

# Respect



## Perpetrators in the early stages of help- seeking: Views of service users

An evaluation of the Respect  
Phoneline

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## 1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a qualitative research project which sought to hear the views of service users of the Respect Phonenumber for perpetrators of domestic abuse. This was in order to learn more about callers' expectations and experience of the Respect Phonenumber, their help-seeking behaviours, and their perceptions of domestic abuse services more broadly. Based on these views, the report also includes recommendations for how the service provided by the Respect Phonenumber can be improved in the future.

The interviews highlighted some of the complexities and challenges involved in running a helpline for perpetrators of domestic abuse. Generally, however, despite these challenges, the individuals we interviewed gave highly positive feedback about the Respect Phonenumber and the service provided by the helpline workers they spoke to.

A search for relevant academic literature to inform the research was carried out using the Google Scholar and Scopus bibliographic databases, however there appears to be very little existing research on helpline services for perpetrators of domestic abuse. That being said, based on a study in Australia, Paterson et al. (2000) emphasise the role that mass media-based advertising campaigns can play in encouraging violent and potentially violent men to voluntarily contact a helpline for perpetrators, by focusing on an appropriate message strategy (such as the impacts of domestic abuse on children) without being judgemental or suggesting retribution.

The lack of research and evaluation in this area highlights the value of services critically assessing their own work, and indicates that Respect are at the forefront of developments in this field internationally by doing so. Some other evaluations of the Respect Phonenumber have also been carried out in recent years. As part of a larger project Broad and Gadd (2014) interviewed two women who had contacted the Respect Phonenumber identifying as perpetrators, and they were both positive about the advice they received, finding it useful to have someone to talk to and someone who would listen to them without being judgemental.

Meanwhile, Debonnaire carried out interviews with service users and interviews and observations with staff (2008), as well as a client satisfaction survey (2010). She also found that the majority of callers who participated in her evaluations were very satisfied with the

service they received, even though they were calling for help in relation to a difficult topic about which they may have a range of feelings and motivations for making contact. Debonnaire pointed out that many service users took actions as a result of their call such as contacting a programme for perpetrators, indicating that helpline workers are providing clear information for callers about the next steps they can take. However, she also highlighted that the helpline is sometimes hindered by a lack of high-quality specialist services in some local areas to be able to refer callers onto. Debonnaire therefore noted that the Respect Phonenumber has a realistic and sensible model of work which limits the expectations of the service to those which are achievable. Furthermore, she found it to be important that the helpline is specialist and focuses specifically on domestic violence, which requires a particular and very specific set of skills, knowledge and experience on the part of helpline workers. These include the ability to engage with someone who has used violence and abuse, challenge them about their behaviour, and motivate them to take further action, illustrating the need for in-depth training, clear and effective line management, and clinical supervision for staff.

This report starts by describing the research methods used before moving on to discuss the findings from the interviews, including exploring what led service users to call and how they found about the Respect Phonenumber; their experience of making contact with the helpline; interviewees' hopes and expectations about their call; their level of satisfaction with the service; any actions they took as a result; difficulties experienced in talking about their behaviour; and how the helpline and services for perpetrators more broadly could be improved. The report concludes with some recommendations for the future development of the Respect Phonenumber.

## 2. Research method

Fourteen qualitative, semi-structured interviews were carried out between June and September 2019 with service users who had contacted the Respect Phonenumber. The interviews were carried out by phone, with interviewees typically contacted around 2–4 weeks of their original call to the helpline. Service users were recruited through being asked by helpline workers if they would be willing to take part in the evaluation. If they agreed then their contact details (first

name, phone number and/or e-mail address) were then passed onto the research team, as well as the times and methods which would be the most convenient and appropriate for speaking to them. They were then first contacted either by e-mail, text message, phone or voicemail depending on the preference they expressed in order to arrange a time to conduct the interview – or to ask them if they wished to carry it out there and then.

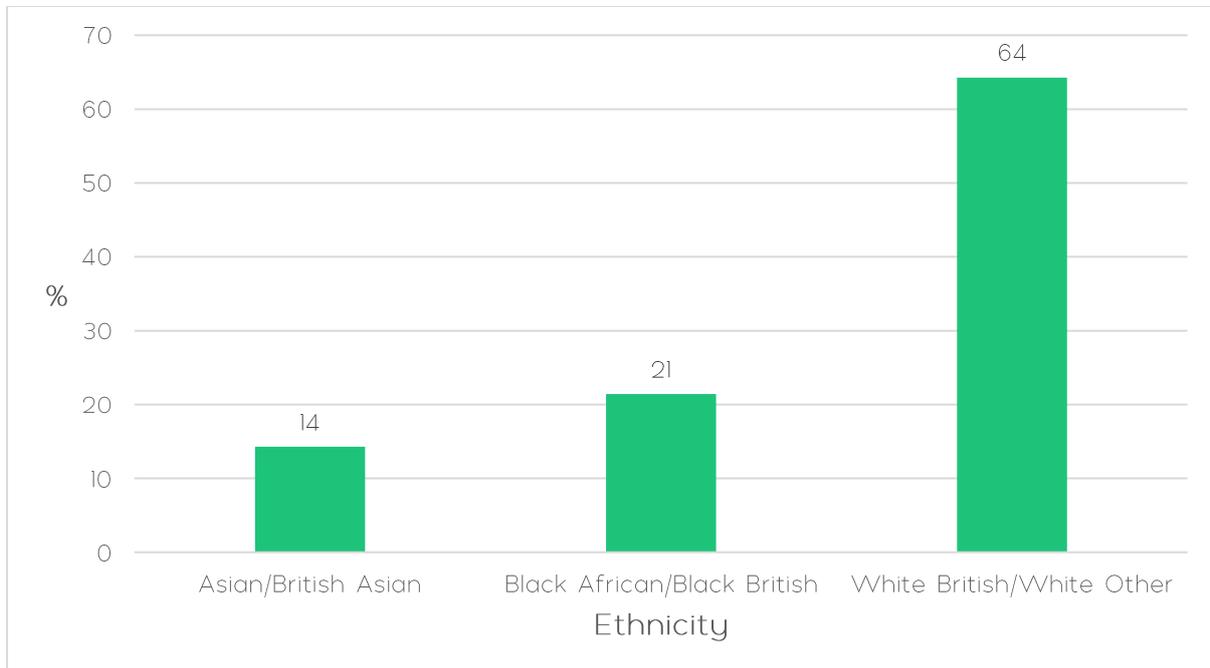
Ethical approval was granted by Durham University Department of Sociology Research Ethics Committee. The sensitivity of the subject matter made it particularly important for us to ensure that participants' anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research. This meant it was vital to follow the preferences given by callers, and not to divulge information about the research until we had confirmed that we were speaking to the person that had contacted the helpline. We also conducted the interviews alone in a private space for this reason. Furthermore, it was anticipated that the interviewees might find it difficult to talk about their call to the phonenumber and the reasons for it, so they were encouraged to take a break, skip questions if needed, or to stop the interview if they were struggling to talk to us about the issues raised.

The interviews typically lasted around twenty minutes, with the same topic guide used for each interview (see annex). However, this was adapted (with the rephrasing of questions or addition of follow-ups for example) when it was deemed helpful to probe particular comments or issues raised by participants further. The Respect Phonenumber also runs an e-mail service and webchat, however we only spoke to callers who had contacted the helpline by phone, as this is the most in-depth service it provides and was best suited to phone-based interviews. To avoid making the interviewees feel too uncomfortable about sharing their experiences, rather than recording the conversations the interviewers took detailed notes of what was being said as the interviews progressed. This qualitative data was then thematically analysed by the research team.

We were successfully able to interview 27% of those individuals whose details were passed onto the research team. Ten interviewees were men calling about their abuse of their female partners, one was a transgender woman calling about their abuse of their male partner, and a further three were female callers, with two calling about a male partner and one about a same-sex female partner.

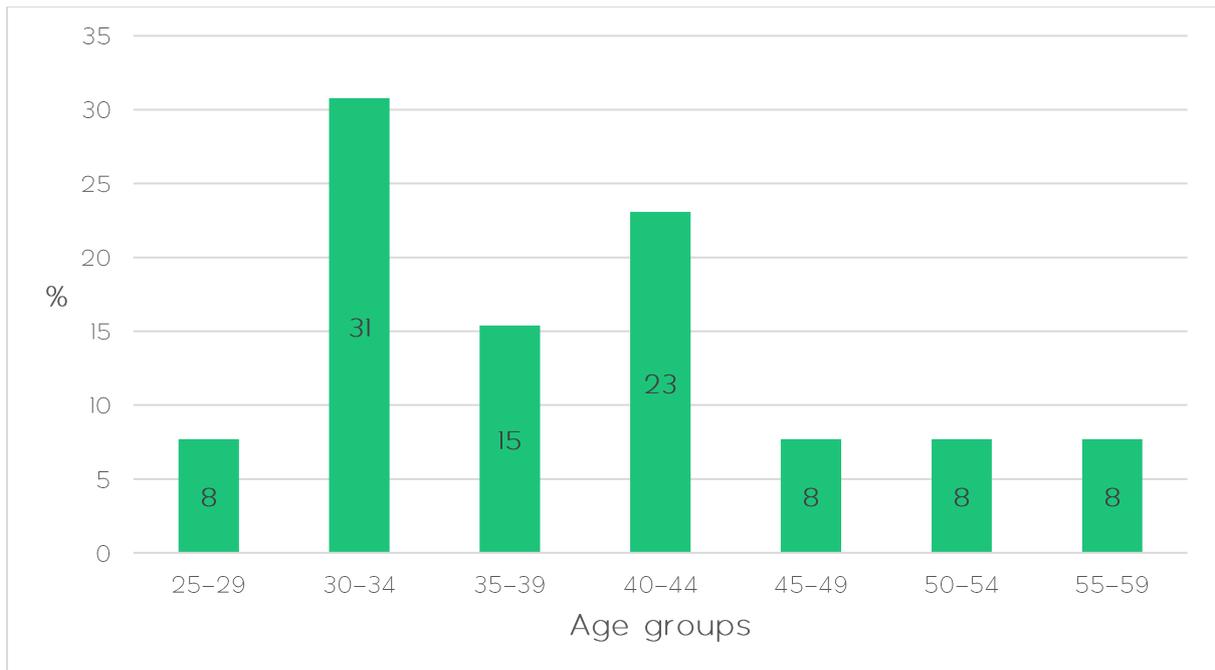
The sample was a relatively diverse group, as illustrated by the following graphs:

**Graph 1 Ethnicity of interview participants**



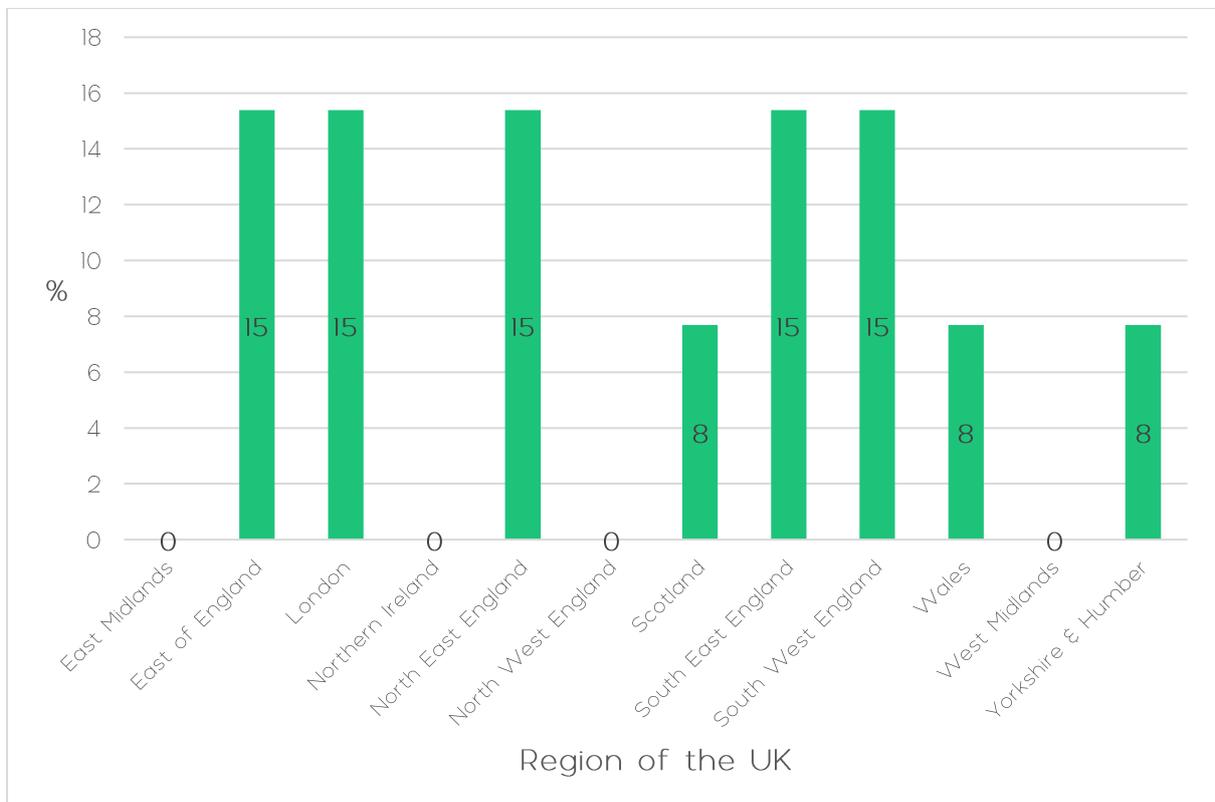
Graph 1 shows that the majority of interviewees defined themselves as being from a White ethnic background (64%), whilst 21% said they were from a Black background and 14% said they were from an Asian background.

**Graph 2 Age of interview participants**



Graph 2 illustrates that the interviewees were a mixture of ages, ranging from 29 to 57. The majority were in the middle-aged bracket, with the largest amount (four interviewees) being aged between 30 and 34.

### Graph 3 Location of interview participants



As is demonstrated by Graph 3, the interviewees were based across the UK, with the only regions not represented in the sample being East Midlands, Northern Ireland, North West England, and the West Midlands.

### 3. Findings

The fourteen interviews we conducted yielded a range of interesting and important findings both about the Respect Phonenumber specifically and interviewees' experiences of seeking support about their behaviour within their relationship more broadly. These findings have been organised into key themes based around the interview questions, which are discussed in turn below.

#### 3.1 What led you to call and how did you find out about the phonenumber?

The interviewees tended to give only brief details of what prompted them to call. In some cases, this was because they were referred/passed on the information about the phonenumber from an organisation. The Mind anger booklet, Samaritans, Relate, and Social Services and Gallop were all mentioned at least once as places they were told about the phonenumber. Some had found the information themselves via internet searches after in the words of one interviewee '*incidents where my behaviour had been less perfect so to speak*' (Interviewee 6). For two interviewees it was their partner or ex-partner that had suggested they call. This underlines the need for information available online about the phonenumber to be written for a broad audience including people using violence and abuse themselves but also potential referrers and victim-survivors themselves. Where internet searches had been conducted by the interviewees, a range of different search terms were used although interviewees could not always remember precisely. Terms recalled included '*domestic violence help*' (interviewee 1), '*help or support for domestic abusers*' (interviewee 5), '*abuse*' (interviewee 9), and '*DVP*' (interviewee 14).

Some of the interviewees talked about wanting advice from experts and the opportunity to speak to someone who was not directly involved in their lives, exemplified by the following quote:

*'I was just looking for help and I didn't want to speak to anyone who wasn't neutral, and I thought my family and friends would not be neutral. And I didn't want to go to counsellor as that would be weird. And the GP wouldn't be neutral. A stranger who was an expert on these topics, maybe they could be neutral.'* (Interviewee 1)

For all the interviewees, this was the first time they had contacted the Respect Phonenumber.

### 3.2 Making contact

Most of the interviewees found it straightforward to get in touch once they had decided to call and had the number. Some had called at a 'point of crisis' while others had had to wait until the phonenumber reopened given its restrictive, day-time opening hours. Those that had wanted or were able to wait and call during the daytime though gave positive feedback:

*'Yes, the opening hours were fine for me, it was during the day, because when I needed it it was available, and it was a point of crisis for me.'* (Interviewee 1)

*'Yes, it was fine, in that moment it was fine. I'm out of work right now and obviously 9-5 weekdays, it's not ideal. But it was fine at the time, but if I'd wanted to call on an evening then more difficult.'* (Interviewee 2)

*'I found it on an evening then realised it wasn't open so had to wait until the following morning. It's not ideal, but I was happy I didn't have to wait too long.'* (Interviewee 5)

*'Erm, I think so yeah, it was 9-5 and I looked one evening and the website said it wasn't open until the next day. So yeah, I'd have preferred on an evening but I had to call back the next day so I did, you can't expect everything to be open 24-7.'* (Interviewee 8)

However, for those who wanted to call when they were away from their partner and who worked full time things were more difficult. Clearly calling a phonenumber such as the Respect one is not simply a matter of leaving the office and making a quick call, and finding the

time, space and privacy was difficult for a small number of interviewees:

*'I found that very difficult because I had to call during a lunch break at work and it was difficult getting the privacy and afterwards, I was upset. Be great if it could be open even an hour outside of working hours.'*  
(Interviewee 11)

Nearly all the interviewees said that they had either got through on the first occasion or that they were placed on hold and soon got through. Only one interviewee had had a different experience and said it took him over a week to get through. Given his experience was so different from the other interviewees it is possible that he was talking about another organisation (perhaps the DVPP he was then referred to) or that he was unlucky on the (unknown number of) occasions he tried to get through. For all but one of the interviewees though this was not a problem.

### 3.3 What interviewees were hoping for and whether they received this

For around two thirds of the interviewees the phonenumber was the first attempt that they had made to talk to someone about their use of violence and/or abuse. Obviously, what they were hoping for in calling varied though can broadly be categorised into the following (sometimes overlapping) groups:

#### 3.3.1 Basic advice on anger management/coping techniques in times of conflict

Callers who wanted to learn about coping/management techniques tended to be happy with their experience of the helpline in this regard.

*'Erm, I think, that, it was helpful in that there was some anger management tips given like removing myself to another room for a short time, so it was helpful in that respect, but there wasn't much space to explore things.'* (Interviewee 2)

*'That I'd just get some advice on what to do and how to conduct myself. [And did you get that?] Most definitely, it was quite straightforward and helpful, she told me how to cope in the situation, in times of relationship conflict.'* (Interviewee 1)

*'I just want to change myself and control the anger.'* (Interviewee 4)

*'I was hoping I could get some advice about how to control my anger issues and other things with my wife.'* (Interviewee 12)

This suggests that the practical, 'anger management' style techniques are useful in some cases, sometimes conjoined with other requests such as those below. There is a caveat to this however which is that one interviewee called for and received information about anger management for herself but was in fact herself experiencing coercive control from her partner who had himself previously been convicted and imprisoned for a domestic violence related offence (the latter was not disclosed to the phonenumber staff but probably would have been with more probing). Therefore, caution should sometimes be exercised about seemingly straightforward calls about anger management requests. More in-depth feedback about this call has been given verbally to Respect's Head of Services to consider if any lessons can be learnt.

### 3.3.2 To talk to someone neutral about whether what they were doing was violent and abusive – whether they were a 'perpetrator'

Talking to someone 'independent' and 'neutral' was important, with a few interviewees using the phonenumber as a way of confirming to themselves or others what was happening in their relationship:

*'Erm, I suppose a couple of things, which I got. I wanted to talk to someone about the situation who was neutral but would understand, I wanted to seek clarification as to whether I was being abusive or not, and then I wanted to know further avenues of support to stop.'* (Interviewee 5)

*'Hoping to find some support and maybe talk to someone about the issue. Just needed to talk to*

*someone who was completely neutral and to point me to further help.' (Interviewee 11)*

### 3.3.3 To receive an intervention/support via the phonenumber

A small number of callers didn't realise that they would be referred on elsewhere and thought the helpline would give them the ongoing support to change they needed directly. This expectation meant that they were sometimes surprised to be 'passed on':

*'I didn't realise they were going to refer me onto someone else – they said we'll look for someone in your area.' (Interviewee 3)*

*'From the info on the website I thought I might have been able to enrol on the course there, I thought they could have signed me up to one.' (Interviewee 8)*

### 3.3.4 To receive a referral to a behaviour change programme/local support

In contrast, some interviewees called with the expectation and indeed purpose of being referred to a local organisation.

*'Yep, they put me in touch with the organisation that did an assessment and then put me on a course. What I didn't want was someone to sit and listen like a psychiatrist would. I wanted methods and ways of dealing with things that would actually make a difference.' (Interviewee 8)*

In some cases, however, interviewees were disappointed at what was available to them locally. For example, one interviewee called for this purpose:

*'Advice mainly, to know if there were any support groups in my area.' (Interviewee 6)*

When asked whether they felt they got what they needed from the call they responded:

*'Yes and no, the closest one is a 40-minute drive, and has to be paid for, which I suppose is understandable.'*

*The other one is an hour away. I expected there to be more, because I live in [names large major city].'*  
(Interviewee 6)

This was similar to another interviewee who felt they didn't exactly get what they were hoping for because of availability of local programmes but that they did get information on other programmes:

*'Details of a course. I'm in [large town] but there isn't one here, so I have to travel to [large town] for it. But I don't mind because I really want to do it.'* (Interviewee 14)

Others were not so lucky, because of location, funding, or requiring a service for same-sex relationships:

*'The thing that could have helped me just got cancelled. But she really tried to find me something, but it wasn't possible.'* (Interviewee 9)

*'I was trying to set up a meeting, but they couldn't help me in what I needed to be done. They didn't provide that service, or they hadn't had the funding, for this particular issue.'* (Interviewee 10)

*'The conversation was good, as much as a therapist doesn't know me that well. But essentially, where I've moved to in that time, she wasn't able to give me any help its where I'm living and I've felt, I'm not feeling good about that. No help or anything, it's not great. I also found that being in a same-sex relationship there was very little help it's all very male dominated. Bit disappointed.'* (Interviewee 11)

In these latter cases, the interviewees were generally understanding of the phonenumber staff situation of wanting to refer but not being able to, but this ultimately did impact on their satisfaction scores described in the next section.

### 3.4 On a scale of 1–10 how satisfied and why?

The scores out of ten in terms of satisfaction with the phonenumber ranged from 5 to 10 out of 10, with the average (mean) score across

all fourteen interviews being 8 out of 10. Five of the interviewees gave it a straight ten out of ten:

*'Because in the conversation she gave me a key that helped me unlock a problem that I wasn't thinking of from that perspective. It was basically taking a step back and respect her personal boundaries. It was that simple, and I wasn't thinking like that.'* (Interviewee 1)

*'She was helpful, she gave me other numbers.'*  
(Interviewee 3)

*'Because the guy that answered, I didn't feel judged, I felt listened to, he offered information and advice as well and I got a contact for follow up work for a choose to change course.'* (Interviewee 5)

*'Done exactly what I was hoping for.'* (Interviewee 14)

*'Oh 10 definitely, erm I think they guide me what to do, call this one they are there to listen, even if I talk too much. They were really helpful. Galop also recommended for me to ring Respect. Because I'm a transsexual as well, and the police insisted to put me as male, and I was really shocked and in trauma, I am a female in my passport and at work, but I just signed everything that they said, they didn't say I needed a solicitor.'* (Interviewee 4)

In the latter case the interviewee was asked if she felt that Respect had been respectful of her trans status and she replied yes and went on to talk about her fears of being convicted for the assault against her partner and getting placed in a men's prison.

The remaining interviewees were generally happy with the service but tended to rate it slightly lower because of the limited services available for them to refer on to. Clearly this is not something that is within the hands of the helpline staff to alter. For example, the interviewee that gave the lowest mark of 5 out of 10 explained her answer as:

*'5 out of 10. The woman was supportive as much as she could be.'* (Interviewee 11)

She felt unable to give a higher score for satisfaction because there had been no available support to refer on to so while she accepted

that the helpline staff had been supportive, she ultimately had not got what she had hoped for in calling.

This sort of response was common – to give just two more examples:

*'6 out of 10. Just the fact that, I didn't get more – there wasn't as much available as I hoped.'* (Interviewee 6)

*'I was satisfied in terms of what they did do, but I didn't get all what I hoped for, so 7 out of 10.'* (Interviewee 7)

The response that differs goes back to the case described above where the woman interviewee who was experiencing coercive control (not disclosed to the phonenumber) called for anger management advice after being told by her male partner that she was a domestic violence perpetrator and should call Respect. In this case, she recognised that the member of staff dealt with the facts of the information he was given but felt in retrospect that he could have dug a little deeper to find out what was happening to her:

*'Yeah it was a good experience, he was really – he spoke well, and explained things and did listen and because at the time I was in this space of 'shit I'm doing this'. So for where I was with my head space at the time he was bang on. 7 or 6. I think 6. With more probing it could have come about that there was more to the story. But he was there and doing a great job with what was presented.'* (Interviewee 2)

### 3.5 Actions taken as a result of the call

Where a referral was made to another organisation all interviewees said that they had contacted that organisation – usually a local behaviour-change programme (DVPP). In some cases, the interviewee was about to start on a programme, while others were in the assessment process. In one case the referral turned out not to be possible, but the interviewee was still satisfied with the process:

*'I rang DVIP after that. And they told me I have to go to Court first before I could access their services.'*

*Overall, I think it was okay because I spoke to Respect and they gave me the DVIP number and they told me what I should do. I called my Social Worker and she was happy that I'd done what she said.' (Interviewee 12)*

### **3.6 To what extent would you say that you have found it difficult to talk about your behaviour?**

There were diverse views in response to this question. Many interviewees reported what might be expected – that it is incredibly difficult to pick up the phone and talk to someone about using violence and/or abuse within a relationship.

*'Yes, its raw.' (Interviewee 3)*

*'Yeah it's so difficult. At first it was so difficult for me but if I don't be honest, who's going to help me? If I'm going to try to blame other people, I'm just cheating myself, I didn't mean to do that. I'm on hormones as well. Little things get me angry and I get mad and last time I tried to push and hit him, and he tried to hit me.' (Interviewee 4)*

Some felt that it was particularly difficult for men to ask for help and admit they have a problem:

*'Definitely. Especially men. I think a lot of people find it difficult to talk about relationships but particularly men – I've never like been out with my friends and talked about relationships and emotions – well maybe only if something very extreme – men very rarely talk about that.' (Interviewee 8)*

*'I think, it was for me, and I consider myself to be quite self-aware. I think it is, it really is, it shocked me, my behaviour, and I thought I have to do something about it. I'm aware in a general way about domestic abuse in society and I think I've looked at it from a different angle now and I think men find talking about their emotional experiences quite difficult. It's not easy to do.' (Interviewee 5)*

Some of the comments made by interviewees pointed to the role that gender norms around masculinity in particular may play in inhibiting men from seeking help in relation to changing their behaviour. As interviewee 8 points out above, men are often discouraged from talking about their relationships with people around them, or sharing emotional problems that they are experiencing. This may therefore play a part in men finding it difficult to seek out support if they are concerned about their behaviour within their relationship, especially when compounded by a sense of a guilt or shame about being seen as a perpetrator of domestic violence, even when contacting an anonymous helpline.

There was a recognition for some interviewees that although it was a difficult thing to do it was something that had to be done because of the place that they had found themselves in – often at the 'end of the road' and/or in a position of 'needing to do something':

*'Yes, because sometimes until you reach a breaking point that this has gone beyond and you're gonna lose the person you love because of that, you can be quite arrogant about it, "I don't need anyone's advice or help". But I was at a point that I was going to lose the person that I love. It's hard it's not easy, but it's a positive step, that personal boundary surrounding her physically and she says get out I then I get out.'*  
(Interviewee 1)

*'Yeah, it was difficult but also, I just wanted to get stuff sorted, so it was difficult in so far as what they would be asking or what they would be saying I just wanted to crack on and get to the bottom of things really.'* (Interviewee 2)

A small number of interviewees found it fairly easy to call, either because of its anonymous nature or because they already had therapeutic or social services interventions so were experienced about talking with professionals about their private lives.

*'I think I'm better at speaking, but only because I've had therapy that's worked quite well. I'm better at opening up. With my partner, and with anyone.'* (Interviewee 11)

*'Because before I got here, because my kids are in child protection, and you have to explain things in meetings*

*and things. So, I've been through this already, that's why I had no problem talking to Respect.' (Interviewee 12)*

### **3.7 Is there any way in which you think the service provided by the Respect Phonenumber could be improved?**

Interviewees were asked if the phonenumber could be improved in any way. Mostly, they said that they didn't feel it could be improved, or that more funding for local services that they could have been referred to would have improved their experience. This was particularly the case in terms of same-sex domestic abuse. Longer opening hours were also suggested to make it easier for people to make private calls if they work standard office hours. One interviewee thought that the helpline was staffed by volunteers that had not been fully trained, but this is clearly a misunderstanding as volunteers or interns have never been used on the phonenumber. Making sure the website was completely clear about what the phonenumber staff could and could not do in terms of programme enrolment was also mentioned.

In line with the recommendation discussed earlier in this report that further questioning might be useful in some cases where anger management is requested, one interviewee felt that coercive control should be more at the forefront of phonenumber staff minds:

*'Yeah more understanding about coercion and control, that's something that I've asked in my own research [her reading around the topic using online sources]. But it's a half hour call, and there's a lot that needs to be said. And I'm reading more about, about what are normal arguments, and actually abuse is about coercion and control and there are lots of ways that this can happen, and these last few weeks I've learnt that people do row and people do get angry and things do get thrown, and my actions might have very scary, and understanding the fundamentals of what abuse is, and if I'd understood that coercion and control are at the forefront at it then I might have had a different gaze about myself.' (Interviewee 2)*

### 3.8 If there was one thing which could be done to improve services for men who wish to change their behaviour in their relationships, what do you think it should be?

Interviewees sometimes struggled to answer this question which is understandable. Some felt that more availability of behaviour-change programmes was important, especially those who had not been able to access services in their area:

*'... it's all to do with funding isn't it. There should be more services, but at the same time I'm realistic – I understand that the way the country is at the moment, it may not be possible to do.'* (Interviewee 10)

*'I think maybe the local councils should work with Respect and have like, some people locally, other than just calling, because sometimes it's better face to face than on the phone. So, I believe you can work with the local government or have some projects through the council to make aware that these things are available.'* (interviewee 12)

Interviewees also felt that there should be more awareness that such programmes exist, and that they should be free of cost. This is exemplified by the following two quotes:

*'There's the Choose to Change programme, there are two in north wales that are groups and are free, then there is one in South Wales that is one to one and its £59 per session. And it's a minimum of 20 weeks, so that's a hell of a lot of money. So, if you're on the poverty line, you're not going to be able to get that help. That's going to restrict many peoples access. So, more services that are free and more awareness of them.'* (Interviewee 5)

*'If it was known more widely by GPs and the mental health nurses then yeah definitely. I don't know why [mine] didn't know but she didn't. I think a lot of people are struggling these days and a lot of people get to the point where you're desperate for help. A lot of the time you feel incredibly alone so it's great to find out that*

*there are organisations out there that can help you.'*  
(Interviewee 8)

Finally, interviewees felt that wider societal shifts are needed in terms of awareness of domestic abuse being used in relationships, including within schools, health, and the criminal justice system:

*'Change society, I think! Gosh, I guess relationship education, things like this should be taught in schools, and self-awareness, I thought I was quite self-aware, but there was a lot of things going on that I'd repressed that just came out. Schools need to tackle it.'*  
(Interviewee 5)

*'Just in the way that mental health is now being more talked about, this issue should be, so people don't feel so ashamed about talking about it and seeking help.'*  
(Interviewee 6)

*'First, when someone isn't acting right try to help them and understand and not just punish. Sometimes punishment is needed, but also try also to understand and help. The second thing is to understand that people's life is more than just money and working. It's hard sometimes to understand and remember that.'*  
(Interviewee 9)

#### **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

The findings from this evaluation are incredibly positive about the difficult, caring professional work conducted by the helpline staff. Interviewees rated the helpline very highly, particularly where the purpose of the phonenumber was understood. The phonenumber hours are restricted to office hours, and while this was only raised as a problem by a small number of callers, it is worth remembering that we were only able to interview the callers that did get through and there may be many more who were not able to because of the hours it is available. For those that were working standard office hours and had been able to call it was clear that this presented some difficulties.

Given the positive conclusions from this evaluation there are only a few recommendations we can suggest in terms of possible improvements to the service:

- A pilot exercise of opening the helpline later one day a week and running into early evening should be piloted if resources allow. If demand is high, a funding bid to extend the phonenumber on a regular basis could be submitted.
- A light touch review of the website should be conducted to check that there is no room for misunderstandings of what the phonenumber can and cannot do and also to ensure it has enough information for female same-sex domestic abuse.
- Hold a staff development session to discuss within the helpline staff team how best to identify victims who have phoned the helpline as part of a 'gaslighting' campaign of coercive control from their abusive partners.

## 5. References

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## 6. Annex I – Interview topic guide

1. In brief, what led you to make contact with the Respect Phonenumber?

- Prompt: Was there anything in particular that eventually prompted you to make contact?

2. How did you hear about the Respect Phonenumber?

- Prompt: Do you think there's anything that could be done to make more people aware that it exists?
- Was this the first time you'd called it?

3. Did you find it easy to make contact with the Respect Phonenumber?

- Prompt: Were the opening hours suitable for your needs?
- Prompt: Were you able to get through on your first attempt?
- Prompt: Was this the first time you had talked to a support service about your behaviour?

4. What were you hoping for by calling the Respect Phonenumber?

Would you say you received this?

5. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied were you with your experience of contacting the Respect Phonenumber, and why?

6. Did you take any actions as a result of the call? If so, what?

- Prompt: What have you found helpful?

7. To what extent would you say that you have found it difficult to talk about your behaviour? Why do you think that is?

8. Is there any way in which you think the service provided by the Respect Phonenumber could be improved?

9. If there was one thing which could be done to improve services for people who wish to change their behaviour in their relationships, what do you think it should be?

Demographic questions:

- What is your ethnicity?
- How old are you?
- Which region of the UK do you live in?

# Respect

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