

Does victim empowerment align with perpetrator accountability – what are women's experiences of being named as a protected person under a domestic violence protection order (DVPO)?

This project will explore the use of domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) in policing.

Key details

Lead institution	Lancaster University
Principal researcher(s)	Mandi Whittle m.whittle2@lancaster.ac.uk
Police region	North West
Collaboration and partnership	ESRC funded project. Working with police, third sector women's specialist support services and supervision from experts across three north-west universities.
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	October 2018

Research context

This research aims to understand what DVPOs bring to the complex area of policing domestic abuse. How are they used, who receives protection and what does that look like from a survivor's perspective?

DVPOs are designed to provide immediate, emergency short-term protection whilst generating 'breathing space' for longer-term safety planning considerations to occur. This space is designed to

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be free of interference of the perpetrator who can be removed from the home and/or barred from making contact for between 14 and 28 days, depending on the order length.

Little is known about the effectiveness of these orders and what happens during the 'live' period. Furthermore, with the introduction of [the DA Bill \(2021\)](#) these orders will be replaced in due course with a DAPO which will increase and extend their powers.

Given the dearth of knowledge around current DVPO usage, national and regional variations and lack of victim-survivor voices, it is essential that we understand the current orders before replacing and extending their powers.

Research methodology

Mixed methods study utilising force data on DVPOs and expanding that by adding more contextual data. This will be used to obtain a sub-sample to be used as case-studies.

Qualitative interviews with various police personnel involved in the DVPO process will add to current understanding of policy, process and practice. Further qualitative interviews with victim-survivors will add lived-experience.

The study is focusing on adult, female survivors who have been named a protected person under a DVPO issued for domestic abuse in an intimate rather than familial circumstance, with or without their consent. A biographical interview method and narrative analysis will be utilised to analyse the survivor voices.

Semi-structured one-to-one interviews will be conducted with various police personnel and focus-groups will be used with front-line officers.

Summary of findings

This project was completed in December 2025.

Whittle M. (2025). [Ensuring safety: Domestic violence protection notices and orders \(DVPN-Os\)](#).

Doctoral thesis. Lancaster University.

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Tags

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