

The Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme (PHPES)

Addressing the challenges faced by 'front line' practitioners

Evaluation of a Programme for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Abuse



Our practitioner partners

The PHPES scheme enables people working in public health, who are introducing innovative initiatives aimed at improving health, to work in partnership with NIHR SPHR to conduct rigorous evaluations of their cost-effectiveness. NIHR SPHR researchers worked with:

FOUNDATION

Foundation delivers a range of programmes, across the North of England. In addition to provision of housing support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, Foundation offers advice, information, help, support and counselling to those suffering through domestic abuse, through a range of schemes and programmes. Foundation 4 Change is one such initiative that aims to work with men and women who recognise that they have been, or could be, abusive towards their partner or family members to help them understand and improve their behaviour and relationship with their loved ones.

Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) is a serious public health concern. In England and Wales, 26% of women and 14% of men between the ages of 16 and 59 have experienced DVA (CSEW, 2016).

Background

Domestic abuse (DA) occurs within the unique and often complex contexts of individuals' lives; there are wide-ranging cultural, social and behavioural determinants leading to DVA. While the provision of victim support is imperative, appropriate programmes aimed at perpetrators to understand and change their behaviour and its consequences are helpful to prevent repeat offences. Foundation 4 Change is one such voluntary perpetrator programme that offers personalised

support to self-identified perpetrators through a menu of options which allow clients to receive ongoing support including: an awareness raising workshop, one to one support sessions with key workers, eight structured group sessions delivered over 8-10 weeks, and a drop in hub. Using motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural therapy to enable change in thought processes and beliefs, the programme is designed to challenge DVA and equip participants with skills for developing healthy relationships with (ex) partners/family.

Researchers from the University of Sheffield worked in collaboration with public health professionals in Doncaster, and clients and staff of the Foundation 4 Change programme to explore a voluntary intervention for perpetrators of DVA. Using theory-driven evaluation methods the researchers explored what works, for whom, in what circumstances and why.

Key issues

- DVA is associated with severe physical, psychological and emotional consequences for individuals and families.
- DVA has been related to substantial economic costs for public services of an estimated at £16 billion.
- DVA perpetrators' reasons for voluntarily seeking help in preventing further abuse can be complex and difficult to uncover.

Key research objectives

- Develop and test the programme logic, including its key in-built assumptions.
- Describe and evaluate the programme implementation.
- Explore contextual factors that influence the: change mechanisms; and/or implementation processes; and outcomes of the programme.
- Describe any differential access, experiences and outcomes of the programme by gender, socioeconomic and ethnic group
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and transferable lessons.
- Describe the costs and benefits (including wider social returns) associated with delivering the programme.

Method

The evaluation used a mixed-method, theory-driven evaluation incorporating Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis. Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including service commissioners, service providers, clients, social workers and other professionals was ensured. Data was collected using a range of qualitative (individual interviews, focus group discussions, ethnographic observations) and quantitative (questionnaires, examination of routinely collected information) methods.

Public Involvement

A Client Reference Group (CRG) was set up as part of the evaluation, consisting of current and former clients of Foundation 4 Change programme. A Project Advisory Group (PAG) consisting of academic, practitioners, researchers was also established.

Key findings and learnings for practice

- Goals and objectives of various DVA services are focused on outcomes for specific individuals rather than addressing wider relationship contexts.
- Dynamic motivations of voluntary clients can determine a window of engagement, which requires rapid intervention.
- Commissioners of voluntary perpetrator services should consider staff support and retention as part of the commissioning process.
- The client-centred approach of staff, which pervades all elements of the service, is valued by clients and encourages ongoing engagement in activities.

The aim of both of these groups was to ensure robustness of the evaluation. Both groups facilitated development of data collection tools, recruiting of participants, data collection methods. These groups will also contribute to interpretation of findings and dissemination activity.

What next?

The findings of the study will feed into regional DVA service planning processes.

Findings will be disseminated through NIHR SPHR and local, regional and national networks, conferences and events.

SPHR Contact/Find out more

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About PHPES

PHPES projects are:

- **generated by front line practitioners,**
- **designed to provide transferable, robust evidence on the impact of local practice for local practitioners,**
- **developed and delivered in collaboration with NIHR SPHR academics building evaluative capacity in public health practice.**

About NIHR SPHR

The NIHR SPHR aims to build a high quality evidence base for cost-effective public health practices. We work with local practitioners and members of the public, carrying out a wide range of research projects and programmes with a school wide focus on alcohol, ageing well and health inequalities