

## Choices report content

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## 1. Introduction

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Research clearly demonstrates the devastating impact that living with DA has on family members.

The evidence from Domestic Homicide Reviews is that agencies are poor at identifying levels of risk and the biennial and triennial reviews of 'Serious Cases' have identified that the rate of child death and serious harm as a result of DA in families has not reduced over the last 10 years.

The effects of domestic abuse on victims are widespread and will vary depending on the typology of abuse.

Typically victims will experience fear, uncertain of when the next abusive encounter will begin. It is common for a victim to suffer a loss of self-esteem and become isolated from friends or family. Participants on previous programmes have reported anxiety and depression or other mental health conditions resulting from their abuse. Victims often report feeling conflicting emotions relating to self-blame, anger or resentment.

An estimated 1.9 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year, according to the year ending March 2017 Crime Survey for England and Wales (1.2 million women, 713,000 men).

The police recorded 1.1 million domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in the year ending March 2017 and of these, 46% were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes; domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police accounted for 32% of violent crimes.

Children exposed to domestic abuse are also known to be at far greater risk of ACEs related outcomes.

It is widely accepted that DA is over represented in Children's Social Care resulting in a significant and disproportionate demand on resources.

Numerous initiatives over the last 15 years have had a positive impact in identifying domestic abuse, however 'whole family' approaches to the problem remain rare.

At Calan DVS we appreciate how DA affects all family members and believe our 'whole family' approach through The Choices Programme, meets a significant need for those directly affected and for public services tasked with managing risk.

## **2. Choices programme summary**

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The Choices programme has been developed to comply with the most recent national standards to ensure the safety of women and children.

The programme is offered by Calan DVS within Bridgend County for male perpetrators of abuse within heterosexual relationships.

The purpose of the programme is to challenge and support perpetrators of abuse to cease their violence and abusive behaviour and to develop a respectful and responsible attitude towards those around them and themselves.

Choices is used to support change and understanding of past behaviours and abuse from men towards women. The programme aims of teaching ways of being non-abusive, whilst taking perpetrators through a step by step and highly structured programme and supporting them to understand they are accountable for their actions.

As a programme Choices covers multiple topics and areas of abusive behaviour including:

- Respect within a relationship
- Gender
- Parenting
- Emotional Intimacy
- Sexual Respect
- Support and Trust

The Programme is delivered in accordance to RESPECT accreditation standards and facilitated over a 28 week period. (5 weeks for one to one assessments and 23 weeks for group work).

In addition to the male programme, the Choices programme also works with the survivors and children within these relationships. These services are offered to the survivors once a male signs and agree to the terms of our participation agreement.

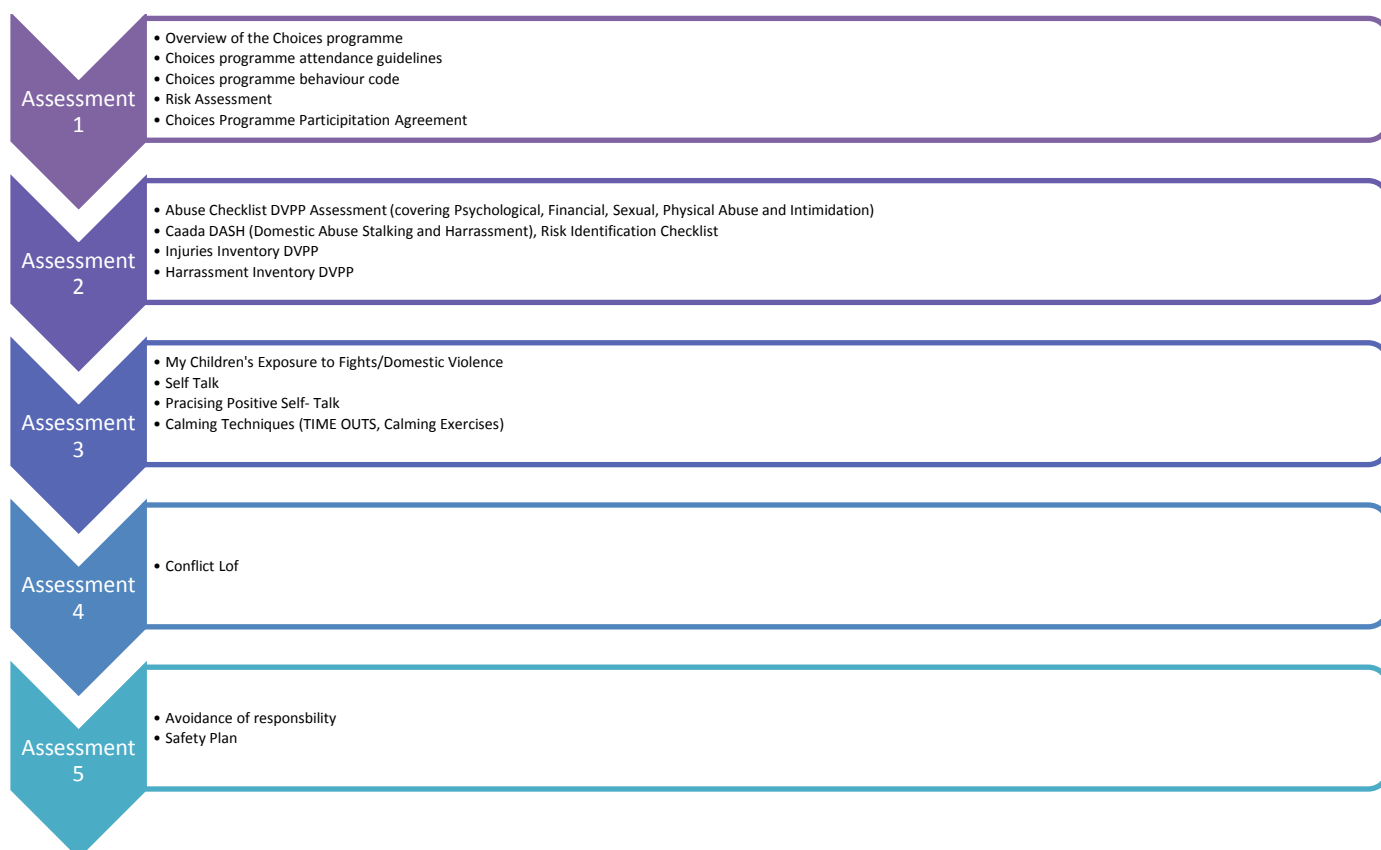
Calan's aim is to work with all of those affected in past or current abusive relationships to support and to help each move towards more positive outcomes in the future.

### 3. Choices programme delivery – Assessments Males

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The 1:2:1 assessment for alleged perpetrators is delivered over the course of 3-5 one hour assessments (dependent on the male's engagement). As part of the delivery, the Choices team complete a risk assessment; discuss attendance guidelines and the expected behaviour code.

The framework of the 1:2:1 assessments covers:



When complete the male perpetrator is then assigned as either suitable or not suitable for group work. Throughout this process the assessments are video recorded in Bridgend Council offices which is relayed to the perpetrator. This is for programme facilitators to be evaluated later on during supervision.

#### **4. Choices programme delivery – Males**

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RESPECT accreditation standards are followed closely by the Choices team in order to deliver the programme as effectively as possible. Throughout Calan's delivery we aim for the RESPECT outcomes where we see a reduction in perpetrator's violent and abusive behaviour, an increase in survivor's safety, well being and freedom, improvement in children's well being and safety, improvement in multiagency work and the effective targeting of interventions.

The programme does have a degree of flexibility and as such the team can add research and activities they find appropriate based on the dynamics and needs of the groups. The Choices team carry out additional research to obtain an evidence base and examples which is incorporated into the session lesson plans. It is paramount that the perpetrators continue to engage with an amount of humility and whilst accepting of circumstances, acknowledge their actions as solely their own.

The Group Work Modules include:

- Respect
- Gender
- Parenting
- Emotional Intimacy
- Sexual Respect
- Support and Trust

#### **5. Choices programme delivery – Survivors and Children**

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The delivery of the programme for survivors and children incorporates elements of the framework to introduce the different forms of abuse and to support in safeguarding the service users from abuse.

The women accessing the programme are proactively offered:

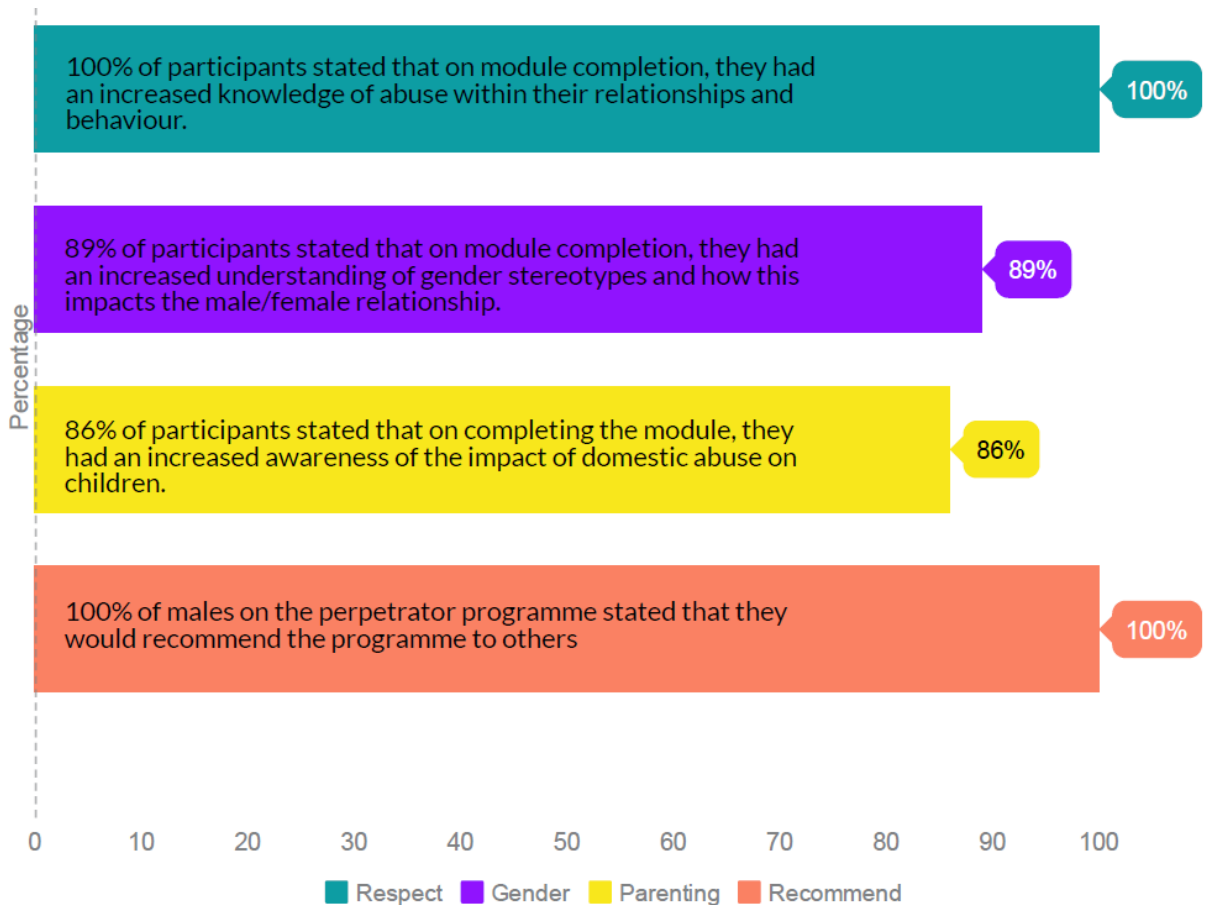
- Ongoing support (for up to 6 months after the perpetrator has completed programme)
- Face to face or telephone support
- Risk assessment and safety planning
- Signposting to specialist services
- Parenting input and support
- Awareness raising about the nature of domestic abuse
- Emotional support

The Choices programme has dedicated Children and Young Persons (CYP) worker, Women's safety officer and a Family Mediation officer therefore ensuring effective support to the whole family.

## 6. Choices – Participants data and feedback



### Perpetrator feedback



"While all the projects are very relevant to myself in particular, this particular project (parenting) is the main one I asked for... It was good to learn things from my kids perspective but also difficult to learn those things as well..."



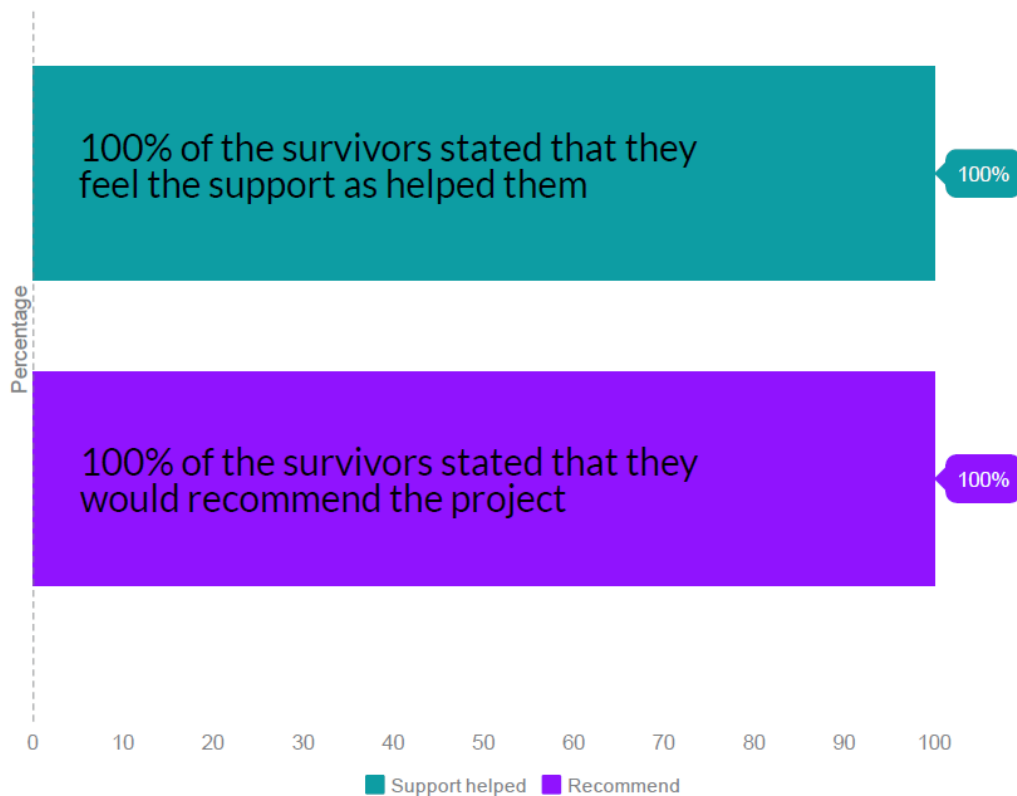
"I have learned a lot about the course and feel it will help moving forward in the future"



"Roleplay observed was very intense. Well put forward but difficult to watch"



## Survivor feedback



## **7. Choices – Referral partner feedback**

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- 100% of partners stated that they found the support from the Choices programme as beneficial and that they were happy with the referral process.
- 100% of partners stated that the referral was received and actioned within a reasonable timeframe.
- 100% of partners said that they would recommend Choices to their colleague and other agencies.

“Excellent communication from the Choices service which supports better working together between agencies”

“Staff are incredibly approachable for staff and myself”

“The Choices programme itself is excellent and a much needed service for the area”

“The Service user stated that he found the support from the Choices programme beneficial and he now sees how his behaviours caused difficulties in his relationship with his wife and son, also causing them emotional problems”

“I would highly recommend this service and am thankful for the support and intervention and support the Choices team have provided this family”