



Distributed to: CTPHQ Prevent

Subject: Prevalence of domestic abuse related incidences within Prevent referrals

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Operation/Thematic: Project Starlight

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Background

Counter Terrorism Policing was tasked to investigate if there was a link between domestic abuse and referrals into Prevent.¹ Analysis of 420 vulnerable to radicalisation (V2R) referrals revealed that 39% of the sample had a link to a domestic abuse related incident: either as an offender, victim, witness or combination of these categories. Subsequently, Project Starlight was commissioned to replicate this analysis on a larger scale to determine if there is an association between V2R referrals and domestic abuse at a national level.

Sample

Project Starlight consists of individual² V2R referrals received by the nine lead police force areas in England and Wales throughout 2019. This provided a sample size of 3,045 individuals, which is 47% of the total amount of V2R referrals received in England and Wales for the same period. See appendix 1 for full methodology and scope.

¹ Prevent aims to safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying individuals and offering support; tackling the causes of radicalisation and responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism; and enabling those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate. Therefore Prevent referrals will be referred to as vulnerable to radicalisation (V2R) referrals for the purpose of this report. Not all V2R referrals will meet the counter terrorism thresholds and will therefore be closed at the initial assessment stage. Throughout the referral process if no counter terrorism concerns are identified the referral can be closed.

² Individual V2R referrals are people only: institutions and ideologies have not been included in the sample. Repeat V2R referrals have also not been included.

Key Findings

- Just over a third (35%, 1,076) of Project Starlight's cohort had a link to a domestic abuse related incident: either as an offender, victim, witness or combination of these categories.³
- Project Starlight's sample found that 15.4% of V2R referrals aged between 16 and 74 throughout 2019 had a link to a domestic abuse incident as a victim. This is nearly three times higher than the estimated national figure for the year ending March 2019. Data from the Office of National Statistics has revealed 5.7% of adults experienced (were a victim of) a domestic abuse related incident between April 2018 – March 2019.⁴
- Within the overall Project Starlight cohort there was a similar prevalence of links to domestic abuse related incidents within men and women. However, the nature of the link differs between genders: males were recorded most often as an offender of a domestic abuse related incident, whereas females were recorded most often as a victim of a domestic abuse related incident.
- The link also differed between adults (aged 16 and over) and children (aged 15 and under): adults were recorded most often as an offender and children were recorded most often as a witness.

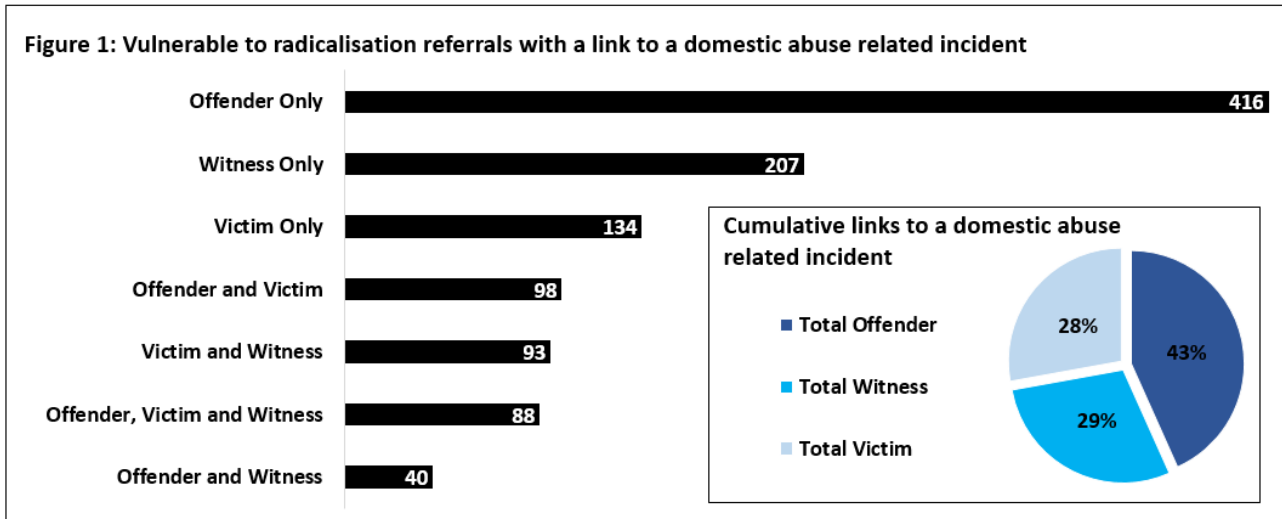
Details of Findings

What is the prevalence rate of domestic abuse in vulnerable to radicalisation referrals?

Project Starlight's sample revealed that 35% (1,076) of V2R referrals had a link to a domestic abuse related incident: this was either as an offender, victim, witness or combination of these categories (see figure 1 for full breakdown). Incidents recorded ranged from children witnessing domestic abuse in their households to people being convicted of the attempted murder of their partner.

³ Project Starlight's findings should not be used to infer a causal link between domestic abuse related incidents and V2R referrals.

⁴ The Office of National Statistics sample is from police data for the period April 2018 - March 2019 and only includes victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales, aged 16-74.



Data from the Office of National Statistics has revealed that between April 2018 and March 2019 an estimated 5.7% of adults (aged 16-74) in England and Wales experienced (were a victim of) a domestic abuse related incident.⁵ Project Starlight’s sample found that 15.4% of V2R referrals aged between 16 and 74 had a link to a domestic abuse incident as a victim. This is nearly three times higher than the estimated national figure for the year ending March 2019.

Gender

Of the 1,076 V2R referrals where a link to a domestic abuse related incident was identified, 83% (896) of the V2R referrals were male and 16% (174) were female.⁶ This is consistent within the overall Project Starlight cohort: 84% were male and 15% were female.

Similar prevalence rates of links to domestic abuse related incidents were seen both in the male and female cohorts; 35% and 38% respectively. However, when there was a link to a domestic abuse related incident identified, the nature of the link differs between genders: males were recorded most often (47%) as an offender followed by a witness (28%) and then a victim (25%); whereas females were recorded most often (42%) as a victim of a domestic abuse related incident followed by a witness (32%) then an offender (26%).

Age

Within the overall Project Starlight cohort the prevalence rate of domestic abuse related incidents in adults (aged 16 and over) and children (aged 15 and under) varied, accounting for 39% and 30% respectively. Where a link to a domestic abuse related incident was identified, the nature of the link differs between these age groups: adult V2R referrals were recorded the most as an offender of

⁵ Office of National Statistics - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/overview/november2019> (Accessed 17/05/2021).

⁶ The remaining 1% of V2R referrals includes individuals who identified as transgender; were intersex; or no gender was recorded.

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domestic abuse (52%) followed by a victim (28%) and then witness (20%). Links generally involved V2R referrals being abusive towards their current or ex-partner, whereas child V2R referrals were recorded the most as a witness to a domestic abuse related incident (49%) followed by a victim (27%) and then offender (24%). Links typically involved their parents/parent and step parent as the offender and victim.

Ideology

Where a domestic abuse related incident was identified, an 'Islamist' ideology was recorded in 28% of V2R referrals; 'vulnerability present but no counter terrorism link' accounted for 21%; 'Extreme Right Wing' accounted for 18%; and 'no counter terrorism concerns' accounted for 12%. This was consistent with the wider Project Starlight cohort, and was consistent across age groups.⁷

Closure Outcome

Where a domestic abuse related incident was identified, just over a third (36%) of V2R referrals were closed at the 'initial assessment' stage; 24% were closed by police 'not suitable for Channel'; 20% were closed at the 'in Channel' stage; and 13% were closed at the 'multi-agency stage'.⁸ This was consistent with the wider Project Starlight cohort.

Next Steps

- Counter Terrorism Policing to continue to work with domestic abuse safeguarding practitioners within policing, statutory agencies, and third sector charities.
- Consideration should be given to raise awareness and upskill police practitioners, both in counter terrorism policing and safeguarding police practitioners, in order to safeguard those who may be V2R and those at risk of domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity.
- Consideration to commission further work to explore how a link to a domestic abuse related incident may relate to the pathway to radicalisation.

⁷ V2R referrals aged 0-15 and 16-82.

⁸ Data for the remaining 7% was not available.

Appendix 1

Methodology and Scope

Sample

Project Starlight consists of individual⁹ V2R referrals received by the nine lead police force areas¹⁰ in England and Wales throughout 2019. This provided a sample size of 3,045 individuals, which is 47% of the total amount of V2R referrals received in England and Wales for the same period. Project Starlight's cohort consisted of 2,566 males and 458 females¹¹; 1,853 were adults (aged between 16 and 82) and 1,179 were children (aged 15 and under).¹²

Definitions

Domestic abuse is defined by the UK Government as any incident of physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; physical, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are personally connected to each other.¹³ This therefore only encompasses an offender and victim of domestic abuse. Project Starlight's sample looks at not only offenders and victims of a domestic abuse related incident, but also those that have witnessed a domestic abuse related incident.

All V2R referrals regardless of age have been included in Project Starlight's sample; extending the scope to include V2R referrals aged 15 and below who have been an offender, victim or witness to a domestic abuse related incident.

Also within the scope of Project Starlight are any incidents and/or crimes reported on local policing systems where there was violence that had a familial link; such as assault, attempted murder, murder, adult at risk and child at risk.

⁹ Individual V2R referrals are people only: institutions and ideologies have not been included in the sample. Repeat V2R referrals have also not been included.

¹⁰ Within England and Wales Counter Terrorism Policing consist of nine regions, with each region having a designated lead police force. Project Starlight's sample consists of all V2R referrals received by each of the nine police forces areas. This provides a representative sample and accounts for nearly half (47%) of the V2R referrals received throughout 2019.

¹¹ The remaining 21 V2R referrals includes individuals who identified as transgender; are intersex; or no gender was recorded.

¹² No data was available for the remaining 13 V2R referrals.

¹³ Legislation.gov.uk – Full description of Domestic Abuse:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/section/1/enacted> (Accessed 26/08/2021). This legislation was revised in 2021 therefore data within this report should be considered in the context of previous legislation.

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Limitations

It is acknowledged that there are limitations with the data. As domestic abuse related incidents were only sourced from the local police intelligence system, any incidents occurring outside of the police force where the V2R referral was received may not have been captured.

As it is also highly likely that there is an under reporting of domestic abuse related incidents to the police, the true extent of the prevalence of domestic abuse related incidents in V2R referrals remains unknown.