and responsibilities defined in the job descriptions vary from region to region. Qualitative responses also reveal that DACs' work plans are very often set not from the job description but from the DACs' own set of priorities, which may be revised regularly:

'I set my own priorities really. This comes from the work of the Forum, but it is down to me to identify what I need to be working on.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, mid-Wales)

Some DACs expressed a desire for closer management of their work plan so that their objectives may be clear:

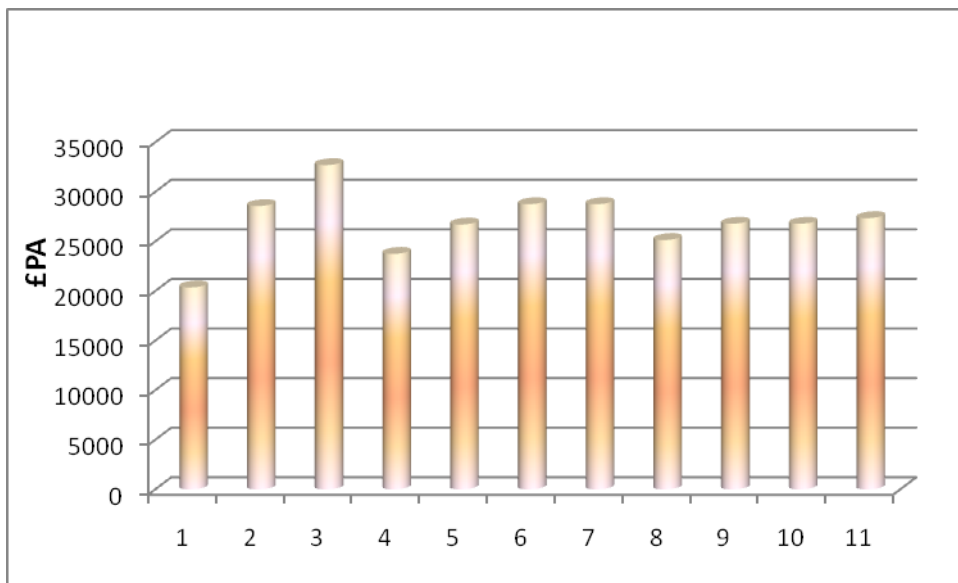
'I would prefer to have meaningful discussion of the priorities. Sometimes it seems that I'm the only one who really understands the issues around domestic abuse to be able to say what the priorities are.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North-Wales)

Table 6) Domestic Abuse Coordinators' line management, and accountability and general responsibilities from written job descriptions

DAC	Reporting to	responsible for Staff (n)	Main responsibilities	Interaction with MARAC
1	Children Protection Coordinator	1	Coordinate Domestic Abuse Forum, develop services	no reference in job description
2	Chief Executive –Women's Aid	0	Prepare DAF action plan and other service strategies	no reference in job description
3	Executive Director, Community Safety Partnership	0	On- going development of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy	providing strategic support
4	Community Safety Coordinator	0	Multi agency policy development	providing general oversight
5	Senior Community Safety Officer	0	To develop and implement Domestic Abuse Strategic plan	providing oversight and development
6	Principal Community Safety Officer	0	To develop and implement Domestic Abuse Strategic plan	no reference in job description
7	Police Public Protection Unit	1	Coordinate activities of the DAF and raise awareness amongst agencies	no reference in job description
8	Domestic Abuse Forum	0	Develop and implement DA Strategy	no reference in job description
9	Community Safety Chair	0	Coordinate activities of the DAF	no reference in job description
10	Community Safety Partnership	5	Manage a multi agency team providing advocacy	attendance only expected
11	Senior Community Safety Officer	0	Strategic development of Domestic Abuse policy	providing oversight and monitoring

Based on analysis of available data on pay for DAC roles (n=11), the mean average pay for a DAC is £26, 879. The variation between the lowest and highest pay is £12, 336. Chart 1 below shows the salaries payable as detailed by all respondents.

Chart 1) DAC annual salaries



Base) 11 responses

Evidence gathered throughout this review suggests that variations in pay scales as displayed in Chart 1 do not necessarily reflect variation in responsibilities. For example, some DACs who are responsible for directly managing staff are paid less than DACs who do not. DACs are responsible to line managers of similar levels of seniority, yet, pay scales vary.

Many respondents from different groups reported that there was an unacceptable level of variation in pay scales. This was particularly disconcerting for some DACs who were aware of the different pay scales, as when a post is advertised, the information is made public.

4.7 Current funding arrangements

DACs and line managers were asked to provide information about the funding for the post.

Table 7 below details the responses. This shows that for a majority of the 11 respondents, funding for their posts is topped up by additional funding which typically comes from local Community Safety Partnership budgets as well as Home Office funding. All 11 respondents' posts were funded, at least in part, by £27,000 provided by the Welsh Assembly Government. A consensus from line manager respondents was that the £27,000 was either inadequate or barely adequate to cover the total cost of the post. Two of the 11 DAC respondents work part time; in which cases the £27,000 of Welsh Assembly Government funding was able to cover the total cost of their employment.

Table 7) funding arrangements for DACs based on 11 responses

£27k funding from Welsh Assembly Government only	Number accessing additional funding for the post <£10k	Number accessing additional funding for the post >£10k
3	4	4

'Additional' funding came from a variety of sources. These included:

- The Home Office
- Local Community Safety Partnership budgets
- Discreet grant funding from national organisations

Many DACs are involved in applying for funding from external bodies for domestic abuse projects and services. This involves writing funding applications for external funding streams such as Big Lottery funding or discreet Home Office budgets.

However, this was not identified by DACs as a core function of their work. One line manager respondent made an important point in relation to this:

'We have to be careful that DACs don't go off and start applying for money doing joint bids with other services. They will be seen to be in competition for already scarce resources. It is better for the DAC to focus on getting domestic abuse into mainstream services so that it becomes a normal part of provision.'
(Domestic Abuse Forum member, voluntary sector, South Wales)

4.8 Level of seniority

Questions of pay were frequently followed in qualitative responses with a discussion of the level of seniority and authority that DACs occupy. Responses from both DAC line managers and colleagues consistently were that the DAC is able to fulfil the requirements of the job given current levels of seniority and that, more important than seniority, is the commitment and passion of individual Coordinators. This had little to do with their seniority in their organisation. However, a recurring theme to emerge from conversations with line managers and other DAC colleagues was the need for high level commitment to their work from their line managers and wider organisation in which they are based. Frequently, this was felt to be lacking:

'It is important that they have a weight behind them so that they can escalate the issues to the right place.' (Partnership Manager, mid-Wales)

'Line management is important, and also it is about the priority that the organisation in which they are located [gives] domestic abuse. If the organisation doesn't consider it is a high priority, then their ability to get any work done is affected.' (DAC colleague respondent, voluntary sector, mid-Wales)

The extent to which DACs were able to influence policy at a senior level within statutory partnerships and services was a function of the extent to which domestic abuse is a priority within organisations generally, it was felt:

'Of course, the fact that DACs are quite low down the scale of management is indicative of the priority level given to domestic abuse.' (DAC line manager, North Wales)

"I know DACs who have left because they weren't listened to. We need more recognition of the importance of the role. But we need someone to be able to take things up when necessary.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

'We are not as senior as I think we should be sometimes, but that reflects the fact that domestic abuse is not taken that seriously.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, mid Wales)

This also means that there is little opportunity for career progression for DACs, unless it is to a different role with a broader remit. In relation to career prospects for DACs, one line manager respondent introduced the idea of integrating DAC work across regions and instituting the integrated role as a more senior post. This could potentially ensure high level organisation entry for domestic abuse as an issue, and may be cost effective if it yields results across areas. However, this would need further reflection and scoping, beyond the focus of this review.

Domestic Abuse Coordinators themselves were realistic about the level of seniority they could achieve, acknowledging that their responsibility is to escalate issues through their line management if partners needed to be brought to task – for example, to deliver on an action they had previously committed to. The highest level of accountability for DACs responding to this research is at Head of Service level and in many cases; it was at Principal Community Safety Officer level, which is one grade below Head of Service. However, conversations with DACs revealed that it is not necessarily the job title of their line manager which ensures action is taken forward, but rather the level of commitment of that person and of their agency more widely. The majority of DAC respondents reported that they were generally satisfied with their line management support and supervision, although a minority reported

that they sometimes felt isolated in their role – for example having to set their own priorities and workloads, and identify the priorities for the area, without a clear steer from line managers or other colleagues. For example, two DAC respondents reported that their role is to provide expert advice (correctly, in their view) and thus, line managers and others wouldn't be expected to have adequate understanding to discuss priorities with them:

'I sometimes feel as if I am unable to discuss issues because I am the only one who understands enough about domestic abuse.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

'I seem to spend a lot of time explaining the arguments for action because my level of understanding is higher than (that of) other people in the organisation.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, mid-Wales)

4.9 Professional relationships: lines of influence and accountability

This issue was explored in all aspects of field work with DACs and their direct colleagues. E-survey responses provided a list of professional contacts each DAC respondent had and were divided between those seen on a daily/weekly or monthly or less basis.

Table 8 below summarises those most frequently mentioned where responses were given (n=14).

Table 8) Professional agencies and frequency of contact with DACs

Contacts on a daily or weekly basis	Contacts on a monthly or less basis
Women's Aid staff	Health agencies
Independent Domestic Violence Advocates	Welsh Assembly Government
Independent Sexual Violence Advocates	MARAC (staff)
Other Domestic Abuse Coordinators	Courts/court staff

Police/PPU staff	Mental Health
Safeguarding Children officers	Social services
Other voluntary sector provider agencies	
Substance misuse agencies	

Notably, statutory services, except for police, and children’s Social Services, are either mentioned infrequently or as a ‘monthly or less’ contact. Information from in-depth interviews mirrors this picture in that the police are the most frequently contacted or ‘closest’ statutory partners, whereas Health in particular is lacking or absent. DACs frequently reported that Health agencies are difficult to engage, except for health visitors and midwives:

‘It is almost impossible to get Health around the table.’ (DAC colleague, voluntary sector, mid-Wales)

Given that a key priority in the Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy is to ‘*Increase the rate that domestic abuse is reported*’ (2005, pp. 32), health agencies should be engaged as a priority in this regard, as they are often the first port of call for a victim following an incident; this is reflected in Aim Four of the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Implementation Plan (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010b). Although the introduction across Wales of the All Wales Ante Natal Domestic Abuse Pathway supports the Aim, apart from this, there appears to be little engagement from health services. This is not through lack of trying to engage on the part of DACs, as reported to researchers through qualitative interviews:

‘It’s really difficult to get Health to do anything. It’s like they don’t yet think it’s got anything to do with them.’ (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, South Wales)

‘The DAC would be able to get the right person involved but no one knows who it should be that we contact in Health because we have never engaged with the health agency.’ (DAC colleague, voluntary sector, mid-Wales)

In response to the problem of health service engagement, one area has relocated the DAC from the Community Safety Partnership to sit within Social Services. This was done in order to 'encourage a more holistic and joined up approach to domestic abuse' (DAC line manager). In this area, it was felt that basing the role in a criminal justice setting, as had been done previously, gave the wrong indication that domestic abuse is mostly about the offence and the victim, rather than reflecting the 'community' aspect of the Coordinated Community Response model, including the issue of prevention. It was also hoped that being based in Social Services would provide access to Health services, as Primary Care Trusts and Social Services are currently working towards integration.

4.10 Assessment of deliverables

Information about deliverables achieved by DACs over the previous 12 month period was gained from qualitative interviews and open-ended responses in the E-surveys. The qualitative and quantitative research tools did not ask DACs to provide an account of all deliverables achieved over a certain period as some DACs had only been in post a short time. However, the research did probe for examples of deliverables by Domestic Abuse Coordinators against key objectives of the Welsh Assembly over the 12 months prior to this research. Responses showed that a major development over this period for a large proportion of DACs has been to agree and develop a new Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan. Figure 3 below shows a sample of actual deliverables achieved by DACs in the last 12 months. Other deliverables vary across regions.

Figure 3) sample of deliverables from DACs

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of the new DA action plan and reinstating the delivery of multi-agency awareness-raising training• The roll-out of routine enquiry within local hospitals |
|--|

- Obtaining funding for a multi agency one-stop shop for victims and families
- Securing enough funding for a full-time IDVA post.
- Delivering a multi-agency conference
- Securing funding for research

The development of a local strategy and action plan was frequently reported as a pre-requisite for developing further action:

'The most significant development has been the creation of a strategy which all agencies have signed up for. It has been quite an achievement to get different partners to engage with the process.' (DAC colleague, voluntary sector, mid-Wales)

Where DACs reported that they had not been in post for a long time or absent as a result of sickness (n=2), this was felt to have limited the number of successes achieved. There was considerable variation in the number and nature of deliverables reported by DACs. Although a consensus exists across respondent groups that the work plan for DACs and the Domestic Abuse Forums must respond to local needs analyses and that some areas will be more developed than others in terms of systemic readiness to address domestic abuse, the variation in the nature of deliverables reported underlines a concern highlighted by a number of respondents: that there needs to be clearer guidance from the Welsh Assembly on what specific projects and tasks DACs must deliver on:

'The Welsh Assembly needs to be more prescriptive. The objectives in the Strategy are too open to interpretation. There needs to be a stronger voice from them. They need to say that agencies are expected to deliver X,Y,Z and there needs to be an action plan attached to the Strategy. Something more defined. At the moment areas can get away with doing nothing.' (DAC colleague, Domestic Abuse Forum member, mid-Wales)

'The performance monitoring is quite loose from WAG. They aren't very challenging so we are thinking of developing our own indicators that will be stretch targets.' (DAC line manager, North Wales)

Responses to E-surveys and in-depth interviews were analysed against key priorities in the Welsh Assembly Government Domestic Abuse Strategy of 2005 and The Right to be Safe 2010. These examples are given in Table 9 below. Where DACs reported they had been able to make significant progress against national targets, this was often as the result of involving local agencies in the development of an action plan through the Domestic Abuse Forum, thus ensuring cooperation from agencies that would be responsible for delivery:

'We have a bottom up approach where local issues and priorities are set and then they can be put under the WAG priorities. What we do is locally responsive.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

Table 9) Examples of actions overseen by DACs against key Welsh Assembly priority areas

		Welsh Assembly priority						
		Development and implementation of a quality coordinated joint-agency response	Improve the current service provision for all victims and to increase the safe choices	Hold abusers accountable for their behaviour	Increase public awareness	Challenge the notion that domestic abuse is acceptable	Protect children and young people in Wales f	Educate and inform children/young people
Example of activity	<p>Funding received for developing a multi-agency 'Safety Unit' to provide support to all victims of abuse</p> <p>Development of Domestic Abuse Forum into clear structures of accountability</p>	<p>MARAC review conducted</p> <p>Development of multi agency one stop shop for victims</p> <p>Obtained funding from Supporting People to provide accommodation for victims</p>	<p>Developed self referral perpetrator programmes</p>	<p>Developed posters for distribution and training network and conference</p> <p>Elder Abuse response card distributed to day centres.</p>	<p>Applied for funding for a young people's Domestic Abuse worker</p> <p>Incorporated guidance in children and young people's plans</p> <p>Developed children's counselling service in schools</p>			

The work of Domestic Abuse Coordinators: key points summary

- The large majority of DACs have been in post for over 2 years, and 31% in post for over 5. 75% are in post full time and the majority of line managers are located within Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)
- A large proportion of DAC time is spent organising training and awareness sessions for other organisations on the issue of domestic abuse
- A large proportion of DAC line managers and colleagues from Domestic Abuse Forums believe the provision of training should not form part of the DAC role
- A large focus for DACs' work currently is on organising and developing the Domestic Abuse Forum and local Domestic Abuse Strategy
- DACs are able to provide a good source of information about current services and priorities for external agencies interested in the issues
- There is no suggestion of duplication between the work of DACs and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates
- A small proportion of time is spent by DACs in organising the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference; the time spent is due to monitoring its progress and gaining information to help inform local priorities
- Job descriptions have some commonalities, particularly around ensuring that the Local Domestic Abuse Strategy is developed. However:
 - Job descriptions do not fully describe the work of the DAC
 - In many cases, the work priorities are determined by DACs themselves
 - There is a need for a more consistent picture of what DACs should and should not do, in particular:
 - There is a need to ensure that DACs do not personally provide services to address gaps but work towards identifying those gaps
 - There is a considerable variation in pay for DACs
 - There is wide variation in terms of which agency the DAC role is located
 - The level of seniority of the DAC post is felt to be appropriate but also that the lines of accountability are more important for ensuring that actions from the local action plans are taken forward.

5 Performance indicators and management

A key requirement for this review was to identify potential 'performance standards' for the role of the DAC. Before this issue is addressed an important note on terminology is made. 'Performance Standards' typically relates to minimum efficiencies in a service being delivered for example '*to assess a client within one week of referral*'. 'Performance indicators' refers to a set of either numeric or static targets that an individual or organisation should achieve by a set point in time. Evidence from the field work indicated that specific *objectives*, rather than standards or indicators are needed and we therefore refer to 'work objectives' for DACs in addressing the performance elements of the review brief. '*Work objectives*' indicates a set of activities that can be worked towards which, if achieved, will help deliver on wider strategic objectives for domestic abuse. Developing standard 'work objectives' for DACs seeks to do two things:

- 1) Provide consistency of approach amongst DACs across localities
- 2) Focus DACs' activities so that Wales-wide strategic objectives can be addressed

However, before specific work objectives can be highlighted, it is necessary first to isolate core overarching objectives for the DAC role, thus describing what the DAC role should *look like*. The evidence gained from this review suggests the following common definition of the central objective for Domestic Abuse Coordinators.

To support and promote coordinated joint agency action to address domestic abuse by encouraging and supporting partner agencies to take specific steps towards common goals, as indicated in the 2010 Right to be Safe Strategy.

This definition derives from both E-survey and qualitative data and findings from the literature review.

Currently, an overarching set of standards exists for the DAC role, which was developed by the Welsh Assembly Government (see Appendix 2). DAC respondents were largely indifferent to the existing 'standards' where some felt they had already undertaken most of the items listed and others were content that they were on track to delivering them.

'We have the Welsh Assembly indicators but to be honest, they are quite minimal and we were doing all of those anyway.' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, mid-Wales)

It is, therefore, a recommendation of this review that the existing performance standards (see Appendix 2) should include specific work objectives as set out below.

DAC and other respondents frequently pressed for more robust performance guidance including specific targets that would help guide DACs in setting their work plans. This, in combination with more prescriptive actions and targets for delivery in the Wales National Strategy for partner agencies, would help DACs to make progress against their priorities.

DACs were asked which, if any, performance indicators, goals or objectives they are currently actively working towards, in addition to the Welsh Assembly Government's performance standards. All respondents reported that they are performance-managed according to the local objectives set within the local Domestic Abuse business or action plan. Where these are still in the process of being written, monitoring is provided through line management and supervision. One DAC respondent reported their performance management was linked to progress against police baseline data on general reoffending rates. However, being able to collect data on progress specific to domestic abuse victimisation rates was difficult, due in

part to difficulty in accessing police data, as detailed above - a situation which is known on a national basis to be problematic⁴.

It is important to note that Domestic Abuse Coordinators' work cannot be directly monitored through statistical targets such as reductions in repeat offending as the factors affecting changes in such figures are multiple, complex and involve actions that are often beyond the control of DACs. Although DACs and their line managers should be interested in changes observed in targets, such as 'NI32' (numbers of repeat referrals to the MARAC) and reductions in repeat offending, they should not be directly performance managed by these. An important point here is that DACs' primary role, as perceived across respondent groups, is to engender improved partnership working and advocacy for the domestic violence agenda as a whole, so that actions to tackle the problem will be mainstreamed and coordinated across agencies. These sets of objectives cannot be performance monitored on a purely quantitative basis.

5.1 Recommended work objectives for Domestic Abuse Coordinators

The following work objectives for DACs' work have been developed, based on research findings. Local work plans for DACs should reflect these objectives and DACs' performance should be monitored against them. Specific targets are suggested in brackets; these may be developed or amended locally.

Short to medium-term objectives:

⁴ Home Office, 2001

- To review the structure and purpose of the Domestic Abuse Forum to assess whether it is fit for purpose, that attendance is regular and consistent and that agreed actions are regularly delivered. (*Within three months of objective being agreed*)
- Deliver updates on domestic abuse services and local research to interested parties, highlighting where domestic abuse impacts on different partners' agendas. (*Suggested target: to deliver updates on a quarterly basis*)
- Review, identify and analyse lessons from MARAC cases, on a regular basis for Domestic Abuse Forums. This will involve regular liaison with MARAC co-ordinators. (*Suggested target: to attend MARACs on a quarterly basis to observe*)
- Research and develop a strategy for mainstreaming training activities for partner agencies on domestic abuse issues. (*Suggested target: training mainstreaming strategy developed within six months of objective being agreed.*)
- Undertake a review of service gaps, identifying barriers to the co-ordinated community response (CCR) to domestic abuse being delivered. The review should make comparison with other areas in the UK where the CCR is being delivered successfully. The review should also consider what needs to be in place to address the priorities of the 2005 and 2010 Welsh Assembly Government strategies. (*Suggested target service gap review delivered within six months of objective being agreed*)
- Develop an information plan in partnership with line manager, to identify how and when to get information on victimisation and repeat victimisation. (*Suggested target: information plan delivered within six months of objective being agreed*).
- Establish regular meetings and information exchanges to collate data on victimisation and repeat victimisation with one or more of the following:
 - Police information analysts
 - Victim support and other voluntary sector information support/database managers
 - MARAC coordinators
 - Community Safety Partnership information analysts

(Suggested target: meetings established within six months of the objective being agreed and should take place at least quarterly)

- Regularly report on DAF attendance and actions with particular reference to consistency of attendance and health service representation and extent to which actions are taken forward by attending partners. Report on progress of DAF attendance and activity to the DAF and where they exist, Domestic Abuse Champions. *(Suggested target: deliver progress report biannually)*

Suggested work objectives for partner agencies

The following suggested objectives for partner agencies working with the DAC derive from the evidence in this review. Although these suggestions are outside of the control of the DAC they should nevertheless be read in conjunction with DAC-specific work objectives.

For Domestic Abuse Forums:

- To assist DACs with a review of the structure and purpose of the Domestic Abuse Forums
- There should be regular attendance (at least 3 meetings per year) from the *same* colleagues from key statutory agencies at Domestic Abuse Forum meetings. Those attending should be at least senior manager grade, and should have direct responsibility for decision making for their departments' respective budgets.
- To agree a strategy, written by the Domestic Abuse Coordinator, for mainstreaming training and awareness-raising activities.
- To ensure that the MARAC is serviced by a permanent co-ordinator
- To agree with the DAC targets for ensuring activities that are agreed at forum meetings are fulfilled by members who take responsibility for them.

For Health agencies:

- To have identified a lead person possibly from Primary Care or Acute services, to attend the Domestic Abuse Forum and to ensure their attendance

For Police and voluntary sector agencies:

- To agree with the DAC a system for collecting data on victimisation and repeat victimisation for domestic abuse incidents in the local police area; where agencies exist, this should include data on referrals to and from voluntary sector organisations

Medium to long-term deliverables or targets

- *For all partner agencies:* To include specific targets and objectives relating to domestic abuse within key statutory services strategic plans such as Children's Social Services Plans, Primary Care Plans, Education, Drug and Alcohol Action plans and Adult Social Services plans.
- *For Domestic Abuse Forums:* To have in place a community-based domestic abuse perpetrator programme, following a thorough feasibility study and risk assessment
- *For Domestic Abuse Forums:* To have in place preventative projects aimed at children and young people.
- *For Domestic Abuse Forums:* To have identified strategic leads for wider violence against women objectives within police, health and Social Services departments.

6 Summary: the main challenges for Domestic Abuse Coordinators and good practice points

The main challenges identified by DACs, their line managers and other colleagues who took part in this review centred around two key themes: 1) partnership working and ensuring the cooperation of different agencies and, 2) ensuring consistency across Wales in DACs' expectations of their work so that it may be effectively performance-managed.

6.1 Partnership working and ensuring the cooperation of different agencies

The first set of challenges involve ensuring that the Domestic Abuse Forum is effective: meaning that it should be populated by the appropriate individuals who have sufficient levels of seniority or engagement within their agencies to ensure agreed actions are followed through. It also means that agencies which agree to actions in the Forum would be held to account and monitored for delivering on agreed actions. The difficulty in achieving such accountability was underlined by DAC colleague respondents who had working knowledge of Domestic Abuse Forums:

'The problem is that there is no statutory responsibility so you can't actually do anything when an agency doesn't come back to the next meeting and report on what they've done.' (Domestic Abuse Forum member, mid-Wales)

'There are a group of people at the Forum who would be bored with the operational issues or who couldn't engage with the strategic issues, so you have to get the balance right with the Domestic Abuse Forums' (Domestic Abuse Coordinator, North Wales)

This research highlighted examples of work undertaken by DACs suggesting good practice in addressing the challenge of partner agency accountability at Domestic Abuse Forum meetings including:

- Involving a wide range of agencies, including representatives of victims from the early stages of developing a local Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan
- Considering the correct structure for Domestic Abuse Forum meetings, so that agendas can be pitched to the understanding levels of members attending. An example of this would be splitting the Forums into Strategic groups, with operational sub groups responsible for specific elements of delivery
- Ensuring that the local Domestic Abuse Strategy is developed with the engagement of local agencies from the beginning.

In examples of good practice, DACs have been able to improve attendance from previously disengaged agencies with the active support of the Domestic Abuse Forum Chair or the DAC line manager. Similar good practice includes the DAC providing timely and informative responses to requests for information about domestic abuse and its impacts and keeping agencies up to date with research findings, project developments and statistics, even to individuals who are not directly sitting on the Domestic Abuse Forum.

Raising the status of domestic abuse as an issue across services is characterised as a central and on-going concern of the post by DACs, their line managers and colleague respondents. Thus, a consensus emerged from the research that DACs' job descriptions, work plans, monitoring and supervision should centre on this fundamental challenge. Good practice points surrounding the issue of raising awareness and concern for domestic abuse gathered from the research include:

Line management:

- Line managers and the agencies in which they are located should be committed to domestic abuse more generally
- Line managers should have sufficient lines of influence to be able to escalate problems and barriers
- Line managers should have a good level of understanding of the issues surrounding domestic abuse
- Line managers should be consistent and not in a post with a high staff turnover

Interagency involvement with the Domestic Abuse Coordinator

- The DAC should provide timely and effective responses to requests for information from other agencies
- Partner agencies particularly those who are underrepresented in key domestic abuse meetings, are involved in the recruitment and interview process for the DAC post
- The DAC involves a wide range of agencies to take part in developing the local Domestic Abuse Strategy
- The DAC lists the responsibilities of each agency involved in delivering the Strategy objectives
- The DAC should be identified as an independent voice even if line managed within a specific department or organisation. This may be achieved for example through dual agency line management

Ensuring that domestic abuse is addressed at a high policy level within organisations

- The Chair of the Domestic Abuse Forum is senior and influential
- Champions for Domestic Abuse are identified in senior positions within Statutory Service structures
- Ensuring that Domestic Abuse is addressed in key strategic documents in statutory service areas, for example in Health and Social Care

6.2 Ensuring consistency in the work of Domestic Abuse Coordinators across Wales

One of the issues constantly raised through the research was the lack of clear direction and targets from national policy for both DACs and more generally in what is expected of each service. By setting out recommended work objectives for Domestic Abuse Coordinators (see section on performance management above), DACs may be working towards more consistent goals across localities which will eventually create more similar policy environments across regions in which to advocate for domestic abuse as an issue.

DACs, their line managers and colleague respondents frequently pointed out that partner agencies did not have a clear sense that domestic abuse is a national priority; thus, it is difficult to make the case for the inclusion of actions to address domestic abuse within agencies' service plans. Although some good practice has been identified in addressing partnership commitment to domestic abuse, a set of clearly defined deliverables and targets that outline what is expected at a local level would provide DACs and Domestic Abuse Forums with the tools to argue their case with partners more effectively.

The other important point to emerge from the research was the degree of variation in the scope of DACs' work. Although there are consistent themes in their current priorities, particularly around ensuring that Domestic Abuse Forums are organised and local Strategies are developed, there is variation in the degree to which DACs take on specific responsibilities – particularly in delivering training. A clear call emerged in the research, from a range of respondents, that the job description for DACs should be consolidated and more consistent. In particular:

The DACs should:

- Ensure partnership engagement and the representing of domestic abuse in partners agencies' key strategies
- Identify gaps in service provision and advocate for action to address these

The DACs should not:

- Provide services themselves when there is an identified gap.

6.3 Recommendations

The following key recommendations emerge from this review:

Domestic Abuse Coordinator specific:

- The focus for the DAC's work should be on raising the importance of domestic abuse across key service areas, identifying service gaps and what action can address these
- DACs should not be taking action to address service gaps themselves; rather, establishing how these gaps may be met in the medium to longer terms
- Training activities should be developed as a partnership action and DACs should focus on mainstreaming these activities going forward
- Line management should be sufficiently engaged and committed to the domestic abuse agenda
- Line managers should have a reasonable working knowledge of domestic abuse to effectively engage with DACs in supervision
- The accountability level of DACs should be reviewed at a local level to ensure that domestic abuse is addressed at levels appropriate to the importance of the issue. This may include identifying champions from different departments or organisations
- The performance management for DACs should be more consistently developed; thus the existing Wales 'KPIs' or 'performance standards' should include the work objectives identified in this review (see Section 5)

Partnership working:

- The purpose and structure of Domestic Abuse Forums should be reviewed initially by DACs and their line managers and developed by the Domestic Abuse Forums as a matter of urgency to ensure that attending partners take forward actions arising from Forum meetings. Good practice points should be

considered, including separating operational sub groups from strategic discussions

- Action plans should be developed with the involvement of a range of agencies from the outset, to improve cooperation and buy in

Nationally:

- To develop improved standards and indicators for delivery against the Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy and The Right to be Safe Strategy, which defines exactly what is expected of each local authority area. The lead for this work should be the Welsh Assembly Government.
- Review and develop the purpose and structure of Domestic Abuse Forums, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that attending partners take forward actions arising from Forum meetings. These actions should be undertaken at a local level but monitored and guided by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Future research recommendations include:

- Training needs analysis of DACs – particularly with reference to partnership working abilities
- A local partnerships' review of the level of seniority for the local DAC post. If at a local level, domestic abuse is considered a priority, then the person responsible for advancing the work should be based at the appropriate level of seniority. This may include considering how the domestic abuse agenda may be taken forward by other senior roles within Community Safety Partnership settings
- Monitoring and assessment of the impact of any increase in workload following the publication of 'The Right to Be Safe', (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010a)

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Appendix 1 Agencies of interview participants

Voluntary sector:

Women's Aid

Hafan Cymru

Statutory sector:

Police

Probation

Health (nurses and public health)

Local Authority Housing Departments

Adult and Children's Social Services

Supporting People?

IDVAs

Mental Health Support Agencies

Substance misuse Agencies

Appendix 2 Performance indicators developed by the Welsh Assembly Government for Domestic Abuse Coordinators

INTERIM KEY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE CO-ORDINATORS - DRAFT

1. Work as part of the Community Safety Partnership to ensure that issues relating to domestic abuse and violence against women is represented within appropriate strategic assessment and partnership plans.
2. Actively promote the establishment of robust links between domestic abuse and substance misuse service providers. To enable a seamless treatment of clients with co-existing and/or complex needs.
3. To develop a local strategy identifying how the all-Wales Strategic Action Plan to address violence against women and the Welsh Assembly Government's Domestic Abuse Strategy will be implemented locally.
4. Provide the Welsh Assembly Government with an annual report on progress against the local strategy within 4 weeks of the end of the financial year.
5. Provide the Welsh Assembly Government with a quarterly progress report in accordance with the template, to reflect national and locally driven aims and objectives, within 2 weeks of the end of the quarter.
6. To collaborate across CSP boundaries to share good practice in dealing with domestic abuse and violence against women and benefit from economies of scale in project delivery.
7. Promote the compilation of a range of information for victims and professionals which meets the local need. This may be web based or otherwise. To ensure accurate, up to date information this should be a standard agenda item at domestic abuse forums
8. Ensure that Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators are aware of local and regional information sharing protocols and how to implement them in relation to domestic abuse and violence against women. Any gaps should be highlighted at domestic abuse forums.
9. To promote a safer relationship programme within the education and youth service arena to include the integration of the all Wales Schools Liaison Programme and the Children and Young People's Partnership into the local strategy.

10. To promote the need for regular domestic abuse awareness-raising to be undertaken with key partner agencies as identified by an annual needs assessment.
11. Continually support and raise awareness of the all Wales 24hour Domestic Abuse Helpline and support national awareness raising campaigns.
12. To ensure that the MARAC process runs in accordance with the national guidelines.
13. Establish effective strategic links to promote the elimination of domestic abuse and violence against women within other statutory partnerships and working groups e.g. Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Children and Young People Partnerships, Adult Protection and Supporting People Lead Officers.
14. To ensure BME service providers are involved in the development of policies and procedures to provide adequate provision for victims of forced marriage and honour based violence.
15. Actively promote the establishment of an accredited programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse.
16. Work with partner agencies to collect data to be analysed which will assist in identifying gaps in service delivery.
17. To work with Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Steering Groups, where in operation, to actively encourage the development of the SDVC for the benefit of service users.
18. Actively promote proportionate support from partner agencies for all victims of domestic abuse regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability.
19. Establish and maintain links with services that are able to provide support to male victims of domestic abuse. Encourage and promote the use of screening protocols when dealing with male victims in the area to ensure that the true victim is being supported.

Appendix 3 Topic Guides and E-surveys

Topic guide: interviews with Domestic Abuse Coordinators (similar versions were distributed to Line Managers and members of the Domestic Abuse Working Group)

KM Research and Consultancy Ltd

Review of the role of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators, Wales

Survey of domestic abuse co-ordinators in Wales

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to examine the role and scope of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators' work. This is to compare similarities and differences across regions and to find potential new ways of working in the future. We would really appreciate it if you could complete the following questionnaire. It should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

It is important to note that we are not 'inspecting' those working as coordinators, rather, we are trying to understand the different patterns of working and roles. Please be as open and honest as possible in your answers, they are not used to assess performance and will be treated as entirely confidential.

Although this is a semi-structured questionnaire, we hope to speak to people on a one to one basis in the next couple of weeks, to develop the responses more. Please indicate below if you are willing to be contacted for this. If you have any questions at all about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact Katie McCracken (lead for the research) on 020 7993 5987 katiem@kmconsultancy.org.uk

Thank you for your time.

1) What is your name?

2) What is your telephone and email?

- 3) What is your job title?
- 4) Are you the domestic abuse coordinator for your area?
- 5) How long have you been in post for?

Domestic Abuse co-ordinator –

Please indicate what you think is currently, the main focus of your work, as experienced on a day to day basis. Please rank your answers from 1-5; ‘1’ being the most applicable’ and ‘5’ being ‘the least applicable’. Please give a different number for each option. Please do not reflect what is in your job description but rather what your actual experience is.

To act as a change agent in local partnerships, in order to improve services for victims and work with perpetrators	
To work directly with victims and their families to ensure they receive effective support	
To increase awareness and knowledge about domestic abuse amongst statutory agencies for example through training	
To research and develop new services by responding to local needs	
To work with statutory and voluntary partners to improve information sharing and responsiveness to the needs of victims.	

**Are there any others not listed above that are applicable?
(please describe briefly)**

Focus group topic guide

- 1) What is the service need: for victims and families?
- 2) What is service need for perpetrators?
- 3) How are these needs currently being met? By whom?
 - a. What is the role of the IDVA in this
 - b. What is the role of the ISVA in this?

- 4) What are the main strategic or organisational challenges surrounding domestic abuse?
- 5) Is the DAC role more strategic or operational? (prompt: securing funding and increasing domestic abuse as a priority or more about working with specific victims and families?)
- 6) What is the cross over between strategic and operational work in the DAC role? (prompt: – how do they/you come to understand local needs?)
- 7) Who deals with service gaps?
- 8) What, if anything, is missing to provide a Coordinated Community Response?
- 9) Do you feel that DACs have adequate systemic support for their work?
- 10)What are the missing elements of the CCR model? Tier 1 – 4 (prompts. Who else helps them/you to deliver this)?
- 11)What political challenges do DACs face in working with partners?
- 12)What is the most common task DACs engage within your work?
- 13)Is this rewarding/delivering results?
- 14)What are the exceptions to DACs current work?
- 15)In the DAC's accountability structure, is there a contact who is more 'senior' but still has a firm grasp of the philosophical and practical issues surrounding domestic abuse?