

# DVAC Guidance

## 2008-2009

July 2008

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## **Devon County Council's DVAC Scheme 2007-8**

DCC has a corporate Domestic Violence Policy which was updated and revised in 2007, [http://staff.devon.gov.uk/domestic\\_violence\\_policy.pdf](http://staff.devon.gov.uk/domestic_violence_policy.pdf). This policy recognises the scale and impact domestic violence and abuse at home has on staff in the workplace. Research indicates that there are likely to be approximately 2,300 victims and a similar number of perpetrators working for the Local Authority. DCC would like to ensure appropriate support is available to victims and that perpetrators are challenged to consider the impact their behaviour might have on their ability to work with clients and colleagues. The policy includes a Management Guidance to aid managers to understand how to support staff who might be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

It is recognised that domestic violence and abuse is an extremely difficult thing to talk about and that most victims endeavour to function without support, in the hope that the situation will end. Additionally, the majority of victims do not see themselves to be in a domestic violence situation. However, we are aware that some victims wish they could speak to someone, in private and confidence. The workplace can offer them this opportunity.

DCC has initiated a Domestic Violence and Abuse Contacts Scheme, on the same lines as Acceptable Behaviour Contacts, so victims and perpetrators are able to speak to someone about where they can find help. The contact will usually be by telephone but in some instances will include face to face meetings. The strength of the service lies in the fact that the Contact is a peer and outside of any formal process.

### **Set up and First year of DVAC Scheme**

The DVAC scheme received Corporate Management Board support on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007 after which the first tranche of DVACs were recruited. The first DVAC workshop was held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 after which the 12 interested DVACs undertook to receive the required training. The final workshop for these DVACs is on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008. Individual interviews will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

The DVAC scheme will be launched across Devon County Council on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008, with an official launch at the Phoenix Centre, Exeter, on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

A second tranche of interested DVACs responded to an email from Phil Norrey in April 2008. Their first workshop will be 17<sup>th</sup> September or 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 and it is anticipated they will commence their role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009.

The first phase of the scheme's operation, Sept 08-end March 09, will be monitored and a report submitted to the DCC DVA Directorate Group to determine the DVAC scheme's future.

The intention is to roll out the scheme so access to DVACs is spread widely across the Local Authority.

## **The Role of DVA Contact**

Domestic Violence and Abuse Contacts provide a sympathetic and understanding ear, providing impartial referral information so that the individual can decide the course of action best suited to him/her at that time. There may be a range of possible options: i) to refer to DCC support services; ii) to refer to external specialist support services; iii) to provide information and advice iv) to support the client in a meeting with his/her manager v) to inform about the employer's flexibility to support the client, utilising the DCC Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

It is important to note that the DVA Contact is NOT a counsellor.

It is anticipated that in the majority of cases contact with the client will be by telephone but on some occasions a face to face meeting might be agreed, on DCC premises and within DCC core working hours. It is further anticipated that a maximum of two hours support per client will be provided. Exceptions to this are likely to be when the client asks the DVAC to accompany them to meet their manager.

## **Selection Process**

A DVAC must obtain signed consent for them to commit to 5 days per annum volunteering on the DVAC scheme. Completed applications are to be sent to the Adva Office (G41, County Hall).

DVAC applicants will be invited to an initial half day workshop to learn more about the scheme, the process for application and service provision, interview process, training and supervision.

The DVAC will attend the required 3 days of training after which he/she will be interviewed to determine suitability for the role.

On successful completion of interview the DVAC's name will be added to the Central Referral Unit DVAC Register and will be able to commence their DVAC role.

## **Support and Training for DVACs**

DVA Contacts are supported by training and group supervision as well as being part of a peer supportive group. Initial training is given to all new Contacts. Contacts will need to attend the following training, at no cost to themselves or their Directorate:

- Managers Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse – the Links to Duty of Care (one day)
- 'Tackling Risk Assessment in Domestic Violence and Abuse' (one day, multi-agency)
- 'Tackling Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Abuse' (one day, multi-agency).

DVA Contacts will not be able to take on their role until these 3 courses are completed. This is to ensure they have sufficient understanding of the issue.

Further training and group supervision will be provided twice a year (two half day workshops).

Telephone supervision will be on-going, with a maximum of 2 hours per DVAC per annum.

## **Interview Process for DVACs**

It is in the interests of the DVAC, the clients and Devon County Council that DVACs are appropriately skilled, knowledgeable and demonstrate that they have the right 'attitude' to the issue to provide this service.

To determine this an informal 'interview' will be conducted for everyone wishing to be a DVAC, on completion of the 3 days training and attendance at the required workshops. The interviews will be 20 minutes and the decision of the adva partnership panel will determine the DVAC's readiness and suitability for the role.

On successful completion of this process adva will notify the DVAC Central Referral Unit of the DVAC's name to add to the DVAC Register.

## **DVAC Referral process**

Publicity of the DVAC scheme will only advertise one telephone referral number – the DVAC Central Referral Unit (CRU), currently operated by Jenny Brown, the Referral Co-ordinator. The number is 01392 382828.

It is assumed that the majority of requests for support from a DVAC will be from victims or survivors of domestic abuse. If, however, a perpetrator requests support it is the role of the DVAC to refer him/her to the perpetrator support programmes in Devon and nationally.

- i) A telephone answer machine message will ask clients to leave their name and a 'safe' number (work, home, mobile) and time when they can be contacted.
- ii) The Referral Co-ordinator will listen to messages after 1pm each day and will usually contact the Client within 24 hours to acknowledge receipt of the message and seek consent to provide name/identifier and Directorate/number to DVACs
- iii) A client has the option of requesting DVAC support from a male or female DVAC.
- iv) The Referral Co-ordinator will email DVACs (except those within client's Directorate) to ask if someone is available to respond. At this stage only Client Directorate information is shared. A '1<sup>st</sup> come 1<sup>st</sup> served' system will operate to ensure as quick a response to the client as possible.
- v) On identification of an available DVAC the Referral Co-ordinator will supply that DVAC with minimum client detail (name, number, Directorate, time to call).
- vi) The DVAC will contact the client asap, guided by the information received from the Referral Co-ordinator. The DVAC will explain the service options and Confidentiality and Safety Agreement (appendix 5). The DVAC should seek to obtain this consent, completing the 'consent given'

- date/time section on Client Record Form (appendix 4). Should the client not consent to the Agreement then support can continue but will be anonymous and no detailed records kept on the client, apart from i) date referred ii) identifier iii) action taken iv) time spent v) date closed.
- vii) The CRU will monitor DVAC case loads and distribution to ensure equal take-up of DVAC service and will sometimes target a specific DVAC to provide the service to a client.
  - viii) CRU will hold minimum data on each client referring into the DVAC service
    - a. Date referred
    - b. Name
    - c. Directorate
    - d. DVAC assigned to case
    - e. Action taken
    - f. Date case closed.
  - ix) The DVAC will collect minimum data on the client (see Client Record Form):
    - a. Identifier/Name
    - b. Agreed Consent to Confidentiality and Safety Agreement
    - c. Directorate
    - d. Date of Referral
    - e. Reason for call (brief summary)
    - f. Has client sought support from anyone else in the past for this issue? If yes, who/when.
    - g. Agreed actions
    - h. Date case closed
    - i. Times spent with client (Date and Time (to show minutes/hours))
  - x) DVAC to email completed Client Record Form to the CRU once case is closed, or after 6 weeks from referral date if no further contact has been made with the client, to the Referral Co-ordinator. Make sure the email 'subject' states 'DVAC Record Form' and does NOT include the name of the client.
  - xi) CRU to forward Client Record Forms to TRIM (electronically secure DCC server), access to which is only available for adva manager and Referral Co-ordinator.
  - xii) CRU to provide DVAC and adva a quarterly monitoring report providing the following:
    - a. Numbers of cases referred by month, by Directorate
    - b. Numbers of cases supported by each DVAC
    - c. Numbers who drop out after initial referral
    - d. Time spent supporting client, by DVAC
    - e. Outcomes – actions taken
  - xiii) Client Record Forms will be held in TRIM indefinitely and will be removed and destroyed from this system a) should the client leave Devon County Council employment b) retire from Devon County Council or c) become deceased whilst employed by Devon County Council.

### **DVAC First Contact with Client and Confidentiality**

It is important during the first telephone contact between DVAC and client that the Confidentiality and Safety Statement (appendix 5) is agreed to by the client. This agreement will be noted by the DVAC, and dated, on the Client Record Form (appendix 4).

If the client requests it the DVAC can give the client their work telephone number.

## **DVAC Completion of Client Record Form**

It is important that this form is completed carefully and succinctly, avoiding any use of subjective interpretation of a client's comments and personal opinion. The information recorded should be minimal. Any reference made to a 'third person' should record only the first name, never the full name.

On closure of client's case all records held by the DVAC on that client are to be emailed to the CRU and all copies and email traces of the documents held by the DVAC are to be destroyed by the DVAC.

## **Supervision**

All DVACs will receive telephone supervision on a 'needs' basis, up to 2 hours per annum. The supervisor contact details are to be made clear to the DVAC who will be free to contact the supervisor when necessary regarding client cases. When discussing clients the full name/identification of the client will not be revealed by the DVAC, only the details of the case.

Group work supervision will be provided twice a year and might include additional training.

The Supervisor will keep a supervision record on each of the DVAC clients (see appendix 9). When the client case is closed the Supervisor will email the 'DVAC Supervision Record' to the CRU for all records to be held in the client file, and subsequently kept on TRIM. All copies of records to be destroyed by Supervisor on case closure.

## **Complaints Procedure**

DVACs and Clients have the right to voice their concerns if they consider that they have not been supported appropriately or have concerns about the ways in which they have been supported. (See appendix 7).

The Adva Manager has the authority to discontinue the service of a DVAC, and notify the DVAC's Manager of this decision, based on information of concern presented to her about the individual.

## **Review Process**

A review process will be built in whereby all DVACs will meet as a Group six months from start date (i.e start April 09) to i) review their experiences to date ii) suggest updates/changes to the process and Guidance iii) comment on supervision support iv) suggest further training / support needs v) discuss issues of concern.

The Review will include feedback from clients who are willing to comment, anonymously, on support they have received.

In addition, DVAC Managers' views will be sought to comment on their views of the process and its positive and negative impact on their employee/s.

Further statistical data will be collected from CRU to assess take-up of the service, and from adva to assess costs of the service.

This information will be presented to the DCC DVA Directorate Group for discussion and feedback, including the determining the scale of the DVAC Scheme within Devon County Council from 2009 onwards.

## **Appendix 1**

### **PROFILE AND CRITERIA FOR DVACs**

#### **Knowledge** (This can be gained as part of the training)

- An understanding of the extent of domestic violence and abuse within our society and workplaces
- An understanding of the impact of domestic violence and abuse on employees
- An appreciation of the responsibilities of managers and best practice
- An understanding of the need for victim-focussed risk assessment
- An ability to carry out an effective risk assessment
- Knowledge of the MARAC process (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)
- An understanding of the link between risk assessment and child protection
- An ability to identify the themes of perpetrator behaviour
- An ability to recognise the challenges posed by perpetrators
- An ability to recognise and assess the risk perpetrators present
- Knowledge of current research and relevant local practices pertinent to perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse
- Awareness of multi-agency best practice in relation to domestic violence and abuse

#### **Skills**

- Interpersonal Effectiveness
- Emotional Literacy
- Non-judgemental Approach
- Assertiveness
- Facilitation of Others to Reach Decisions
- Literate (an Adviser's role may be to help write letters) Interpersonal skills in order to engage perpetrators in the assessment process
- Skills to avoid collusion with the perpetrator

#### **Attributes/Abilities**

- Practise Anti-Discrimination
- Practise Confidentiality
- An Ability to manage boundaries knowing the role of Adviser and where it ends
- Confidence to inspire confidence in others
- Self-awareness – and an ability to know what “hooks us” and if appropriate, refer on

**Appendix 2**

**APPLICATION FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE CONTACT (DVAC)**

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

.....

.....

**Telephone:** .....

**Line Manager:** .....

**Commitment to be completed by both Contact and Line Manager.**

Corporate Management Board, on 24.9.07, authorised the establishment of Domestic Violence and Abuse Contacts in Devon County Council (DVAC's). Adva will provide the necessary training, induction and supervision which DVACs will receive within their normal working hours. Travel and other expenses are met by Chief Executive's Directorate.

I understand that being a DVA Contact will require an initial 3 days training, half day workshop and interview in 2007-8 and approximately five days commitment each year from 2008-9.

**Signed by applicant:** .....

**As line manager for the applicant I agree to their release for training and DVAC work as agreed by CMB.**

**Signed by manager:** .....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED AND SIGNED APPLICATION**

Return this form by post to:  
Rachel Martin  
adva Manager  
G41, County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

Or e-mail to:  
rachel.martin@devon.gov.uk  
  
Rachel Martin's telephone no.  
for further information:  
07815 563318

## Appendix 3

### DVAC CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFETY AGREEMENT

I, ..... have my  
manager's support....., within the  
..... Directorate

for me to participate in the Domestic Violence and Abuse Contact scheme for Devon County Council, committing five days to the work each financial year.

I agree to abide by this DVAC confidentiality and safety statement to safeguard the confidentiality of the client at all times unless I believe that the client, or a child, may be at risk of serious harm.

I accept that referrals for my DVAC service will come through the Central Referral Unit (CRU) to provide support only to clients outside my Directorate. On exceptional cases, when my support is specifically requested from within my Directorate by the client, and I agree to provide this support, I will inform the CRU of the minimum client details (see Client Record Form). I agree that for my safety, and that of my client/s, boundaries around my work as a DVAC must be clear to both client and me.

Boundaries include my safety by ensuring that my personal details remain private and not shared with the client; that any meetings arranged with the client will take place within County Council core hours and on County Council premises; that I will notify the CRU by email of meeting dates/times with client; should I consider any client is contacting me too frequently or that the client contact is becoming a problem I will discuss the situation with my supervisor; that any client requiring more than 2 hours total support I will discuss with my supervisor before agreeing continued engagement with the client. If I should ever consider my safety to be compromised I will discuss this immediately with my supervisor. I have the right to discontinue support to a client, firstly having discussed this with my supervisor to make clear how this discontinuance will be handled.

It is my role to act as a referral contact point only to clients within Devon County Council, not to provide counselling..

It is recognised from national projects that some victims can present as victims or survivors but are, on further assessment, perpetrators of domestic abuse. Having undertaken 'Tackling Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse' training I am aware of this potential situation, and will refer clients on to relevant support services based on the information with which I am presented.

I will collect the minimum statistical data on the client (see Client Record Form) and inform the client of this data, which is to provide anonymous, statistical information to inform the Local Authority of the impact and outcomes of the service. I will email this Client Record Form, on case closure, to the CRU for central collection and collation. I will not keep any client records once the case is closed.

I will access telephone supervision support when I need it.

I will attend two workshops a year, which will include access to group supervision. I agree to basic information (Appendix 5, Supervision Record) to be kept by the supervisor, and copies provided to me, on request.

I am willing to participate in the 6 month Review process in April 2009.

Signed (by DVAC).....

Date Agreement Signed.....

**Appendix 4**

**CLIENT RECORD FORM**

The Client agreed to the Confidentiality and Safety Agreement on .....  
.....(date/time)

**Client Name or Identifier:**

**Directorate:**

**Date of Referral:**

**Reason for Client Call:**

**Has client sought support from anyone else in the past for this issue? Yes/No**

**If yes, who and when:**

**Agreed Actions:**

**Dates and times of contact with client**

Date	Time from	Time to	Total minutes

**Date Case Closed:**

## Appendix 5

### **DVAC CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFETY STATEMENT**

Devon County Council through the DVAC service offers private and confidential advice and support to DCC employees who are affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse.

The DVAC will not give the client's name or any information from or about the client to anyone else without a client's consent unless a DVAC has reason to believe that the client, or a child, may be at risk of serious harm.

DVACs will receive regular supervision in which they may discuss their concerns about a client without using their name.

## Appendix 6

# DVAC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS/CLIENT FAQ CHECKLIST

### DVAC Questions

- What made you call this number?
- How long has this been happening?
- How safe do you feel at home/work?
- Have the police been involved?
- Have you been able to tell your manager (if not, why not?)
- Would you like me as your DVAC to accompany you to see your manager?
- Who else knows about your situation?
- What would you like to happen at work?
- What would you like to happen at home (with reference to emergencies if appropriate)?
- Are there children in the relationship (if yes, what ages)?
- Any other problems that may compound the situation eg disability, ethnicity etc?

### DVAC Statements/Information

- It is not your fault
- You are not alone in experiencing abuse (1 in 4 women, 1 in 6 men)
- You don't have to leave the relationship in order to get help
- Information, leaflets, numbers etc
- Complete agreed Action Plan/Follow up
- It is not DVAC role to decide who is telling the truth
- Specialist advice numbers: DM/adva office/W Aid/HR

### Frequently Asked Client Questions

- What can you do?
- How will it help me to tell my manager?
- What sort of things can my manager do?
- Who are you going to tell?
- What will happen about my children?
- My partner also works for DCC – what will happen to him/her?

## Appendix 6 continued

### Frequently Asked Client Questions and Sample Answers

- **What can you do?**
  - Listen
  - Support you in whatever you decide to do
  - Provide you with information and list of specialist resources
  - Accompany you to meet/discuss your situation with your manager
- **How will it help me to tell my manager?**
  - You don't have to tell your manager
  - If you feel comfortable with your manager we would recommend you saw him/her, and we can accompany you, if you wanted
  - Your manager is in the best place to institute changes in your workplace to support you
  - DCC takes DVA very seriously and is engaging Managers at all levels
- **What sort of things can my manager do?**
  - Help you keep safe
  - Alter arrangements in your workplace, with your agreement
  - Give you time off in work time to seek help/support
  - If necessary change your job role
  - Offer you support/listen
- **Who are you going to tell?**
  - My supervisor will know about all my cases
  - We complete a brief data form (go through Client Record Form)
    - This is to provide anonymous data to Corporate Management Board on numbers staff supported through DVAC scheme
    - TRIM (see DVAC Referral Process xiii)
    - Emergency – Police and/or Child Protection lead within DCC
- **What will happen about my children?**
  - It's common in abusive relationships for the perpetrator to frighten their partner into not getting help by threatening that children will be taken
  - CYPS Services want to support the non-abusing parent to protect the child/ren and not to separate you from them
- **My partner also works for DCC – what will happen to him/her?**
  - You can request that HR interviews you and your partner separately
  - DCC policy is to support both parties, victim and perpetrator
  - Flexible approach, based on individual family situation
- **My manager is the last person I'd go to?**

- What would you like to do about that?
- We can provide you with details of other support services, within DCC or outside DCC, across Devon

## Appendix 7

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

DVACs and Clients have the right to voice their concerns if they consider that they have not been supported appropriately or have concerns about the ways in which they have been supported.

DVACs should, in the first instance, voice concerns with their supervisor to determine next steps.

All concerns should be sent, in writing, to Rachel Martin, Adva Manager by email or letter ([rachel.martin@devon.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.martin@devon.gov.uk) or G41 CEX, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QD).

The adva Manager will note the concerns, and liaise with Personnel and Performance, as appropriate, and will respond to the written concern/s within 15 working days.

The adva Manager has the right to discontinue the service of a DVAC, and notify the DVAC's Manager of this, based on information received that causes concern regarding the individual's appropriateness for the role. No such action will be taken lightly or without due consideration of the information presented.

**Appendix 8**

**CLIENT EVALUATION FORM**

**DATE**.....

**DIRECTORATE**.....

**We would be grateful if you would fill in this form so that the provision of this DVAC service can be monitored, evaluated and improved. Please be honest.**

**Please tick the number that best describes how you feel and add comments if you wish. Comments would be particularly helpful.**

**1. How do you rate the support you received from the DVAC?**

**Met completely**

**Not at all**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

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**2. What did you find the most useful aspect of your contact with the DVAC?**

Comments

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**3. What did you find the least useful aspect of your contact with the DVAC?**

Comments

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**4. Has your situation changed as a result of contact with the DVAC?**

YES  NO

**4.1 If yes, what has changed and how?**

Comments

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-----

**5. Is there anything further that you would have liked the DVAC to have done?**

Comments

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**6. Any additional comments**

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-----  
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

