

## Case study: Drive

### What is Drive?

The Drive Partnership, made up of Social Finance, Respect and SafeLives, was created in 2015 to change the way that statutory and voluntary agencies respond to perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. With only 1% of perpetrators receiving any kind of intervention at that time, the opportunity to do more to tackle the cause of violence and abuse was clear. It has currently two main connected strands of work to achieve this goal:

1. **Scaling up a practical model** of working with perpetrators (“The Drive Project”) – focusing specially on high harm and serial perpetrators—the people who pose the greatest risk of serious harm or murder to people they are in intimate or family relationships with. Drive coordinate the delivery of the Drive Project. This model incorporates intensive individual work with perpetrators to address their behaviour and a multi-agency collaboration to coordinate a response which both disrupts abusive behaviour and manages risk.
2. **Leveraging changes to national systems** so that perpetrators posing all levels of risk can no longer get away with abusive behaviour and can access the help they need to stop. This includes some work to change the narrative on domestic abuse from ‘why doesn’t she leave?’ to ‘why doesn’t he stop?’.

Drive is funded by a mix of grant making trusts, central government grants and local government commissioning from policing, public health and local authorities.

### Evolution: 2015 to today

When coming together in 2015 around the question: *how do we create a national response to perpetrators that keeps families safe?*, the three partner organisations developed and tested an intervention for high harm perpetrators, that was implemented first in two “pilot sites”. With a strong “test and learn” mindset, the Drive Partnership kept evolving their model, and commissioned an external evaluation to strengthen the evidence base and answer the question: *does it really work?* (see below).

The Drive Project is now widely recognised and has rapidly scaled in four phases. It is now delivered in 10 police forces areas (corresponding to 20 local authorities’ areas) – see graph below.



Early in the testing phase, it became clear to the Partnership that the Drive Project is not the unique answer to drive system change and improve national response to perpetrators of domestic abuse. Firstly, the Project works with high harm perpetrators, who are only one cohort group among those who harm. The success of the Drive model led to a risk of diverting the attention to high risk perpetrators, and not fully considering the full picture and diversity of needs among the cohorts. Secondly, the multi-agency nature of the Drive intervention highlighted the need to change “systems”, i.e. the thinking, behaviours and practices across many agencies involved in the response to domestic abuse. Therefore, the Partnership extended in 2018 the breadth of its work to actively foster systems change (as described in (2) above).

This is what made Drive an example of systems change: influencing the overall response to domestic violence and abuse by the police and criminal justice system, by social services and other parts of local government, and by the wider voluntary sector.

## **Main achievements**

### **1. The Drive Project**

- Between 2016 and July 2021, 2590 high risk perpetrators have been challenged and supported in 10 police forces areas (and 20 local authority areas), in the benefit of 2926 associated victims survivors, and 4841 children.
- Evidence demonstrates that Drive has made a real difference to the safety of victims and survivors of domestic abuse. [An independent evaluation](#) by the University of Bristol found that victims/survivors were nearly 3 times less likely to experience physical violence or abuse when the perpetrator had been referred to Drive than people in a control group with no Drive intervention.

### **2. Systems change**

The Drive Partnership has triggered changes in the thinking, decisions and practice of a range of different agencies, well beyond the scope of the Project, including:

- Improved coordination and multi-agency working on perpetrators, including via the generalisation across the country of multi-agency perpetrator panel forums.
- Shifts in the attitudes and practices of local services working on domestic abuse: *“All the agencies now consider perpetrators – Drive has mainstreamed that conversation, that concept is now part of core business.”* (Stakeholder from multi-agency response)

The Partnership has also contributed to increased attention to perpetrators in national policy and funding priorities:

- It has been instrumental at bringing together a coalition of 125+ organisations, around a Call to Action that has enabled perpetrator policy to become a central plank of the Domestic Abuse bill.
- Together we have successfully made the case for funding for perpetrator work and research. The Home Office committed to £10m funding for perpetrator interventions in 20-21 (+ £3m for research) and £25m funding for 21-22. These funding pots are the first and second ever to be created specifically to address perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- The coalition network that has developed into regular monthly virtual meetings to progress the call for action and maintain momentum.

### **New strands of work**

Further work is ongoing within the Drive National Systems Change team, including:

- Workforce development (e.g. perpetrator training for a wide range of agencies such as GPs and children social care)
- Exploratory work to address 4 priority systemic gaps in the current response to perpetrators: child victim-survivors, racialised communities, LGBT communities, and perpetrator housing. Sector collaboration, and engagement with people with lived experience, are key principles in this research.