



DVACT-PAI

Assessments & Interventions

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DVACT-PAI Assessments and Interventions

DVACT-PAI is an independent organisation providing expert assessments relating to **domestic abuse** and **sexual abuse** as well as assessments of **psychological** and **cognitive functioning** for children's services and the family courts. We also provide **domestic abuse intervention programmes** for parents.

The following sets out details of the services that we offer to self-referring parents in private (child contact or residency) proceedings.

Assessments

DVACT-PAI specialises in complex cases with assessments designed to offer a level of clarity and insight into the dynamics of abuse and ongoing risks within the family, including an expert opinion on specific issues of concern. Our primary concern is to ensure the safety of, and assess the potential for harm to, the children from violence and abuse within the family.

DVACT-PAI expert assessors all possess the competencies and expertise outlined in the 2012 [guidelines for the commissioning of expert domestic violence risk assessments](#) and have many years' experience in the family courts as specialists and expert witnesses. CVs are available upon request.

We are always keenly aware of the need to move matters forward swiftly, particularly regarding the children's timescales, we have a professional reputation for providing expert reports within greatly reduced timescales of 8 - 12 weeks (depending upon the type of assessment and current caseload) and we will meet court dates wherever possible.

Please note that for all assessments and interventions we must be instructed by the court to carry out the work with access to the full court bundle of documents to include; findings of fact; court orders; statements from both parties; copies of any assessments and reports completed. We will also require payment in full and contact details of both parties.

The following information gives brief details of what each of our expert assessments includes; as specialists in complex cases our assessors have expertise in a number of areas and can answer further questions on issues such as: substance misuse, HBV, female perpetrators, cultural imperatives, non-English speakers, criminality, same sex relationships and multiple parent cases.

Family Safety Assessments

Our Family Safety Assessments are comprehensive and are 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. 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 perpetrator – Assesses the risk towards the victim and children from the domestic abuse perpetrator. This includes an interview with both the perpetrator and victim, wherever possible. The report will include:

- 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.

Domestic abuse family or third party assessment – 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 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:

- 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;
- likelihood of further exposure of the subject child/ren to sexual abuse;
- prognosis for change and a risk management plan.

Psychological and Cognitive Assessments

Assessments of psychological functioning – Should the court have concerns about the extent to which mental health difficulties affect a parent’s functioning, we can provide formal screening for psychopathology, using well-respected self-report inventories alongside a clinical interview.

While it is beyond the area of expertise of a psychologist to make diagnoses, the report can comment on any observed indications of mental health problems or personality difficulties and make recommendations for treatment to address these.

Please note that a psychological assessment will always take place alongside a family safety assessment. A psychological assessment does not replace the need for a risk/family safety assessment as the presence of mental health difficulties is not necessarily a risk indicator, and many people who pose high risk do not have an identifiable mental health difficulty.

Cognitive assessments – This assessment will focus on the capacity of a parent to use and retain information. It will involve a short clinical history taking and the administration of a standardised, validated measure of IQ (the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales IV – WAIS IV). The findings of a cognitive assessment can help to ensure that communication and support are provided to the parent in a way that they can understand and use.

Please be aware that it is not possible to use the WAIS IV with parents who do not have a good command of the English language, even with an interpreter present. In general we do not have access to versions of this test in other languages. However, we can explore with the parent whether there have been any indicators of cognitive difficulties in their developmental, educational and employment history, and their literacy and everyday coping skills. This screening exercise can be supplemented with a language-free test, such as the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence Fourth Edition (TONI-4) or the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (II).

Please note that sometimes it is not possible to allocate a family safety assessment and a psychological assessment to the same assessor. In such cases the hours requirement for the psychological assessment would increase as the assessor would not have already read the papers and interviewed the clients as part of the family safety assessment. In such cases we advise estimating up to 25 hours’ work for the psychological assessment.

Assessment Costs and Timescales

Please note that because of 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. Where the Court directs that the fees are to be met by the parent/s this will need to be paid in full in advance of the work starting.

The cost and timescales of all assessments are shown below:

Assessment	Cost	Timescale to complete
Family safety assessment	£2816 (+VAT)	8 weeks
Sex offending assessment	£2995.20 (+VAT)	10 weeks
Sex offending assessment alongside a family safety assessment	£3796 (+VAT)	10 weeks
Psychological assessment alongside a family safety or sex offender assessment	£3564.80 (+VAT)	10 weeks
Cognitive assessment	1 parent £655.20	Please enquire
	2 parents £936	

Please note that the costs given above do not include interpreter costs which must be funded additionally.

Attendance at Court hearings or Professionals meetings will be charged additionally at the relevant hourly rate with travel time and expenses charged at the legal aid rate. If a court attendance is cancelled or re-scheduled at less than 24 hours' notice it will incur a cancellation fee.

If parents cancel or fail to attend their appointments with less than 48 hours' notice, a missed appointment fee of 2 hours will be charged.

Interviews take place via video calling, in person appointments will incur additional travel costs as follows:

Travel time, per hour £40

Travel expenses, per mile £0.45

Where clients do not attend in person interviews a cancellation fee of 2 hours will be charged plus travel time and expenses.

Treatment Programmes

DVACT-PAI provides a bespoke 1:1 domestic abuse perpetrator programmes for parents in private law proceedings. We do accept self-referrals from parents with the programme designed specifically to meet the needs of parents who are in proceedings or who have children in Child Protection measures.

Partner Abuse Intervention for Parents – This is an 18 session programme of work delivered on a 1:1 basis. This programme is 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 include:

- Weekly 1:1 sessions delivered by video calling via Zoom or another online platform.
- A dedicated and experienced programme facilitator allocated to the case with at least 10 years of experience in delivering domestic abuse interventions.
- A risk assessor allocated to the case to oversee the work.
- Access to our online platform to continue work in between sessions.
- Access to technology (a tablet) where required.
- A full final report completed by an expert risk assessor that can be used in proceedings and filed with all parties.

Programme final reports are completed by an 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.
- Further recommendations for risk management, including a view on child contact where appropriate.

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.

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.

Programme Costs and Timescales

Costs for the programme are detailed below:

Programme	Cost (where an initial assessment has not been completed)*	Timescale (from receipt of documents to final report)**
Suitability assessment	£285 (+VAT)	3 weeks
18 Session PAIP	£2450 (+VAT)	22 weeks
Specialist perpetrator work	Available upon request	Dependent upon the type of work and number of sessions required

* A reduced fee is available where an initial DVACT-PAI family safety assessment has already been (or is being) completed.

**Timescales include 2 weeks to start the programme from receipt of all paperwork and 2 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.

In some cases it may be possible to shorten timescales in order to meet Court/meeting/conference dates this is at the discretion of the clinical manager and is decided on a case-by-case basis.