

**PREVENTING REPEATED DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE: A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ON
MERSEYSIDE**

Sam Lloyd, Graham Farrell
and Ken Pease

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Editor: Gloria Laycock
Home Office Police Research Group
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Police Research Group: Crime Prevention Unit Series

The Home Office Police Research Group (PRG) was formed in 1992 to carry out and manage research in the social and management sciences relevant to the work of the police service and Home Office policy divisions. One of the major police department divisions which acts as customer for the PRG is the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit which was formed in 1983 to promote preventive action against crime. It has a particular responsibility to disseminate information on crime prevention topics.

The object of the present series of occasional papers is to present research material in a way which should help and inform practitioners, including the police, whose work can help reduce crime.

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Foreword

This report describes the first stages of an innovator project on Merseyside designed to prevent domestic violence. The research phase of the work, which concentrated upon an analysis of police data, showed that women were repeatedly victimised and that second and subsequent attacks were often carried out fairly soon after the initial incident.

These observations led to the development of a rapid response system which involved computer assisted information as officers were dispatched in response to calls. This period of concentrated police attention gave time for the development of preventing packages tailored to individual victim circumstances.

Although it is too early to provide a reliable statistical analysis of the initiative, the report provides detailed accounts from the victims which amply illustrate the relief both they and their children experienced as a result of this work.

We hope to see more projects of this kind which attempt to reduce the incidence of crime, particularly violent crime, directed at some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

I M BURNS
Deputy Under Secretary of State
Home Office
Police Department

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Finally, we thank Karen Clarke, the Domestic Violence Prevention Worker for continued hard work under extreme pressure.

SAM LLOYD
GRAHAM FARRELL
KEN PEASE

The Authors

Sam Lloyd, Merseyside Police, 'C' Division.

Graham Farrell, Manchester University Department of Social Policy and Social Work.

Ken Pease, Manchester University Department of Social Policy and Social Work.

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1. Background and Information-Gathering

This paper focuses upon work undertaken in Merseyside Police 'C' Division to prevent repeated domestic violence. It describes the project, provides some case histories and draws some conclusions. A further evaluation is envisaged which will include statistical analysis of its effects. The objective was *the prevention of repeat victimisation by all locally appropriate means*. This underpinned the work (and the saying gained some notoriety amongst those involved). The purpose encapsulates a great deal of background work (see Farrell and Pease, 1993). The first crime prevention initiative based on an understanding of repeat victimisation was the Kirkholt Project, in Rochdale (Forrester *et al.* 1988, 1990; Pease, 1991, 1992). It was observed that the likelihood of repeat burglary was massively higher than that of the first. Measures were put in place immediately *after* a domestic burglary had been committed. Within a year, the rate of repeat victimisation fell virtually to zero, and of all domestic burglaries to 30% of the previous level. Home Office funding was obtained to apply the strategy of preventing repeat victimisation to violent crime. This report is one of the products of the enterprise.

Preparatory Work

The prevention package was developed from a number of sources. A review of the domestic violence literature was commissioned (Mullender and Morley, 1991, 1993). West Yorkshire Police's innovations were studied and incorporated. Data were collected about the area chosen as the site of the project and police incident logs (calls to the police from the public) were analysed.

The project was to be located in a single police beat which was selected as having a particularly high incidence of violent crime. Thereafter the immediate practical task was to identify which types of violent crime were both frequent and liable to repetition at the same place or against the same people. The two candidates for intervention on these criteria were domestic incidents and violence in and around shops on one corner of the beat area. This report details only the first of these. The domestic violence project was later extended to the whole of 'C' division. This extension had not been envisaged during the research phase, and the analysis which follows is based on 1261 incident logs collected from the single beat over the period February 1989 – March 1991.

What is 'domestic' violence?

Violence between people who live together or once lived together is usually categorised as domestic. The definition is fuzzy at the edges, notably in its treatment of attacks outside the home by present or former cohabitants, and attacks in the home by people with whom no such relationship is acknowledged. A precise definition of domestic violence in this context is unnecessary, perhaps even unhelpful. This is because:

- a. unless the coding of calls to the police were to be changed, what was treated as domestic violence for the project was whatever was coded as such in calls to the police;

- b. the measures put in place could be helpful to anyone liable to repeated attacks in or around their home, for instance vulnerable witnesses. For that reason, it would be preferable not to regard the measures as uniquely appropriate to domestic violence. If the scope for use is wide, why should definitions be narrow?

Table 1 shows the distribution of calls to households for domestic incidents in the beat area from February 1989 to March 1991. The patterns of repeat victimisation were similar to those found elsewhere, with a few households accounting for a large proportion of calls (see Farrell, 1992). Domestic violence has been described in a number of research studies as an ongoing or ‘processual’ crime which persists over time (see for example Genn, 1988; Sheptycki, 1993; Sherman *et al.*, 1991). It is also massively under-reported (Smith, 1989). Table 1 and background research both suggested an absolute level of problem which justified intervention.

The reader will have noticed that the classification ‘domestic incident’ is being used as synonymous with domestic violence. This was the code the police used, so there was no choice. In any event, the extent of under-reporting suggests that even if a substantial proportion of incidents reported were not violent, there would be a more than offsetting number of violent incidents that would remain unreported. So long as at least some of the turbulent households were identified, that would be enough. Further, calls which originated outside the afflicted household came from people who had overcome their reluctance to report, ie who were seriously concerned with what was happening. Third, and crucially, the content of the messages made it clear that it was physical violence or its imminent threat which was typically involved. Experience with victims later confirmed that a call to the police is very much a last resort, and should be taken seriously, even when coded as something so anodyne as a ‘domestic incident’. For these reasons, we had confidence in the data.

Table 1: Distribution of Calls to the Police Coded as Domestic Incidents (25 month period, February 1989-March 1991).

No. Calls	No. Households	Total Calls	Cumulative %
0	1360	0	100
1	65	65	100
2	12	14	62
3	3	9	48
4	4	16	43
6	2	12	34
7	1	7	27
11	1	11	23
14	2	28	16
	1450	172	

Notes to Table 1:

1. this table uses the most conservative grouping to define domestic disputes so that repeat calls and total calls are under-estimated
2. estimate of n=1450 households based on information from the local housing department and a count from detailed household level maps.
3. the table excludes neighbour disputes of which there were 74 for the period (often classed/responded to as ‘domestic’) and excludes 14 ‘domestics’ not located to specific households.

The Time-Course of Repeated Domestic Incidents

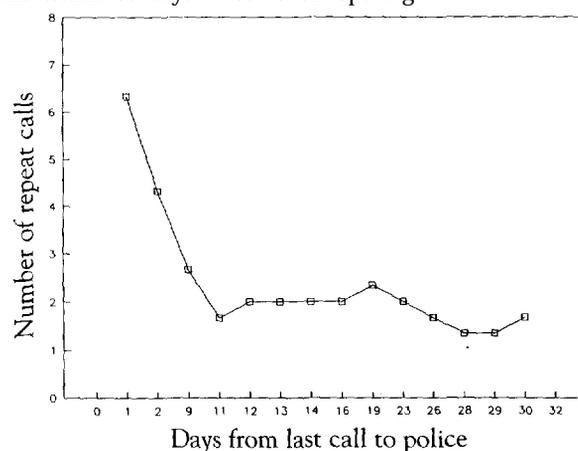
Figure 1 draws on the same data as Table 1. It shows that one 'domestic incident' call to the police is likely to be quickly followed by a further call. After a first incident, 35% of households suffer a second within five weeks. After a second incident, 45% of households suffer a third within five weeks. This gives a good indication of where resources can be deployed to prevent crime and detect perpetrators. There exists a 'heightened risk period' for repeat domestic victimisation¹, just as Polvi *et al.* (1989) showed for domestic burglary and Sampson and Phillips (1992) showed for racial attacks.

Three points were carried forward from the research phase in determining preventive action. These were:

- i) The extent of domestic violence was such as to merit attention;
- ii) The 'heightened risk period' of repeat victimisation – which suggests preventive resources might be allocated (and re-allocated) according to risk. This offered a means of 'prioritizing' crime prevention (described in more detail at the start of the next chapter);
- iii) An offence as complex as domestic violence is unlikely to be prevented by a single measure. Preventive packages need to be tailored to victim circumstances, and to seek to change the circumstances leading to the offence. This was taken from experience, from a reading of the literature on domestic violence, and from the comments of colleagues (see also Walklate, 1992a,b).

Figure 1: Time-course of Repeat Domestic Violence

Calls within 35 days: 2/89-/3/91: 3pt avg



¹The database did not distinguish between calls between people who were living together and those who were not. While there is no obvious reason to believe that this will affect the time course, it is a possibility which could be explored by future research.

2. Preventive Strategies and Implementation

The fact that victimisation is likely to recur quickly makes it realistic to think of special precautions for a limited time – precautions which might otherwise be unrealistic. Polvi *et al*, (1991) in their analysis of burglary rates, suggested that an alarm loaned to premises at transient risk could form part of a general approach to reducing repeat victimisation. Similarly, rapid response alarms might be an effective short-term measure for victims of domestic violence.

Measure 1: Quick Response Pendant Alarms

Alarms which were to be used for this purpose needed to be portable, not rely on BT lines, and allow quick installation after an incident. A leading company¹ was contacted which specialises in alarms for the elderly, enabling them to summon help. It was prepared to explore ways of linking its equipment with other products. Pressing a button on a neck pendant dials a central station from the unit in the home, and a voice link is opened. Even if the elderly person is unable to speak, the origin of the call is evident to those monitoring the system. In some cases, it might be preferable to avoid BT lines, because some homes are without such lines, and because a determined assailant could cut lines outside the house, which would give a warning only to the victim. To overcome this, the alarms were linked to mobile phones. The end result was that the individual alarms were linked to a cellular network by a FAX interface. This amounts to a 'portable' alarm which could readily be moved from one location to another. The first unit was delivered to Merseyside Police in April 1992 and the first alarm was issued on April 27th 1992. The central station for the alarm was Merseyside Police's C Division control room.

In general terms, this arrangement may have considerable advantages of which ten are rehearsed in Table 2:

Table 2: Advantages of a 'Portable' Alarm for Crime Prevention

- It does not need to be hard-wired.
 - It offers a more advanced and cost-effective technology than conventional alarms.
 - The prospect exists of it being raised from an inert state, offering low power consumption.
 - It allows swift central police control of installation and is cost effective according to extant priorities.
 - It opens a voice channel, so that officers can hear what is happening and give reassurance that help is on the way.
 - It enables the identification of accidental activations before police officers are dispatched.
 - An alarm can be triggered either from a neck pendant (with anti-strangle breakpoint) or from a button on the equipment itself.
 - Triggering the alarm activates the central system in the Divisional Control Room, automatically recalling the address history and information to the computer screen.
 - The alarms receive a priority response from the police.
 - One alarm can be used time and again for crime prevention at different locations.
-

¹Tunstall Telecom was the company contacted. The Tunstall product of interest was the Solo II. The Fax connection arrangement described below was tested and supplied by Unicar of Leeds.

Whilst any deployment always involves some discretion – in this case that of the Crime Prevention Officer and the Domestic Violence Prevention Worker – basic criteria were developed at the outset whereby alarms might be offered to:

- (a) those who have obtained a court injunction against their ex-partners, *and/or*
- (b) where there exists a police record of violence at the address or police judgement of current probability of attack, *or*
- (c) where a referral comes from another agency or a self referral by a victim.

Realistically, the alarm option was only available to those not currently living with the perpetrator of the violence. The other elements of the package were available whether or not this was so. Alarms were issued for a limited period, in the first instance for thirty days, offering time in which other means of ensuring the victim's safety could be arranged. The loan period needed to be flexible to meet individual circumstances. A practical advantage of such an approach is that alarms so allocated could not develop into an open-ended, ever-expanding drain on police resources.¹

Through use in conjunction with the DEWS database described below, the alarms came to be known as DEWS alarms by police officers.

Measure 2: An Early Warning Database

Based upon a system operated by West Yorkshire police, a separate police database of calls to a 'domestic' incident was established. When officers are sent to a 999 call coded as a domestic incident, the control room dispatcher can now check the database for previous calls from the same address, and radio details to officers en route to the incident. The database complements the alarms described above, in that it alerts officers to the history of domestic violence at *all* the addresses which they attend for such incidents (rather than just those with alarms). Officers arrive well briefed, and aware of the risk of injury (for example, if a previous 'domestic' incident involved an armed man who threatened the police).

The DEWS database meant that the scheme had to be expanded to the whole division. All 'C' Division calls come to the same control room console. If part of the Division had been in the scheme and part outside it, the operator would have had to check whether a call fell within the area covered by the scheme before checking the DEWS system. This would have been a recipe for delay, confusion and frustration in the control room, so the scheme was expanded. Of course this meant that the scale of the domestic violence problem addressed was much greater than that encompassed in the preliminary work.

¹The scheme was 'exported' to South Yorkshire, where it was extended. Further development by DC Fieldsend in South Yorkshire incorporates movement detectors to trigger a call. Control room staff listen to events inside the protected premises, thus facilitating a flexible and effective deployment. South Yorkshire more recently has incorporated a video recorder as part of the loaned equipment in order to collect evidence for prosecution in cases of repeat harassment.

Measure 3: More Complete Transfer of Injunction Details from Courts to Police.

Police are not always aware of court injunctions currently in force (see Smith, 1989), placing both themselves and courts in an invidious position, and victims in danger. More complete transfer of information would ensure that the court could issue injunctions which were more likely to be enforced, and police could arrive at a household with a knowledge of their powers. The project aimed to improve the reliability with which this information passes from courts to police. This involved direct communication between the project team and ten local Magistrates and County Courts. Each Clerk to the Justices was informed of the work of the project, and of the need routinely to inform the police of injunctions issued. The CPO sought to improve the flow of information through the police system so that it would be available for operational use in the control room. The project did result in an improvement in communication, but it would require a major data gathering exercise to determine how close to complete information exchange now is.

Measure 4: Support and Information for Victims of Domestic Violence.

A Domestic Violence Prevention Worker was employed and accommodated at a newly established 'Centre Against Partner Assault' (CAPA) at a local community centre. She worked closely with the Crime Prevention Officer who issued the alarms, and provided support and information to victims of domestic violence; helped them to develop safety plans, and improved communication with other agencies. Since most domestic violence remains 'hidden' from the police (see Smith, 1989), the worker provided advice and encouraged notification to the police. She also provided a 'drop-in' centre for the local community, and links with a group of local agencies through a domestic violence forum. In the context of the alarms scheme, her objective was to use the period of relative safety which the alarm offered to facilitate changes which make alarm withdrawal acceptable to the victim. It was stressed that she was not to imply that a victim *should* make any changes to her life with which she was unhappy.

Measure 5: Heightened Awareness of Domestic Violence.

Domestic violence 'aides-memoires' were issued to police officers detailing their powers, and information cards produced to give to victims when called to a 'domestic incident' (see Annex A). The Domestic Violence Prevention Worker produced posters and literature detailing available services. These were to be found in shops, surgeries, libraries and the like.

The System in Operation

The virtues of the police's work are apparent in what follows, but those of CAPA's may not be. CAPA's role was central in mobilizing local effort, and underpinning changes in lifestyle. The alarm is the necessary piece of grit at the scheme's centre, but the system as a whole, with fine work by police officers and CAPA, is the pearl.

¹An extensive report on CAPA'S work is available upon request from the second or third author. It is omitted here only on the grounds of space.

Figure 2 describes the process of contacts with victims in the form of a flow chart from initial contact through to crime prevention work.

Figure 2: Flow Chart of the Alarm Loan Process

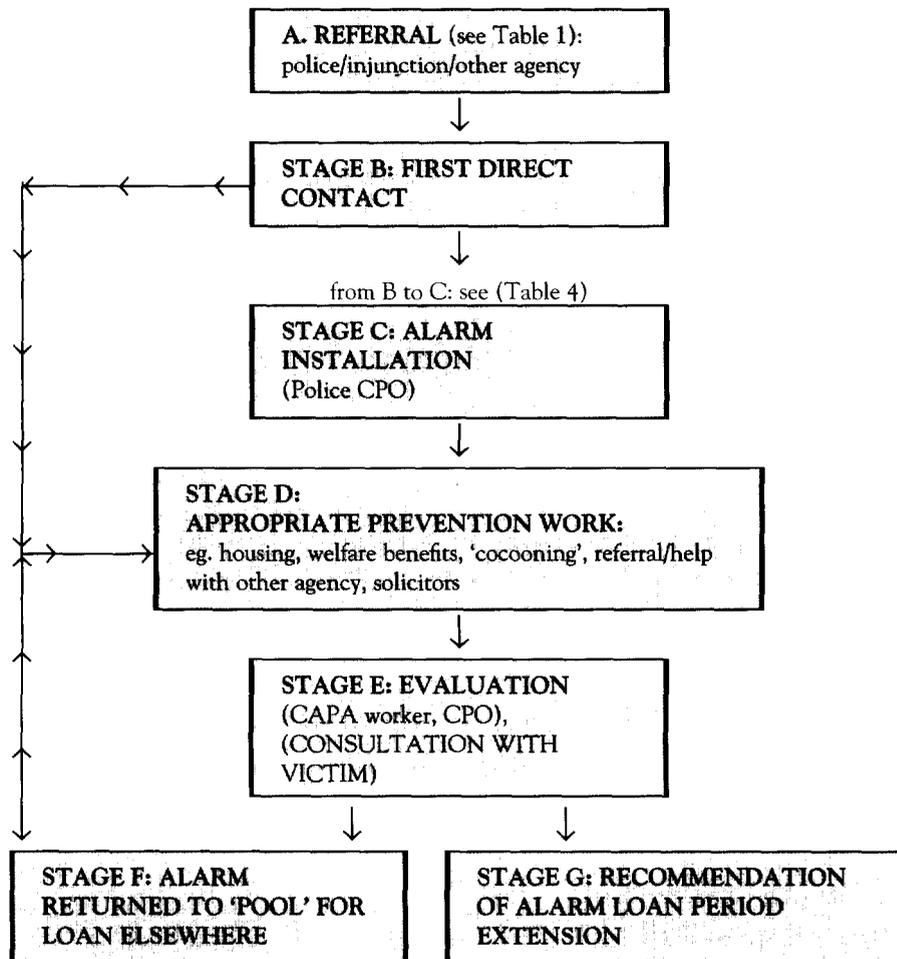


Table 3 below shows the sources of referral for the first alarms. Twenty alarms had been returned up to this point. This is an important datum since one criticism had been that no victim would ever be willing to relinquish the alarm. No alarm in the project has been withdrawn from a victim against her wishes. Two alarms were removed but reinstalled. In one of these cases the alarm was taken out at the request of the woman. Her BT phone line had been disconnected and she did not realise that an alarm could still be connected. The other case involved a partner of the alarm recipient, and perpetrator of previous attacks. He let himself into the house with keys

which nobody was aware he had, found the alarm and took it to a police station. The alarm was returned at the earliest opportunity.

Table 3: Source of referral for alarm recipients

Source of initial referral	Number
Lower Lane Police /DEWS/CAPA	23
Other police stations	4
Local solicitors	3
Victim Support	2
SHADO*	2
Social Services	1
TOTAL	35

* *Self Help Against Drugs Organisation, a local counselling service which has branched into issues other than drugs.*

In **Table 3**, the category 'Police at Lower Lane/DEWS/CAPA' accounts for most installations. This category includes referrals from police officers attending domestic incidents, and cases where the CPO had viewed the computerised Domestic Early Warning System and identified repeat calls. Victims were approached by the CPO or the CAPA worker. As of February 1993 there had been only one case of a woman directly approaching the CPO for an alarm after having read about the work in the Liverpool Echo. The cases which are from other agencies – Victim Support, SHADO, local solicitors and social services to date-were usually referred via the CAPA worker.

Time from Contact with Victim to Alarm Installation

One measure of quality of service for victims of domestic violence would be the time between first contact with CAPA or CPO and installation of an alarm. Speed of service is important given that victimisation is likely to recur quickly. **Table 4** shows time between contact with victim and alarm installation. This is the best available measure of service delivery.

Table 4: Time between first contact with victim and alarm installation

Days from contact to installation	Number
0-1 days (same and next day)	16
2-3 days	9
4-5 days	5
7-14 days	4
14-28 days	3
TOTAL	37

From the table, of the 37 installations, 68% of alarms were installed within 3 days of first contact with the victim. 84% were installed within a week of contact. A variety of practical reasons delayed alarm installation after initial contact. As for the best way of establishing contact, a telephone contact was judged both quicker and more effective (in terms of reassurance and explanation) than a letter. Where there was no telephone a personal visit by the CPO and/or the Domestic Violence Prevention Worker was the preferred means of first contact. Irrespective of whether an alarm was issued, the aim was to keep in touch with the victim and offer appropriate help (see stage D of Figure 2).

The Role of the Domestic Violence Worker

If an alarm was recommended, it was stressed to the recipient that it was a temporary measure intended to go some way to restoring the conditions and confidence necessary for a recipient to organise her life in the longer term. Work with individual victims took most time, but two initiatives were under way at the time of writing; they were meetings of victims as a group, and exploring the possibility of cocooning victims.

(a) Meetings of victims: The alarms had been on issue, the DEWS database running, and the worker at CAPA in place for a number of months, and it was recognised that the 'safety plan' aspect of the project remained its weakest link. Some ideas had been derived from existing literature (eg. the Hammersmith and Fulham Council 'Domestic Violence Fact Pack') and experience. Several meetings of alarm recipients took place at the CAPA offices. The first meeting of alarm recipients requested that the local police CPO be present at the next meeting, and the divisional Superintendent attended a later meeting. A local barrister gave advice about legal issues, a judge expressed the wish to attend (though had not at the time of writing), and the feelings surrounding the meeting were constructive, warm and mutually supportive. To a considerable extent, safety plans emerged. As one indication of the perceived usefulness of these meetings, when a bomb hoax interrupted one (presumably from a perpetrator who had learned of its date and time), participants went into the yard outside the CAPA office and resumed the meeting.

(b) Neighbour 'cocooning' of victims: This is an idea taken from the Kirkholt burglary prevention project where 'cocoon watches' of nearest neighbours of burglary victims were formed in order to prevent repeat victimisation. Aside from the Kirkholt project there has been evidence that neighbours are concerned – along the lines that innocent bystanders would get involved in victimisation if they were empowered to do so (Kidd, 1985). Generating neighbour involvement in ongoing domestic violence has been suggested in the literature (Sherman, 1992). It became clear in the present project that the neighbours of victims were not hostile. In one memorable recollection, a victim had gone to her neighbour bloodied after her ex-husband had left, to find the neighbour with her hands over her ears weeping. If these feelings could be translated into effective action, it would be a powerful tool against domestic violence.

3. Some of the Scheme's Effects

A variety of effects are described here including the effects of the scheme on victims' lives which are briefly reported in the next section. Complete accounts are available upon request from the second or third authors. In the writers' opinion, these accounts, in and of themselves, justify the scheme's continuation and development.

Living with repeat victimisation: the view from the women

Accounts are included here from nine of the first fifteen of those to whom alarms were issued¹. It is clear that the alarms, and the police service which underpinned them, were greatly appreciated by their recipients. The contrast with previous frustrations at police response was often very marked. Secondly, the effect which the alarms had on the quality of life of the *children* of victims was in some cases significant.

The accounts are reproduced from the Domestic Violence Prevention Worker's continual monitoring and assessment of each case.

Ms A

Ms A's solicitor told her of the alarms. At the time she "felt desperate" and would have welcomed any help – the alarm was the only form of help offered. The police who came to install the alarm were "smashing". The neighbours were used to seeing police at the house. She feels that because of the alarms and the DEWS system her problems are being taken seriously by the police, and that had she just phoned them, her call might not have been given any real or prompt attention.

Ms A said that the alarm was installed when matters were coming to a head, and the violence was increasing. She feels that without the alarm her situation would have worsened. The alarm had a major effect on the life of both herself and her children. Before its installation she was continually frightened and tense, and the children aged 8, 4 and 3 were aware of this. After the installation she became more relaxed. Previously she had been scared to go into her garden or let the children play there, but increasingly she gained confidence and feels that "the alarm helped me live a normal life again". She has found that the pendant alarm has too long a cord, which means that it was often a problem to wear, and says that a false activation was caused by this, as it swung around her neck and hit the pram when she was picking up the baby. She continued to wear the pendant all the time, but suggests that the cord be made adjustable. She also stated that locating the Solo unit out of the children's reach was a problem, as again the wire was too short and would only reach as far as her windowsill. A further false activation was caused by the youngest child being able to reach the

¹It is the intention of the research team to continue to monitor the views of alarm recipients. The accounts which are included in this report were given to Karen Clarke, the CAPA Domestic Violence Prevention Worker. Some facts have been changed to protect the anonymity of the people concerned.

unit. She suggested that the units could be wall mounted so that they could not be accidentally knocked, but still be within easy reach.

Ms A seemed reluctant to talk in great detail about the police response to the false activations. However, she did say that they advised her to be more careful and that they “were quite reasonable” and that their attitude was “quite understandable”. The last activation led to her husband being charged. She was walking home with a friend when her husband approached and threatened her with a knife. She got in a taxi, but he dragged her out and threatened her again. She told him she had activated the alarm and that the police were coming, at which point he backed off slightly and she was able to run home and make a genuine activation. When the police arrived he was attempting to break into the house. She feels that the knowledge that the alarm was present stopped him attacking her on previous occasions, and she has given him the impression that the alarm worked over a great distance. She states that had he not genuinely believed that she had activated the alarm during the above incident he would have inflicted grave harm upon her. Ms A said she hoped her information would help secure further alarms. She said that the hardest thing had been coming to see me the very first time when she heard that I could arrange for alarms to be issued. She was pleased that I was a civilian and said that had she been told to contact the police directly she might have been put off the whole idea. Ms A said that she felt I was an equal, “just another woman”, and that she could talk freely to me.

She told me that she is very conscious of the authoritative manner of the police, and that she would have been scared to ask questions about the alarm.

In her opinion, in the long run the alarms save money. For instance, normally during the time period for which she had the alarm she would have made numerous calls to the police, as her husband used to pester her continually. Knowing that the alarm is there, he has been scared to call as often, resulting in less calls to the police by Ms A. She also wanted to point out that it is of vital importance that help is immediately available, which is not always possible by telephone. Ms A states that when she first came to ask for an alarm she thought that she would have to pay towards the cost. She was pleased that this was not the case but would have paid a nominal sum anyway, even though she only receives income support. She would also have been glad to help with fundraising. She believes the alarms should be available to all women in need and that “you can’t buy peace of mind but buying alarms is approaching it”.

Ms B

Ms B became aware of the alarms when the CPO called and left a card. She said that they are a “really good idea”, and was pleased with the police involvement. The police who installed the alarm arrived in an unmarked car and were not wearing uniform – but it would not have been a problem if they had made their presence more obvious as the neighbours were used to the police being at her house. Ms B was not present when the false activation occurred. The alarm was accidentally knocked by the babysitter, who reported that eight policemen arrived within a few minutes. The police helicop-

ter was also flying above, although this was obviously coincidental. The police told the babysitter that she should have phoned the police station to warn them it was a false alarm, but were polite to her. Ms B keeps the Solo unit in her living room by the telephone, but does not normally carry the pendant around with her, although she did when the alarm was first installed. Her husband is aware that she has an alarm, and Ms B feels this knowledge deters him from calling.

She says her husband's behaviour is unpredictable and that she never knows when he will become violent. In the past he would become aggravated by such matters as his tea not being ready or shirt not being ironed. Ms B did not want to talk in detail about the violence; she did mention an incident when her husband threw a screwdriver at her which struck her in the face. She said that this was "nothing compared to other things he's done". Ms B said that the alarm gives her a "lot more security", and that it has benefited her children, although they are still afraid of their father. He was seeing the children and taking them for days out, but his behaviour worsened and Ms B is applying to the courts for access to be refused. Her daughter recently hid in a cupboard when she thought her father was coming to the house. One criticism was that the alarm seems to amplify the noise of the phone ringing, and that several callers have said that her line sounds continuously engaged when it is not. It is possible that the latter is a problem with the phone rather than the alarm.

Ms B said that she was happy to tell her experience as it "may help other people", and that "more should be done for domestic violence". She added that the media has focused on domestic violence recently, but that the introduction of the alarms seems to be the only concrete thing that has happened. She said that from her point of view I (the Domestic Violence Prevention Worker) have not personally been necessary, but that she considers she is more fortunate than some other women as she has her own job, house, and income and can handle her own affairs. Ms B feels a particularly favourable aspect of the alarms is that the response should be instant and that the police will instantly see her details on computer and will be able to hear what is going on in her house. Her husband has threatened to kill her. She takes this threat seriously. She believes that he is mentally ill. There are several court cases pending between herself and her husband over various matters, such as access to children, maintenance, distribution of property and assets, and she is also applying for a divorce. Ms B thinks that the court appearances and arguments will aggravate her husband, and fears future attempted violence, against which the alarm will be her main line of defence.

Ms C

Ms C was informed of the alarm's availability by her solicitor and she thought it was "a brilliant idea". However she was slightly worried about accepting an alarm, until I reassured her that at this stage she would not be depriving another woman in worse circumstances of an alarm, as we had not yet issued all the existing alarms. She said that the police who came to install the alarm were "smashing and very discreet" – the neighbours did not seem aware that the police had been at all. Ms C says she is still

often nervous and “on the alert”, but that these feelings have lessened since the alarm’s installation, and she is now “much safer and secure”.

The Solo unit is kept in her living room and the pendant in her bedroom. One criticism is that the alarm is too easily accidentally knocked and activated. As she does not shop locally she says it does not bother her that the alarm does not work over a wider radius, but that it would be a “brilliant idea” if other women in more desperate circumstances could take it to the shops with them. Her husband does not know of the alarm’s installation, Ms C says she “isn’t really bothered whether he knows or not” but that on the whole it might be preferable if he did, as the knowledge might prevent him from returning. Ms C said that usually she talks to her mother, but is reluctant to ask for much help as she feels she should be fully independent and does not wish to worry her mother. She also wanted to help other women gain alarms, and likes to give assistance regarding this. The alarm represents her only security: she does not have a phone, and would not ask the neighbours for help as she does not like to involve them in personal problems. Most of them are elderly and have health problems.

When asked how she would cope with a violent or potentially violent situation without the aid of the alarm, Ms C said that she would try and coax her husband into letting her out of the house; failing that she would climb out of a window as she has had to do previously. She would then try to find a public phone to contact the police. Ms C said that the alarms were about “saving life” and therefore “essential”. She stressed the importance of a direct contact with the police, and of the length of time it can take to find a phone which works. She believes that sometimes women are “sweet talked” or threatened away from the idea of phoning the police by the man concerned and that afterwards they regret this and may be injured as a consequence. She said that because the alarm is immediately available and quickly operated, this state of affairs would be far less likely to occur.

Ms D

Ms D said that when she received the initial letter offering the alarm she thought it was a “very good idea, and was pleased that the police were actually doing something”. When she has phoned the police in the past she said that the response had been good, but precious time is wasted whilst telling the person who answers the phone such details as name and address. The most positive thing about the alarm for Ms D is that if she does have to use it the response should be instant, and the police will be aware of relevant details immediately.

In the past the man concerned has made his escape before the police arrived. Now she hopes they may be able to arrive in time to apprehend him. Ms D approves of police involvement, and said that their attitude when they came to install the alarm was pleasant. She approves of the fact that they arrived in an ordinary car and did not wear uniform. She says that the alarm makes her feel more secure, and that her mother is relieved that help is available for her. She does not have any children and lives alone. Ms D keeps the Solo unit just inside the door of the meter cupboard, which is in the

living room. She does not carry the pendant around, since, as the attacks have always been directed towards the house or car, she is not literally in fear of her life as some women are. However, she feels that the pendant is an excellent idea for other women.

She prefers that the man in question does not know of the alarm's presence. She believes that the alarms should be widely available for all women at risk, largely because of the legal implications, for instance they will make injunctions easier to enforce. In her own particular situation she is relieved to know that if her ex-boyfriend again breaks his bail conditions and approaches her that there is now every likelihood that the police will arrive in time to apprehend him. Ms D said she did not mind being interviewed and giving an evaluation, as she hoped that her evaluation, once sent to the relevant bodies might help other women obtain alarms.

For Ms D, I was not an essential part of the initiative, and she has had no need of my services – however she did say that she appreciated that I could be of service to other women, for instance in relation to housing matters. She has not seen or heard from her ex-boyfriend since just before the installation of the alarm, however she said that his outbursts of violence are not predictable: often he will leave her alone for months and then make frequent appearances for a few weeks. He is due to face charges relating to damages to her house and property, and she fears that around the date of the hearing he will again become aggressive. If the alarm was not present her main source of help would be the telephone. The neighbours would probably also be a source of help. Ms D has never approached them and directly asked for help but the last time her ex-boyfriend arrived and smashed her car, some of them came to see if they could help.

Ms E

Ms E was extremely impressed with the alarm. The violence has been going on for at least 10 years. She left home with her 4 children aged 8 to 16 and spent two nights in the open, as she did not know where to go. Eventually she spent a few weeks with her two youngest children in a refuge and she returned home when the Housing Office put the house solely in her name. The house had been damaged by her husband and furniture and clothes destroyed – I have seen evidence of this damage. Ms E said that her husband expresses the wish to murder her. Before the installation of the alarm he used to arrive unexpectedly. He would smash his way into the house and usually become violent. The two eldest children are terrified of him.

Since the installation of the alarm he has only called once (see below). He knows that Ms E has an alarm, as the letter offering the alarm arrived whilst Ms E was in the refuge and he was still living in the property. Ms E thinks this knowledge has deterred him from making any more visits. She says that the police response when she activated the alarm was excellent: two officers went after her husband who ran away; he did not have time to do any damage. Unfortunately they did not succeed in catching him. She said the police took only about two minutes to arrive and were sympathetic and helpful. Ms E believes that the alarm may have prevented her murder. Alternatively, she feels that when defending either herself or the children she could kill him. Her

son, aged 13 has stabbed the father once, in an effort to stop him attacking her. Since this event the boy has become withdrawn and nervous. Ms E thinks that the alarm has given greater confidence to the children, as well as to herself and says that they are no longer living under quite the same amount of pressure. She carries the alarm everywhere with her.

Ms F

For Ms F the most positive thing about the alarm is the fact that if necessary she can reach the police immediately. She is reassured that her details will show up on the computer and she will not have to waste valuable time giving details of herself and her situation. On a previous occasion her ex-boyfriend bit through the telephone wire while she was dialling 999. On another occasion the baby was nearly hit by a brick thrown through the window by the ex-boyfriend. She is still scared but it is a great comfort to know that help is immediately available. Ms F's family had taken turns to stay with her. This situation is not satisfactory, as they live some distance away. Ms F says that it was her mother who stayed most often before the alarm was installed. This was not beneficial, as the mother's anxiety was worse than her own and served to increase the anxiety of the whole family. She has contacted the police during previous episodes, and says that they have never before been helpful. However on the last occasion the officer attending said he would ask the CPO to install an alarm, which duly happened. She is now pleased with the police involvement and the action which has been taken. A week ago she believed that her ex-boyfriend was in the area and she was frightened. She did not activate the alarm as she had no proof of this, but telephoned the police to ask that patrols be aware of the situation. The response was excellent; two patrol cars arrived, one drove around the area looking for the man in question, the two officers from the other car came to the house and reassured Ms F.

Ms F also states that the alarm has benefitted her children. She has a baby girl and a girl aged eight. The older child has been aware of and frightened by the violence. Ms F says that the child is now more relaxed as she is aware of how the alarm can summon help. Before going to bed the child always asks her mother to check that the alarm is safe and in its usual place (by the mother's bed) in case it is needed during the night. Ms F sees the solution to her problems as moving to a different area where her ex-boyfriend will not be able to find her. The Housing Officer concerned has agreed to rehouse her as soon as a suitable property is available.

Ms G

Ms G described the alarm as "like having a Guardian Angel". She said that it had made a vast difference to her life. Before the installation she said that she could not live a normal life; her husband has threatened to kill her. She believes that this threat is real and that he would carry it out given the opportunity. She says that her life consisted of being on perpetual guard and of constantly "looking over her shoulder" and expecting the next attack. Ms G says that she became depressed and lost interest in everyday life. Much of her time was spent sitting and worrying. She did not feel motivated to do the same amount of housework as usual and her relationships with

other people began to suffer. For instance, she used to have a close relationship with her two young nieces, and have them to stay with her. However she became frightened that her husband would arrive and become violent, so she stopped inviting them. Now, with the security that the alarm provides, she is planning to have them stay overnight again and is looking forward to this greatly.

Ms G has two teenage sons, one of whom has learning difficulties. Before the alarm was installed he had become very nervous and withdrawn. He had witnessed violence against his mother and was terrified of his father returning. Ms G says he is now much more relaxed and confident. The alarm then has had a positive effect on the family unit. Ms G has moved to her current address since divorcing her husband in the hope that he would not be able to find her. However, neighbours have reported that he has been seen in the area, and that he has been enquiring for her in the local pub, so the fear that he could find her seems to be real. That Ms G has been subjected to extreme terror is obvious; for instance, when recording this evaluation we discussed the possibility of using a tape recorder – I explained that actual names and addresses would not be given to anybody outside the project, whereupon Ms G said that if her husband did succeed in murdering her would we please see that the police were given any records or recordings. The alarm has not completely solved Ms G's problems. Only the certainty that her ex-husband could never find her, or his death, would do this. However, it has given her an element of security and safety which she did not previously think was possible.

The alarm for Ms G has had wider implications. She used to feel very alone in her situation, being embarrassed to tell anyone. Who would care or be able to help anyway? She first read about the alarms in the press, and her initial reaction was to sit down and cry in relief at the idea "that there was somebody who cared and that there was help available at last". She then wrote to the CPO and described her situation. She "poured her heart out". The next thing to happen was that the CPO arrived to install an alarm.

She was impressed with the police attitude and the speed with which her letter was responded to. Since then, as already described, she has been able to live a more usual life, and although she is still afraid, she now feels more in control and less dominated by thoughts of her ex-husband.

Ms H

As Ms H has been attacked by her ex-boyfriend many times and he has also threatened and/or attacked her four children (aged 19, 14, 12 and 10) she is very pleased with the security which the alarm represents. Her initial reaction when I telephoned her was "that it was a very good idea". She said the police who came to install the alarm were smashing and "(very good with the children)". She expected to be pressurized into pressing charges, and was glad that this did not happen. Ms H has called the police out several times in the past and although they have removed the man, they have not been able to supply any concrete help.

Her children were present and told me that the alarm makes them feel a lot safer. The boy aged about 19 told me how the man has attacked him, and kept "offering to fight him". One of the girls, aged about 12, said that the man had dragged her by her hair from her bed in the middle of the night and thrown her out into the street. He has also "had a go at the police" when they called. The whole family are greatly relieved to know that in future they will only have "to put a finger on the button" to get help. The man has broken in before, and Ms H thinks he could do so again. For this reason she is not currently obtaining an injunction. She has not heard from or seen him for a few weeks and fears that if he has papers suddenly served on him it could aggravate him again. Consequently, she does not wish him to know that the alarm has been installed. The alarm unit is kept in the living room and the pendant upstairs. Ms H said she did not mind keeping in touch at all, and has approached me for advice on getting her phone number changed and contacting appropriate solicitors.

Ms I

Ms I first heard of the alarms when I sent her a letter, acting upon information from the CPO. On this occasion she chose to give her husband another chance. However, she is now determined to be free of him and has applied for a divorce and an injunction. It is yet to be seen whether or not the alarm helps with these applications. She has suffered severe violence in the past and said the final straw was when her husband went for one of the children. She was pleased that the police had passed on her details to me and that "it was a relief she was being believed". She has called the police several times in the past. However, a typical response was, "sorry love, we can't do anything". On one occasion Ms I said the police called her an idiot for expecting them to do anything. She has told her husband that the alarm is there, as she thinks this will deter him. He has broken into the house before. The children, two boys aged 10 and 14, are terrified of him. One boy was present when the alarm was installed and seemed relieved when we explained how he could use the alarm, although he was obviously still frightened. Ms I's mother was present also, and was very pleased with the alarm. Ms I keeps the alarm in her living room and the pendant in her bedroom. There was one false activation when she had a party in the house. She said the police were very understanding and nice to everyone, particularly when she explained that some guests had "had a few." She does not want to move and hopes that in time the situation will die down. She is also gaining confidence and having friends around to the house more often. Ms I considers me essential to the project as someone between the police and the public, and someone to give practical advice. She thinks that it is easier for women to approach someone such as myself and that the police would be too formal. Ms I wishes to see the alarms being issued nationally and is very keen for me to keep in touch with her.

Ms J

On a noticeboard in the 'C' Division Control Room are written recent incidents of serious violence. Ms J's most recent victimisation was spotted there. She said her initial reaction to the contact was to feel "made up, it done me good". When asked

about the attitude of the police who came to install the alarm, and if she minded the police presence, she described the CPO as a “lovely helpful gentleman”. She has had contact with the police in the past when she was attacked by the man concerned, a Mr G, who gave her a catalogue of injuries, including facial wounds, double vision and throat injuries through attempted strangling. She said that the police have always been helpful, but that they advised her not to press charges as Mr G had, before the last attack, suffered a stroke and slight brain damage, and would not therefore be seen as responsible for his actions. She feels very bitter that Mr G has got away with his crime, particularly as he had already attacked her before the stroke. Inspector F handled the case, Ms J’s solicitor told me that Inspector F was thinking of applying for bail conditions against Mr G, but this has not transpired.

Ms J keeps the alarm unit in her living room and the pendant in her bedroom, she said she now feels “happy, contented and safe”. She has many children and grandchildren and says the alarm has had a positive effect on them, they “are made up” and know “she’s all right now”. Ms J said an improvement would be if the alarm worked in the street, as she has been attacked there. She is grateful for the things I have done for her (getting phone number changed, liaising with her solicitor, putting her in touch with VSS, and providing a listening ear) and said that “I had done more than anyone for her”. When asked about other safety plans, she said that the phone would be her main source of help and that she hoped the situation would die down. Since September, when she was last attacked, Mr G has not called, and since her phone number was changed he has not been able to make threatening calls. She has a neighbour who is aware of her situation and would take her in. Mr G does not know of the alarm’s installation and Ms J does not wish him to know for fear of further aggravation. Her solicitor has not applied for any kind of a protection order as he thinks that one would not be granted. At the time of writing Ms J was again happy with this decision as she fears that having papers served on Mr G could aggravate him again. Ms J said she would like to tell the funders that the alarms “are doing a very, very good job”. She added that there are many woman like herself, and some that may even be killed for lack of protection.

Costs

The expenditure on the scheme reported here (excluding research costs) comprises:

- equipment costs of the alarm base station and computer and associated hardware: £18,000 for a system comprising 24 alarm units (capable of expansion at £159 per alarm unit at October 1992 prices);
- phone costs, including Cellnet air-time costs (currently totalling £450 per month);
- the costs of employing the Domestic Violence Prevention Worker and running costs of the Centre Against Partner Assault in a local community centre, currently totalling £18,000 per year.

Crimes prevented

There will always be difficulties involved in this measurement. As elsewhere, there are at least five kinds of preventive effect and these are considered separately.

a. Direct incapacitation

Genuine alarm activations prevent crime when, for example, a perpetrator has been kicking down the door of a house, but the priority response prevents him assaulting its occupants. There were thirteen such instances in the project as of June 1993.

b. Indirect incapacitation

This would be achieved by the incarceration of those whose arrests have been effected by alarm activations. There were four arrests effected by the scheme as of June 1993.

c. Special deterrence

This would occur by a perpetrator knowing of the alarm arrangement and his resulting desistance from the offence. The case histories suggest that a man who knows of an alarm in place may be less likely to repeat the assault. On the basis of the figures on repeat domestic violence victimisation rehearsed earlier, an estimate of nine activations would have been expected if the alarms were loaned for one month each and if the women to whom they were issued were a random sample of those calling the police for offences of this kind. In fact the average loan period is much longer than one month, and the group protected is a quite highly selected group on the basis of their risk of further attack (as betokened by the issuing of injunctions, police judgement of danger etc.). The true number of expected activations is almost certainly several fold higher than this. The manner in which the writers intend to explore this issue is through identifying a risk group equivalent to the women protected, and comparing the actual and expected repeated incidents.

d. General deterrence

This may be achieved through the scheme's existence becoming known. The media have an important role here. It may also be achieved by other actual or potential offenders desisting on the basis of the possibility that their victim may be protected by an alarm.

e. Domino prevention

This refers to the effects of the alarm option upon practice and which might itself be preventive. An instance of how this might operate is detailed below, but there may be other ways in which police and court practice flag the unacceptability of domestic violence.

In addition to allocating the quick response alarms, CAPA and the CPO have been instrumental in arranging rehousing. The alarms are used as an interim measure before rehousing to a place where (hopefully) the assailant cannot locate the victim. Assistance in rehousing is not a traditional crime prevention activity, but is close to the ultimate in opportunity reduction. The alarm-rehousing

sequence may change routine housing and CPO practice to the benefit of victims.

Enforceable injunctions

A standard response to domestic violence is a County Court injunction. There is skepticism about the enforceability of such injunctions, because of communication imperfections between courts and police, and the speed of police response necessary to detect a breach of the injunction. If the system described here led to a priority, informed police response, 'enforceable injunctions' could enhance court confidence. The benefits are primarily to the victim who has not wasted time and money going to court, to the courts who may be able to issue an injunction confident of its enforcement, and to the police who would be able and motivated to record and police injunctions more fully.

Police safety and the 'feelgood factor'

One of the benefits recognised at the outset by the police was the potential for reduction in personal risk to individual officers called to 'domestic' incidents. The databases of past domestic incidents and current alarm users means that officers are informed of the hazards of a situation.

Much criticism has been levelled at the police response to domestic violence, both by the public and by academic commentators. It is seldom that officers attending domestic violence have received praise from the 'customers'. As elements of the case histories suggest, empowering the police to prevent crime can produce good feelings. The CPO notes the buzz he got when issuing the alarms, not something that police officers typically associate with dealing with domestic violence. The victims were eloquent in their appreciation of police help.

Fear of Crime

That the victims of domestic violence live in perpetual fear is one of the themes of research on the subject. The reduction of fear has been recognised as an important policy objective (for example, Home Office Working Group, 1989). Even at this early stage in the project the case histories suggest there may be psychological benefits for both women and children.

Few alarms, many beneficiaries

The alarms were loaned, not given. The same alarms are to be used time and again. This means that a relatively small number of alarms could service a whole police division. In the project described herein twenty-four alarms were available. Total expenditure on alarms is thus low since alarms are moved around according to victimisation risk. Given that alarms are a scarce resource, the 'heightened risk period' for revictimisation means that alarms are achieving maximum efficiency in preventive terms. They will not be subject to the inefficiency and drain upon police resources that occurred with the proliferation of conventional intruder alarms. There

will be fewer activations (due to small numbers), a lower rate of false alarms (due to the voice channel) and a greater likelihood of the crime which is prevented being serious – because the alarms are allocated to ‘high risk’ cases. Moreover, they are activated by women who received information on the use of the alarms, and the need not to press the alarm “just to test if it is still working”.

The “few alarms-many victims” approach derives from the notion of ‘drip-feeding’, developed by Forrester *et al.* (1990) and Pease (1991) which denotes the relative constancy of effort over time which comes with a strategy of preventing repeat victimisation. The labour input required is not intense since it is roughly constant over time, and within the scope of limited resources - hence ‘drip feeding’ crime prevention. It is also, by definition, a resource which achieves continued use over time, and hence will achieve high cost-efficiency (as opposed to, for example, some burglar alarms which fall into disuse or disrepair and may have ‘low risk’ of genuine use – all factors which would increase the ratio of false to genuine activations).

‘Hidden’ benefits

These include the savings from the potential costs of refuge space, the time and effort of social services and housing, hospital and General Practitioner facilities. The difficulty of incorporating these costs into any analysis does not justify their exclusion – and it is possible that they might be built into a more elaborate econometric model. The recent US National Research Council work on violence found that

“In a recent review of spouse abuse, Stark and Flitcraft (1991; 139) conclude that spouse assault may be the single most common cause of injury for which women seek emergency medical attention. From their investigation of emergency treatment of women in a metropolitan hospital, they report that battered women were more likely than other women receiving emergency treatment to be injured in the breast, chest and abdomen and three times as likely to be injured while pregnant (Stark and Flitcraft, 1991; 140, Stark and Flitcraft, 1982).” (Reiss and Roth, 1993; 237-8).

They also point to evidence suggesting that suicide and attempted suicide rates increase in cases of repeated domestic violence, that links have been made between domestic violence and mental illness, personality disorders, clinical depression and greater requirements for psychiatric care for victims (Reiss and Roth, 1993; 238).

It is not fanciful to see an improvement in the children’s attitude towards the police as one incidental benefit. Having seen the police hitherto unable to protect their mother from assault, the change is surely of psychological importance. More important is the benefit to the relationship between mother and children who no longer have to see her subjected to humiliating violence and no longer come to her defence (as in, for example, Hanmer, 1990, 1991).

Replication and returns to scale

The development of approaches to crime prevention through a demonstration project is based upon the assumption that the initial investment may be recouped

through replication. Any such project will have a high cost per crime prevented. However, since the cost of the research and development is a one-off payment, the effective unit costs of the investment will fall with time and replication. The ratio of cost to crimes prevented will be lower upon more widespread use of the strategy. This is similar to a firm which lowers unit costs of production through increasing output. Whilst it can never reach zero, the cost per crime prevented can fall close to zero through wide and prolonged usage. The project described here is already being replicated in a sister project in Sheffield. The potential for development of both the philosophy underlying the project – preventing repeat victimisation – to different crime types, and of the specific preventive aspects of the project – both preventing domestic violence, and the wider potential use of the technology developed for other crime (eg. burglary – see Burquest *et al*, 1992; Fieldsend, 1992), will ensure that the unit cost of the initial investment, per crime prevented, falls close to zero.¹

Three Imponderables

a. An increase in call to ‘domestics’?

The project may not result in any reduction in the volume of incidents to which the police are called. If this is because more victims are now calling upon the police for help in circumstances where hitherto the police were regarded as impotent, that might be viewed as a success. However, it introduces a difficulty into evaluation. Given that the bulk of domestic violence remains hidden, the possibility that a scheme such as this would increase calls for service to the police should not be discounted.

b. Breaking up violent relationships?

A second imponderable remains the domestic violence committed by current co-habitees. A plausible scenario is that a domestic violence prevention scheme such as this could break up current relationships, insofar as victims will see new hope of safety when living alone. For example, an ouster injunction is a more realistic option when supported by an alarm. Whether the end of a violent relationship is ever worth grieving over is a moot point, but this kind of effect should not be neglected.

c. Crime displacement?

A third imponderable is displacement, the albatross that hangs around the neck of any crime prevention work. In evaluative terms, it is potentially the largest social cost to any project. However, the crucial issue of displacement is substitution, and there are few substitutes for domestic violence. It is unlikely to be displaced to another crime type – at least not property crime or acquisitive violent crime. Other non-acquisitive violent crime, such as assaults in public houses, might occur, but this is unlikely to be complete displacement – at the very least due to reasons of guardianship which make other targets less vulnerable. If there were total displacement to this type

¹For a more detailed account of costings, see Farrell, Buck and Pease (1993).

of crime it may be argued to be benign displacement, resulting in a form of dispersion or more egalitarian distribution of crime (see Barr and Pease, 1990). The chances of intervention by other persons, of arrest, and – most importantly – of the victimisation being less focused upon a single individual or family, would be much greater than in domestic violence. The potential for outside involvement and prevention might also be greater if spatial displacement took place, so that the same victims were attacked, but outside the home. This would be less than total displacement, and there may be greater protection, and certainly more witnesses, in a crowded shopping area.

The biggest displacement risk is long-term temporal displacement. The violent partner may continue to be an abuser in the next relationship. However, this ‘worst case scenario’ is surely not sufficient reason to stop domestic violence prevention work. Assuming (a) that all violent partners are able immediately to start a new relationship, and (b) make no effort to alter their behaviour, perhaps some will still have received a strong signal that an intimate relationship is not a licence to assault, and that society *will* respond to what is no longer viewed as ‘private’ violence. This may be especially true if the triggering of a quick response alarm has resulted in arrest and/or further civil or criminal court action. Whilst an unlikely flagship for crime prevention theories of displacement, the elasticity of substitution suggested by the nature of domestic violence would appear to be lower than that of other crimes, and hence most likely to be an effective target for prevention work. Alternatively, an optimistic viewpoint might be that positive crime prevention action could result in what Clarke (1992) calls a ‘diffusion of benefits’, if other men are less inclined to violence when they know there is effective action which can be taken against them.

What to do Next

It is difficult to communicate simultaneously the commitment felt by those involved to the principle of the system described above, and the caution which needs to be exercised about the pilot scheme until a further stage of evaluation and rigorous data analysis has been completed. The project team believes that the system has already proved its worth in improving quality of service to victims of serious and repeated crime. However, much remains to be learned. The approach is worth refining.

The danger which can be foreseen is that the alarms, which are the most dramatic part of the package, will be taken elsewhere and applied without the infrastructure of the other measures.

The scope for the alarm, properly located in a set of other measures, extends far beyond domestic violence. It could be an element in witness or juror protection programmed (see Farrell, Jones and Pease, in press). In a sister project in Sheffield, it is already being used, linked to a movement detector (and in some cases of harassment, a video channel), to protect premises against burglary during the six weeks after a burglary in which there is enhanced risk of a repeat crime. The equipment is portable, and not expensive. The equivalent of one Transit van would equip a division. The possibilities are almost endless.

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