



**The Cardiff Women's Safety Unit:
A Multi-Agency Approach
to Domestic Violence**

Final Evaluation Report

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Whilst every effort has been taken in the preparation of this publication, no liability is assumed for any errors or omissions.

Final Evaluation Report of the Women's Safety Unit Cardiff, Wales

Executive Summary

The following are highlights from the research findings contained in this report:

- The WSU was referred 1150 women and their 1482 children from mid-December 2001 through January 2003. The report is based on structured interviews with 222 clients coming to the WSU during this time and official data from the South Wales Police and the Crown Prosecution Service on domestic violence in the Cardiff area.
- Most WSU clients are white females who are less than 40 years old, have children in their households, and receive benefits. Their partners tend to be white males who are less than 40 years old, employed, have previous domestic violence complaints, and are still in relationships with WSU clients.
- WSU clients have serious and extensive abuse histories. The typical WSU client has experienced about 6 years of physical abuse from her current partner. The average WSU client reported that she experienced more than 5 violent acts from her current partner, and more than 7 violent acts from a partner in her lifetime.
- This violence has left WSU clients with many injuries (e.g., from current partners more than 1 in 4 women have had bruised faces, more than 1 in 4 women have had bruised arms and legs, and more than 1 in 10 have received split lips and black eyes) and negative mental health outcomes (e.g., about 4 in 10 are currently experiencing depression and/or anxiety).
- Partners with drug problems inflicted significantly more violence and injuries on their WSU partners. Substance abuse treatment needs to include screening for domestic violence, and batterer programs need to address the implications of substance abuse on the severity and propensity of offending.
- One-fourth of WSU clients report that they had been sexually abused by their current partners. Prior police contact was related to sexual abuse. Specifically, about 1 in 3 perpetrators who had previous domestic violence complaints sexually abused their partners, compared to 1 in 10 perpetrators without previous domestic violence complaints. As a potential risk indicator, prior police complaints should alert both police officers and victim advocates that there is a greater likelihood of sexual abuse present in these relationships compared to couples experiencing their first police intervention.
- Specific domestic violence protocols have been agreed between the WSU and the South Wales Police and the Crown Prosecution Service in Cardiff. Consequently there is improved coordination between these agencies and a more victim-oriented approach to case processing.
- The South Wales Police was the agency that most frequently referred women to the WSU (62%). About three-quarters of WSU clients received referrals to other agencies. The biggest source of referrals by the WSU was to the Homesafe agency (for target hardening).
- Almost 1200 persons working in criminal justice and community agencies in the South Wales area have received domestic violence training sessions from the WSU.
- Analysis of police data indicate that there is a positive, across-the board trend in Cardiff as a result of the WSU, the Police Watch programme, and the pro-arrest police domestic violence policy. For example, the number of repeat victims has decreased by 36% (from 58 to 37 per month), the number of victims refusing to make a complaint has decreased by 18% (from 99 to

81 per month), and the amount of concern for children reports submitted by officers has increased by 139% (from 22 to 55 per month).

- WSU clients were generally satisfied with how the police handled the incident. The majority of clients thought that the police were courteous, respectful, appeared concerned, took the time to listen, and took the situation seriously. Victim satisfaction was related to both officer behaviour and officer demeanour, but the latter exhibited a stronger impact. Police training should impart to officers the power their attitudes have over victim satisfaction.
- Attitudinal surveys were completed by 12 prosecutors in Cardiff office of the CPS. Prosecutors feel that the CPS promotes taking domestic violence seriously and that the WSU allows them to more efficiently and effectively handle cases of domestic violence. When asked to think about who impacts their ability to effectively prosecute domestic violence cases, prosecutors were most likely to list someone from the WSU. Relationships between prosecutors and WSU staff are very positive, and relative to other agencies in the community, prosecutors ranked their relationships with the WSU the highest in degree of contact, trust, understanding, cooperation and empathy.
- New court procedures have been implemented for Magistrates' Court and Crown Court in Cardiff. Now all domestic violence cases are flagged, sent to the same court, and reviewed pre-trial on the same day each week. As a result of having the Pre-Trial Review (PTR) and trial procedures streamlined and priority given to domestic violence cases, remarkable results have been achieved. For example, compared to the standard court procedure which typically lasts 14 weeks, the domestic violence procedure in Cardiff lasts approximately 7 weeks. All victims are supported by a member of the WSU, and a member of the WSU attends PTR each week to offer advice and information about domestic violence cases. All of these procedures allow for a timelier, more consistent approach to how cases of domestic violence are processed in Cardiff.
- Analysis of 77 CPS domestic violence case files showed that charging standards were used in 97% of cases and charges were maintained in 83% of cases. The percentage of cases where victims have retracted and subsequently been discontinued has been steadily decreasing, but is still substantial (over 60%). Victim participation (in the form of attending court and making a personal statement), more dangerous offenders, and cases going to PTR all reduce the likelihood of a case being discontinued.
- Clients' perceptions of WSU service were overwhelmingly positive. The average response on a scale rating the WSU from 1=not effective to 10=most effective in helping clients obtain a safe outcome was 9.2. Only one of the 222 clients interviewed thought that meeting with the WSU increased the threat of or the actual violence they experienced. This means that, for the overwhelming majority of victims, the WSU has been able to achieve the delicate balance of intervening in difficult situations without furthering risk to victims or their children. When asked how WSU service could be improved, all the respondents suggested more advertising (to alert more women to the helpful service provided by the WSU), more workers, and/or more funding.

Introduction

Background of the Women's Safety Unit (WSU)

In Autumn 2001, the Cardiff Domestic Violence Forum, currently chaired by Julie Morgan, MP, secured a £300,000 grant during the second wave of funding from the Home Office under the "Violence Against Women Initiative" of the Crime Reduction Programme. Projects funded under the first wave are almost entirely English; therefore, the WSU represents the sole Welsh project funded under this initiative. The WSU is funded for a 2-year period that began in April 2001. Staff were recruited and hired from April through October 2001. The launch of the WSU occurred on 26 November 2001. The WSU provided service to its first client on 10 December 2001. Through January 2003, 1150 women and their 1482 children have been referred to the WSU.

Function of the WSU

The WSU provides a central point of access for women and their children experiencing domestic violence¹ (DV) or known-perpetrator rape² (KPR) in the Cardiff area. While the overriding aim of the WSU is to help victims gain safety, the WSU team also provides advice, advocacy, specialist counselling services, legal services, housing services, refuge provision, target hardening and collects evidence. In this way, victims are provided with an effective, immediate and consistent range of support services at one referral point. Through the provision of these services, the WSU hopes to restore women's faith in the criminal justice system in order to improve reporting rates for DV and KPR and to reduce the level of attrition of these types of cases.

The aim of the WSU is to facilitate inter-agency co-operation to provide victims with a seamless response to their cases. The WSU has also developed protocols with the South Wales Police (SWP) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in Cardiff to provide more effective and sensitive treatment of victims, and has engaged in a media campaign to draw attention to the prevalence of these crimes. Additionally, the WSU provides multi-agency training to increase professionals' understanding and awareness in identifying risk and providing protection for women and children from DV and KPR. The vision of the WSU is to bring about sustainable change in the multi-agency arena and to help create a culture in Cardiff where domestic violence and non-consensual sex are not accepted.

The goals of the WSU include (1) increasing the proportion of victims who are willing to seek help, (2) increasing the proportion of cases resulting in arrest, charges and convictions, (3) providing more appropriate and adequate services to victims, and (4) reducing the level of repeat victimisation.

WSU Staff

The WSU is staffed by one Operational Manager, two Support Workers, one Seconded Police Officer, and one Administrator. The role of the Operational Manager generally is to develop and maintain the practice of the WSU. Practically this means that the manager must ensure the effective implementation of the unit's policies on a day-to-day basis, especially equal opportunities and confidentiality in relation to users, staff, and all aspects of service provision. The manager is also responsible for providing training and consultation to other agencies in the area of domestic violence

¹ The definition of domestic violence adopted by the WSU is: "the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one adult person, usually a man, over another adult, usually a woman within the context of a close personal relationship. Such abuse may manifest itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual violence and abuse, financial control and abuse and the imposition of social isolation or movement deprivation."

² The definition of KPR and sexual assault adopted by the WSU is: "sexual intercourse or sexual assault of a woman (either physical or mental) without her consent, by a man she knows socially, professionally, intimately or as a relative, and is predominantly the misuse of male power that involves the intimidation, coercion, intrusion, threat and force to control. It is unwanted, humiliating sexual attention."

and known-perpetrator rape, promoting the work of the WSU to outside agencies and the media, and forging and maintaining positive working relationships between the WSU and other community agencies. The manager also provides service and advocacy to WSU clients, depending on the current workload of the support workers.

The manager of the WSU comes from a criminal justice background, having worked for more than 20 years in the Probation Service. She went on to establish and run a Duluth-based perpetrator programme for the NSPCC, developing services for women and children. The manager jointly drafted the original bid for Home Office funding for the WSU. She is currently seconded from South Wales Probation Service.

The role of the two Support Workers is to participate in all aspects of the WSU's work with particular responsibility to provide service and advocacy to women who have experienced domestic violence and/or known-perpetrator rape. Their aim is to empower and enable women accessing the unit to take responsibility for their own decisions and actions, and to ensure that relevant and up-to-date information and advice is available to them at all times. To this end, support workers make women aware of all the services, resources and options available to them (both within WSU and the wider community) so that they can make informed choices. Support workers provide emotional support to clients, establishing trust, building confidence, maintaining motivation and exploring ways of building positive relationships with various agencies. In short, support workers provide one-to-one personal support for women who have experienced domestic violence and/or known-perpetrator rape.

One of the support workers is seconded from Cardiff's BAWSO (Black Association of Women Step Out). She has 8 years experience as a child care worker for Cardiff Women's Aid, developing and delivering services for children in refuge. She has spent 4 years working for BAWSO developing and delivering services for women and children from minority ethnic groups. The other support worker has experience working in further education, mental health and counselling, and family support work in women's refuge.

The role of the Seconded Police Officer is to offer support and advice, particularly related to criminal justice issues, to clients attending the WSU. If the client does not wish to make a complaint against her partner, the officer obtains substantiating evidence by means of a Pocket Book entry, notes injuries, takes Polaroid photographs, completes the FSU9 form (domestic violence report) and faxes the form to the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU)³ of the South Wales Police. If a complaint is made, the above are performed in addition to obtaining full antecedent and comprehensive statements and organising scenes of crime photographs. The officer completes necessary forms and liaises with the relevant parties. If it is an indictable offence, the officer contacts the Detective Chief Inspector; for any other offence the Sector Inspector is contacted. The officer keeps the client updated and informed on the progress of her case, attends pre-trial reviews and all court cases. The Seconded Police Officer has worked for the South Wales Police for 15 years as a beat officer. She completed the Family Liaison Officer Training Course before starting work at the WSU.

The administrator is a business and finance graduate who has previously worked in the private sector and on a voluntary basis with several youth groups. In addition to budgeting and accounting duties, the administrator is also responsible for organising the personal contacts between WSU clients and support workers, collecting information on WSU contacts with women and children, and entering client surveys into a computer database.

Methodology

In addition to observations made by the author, three sources of data are analysed in this evaluation: victim interviews, police data, and surveys and case files from the CPS. Each source of data is described below.

³ This unit was previously named the Family Support Unit (FSU), thus the name of the domestic violence report (FSU9) reflects the old name.

Victim Interviews

The primary source of data for the evaluation of the WSU comes from the women who came to WSU for service. Detailed information was gathered from the women as part of the initial interview/assessment process. This allowed WSU staff to facilitate the advocacy and counselling offered to the women as well as collecting information that could be used in this evaluation. The data collection instruments can be found in Appendix A. The primary interview instrument contains the following sections: client demographic information; abuse history; abusive incident report; perpetrator information; client perceptions of the police response; referral information; services offered to client; and client perceptions of WSU service. The instrument gathered quantitative and qualitative information via closed and open-ended questions. The majority of the findings contained in this preliminary report are produced from the quantitative data; however, qualitative data are also included.

Due to the sensitive nature of the meetings between WSU staff and clientele, the completion of the data collection instruments had to be a secondary consideration to the primary goal of making women feel comfortable, secure and safe. There was some initial reticence on the part of WSU staff that the data collection forms would be perceived to be intrusive to the women and perhaps intimidating due to their length and the detailed nature of the questions. Once the forms were used, however, their benefits were immediately apparent. For example, the forms helped WSU staff structure their initial intake interview with clients and reminded them of the many types of information that needed to be collected for a comprehensive history and needs assessment to be completed. Additionally, the instruments proved to be a therapeutic tool to many women. For example, the forms helped many clients put a name to the various abusive behaviours they had experienced from their partners. For example, some clients had not previously considered types of financial and/or emotional abuse to be "abusive." Many unwanted sexual acts also were not considered to be abusive until they were revealed to WSU staff. The instruments therefore helped women realise the exact nature of the abuse within their relationships and provided a structured way that they could talk about these painful incidents.

The WSU took great effort to insure the women knew that the information they provided would be held in the strictest confidence. Typically the WSU staff member would use the instruments to structure the interview and would fill in forms along the way. Sometimes, however, the woman was too upset at the time and the WSU staff member might consider filling in the form to be insensitive or distracting to the interview process. In those cases the WSU staff gathered as much information as possible from the woman and then filled in the form after the interview was completed. Finally, in other cases the woman would fill in parts of the form herself while still at the WSU and able to have questions answered by WSU staff. It is not ideal, from a research point of view, to have different methods of gathering data. However, using these various data collection methods insured that the primary goal and mission of the WSU (to help and support women who have been victimised by domestic violence and/or known-perpetrator rape) was not superseded by efforts to collect data for the evaluation of the WSU.

South Wales Police Data

Summary police data were also analysed as part of the evaluation. Each month, the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) of the South Wales Police submits statistics to headquarters relating to domestic violence as part of its performance review. The information contained in these memos includes: the totals for the month, the totals for the year to date, and the difference compared to the previous year. Figures are provided for the following indicators: FSU9 forms (police domestic violence reports) submitted that meet the criteria of domestic violence; arrests made; persons charged; repeat victims; victims who refuse to make a complaint; mental health related incidents; alcohol related incidents; drug related incidents; and F11a forms (concern for children reports) submitted.

Although not detailed, these data allow trends over time to be assessed. In particular, they allow for a pre-post WSU comparison to be made about the prevalence and nature of domestic violence in Cardiff. The police data also provide a form of data other than that provided by victims to evaluate the potential impact made by the WSU in the Cardiff area.

Crown Prosecution Service Data

Two sources of data were available from the Crown Prosecution Service: surveys of prosecutors and domestic violence case files. Each provides a different yet important account of how domestic violence is handled in Cardiff, and in particular the impact of the WSU on this process.

Surveys. A 6-page survey was administered to prosecutors working in the Cardiff office of the CPS. The survey was created with input from two Senior Crown Prosecutors. The survey was designed to elicit information regarding prosecutors' experience prosecuting domestic violence cases, their attitudes towards these cases, their working relationships with other agencies in the community, and their perception of the factors that influence case outcomes. Twelve out of 19 prosecutors returned the survey. Quantitative and qualitative findings are presented, with particular attention paid to the prosecutors' accounts and perceptions of working with the WSU.

Case Files. Two forms were used to gather information from domestic violence cases that were completed by the Cardiff CPS from January through August 2002. One is the CPS Domestic Violence Monitoring Form that was recently created by CPS headquarters for use nationwide, and the other form was created specifically for the purposes of this research. Together they provide an overview of the background characteristics of victims and defendants, actions taken by these parties during case progression, aggravating and mitigating factors, and case outcomes. Information was collected and analysed from 77 cases completed in Magistrates' Court.

Section I: Characteristics of WSU Clients

Selection of the Sample

Table 1 presents descriptive information for 222 WSU clients. This sample of clients represents about 20% of the 1150 women who came into contact (either via self-referral or referral by an outside agency) with the WSU from 10th December 2001 to 31st January 2003 (approximately 13½ months).

WSU staff attempt to make contact with all women referred to the WSU, but this is not always possible. At least six telephone calls are made to the woman at varying times in order to maximise the chance of making contact. If there is still no response, then the WSU asks the referring agency to check that the phone number is correct. If the referring agency is the police, then the attending officer can also re-visit the woman to insure that she does not require WSU assistance. About 200 of the 1150 women were either never successfully contacted or did not require WSU service.

The remaining women made contact with the WSU but it was not possible for all of them to have a completed data form. Often it was the case that the original contact with the WSU was very upsetting and, following the prescribed victim-centred methodology, the data form was not introduced if the WSU staff member felt it was not appropriate. Additionally sometimes the woman stated that she would return to the WSU to complete the data form, but never did. Several follow-up phone calls were made to these women but not all of them returned to complete the form. The final sample of 222 therefore represents the final product of a filtering process that includes: inability to make contact with women; women not requiring or wanting WSU service; and/or data forms not being completed. These 222 women provide vital information about the WSU, the police, and their experiences with domestic violence and/or known-perpetrator rape.

Description of WSU Clients

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics of the 222 women in the sample are presented in Table 1. WSU clients are mostly white females who speak English. Over 80% are less than 40 years old. More than 4 out of 5 clients have at least one child, and almost 9% are currently pregnant. A small proportion of clients self-report physical and mental health issues. The most common physical health issue was asthma. The most common mental health issue was depression. Eleven of the 25 women that reported having mental health issues also reported having physical health issues.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of WSU Clients.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Gender	Female	100.0
Age in years	Less than 20	5.7
	21 through 30	34.4
	31 through 40	40.2
	41 through 50	15.3
	51 and Older	4.3
Ethnicity	White/British	89.4
	Black	1.9
	Asian	3.4
	Mixed race	3.9
	Arab/Middle Eastern	1.0
	European	0.5

Interpreter Required	No	99.1
	Yes	0.9
Currently Pregnant	No	91.3
	Yes	8.7
# Children in Household	0	16.9
	1	25.4
	2	35.7
	3	14.6
	4+	7.5
# Family Members in Household	1	10.4
	2	22.7
	3	36.5
	4	16.6
	5+	13.7
Physical Health Issues	No	84.9
	Yes	15.1
Mental Health Issues	No	88.5
	Yes	11.5

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Resource Levels

Table 2 presents information about the resources available to the women coming to the WSU. While the overwhelming majority of women have access to a telephone, only about 4 in 10 women have access to and/or use of a motorised vehicle. Approximately 7 in 10 women live in council housing or rented accommodation.

Regarding employment, 17% of WSU clients reported having a full-time job. About one-fourth are employed part-time and almost half are currently unemployed. The employment status of women has implications for the financial resources available to them should they need to live independently of a partner and/or raise children on their own. Less than half of clients report having a private income, and the average amount per month was £700. Given that most clients reported having children at home (and the majority had responsibility for two or more children), it would be difficult for most of the women in the sample to support themselves and their children on their private incomes alone. This explains why more than 80% of WSU clients receive benefits, most of which are income support benefits or working families' tax credit.

Table 2: Resources Available to WSU Clients.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Access to Telephone	No	3.6
	Yes	96.4
Access to Motorised Vehicle	No	59.7
	Yes	40.3
Use of Motorised Vehicle	No	64.7
	Yes	35.3
Employment Status	Full time	16.9
	Part time	22.4
	Self employed	1.4
	Student	4.1
	Training scheme	0.9
	Career	0.5
	Unemployed	48.9
	Other	5.0
Private Income	No	55.0
	Yes	45.0
If yes, average monthly amount?	£700.31	
Benefits	No	16.5
	Yes	83.5
If yes, average monthly amount?	£375.81	
If yes, type of benefit?	Income support	76.1
	Disabled living allowance	20.7
	Working families tax credit	45.9
	Incapacity benefits	16.7
	Other benefits	58.8
Housing Type	Detached/semi	33.3
	Terraced	50.0
	Flat	12.9
	Family/friends	3.8
Housing Tenure	Owner occupied	31.4
	Private rented	18.2
	Council housing	50.4

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Current Abusive Situation

The next two tables provide information about the abusive situation that led to contact between women and the WSU. Information was gathered regarding several types of abuse the women may have experienced from their current partners: physical, emotional, sexual and financial. Table 3 reports on the frequency, duration, and severity of each type of abuse experienced by WSU clients from their current partners. Table 4 reports on the women's perceptions of the current abusive situation. Information regarding the women's lifetime history of abuse is provided in the next section of the report.

Table 3: WSU Clients' Abusive Experiences with Current Partner.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Physical Abuse</u>	<u>Sexual Abuse</u>	<u>Emotional Abuse</u>	<u>Financial Abuse</u>
Experienced this type of abuse	No	6.8%	74.7%	2.3%	35.8%
	Yes	93.2%	25.3%	97.7%	64.2%
Duration of abuse	Mean years	6.3	6.6	6.6	5.9
Occurrence of incidents	Constant	6.7%	11.6%	47.4%	49.2%
	Daily	8.7%	2.3%	16.7%	7.5%
	Weekly	7.7%	16.3%	14.4%	14.2%
	Monthly	11.3%	9.3%	3.8%	8.3%
	Other	65.6%	60.5%	17.7%	20.8%
Frequency over last 12 months	More	58.2%	29.7%	59.0%	49.6%
	Less	17.9%	32.4%	12.7%	26.1%
	Same	23.9%	37.8%	28.3%	24.4%
Severity over last 12 months	More	58.5%	36.1%	65.4%	50.0%
	Less	16.9%	27.8%	11.7%	23.7%
	Same	24.6%	36.1%	22.9%	26.3%

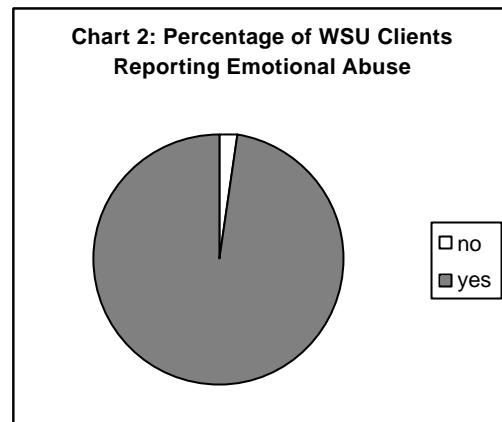
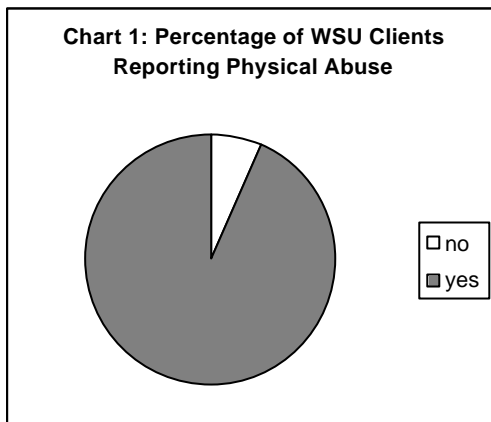
Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Physical and emotional abuse are the most common forms of abuse experienced by women coming to the WSU: 93% of women experienced physical abuse from their current partners and 98% report that their partners perpetrated emotional abuse (also see Charts 1 and 2). For most women these forms of abuse have been going on for several years. The average woman experienced 6.3 years of physical abuse and 6.6 years of emotional abuse. Some women did not classify the duration of the abuse in years, and their responses were not included in Table 3. For example, 14 women said that the physical abuse had occurred once or twice, one said "in spasms" and one said "throughout" the relationship. Regarding emotional abuse, six women stated that it had lasted "throughout" or "from the beginning" of the relationship, and one said "since the break up." Notably, 20% of those responding had experienced emotional and/or physical abuse from their current partner for 10 or more years, and one woman had experienced 45 years of abuse.

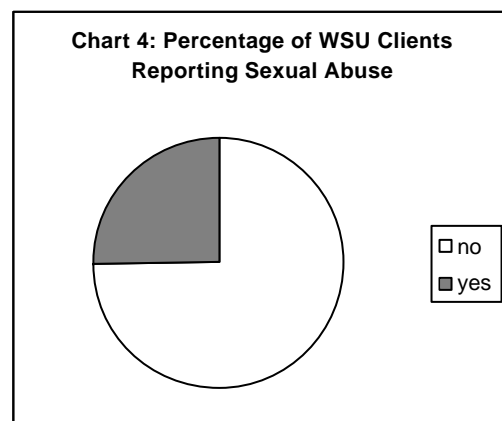
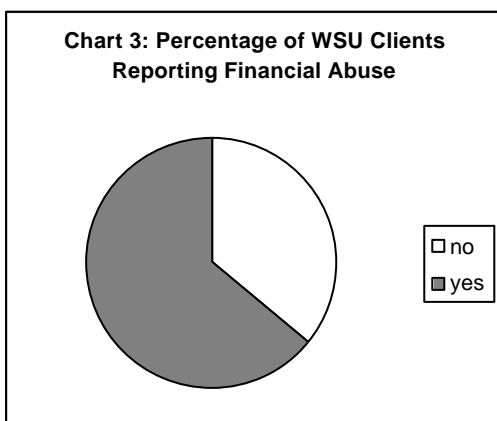
Almost 60% of the women reported that the frequency of physical and emotional abuse had increased over that past 12 months. Similarly, more than half of the women reported that the severity of physical abuse had increased over the past 12 months (59%) and even more reported that the emotional abuse had increased in severity over the past 12 months (65%). While there may be

myriad reasons why abuse in a relationship might escalate, one 18-year old client reasoned that the physical and mental abuse she experienced had increased in severity and frequency “since I had the baby.”



Financial matters are another area where intimate partners may exhibit abusive patterns. About 6 in 10 women reported experiencing financial abuse (see Chart 3). The average woman experienced almost seven years of financial abuse, and eight women stated that it had been occurring “constantly.” According to quotes from the women, this type of abuse can manifest itself in many different ways. For example, it could mean that the partner is “mean with money” or is “totally in control of the money.” This can result in the woman not having access to finances, so that “important bills are not paid.” Even more problematic, women reported their partners would refuse to work, leave them “hundreds in debt” and even steal from them. As one woman said, “When I left he’d been to the bank and cleared the account.” Many of the women ascribed these problems to drug, alcohol and/or gambling problems that the men have. For example, one 54-year old woman said “It’s the drugs... when he’s on them he doesn’t know what he’s doing.”

Financial abuse can also be far more sinister, as one 33-year old mother described that her partner “wanted to put me on the streets to work for him.” What is termed ‘financial abuse’ may therefore overlap with other issues affecting the relationship, such as sexual abuse or drug or alcohol addictions. Financial abuse is not merely arguments over bills, but rather another expression of control by the men and another source of anxiety, worry or even terror for the women. Of the four types of abuse described, financial abuse is the type of abuse that the largest percentage of women (49%) report occurs constantly and almost half of the women stated that the frequency and severity of this form of abuse has increased over the last 12 months.



Sexual abuse within intimate relationships is a sensitive topic that was also explored in this study. Among this sample of women, about 1 in 4 reported experiencing sexual abuse from their current partners (see Chart 4). Women who experienced sexual abuse from their partners stated that it had on average been occurring for about six years. Unlike those experiencing other forms of abuse within their relationships, these women are more likely to report that the frequency and severity of the sexual abuse had stayed the same or decreased, rather than increased, over the past 12 months. Six women also report that what they experienced was a “one off.” This description, however, implies that what they experienced was probably a rape.

Of the 55 women who reported experiencing sexual abuse, 54 also reported physical abuse, 53 reported mental abuse, and 36 reported financial abuse. This group of women can be considered especially vulnerable, as they have to cope with many forms of abuse simultaneously. However, analyses on this subset of women who reported experiencing all forms of abuse revealed that they did *not* differ from the other women in terms of their race, age, whether they are currently pregnant, number of children, or physical or mental health issues. Sexual abuse as part of violent relationships is discussed in more detail in a later section of this report.

In conclusion, the results presented in Table 3 indicate that most of the women coming to the WSU are being victimised in multiple ways: emotionally, physically, financially, and sexually. Furthermore, this abuse has usually been occurring for many years.

Table 4 provides information about women's perceptions of the abuse they are experiencing from their current partners. This table highlights the severity of the circumstances that are faced by many WSU clients. For example, over 70% of the women stated that they believed they would be injured or killed by their current partners. A majority of the women also felt that the pattern of abuse was escalating in severity (73%) and frequency (68%). This mirrors the findings of other research indicating that battering tends to escalate in frequency and severity over time (Fagan et al., 1984; Pagelow, 1984; Walker, 1984).

Notably, this table also highlights the resourcefulness and strength of women coming to the WSU. For example, an overwhelming majority of the women (96%) sought outside help for their violent relationships and a vast majority (87%) want to or have tried to separate from their partners. Less than 16% feel protective of their partners. About 1 in 5 women seem very isolated from help. About 1 in 3 women report that they feel unable to cope with the current situation. In short, despite fears of injury and/or death and living with violence escalating in severity and/or frequency, most women state that they are able to cope and are actively seeking to change their circumstances.

Table 4: WSU Clients' Perceptions Regarding Current Abuse.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Believes may be injured or killed	No	28.6
	Yes	71.4
Feels unable to cope	No	61.0
	Yes	34.6
	Unsure	4.4
Has tried or wants to separate	No	12.7
	Yes	86.8
	Unsure	0.5
Has sought outside help	No	3.7
	Yes	96.3

Feels protective of perpetrator	No	80.4
	Yes	15.7
	Unsure	3.9
Seems very isolated from help	No	74.5
	Yes	21.6
	Unsure	3.9
Feels pattern of abuse escalating in severity	No	26.6
	Yes	72.7
	Unsure	0.8
Feels pattern of abuse escalating in duration	No	47.6
	Yes	51.6
	Unsure	0.8
Feels pattern of abuse escalating in frequency	No	31.1
	Yes	68.0
	Unsure	0.8

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Lifetime History of Abuse

Research has documented that violence in intimate relationships is often severe, resulting in physical injuries and health problems (Berrios & Grady, 1991; Sullivan, 1991), psychological anguish (Follingstad et al., 1990), and in the most severe cases, even death (Browne & Williams, 1993; Greenfeld et al., 1998). The next five tables provide detailed information on the types of abusive behaviours that WSU clients have experienced not only from their current partners, but also in their lifetimes. Generally, the tables provide evidence of the multitude and severity of the forms of violent and emotionally abusive actions to which the women have been subjected.

Table 5 reports results from the Violence Assessment Index. This is a list of 27 violent actions that women might experience within intimate relationships. Women were asked if they had ever experienced each of these actions from their *current* partner as well as from *any* partner. The behaviours range in seriousness from grabbing or pushing to hurting with a weapon or forcing sexual activity. The average WSU client reported that she experienced more than 5 of these actions from her current partner, and more than 7 of these actions in her lifetime.

It should be noted that this table would not reflect the *total* amount of violence that a woman has experienced because it does not gather information about frequency. For example, while more than 30% of women stated that they had been hit with a fist and 24% had been kicked by their current partners, we do not know whether they had been punched or kicked once or many times. Therefore, this table should be viewed as an underestimate (or 'tip of the iceberg') of the violence experienced by women coming to the WSU.

Table 5: Results from the Violence Assessment Index.

	<u>Experienced From Current Partner</u>	<u>Experienced From Any Partner</u>
Punched or kicked the walls or furniture	43.7%	45.5%
Broke your glasses or tore your clothing	18.5%	32.9%
Tied you up or restrained you in some way	17.6%	33.8%
Forced you to do something against her will	14.9%	22.5%
Pushed or shove you	56.8%	49.1%
Grabbed you	52.3%	46.8%
Held his hand over your mouth	14.9%	21.2%
Twisted your arm	21.6%	23.9%
Slapped you with an open hand	33.3%	37.8%
Dragged you or pulled you by your hair	28.4%	36.9%
Bit you	4.5%	7.7%
Hit you with a fist	30.2%	39.2%
Kicked you	24.3%	32.0%
Kicked or punched you in abdomen when pregnant	2.7%	14.9%
Burned you	0.5%	2.7%
Threw something at you	28.8%	37.4%
Hit you with object	6.8%	22.1%
Tried to hit you with an object	9.5%	27.5%
Drove recklessly to scare or hurt you	18.9%	27.0%
Tried to choke or strangle you	16.7%	45.5%
Tried to smother or drown you	1.4%	8.6%
Forced sexual activity	10.4%	19.4%
Threatened you with an object or weapon	14.4%	28.8%
Hurt you with a weapon	2.7%	10.8%
Threatened to kill you	36.0%	42.3%
Hit or otherwise hurt the kids	5.9%	14.0%
Any other violent actions not mentioned	1.4%	15.8%
TOTAL violent behaviours experienced	(27 possible)	(27 possible)
	Range	0-19
	Mean	5.17
		0-23
		7.46

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

As Table 5 shows, WSU clients have experienced high levels of physical abuse in their lifetimes. For example, almost 15% of the women have been punched or kicked in the abdomen when they were pregnant.

A summary is telling to the severity of the violence so many women have experienced:

In their lifetimes...
About 4 in 10 women have experienced one <i>or more</i> of the following actions <i>at least</i> once: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner punching or kicking the walls or furniture • Been pushed or shoved • Been grabbed • Been choked or strangled • Been threatened with death
About 3 in 10 women have experienced one <i>or more</i> of the following actions <i>at least</i> once: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their glasses broken or their clothing torn • Been tied up or restrained in some way • Been slapped with an open hand • Been dragged or been pulled by their hair • Been hit with a fist • Been kicked • Had something thrown at them • Been threatened with an object or weapon

Table 5 also reveals that about 19% of women report experiencing forced sexual activity from a partner during their lifetime. This is a lower prevalence of sexual abuse/violence than reported in Table 3, where 25% of women reported experiencing sexual abuse from their current partner. Perhaps having the statement include the word 'forced' made fewer women want to admit to this type of victimisation. This wording may have called up images of rape rather than other types of sexual abuse that may have been considered less serious. Much research has reported on the influence of wording on the rates of rape and sexual abuse reported by women and girls (see Koss & Oros, 1982; Maxwell, Robinson & Post, 2003; Spitzberg, 1999). In general, reported rates are lower when the action described is a narrow legalistic definition and/or involves force or violence. Also, past research has found that women raped by spouses or other close family members were less likely to label the experience 'rape' than victims raped by other types of acquaintances or strangers (Koss et al., 1988).

Regardless of the wording, however, a substantial proportion of women coming to the WSU have experienced unwanted sexual activity within an intimate relationship at some point in their lives. Furthermore, past research suggests that this proportion may be an underestimate of the actual number of women experiencing sexual abuse by their current or former partners.

Table 6 reveals the physical outcomes of the violence suffered by women coming to the WSU. Generally, the table reveals that many women have suffered severe injuries as a result of actions committed by their current or former abusive partners. Out of 29 types of injury listed, the average woman reported that she experienced more than 2 injuries from her current partner and more than 5 injuries from any partner.

Table 6: Results from the Injury Assessment Index.

	<u>Experienced From Current Partner</u>	<u>Experienced From Any Partner</u>
Cuts on face	12.6%	27.0%
Bruises on face	25.7%	39.6%
Cuts on arms/legs	11.3%	16.2%
Bruises on arms/legs	32.9%	49.1%
Cuts anywhere on body	8.6%	15.8%
Bruises anywhere on body	23.4%	40.1%
Soreness without bruises	27.0%	45.0%

Burns anywhere	0.9%	5.4%
Rug burns anywhere	7.7%	17.6%
Loose, broken, or lost teeth	1.8%	6.8%
Split lip	10.8%	24.8%
Lost hair	15.8%	29.7%
Bite wounds	3.6%	7.7%
Black eye(s)	15.8%	32.9%
Fractured bones	4.1%	14.0%
Broken ribs	1.8%	6.8%
Broken nose, jaw, or cheekbone	2.3%	11.3%
Broken arm or leg	0.0%	2.7%
Sickness or vomiting	17.1%	29.3%
Internal injuries	0.9%	6.3%
Strains or sprains	5.4%	18.5%
Dislocated joints	0.5%	3.2%
Blackout or unconsciousness	5.0%	20.3%
Concussion or other head injury	6.8%	20.7%
Pregnancy complications	0.9%	9.0%
Miscarriage	0.9%	9.5%
Wound from weapon	1.4%	11.3%
Permanent scarring	0.9%	18.9%
Any other injuries not mentioned	0.5%	4.5%
TOTAL injuries experienced	(29 possible)	(29 possible)
	Range	0-19
	Mean	2.46
		5.44

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

The physical violence committed by their current partners has left more than 25% of women with bruises on their faces and more than 32% of women with bruised arms and/or legs. About 10% of women were given split lips, 15% of women were given black eyes, and 17% have had sickness or vomiting from physical abuse inflicted by their current partners.

In their lifetimes...
About 1 in 5 women has <i>at least once</i> suffered from one <i>or more</i> of the following injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strains or sprains • Blackout or unconsciousness • Concussion or head injury • Permanent scarring
About 1 in 4 women has <i>at least once</i> suffered from one <i>or more</i> of the following injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts on face • Split lip
About 1 in 3 women has <i>at least once</i> suffered from one <i>or more</i> of the following injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises on face • Bruises elsewhere on body • Lost hair • Black eye(s) • Sickness or vomiting
About 1 in 2 women has <i>at least once</i> suffered from one <i>or more</i> of the following injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises on arms and/or legs • Soreness without bruises

Experiencing extremely severe injuries is generally a rare phenomenon from current partners, but significant proportions of women have received them in their lifetimes. For example, about 14% of women have experienced a fractured bone as a result of physical violence from a partner and 11% have had a broken nose, broken jaw or broken cheekbone as a result of domestic violence. Almost 10% of women report having had pregnancy complications and/or miscarriages as a result of violent relationships. In short, many women have experienced criminal assaults that have left them with serious injuries from the violence perpetrated by their intimate partners.

The women were also asked about the emotionally abusive actions they have experienced in their relationships. Tables 7 and 8 report on the types of emotional abuse suffered by WSU clients and the mental health outcomes directly resulting from the abuse. The Emotional Abuse Index lists 26 possible emotionally abusive behaviours that a partner could commit within an intimate relationship. The average WSU client experienced almost 7 of these from her current partner and almost 10 of these from any partner. Overall, results presented in Table 7 reveal how prevalent emotional abuse is in the lives of women coming to the WSU.

Table 7: Results from the Emotional Abuse Index.

	<u>Experienced From Current Partner</u>	<u>Experienced From Any Partner</u>
Shouted and screamed at you	66.2%	50.5%
Swore at you or called you names	64.0%	48.2%
Ignored or made light of your feelings	58.6%	45.9%
Ridiculed or criticised you in public	41.0%	42.3%
Criticised your family or friends to you	54.1%	43.7%
Harassed your family or friends in some way	25.7%	34.7%
Discouraged your contact with family or friends	32.4%	39.6%
Threatened to hurt your family or friends	22.1%	24.3%
Threatened to hurt the kids	5.0%	10.4%
Shouted at the kids	16.2%	30.6%
Tried to humiliate you	39.6%	47.7%
Broke or destroyed something important to you	25.2%	33.8%
Abused or threatened to hurt the pets	5.9%	16.2%
Punished or deprived the children	4.5%	11.3%
Threatened to take the children away from you	21.6%	26.6%
Left you somewhere with no way to get home	7.7%	21.2%
Threatened to end the relationship	14.9%	19.8%
Tried to force you to leave your home	17.1%	33.3%
Threatened to commit suicide	24.8%	36.0%
Questioned you about your activities	48.2%	45.0%
Tried to provoke an argument	54.5%	48.6%
Deliberately keep you short of money	25.7%	30.2%
Make you feel sexually inadequate	19.4%	27.9%
Pointed at you	49.5%	43.2%
Nagged you	46.8%	40.5%
Any other emotional abuse not mentioned	2.3%	12.6%
TOTAL emotionally abusive behaviours experienced	(26 possible)	(26 possible)
Range	0-24	0-26
Mean	7.93	8.64

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Significant proportions of women have been screamed at (66%), sworn at or called names (64%), ignored (59), provoked into an argument (55%), humiliated (40%) and/or questioned about their activities (48%). Even higher proportions of women have experienced these behaviours in their lifetimes.

Smaller, but still significant, proportions of women have experienced more threatening forms of psychological abuse. For example, about 2 in 5 women have had their current partners threaten to hurt their family or friends, threaten to take their children away, been made to feel sexually inadequate and/or threaten to commit suicide. Even higher levels of women have experienced these forms of more severe emotional abuse in their lifetimes. Again, it is important to remember that this table would not reveal the total or absolute amount of emotional abuse experienced because we do not know whether the woman experienced the emotionally abusive action once or many times.

From their current partners...	
About 1 in 6 women has experienced one <i>or more</i> of the following <i>at least once</i> :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shouted at the kids • Threatened to end the relationship • Tried to force the woman out of her home
About 1 in 5 women has experienced one <i>or more</i> of the following <i>at least once</i> :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened to hurt the woman's family or friends • Threatened to take the children away • Made to feel sexually inadequate
About 1 in 4 women has experienced one <i>or more</i> of the following <i>at least once</i> :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken or destroyed something important to the woman • Threatened to commit suicide • Deliberately kept the woman short of money • Harassed the woman's family or friends in some way

Table 8 describes the emotional outcomes experienced by WSU clients as a result of abusive actions committed by their current or former partners. Of 11 possible mental health outcomes, the average woman is currently experiencing almost two of these.

Table 8: Mental Health Outcomes of WSU Clients.

	<u>Currently Experiencing</u>	<u>Ever Experienced</u>
Alcohol Misuse	2.7%	9.0%
Drug Misuse	0.9%	3.2%
Depression	38.7%	25.7%
Anxiety	44.1%	26.1%
Paranoia	27.5%	19.4%
Panic Attacks	24.8%	17.6%
Sleeping Disorder	23.0%	21.6%
Agoraphobia	6.8%	8.1%
Suicidal Thoughts	10.8%	20.3%
Homicidal Thoughts	5.0%	10.4%
Other Mental Health Outcome	1.4%	4.1%
TOTAL mental health outcomes experienced	(11 possible)	(11 possible)
Range	0-11	0-11
Mean	1.86	1.65

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

The most common mental health outcomes experienced are anxiety (44%) and depression (39%). These rates are higher than those found by other researchers. For example, Kessler et al. (1994) found depression in 21% of abused women, and Weissman and Klerman (1992) found a prevalence of 10%. Significant proportions of women also reported experiencing paranoia (28%), sleeping disorders (23%), and panic attacks (25%). About 1 in 10 women were currently having suicidal thoughts as a result of the violence in their lives. Given that WSU clients were 'self-diagnosing' these outcomes, we should keep in mind that rates of mental health problems could be higher (or lower) if the diagnoses were made by trained professionals. However, other research has shown that a common mental health response to being in an abusive relationship is depression (Campbell & Lewandowski, 1997).

As a result of abuse from their current partners...
About 4 in 10 women are currently experiencing one <i>or more</i> of the following problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety
About 1 in 4 women are currently experiencing one <i>or more</i> of the following problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paranoia • Panic attacks • Sleeping disorders

Analyses were performed to determine whether the physical and emotional abuse histories and outcomes of women were related to any of their personal characteristics. In other words, did women with certain characteristics report significantly higher scores on the Violence Assessment Index, the Injury Assessment Index, the Emotional Abuse Index, and/or Mental Health Outcomes?⁴ The results of these analyses are presented in Table 9.

Firstly, it should be noted that the table only reports results that are statistically significant. That is, characteristics that were tested but not statistically related to women's levels of physical abuse, injuries, emotional abuse and/or mental health outcomes are not included in the table. The non-significant variables include: (1) client's age, (2) client is white, (3) currently pregnant, (4) whether there are children in the household, (5) whether there are family members in the household, (6) whether the client receives benefits, (7) whether the client is unemployed, (8) whether the client has access to a telephone, (9) whether the client herself called the police, (10) whether the client has access to a motor vehicle, (11) whether the client has use of a motor vehicle, and (12) whether the client is currently living with the perpetrator.

Since most of the variables tested were *not* significantly related to women's levels of physical and/or emotional abuse, results of these analyses should be interpreted to mean that, for the most part, characteristics of the women themselves have little to do with how much physical abuse, injuries, mental abuse, or mental health problems they experience from either their current or former partners.

Table 9 presents the results of analyses that revealed statistically significant relationships. The five variables that did significantly affect women's scores on the Violence Assessment Index, the Injury Assessment Index, the Emotional Abuse Index, and/or Mental Health Outcomes are:

- (1) Physical health issues
- (2) Mental health issues
- (3) Client moved home previously due to abuse
- (4) Relationship status with perpetrator
- (5) Access to private income.

⁴ The women's responses to each of these were summed in order to create a scale. For example, a woman who answered 'yes' to 5 different types of violent behaviours from her current partner scored a 5 on the VAI Current scale. The bivariate analyses were conducted between the women's characteristics and their scores on eight scales: VAI Current, VAI Ever, IAI Current, IAI Ever, EAI Current, EAI Ever, MHO Current, MHO Ever. These scales had a high level of reliability. Alpha scores were .80 or better for all eight scales, which exceeds the conventional level of .70.

Readers should also keep in mind that the causal order of these variables cannot be established conclusively. For example, it is unclear whether having physical health issues increases women's risk of violence, or whether experiencing violence contributes to having physical health issues. Similarly, do women with private incomes experience less abuse because they are not completely dependent on their partners financially, or does having less abuse in their lives make women more able to work and earn their own money? For each relationship, an interpretation is made (based on past research and experience) as to the direction of the causal order. However, readers should bear in mind that an alternative explanation is possible. What these results do reveal are the characteristics of women that are statistically related to the amount of physical and/or psychological abuse they experience.

Table 9: Characteristics of Clients Significantly Associated with Abuse Experiences and Outcomes.

Variable		VAI Current	VAI Ever	EAI Current	EAI Ever	IAI Current	IAI Ever	MHO Current	MHO Ever
Physical Health Issues	No	5.03	7.47	7.64	8.91	2.28	5.45	1.61	1.53
	Yes	6.36	7.18	10.09	6.94	3.61	5.36	3.42	2.45
	Significance	0.176	0.789	0.042	0.148	<i>0.063</i>	0.917	0.000	0.033
Mental Health Issues	No	5.00	7.02	7.66	8.16	2.26	5.27	1.62	1.36
	Yes	6.60	10.72	10.44	12.32	3.92	6.88	3.76	4.00
	Significance	0.148	0.002	0.041	0.006	0.037	0.100	0.000	0.000
Moved home previously due to DV	No	4.81	7.53	6.86	9.12	2.13	5.67	1.42	1.19
	Yes	4.66	9.85	6.92	11.17	2.45	6.70	1.74	2.00
	Significance	0.874	0.025	0.955	0.108	0.623	0.223	0.429	0.035
Relationship with perpetrator	Married	5.38	6.47	9.03	7.68	2.60	4.90	2.10	1.18
	Partners	6.07	6.40	8.57	6.63	2.93	5.34	1.97	1.27
	Separated	3.62	11.95	6.05	14.84	1.76	7.49	1.51	3.35
	Divorced	6.17	11.00	7.50	11.50	3.83	7.33	2.17	1.67
	Significance	0.126	0.000	0.124	0.000	0.388	0.029	0.637	0.000
Private Income	No	6.03	7.77	9.06	8.43	2.86	5.72	2.36	2.17
	Yes	4.62	7.31	7.02	9.25	2.25	5.32	1.42	1.26
	Significance	<i>0.056</i>	0.574	0.024	0.430	0.269	0.535	0.003	0.006

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting.

All values represent mean scores on the scale.

VAI=Violence Assessment Index; EAI=Emotional Abuse Index; IAI=Injury Assessment Index; MHO=Mental Health Outcomes.

Significance values less than 0.05 indicate mean scores that differ significantly among the categories of the variable (see bolded values).

Significance values less than 0.10 are italicized to indicate differences that came close to being statistically significant.

Women who reported having physical health issues reported significantly more negative mental health outcomes from their current and former partners. Specifically, they experienced about twice as many negative mental health outcomes from current partners (3.42 compared to 1.61) as well as in their lifetimes (2.45 compared to 1.53). Women with physical problems reported higher levels of emotional abuse (10.09 compared to 7.64). They also experienced more injuries from their current partners (3.61 compared to 2.28), although this difference was not statistically significant.

Women who reported having mental health issues reported significantly higher levels of physical and mental abuse. For example, in their lifetimes they experienced more violence (10.72 compared to 7.02) and more emotional abuse (12.32 compared to 8.16). From their current partners they report more emotional abuse (10.44 compared to 7.66) and injuries (3.92 compared to 2.26). These women also report higher levels of negative mental health outcomes from their current partners (3.76 compared to 1.62) and from other partners in their lifetimes (4.00 compared to 1.36).

Women who stated that they had previously moved home due to domestic violence and/or known-perpetrator rape reported experiencing more violent actions in their lifetimes (9.85 compared to 7.53). Not surprisingly, they also reported experiencing more negative mental health outcomes in their lifetimes (2.00 compared to 1.19).

The type of relationship that women have with their partners was also a significant factor influencing their levels of reported violence, injuries, and emotional abuse. The pattern is clear: women who are separated or divorced from their perpetrators report almost twice as much lifetime violence, lifetime injuries, lifetime emotional abuse and lifetime mental health problems compared to women who are married to or partners with the perpetrators. This is the one variable that impacts women's experiences on every dimension: physical abuse, emotional abuse, injuries, and mental health outcomes.

This would seem to indicate that women may have removed themselves from violent relationships (either by separation or divorce), but they are still experiencing violence. It is unclear whether they are currently engaged in new violent relationships or are being victimised by the men from whom they are separated or divorced. Other studies document that leaving an abusive relationship may not mean a cessation of violence; violence may continue even after the relationship is formally ended (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993; Ellis & Stuckless, 1992; Giles-Sims, 1983; Mahoney, 1991). Additionally, findings from the most recent British Crime Survey show that the rate of domestic violence is more than four times higher among those who are separated compared to those that are married, cohabiting, divorced, or single (Table 6.01 from the 2001/02 British Crime Survey). The evidence would suggest, therefore, that it is more likely that WSU clients are experiencing victimization by men from whom they have separated or divorced rather than new partners.

Resources also impact the levels of abuse reported by WSU clients. Women who reported having a private income reported having less emotional abuse from their current partners (7.02 compared to 9.06). They also report significantly lower levels of negative mental health outcomes as a result of abuse from either current or former partners. Notice that having a private income was also associated with a lower level of violence from current partners (4.62 compared to 6.03), although this difference was not statistically significant. The data reveal a strong relationship between having access to one's own money and having less experience of emotional abuse or mental health problems. WSU clients that have some financial independence report having better mental health.

In conclusion, Table 9 reveals that women who are burdened additionally by physical or mental health issues also have to cope with higher levels of violence, injuries, emotional abuse, and mental health problems. Additionally, women who have had a history of domestic violence and/or known-perpetrator rape also deal with significantly higher levels of violence and mental health problems. The one variable that significantly reduced a woman's reported level of abuse was her access to private income. Research in the US has shown that women with more resources are more often able to remove themselves from violence. For example, higher rates of domestic violence are found among females living in low-income households, young women (ages 16 to 24), and women with children under the age of 12 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1998).

Disclosures of Sexual Abuse

The rape and/or sexual assault of women within intimate relationships has only recently become a research issue due to the historical belief in the predominance of stranger rape, and the belief that this type of rape is the only 'real' type experienced by women. Research into sexual abuse or assault by intimate partners is extremely limited, especially when we consider the extensive amount of research conducted on domestic violence in the last two decades. One-quarter of the women in the WSU sample reported some form of sexual abuse within their current relationships (prevalence rates have been detailed in Table 3 and Table 5). This is a *smaller* proportion than those found in the few other studies that could be located. One study in the US documented that approximately 40-45% of battered women were forced into sex by their male partners (Campbell & Alford, 1989). Other studies have put the estimate of women who have been sexually assaulted in relationships that are also physically abusive as high as 59% (Shields & Hanneke, 1983; Walker, 1984).

Data from the 2000 British Crime Survey (BCS) provide more recent evidence of the prevalence of sexual abuse within intimate relationships. In their analysis of BCS data, Myhill and Allen (2002) found that women were most likely to be sexually attacked by men known to them, usually a partner (32%) or an acquaintance (22%). Current partners committed 45% of the rapes reported by the women in the survey. BCS data show that known perpetrators are also more likely to be responsible for multiple attacks, and attacks that result in physical injury.

Women sexually assaulted by someone they know are more likely to suffer from especially serious depression and/or fear as a result of the attack (Burge, 1989; Frank & Stewart, 1984). They are also less likely to seek medical or psychological services (Hanneke & Shields, 1985) and a recent study found that they were less likely to seek medical, police, or agency help (Mahoney, 1999). For these reasons, Myhill and Allen (2002) suggest that sexual abuse needs to be recognised as "often an integral part of the wider domestic violence syndrome" (p. 6).

To increase our understanding of sexual abuse within relationships, analyses were performed to determine whether any characteristics of WSU clients were associated with an increased prevalence of sexual abuse. The variables tested, and found to be non-significant, included: (1) client's age, (2) client is white (3) currently pregnant, (4) physical health issues, (5) whether there are children in the household, (6) whether the client receives benefits, (7) whether the client is unemployed, (8) whether the client has a private income, (9) the type of housing the client lives in, (10) whether the housing is rented, (11) whether the client has access to a telephone, (12) whether the client has access to a motor vehicle, (13) whether the client has use of a motor vehicle, (14) whether the client is currently living with the perpetrator, and (15) whether the client has previously moved home due to domestic violence or known-perpetrator rape.

Three variables were significantly related to the presence of sexual abuse within the relationship:

- (1) Mental health issues
- (2) Number of family members in the household
- (3) Relationship status with the perpetrator.

WSU clients who reported having mental health issues disclosed significantly higher rates of sexual abuse. Specifically, almost half of the women with mental health issues experienced sexual abuse, compared to less than one-quarter of women without mental health issues. It is difficult to determine the causal order of this relationship. Women may be more depressed because they are experiencing sexual abuse from an intimate partner, or they may be more vulnerable to sexual abuse because they are experiencing mental health problems.

Women who live in households with many family members report higher levels of sexual abuse within their relationships. Specifically, the rate is 14% for one other family member, 25% for two, 23% for three, 20% for four, and 46% for five or more. This finding is difficult to interpret.

The type of relationship that the client and perpetrator share also has a significant impact on levels of sexual abuse. Women who are partners with the perpetrator report the lowest rate of 17%, followed by women who are currently separated from their partners (24%). More than one-third of married

women report sexual abuse within their relationships. The highest rate is for divorced women, who report a rate of 67%. However, only 6 women in the sample are divorced so the small numbers might be skewing the results.

Next, analyses were performed to identify perpetrator characteristics that might be associated with WSU clients' reported levels of sexual abuse. The variables tested that were *not* significantly related to sexual abuse were: (1) perpetrator's age, (2) perpetrator is white (3) perpetrator has physical health issues, (4) perpetrator has mental health issues, (5) perpetrator has an alcohol problem, (6) perpetrator has a drug problem, and (7) perpetrator has previous domestic violence convictions.

One perpetrator variable did significantly influence rates of sexual abuse reported by the women: having previous domestic violence complaints. Having previous complaints for domestic violence makes perpetrators much more likely to inflict sexual abuse on an intimate partner. Specifically, about 1 in 3 perpetrators who had previous domestic violence complaints sexually abused their partners, compared to 1 in 10 perpetrators without previous domestic violence complaints. As a potential risk indicator, prior police complaints should alert both police officers and victim advocates that there is a greater likelihood of sexual abuse present in these relationships compared to couples experiencing their first police intervention.

In conclusion, sexual abuse was experienced by about one-quarter of the women coming to the WSU, a prevalence rate lower than that found in past research. It is notable that such a substantial proportion of women felt comfortable enough with staff at the WSU to disclose this sensitive information. These results, however, are especially troubling given the evidence that women sexually assaulted within intimate relationships are less likely to seek help from outside agencies. The reality is that a population of women in the community have been victimised in this way, yet have not received any help. The offenders are free to offend at will, without risk of punishment. These are the relationships that must come to the attention of either criminal justice or community agencies in Cardiff.

It is important that sexual abuse be recognized as a significant aspect of what we think of as 'domestic violence.' These results demonstrate that substantial proportion of women exposed to physical violence by a partner must also cope with sexual violence. The physical and psychological consequences of sexual abuse by a partner will be necessarily different and probably more severe. The stigma associated with rape, even by a stranger, still profoundly influences the reporting practices of victims and the decision-making of criminal justice officials. When this crime is committed within the context of a domestic relationship, more than likely the shame and stigma are even more pronounced. For these reasons, particular attention must be paid to identifying instances of sexual abuse within intimate relationships, and providing the appropriate care to victims.

Childhood Experiences

Feedback from WSU staff a few months into the evaluation indicated that childhood experiences of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse seemed to be present for many of the women coming to the WSU. An additional page of questions was therefore added to the victim interview schedule in order to ascertain the prevalence of childhood experiences of abuse (see p. 8 of Appendix A). Forty-three of the 222 women in the sample were asked these additional questions about their childhoods. Five of the forms were missing. Of the 38 respondents for whom we have data, 18 (47%) responded that they were exposed to domestic violence as a child. Most often these experiences involved witnessing male to female violence between their parents/guardians, although one respondent said that the violence was 'mutual.' Another trend emerging from the data was the chronic state of the abuse. Many women stated that it occurred throughout their childhoods, and some responses revealed that respondents' mothers were victimised by more than one partner.

Thirteen women (34%) disclosed experiencing sexual abuse as a child or young person. Seven of these involved incest, usually perpetrated by the father. Four involved non-familial perpetrators, such as neighbours or strangers. Most of these incidents occurred when the client was younger than 10 years old and often occurred repeatedly over a period of years. Five of the women had childhood experiences of both domestic violence and sexual abuse.

While these results should be considered exploratory, it is still notable that about half of the women had exposure to domestic or sexual abuse before they left home. Research has documented the link between witnessing domestic violence as a child and the increased prevalence of perpetrating (for boys) and being victimised (for girls) by domestic violence during adulthood. But these same negative childhood memories can also provide the impetus for change. As one women stated, "I do not want my children growing up in the same situation as I did."

Characteristics and Criminal Justice History of WSU Clients' Partners

The next two tables describe the demographic characteristics of the abusive partners of the women coming to the WSU as well as the men's history with the criminal justice system. WSU clients provided this information as part of the interview procedure.

Table 10 shows that almost 80% of perpetrators are less than 40 years old, 82% are white, and only 1% are unemployed. Most of the perpetrators are still in relationships with WSU clients; less than one-quarter are separated or divorced. About one-quarter of the men were reported to have mental and/or physical health issues. Like the women, the most common physical complaint was asthma. Also like the women, the most common mental health problem was depression.

About half of the men were reported to have alcohol and/or drug problems. While no detailed information was collected about alcohol consumption, WSU clients were asked to describe the drugs used by their partners. Of the 93 men that had drug problems, additional information was provided for 55. Of these, 29 (31%) were reported to use Class A drugs such as cocaine, speed, and/or heroin. An additional six were reported to use "anything" or "everything," which more than likely would also include Class A drugs. Sixteen were said to use cannabis. The majority of the drug using partners are therefore multiple and/or hard drug users. Other studies have documented a significant correlation between alcohol and drug use and violence in relationships (Fagan, Barnett, & Patton, 1988; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Ptacek, 1998). Some researchers have found that between 70 and 97 percent of men are under the influence at the time of a domestic assault (Brookoff, 1997; Roberts, 1988).

Table 10: Characteristics of the Partners of WSU Clients.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Gender	Male	100.0
Age	Less than 20	2.4
	21 through 30	31.7
	31 through 40	44.2
	41 through 50	14.9
	51 and older	6.7
Ethnicity	White/British	81.7
	Black	5.3
	Asian	4.8
	Mixed race	5.3
	Arab/Middle eastern	1.4
	European	1.4
Physical Health Issues	No	67.5
	Yes	24.9
	Unknown	7.7
Mental Health Issues	No	60.8
	Yes	23.9

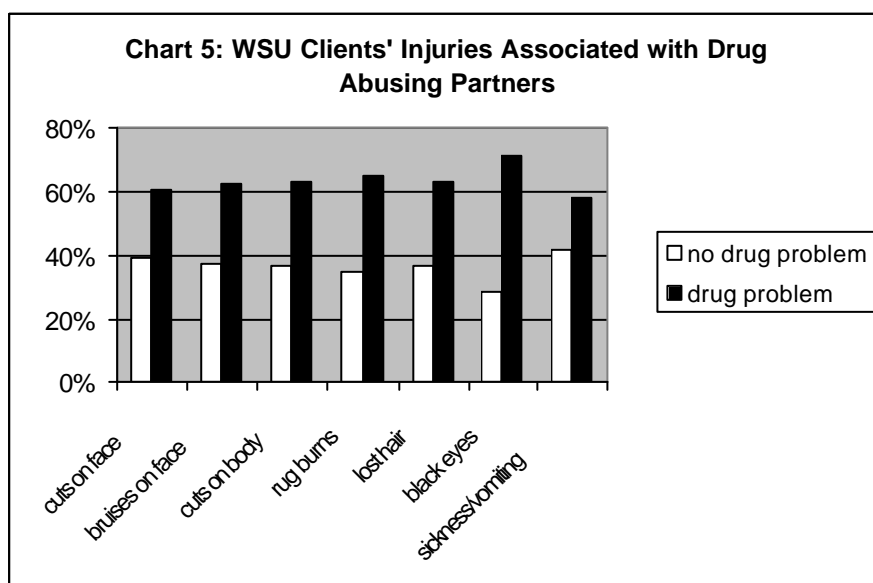
	Unknown	15.3
Alcohol Problem	No	51.7
	Yes	48.3
Drug Problem	No	55.7
	Yes	44.3
Employment Status	Full time	37.4
	Part time	3.4
	Self employed	7.9
	Training scheme	1.0
	Career	45.3
	Unemployed	1.0
	Other	3.9
Relationship with WSU Client	Married	33.7
	Partners	45.0
	Separated	18.3
	Divorced	3.0

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Additional analyses were conducted to determine if perpetrator characteristics were associated with WSU clients' scores on the four abuse scales (recall Tables 5-8). Again, most variables were not statistically significant: (1) perpetrator's age, (2) perpetrator is white, (3) perpetrator has physical health issues, (4) perpetrator has mental health issues, (5) perpetrator has an alcohol problem, (6) perpetrator has previous domestic violence complaints, and (7) perpetrator has previous domestic violence convictions. These seven variables had no impact on women's scores on the abuse scales.

The one variable that was significantly related to women's scores on the abuse scales was the perpetrator having a drug problem. Almost half of the women in the sample reported that their partners have a drug problem (44%). Perpetrators with drug problems on average produced significantly higher levels of injuries (3.31 compared to 1.97). Out of 29 injuries comprising the Injury Assessment Index, 7 were more likely to be inflicted from partners with drug problems. The specific injuries significantly more likely to occur with drug abusing partners are presented in Chart 5.



Women who had partners with drug problems also reported more violence (5.86 compared to 4.81), more mental health problems (2.20 compared to 1.69) and more emotional abuse (8.29 compared to 7.98), although these relationships were not statistically significant. The trend, therefore, is that partners with drug problems inflict more physical and emotional abuse on their partners. Coker et al. (2000) also found the male partner's drug or alcohol use to be the strongest correlate of current intimate partner violence. It also appears that men who batter who also have a substance abuse problem will be less likely to comply with criminal justice sanctions. An analysis of 2438 violent offenders on probation in the Chicago area found that domestic offenders who had a substance abuse problem were significantly more likely to repeatedly violate the technical conditions of their sentence, such as missing treatment or not paying fines or fees (Olson & Stalans, 2001). Additionally, compared to other violent probationers, domestic offenders were about four times more likely to re-victimize the original victim. This report, coupled with past research, makes it clear that domestic offenders with substance abuse problems are especially tenacious offenders. Substance abuse treatment needs to include screening for domestic abuse, and batterer programmes need to address the implications of substance abuse on the propensity to re-offend.

In conclusion, it is important to note that most perpetrator characteristics were *not* associated with the levels of abuse reported by their WSU partners. This could be interpreted to mean that it is difficult to predict which kinds of men will inflict the most types of physical and/or mental abuse within relationships. Stated differently, physical and emotional abuse of intimate partners may be viewed as the purview of all types of men.

Table 11 provides information about the criminal justice history of the partners of WSU clients. This table reveals that a substantial proportion of the men have had a history of contacts with the police and/or courts for domestic violence as well as other crimes.

Table 11: Criminal Justice History of the Partners of WSU Clients.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Referral to Voluntary Perpetrator Programme	No	70.1
	Yes	14.2
	Unknown	15.7
Programme Accepts Perpetrator	No	50.6
	Yes	10.1
	Unknown	39.3
Previous DV Complaints (WSU client)	No	31.8
	Yes	63.7
	Unknown	4.5
If yes, how many?	1 or 2	41.5
	3 or 4^	21.2
	5 thru 9	11.0
	10 or more*	26.3
Previous DV Convictions (WSU client)	No	68.5
	Yes	13.8
	Unknown	17.7
If yes, how many?	1 or 2	95.7
	10 or more	4.3
Previous DV Complaints (different partner)	No	51.3

	Yes	29.7
	Unknown	19.0
If yes, how many?	1 or 2	86.1
	3 or 4	13.9
Previous DV Convictions (different partner)	No	57.4
	Yes	11.3
	Unknown	31.3
If yes, how many?	1 or 2	84.2
	3 or 4	15.8
Other Previous Convictions	No	32.8
	Yes	52.9
	Unknown	14.2
If yes, how many?	1 or 2	55.4
	3 or 4 [^]	12.0
	5 thru 9	9.8
	10 or more [*]	22.8

Notes:

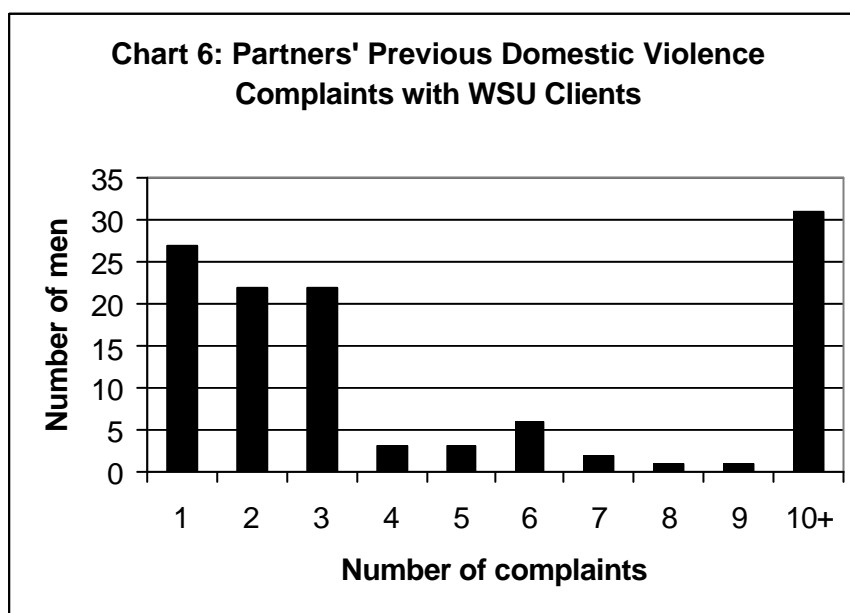
N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

[^] This category also includes the response "a few," which was recoded to "3."

Depending on the question, 1 or 3 clients gave this type of response.

^{*} This category also includes responses such as "numerous" or "too many to count." Depending on the question, 13 or 16 clients gave these responses.

The criminal justice system has already been involved in many of these relationships due to domestic violence. Specifically, 64% of the men have had previous domestic violence complaints and 14% have been previously convicted for domestic violence. Moreover, about half the men have had a large number of previous complaints for domestic violence – 59% have had 3 or more complaints. The distribution of complaints is presented in Chart 6.



These results indicate that many WSU clients have had a serious domestic violence history with their partners and have sought and followed through with legal remedies. However, only a small proportion of these men have voluntarily been referred to a perpetrator programme (14%) or been accepted into a programme for treatment (10%).

Many WSU clients also knew about their partners' violent relationships with other women. Almost 30% of WSU clients had knowledge of their partner having domestic violence complaints with a previous partner. About 11% had knowledge of their partner being previously convicted for domestic violence with a previous partner. These results lend further support to the idea found in other research that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour (Coker et al., 2000; Maxwell, Garner & Fagan, 2002; Olson & Stalans, 2001).

Most of the partners of WSU clients also had contact with the criminal justice system for crimes other than domestic violence. More than half had previous convictions for other crimes and half of these men had three or more previous convictions. Where information is known, the most common offences were driving related, but property crimes such as burglary and criminal damage were also noted. Additionally, crimes of violence such as assault and great bodily harm were included in some partners' criminal histories.

In conclusion, Table 11 indicates that the partners of WSU clients tend to have extensive criminal backgrounds, and are criminally versatile. In the US, research on more than 4000 male domestic violence offenders from many different jurisdictions found that those with prior arrests for *any* offence were from 250% to 330% more likely to commit new acts of domestic violence (Maxwell, Garner & Fagan, 2002). Because research has shown that men with criminal histories are significantly more likely to perpetrate additional violence against their partners, we should consider a substantial proportion of WSU clients to be at risk of experiencing violence in the future.

Section II: Services Offered by the WSU

Services Offered to WSU Clients

Table 12 provides an overview of the percentage of WSU clients receiving various services offered by the WSU. Types of services are explained in detail in the sections that follow.

Table 12: Percentage of Clients Receiving WSU Services.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Percentage Receiving Service</u>
Locks and crime prevention	63.0%
Panic Alarm	6.6%
Safety advice -- client	91.3%
Safety advice -- client's child(ren)	4.3%
Advocacy	68.8%
Counselling	69.8%
Survivors' Forum	66.9%
Referral to another agency – client	78.1%
Referral to another agency -- client's child(ren)	17.9%
Client offered groupwork for children with NSPCC	68.9%
Client offered groupwork for children with other agency	62.9%
Client's Child(ren) attending groupwork	33.3%

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Referrals

Information was collected as to what agency referred the victim to the WSU as well as what agencies the client was referred to by staff members of the WSU. The number of agencies referring victims to the WSU should also be considered an indication of the inter-agency collaboration that the WSU has helped to foster in the Cardiff area. Many different organisations and individuals have taken responsibility for referring victims to the WSU.⁵ Information is available for 192 of the 222 women included in the sample. The biggest source of referrals made to the WSU was from the South Wales Police. Beat officers referred 96 women and the DVU referred 22 women for a total of 118 referrals made by the police. The next biggest source of referrals was the 'other' category, consisting of 29

⁵ To date, 21 different groups/agencies/or categories of people have referred women to the WSU. The police and the CPS however still remain by far the biggest source of referrals.

referrals. The Crown Prosecution Service referred 21 cases to the WSU. Health visitors referred 10 women to the WSU. Next is Women's Aid which made 6 referrals. Housing agencies made 5 referrals, followed by Probation which made 4 referrals. Social Services made 3 referrals. BAWSO and NHS Direct each made two referrals. Finally, GPs, the NSPCC, and 'Friends' (of the woman) each made one referral. That so many agencies have referred women to WSU is a testament to the success of its advertising and the networking with and training of community agencies.

WSU staff have also referred more than three-quarters of women to other agencies in the community. While the average client received about 2 referrals, eight women received 10 or more referrals. Sixty-five women received one referral, 48 women received two referrals, and 29 women received three referrals. Twelve women received between 4 and 9 referrals.

The biggest source of referrals was made to the Homesafe agency. This agency received 83 referrals from the WSU. Homesafe provides target hardening services specifically for victims of domestic violence. Homesafe's staff consists of 14 trained lock fitters who respond by the next day to requests for changes to locks and letterboxes. Two lock fitters also trained in counselling. A risk assessment is performed to determine whether staff members need a police escort when they respond to referrals. Homesafe is funded by a bid to the lottery made by Safer Cardiff. The agency received £300,000 for a five-year period.

Fifty-three women were referred to counselling. The police received a total of 48 referrals (34 to beat officers and 14 to the DVU). Housing is the next most referred to agency, with 41 referrals. The NSPCC received 29 referrals by the WSU. Nineteen women were referred to the Crown Prosecution Service. Social Services and Women's Aid each received 13 referrals. Fourteen women were referred each to counselling and to 'other' agencies. Victim support and Social Services each received three referrals. Medical agencies received the following referrals: three to hospital, three to GPs and one to a midwife. Homestart⁶ and Women's Aid each received two referrals. One referral each was made to the following agencies: CPS, BAWSO, Rape Crisis and school.

Target Hardening

The WSU provides services to clients that are included in the concept of 'target hardening.' The aim of these services is to make the home and immediate environment of women more impervious to violence. About half of the women (n=114 or 51%) were offered locks and crime prevention. Also, recall that 83 women were provided with referrals to the Homesafe agency, which specialises in target hardening for victims of domestic violence. Additionally, 11 women were provided with panic alarms, and one of the women has since reported using her alarm.

Advocacy

Police. Recall that one WSU staff member is a Seconded Police Officer who provides criminal justice information and case follow-up for clients. This officer is responsible for collecting evidence, liaising with officers from the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU), and attending court with clients. Additionally, the WSU and the South Wales Police signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the sharing of information on domestic violence and known-perpetrator rape in the Cardiff area (see Appendix B). All WSU staff liaise with the police and share casework with the DVU. Further information about the relationship between the WSU and the police can be found in Section III of this report.

Courts. It is the responsibility of all WSU staff to attend court with clients, but typically the Seconded Police Officer provides this service. She or another member of the WSU has attended court with more than 60 victims through January 2003. Typically these are one-day events, but sometimes they last longer. Also, it must be remembered that by the time a client's case might reach trial she has been in contact with multiple members of the WSU over many weeks.

With input from the WSU, a special protocol for domestic violence cases has evolved over time (see Appendix C). This protocol, agreed by the police, CPS, Magistrates' Court and Crown Court in South

⁶ Homestart provides multi-agency support for women with children. It provides targeted resources for children under 5 years old.

Wales, facilitates a victim-oriented approach. Further information about the relationship between the WSU and the CPS can be found in Section IV of this report.

Survivor's Forum

The Survivor's Forum is an excellent example of the flexible and accountable service provided by the WSU. The group arose as clients expressed an interest in follow-up from the WSU and particularly wanted to meet with other women facing the same issues. The Survivor's Forum is an informal group where clients meet to discuss current problems and to provide each other with support. The meetings are held at the WSU. Since the first meeting that took place on 17 March 2002, the Survivor's Forum has continued to meet every fortnight at the WSU. The group now has a budget of £1,000 from a civil servants' union in exchange for domestic violence training provided by the WSU Operational Manager. To date some of the money has been spent on aromatherapy and massage workshops. The Operational Manager of the WSU also discusses pertinent topics as appropriate (e.g., the power and control wheel, the criminal justice system, etc.). There is also a phone network between the women that provides an informal hotline service when a woman needs support. The Survivor's Forum has provided an invaluable service to many women, in particular those that view discussion as a healing process and those that want advice and support with regard to how to help their children heal from witnessing and/or experiencing domestic violence.

The author was able to observe the first meeting of the Survivor's Forum in addition to one in 2003. At this meeting the discussion was facilitated by the Operational Manager of the WSU, who encouraged the women to discuss the experiences that led them to the WSU and also their perceptions of WSU service and how it could be improved. Thirteen women confirmed attendance but eight actually attended. Since then, on average about six women attend each meeting of the Forum. Field notes from these observations are discussed below.

One woman started talking about how she did not realise how severe the problem with her abusive partner was until she came to the WSU. She stated that as a result of her support from the WSU, she has received an injunction and the man is out of her life. She is, however, continuing to see the effects of domestic violence on her children. She has received a referral to the NSPCC for counselling services for her children. The needs of children dealing with domestic violence were a topic that was relevant to many, if not all, of the women present. They wondered how they could go through the criminal justice process while simultaneously preventing their children from being traumatized further. Many also brought up the issue of their (ex)partners using the children as another form of harassment.⁷ For example, some partners spoke poorly of the mothers to the children, or would refuse to bring the children back from a contact visit. Others said they would fight to take the children away from the mother if she continued the domestic violence complaint through the criminal justice system.

Another issue that received comments from many of the women was the county court. Many thought that this agency needed to be targeted for training on how to more appropriately deal with victims of domestic violence. For example, one idea was to have the same judge follow a case through to its closure to avoid confusion and to allow for consistent treatment. The women commented that while some of the court staff are very good, others are not. Finally, the masculine court culture was seen as a barrier to the effective and fair treatment of domestic violence cases.

The conversation next focused on the usefulness of support groups such as the Survivor's Forum. One vital area of helping victims is to provide support and social interaction to combat feelings of isolation and worthlessness that surround women dealing with domestic violence. During the forum, many if not all of the women provided examples of their extreme sense of isolation, worthlessness and helplessness. They believed that coming together to talk about these issues would help to counteract these negative feelings. One woman commented that the WSU fill the gap that the police cannot fill, but still cannot replace the support that a close friend could provide. Without strong

⁷ In court recently, a WSU staff member observed that a man charged with domestic violence used 'poor mothering' as a mitigating factor, or excuse as to why he assaulted the mother of his children. He claimed that he had seen their children riding in the car while not wearing their seatbelts. When he got into the car he assaulted the woman in front of their children.

friends, many women felt that they would be completely alone. One stated that the experience of dealing with an abusive partner makes one want to have "someone pick you and the children up and carry you to the other side." The overall feeling seemed to be that no amount of support would be too great for women experiencing domestic violence. In that regard, groups such as the Survivor's Forum provide a vital service.

The next topic of discussion was the police response to domestic violence. Most of the comments made during this discussion were negative. Most gave examples of how officers gave them poor advice or threatened not to come around if the women called again, since previously she may have dropped the charges. These threats obviously made it difficult for some of the women to know what to do. Even for women who did not necessarily have negative experiences with the police, comments were made regarding the loss of control that many women experienced that made them fearful of picking up the phone. They wondered, "What will happen if I call for help?" and usually felt a sense of dread about the chain of events that might ensue. For those reasons, the women present thought that police should be helpful and supportive given that making the call was a difficult and brave action.

The response from housing was seen as profoundly changed. Many women had previously dealt with housing and were shocked and pleased by the new form of response received as a result of cooperation with the WSU. Not only were the housing staff more sensitive in their interviews with the women, but the outcomes were more often successful. Part of the change in response was attributed to training conducted by the WSU. Also, the new procedure of having the WSU fill in the forms and then fax them directly to housing was seen as beneficial, as it saved the women a trip there in person. Now, housing telephones the WSU with information and/or decisions about the women's housing applications. This new procedure was greatly appreciated by the women present.

Children's Services

Past research has demonstrated that domestic violence has dire consequences for children in the household. For example, Roy (1977) found that 45% of assaults on women were accompanied by similar assaults on their children. More recent studies suggest that the problem is even more widespread. These studies estimate that in 60% to 75% of the homes in which domestic violence occurs the abuse extends to the children (Bowker, Arbitell & McFarron, 1988; McKibben, DeVos & Newberger, 1989). Even witnessing abuse has negative consequences for children's emotional and behavioral development (Kolbo, Blakely & Engleman, 1996). To quote from Home Office Circular 60/90:

Research has shown that children who are either present at, or hear, incidents of domestic violence can be deeply affected (this could include behavioral, physical and psychological effects). In 90% of incidents occurring within families, children are in the same or next room, which can cause distress and confusion. Some children may not display any visible reaction but one should not assume they are unaffected. Where there is evidence of domestic violence in a family, the likelihood of child abuse is greatly increased.

In this study, 6% of women reported that their current partner hit or otherwise hurt the kids, and 14% reported that a previous partner had hit or otherwise hurt the kids (see Table 5). WSU clients also reported that their children have suffered emotional abuse. For example, partners have threatened to hurt the kids (5% of current and 10% of any partner), shouted at the kids (16% of current and 31% of any partner) and/or punished or deprived the children (5% of current and 11% of any partner). Negatively impacting both mothers and children is the threat that they will be separated from one another. Twenty-two percent of WSU clients had been threatened that the children would be taken away by their current partners (27% had experienced this from any partner). Domestic violence therefore impacts a substantial proportion of children both physically and psychologically.

It is important that children's problems as a result of experiencing or witnessing domestic violence are addressed. The WSU provides referrals for clients seeking counselling services for their children who are experiencing problems as a result of domestic violence. Roughly 6 in 10 clients received referrals on behalf of their children. The two agencies used in this regard are CAAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Children). The NSPCC offers groupwork for children as part of its Domestic Violence Prevention Service.

Services Offered to the Community

Training Sessions

More than 1100 persons working in criminal justice or community agencies in the South Wales area have received training by the WSU. Typically they receive sessions entitled, "A 'What Works' Approach for Domestic Abuse in Cardiff," but they are also specific to the type of personnel receiving the training (e.g., police, magistrates, midwives, etc.). A sample agenda for the training can be found in Appendix D. These training sessions are provided free of charge and allow the WSU to further promote a climate in the South Wales, and especially Cardiff, area that is intolerant of domestic violence. The training also allows for better screening for domestic violence by agencies not typically responsible for this (e.g., midwives) and better processing of domestic violence cases and treatment of domestic violence victims by criminal justice officials. Typically the training is provided by the WSU's Operational Manager. Providing training in the community has the added effect of advertising the service provided by WSU and therefore increasing that chance that victims will be referred. Table 13 presents an account of who has received training by the WSU from December 2001 through January 2003.

Table 13: Number of Community Members that have Received Domestic Violence Training from the WSU.

<u>Type of Personnel</u>	<u>Number of Personnel</u>	<u>Length of Training</u>
Multi-agency training	240	full day
Magistrates	80	3 hours
Senior House Officers	45	1/2 day
Police Officers	6	1/2 day
Probation Trainees	7	full day
Witness Service Trainees	20	1/2 day
Safer Cardiff	25	full day
Pontypridd Domestic Violence Forum	30	full day
Swansea Domestic Violence Forum	40	1/2 day
Gregynog Domestic Abuse Forum	10	1/2 day
Swindon Domestic Violence Intervention Project	10	full day
Haringey Council DV Coordinators	3	1/2 day
National Assembly Conference	300	2 hours
NSPCC Appeals	15	2 hours
Trainee Health Professionals	100	1/2 day
Bridgend Midwives	20	1/2 day
Student Health Visitors	6	1/2 day
Psychologists	30	full day
Alcohol Workers	10	full day
Methodists	20	2 hours
Specialist Registrars	25	2 hours
DV Conference - London	20	2 hours
Womankind Conference	100	2 hours
University Social Studies	10	full day
CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service)	10	1/2 day
TOTAL personnel	1182	

Section III: Policing Domestic Violence in Cardiff

Background

This section provides a background into the police response to domestic violence in Cardiff by discussing three important elements: the Domestic Violence Unit of the South Wales Police, the recent change in force policy regarding domestic violence, and the Police Watch programme.

Domestic Violence Unit

The role of the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) of the South Wales Police is to receive domestic violence reports from officers attending initial incidents of domestic violence, provide advice and support to victims of domestic violence and refer them to other agencies as appropriate. Additionally, the DVU is required: to liaise with the Crown Prosecution Service on domestic violence issues; to develop working relationships with divisional officers; to keep statistics relating to domestic violence; to develop good working relationships with Women's Aid and other agencies who are able to assist (such as the WSU once it was launched); and to provide information to local intelligence officers on families, particularly where those families exhibit violence towards police officers who attend at their homes.

An initial interview with a Detective Sergeant from the DVU (14 November 2001), and on-going communications since then provide important background information regarding the police response to domestic violence in South Wales. When police respond to domestic violence calls they are expected to arrest, but according to the Sergeant the problems officers face include many victims refusing to make complaints and officers being fearful of wrongful arrest of suspects lawsuits (when victims deny domestic violence happened then officers are on 'shaky ground' in terms of violating the human rights of suspects). The Sergeant noted that officers are still obligated to investigate the incident, regardless of a victim's desire to make complaint.

Officers are required to submit FSU9 forms (domestic violence reports) to the DVU (regardless of whether arrest was made) before the end of their tour of duty. The definition of domestic violence adopted by the South Wales Police is listed on the top of the form: "any incident of violence or aggression, wherever and whenever it occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse of an individual by a family member, partner, or ex-partner in an existing or previous relationship, regardless of gender, culture, or sexual orientation." These forms are not computerised. The Sergeant keeps track of some data from these forms to create monthly tallies that he is required to submit to headquarters each month. The Sergeant also submits the monthly tallies to the Operational Manager of the WSU for general information purposes. The variables contained in the monthly tallies include: FSU9 forms submitted that meet the criteria of domestic violence; FSU9 forms submitted that did not meet criteria of domestic violence; arrests made; persons charged; repeat victims; victims who refuse to make a complaint; mental health related; alcohol related; drug related; and F11a forms (concerns for children) submitted. There are approximately 200 FSU9s per month, about 25-35% of which result in arrest.

Each FSU9 form contains a white copy and a green copy. The green copy is filed at the Crime Management Unit (CMU). The FSU9 forms help the CMU to determine whether a recordable crime occurred. These forms also provide a form of oversight to an attending officer's performance at the scene. For example, if an officer indicates that an assault did take place then the FSU9 should contain a Divisional Crime Number.

The white copy of the FSU9 is sent to the DVU where each one is reviewed, regardless if whether a recordable crime took place or what type of crime took place. Part of the review process is to determine whether the victim is a repeat victim (defined as having two incidents within a 12-month period). If the victim is a repeat victim, it is the responsibility of officers in the DVU to make contact with the victim to offer support and advice, by means of telephone, letter, or pre-arranged appointment. When a victim reaches Action Plan Level (three reported incidents) the DVU officer is required to hold a strategy meeting with the Divisional Detective Inspector. At this level any children in the family are referred to social services for risk assessment. The children do not have to be

present at the scene for this referral to be made. Social Services are then expected to report feedback on their visit to the home back to the DVU, who would make a notation in their file on the victim. According to the Sergeant, Social Services generally do follow through and report back to police. No police notation in file is more likely to mean that social services did not provide feedback to police (not that they did not visit/contact the victim).

According to the DVU Sergeant, police training in South Wales on domestic violence incidents consists of about two hours during their standard 3-4 month training that officers receive when they are first on the job. The South Wales Police force has been selected by the National Operations Facility (Police Training Centre) Bramshill to pilot a police training package on domestic violence. This training commenced in April, 2003. In addition, follow-up training on domestic violence is provided by the seconded police officer from the WSU to frontline officers who attend baton training.

Police Domestic Violence Policy

The police policy regarding domestic violence was in a stage of revision during autumn 2001 and spring 2002. The previous policy was in place for the past 10 years. The new policy was implemented in May 2002. The DVU Sergeant was responsible for most of the revisions to the new policy, which can be found in Appendix E.

The new policy states that the South Wales Police is "committed to taking positive action in all cases of domestic violence." It describes the initial action of officers attending to incidents of domestic violence as follows. First, the officer should protect the victim and children (if applicable) from any further abuse. Secondly, the officer must hold the offender accountable. Where a power of arrest exists, the alleged offender should normally be arrested. An officer must be prepared to justify a decision not to arrest in the above circumstances and indicate the reason on the FSU9. The revised policy is therefore a pro- or preferred arrest policy, where arrest is the response officers should take in cases of domestic violence. Whereas the previous policy made a similar statement that the South Wales Police is "committed to taking positive action in all cases of domestic violence giving all victims and any children involved the full protection of the law," it did not describe arrest as the preferred response to be taken by officers at the scene. Instead, initial action was described as a four-part process: calm the situation; ensure that there is no danger to anyone present; ensure that medical assistance is obtained if necessary; and separate the parties to obtain independent explanations. The police policy change that occurred in May 2002 should therefore have an impact on the proportion of domestic violence cases resulting in arrest.

Police Watch Programme

The Police Watch programme was implemented throughout Cardiff in April 2002. It is an expansion of a programme that was piloted in one sector of Cardiff, Ely, which has high rate of domestic violence and repeat victimisation. The Ely project has been running since April 2001. The aim of this police intervention is to reduce repeat domestic violence victimisation in the Cardiff area.

There are three levels of intervention within the Police Watch programme. Level 1 occurs when officers attend a domestic violence incident when violence is used or threatened. They are to handle the incident in accordance with the new force policy, submit a domestic violence report (FSU9) and advise both victim and offender of the new policy and the Police Watch programme. The attending officer(s) is supposed to offer Police Watch to the victim at this stage. Police Watch provides enhanced police presence to both the victim and the perpetrator via high-visibility police patrols, which are to occur twice per week in the vicinity of the incident. This intervention is to last for six weeks. If the victim resides in a residence apart from the perpetrator, target-hardening options will be offered as part of the intervention. A letter will be sent to the victim detailing agency contact information where further assistance may be obtained, and a warning letter will be sent to the perpetrator.

Level 2 initiates at the second reported incident. Again, attending officers are to deal with the incident in line with force policy and to submit a FSU9. Officers are supposed to reiterate the policy at the scene. A second information letter will be sent to the victim, and a second official warning letter will be sent to the perpetrator. The Sector Inspector arranges for a Community Constable to visit the victim, who will encourage and help the victim complete a risk assessment form. As part of the follow-up, the Constable is supposed to inform the victim of Police Watch, Cocoon Watch, and options

for target hardening. Cocoon Watch is a police initiative that requires the help and support of neighbours, family members and relevant agencies in protecting the victim by contacting the police immediately if further incidents of domestic violence occur. The intervention is only implemented with the informed consent of the victim. The perpetrator is made aware that a Cocoon Watch has been implemented. Upon completion of the 'risk assessment' form, the Sector Inspector will determine how many patrols of the vicinity are required, whether additional follow-up visits to the victim should be made, and the duration of the intervention. Where the perpetrator is apprehended and charged, consideration should be given to opposing bail, and the history of domestic violence should be brought to the attention of the Crown Prosecution Service.

Level 3 occurs after the third incident is reported. The attending officer should again deal with the incident according to force policy and should submit a FSU9. The perpetrator is reminded of the policy and a third official warning letter is sent. The victim is sent another information letter that includes details of bail conditions if they are applicable. Police Watch is increased and a Domestic Violence Officer (DVO) from the DVU will make contact with the victim and attempt to arrange a visit. A referral will be made to the Crime Prevention Officer for further target-hardening advice, including panic alarms, mobile phones, etc. The DVO will arrange a multi-agency meeting to facilitate improved communication and information sharing within and between agencies. Where the perpetrator is arrested and charged, consideration should be given to oppose bail and provide Crown Prosecution Service with a history of the domestic violence.

According to the DVU Sergeant, general reports from beat officers indicate that recently many victims have expressed satisfaction that the police are being helpful and supportive. Letters have also been received from victims' solicitors expressing similar satisfaction.

Coordination and Cooperation between the WSU and South Wales Police

Joint Protocol

A memorandum of understanding was agreed between the South Wales Police and the WSU in October 2001 (recall Appendix B). The aim of this joint protocol is to allow maximum information sharing between the police and the WSU. Officers who attend domestic violence incidents are instructed to inform victims of the existence of the WSU and to describe the support that can be offered by the unit. Officers are to refer victims to the WSU by completing a form called the WSU1 that includes victim details, attaching it to the victim's FSU9 form, and faxing both forms to the WSU.

Once a police referral has been received at the WSU, a staff member is expected to act within two working days. Additionally, the Seconded Police Officer in the WSU (or, in her absence the Operational Manager) is responsible for liaising with the attending officer in the case. Information on referrals was provided in Section II of this report. The high number of police referrals (both by DVU officers and beat officers) demonstrates an exceptional level of cooperation between the WSU and the South Wales Police.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

Another recent development demonstrates the close working relationship between the WSU and the SWP. In December 2002 the SWP piloted a Victim Initial Risk Indicator Form (see Appendix F) that is to be completed by attending officers at the scene of domestic violence incidents. The risk instrument was developed from a review of 40 domestic homicides, relevant research, and communication with other community and criminal justice agencies. The aim of the risk instrument is to identify serious cases of domestic violence that can be addressed through Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). In Cardiff, about twenty cases per month are being identified as high risk.

The first MARAC occurred on 1 April 2003 and was attended by members of 16 agencies, including police, probation, local authority, health, housing, refuge and the WSU. It is expected that these meetings will occur at least monthly and provide a forum for sharing information and taking actions that will reduce future harm to high risk victims and their children. At the first meeting, the circumstances of individual women were discussed and plans were created to help promote their safety. Representatives from various agencies contributed information, and often this process revealed discrepancies in the information held across agencies. For example, the WSU and the SWP

might have knowledge of one woman as a repeat, high-risk victim, but South Wales Probation might not have any knowledge of her partner being a serious domestic abuser, or he might not be on their system at all. Only in a multi-agency framework can these loopholes be identified and closed.

Observation of the first MARAC revealed the invaluable role played by the WSU in a multi-agency approach to reducing domestic violence in the community. The idea of a 'multi-agency approach' is actually embedded in the job description of the seconded police officer who works at the WSU. At the MARAC this officer was able to act as a bridge between community and criminal justice agencies and their respective approaches to handling cases of domestic violence. Working as an officer with the SWP, she has access to confidential information such as offender pre-cons that is not normally shared with community agencies. She is also able to track cases through the criminal justice system much more effectively. Working as a member of the WSU, she has access to in-depth information gathered by victim-oriented trained professionals that is not normally within the purview of criminal justice agencies. The WSU therefore was able to provide the timeliest and most relevant information, and shared with others present at the MARAC this information was instrumental in creating safety plans for victims.

Findings from Police Domestic Violence Data

Table 14 utilises police domestic violence data to make pre- and post-WSU monthly comparisons to describe the impact of the WSU on the prevalence and nature of domestic violence in Cardiff. These analyses were conducted to provide an in-depth look into the changes associated in police data in the months before the WSU was implemented compared to the months after the WSU was implemented.

For example, what is the percentage change in the number of victims refusing to make a complaint in April 2001 (pre-WSU) compared to April 2002 (post-WSU)? As Table 14 indicates, there was an 89% decrease in the number of victims refusing to make a complaint. Table 14 also demonstrates that for most months, the WSU is associated with a reduction in the percentage of victims who refused to make a complaint. For two months there were slight increases (1% in June and 2% in July), for one month there was no difference (August), and for December there was a rather large increase (54%). December 2002 was a rather unusual month in general, however, as there were almost 300 domestic violence complaints compared to the average of 200 per month. Alcohol-related complaints were also notably higher in December (156 compared to the average of 95). It is important to note that overall, the trend is one of reduction in the number of victims who refuse to make a complaint.

Table 14 also shows that the percentage of repeat victims has been reduced for 11 of the 12 months that the WSU has been in operation. For some months these are remarkable reductions (e.g., 333% decrease for June 2002 compared to June 2001), while for other months these reductions are negligible (e.g., 2% decrease for March 2002 compared to March 2001). However, the trend is that for 11 of 12 months there was a decrease in the percentage of domestic violence incidents that had a repeat victim.

Table 14: Prevalence and Nature of Domestic Violence In Cardiff: Monthly Comparisons Pre/Post WSU.

	<u>Jan (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Feb (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Mar (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Apr (2001 - 2002)</u>
DV Complaints	-30 (13% decrease)	19 (9% increase)	34 (14% increase)	24 (10% increase)
Arrests Made	1 (2% increase)	-5 (10% decrease)	-16 (33% decrease)	-31 (89% decrease)
Persons Charged	9 (25% increase)	1 (3% increase)	-7 (21% decrease)	13 (25% increase)
Repeat Victims	-35 (78% decrease)	2 (3% increase)	-1 (2% decrease)	-46 (307% decrease)
Victims Refusing to Make Complaint	-40 (39% decrease)	-3 (3% decrease)	-31 (38% decrease)	-59 (89% decrease)
Concern for Children Reports	26 (68% increase)	16 (36% increase)	39 (63% increase)	35 (64% increase)
	<u>May (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Jun (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Jul (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Aug (2001 - 2002)</u>
DV Complaints	32 (15% increase)	17 (9% increase)	42 (19% increase)	23 (13% increase)
Arrests Made	-13 (45% decrease)	-13 (48% decrease)	12 (22% increase)	18 (37% increase)
Persons Charged	51 (68% increase)	15 (47% increase)	12 (32% increase)	2 (8% increase)
Repeat Victims	-14 (33% decrease)	-40 (333% decrease)	-19 (48% decrease)	-11 (26% decrease)
Victims Refusing to Make Complaint	-46 (78% decrease)	1 (1% increase)	2 (2% increase)	0 (no difference)
Concern for Children Reports	25 (56% increase)	27 (52% increase)	54 (75% increase)	34 (52% increase)
	<u>Sep (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Oct (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Nov (2001 - 2002)</u>	<u>Dec (2001 - 2002)</u>
DV Complaints	1 (1% increase)	-9 (4% decrease)	12 (6% increase)	131 (44% increase)
Arrests Made	13 (31% increase)	5 (9% increase)	-5 (15% decrease)	25 (42% increase)
Persons Charged	4 (17% increase)	-7 (39% decrease)	-16 (160% decrease)	-14 (200% decrease)
Repeat Victims	-22 (69% decrease)	-32 (84% decrease)	-31 (111% decrease)	-8 (24% decrease)
Victims Refusing to Make Complaint	-22 (36% decrease)	-34 (41% decrease)	-11 (14% decrease)	71 (54% increase)
Concern for Children Reports	15 (33% increase)	25 (40% increase)	40 (62% increase)	37 (52% increase)

Note:

Figures indicate the change from one month in 2001 compared to the same month in 2002.

The next table compares the effects of the WSU, the Police Policy Change and the Police Watch programme on the prevalence and nature of domestic violence in Cardiff (see Table 15). Before and after comparisons were made using monthly police data on domestic violence to determine whether the interventions were associated with increases or decreases in certain indicators over the 24-month period (Dec 00-Dec 02). For example, has there been a significant change in the amount of concern for children reports submitted by police officers after the new police policy was implemented?

The table indicates that each of the three interventions produced positive effects, and for two indicators all three interventions produced a statistically significant change (repeat victims and concern for children reports). Pre-post comparisons for the WSU, the Police Policy, and the Police Watch Program indicate that they all significantly reduced the amount of repeat victims, and increased the amount of concern for children reports.

None of the interventions were associated with a reduction in the amount of domestic violence complaints. This finding serves as a reminder that domestic violence is an entrenched social problem that is unlikely to be reduced by one particular programme within a few months. Nonetheless, several positive impacts were observed as a result of the WSU, the Police Policy Change and/or the Police Watch programme.

The WSU was associated with significant changes in 6 of the 9 indicators. The number of persons charged for domestic violence increased from an average of 27 per month to 31 per month (15%). The number of victims refusing to make complaints was reduced from an average of 99 per month to 81 per month (18%). Repeat victims were reduced significantly post-WSU, from an average of 58 to 37 per month (36%). The amount of concern for children reports more than doubled, from an average of 23 to 55 per month (139%).⁸

In conclusion, these across-the-board trends highlights that all of the interventions are producing impacts in the desired direction, and that these interventions working in concert will be responsible for continued successes. The number of mental health related and alcohol related complaints also both increased significantly, most likely due to improved police reporting procedures.

⁸ The Sergeant from the DVU has also stated that the quality of the information contained in these reports has improved dramatically. Not only are officers filling out these forms more often, they are also including more detailed and useful information on these forms.

Table 15: Effects of the Women's Safety Unit, Police Policy Change, and Police Watch On the Prevalence and Nature of Domestic Violence in Cardiff (Dec 00-Dec 02).

	<u>Pre- Women's Safety Unit</u>	<u>Post- Women's Safety Unit</u>	<u>Old Police Policy</u>	<u>New Police Policy</u>	<u>Pre- Police Watch Program</u>	<u>Post- Police Watch Program</u>
DV Complaints	189.5	211	197.18	208.13	194.94	210.89
Arrests Made	47.58	44.54	47.06	43.75	47.81	42.78
Persons Charged	27.08	31.38	29.76	28.38	28.38	31
Repeat Victims[^]	58.08	37.15*	53.59	33.63*	56	31.56*
Victims Refusing to Make Complaint	98.92	81.31*	94.18	80.38	95.94	78.78
Mental Health Related	10	14.62*	11.47	14.38	11.56	13.89
Alcohol Related	87.5	103.62*	93.24	101.50	92.94	101.11
Drug Related	12.42	14.62	13.59	13.50	13.25	14.11
Concern for Children Reports[^]	22.58	54.62*	29.65	59.62*	28.06	59.11*

Notes:

All figures represent average monthly totals.

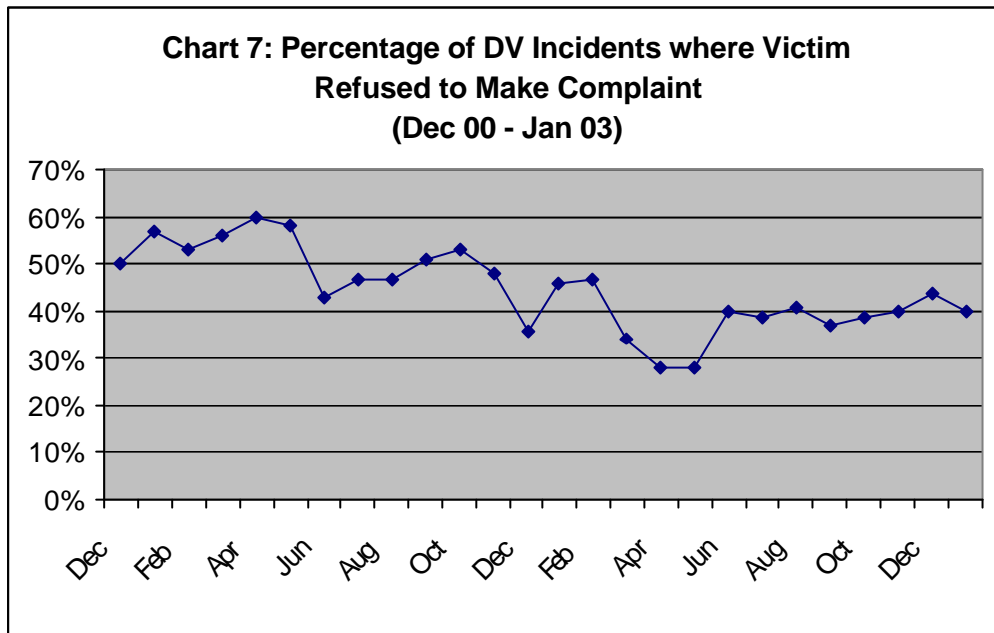
WSU took effect Dec 01, PPC took effect May 02, PW took effect Apr 02.

* Indicates that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the figures.

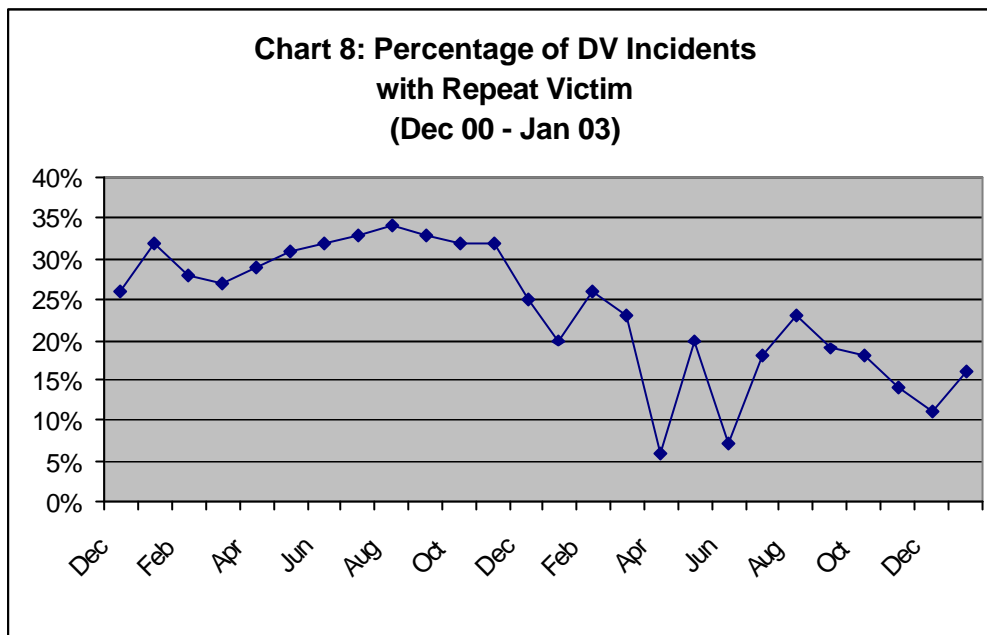
[^] Indicates that a significant change was observed for all three interventions.

The indicators that showed a significant change post-WSU are worth a more detailed look, particularly victims refusing to make a complaint, repeat victims and concern for children reports. Charts 7-9 show the trends for these three indicators over time. Percentages in each chart represent the proportion of complaints of a certain type divided by the total number of complaints for that month.

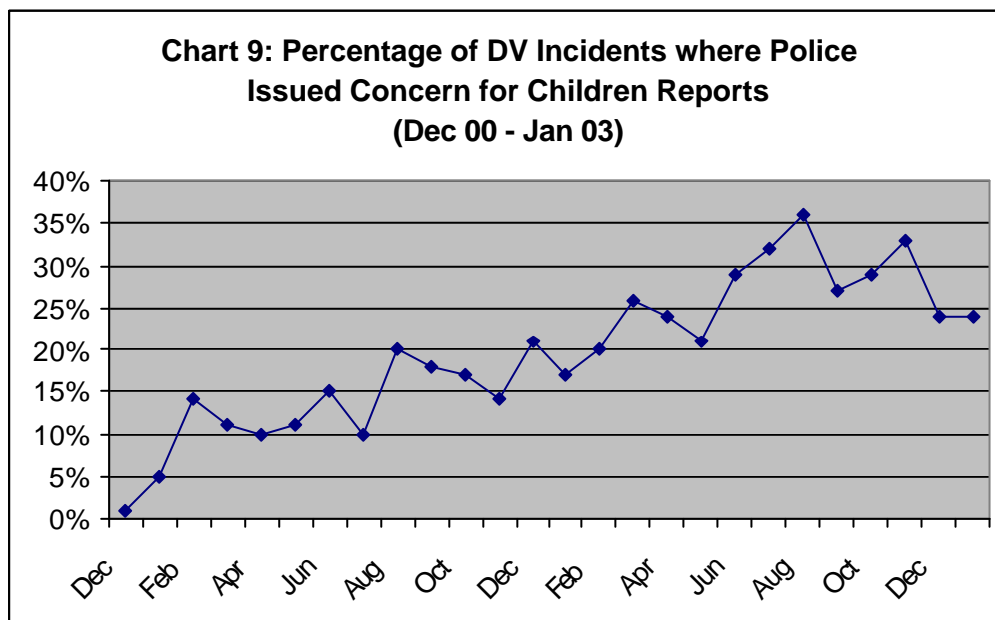
The percentage of incidents where the victim refused to make a complaint has decreased post-WSU (see Chart 7). Specifically, 50% of victims refused to make a complaint in Dec 00. This percentage fell to 36% in Dec 01, and was 44% in Dec 02. Overall, there has been a steady reduction in the amount of victims who refuse to make a complaint against their abusive partner.



On the next page, Chart 8 shows that over time the percentage of incidents where there was a repeat victim has decreased – from about 32% in January 2001 to 16% in January 2003. The trend is stable and reflects consistent and substantial reductions in the amount of repeat victims coming to the attention of police each month. Research in Merseyside (UK) has shown that repeat victimisation is an important indicator of police performance, as it promotes attention to a police force's ability to prevent rather than merely respond to domestic violence in the community (Farrell & Buckley, 1999). That repeat victimisation has continually been decreasing is an indication that multi-agency partnerships in Cardiff are working.



One police indicator has increased since the implementation of the WSU in Cardiff. Chart 9 shows that the number of Concern for Children reports (F11a forms) completed by police officers has increased substantially over time. In January 2001, police made these reports in only 5% of domestic incidents. In January 2003, they made these reports in 24% of domestic incidents. This also appears to be a stable trend that reflects an increased dedication by police to documenting situations where children might also be at risk (either physically or psychologically) from domestic violence.



In conclusion, the WSU has produced significant changes as an intervention when we examine the police data before and after the programme was in place. Important changes to police policy and practice in conjunction with the implementation of the WSU have been instrumental in producing improved outcomes for domestic violence incidents in Cardiff.

WSU Clients' Experiences with Police

WSU clients' perceptions of the service they received from police are displayed in Table 16. The majority of WSU clients (74%) called the police themselves as opposed to having a friend or neighbour call. The majority of WSU clients (73%) also wanted the police to make an arrest even though fewer were certain of the benefits of arrest. For example, less than half (47%) thought that arrest would decrease the likelihood of future domestic violence or teach the perpetrator a lesson (48%). Slightly more than half (55%) thought that arrest would help them get the support they need (55%). Evidently, most WSU clients rely on the police for help and want them to make an arrest once they arrive at the scene regardless of what effect the arrest will have on the future.

The majority of victims are satisfied with how the police handled the incident: about 3 in 4 reported they were satisfied or very satisfied. Positive comments made by the women included "police handled the situation well" and "police were brilliant." One issue that did arise as an area for improvement was response time; 1 in 4 stated that police arrived slower than they expected. Women also mentioned response time when they provided additional comments about how they thought the police response to domestic violence in Cardiff could be improved. Typical statements were, "police could have been faster" and "more officers [are needed] – response time is not good".

Table 16: WSU Clients' Perceptions of Police Service.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Client called the police	No	26.3
	Yes	73.7
Police arrived on scene	Faster than expected	31.9
	Slower than expected	25.3
	About as expected	24.7
	Doesn't know	18.1
Client wanted police to make arrest	No	18.0
	Yes	73.2
	Unsure	8.8
Client believes arrest would decrease likelihood of future DV	No	53.2
	Yes	46.8
Client believes arrest would put her in more danger	No	55.9
	Yes	44.1
Client believes arrest would help her get support she needs	No	45.5
	Yes	54.5
Client believes arrest would teach the perpetrator a lesson	No	52.3
	Yes	47.7
Client would call police again for help	No	3.6
	Yes	90.2
	Unsure	6.2

Satisfaction with how police handled the incident	Very satisfied	36.7
	Satisfied	41.7
	Neutral/don't know	6.0
	Dissatisfied	10.1
	Very dissatisfied	5.5
Further contact with police since the incident	No	32.0
	Yes	68.0

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All figures listed are valid percentages.

Table 17 provides a comparison of the expectations and evaluations of WSU clients regarding police service. This table provides more detail about what victims expect from police officers arriving at the scene and what officers actually do once they are at the scene. If the difference between expectations and actual behaviour is a negative number, this is the percentage of WSU clients that had their expectations unfulfilled, and who can therefore be considered to be dissatisfied with the attending officers' performance.

Table 17: WSU Clients' Expectations and Evaluations of Attending Officers' Performance.

<u>Police Behaviour</u>		<u>WSU Clients' Expectations of Police Behaviour</u>	<u>Actual Police Behaviour at Incident</u>	<u>Difference*</u>
Courteous or respectful	No	3.6	8.3	4.7
	Yes	89.1	88.1	-1.0
	Unsure	7.3	3.6	
Understanding	No	6.7	10.8	4.1
	Yes	84.0	82.5	-1.5
	Unsure	9.3	6.7	
Appear concerned	No	7.3	13.0	5.7
	Yes	81.8	79.7	-2.1
	Unsure	10.9	7.3	
Take time to listen	No	6.3	12.4	6.1
	Yes	82.8	83.4	-0.6
	Unsure	10.9	4.1	
Take situation seriously	No	5.7	14.0	8.3
	Yes	87.5	80.8	-6.7
	Unsure	6.8	5.2	
Speak to client separate from perp	No	4.4	10.4	6.0
	yes	86.7	86.3	-0.4
	unsure	8.9	3.3	

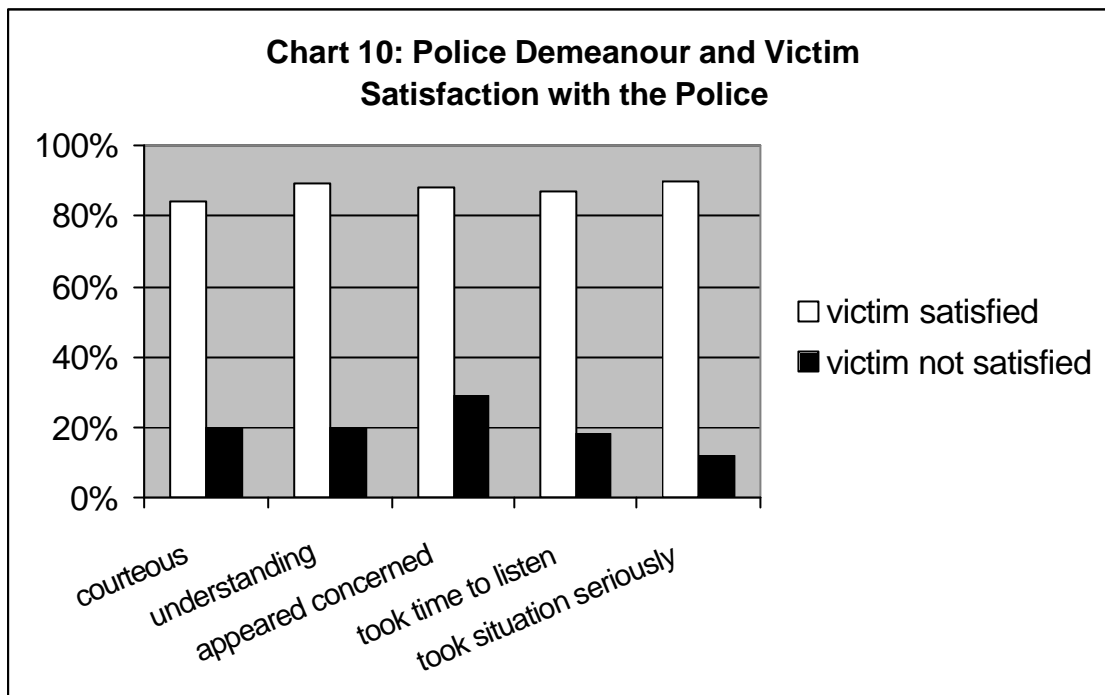
Question any witnesses present	No	22.0	48.6	26.6
	Yes	57.1	40.0	-17.1
	Unsure	20.8	11.4	
Search for/ask to see evidence	No	26.9	45.0	18.1
	Yes	57.1	45.0	-12.1
	Unsure	15.9	10.0	
Make an arrest	No	22.3	43.1	20.8
	Yes	62.8	53.3	-9.5
	Unsure	14.9	3.6	

Notes:

N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid.

Generally, the data presented in Table 17 show that victims have realistic expectations of the police, and that generally the police fulfilled their expectations. There is little difference between expectations and evaluations of the police by victims. For example, most victims expect officers to be courteous or respectful, understanding, and to appear concerned, and mostly victims report that officers at the scene behave in these ways. The one area where victims were most likely to have their expectations unfulfilled relates to the questioning of witnesses. Fifty-seven percent of victims expected police to question witnesses, but only 40% of victims reported that police actually did question witnesses.

Additional analyses were performed to determine which factors significantly influence victim satisfaction with the police. Notably, client race, client age, police response time and whether the client has had previous contact with the police were *not* significantly related to satisfaction. However, several variables did significantly impact whether victims were satisfied with how police responded to the incident. These can be grouped into police demeanour variables (see Chart 10) and police behaviour variables (see Chart 11).

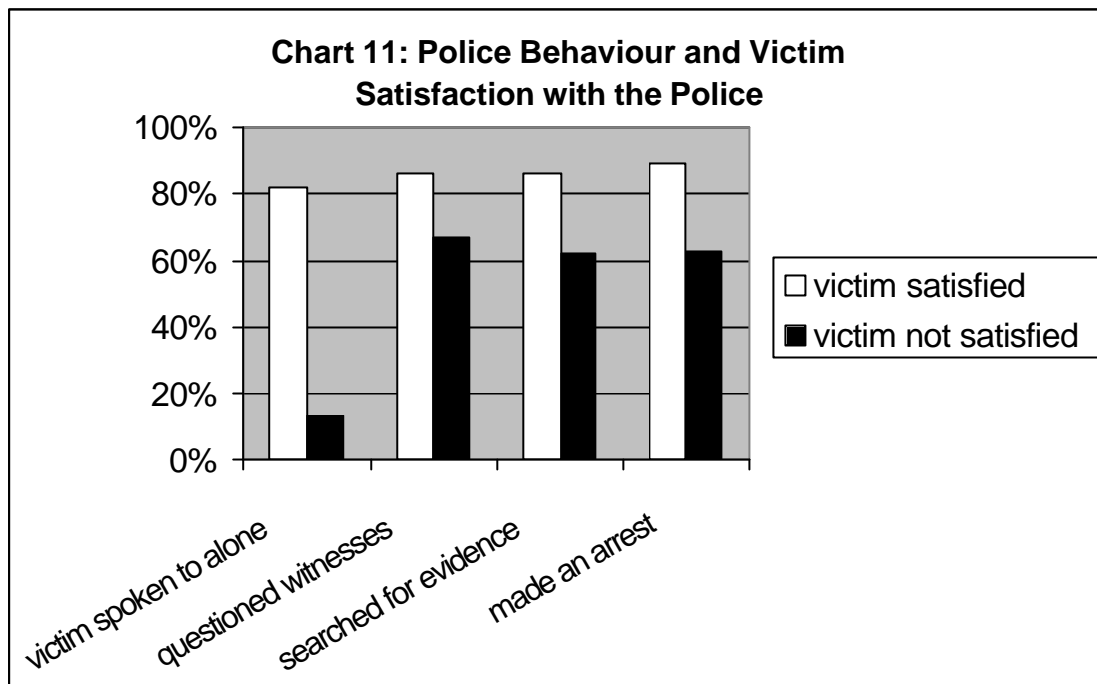


This chart shows that the demeanour that officers exhibit towards victims at the scene has important repercussions for their levels of satisfaction. When officers were courteous, understanding, appeared concerned, took the time to listen to them, and took the situation seriously significantly higher proportions of victims were satisfied. These relationships are not only statistically significant, but also substantively significant. In other words, these impacts are *large*. For example, only 20% of victims are satisfied when the police were not courteous but 84% were satisfied when they were. This is more than four times the amount of victims who say they are satisfied with how the police handled the incident. The same can be said for the other demeanour variables that also show substantial impacts on victim satisfaction. Women's negative comments about the police also reveal the importance they place on the attitude that officers display towards them:

- "They could have been more understanding. There should be someone who specialises in domestic violence."
- "[Police were] chauvinistic; [they] could have been more polite to the children. [They] did not want to listen to the children."
- "[Police] could have been more sympathetic and less judgmental."
- "[Police need] tact and diplomacy... [they need] specialist training."

The variable that shows the most dramatic impact is whether the officer took the situation seriously – when they did 90% of victims were satisfied, but when they did not only 12% of victims were satisfied. As one woman stated, "they could have taken the incident more seriously and taken the statements more quickly." This variable probably reflects whether victims feel respected by police who recognize how traumatic the incident was for them, and treat the situation as if a serious crime has occurred rather than a waste of time or garbage work.

On the next page, Chart 11 shows that what actions the police take (or fail to take) at the scene also significantly impacts whether victims are satisfied.



Notably, the hugest difference in satisfaction occurs from whether the victim is spoken to alone, separated from the perpetrator. Eighty-two percent of victims were satisfied when they were able to speak to police in private, compared to only 13% of victims when they had to speak to police in front of the perpetrator. This is a police behaviour readily amenable to change, and rarely dependent on situational features of the incident. Another issue that arose from the comments women made was their dissatisfaction at not being kept informed about the status of the case. Many women expressed a desire for police to “be better at feeding back information” or to “follow up with a visit.”

Police behaviours that increase victim satisfaction include questioning witnesses, searching for evidence, and making an arrest. When officers engage in these behaviours, significantly greater proportions of victims are satisfied. These behaviours also reflect police taking the situation seriously, and being proactive at the scene. Conversely, when officers do not engage in these behaviours, victims may take this as a sign that the incident is not being treated as a serious matter. These findings are similar to that of other research that has found a relationship between police behaviour and victim satisfaction. Studies have shown that police activities that indicate a greater degree of investigative effort, such as completing a crime report or making an arrest, are positively correlated with victim satisfaction with the police (Brandl & Horvath, 1991; Chandek, 1999; Percy, 1980).

One important implication from the results presented these charts is that what most impacts victim satisfaction is what is most under police control. Victim satisfaction was related to both officer behaviour and officer demeanour, but the latter exhibited a stronger impact. Officers can always determine the *style* in which they interact with people at the scene of a domestic dispute. It is their choice whether they are courteous to victims, or whether they appear to be understanding or concerned. Additionally, officers who are properly trained can always be sure to talk to the victim separately from the perpetrator. Other police behaviours, such as making arrests or searching for evidence are in part dependent on the characteristics of the situation. Sometimes, for example, the perpetrator has left the scene and an arrest cannot be made or there are no witnesses present to question. Police training should impart to officers the power their attitudes have over victim satisfaction.

Victims’ satisfaction with the police response has several practical consequences in terms of effective criminal justice functioning. Some research suggests that victims’ satisfaction with the police increases the likelihood of cooperation in the prosecution of their cases (Goldstein, 1982; Lurigio & Mechanic, 2000). Other work suggests that satisfaction with the police may have effects that are

even more long-term in nature. Women who are satisfied in previous police contacts are more likely to seek criminal justice interventions in incidents of future violence (Brown, 1984), while the opposite situation exists when women are dissatisfied (Fleury et al., 1999). This can have extensive and pronounced negative consequences for women (and their children) living in violent households.

In conclusion, a trend emerges that police demeanour appears to be a more important determinant of satisfaction than police behaviour. Other research has reached similar conclusions (Brandl & Horvath, 1991; Chandek, 1999; Chandek & Porter, 2000; Reisig & Chandek, 2001; Shapland, 1983). This finding could have potentially substantial implications for police confidence and ability to handle the often tricky and frustrating crimes of violence and/or sexual abuse within intimate relationships. If officers are made *more* aware of the fact that treating victims with courtesy, respect, understanding, appearing concerned and taking the time to listen could have implications regarding victims' desire to cooperate and their evaluations of police performance, then perhaps officers will be more inclined to exhibit these demeanours at the scene. These are changes that are perhaps easier to achieve because demeanour is more within officer control than investigatory actions (such as questioning witnesses, collecting evidence, making an arrest) that are more dependent on the characteristics of the incident. On the other hand, we must caution against encouraging officers to be nice to victims in the place of using their police powers to actually *do* something for victims. Sensitive and comprehensive training on the issue should increase the likelihood that officers can achieve the ideal balance.

Section IV: The WSU and the Crown Prosecution Service

Background

The decision-making of prosecutors is an important area to investigate with respect to domestic violence. Unlike violence against strangers, in the past if an offence of violence occurred in a domestic context, it was often considered to be less serious than a similar offence committed in a non-domestic context. In effect, the domestic context was viewed as a mitigating factor in the case. The result has typically been a high level of attrition of domestic violence cases as they progress through the criminal justice system, with only a fraction of offenders receiving a sentence and many victims feeling as if the system does not consider the violence they have experienced to be 'real' or 'criminal.'

Today, far from being considered a mitigating factor, violence in the domestic context is seen by society as an aggravating factor and the level of attrition of these cases is now considered unacceptable. Nationally, new initiatives are being put into place in order to rectify this situation. Specialist prosecutors who receive training specific to the unique features of domestic violence cases (e.g., victims who may want to drop charges due to fear of reprisal) and specialist courts to deal with domestic violence cases are some reforms that are occurring in the UK as well as other countries such as the US and Australia. The situation in Cardiff with respect to the prosecution of domestic violence cases has changed dramatically in the past year, in large part due to the efforts of the WSU.

Information in this section was obtained from the following sources: interviews with WSU staff, interviews with CPS prosecutors, results from CPS prosecutor surveys, analysis of CPS domestic violence case files, and observations made by the author.

Coordination and Cooperation between the WSU and the CPS

Staff of the CPS and persons who would eventually become staff of the WSU started meeting in July 2001 to discuss how to increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which cases of domestic violence are prosecuted in Cardiff. This group looked at the specialist domestic violence court in Leeds as an example of good practice that could be adapted in Cardiff. The focus of the meetings was on structuring a fast-track process whereby domestic violence cases were flagged, prioritised and streamlined through the criminal justice system. The two primary goals were to shorten the process time and to increase women's safety by keeping them informed about their cases. In October 2001 a joint memorandum of understanding was agreed between the CPS and the WSU. The new system was adopted and in place beginning January 2002. The main components of the new system include special court procedures and specialist domestic violence prosecutor(s), each of which is described below.

Court Procedures for Domestic Violence Cases

Magistrates' Court

New procedures were implemented in order to fast-track or streamline the processing of domestic violence cases in Cardiff. First, it was agreed that domestic violence cases would be 'flagged' (identified) and given a special status so they can be listed together at the same court. This arrangement allows for victims, prosecutors and WSU staff or other victim advocates to be aware of when and where domestic violence cases will be heard. The WSU has limited staff members who could not support all victims if multiple courtrooms were used, as timetabling could make travelling to different courts on time nearly impossible, or two domestic violence cases might be heard simultaneously. To avoid these problems, Thursday has been designated the day of each week where domestic violence cases are given Pre-Trial Review (PTR).

Pre-Trial Review is an administrative procedure to explore if a trial is necessary. Every not-guilty plea goes to a pre-trial review court, where it is determined if the case can be resolved or 'cracked' (i.e., the defendant pleads guilty or there is a withdrawal) or whether it needs to be set up for trial. This

practice has the effect of reducing the amount of cases that are terminated at a late date and thereby saving the court valuable resources. As Crisp and Moxon (1994) noted in their study of case termination: "It is in everyone's interest that cases that are going to be terminated are dropped as early as possible. Otherwise prosecution and defence will waste time on preparatory work, witnesses will attend court unnecessarily and court time will be wasted because other cases cannot always be scheduled in at short notice."

Nationally, magistrates are being encouraged to implement pre-trial protocols but there are many different ways of doing this. Cardiff is a good size for having a dedicated PTR court. All domestic violence cases can be given PTR on one day of the week. Importantly, this procedure does not have any negative resource implications because other types of cases can be heard on other days of the week (i.e., extra funding would be needed to set up an entire court dedicated exclusively to domestic violence).

A member of the WSU, typically the seconded police officer, has attended Pre-Trial Review court every Thursday since they were implemented for domestic violence in January 2002. The presence of the WSU means that there is a victim advocate present in the court to ensure that valid cases are not dismissed. Furthermore, the victim advocate is not a volunteer but a trained professional with expert knowledge of how the criminal justice system operates. Observation of the interaction between court staff and the WSU seconded police officer during one PTR highlighted the importance of the new protocol. It was immediately apparent that the WSU officer was respected as a key player in the court's administration of domestic violence cases. First, in addition to checking the diaries of prosecutors and defence solicitors before setting a court date, the WSU officer's diary was also checked to ensure that she could be present. The practice was to not set a court date unless the prosecutor, defence solicitor, and WSU officer could be in attendance.

Second, prosecutors gathered information and advice from the WSU officer before a domestic violence case was to be dropped, to make sure that they had all the relevant information. In a one case, the defendant was charged with threats to kill. The prosecutor consulted with the WSU officer before dropping the case, and explained that the threats were made toward another person (not the WSU client). This person did not take the threats seriously and refused to be a witness. Both the prosecutor and the WSU officer agreed that the dismissal was the appropriate course of action. This interaction enabled the CPS to be certain that they had the correct information about the case, and demonstrated to the WSU that the CPS was dropping the case for legitimate reasons.

Third, the WSU officer provided information in a proactive way that informed the decision-making of prosecutors. For example, a WSU client had been sent a letter written to her from her partner/defendant while he was in prison. In the letter he admitted to the abuse for which he is currently in custody. While the letter was supposed to have been faxed to both the WSU and the CPS by the police, the prosecutor did not have this important piece of evidence. The presence of the WSU officer at court enabled this letter to be included as evidence. The WSU officer's knowledge of the victim/case therefore positively impacted the prosecutor's ability to make an informed decision. In conclusion, to an outside observer it was obvious that the court recognized the importance of the WSU officer's attendance at court and respected the information and advice she brought to bear on domestic violence cases.

If a case proceeds to trial after PTR, it is one of four cases of any type that are listed for trial per 'not guilty' time slot. The new procedure states that only one of these four cases should be a domestic violence case, and if the case progresses it must have priority over the other three cases. As a result of having the PTR and trial procedures streamlined and priority given to domestic violence cases, remarkable results have been achieved. For example, compared to the standard court procedure which typically lasts 14 weeks, the domestic violence procedure in Cardiff lasts approximately 7 weeks. All victims are supported by a member of the WSU. All domestic violence cases are listed together and heard on the same day each week. All of these procedures allow for a more streamlined, consistent approach to how cases of domestic violence are processed through the Magistrates' Court.

With regard to the processing of domestic violence cases by the Magistrates' Court, it also should be remembered that 80 magistrates received an accredited 3-hour training session provided by the WSU (recall Table 13). This represents every magistrate working in Cardiff.⁹

Crown Court

While the original partnership between the CPS and the WSU concentrated on how the Magistrates' Court handled cases of domestic violence, recently those efforts have been expanded to include the Crown Court. A new procedure has been agreed and in operation since January, 2003. It states that domestic violence cases should be listed together on Mondays. Similar to having PTR at Magistrates' Court on Thursdays, this is important practically because it consolidates resources and staff time. It is also important symbolically as murder and rape cases have traditionally been seen at Crown Court on Mondays. This sends the message that domestic violence is one of the most serious types of crimes disposed of at Crown Court. The new procedure also stipulates that domestic violence cases will not be used as 'floaters.' 'Floaters' are cases that are traditionally viewed as less important and therefore are timetabled last – so victims or their advocates get little advance notice or preparation time. Finally, the new procedure states that only experienced, full-time judges will hear domestic violence cases at Crown Court.

Domestic Violence Prosecutor(s)

Originally, one of the 19 prosecutors working in the Magistrates' court in Cardiff was designated to be a specialist domestic violence prosecutor. He was responsible for handling all of the in-coming domestic violence cases and liaising with the WSU. Due to the workload and design of the prosecutorial team in Cardiff, however, this was determined to be a flawed idea. For example, when one prosecutor is responsible for a particular type of case, what happens to new cases of that type when that prosecutor is busy or unavailable?

A new system was implemented to resolve the problem of specialisation. It was determined that all 19 prosecutors should be effective at handling cases of domestic violence, have good working relationships with the WSU, and be familiar with the new domestic violence court procedures. In Cardiff, the 19 prosecutors in the Criminal Justice Unit handle approximately 20,000 cases per year. They are divided into two teams, each of which handles a different stage of a case. The first team is responsible for the first listing at court while the second team handles PTR and trial preparation. Now prosecutors from each team make contact with the WSU when they are dealing with a case of domestic violence. The new protocol specifically encourages prosecutors to contribute towards prompt, efficient and co-ordinated multi-agency action that increases the safety of victims and witnesses and provides timely support and information.

The head of the Cardiff Criminal Justice Unit was responsible for training the prosecutors on the aim and goals of the WSU and the new information-sharing protocol that was agreed. He states that all prosecutors handling cases of domestic violence should have been liaising with the WSU at least since February 2002. Prosecutors are positive about the new arrangements as they are aware that the WSU provides an important additional source of information about a case, and that victims (who are often reluctant to participate) get the support they need to follow through with their cases.

Prosecutor Survey Results

A 6-page survey was administered to prosecutors working in Cardiff during Autumn 2002 (see Appendix G). The survey was created with input from two Senior Crown Prosecutors. The survey was designed to elicit information regarding prosecutors' experience prosecuting domestic violence cases, their attitudes towards these cases, their working relationships with other agencies in the community, and their perception of the factors that influence case outcomes.

Out of the 19 prosecutors working at the Cardiff CPS office, 12 returned the survey. Two of these returns had a substantial proportion of missing answers. Nevertheless, the findings provide an

⁹ It has been agreed that in September 2003 all magistrates in South Wales will receive a one-day training session provided by the WSU.

interesting glimpse into the working practices and attitudes of prosecutors regarding domestic violence. Results are analysed in order to better understand their decision-making regarding domestic violence cases and their working relationships with other agencies.

Background Characteristics

The average age of respondents is 40 years. Nine of the respondents classified themselves as white/British, two as European, and one did not answer. Seven of the 12 respondents are male. Eleven of the 12 respondents are Senior Crown Prosecutors with an average work experience length of 11 years at the CPS, with 7 of these spent at Cardiff CPS. Only four respondents reported that prosecuting domestic violence had ever been a 'speciality,' and only two reported domestic violence as their current speciality. Half reported that they had received training pertinent to prosecuting cases of domestic violence. While most have not been formally assigned to be 'domestic violence prosecutors' or received specialist training, the majority had extensive experience prosecuting these types of cases. Specifically, nine of the 12 reported prosecuting more than 500 of these types of cases in their careers (two others reported prosecuting 100-500 cases and one reported prosecuting less than 100 cases).

General Attitudes about Domestic Violence

Attitudes of prosecutors reflect the notion that domestic violence is a crime that should be taken seriously. One question asked respondents what they thought that force policy in cases of domestic violence should be for attending officers: arrest, mediation, or separation. They were asked to answer the question both "as a prosecutor" and "as a citizen," but only one respondent's answers changed between these two roles. Eight of the 10 reporting thought that force policy should be arrest. As one prosecutor explained, "What lies behind domestic violence in most cases is power and control, therefore the victim is always going to be weaker, and in need of support, etc. and given time to make decisions and receive help and support. The best way to ensure/offer this is by arrest – mediation and/or separation can follow."

Two prosecutors thought that mediation should be force policy in cases of domestic violence. As one stated, "Arrest is often necessary, but cooling off is often rapid and more often than not there are civil remedies that can be swiftly pursued before wasting criminal court time by [the victim] ultimately refusing to attend court. Too often, the remedy sought is simply removal, not prosecution." In their prosecutorial 'hat', no one thought that separation should be force policy, but one respondent did in his citizen 'hat'.

Another question asked respondents to state (again, both "as a prosecutor" and "as a citizen") whether they thought that cases of domestic violence should be handled as a crime, social problem, or civil problem. Of the nine prosecutors responding, all nine thought that domestic violence should be handled as a crime. As one explained, "Currently, the criminal process is the only way of 'enforcing' the cooperation of violent partners... diversion needs to be an option but prosecution should always be available." Another stated that "Assault is assault; and in DV cases involves bullying of a weaker party. Social factors may feature and civil remedies may follow... [but] there should be no distinction between assault on a stranger and assault on a partner – though the causes and mitigation, etc. mean each case has to be treated on its own merit."

Two of the three respondents did not respond to the question and commented to indicate that they could not generalise how all cases of domestic violence should be handled (and they made similar comments about the previous question). The other respondent commented as follows: "[I am] unable to generalise. Some are obviously crimes; some are obviously civil matters as the burden of proof in criminal cases is frequently a bar to successful conviction." None of the respondents had different answers based on their views "as a prosecutor" versus "as a citizen."

To summarise, the overwhelming majority of prosecutors felt that domestic violence should be handled as a crime, but two felt that it was impossible to generalise how these cases should be treated, and a comment from one implied that domestic violence could be treated as a civil rather than criminal matter by the CPS.

Prosecutors were asked to rank their agreement with the statement "I feel that when police officers respond to fights between couples they are not really dealing with crime or crime prevention" on a 5-

point scale (where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree). All 12 prosecutors disagreed with this statement, and nine disagreed 'strongly.' As one respondent explained, "In every sense of the word, domestic violence is a crime." Another respondent added the following caveat: "From the point of view of the police officer though, this question would come 3."

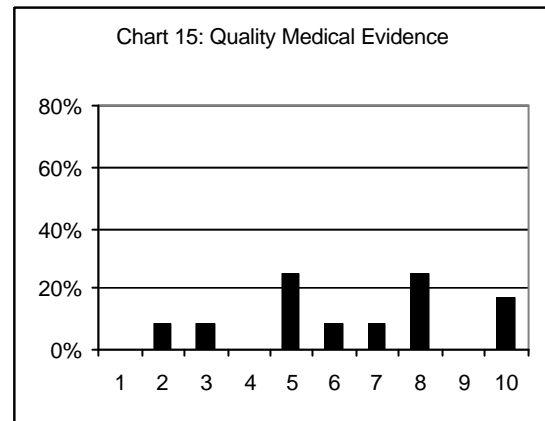
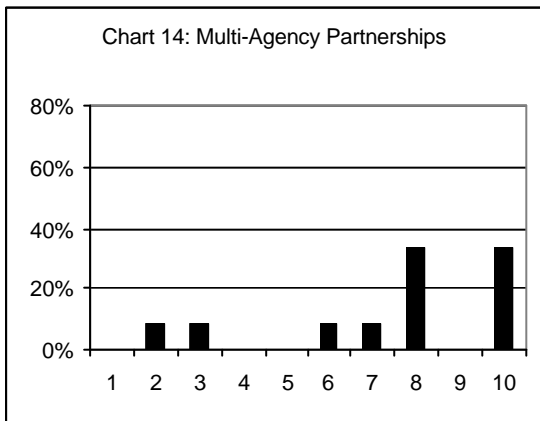
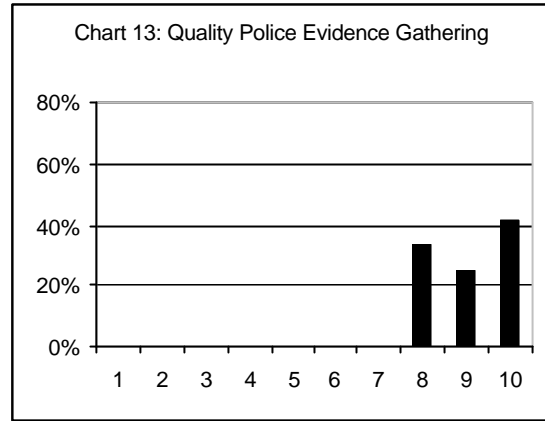
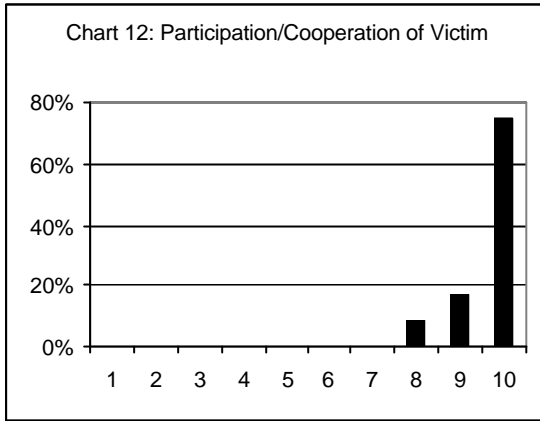
Perceptions of Prosecuting Domestic Violence

What factors do prosecutors think are important to achieving a successful resolution to a domestic violence case? Respondents were asked to rank four items on a scale from 1 to 10 (1=not at all important, 10=most important): quality medical evidence; participation/cooperation of victim; quality police evidence gathering, and; multi-agency partnership. Victim cooperation and police evidence gathering received the highest average marks (9.7 and 9.1, respectively). Victim cooperation also had the highest number of prosecutors ranking it a '10', as nine of the 12 respondents rated it as most important. Multi-agency partnership had a mean score of 7.5, while medical evidence was viewed as relatively least important at 6.4.

Charts 12-15 displayed on the next page highlight that prosecutors generally are in agreement with the important role played by victim cooperation and quality police evidence gathering, as all respondents ranked these factors an 8, 9, or 10. It is safe to say that prosecutors therefore believe that these factors play a vital role in whether a case of domestic violence is successfully resolved. It cannot be overstated however that victim cooperation is regarded as the *most* important factor as almost 80% of prosecutors ranked it 10 out of 10.

Regarding the importance of multi-agency partnerships and quality medical evidence, there is a notable lack of consensus among prosecutors. Some believe these factors to be extremely important, while others clearly do not. It can be inferred from these findings that prosecutors feel that case outcomes are largely tied to actions taken by those outside the CPS (victims, police officers), and consequently outside their control.

Charts 12-15
Prosecutors' Rankings of Importance in Promoting a Successful Resolution in Cases of Domestic Violence
(1=not important, 10=most important)



But how do prosecutors define 'successful resolution' for cases of domestic violence? This is not a straightforward issue. To quote from the CPS (2001) Guidance on Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence:

A key feature of domestic violence cases is often the difficult task of balancing the victim's wishes against the public interest... It is often difficult to achieve the right balance between what is seen by some as empowering and by others as burdening the victim with the 'responsibility' for the prosecution. On the one hand it is our decision to proceed – or not – with any prosecution... On the other hand, some victims of domestic violence feel that they are continuing to be 'controlled'... Prosecutors should be alert to these issues and aware of the views of the victim.

The above quotation shows that even the official statement by the CPS cannot be black and white with respect to domestic violence cases – and that 'success' may be mediated by a variety of factors.

Generally, when asked to define 'successful resolution,' prosecutors who answered the survey produced legalistic definitions, victim-oriented definitions, or some combination of the two. Four reported that success meant that the case ended with a trial/conviction/sentence. Three coupled

these legalistic outcomes with a hope for deterrence or “no repeat violence” for the victim. Another focused exclusively on deterrence, stating “[success is] a result in whatever form that prevents a recurring of it [violence].” Another stated that success means “a balance between the interests of the injured party and the public interest.” Two prosecutors had a victim-focused definition of success. For example, one stated that “priority has to be safety for the victim (usually female) and children – to prevent further domestic violence to them. Also to protect other possible future partners... therefore conviction and sentence is usually the best outcome, but not *always* necessary for a ‘successful resolution’” and the other stated that success meant “when the victim is no longer in fear or danger.” The last respondent simply stated that success meant “an appropriate outcome in the circumstances of the case.”

Prosecutors were next asked to rank their agreement with the following statement, “successfully prosecuting cases of domestic violence generally takes more time and effort than prosecuting other types of violent crime.” Six of the respondents agreed with the statement, two were neutral, and four disagreed. Another question asked prosecutors to estimate the proportion of domestic violence victims that would drop the charges. The average response was 53%, with responses ranging from 30% to 90%. Given the importance placed by prosecutors on victim cooperation/participation to the successful resolution of domestic violence cases, and the belief that a significant proportion of victims will drop the charges, it is easily understood why these types of cases may be perceived to take more time and effort. Additionally, nine of the 12 prosecutors agreed with the statement that “the organisational culture within the CPS takes cases of domestic violence seriously” (one was neutral, and the other did not respond).

In conclusion, these findings demonstrate that prosecutors feel that prosecuting cases of domestic violence ‘successfully’

- ✓ is a complex process of taking victim and state needs into account,
- ✓ depending in large part on victim participation,
- ✓ which is perceived to be lacking in a substantial proportion of cases,
- ✓ occurring within an organisation that promotes taking domestic violence ‘seriously.’

Agency Impact on Domestic Violence

The next section of the survey required respondents to rank the effectiveness of various agencies in Cardiff in four areas: reducing domestic violence in the community; identifying cases of domestic violence in the community; deterring offenders from committing future violence, and; addressing the needs of victims of domestic violence. This part of the survey aimed to identify the role that prosecutors believe various agencies play in addressing domestic violence in the community. The agencies listed were: Police; Mental health care facility; Church/minister; Refuge; Women’s Safety Unit; CPS; Hospital/clinic/private physician; Drug/alcohol services; Court, and; Other.¹⁰ Before proceeding to the findings, it should be noted that 3-4 surveys were missing this information.

Charts 16-19 display the agencies and the rankings given to them by prosecutors. Only information relating to the rankings of first, second and third is presented. An agency earned 3 points for a first place vote, 2 points for a second place vote, and 1 point for a third place vote. The points earned were summed for each agency.

What is immediately clear from the charts is that the three agencies believed by prosecutors to be the most effective at addressing domestic violence in the community are the police, the WSU, and the CPS. The police were ranked #1 by the most prosecutors on three of the four issues: reducing domestic violence, identifying cases of domestic violence, and deterring offenders from committing future violence. The only aspect that police were not believed to be effective at was addressing the needs of victims of domestic violence.

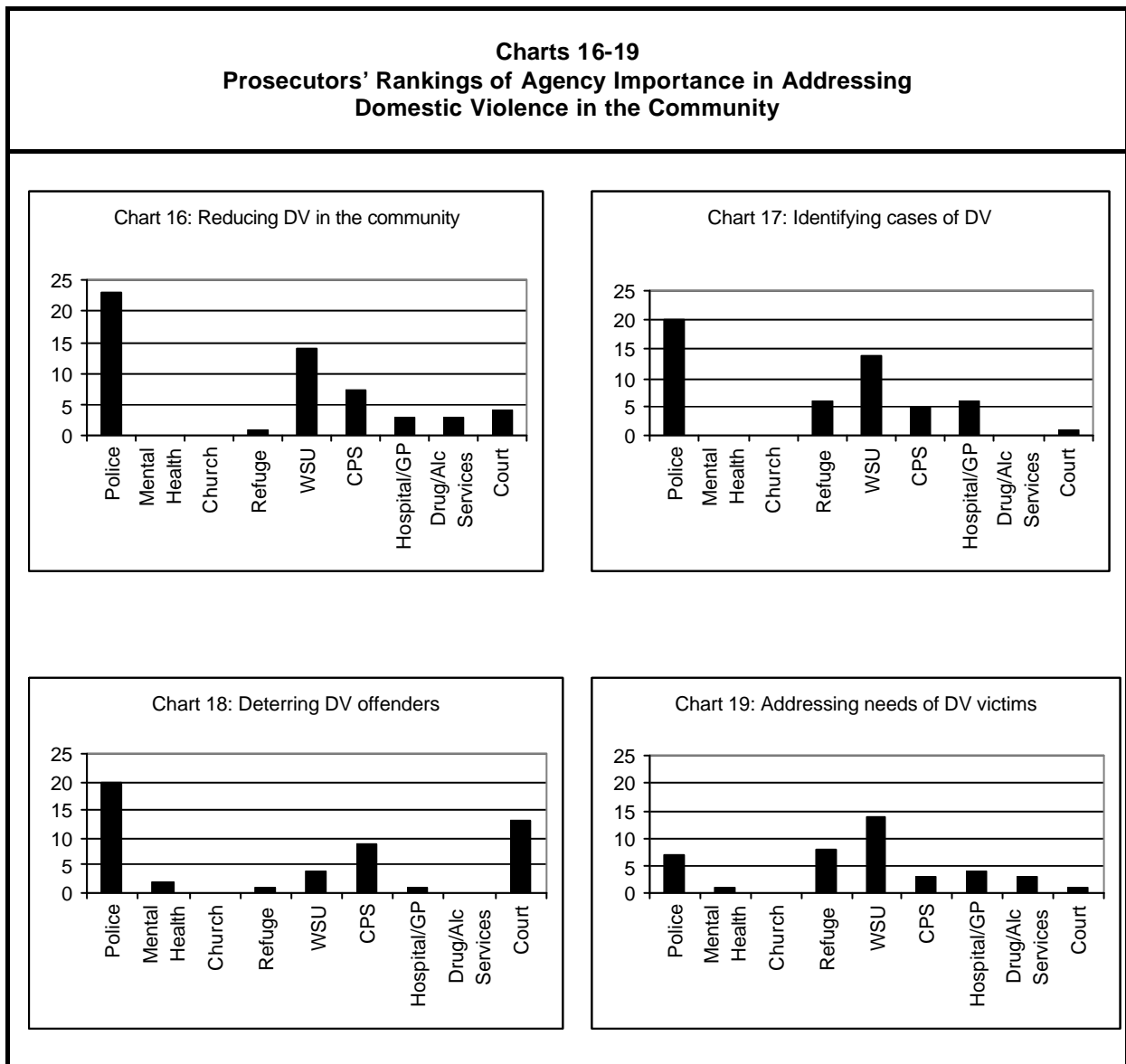
The WSU earned the most points for addressing the needs of domestic violence victims, followed by women’s refuge. The WSU also earned the second largest number of points for reducing domestic

¹⁰ Only two prosecutors used the ‘Other’ option, both for the issue of reducing domestic violence in the community. The agencies specified were Probation and Education.

violence in the community and identifying cases of domestic violence. Next to the police, prosecutors believe that the WSU is the most important agency for addressing domestic violence in Cardiff.

The CPS earned the second largest number of points for deterring offenders from committing future violence, followed by the court. The CPS was also viewed as third most important in terms of reducing domestic violence in the community and identifying cases of domestic violence.

Generally, it can be said that police are viewed to be most effective at reducing and identifying cases of domestic violence, and deterring future offending. The WSU is viewed as most effective at addressing the needs of victims. The CPS is perceived to be effective at deterring offenders from committing future violence. While not without some overlap, these findings illustrate how different responsibilities for addressing domestic violence in the community are mapped onto various agencies by prosecutors completing the survey.



Inter-Agency Relationships

Prosecutors were asked to reflect on their work relationships with other agencies and people in the community, as these can affect their ability to effectively prosecute cases of domestic violence. To this end, the survey gathered information on five people (chosen by the respondent). For each

relationship identified, respondents were asked to rank it on five dimensions: contact; trust; understanding; cooperation; empathy on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Eight of the 12 respondents completed this section, and only five respondents provided information about five (out of five) people that impact their ability to prosecute cases of domestic violence.

Prosecutors listed the following agencies as those who most affect their ability to effectively prosecute cases of domestic violence:

- the WSU (12 relationships)
- the Police (6 relationships)
- the Court (5 relationships)
- the CPS (2 relationships)
- the NHS (1 relationship)
- Victim Support (1 relationship)

In terms of contact, trust, understanding, cooperation, and empathy (collectively viewed as a measure of 'social capital'), prosecutors generally viewed their inter-agency relationships as having a high degree of social capital. A social capital scale was created by summing the scores on each of the five dimensions (for a total possible score of 25). Looking at the social capital scores across agencies, the WSU had the highest score on the social capital scale with a mean of 24.4. This means that when respondents listed someone from the WSU as a person that impacts their ability to effectively prosecute a case of domestic violence, they typically ranked their relationship with this person as having a very high degree of all of the following: contact, trust, understanding, cooperation, and empathy. The court came next with a mean of 23.2, followed by the police at 18.2. The other agencies had too few relationships to analyse for an accurate mean score.

To summarise the findings from this section:

- ✓ In terms of the *quantity* of relationships or number of people that impact their ability to prosecute cases of domestic violence, the WSU was mentioned more often than any other agency.
- ✓ In terms of *quality* of these relationships, the WSU also ranked the highest on levels of contact, trust, cooperation, understanding, and empathy.

What can be inferred from the personnel/agencies *not* listed by respondents is unknown. Perhaps respondents generally have very good inter-agency working relationships and just chose to list certain agencies. On the other hand, perhaps respondents were reluctant to list people (and/or agencies) with whom they have poor relationships.

At the end of the survey, prosecutors were asked to comment on what can be done to encourage multi-agency partnerships in Cardiff. The most obvious theme to emerge from these comments is a need to continue and increase the funding devoted to inter-agency partnerships, and specifically the WSU. Listed below is a selection of their comments.

- "Financial support."
- "Inter-agency partnership in Cardiff is now well-established and effective – establishment of the WSU and the 'cluster court' were established this way. Additional funding would clearly assist."
- "The Domestic Violence Forum established pursuant to Crime and Disorder initiatives led to funding applications for the WSU's 'one stop shop'. This is the best example of excellent inter-agency working. It is vital that funding is extended to support a 'one stop shop' for victims of domestic violence in the city."
- "The CPS must remain robust. Defence solicitors use delay and 'wriggling' tactics in such cases, and only sustained diligence will change their mindset. The ultimate arbiter, the court, is getting better. We need 'more of the same.'"
- "Further resources to ensure that *all* victims are given the necessary support."
- "More awareness of involvement of others by mutual publicity. Otherwise, under current restrictions on money and organisation, very little else [can be done]."

In conclusion, it is clear that prosecutors in Cardiff do not think about 'multi-agency partnership' without thinking of the WSU. When asked to think about who impacts their ability to effectively

prosecute domestic violence cases, prosecutors were most likely to list someone from the WSU. Relationships between prosecutors and WSU staff are very positive, and relative to other agencies in the community, prosecutors ranked their relationships with the WSU the highest in degree of contact, trust, understanding, cooperation and empathy.

Prosecutors' Experience with the WSU

Finally, it is necessary to gain an understanding of how, according to prosecutors, the WSU impacts the prosecution of domestic violence cases in Cardiff. Ten of the 12 reported that the WSU does 'materially affect' how they handle cases of domestic violence. Comments made by prosecutors regarding the impact of the WSU on case outcomes were very positive. One Senior Crown Prosecutor who has specialized in prosecuting domestic violence cases stated that "The Women's Safety Unit has ensured that *all* a victim's needs are assessed and has provided invaluable support to reluctant witnesses" [emphasis in original]. This prosecutor went on to describe the difference that WSU was able to make in one case specifically:

I dealt with one case involving a female victim of eight years of domestic violence. She had made numerous complaints, including five bone fractures at the hands of her husband, but had always withdrawn them. Last year she refused to give evidence even when summonsed to Crown Court. In the most recent case, she received support from the WSU and her husband was convicted, after trial, of a serious assault upon her.

Another Senior Crown Prosecutor said:

Domestic violence cases have traditionally suffered from a high attrition rate. The effect of the WSU has, in my opinion, caused a reduction in attrition due to the support provided to the victims. The support provided by the WSU representative to distraught victims of domestic violence in the hostile, adversarial environment of the Magistrates' Court has, on more than one occasion, facilitated a positive prosecution outcome.

A Senior Crown Prosecutor that has prosecuted cases of domestic violence for more than 10 years stated that:

There have been a number of cases where if it were not for the support and assistance of the WSU, the CPS could not have prosecuted defendants. Even if prosecution is not considered appropriate, the injured party in such cases has still been assisted by the WSU. I consider the WSU to be an essential component of the Criminal Justice System. It is an agency which works directly to the benefit and assistance of the injured party, their family and society.

One Senior Crown Prosecutor with 18 years experience prosecuting domestic violence summed it up by saying that the "WSU have been the single greatest improvement I have seen since commencing prosecuting."

Additionally, a letter detailing the close working relationship between the WSU and the CPS is provided in Appendix H. Written by a Senior Crown Prosecutor of the Cardiff Criminal Justice Unit, it explains the positive outcome in one case as a result of the implementation of the WSU in Cardiff.

Domestic Violence Cases Analysis

Two forms were used to gather information from domestic violence cases that were completed by the Cardiff CPS. One is the CPS Domestic Violence Monitoring Form that was recently created by CPS headquarters for use nationwide (see Appendix I). The other form was created specifically for the purposes of this research in order to gather additional information (see Appendix J). Together they provide an overview of the background characteristics of victims and defendants, actions taken by these parties during case progression, aggravating and mitigating factors, and case outcomes.

Domestic violence cases were identified, retrieved from archives, and the relevant data collected by Case Progression Officers at the Cardiff CPS.

Conducting analyses of domestic violence case files is important given the increased attention paid to violence against women by the media, the criminal justice system, community agencies, and society in general. It is important to know the characteristics of victims and defendants, the choices they make during case progression, and the factors associated with various case outcomes. The focus of most research to date has been on the police response to domestic violence, to the exclusion of how other segments of the criminal justice system respond to this crime. Currently, there is little that is known about how domestic violence cases progress through the criminal justice system other than, similar to rape, "attrition is a problem." Large-scale research into the decision-making of prosecutors is currently being conducted, but not for domestic violence cases.¹¹ The Cardiff CPS therefore should be commended for undergoing this type of audit, even though the current project is of a small scale.

Selection of the Sample

The sample analysed reflects domestic violence cases finalised in Cardiff Magistrates' Court during the period Jan – Aug 2002.¹² During this 8-month period 160 cases were identified as domestic violence cases on the CPS computer system. These cases include both violent (e.g., assault) and non-violent (e.g., criminal damage) offences. Reflecting the focus of the WSU on violence within intimate relationships, and as a result of discussions with CPS personnel, it was determined that only violent offences would be included for analysis. Excluding non-violent offences resulted in a reduction from 160 to 115 cases. During the course of data collection, 81 of these 115 were able to be retrieved for data collection.¹³ A cursory examination of these 81 cases revealed a small group that do not reflect 'traditional' notions of domestic violence and that would not come under the purview of the WSU. Specifically, the relationship between the victim and perpetrator was not one of a current or previous intimate relationship.¹⁴ Therefore, the final sample to be analysed consists of 77 cases. This sample reflects violent offences perpetrated by a former or current intimate partner that were finalised by the Cardiff CPS sometime between January and August, 2002. The offences included and their proportion of the sample is as follows:

1)	Section 39 Common Assault	(n=14, 18.2%)
2)	Section 47 Assault/Actual Bodily Harm	(n=44, 57.1%)
3)	Section 20 Wounding	(n=2, 2.6%)
4)	Section 2 or Section 4 Harassment	(n=8, 10.4%)
5)	Threats to Kill	(n=9, 11.7%).

¹¹ A national study of approximately 15,000 CPS cases to be published this summer seeks to determine whether there is "any bias in decision-making in respect of race and gender by the CPS in each stage of the prosecution process." While an important study, cases relating to homicide, rape and domestic violence have been excluded from the analysis. It will be difficult to document or understand bias relating to gender when cases that predominantly affect women are excluded from study.

¹² This period reflects the on-going nature of the analysis of CPS domestic violence cases. Retrieving and coding information from CPS files is an arduous task that requires much time from CPS personnel. The plan is to have a matched sample of cases from 2001 to determine the extent and nature of the impact that the WSU has had on the attrition, progression, and outcomes of domestic violence cases in Cardiff. To date this plan is currently in place but data collection is not yet completed.

¹³ There are two main reasons for this. First, cases might have been mis-categorised as domestic violence cases. Prosecutors are encouraged to err on the side of caution in terms of flagging all cases that could possibly be domestic violence cases. Over time, however, evidence might show that the offence committed was not a domestic offence. Second, files might not be available because someone else has taken them from the archives, for example to work on a case that is being appealed.

¹⁴ One defendant was the father of the victim, one was the son/step-son of the victim, one was a sibling, and one victim was the friend of the abused partner.

Description of Involved Parties

Table 18 provides a description of the background characteristics of the victims and defendants. The overwhelming majority of CPS domestic violence cases involve male defendants and female victims. Most victims and defendants are white, less than 40 years old, and do not hold a full-time job. The victim is a *former* partner/spouse of the defendant in about one-third of cases. More than half of the victims are known to have a history of domestic violence with the defendant. About 44% of defendants are known to have a history of domestic violence with the victim and/or someone else. Four defendants have had prior convictions for domestic violence, with one serving time. About 66% of defendants have a prior criminal history. For about half of these defendants, this criminal history represents arrests and convictions for violent offences – and six have previously served time for violent crimes. The background characteristics of both victims and defendants reveal that a substantial proportion have experience with domestic and/or other violent crimes.

Table 18: Background Characteristics of Victims and Defendants in CPS Files.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Victim</u>		<u>Defendant</u>	
	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Sex	Male	3.9	Male	97.4
	Female	96.1	Female	2.6
Ethnicity	White/British	58.4	White/British	80.5
	Black	1.3	Black	5.2
	Asian	2.6	Asian	3.9
	Mixed/Other	2.6	Mixed/Other	2.6
	Unknown	35.1	Unknown	7.8
Age [^]	Under 20	7.8	Under 20	1.3
	21 through 30	19.5	21 through 30	28.6
	31 through 40	35.1	31 through 40	44.2
	41 through 50	9.1	41 through 50	13.0
	51 and Over	0.0	51 and Over	2.6
	Unknown	28.6	Unknown	10.4
Employment Status	Full-time	22.1	Full-time	24.7
	Part-time	2.6	Part-time	0.0
	Unemployed	41.6	Unemployed	26.0
	Other	11.7	Other	2.6
	Unknown	22.1	Unknown	46.8
Relationship to Victim at time of Offence			Spouse	28.6
			Former spouse	6.5
			Partner	37.7
			Former partner	27.3
Lived with Defendant at time of Offence	No	32.5		
	Yes	61.0		
	Unknown	6.5		

Prior Criminal History			No	28.6
			Yes	66.2
			Unknown	5.2
Prior History of DV*	No	15.6	No	15.6
	Yes	54.5	Yes	44.2
	Unknown	29.9	Unknown	40.3

Notes:

N=77 domestic violence case files

^ Age was computed using the defendant or victim's date of birth and the date that the case was closed by the CPS.

* For the victim, this refers to a prior history with the defendant. For the defendant, it is unknown to whom the prior history refers.

Aggravating and Mitigating Factors

Tables 19 and 20 display the aggravating and mitigating factors present in the sample of domestic violence cases analysed in this report. These figures represent the percentage of cases where it could be determined that particular aggravating/mitigating factors were present. They do not necessarily mean that a particular factor impacted how a case proceeded, or even influenced the decision-making of a prosecutor. They are simply descriptive statistics that show which factors are most common.

Table 19: Aggravating Factors in Domestic Violence Cases

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Committed in drink	37	48.1	Effect on children	4	5.2
Committed in front of children	36	33.8	Defendant's pre-cons	4	5.2
Repeat offending	16	20.8	History of domestic violence	3	3.9
Property damage	14	18.2	Violation of Restraining Order	3	3.9
Continuing threat	13	16.9	Further threats made	3	3.9
Seriousness of offence	12	15.6	Planned attack	2	2.6
Likely repetition	12	15.6	Victim's serious injuries	2	2.6
Use of weapon	10	13.0	Effect on relationship	1	1.3
Defendant on bail	5	6.5	Breach of Civil Order	1	1.3

N=77 domestic violence case files

The aggravating factors present most often in cases of domestic violence include offences committed in drink, and offences committed in front of children. Repeat offending, property damage, continuing threat, seriousness of the offence, and likely repetition were all present in 15-20% of cases. The average domestic violence case included two aggravating factors.

Table 20 shows that the most common mitigating factor present in domestic violence cases was the 'improved state of the relationship' between the defendant and the victim. In Cardiff, this mitigating factor is established from information provided by the WSU. As the agency that has the most regular and up-to-date information from the victim, the WSU is able to establish whether this is in fact the case. Prior to the WSU, the CPS would ask the police or perhaps there would be direct communication from the victim as to the relationship being in an 'improved state', but there was little to guarantee this was true. Information-sharing between the WSU and the CPS makes it highly likely that the relationship truly has been improved and therefore should legitimately inform prosecutorial decision-making. Not using a weapon and not having a history of domestic violence were mitigating factors in 18-25% of cases. The average domestic violence case had one mitigating factor.

Table 20: Mitigating Factors in Domestic Violence Cases.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Improved state of relationship	22	28.6
No use of weapon	19	24.7
No known history of domestic violence	14	18.2
Victim's minor injuries	10	13.0
Defendant has no pre-cons	10	13.0
Repetition unlikely	9	11.7
No children	3	3.9
Minor nature of offence	2	2.6
Unplanned attack	1	1.3

N=77 domestic violence case files

These tables illustrate that a variety of factors might influence prosecutorial decision-making in cases of domestic violence. The most common aggravating factors are when a defendant commits an offence in front of the children or while under the influence of alcohol.¹⁵ It should be noted that the national domestic violence monitoring form does not include 'committed in drink' in its list of aggravating factors. Because prosecutors themselves and past research show this factor to be important, it should feature in national efforts to understand prosecutorial decision-making.

The most frequently cited mitigating factor is the relationship between the victim and defendant improving over time. In 86% of the cases where there was evidence of an improved relationship, the

¹⁵ Other research has shown that substance use is perceived to be an aggravating factor. Analyses of case files documented that prosecution of domestic violence offences is more likely when the offender has used drugs or alcohol at the time of the incident (Martin, 1994; Schmidt & Steury, 1989), although more recent research found no relationship (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2001). Magistrates sentencing fictional offenders depicted in vignettes about domestic violence were more likely to give custodial sentences when the vignette featured alcohol (Gilchrist & Blissett, 2002).

victim retracted. In 88% of cases where victims retracted, the cases were discontinued. Victim retraction and case discontinuances are discussed in more detail in later sections of the report.

Case Progression and Outcomes

Table 21 (see next page) shows the actions taken by victims and defendants as a domestic violence case progresses. Given the importance prosecutors themselves gave to victim cooperation/participation (as revealed by the surveys), the table was organised to reflect the defendant and victim as equal players in how a case progresses.

Defendants initially pleaded not guilty to all charges in 55% of cases, which was reduced to 42% for final pleas. In only 17% of cases was an acceptable plea offered at or before trial. It should be noted that in a substantial proportion of cases the initial and final pleas of defendants were unknown.

More than 7 in 10 defendants were bailed with conditions from the CPS and from the Court. Eleven defendants breached bail, and in five of these cases the breach involved threats or violence to the victim. In four cases additional charges were brought as a result of the breach. Breaches resulted in amended bail conditions for three defendants, and remand to custody for three defendants.

About 1 in 4 victims made personal statements, were identified as vulnerable or intimidated witnesses, and/or attended court. There was not a statistical relationship between victims being vulnerable and their likelihood of making a personal statements or attending court.

Victim retraction occurred in 50 of the 77 cases. Recall that this is about the same proportion as prosecutors *thought* would retract as revealed by the surveys. Seventeen of these retraction statements were considered to be perfunctory. Perfunctory statements only include documentation that the victim does not want to proceed with the case. Satisfactory statements require that there be an explanation as to why the victim wants to retract and must satisfy several criteria.¹⁶ Twelve of the 17 perfunctory retractions were made to the police. Only one victim retraction occurred at trial; the rest occurred before trial or before a plea was made by the defendant.

¹⁶ See page 6 of the Domestic Violence Protocol found in Appendix C.

Table 21: Actions taken by Victims and Defendants during Case Progression.

<u>Defendant Actions</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Victim Actions</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Initial plea			Victim made personal statement	21	27.3
Guilty to some	7	9.1	Victim identified as vulnerable/intimidated	19	24.7
Guilty to all	5	6.5	Victim had voluntary sector support	26	33.8
Not Guilty to all	42	54.5	Victim attended court	18	23.4
Unknown	23	29.9	Victim retracted	50	64.9
Final plea			Retraction statements are present	38	49.4
Guilty to some	8	10.4	Perfunctory statements	17	22.1
Guilty to all	9	11.7	Satisfactory statements	19	24.7
Not Guilty to all	32	41.6	Type of statement unknown	2	2.6
Unknown	28	36.4	Victim retraction occurred...		
Acceptable plea offered before/at trial	13	16.9	Before plea	20	26.0
Bail conditions from CPS			Before trial	29	37.7
Remand in custody	2	2.6	At trial	1	1.3
Bailed with conditions	55	71.4	How did victim retract		
Bailed without conditions	7	9.1	To police	38	49.4
Bail conditions from the Court			Through defence/defendant	1	1.3
Bailed with conditions	57	74.0	Through victim's solicitor	2	2.6
Bailed without conditions	7	9.1	Direct contact with CPS	6	7.8
Defendant breached bail	11	14.3	Via support group/3rd party	3	3.9
Breaches involved threats/violence to victim	5	6.5	Unknown	1	1.3
Further charges brought as a result	4	5.2			
Breaches resulted in...					
Remand in custody	3	3.9			
Amended bail conditions	3	3.9			

N=77 domestic violence case files

Table 22 provides an overview of characteristics of domestic violence cases and their outcomes. As stated previously, Section 47 Assault was the most common offence charged. This is an indictable offence which results in actual bodily harm to the victim. About one-third of cases involved defendants who were charged with multiple offences, either with some combination of violent offences or multiple charges of the same violent offence.

In more than 8 in 10 cases, the charges were maintained. In other words, the original offence charged was not changed by the CPS. A concern of many studying or advocating for victims of interpersonal violence has been that prosecutors use their discretion to downgrade offence charges. In much research on sexual assault, for example, 'charges maintained' or 'percent downgraded' is usually used as a performance indicator, the implication being that high levels of downgrading or dropping charges would reflect improper use of prosecutorial discretion. The use of charging standards in 97% of cases and charges being maintained in 83% of cases in this study therefore reflects little discretionary decision-making.

This is an improvement over results found in previous studies of CPS processing of domestic violence cases. In their analysis of 296 police charges of Section 47 Assault, Cretney and Davis (1997) found that only about two-thirds of charges were maintained for domestic cases. Section 47 Assault represented only 15% of domestic cases, compared to 30% of non-domestic cases. As they stated, "without a clear explanation of the reasons for reducing the charge the victim is likely to feel that her experience has been devalued" (p. 140). This is less likely to occur in Cardiff given that charge reduction in domestic violence cases is less common.

Table 22: Overview of Domestic Violence Cases and Their Outcomes.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Original Charge		
Sect 39 Common Assault	14	18.2
Sect 47 Assault with Actual Bodily Harm	44	57.1
Sect 20 Wounding	2	2.6
Sect 2 or Sect 4 Harassment	8	10.4
Threats to kill	9	11.7
Multiple charges present	25	32.5
Charge(s) maintained	64	83.1
Charging standards applied	75	97.4
Case sent to Pre-Trial Review (PTR)	35	45.5
Outcome		
Discontinued	49	63.6
Guilty plea	17	22.1
Bound over	6	7.8
Guilty after trial	4	5.2
Not guilty after trial	1	1.3

Sentence		
Not applicable	50	64.9
Conditional discharge	6	7.8
Bindover	6	7.8
Fine	5	6.5
Custody	4	5.2
Community punishment order	4	5.2
Community rehabilitation order	2	2.6

N=77 domestic violence case files

Also included in Table 22 are the outcomes and sentences applied to domestic violence cases. The most common outcome is a case being discontinued, and therefore a sentence for the defendant is not applicable. This occurred in about 64% of the cases included in this study. This is a substantially larger termination rate for domestic violence cases found in a larger study of 10 CPS areas,¹⁷ but identical to that found in a US study (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2001).

Twenty-one cases resulted in a guilty plea/verdict. Of these, the most common sentence was a conditional discharge (n=6), followed by a fine (n=5), custody (n=4), community punishment order (n=4), and community rehabilitation order (n=2). Conditional discharges were also the most common sentences given to defendants convicted of a domestic offence in other research (Cretney & Davis, 1997; Phillips et al., 1998).

Six cases resulted in a bindover. A 'binding over order' is an exercise by the magistrate of their power within civil (rather than criminal) jurisdiction to require the defendant to enter into a recognisance with the court that they misbehaved. Such orders will specify a specific sum of money (usually £50-£400, dependant on means) over a specific period of time that requires defendants to keep the peace. Failure to do so may result in an arrest, a return to court, a forfeiture of the money, and/or additional charges. Bindovers reflect the notion that 'something is better than nothing' when there has been recognition of misbehaviour by the defendant but a lack of factual evidence with which to proceed to trial.

Prosecutors believe that bindovers can be effective with defendants not familiar with the criminal justice system, such as employed¹⁸ or first-time offenders, where the process alone has been punishment enough. Bindovers can be useful for any future cases that are brought to court, as there has been documentation of misbehaviour and an agreement by the defendant to cease such behaviour. However, there is the potential that bindovers can be misused by prosecutors as a 'soft option' for serious offences. The extent to which bindovers reflect positive or negative outcomes is therefore a judgment that must be based a thorough knowledge of the organisational climate of a particular court and the characteristics of the individual case. The percentage of domestic violence cases that result in a bindover is an outcome worthy of further investigation, especially as it might

¹⁷ In their Home Office study of arrests and their outcomes, Phillips et al. (1998) found a termination rate of 14%, and they estimated that this figure nationally is around 9-10%. These figures mask the variation of termination rates across offence categories (e.g., 1% for motoring offences, 29% for offences of violence, 37% for domestic violence offences), but highlight that some offences will have different case progression characteristics than others. Phillips et al. attribute the higher termination rate for domestic violence cases primarily to a higher proportion having witness failures compared to other cases (e.g., reluctance of witnesses to give evidence, the likelihood that the witness would not attend court or come up to proof, doubts about their credibility and conflict between witnesses). Their finding is replicated in this report, but to an even higher degree.

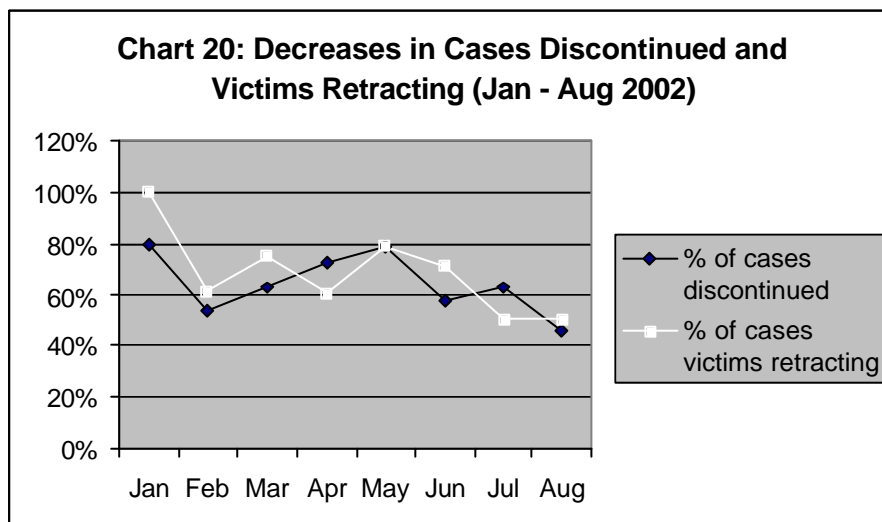
¹⁸ This assertion is supported by empirical research. In their study of more than 4000 male suspects, Maxwell, Garner and Fagan (2002) found that employed domestic violence suspects were less likely to re-offend compared to unemployed suspects, independent of whether they were arrested at the scene.

vary across locations that have different organisational responses to and community services for domestic violence.¹⁹

Factors Associated with Victims Retracting and Cases Being Discontinued

Given the prevalence of victims retracting and cases being discontinued, additional analyses were performed to understand these two topics. The survey showed that prosecutors were unequivocal in the importance they placed on victim participation/cooperation in cases reaching successful conclusions. Additionally, there is a statistically significant relationship between victims retracting and cases being discontinued: in 88% of discontinued cases, the victim retracted.

The general consensus is that victim retraction/discontinued cases are outcomes that should be reduced. They are rarely, if ever, perceived to be successful outcomes. To criminal justice officials, these outcomes represent failures to get convictions and to sentence offenders. To community agencies or victim advocates, they are considered failures for different reasons. It may be assumed, for example, that the victim retracted because she was fearful of retaliation from the defendant, or because she had no faith in the criminal justice system's ability to help her. Cases being discontinued might be perceived as evidence of prosecutors' unwillingness to take domestic violence cases forward because of their individual prejudices or indifference towards violence against women. These are all assumptions and viewpoints that cannot be empirically validated by the current study. What is certain is that the WSU, the SWP, and the CPS have been working to reduce these outcomes, and have had some success (see Chart 20).



As Chart 20 shows, the percentage of cases where victims have retracted and subsequently been discontinued has been steadily decreasing. Because the numbers are small and it is a relatively short period of time, we must view these results with caution. More data are needed to determine whether this trend will continue. However, numerous conversations with WSU, SWP and CPS officials would seem to suggest that the trend will continue, especially since multi-agency coordination and cooperation has if anything accelerated since August 2002.²⁰

¹⁹ Cretney and Davis (1997) found that bindovers were much more likely in Section 47 cases that were domestic rather than non-domestic assaults (16% compared to 4%).

²⁰ Since August 2002, for example, the Crown Court protocol was agreed, the MARAC meetings have started, and the WSU officer attends court practically every day. In short, many of the procedures that would have been in their infancy during January – August 2002 now have become standard practice.

Despite this encouraging trend, it is important to pinpoint the factors associated with a victim's decision to retract, or a prosecutor's decision to discontinue a case. Table 23 displays the factors that are related to these decisions to a statistically significant degree.

Table 23: Variables Associated with Cases Being Discontinued and Victims Retracting.

<u>Variables that DECREASE the likelihood that the...</u>		<u>case was discontinued.</u>	<u>victim did retract.</u>
Defendant is ex-partner/ex-spouse of victim	No	74.5%	85.7%
	yes	42.3%	30.8%
Victim attended court	No	68.3%	70.0%
	yes	44.4%	52.9%
Victim made a personal statement	No	70.4%	73.1%
	yes	47.6%	52.4%
Case sent to Pre-Trial Review (PTR)	No	64.5%	75.9%
	yes	54.3%	51.4%
Defendant has prior history of domestic violence	No	91.7%	75.0%
	yes	67.6%	73.5%
Likely repetition of violence	No	75.4%	76.9%
	yes	0.0%	0.0%
Defendant poses a continuing threat	No	75.0%	77.8%
	yes	7.7%	8.3%
Defendant has an alcohol problem	no	87.5%	87.5%
	yes	33.3%	41.7%
<u>Variables that INCREASE the likelihood that the...</u>		<u>case was discontinued.</u>	<u>victim did retract.</u>
Victim was injured	No	60.0%	53.3%
	yes	70.2%	75.0%
WSU was contacted	No	42.1%	38.9%
	yes	70.7%	75.4%

Notes:

N=77 domestic violence case files

Boldface type indicates that the differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

As indicated by Table 23, similar factors work in similar ways to influence the decision-making of victims and prosecutors. For example, factors that decrease the likelihood of victims retracting also decrease the likelihood of prosecutors discontinuing a case. These factors include the defendant and victim not currently in a relationship, the victim attending court, the victim making a personal statement, the case being sent to PTR, the defendant having a prior history of domestic violence, the

likely repetition of violence, the defendant continuing to pose a threat to the victim, and the defendant having an alcohol problem. When these factors are present, it is significantly less likely that the victim will retract or that the prosecutor will discontinue the case. These findings are not only statistically significant, they are also substantively significant. In other words, there are very large percentage differences between the groups.

Broadly speaking, we can see that victim participation (in the form of attending court and making a personal statement), more dangerous offenders, and cases going to PTR all reduce the likelihood of a case being discontinued. The 'PTR effect' has important policy implications in that these preliminary results indicate it could be organisational strategy worth replicating in other court systems. At the very least, this is a finding worthy of further study, when additional data are available for analysis.

There were also two variables identified that increased the likelihood that cases would be discontinued or that victims would retract:

- (1) the victim was injured, and
- (2) the WSU was contacted.

These variables increased the percentage of victims who retracted and the percentage of prosecutors who discontinued the case.

A victim who is injured might be more fearful of her assailant and therefore less willing to participate in the prosecution of the case. Conversely, an injured victim might be more adamant that the offender be convicted and punished. Each of these notions about how victim injury might influence case progression have been documented in other research. For example, Martin (1994) found that serious injury to the victim resulted in a reduced likelihood of prosecution and Rauma (1984) found that victim injury reduced the chances that charges would be filed. More recent research, however, found that victim injury increased the chances that a domestic violence case will be prosecuted (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2001). Findings from this report add to the debate about how victim injury impacts the decision to retract (for the victim) or the decision to discontinue the case (for the prosecutor).

The interpretation of the 'WSU effect' is not straightforward either. We would hypothesize, for example, that having contact with the WSU would decrease rather than increase the likelihood that victims retract, ostensibly because they have the support necessary to proceed with the case. Similarly, having information from the WSU should make prosecutors less likely rather than more likely to discontinue a case. That the results are opposite from expected is difficult to understand.²¹

Before interpreting these results, one underlying assumption should be noted. Like the 'chicken and egg' conundrum, we cannot know for certain which comes first. It is assumed that contact with the WSU precedes in time whether a victim decides to retract or a prosecutor decides to discontinue a case. In reality, the reverse might be true (e.g., prosecutors could be more likely to contact the WSU *because* victims do not want to proceed). This issue highlights the importance of longitudinal studies where causal order can be documented empirically rather than assumed based on anecdotal evidence.

One interpretation of the 'WSU effect' is that the WSU is involved in cases that are more severe than the average. For example, most victims referred to the WSU suffered for many years at the hands of their abusers, and for many victims the abuse took multiple forms (psychological, physical, sexual, and financial). Less than half have access to their own money, and the majority have at least one small child at home. For these victims, participation may be fraught with more uncertainty and potentially negative repercussions, the 'WSU effect' could simply mirror this reality.

²¹ This finding is very robust. Whether the WSU were contacted, provided pertinent information, or the victim was referred to the WSU all produced the same result. Additionally, when all the factors that influence victim retraction (see Table 24) were simultaneously analysed using logistic regression analysis, the WSU variable was the *only* significant variable influencing whether victims retracted. This means that even when we control for other factors that might influence whether a victim retracts, WSU contact is the only variable that actually does.

Another explanation could be that the support or information provided by the WSU enables victims and/or prosecutors to feel more secure in dropping cases. For example, a victim's circumstances might have changed²² and information-sharing between the CPS and the WSU enables both agencies to reach a similar conclusion that the case should not proceed.

Additionally, involvement by the WSU might encourage the prioritising of victims' preferences (whatever they are). We must remember that victim notions of success might be very different from those held by police, prosecutors, or even WSU staff. Research has shown that women use the criminal justice system to satisfy several different goals (e.g., protection, prevention, reform and justice), and that these goals change over time (Lewis et al., 1997). Given the uniqueness of each victim's experience, a desire for arrest or prosecution should not be assumed to be universal.

In the US, for example, Ford (1991) interviewed domestic violence victims and when applicable asked them why they dropped charges against their offenders. He found that women called the police to help them manage the violence. After this immediate goal was satisfied, they often disengaged from the system (i.e., dropped charges against their offenders). Research in Australia found similar results. When asked to explain why they did not want a case to proceed, victims made comments such as "I felt the accused person had probably learnt his lesson from being held in custody, etc. [He is] extremely unlikely to re-offend" and "I wanted support from family services, and this was the only way to get noticed" (ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety, 2001). In the UK, Cretney and Davis (1997) found that many victims interviewed said that "what they had really hoped for from the court was that their assailants receive some kind of 'treatment' to help him control his behaviour" (p. 154). Studies from many countries therefore have demonstrated that victims might have legitimate reasons not to proceed with a case.

We must therefore question the assumption that arrest or prosecution are *always* desirable outcomes or are desirable for *all* victims. One reason is that criminal justice 'successes' do not necessarily guarantee increased safety for victims. One study found that 20% of victims had been threatened or re-assaulted by their batterer within three months of their initial contact with the court (Bennett et al., 1999). Even if case results in a conviction and sentence, victims are not necessarily safer. Recall that in Chicago, domestic offenders who were convicted and sentenced to probation were about four times more likely to re-victimize the original victim compared to other violent offenders on probation (Olson & Stalans, 2001).

Second, these outcomes are not always equated with victims being satisfied with the criminal justice system. Recall that WSU clients' satisfaction with the police was more a function of police demeanour towards them rather than police behaviour at the scene. Victim satisfaction is an important outcome measure. Research has documented the link between victims being satisfied and being more likely to participate in the prosecution of their cases (Goldstein, 1982; Lurigio & Mechanic, 2000) and to use the criminal justice system in incidents of future violence (Brown, 1984; Fleury et al., 1999). Because most research has focused on measuring victim satisfaction with police, however, we know little about victim satisfaction with prosecutors and/or the 'court experience,' and how this impacts their behaviour. This is an area in need additional study.²³

Finally, these findings should be interpreted with caution given the short time frame and relatively small number of cases analysed. Until more data are collected, we cannot know for certain the type

²² For example, the victim or defendant might have moved away, the victim and defendant might now be divorced, or the victim and defendant might have an improved relationship leading the victim to sincerely feel that 'enough has been done.'

²³ The final evaluation of a coordinated community and criminal justice system response to domestic violence in Australia found that victim satisfaction was higher when prosecutors were perceived to be fair, professional, courteous, interested, and thorough in explaining the court process. Satisfaction with the court process generally was tied to victims feeling that the 'punishment fit the crime' and victims being given a 'proper say' in the proceedings. The report is based on 39 victim surveys (ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety, 2001).

of impact the WSU is having on domestic violence case outcomes, and why. Future research should aim to collect information directly from victims as to the reasons why they decide to drop, or proceed, with a case. We can state with certainty, for example, that a victim retracting due to fear of retaliation from the defendant is a negative outcome. But we should not assume that every case where a victim retracts reflects a failure on the part of the police, the CPS, some other agency, or the victim herself. There can be legitimate reasons why this occurs. Given that this is such a prevalent outcome for domestic violence cases, the causes and consequences of this decision should be explored in more depth.²⁴

²⁴ One qualitative study identified four reasons why victims retract: (1) misperceptions and/or ignorance about the court process that are rarely remedied through follow-up with victims, (2) frustration with the complexity of the court process and the length of time cases take to conclude, (3) fear about how to keep themselves and their children safe while the case is progressing, and (4) conflict over incarceration as a goal when many have children in common with the offender and/or believe their partners need rehabilitation rather than punishment. The study was conducted in the US using questionnaires administered to 92 battered women (Bennett, Goodman & Dutton, 1999).

Section V: Clients' Evaluation of the WSU

Perceptions of WSU Service

Table 24 provides an overview of how WSU clients evaluated the service they received from the WSU. The findings are clear that clients are overwhelmingly positive about the services they have received from the WSU. Additionally, one woman detailed her positive experience with the WSU in a letter that can be found in Appendix K.

Table 24: Clients' Perceptions of WSU Service.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Overall Helpfulness of WSU*	Very helpful	90.1
	Helpful	8.9
	Neutral/don't know	1.0
	Unhelpful	0.0
	Very unhelpful	0.0
Effect of Meeting with WSU on Violence [^]	Decreased the violence	32.5
	Had no effect	66.9
	Increased the violence	0.6
Effect of Meeting with WSU on Threat of Violence*	Decreased the threat	39.4
	Had no effect	60.6
	Increased the threat	0.0
Effectiveness of WSU on Obtaining Safe Outcome* (Scale 1=not effective, 10=most effective) Mean Response = 9.16	0	0.5
	5	3.1
	6	1.0
	7	4.1
	8	17.1
	9	12.4
	10	61.7
Overall Satisfaction with WSU*	Very satisfied	85.2
	Satisfied	14.3
	Mixed	0.5
	Dissatisfied	0.0
	Very dissatisfied	0.0

Notes:

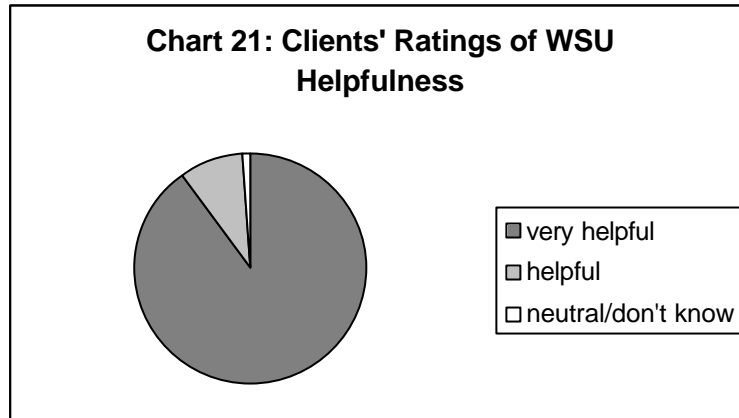
N=222 WSU clients reporting. All percentages listed are valid. These questions were completed in the presence of a WSU staff member in about one-third of cases (36.2%).

* Client responses made in the presence of WSU staff did not significantly differ from clients who completed questions without WSU staff present.

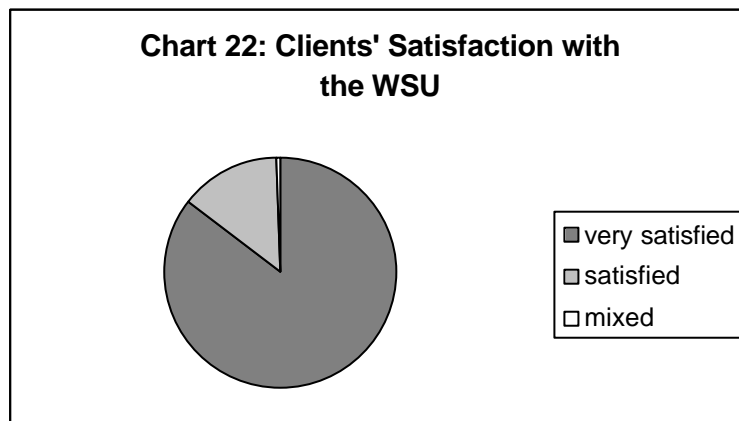
[^] Client responses differed significantly depending on whether WSU staff were present. When staff were present, fewer clients responded that they thought meeting with WSU would decrease violence. In short, completing the questions in front of staff did not mean that clients were more likely to respond favourably about the effectiveness of WSU.

Overall Satisfaction

Every client rated the WSU as helpful or very helpful (only one client was neutral or didn't know how she felt). None of the clients thought the WSU was unhelpful (see Chart 21).



Similarly, every client was satisfied or very satisfied regarding the service they received from the WSU (except for the one client who was neutral or didn't know). None of the clients were dissatisfied (see Chart 22).



Additionally, the average response on a scale rating the WSU from 1=not effective to 10=most effective in helping clients obtain a safe outcome was 9.2. Only one client rated the WSU as a 5 on this scale, all other responses were 7 or better. These are extremely positive responses from the women served by the WSU.

Not only are clients positive, but they are also realistic about what they expect the WSU to be able to achieve for them. As Table 24 shows, significant proportions felt that meeting with the WSU would have no effect on the violence (67%) or the threat of violence (61%). This finding implies that clients also hold other agencies in the community responsible for the reducing domestic violence, such as the police or courts. Another explanation is that clients may place responsibility for reducing the violence solely with the perpetrators themselves. What is also important from these responses is that clients do not believe that meeting with the WSU will *increase* the amount or threat of violence in their lives, perhaps due to vengeance from their partners. Evidently, the WSU has been able to achieve the difficult balance of intervening in delicate situations without furthering risk to victims.

Suggestions for Improvement

Positive evaluations also came through in the additional comments provided by the clients. When asked how WSU service could be improved, all the respondents suggested more advertising, more workers, or more funding. In short, they wanted the WSU to be known to more women and to be able to help more women because they believe that the WSU provides an important and vital service for women in the Cardiff area. As one client stated, "what they did was more than I ever expected." Therefore, the only suggestion for improvement made from the women was that the WSU should be maintained and even expanded.

Section VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

Evidence of WSU Effectiveness

Data analysed in this report provide several indications of the positive impact made by the WSU. First, 1150 women and their 1482 children in the Cardiff area received (at least) one phone call offering support and advocacy from the WSU. Many women were the recipients of one-to-one sessions with trained staff that included advice, support, counselling, referrals, and criminal justice advocacy. Many women received multiple sessions and support that lasted over many weeks, if not months. Hundreds of children received referrals to agencies that provided them with much needed counselling to counter the effects of witnessing and/or experiencing domestic violence. In short, in little more than one year's time the WSU has made a positive intervention in the lives of many women and children living in the Cardiff area.

Analyses of police data show that many positive trends are observable. For example, numbers of repeat victims are declining. Numbers of victims refusing to make complaints are declining. Numbers of persons charged for domestic violence crimes are increasing. Numbers of concern for children reports are increasing. Along with the new police policy and Police Watch programme, the WSU is changing the outcomes of a substantial proportion of domestic violence cases.

Analysis of CPS data show that charges were maintained in the majority of domestic violence cases. The percentage of cases discontinued has been decreasing, even though a substantial proportion of victims still decide to retract. Cases going to PTR are less likely to be discontinued, and the WSU officer has been providing important information at PTR since January 2002. Next to the police, prosecutors believe that the WSU is the most important agency for addressing domestic violence in Cardiff.

The data confirm that agencies in Cardiff are working together to provide better service to victims of domestic violence. Joint protocols between the WSU and both the South Wales Police and the Crown Prosecution Service have been agreed and are in practice. A new court procedure has streamlined the process for victims and made the WSU able to offer consistent advocacy to all clientele. Staff at all three agencies liaise regularly to provide the most effective response to cases of domestic violence.

The WSU has also been a responsive and flexible agency, implementing new services along the way as the need becomes apparent. The Survivor's Forum is a prime example of the success and high degree of satisfaction that can arise from paying attention to the needs of clientele. This is the type of advocacy that is 'woman-defined' rather than 'service-defined' and thus recommended (Davies, Lyon, & Monti-Catania, 1998). The large volume of domestic violence training the WSU has provided to criminal justice and community agencies in the South Wales area (almost 1200 personnel) is another example of the WSU stepping in when the need arises.

The evaluation of the WSU by the women themselves is perhaps the most important indicator of effectiveness. In all areas surveyed the WSU received extremely high marks. Not only did they provide extremely practical advocacy and referrals to women, but they also provided a safe area where women and their children could be supported and comforted during a difficult time. The only way that women could think of improving the WSU was to expand the staffing and funding of the unit. That type of feedback speaks for itself.

Evaluations of programs similar to the WSU provide an additional source of evidence about the successes these types of initiatives can yield. For example, Sullivan and Bybee (1999) studied the effects of an advocacy intervention on future violence in a longitudinal, experimental-design study of battered women in the US. Battered women were randomly assigned to one of two groups. Women assigned to the control group received no assistance; women in the experimental group received one-on-one assistance from an advocate who helped them obtain resources such as housing, employment, legal assistance, education, child care, and health care. Like the WSU, this advocacy intervention was woman-focused, accounting for the individualized needs of each woman. Findings from this research

showed that the intervention was successful at reducing women's risks of further or more severe abuse. Moreover, women who had worked with advocates were more successful at terminating abusive relationships. Thus, with additional time and resources the WSU may have positive effects above and beyond those described in this report.

Finally, results from this research should remind criminal justice and community actors to not assume that they know what victims want or need. The women coming to the WSU are unique individuals, albeit sharing a similar type of problem in their lives. They have managed their circumstances in different ways in the past, and they will make different decisions about how to proceed with the future. Providing a service that can account for the myriad needs and abilities of women experiencing domestic violence should be the overarching goal of any multi-agency approach to addressing domestic violence in the community.

Further Improvements to Victim Service

At this stage, with this amount of resources, it appears that the WSU is providing as much and the best type of service that is possible. All the sources of data analysed in this report show that the WSU is making a positive and significant difference to women and children in the community. Short from additional funding and/or additional staff members, it would not seem feasible to increase the amount of services offered.

That said, there are several hidden populations in the Cardiff area that should be targeted for intervention in the future. For example, this research (as well as other studies) has shown that there is likely to be a population of women who have experienced sexual abuse within an intimate relationship and not received any help from a community or criminal justice agency. Perhaps a targeted media campaign would encourage more of these women to seek help from an appropriate agency such as the police and/or the WSU. Another population that is currently underserved in the Cardiff area may be ethnic minorities. The women being served by the WSU are primarily white. While BAWSO is a community agency in Cardiff that specifically addresses the needs of ethnic minority women experiencing abuse, perhaps additional funding could allow the WSU to provide more multicultural services such as interpreters. Finally, the WSU deals with women experiencing violence within heterosexual relationships. Currently no provision is made for homosexual women, or men who are victimized by violence in homosexual relationships. These are all groups in the community that are practically invisible to the helping professions, and thus should be targeted in future initiatives seeking to reduce the abuse people experience from their (ex)partners.

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APPENDICES