



DVACT-PAI

Assessments & Interventions

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# DVACT-PAI Programmes and Interventions

DVACT-PAI is an independent agency specialising in providing expert opinion in the family courts on all aspects of family conflict, including, **domestic abuse, sexually harmful behaviour and psychological functioning**. We provide **treatment programmes** for parents where there are concerns relating to domestic abuse or sex offending, including a **trauma programme** for perpetrators or victims who have had traumatic experiences that impact on their ability to parent effectively.

## DV-ACTION Programmes

DV-ACTION provides bespoke 1:1 domestic abuse and sexual abuse programmes for parents when referred by a social worker. We also provide an education programme to alleviate the impact of trauma called **TraumaSense**.

All of our programmes are designed to meet the needs of parents who are in Child Protection measures. We accept referrals from social services anywhere in the UK at any stage of the case, including early interventions and those in care proceedings. As specialists in complex cases we can work with those not usually able to attend groupwork programmes, including those who need a translator, those with learning needs, same sex relationships and female perpetrators.

Suitability for treatment can be assessed either through a full **Family Safety Risk** or **Vulnerability Assessment**, or a brief **Suitability Assessment** can be undertaken. Programmes can also be delivered as a **Partner Abuse Intervention** alongside a **Family Safety Assessment**.

All programmes include:

- 1:1 sessions delivered by video calling via Zoom or another online platform.
- A dedicated and experienced specialist programme facilitator allocated to the client.
- An expert risk assessor to oversee the work and complete a final assessment (except TraumaSense).
- Access to independent learning to continue work in between sessions.
- Access to technology (a tablet) where required.
- A final report completed by the risk assessor that can be used in proceedings and filed with all parties.

Programme final reports or Family Safety Assessments are completed by a registered expert assessor independent from the programme facilitator and suitable for use in court proceedings. The final report includes:

- What sessions were attended/missed.

- Topics covered in the sessions.
- Details of the client's engagement with the programme material.
- A consideration of any new developments in the case.
- A view on whether the client's risk or vulnerability has been reduced.
- Domestic abuse and sex abuse programmes will include further recommendations for risk management, including a view on child contact where appropriate.

## Partner Abuse Interventions

Treatment programmes can also take place alongside a **family safety assessment**. This wraparound assessment and intervention provides an opportunity for parents to receive an intervention more quickly and enables parents to demonstrate that they can make positive changes to behaviours of concern.

Completing a targeted treatment intervention at an early stage that aims to achieve genuine progress for parents in protecting their children, shortens timescales, provides evidence as to the parents ability to safeguard the child and avoid further proceedings. The accompanying assessment report will push the case forward providing an expert opinion on the risk posed to the child, and fills a gap in evidence as to whether parents are able to safeguard their child.

These interventions involves an initial 2 hour assessment interview with an expert risk assessor who will advise on the right treatment programme for the parent within an initial suitability assessment report. This will be followed by a 12-week intervention and a final interview to complete the full risk and/or vulnerability assessment report, including the progress made within the intervention.

A **Behaviour Change PAI** aims to assist parents towards making steps towards reducing the risk to their children. The **Vulnerable Mothers Programme** focuses on the attachment to the abusive partner, with reflective work on how the attachment was formed and how the mothers vulnerability to further abuse can be reduced; the full **Domestic Abuse Prevention Programme (DAPP)** seeks to address the risk from the offending parent.

A **Needs PAI** will meet the immediate child protection concerns around safety and increasing accountability. Victim work will concentrate on domestic abuse education, safety planning and recognising risk; a **motivational programme** is delivered to perpetrators to increase levels of acceptance with the aim of moving them to a position where they will be suitable for a full behavioural change programme.

Where there are high levels of trauma within the parents background trauma work can be included or the full **TraumaSense** programme can be delivered as a **TraumaSense PAI**.

## Vulnerability Programmes

The needs of mothers in care proceedings or Child Protection measures are often complex, with enduring problems around adult attachments, accountability and prioritising their children's safety. In these cases, more intensive, challenging and focused work is needed in order to support lasting change.

**Vulnerable mothers programme** - This 12-session 1:1 programme is particularly suitable for women who: have an enduring emotional attachment to their abuser; have a history of separating and reconciling with their abuser; consistently minimise the abuse/retract statements, or have failed to prioritise their own or their children's safety when making decisions. As intensive work that seeks to empower and break attachments this can raise the risk of further abuse; therefore, this programme is only suitable for those who have separated from an abusive partner.

The programme is delivered on a one-to-one basis by an expert worker, using video link. There is an additional session towards the end of the programme where the expert assessor will meet with the client in order to complete the final assessment report. Sessions can be completed using an interpreter should this be required, and topics covered in the sessions will include subjects within the broad areas as follows:

- Domestic abuse knowledge - covering subjects such as power and control, sexual abuse and coercive control.
- Attachment - exploring reasons why the mother remained in the relationship, understanding the emotional attachment to the abuser and pressures to reconcile.
- Children - with a focus on understanding the effects of abuse on the child and reparative parenting.
- Safety planning - focusing on prioritising children's safety, crisis management and early warning signals.
- Personal insight - discussing the impact of the abuse, exploring childhood experiences and reasons for vulnerability.
- Moving forward - building self-esteem, how to work collaboratively with professionals and what to do when starting a new relationship.
- Additional needs - this will cover specific needs not included in the above areas such as alcohol abuse, grieving and loss, the use of violent resistance and immigration concerns.

**Capacity to protect programme** – This 12 session 1:1 intervention aims to increase the protective capacity of mothers where there is a risk towards the children from sex offenders in the home.

The programme is delivered by expert practitioners with years of experience of working with parents and families affected by child sexual abuse (CSA). The key aim of the programme is to enable parents to recognise and respond to the risk of CSA and to substantially increase their confidence in speaking to and supporting their children. It is suitable for various scenarios, including:

- sexual abuse by an adult or another child in the family environment.
- abuse by a trusted adult outside the family environment.
- sexual abuse by a group of adults.
- online sexual abuse.
- sexual abuse by another child or children outside the family environment.

This programme includes a tailored treatment plan with material specifically targeted to the child protection concerns, with modules including:

- Myth busting about sex offenders.
- Emotional impact on the parent.

- Denial.
- Emotional attachment to the abuser.
- Children's reactions to abuse.
- Impact of CSA on children.
- Talking to children about CSA.
- Safety planning with children.
- Helping children with boundaries.
- Understanding risk.
- Adult vs child perspectives.
- CSA and links to domestic abuse.

## Perpetrator Programmes

**Domestic Abuse Prevention Programme (DAPP)** - This is a 24 session programme of work completed on a 1:1 basis for perpetrators who have some level of acceptance of their abusive behaviour. A bespoke programme of focused work is delivered addressing specific areas of concern and will cover all the topics usually delivered within a perpetrator programme including:

- Strategies for reducing abuse.
- Analysing feelings and behaviour.
- Motivation to change.
- Power and control.
- Reparative parenting.
- Emotional abuse.
- Developing empathy.
- Sexual respect, intimacy and respectful relationships.
- Positive self talk.
- Attitudes towards women.

This programme includes an interim report (where required), a full final report and free confidential support for current and ex-partners of those attending the programme.

Please note that where a full domestic abuse risk assessment has not already been completed a suitability assessment will be required before a place on this programme can be confirmed.

**Motivational programme for perpetrators** - This programme is suitable for perpetrators who are willing to complete work but are unsuitable for a full domestic abuse perpetrator programme due to denial and minimisation. As a bespoke programme delivered on a 1:1 basis, there is a particular focus on specific areas of concern and further sessions are included to meet the requirements of the child protection plan.

Please note that this is a motivational programme that aims to progress perpetrators to the point at which they are then suitable to attend a full domestic abuse programme, and is not therefore a replacement for a full DAPP.

**Specialist perpetrator work** - Delivered by highly experienced facilitators, bespoke programmes of work are provided to perpetrators where focus is required on a specific area of need. This could include domestic abuse work with an emphasis on parenting and child protection, safety planning, early intervention or sexual offending.

## Trauma Programme

**TraumaSense** is an innovative, trauma-responsive, psychoeducational programme designed to empower individuals by providing an accessible understanding of trauma.

General trauma services tend to be focused on psychotherapeutic interventions and while these approaches are valuable, they often fall short of addressing the physiological nature of trauma. Many individuals who have experienced chronic trauma feel disconnected from their bodies, unaware of how trauma manifests as physical sensations, stress responses, and trauma-responsive behaviours. TraumaSense fills this gap by offering a structured programme that demystifies trauma in a non-therapeutic setting.

The facilitated 1:1 programme has a strong focus on building psychological awareness, emotional regulation, and personal agency. It is designed to help participants move from reactive survival states towards more intentional, grounded decision-making. By supporting individuals to process the impact of trauma in a non-clinical but psychologically informed way, the programme creates the conditions for healthier relationships, more consistent parenting, and a reduced risk of intergenerational trauma. TraumaSense is not a therapeutic intervention, but it is an important foundation that enables participants to recognise their capacity for change and take ownership of their role as parents, partners, and community members.

This 24 session programme is available for both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse who have traumatic experiences that impact their ability to parent effectively. It is particularly suitable for those mandated to attend as part of a court process and individuals who may not be ready for therapy or feel apprehensive about disclosing their experiences. Session topics include the following:

- Understanding trauma and the stress response system.
- Cultivating safety and stability.
- The long term impact of chronic stress.
- The impact of trauma on the brain.
- Wellbeing.
- Protective factors and resilience.
- Power, control and personal agency.
- Reflection and personal action plan for next steps.

## Programme Costs and Timescales

Costs for the programme are detailed below:

Programme	Cost (without prior family safety assessment )	Timescale (from programme start to final report)
Suitability assessment	£440 (+VAT)	3 weeks
Vulnerable Mothers Programme	£2950 (+VAT)	16 weeks when delivered weekly or 10 weeks for twice weekly sessions
Capacity to Protect Programme	£2950 (+VAT)	16 weeks when delivered weekly or 10 weeks for twice weekly sessions
DAPP	£3700 (+VAT)	22 weeks
Motivational programme	£3100 (+VAT)	16 weeks when delivered weekly or 10 weeks for twice weekly sessions
Specialist perpetrator work	Available upon request	Dependent upon the type of work and number of sessions required
TraumaSense	£2950 (+VAT)	16 weeks
Needs PAI (Mothers Safety Programme, Motivational Programme or TraumaSense alongside an FSA)	Victim £4600	18 weeks
	Perpetrator £4700	18 weeks
	Both Parents £6500	20 weeks
Behaviour change PAI (Vulnerable mothers programme, capacity to protect programme, DAPP alongside an FSA)	Victim £4700	18 weeks
	Perpetrator £5600	18 weeks
	Both Parents £7800	20 weeks

A reduced fee is available where an initial DVACT-PAI family safety assessment has already been completed (please contact the office for further details).

Timescales include 2 weeks to start the programme from receipt of all paperwork and 4-6 weeks at the conclusion of the programme to complete and file the final report. However, this is subject to change depending upon capacity; please contact the office for current timescales.

The Legal Aid Agency does not fund treatment therefore the costs of our programmes are usually met by the local authority. However it may be able to split the cost of the assessment portion of the programme/intervention between the parties and this should be discussed with the programmes team at referral.

Additional fees may apply as follows:

**Interpreter fees** – the costs given above do not include interpreter costs which must be funded additionally or provided by the local authority.

**Missed sessions** - If parents cancel or fail to attend 2 sessions with less than 48 hours' notice the programme will be suspended and the views of the relevant parties will be sought. If the programme re-commences any further missed sessions will be lost or will need to be funded additionally.

## Assessments

Without doubt the essential purpose of any expert assessment is that it must be useful to the professionals and to the court. It should provide expertise that is not available within the usual realm of child protection professionals. DVACT-PAI Family Safety Assessments offer clarity and insight into the dynamics of abuse and ongoing risks within the family, including an expert opinion on specific issues of concern. All assessments are available for one or both parents and third parties.

The primary concern of DVACT-PAI's assessments is to establish and quantify the risks to the children of exposure to domestic abuse and conflict. The most important element of this is establishing, as far as is possible a picture of the nature, severity, frequency and pattern of abuse and violence that has been happening in the family so that professionals can understand what the children are likely to experience if nothing changes. Our goal is to ensure that the safety of the children remains at the heart of assessment and intervention.

We are keenly aware of the need to move matters forward swiftly, particularly regarding the children's timescales, and have a professional reputation for providing expert reports within greatly reduced timescales of 6 - 12 weeks (depending upon the type of assessment and current caseload) meeting court dates wherever possible.

## Registered Experts

DVACT-PAI hold the register for expert assessors who have extensive experience and knowledge in the field, and meet the necessary standards, to provide Expert Domestic Abuse Risk Assessments. You can find our Standards and the Register of Experts on our website at [dvact.org/expertsregister](http://dvact.org/expertsregister). CVs can be provided upon request to the main office at [info.pai@dvact.org](mailto:info.pai@dvact.org)

As specialists in complex cases with multiple concerns, our assessors have expertise in a number of areas and can address issues including: substance misuse, HBV, female perpetrators, mental health, sexual risk, cultural imperatives, non-English speakers, criminality, same sex relationships and multiple parent cases. This makes DVACT-PAI ideally placed to provide single jointly instructed experts to save the courts time and additional expense.

## Family Safety Assessments

Our Family Safety Assessments are comprehensive and based upon an analysis of empirically derived risk indicators taken from multiple sources of information about the subject's background, giving detailed consideration to both static and dynamic risk factors. Psychometric testing including behaviour inventories and CAPI (Child Abuse Potential Inventory) are also utilised within these assessments. Each assessment will give an analysis of the risks posed to the children with a realistic risk management plan for each member of the family, including viability of treatment interventions and prognosis for change where necessary.

**Domestic abuse risk assessment of perpetrators** – Assesses the risk towards the victim and children from the domestic abuse perpetrator. This includes interviews with both the perpetrator and victim, wherever possible. The report will include:

- developmental indicators, including exposure to family conflict in childhood;
- static and dynamic risk indicators, including the imminence of any risks;
- history of domestic abuse and the possible impact on the child;
- likelihood of further exposure of the child to domestic abuse;
- parent's understanding of the impact of the domestic abuse on children;
- prognosis for treatment and a risk management plan including an assessment of the risks surrounding contact with the child/ren.

**Domestic abuse vulnerability assessment of victims/survivors** – Alongside identifying vulnerability to future abuse, the impact of the abuse on the victim's parenting will also be assessed, including:

- victim's background, including exposure to abuse as a child and any abuse in previous relationships;
- history of domestic abuse and the possible impact on the child, and likelihood of further exposure of the child to domestic abuse;
- victim's understanding of the impact of the domestic abuse on children;
- static and dynamic vulnerability indicators, including ability to assess risk and prioritise safety, ability to sustain any separation and understanding of domestic abuse;
- recommendations for risk management strategies and treatment options.

**Joint domestic abuse risk and vulnerability assessment of both parents** – An assessment of both parents (please note that parents are seen separately), including all the elements of risk and vulnerability assessments outlined above, but also:

- a clear picture of the dynamics of the relationship, including the principal sources of risk and danger;
- the likelihood of separation/reconciliation;
- the particular safeguarding issues raised by the parental relationship;
- a risk management plan for each member of the family.

**Third party carer (Special Guardianship) assessment** – Examines whether any potential carer has an adequate understanding of domestic abuse and their ability to protect the children in their care. Including:

- the impact of domestic abuse on the child/children;
- the ongoing risks and the ability to protect the children under specific circumstances (for people being considered as alternative carers).

**Assessment of family members** – Considers other domestic abusers in the home, for example older adolescents or other adults. This assessment will include interviews with all parties, with the assessment report providing the following:

- static and dynamic risk and vulnerability indicators;
- identification of risks and the principal source of danger;
- recommendation of risk management strategies and treatment options.

## Sex Offender Assessments

DVACT-PAI can offer perpetrator and/or victim assessments where sexual offending is a key risk to children. Unlike many similar assessments, a DVACT-PAI report will provide a detailed risk management plan and will identify key risk indicators specific to each child who may be exposed to abuse.

**Assessment of the risk of sexual harm** – These are undertaken by our specialists in sexual offending and will identify risk management plans where offenders or risky adults have close contact with a family; this can be a parent, partner or other members of the family, including adolescents.

As a minimum the report will contain the following:

- formal assessment based on the most effective psychometric and actuarial tools pertaining to risk of recidivism;
- the risk of sexual offending, grooming and exploitation;
- history of abuse and the possible impact on the child/ren;
- social functioning and self-management;
- external factors – support/supervision networks;
- assessment of sexual interests;
- compliance with orders/agreements;
- motivation to stop sexually harmful behaviours;
- internal drivers, insight and empathy;
- prognosis for change and a risk management plan.

**Assessment of protective capacity** – This provides an assessment of the non-abusing parent and includes:

- application of the Capacity & Ability to Supervise and Protect- Risk Framework (CASP-R);
- parent's background and any adverse childhood experiences which relate to their capacity to protect;
- an analysis of the power dynamics in their relationship with the offender;
- ability to recognise abuse, including grooming;
- understanding of abuse and the impact on children;
- support network;
- ability to take action and work openly with professionals to manage the risk.

**Joint assessment of both parents** (please note that all parents are seen separately) – This assessment includes all the elements of the risk and protective capacity assessments outlined above, but also:

- a clear picture of the dynamics of the relationship;
- the likelihood of separation/reconciliation;
- the particular safeguarding issues raised by the parental relationship;
- a risk management plan for each member of the family.

## Assessment Costs and Timescales

Please note that because of our assessors high level of expertise, specifically in the field of domestic abuse or sexual abuse and the comprehensive nature of our assessments, the hourly rate and the number of hours taken does not come within the Legal Aid Agency expert rates. Domestic Abuse/Family Safety/Forensic Risk Assessors are not recognised as a separate expert entity by the LAA. It should also be noted that our assessors are not independent social workers, and only employ assessors whose qualifications and expertise in domestic abuse, far exceeds those in other general professions. The register of experts with details of the required standards for expert assessors is available on our website at [dvact.org/expertsregister](http://dvact.org/expertsregister). You can request any of the assessors on our register however, we cannot always guarantee their availability.

Please contact the assessments team at [info.pai@dvact.org](mailto:info.pai@dvact.org) for further details of the current costs and timescales of a stand alone assessment.