



Information for ex partners of men who have been ordered by the family courts to complete a risk assessment at DVIP

What is a Risk Assessment?

This is an assessment of the risk posed by your ex-partner towards yourself and your child(ren).

Why has a Risk Assessment been ordered?

A risk assessment may be ordered by the courts in any case where domestic violence has been proved, which may pose a risk to child contact. The domestic violence may have been established through admissions, previous criminal convictions, or a finding of fact by the court.

Who makes the referral for a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment must be ordered by the court and a request sent to DVIP; we cannot accept cases where an order has not been made. We then ask Cafcass to complete an information form, or failing that, then a solicitor who is involved in the case can complete one. If we cannot get a referral/information form completed by a professional then we will attempt to obtain contact details from Cafcass and proceed without one. However, this can cause delay.

The court has made an order for an assessment, what happens next?

DVIP should be contacted by a professional involved in the case or by the Father. We will require all the documents filed in the case and payment of the fees for the assessment must be made in full by the Father. Usually the documents will be sent to us by solicitors involved in the proceedings, or if there are no solicitors involved then the parents must provide these documents. We may contact you to ensure that we have documents that include your allegations.

What does a Risk Assessment involve?

Once we have received all the paperwork and fees from the Father an assessor will be allocated to your case. You will be contacted by the assessor and invited to speak to them as part of the assessment process. Ideally DVIP will require between 2 and 4 hours interview time with you and between 4 and 6 hours with the Father. The interviews will usually take place at DVIP's office in Southwark.

It takes 6 weeks for the full risk assessment report to be prepared from receipt of all the paperwork and fees.

Why does the Risk Assessment involve talking to me?

We would like to interview you so that your account of your partner's violent and abusive behaviour can be included in the reports we provide to the Courts. Whilst you do not have to attend these appointments, we strongly urge you to do so, so that your views and any concerns can be taken into consideration when writing the risk assessment. It is important to note that if you do not attend we will still carry out the risk assessment but it will be difficult for us to fully incorporate your views.

Please be advised that the perpetrator will not be aware of your appointments and will be interviewed on separate dates.

We can also assure you that your safety is our main priority at all times when attending and we will listen to any concerns you may have about this.

What if English is not your first language?

Please let us know in advance of your appointment if you require an interpreter and one will be provided for you by DVIP for the interviews.

The assessment is completed, what happens next?

The assessment report will be sent (usually by email) to all the parties in the case including any professionals involved such as Cafcass Officers or Social Workers. The report will not be sent directly to the court.

The court will then consider the recommendations in the report and may make further orders regarding contact arrangements or treatment.

The assessor can also be ordered by the court to attend future hearings and answer further questions regarding the report.

What is the Women's Support Service?

Our Women's Support Services (WSS) leaflet includes information about the help and support WSS can offer you. DVIP offers this linked service to all current and ex partners of men who have been referred to DVIP. The Women's Service will contact you to offer information and support. Services on offer include support and safety planning work, parenting work (on a limited basis), anger management and an ongoing support group.

This is a free and confidential service, completely separate from the interview and assessment process.

What is a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme?

The Court can order that your ex partner cooperates with risk management measures if contact is to take place. This can include attendance on a domestic violence perpetrator programme.

DVIP's perpetrator programme takes a total of 26 sessions to complete. It is delivered mainly in small groups, meeting weekly for three hours. Most sessions begin at 6 or 6.30pm in the evening. Modules include: stopping physical violence, emotional abuse, effects of domestic violence on partners and children, responsible parenting, harassment and stalking, sexual abuse of a partner, jealousy and tactics of isolation.

The courts may order further reports either at the interim stage or upon completion of the programme. This is so that the court can be kept updated of his progress and contact may be recommended or restrictions removed as appropriate.

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