



## Expert Domestic Violence Assessments in Public Law Proceedings

### The Risk Assessment Team

The DVIP Risk Assessment Team are a small team of specialists who offer expert domestic violence assessments in the public and private family courts, including cases being worked under the Public Law Outline (PLO).

### Referral Pathways

There are three referral routes into the Risk Assessment Team, depending on the type of assessment or intervention required:

- **Public Law Assessments;**
- **Private Law Assessments;**
- **Court Ordered Activities.**

This leaflet contains information relating to **Public Law Assessments**. Leaflets for Private Law cases are also available from: [riskassessment@dvip.org](mailto:riskassessment@dvip.org).

### Public Law Assessment Types

In Public Law proceedings DVIP can provide the following types of assessments:

- **Risk Assessments of perpetrators;**
- **Vulnerability Assessments of victims;**
- **Joint Risk and Vulnerability Assessments;**
- **Final Reports, following completion of treatment programmes; and**
- **Family Member Assessments of third party carers.**

### Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments are detailed, court compliant reports which consider the perspectives of both parents. They include:

1. A detailed consideration of domestic violence risk indicators, including: the history of domestic violence, criminality, substance use, the children's exposure to violence, and levels of denial, empathy and motivation to change.
2. A summary of the direct and indirect risks posed to the victim and children as a result of domestic violence.
3. Recommendations for risk management, one of which may be for the perpetrator to attend and engage with a Respect-accredited Domestic Violence Prevention Programme (DVPP).

### Vulnerability Assessments

A victim can be referred for a Vulnerability Assessment independently of their partner. In such a report, the impact of domestic violence on the victim's parenting is assessed, alongside their vulnerability to future abuse. This assessment includes:

1. A detailed consideration of domestic violence vulnerability indicators, including: childhood experiences, abuse in previous relationships, investment in the relationship continuing, and levels of insight into the effects of domestic violence on children.
2. Recommendations for reducing the victim's vulnerability and increasing their safety - one of which (for female victims) may be attendance and engagement with the DVIP Women's Support Services (WSS) programme.

There are two vulnerability reporting options for female clients:

### Consecutive Reporting Option

A Vulnerability Assessment is prepared, and the woman may subsequently attend the WSS programme, if recommended to do so by the assessor.

### Concurrent Reporting Option

The Vulnerability Assessment takes place alongside the woman's attendance on the WSS

programme. The report is filed once the woman has completed the programme, and therefore also examines her progress therein.

### **Joint Risk and Vulnerability Assessments**

In a Joint Risk and Vulnerability Assessment the risk posed by the perpetrator is assessed alongside the vulnerability of the victim. A risk management plan for both parents is included, including treatment options.

### **Family Member Assessments**

In cases where the Local Authority's care plan involves placement or potential placement of a child with extended family members or other third parties, the Risk Assessment Team can offer Family Member Assessments.

These reports can be undertaken as stand-alone reports or can be incorporated into single Risk, Vulnerability or Joint Assessments. They include:

1. An assessment of their understanding and insight into the concerns;
2. Their ability to safeguard children by anticipating and responding to risk;
3. Their ability to prioritise the safety of the children over their relationships with the children's parents; and
4. Recommendations for how to improve these abilities and increase the children's safety.

### **Interim (mid-way) Reports**

An interim report may be ordered at the halfway stage of the DVPP programme, if requested by the local authority and the funding confirmed.

### **Final Reports**

Since attendance alone on a programme (either DVPP or WSS) is not a guarantee of change, DVIP always recommend that a Final (completion) Report should be ordered, in order to:

1. Consider any new information / case updates;
2. Interview the client and consider whether they have been successful in reducing their risk or vulnerability; and
3. Make further risk management recommendations.

*NB: Interim and Final Risk Assessment reports can **only** be prepared once a full Risk Assessment has been undertaken.*

## **Referral process**

When an assessment has been requested by the Local Authority and/or Court, all available documentation should be released to DVIP, along with a completed referral form and confirmation of funding. The case will then be allocated to an assessor.

### **To progress a referral, we require:**

**A completed Referral Form** - This can be obtained by emailing: [riskassessment@dvip.org](mailto:riskassessment@dvip.org);

**Confirmation of funding** – This must be in the form of a purchase order for the correct amount or if fees are to be split, a letter of prior authority from the LAA;

**Evidence of Domestic Violence** – This may be in the form of police reports, a case chronology, admissions from the perpetrator, and/or a transcript from a finding of fact hearing.

### **The referral should also include, if available:**

**Court Order** – This should instruct DVIP to undertake the assessment and whether it is to be a Risk, Vulnerability or Joint Assessment;

**Letter of Instruction** - This should include confirmation of our fees, and who will be responsible for what portion. More information about fees can be found in the Fees section of this leaflet.

These documents should then be sent to the Risk Assessment Team electronically or in hard copy.

## **Timescales**

A stand-alone Risk, Vulnerability or Family Member Assessment will be prepared within 6 weeks and a Joint Assessment within 8 weeks, depending on clients' attendance and engagement with appointments. Stand-alone assessments which incorporate Family Member Assessments may take up to 8 weeks.

Interim and Final reports can be provided within one month of the client's final programme session.

Please note that these are estimated timescales and are subject to change when there is a high volume of referrals and/or over public holidays.

The final filing date for assessments will be confirmed by the assessor once the case has been allocated.

## Fees

<b>Assessments (all charged at £90 per hour):</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Risk Assessment	Up to 32	Up to £2880
Vulnerability Assessment	Up to 32	Up to £2880
Joint Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	Up to 50	Up to £4500
Concurrent Vulnerability Assessment	Up to 40 for assessment 20 sessions of treatment	Total = up to £5100 (Based on up to £3600 for the assessment, and £1500 for the programme)
Family Member Assessment	8-12	Between £720 and £1080
Interim Reports	Up to 10	Up to £900
Final report – risk	Up to 20	Up to £1800
Final report – vulnerability	Up to 16	Up to £1440
<b>Programmes:</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Cost</b>
DVPP	26 weekly groups sessions, each lasting 2.5 hours	Set fee: £2400
WSS	20 consisting of 10 groups and 10 individual sessions with an allocated worker	£75 per session, total: £1500
<b>Other:</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Attendance at court	Half day (up to 4 hours) Full day (up to 8 hours)	Set fee: £450 Set fee: £720
Attendance at professionals' meetings	N/A	Set fee: £250
Interpreters	N/A	<u>Before 6pm</u> £43.20 for first hour, and £37.20 per hour thereafter. <u>After 6pm</u> £56.16 for first hour, and £48.36 per hour thereafter.
Foreign language materials (letters, confidentiality forms, inventories)	N/A	£75 per client
Travel for assessment outside of London**	N/A	£90 per hour for assessor travel time, plus any additional transport costs (petrol, travel fare) incurred.

\*\*Assessor availability to undertake assessments outside of our London offices is limited and may impact on the filing date for reports.

**NB:** The cost of interim and final reports must be confirmed before we can offer the client a place on the programme.

Fees are current for May 2016 but may be subject to change.