

# Parental intimate partner violence and abuse: measurement of the risk of exposing children and the mental health impact (PROTECT)

Project report

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Principal investigator: Dr Ruth McGovern, Newcastle University

## Project background

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This project was funded by the UKRI Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network as part of its workstream on the theme of measurement of violence, abuse and mental health.

The project ran for a total of 1 year



### Project team:

- Dr Ruth McGovern, Newcastle University
- Dr Simon Scott Hackett, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust & Newcastle University
- Ms Deborah Smart, Newcastle University
- Dr Hayley Alderson, Newcastle University
- Dr William McGovern, Northumbria University
- Victoria Cooling, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Professor Eileen Kaner, Newcastle University

### Project partners and collaborators:

- North Tyneside Children's Social Care
- Gateshead Children's Social Care
- NIHR ARCs North East and North Cumbria (NENC); North West Coast (NWC); West Midlands (WM); Kent, Surrey, Sussex (KSS)



# Project summary

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## Background

Many children and families are impacted by domestic violence. These families experience a range of harms as a result and often require support from multiple services. Each of these services have different approaches and priorities which affect their response to children and families who experience domestic violence and how they work with other services. This project aims to understand these different approaches and how this affects the multi-agency response to children and families who experience domestic violence.

## Methods

We talked to 29 practitioners from a range of services about how they work with children and families affected by domestic violence. We also talked to women who had experienced domestic violence to check what we found out from talking to practitioners.

## Results

Services have different approaches to assessing risk within families who experience domestic violence, which results in services seeing and responding to the domestic violence in different ways. Terms such as victim, survivor and perpetrator are barriers to recognising and responding to the needs of children and families affected by domestic violence and contributes to a tendency to 'blame the victim' for the abuse they and their children experience. Service recognised the need to work with the whole family; reinforcing the role of fathers who perpetrate domestic violence and supporting mothers and their children to recover from the impact.

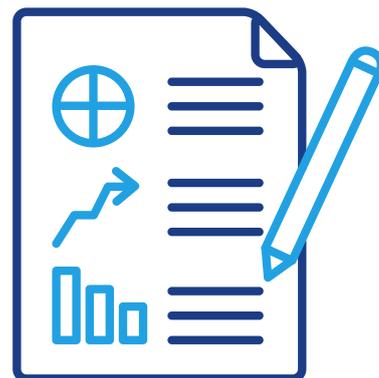
## Conclusions

There are differences in how services assess and respond to children and families who experience domestic violence. These differences make it difficult for services to work together to respond to the needs of children and families.

## Key messages

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# Top 3 key messages from the project



Language such as 'mothers who are impacted by IPVA', 'fathers who perpetrate IPVA' 'children who are impacted by IPVA' should be adopted to promote recognition of the family impact of IPVA and reduce barriers.

Services should utilise a 'Community of Practice' approach which achieves a shared understanding of risk and responding to risk



When responding to parental IPVA, services should recognise and respond to the trauma experienced in order to promote recovery.

# The Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network

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We will be sure to keep our members updated on any outputs linked to this project in the future. To keep updated you can sign up to our mailing list and receive our monthly newsletter. You can also follow us on our socials . All links can be found at the bottom of this page.

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## About the VAMHN

We are a network of individuals and organisations aiming to reduce the prevalence of mental health problems by addressing associated violence and abuse, particularly domestic and sexual violence. We bring together and support research by experts from a range of disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds - some with personal experience, others with expertise from the work that they do, and survivor researchers with both.

The activities of the network are organised into 3 themes:

- Measurement**      Measuring the extent and impact of domestic and sexual violence in relation to mental health. Our first year activities focused on the theme of measurement
- Understanding**      Understanding the pathways that lead to domestic and sexual violence and their relationship to mental health problems
- Intervention**      Planning interventions and services to prevent, reduce and address domestic and sexual violence in people with mental health problems or at risk of developing mental health problems

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