



# ***Portsmouth Early Intervention Project***

*Monitoring Evaluation*

**2005**

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## 1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of the findings from the monitoring evaluation of the Portsmouth Early Intervention Project (EIP) for 2005, based on data from the EIP database and a small number of questionnaires and interviews with service users.

## 2. Background

EIP is a community-based project providing services to victims of domestic violence including information on options, support, safety planning, referral, advocacy and liaison/accompaniment to other relevant services. The current Project grew out of a pilot originally designed to provide early intervention to patients suffering domestic violence identified through routine enquiry by trained medical staff in two hospital departments, A&E and Maternity. Over the lifetime of the pilot the Project expanded its service to users referred from other agencies. One ongoing issue for the original pilot was the lack of office/counselling space available to the Project in the hospital. In 2004, to take account of its community focus and to provide adequate facilities to an expanded workforce, an office was established at the Civic Centre whilst retaining a presence in the hospital. An evaluation of the pilot was published in 2004 (Regan, 2004).

The core aim of the original pilot - to train and support hospital staff in the two departments to routinely enquire about domestic violence and refer those making positive disclosures to EIP - remains a core objective and in line with this EIP began delivering compulsory training to all midwives in Portsmouth in September 2005. This course of action is supported by the recent Department of Health decision to introduce routine enquiry into antenatal services (Itzen, 2006). Furthermore a recent project involving training community midwives to routinely enquire about domestic violence noted an increase in disclosures (Salmon et al, 2004). In addition, the Project is training other health staff to respond appropriate to any disclosure of domestic violence. The continued presence of EIP in the Hospital is reflected in the high level of referrals it receives from the participating departments. EIP currently employs five project workers and a team leader and operates a nine to five, Monday to Friday service.

## 3. Evaluation Design and Methodology

This evaluation aimed to monitor the use of EIP services and the experience of service users. The methodology is a scaled down version of that developed for the original pilot, designed as a prospective, multi-methodological evaluation to assess process and outcome issues using quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collection for the current evaluation included:

- entries on the existing EIP relational database for 2005;
- questionnaires and telephone interviews with service users;
- informal discussions with the EIP team leader.

Two copies of the original relational database now exist. One records data on service users referred only through the Housing Department, the other information on all other service users. Basic data recorded includes information on:

- the service user;
- the perpetrator;
- hospital visit(s) when domestic violence was disclosed;
- client contact(s) with EIP;

- client needs, intentions and use of other services;
- the support, referral and accompaniment services provided by EIP;
- how the client’s situation has changed between hospital and EIP contacts.

Although designed by the evaluation team, the databases and the data they contain are the property of EIP.

Following discussions with EIP management and staff it was agreed to considerably shorten the original service user questionnaire for annual evaluations subsequent to the pilot. The current version consists of three short sections covering referral route to EIP, use of EIP services and use of other agencies. All questionnaire respondents are invited to participate in an interview. The protocol for dissemination of service user questionnaires, agreed in January 2003, was followed for this monitoring evaluation.<sup>1</sup> In addition, where appropriate, service users were also offered the opportunity to participate in an interview as an alternative to completing a questionnaire.

During 2005, eight service users participated in the monitoring evaluation, five completed questionnaires only, two completed questionnaires and participated in telephone interviews and one participated only in an interview. Updated, anonymised copies of both databases were provided to the evaluators in March 2006. Data from both were combined to produce the findings below.

#### 4. Evaluation Findings

##### 4.1 Disclosure and referral

The database contains details on 379 new individuals who disclosed domestic violence during 2005. Of these, EIP had at least one contact with 254, which resulted in a total of 1,098 separate contacts. During 2005 EIP also had renewed contact with 60 service users who were originally referred to the project prior to 2005, which resulted in a total of 434 separate contacts over the course of the year. The following analysis is based on new referrals in 2005 only unless otherwise specified.

Thirty-nine per cent<sup>2</sup> (n=148) of the 379 service users disclosed within one of the original participating hospital departments, 30 per cent (n=115) of these via screening in A&E. Over a quarter of service users (28%, n=105) were referred via the Police and a similar proportion (26%, n=99) via Housing, whilst four per cent (n=14) were referred via other sources. Of the ten male service users, four were referred via Housing, three via the police, two via A&E and the other by his GP. Referral routes for female service users were slightly more diverse and all three self-referrals were female. In only three cases were service users referred from more than one agency: A&E and Police, A&E and Maternity, GP and Counsellor.

**Table 4.1 – Referral Route**

Referrals	N	%
A&E	115	30

<sup>1</sup> See Regan, 2004 pg. 12 for full details of the protocol.

<sup>2</sup> All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Maternity	27	7
*Other hospital	6	2
Police	105	28
Housing	99	26
GP	7	2
Self	3	1
**Other	7	2
Missing data	10	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Mental Health Team (2), A&E Haslar (1), Blendworth (1), O&G (1) and Patient Advice and Liaison Service (1)

\*\* Counsellor (3), Health Visitor (1), INSCAPE (1), Portage (1) and Substance Misuse Team (1)

Over one third (39 per cent) of those who disclosed did so in a participating hospital department, most of whom (30 per cent) were identified via screening in A&E. This is a particularly encouraging figure given that EIP, whilst retaining a presence in the hospital, is not actually based within or on the same site as this department. Around half of those who disclosed via one of the hospital departments (47%, n=70,) referred themselves to the hospital; 13 were referred by police, seven by a midwife and the remainder from a range of other sources.

At the time of the final report, less than half of service users (n=123, 47%) had heard about EIP from a member of the hospital staff. It was noted then that the establishment of the main office of the Project at the Civic Centre and the provision of a funded post by the Homelessness Directorate, would contribute to a continuing decrease in the proportion of referrals received from the hospital. This has indeed proved to be the case, with the proportion declining to just over a third in 2005.

Of the 148 hospital referrals, the services of EIP were offered to the service users by hospital staff in almost all (93%, n=137) of cases. Of the 11 cases where it was not offered:

- no reason was given in eight cases;
- in one case the patient stated her partner would not be returning to the house;
- in one case the matter came to light during an antenatal booking and the staff member did not want to push the issue early on;
- in one case the staff member was unaware the patient was experiencing domestic violence until a later point.

Table 4.2 below illustrates patients' responses when asked by hospital staff if they wished to have contact with EIP.

**Table 4.2 – Patient Response to Offer of Contact with EIP**

Whether/When Patient Wants Contact with EIP	N	%
Yes immediately	81	55
Yes at a later time	37	25

No	23	16
Missing data	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

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Of the seven responding service users, three were referred to EIP by the Police and two by the Housing Department. Social services and a counselling service referred the other two respondents here. All were extremely enthusiastic about their initial contact with EIP and were particularly appreciative of the calm and 'matter of fact' manner in which staff approached the experiences disclosed by service users.

They treated what I said as if it was normal, which I never expected anybody to understand. They took my word, and accepted what I said. (006)

#### 4.2 *Demographic data and history of abuse*

The profile of the 254 service users with whom EIP had initial contact during 2005 was as follows.

- 98 per cent (n=248) were female and two per cent were male (n=6).
- The youngest was 18 years old at the time of disclosure, and the oldest was 67, with 44 per cent (n=112) between the ages of 20 and 39 (data are missing for 78 service users).
- The vast majority (82%, n=208) were 'White British' in ethnic origin, with nine per cent (n=22) of Black, Asian, Mixed Race or Other White origin (data were missing for 24 service users).
- 70 per cent (n=177) had children, and of this group 63 per cent (n=112) had more than one child.
- 9 per cent (n=24) had a disability – predominantly a physical condition (n=16), with five suffering from neurological/psychological disorders, one deaf and one blind (data are missing for one service user).

No one disclosed that they had experienced violence from a 'new' perpetrator – i.e. someone different from the perpetrator disclosed at a previous contact.

The vast majority, 90 per cent (n=228) of perpetrators were male, four per cent (n=11) were female and there were missing data about the gender of the perpetrator in 15 cases. Eighty-seven per cent (n=199) had perpetrated violence against a female current/ex partner. Of the 228 male perpetrators:

- 50 per cent (n=114) committed violence against female current partners;
- 37 per cent (n=85) against female ex-partners;
- 3 per cent (n=7) against other female family members (n=4 sons; n=2 ex-stepfathers, n=1 mother's partner)
- There were missing data regarding the relationship of 22 male perpetrators.

Of the 11 female perpetrators:

- 5 committed violence against their male current partners;

- 1 against her female current partner
- 1 against her male ex-partner
- 1 against her female ex-partner
- 3 against other family members (n=1 sister’s partner, mother, daughter respectively)

Consistent with other research (Walby and Allen, 2004) demonstrating that ending the relationship does not necessarily end the violence, high levels of post-separation violence were recorded among these service users (38%, n=87 of 232 where the perpetrator/service user relationship is known).

**Table 4.3 – Relationship of Perpetrator**

Relationship	N	%
Current spouse / partner	121	48
Ex-spouse / partner	87	34
Other family member(s)	10	4
Missing data	36	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

Where details of the relationship were recorded, all 26 service users who made contact with the Project ten or more times said that the perpetrator was either a current or ex-partner or spouse; all but two of these perpetrators were male.

It is also worth noting here the fairly broad spread in terms of the length of these violent relationships, as highlighted in Table 4.4, although one to five years was the most common.

**Table 4.4 – Length of Relationship**

Length of Relationship	N	%
Less than 1 year	16	6
1–5 years	60	24
6–10 years	27	11
11–15 years	15	6
16–20 years	12	5
Over 20 years	17	7
Missing data	107	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

The EIP Database records a wide range of information about the nature of the violence being experienced by those who disclose. Table 4.5 below illustrates the different combinations of violence reported. It is interesting to note that 53 per cent of those who disclosed reported experiencing both physical *and* emotional abuse – a pattern that reflects the reality of domestic

violence. However, this table also highlights the limited disclosure of sexual violence (reported only by 6 per cent, all but one female).

**Table 4.5 – Type of Abuse / Violence**

Type of Abuse Reported	N	%
Physical and emotional abuse	135	53
Physical abuse only	55	22
Emotional abuse only	30	12
Physical, sexual and emotional abuse	13	5
Sexual and emotional abuse	1	<1
Sexual abuse only	1	<1
Missing data	19	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the six male service users two reported physical abuse; two physical and emotional abuse; one emotional abuse; and one physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Of the 11 female perpetrators, six were reported to have used physical and emotional abuse; two physical abuse; two emotional abuse only; and one physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Where data were recorded (n=178), three quarters (76%, n=135) of service users reported that the violence had happened ‘constantly’ or ‘often’.

**Table 4.6 – Extent of Abuse / Violence**

Extent of Abuse/Violence	N	%
Constant / often	135	53
Occasional / once	43	17
Missing data	76	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

Of those service users who reported the frequency of violence (n=93), 54 per cent (n=50) had experienced only one or two violent incidents over the previous twelve months with 46 per cent (n=43) reporting more than two violent incidents over that period.

Where data were available (n=80), 78 per cent (n=62) stated that they had only attended A&E once over the previous twelve months as a result of the violence, with an additional 23 per cent (n=18) having done so more than once. Table 4.7 below demonstrates that, where known, the majority (63%, n=99) of those experiencing violence had done so throughout their relationship.

**Table 4.7 – History of Abuse / Violence**

History of Abuse/Violence	N	%
Throughout	99	39
Recently only	59	23
Missing data	96	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.8 below brings together the information about police and criminal justice system involvement, and illustrates the process of attrition whereby, although the police were involved in 176 cases (69 per cent of EIP service users), only three per cent (n=7) led to an arrest and only one per cent (n=3) resulted in a prosecution.

**Table 4.8 – Criminal Justice Involvement**

Involvement of Criminal Justice System	N	%*
Police ever involved	176	69
Perpetrator ever arrested	7	3
Perpetrator ever prosecuted	3	1

\* Percentages based on whole sample of 254

It is worth noting that the recorded extremely low level of arrests noted here may be the result of missing data, particularly as the arrest rate is much lower than that of 25 per cent found in the original evaluation (Regan, 2004).

Police were involved in five of the six cases involving male service users, and all but one of the 11 involving female perpetrators. Where an arrest was made, all seven cases involved male perpetrators on female service users, as did the three cases leading to a prosecution. In one of these the perpetrator received a six-month custodial sentence for battery and affray, another received a six-month conditional discharge, and there was no information on the outcome of the third.

### 4.3 Service use

As noted in Section 4.4 above EIP had at least one contact with 254 different service users during 2005 and in total had 1,098 contacts with these service users. One hundred and sixty-three of the 254 service users made contact with the Project on more than one occasion, resulting in 844 (77 per cent) repeat contacts. Table 4.9 below shows that the more ‘typical’ EIP service user had between one and five contacts. Just over half of these service users (53%, n=101) had more than one contact with EIP.

**Table 4.9a – Number of EIP Contacts per Service User – 2005 Initial Contacts Only**

Number of Contacts	N	%
1–5	192	76
6–10	35	14
11–20	22	9
21–50	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

During 2005 EIP also had further contact with 60 service users who were originally referred to the project prior to 2005, which resulted in a total of 434 separate contacts over the year. The majority of this group (n=49) had up to ten contacts with EIP during the course of the year, and only two were high-level service users, receiving 51 and 47 contacts respectively.

**Table 4.9b – Number of EIP Contacts per Service User – pre-2005 Initial Contact Only**

Number of Contacts	N	%
1–10	49	82
11–20	9	15
21–50	1	2
51–60	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

There has been a slight decrease in the number of service users requiring a high number of contacts. The proportion of service users requiring more than 20 contacts at the time of the final evaluation report was five per cent. This has now reduced to two per cent (n=6) and may reflect the use of a more robust exit strategy by EIP staff.

The strong proactive approach taken by EIP staff to service user support, evidenced by 90 per cent of contacts being initiated by them at the date of the final evaluation report, has declined slightly but remains high. Eighty per cent (n=879) of the 1,098 contacts in 2005 were initiated by EIP staff, with 18 per cent (n=201) by the service user and the remaining (n=4) by housing staff (data are missing for 14 service users).

Seventy-three per cent (n=802) of all contacts took place over the telephone and 25 per cent (n=274) were face-to-face (data are missing for 22 service users). Whilst there continues to be a high level of telephone contact with service users, reflecting the pattern reported previously, the proportion of face-to-face contact has increased (from 17% in 2004). This may be reflective of the change in the pattern of referrals, the ability to see clients referred by Housing within that department and the establishment of office space outside of the hospital. The establishment of the office at the Civic Centre has also enabled some service users to access the Project via the city help desk.

EIP staff contacted or attempted to contact 26 individuals who chose not to take up any of the services on offer. Twelve said they did not need any support at the time or had enough support from others. Five said the violence had stopped, three that the perpetrator had left, one said

she felt safe now and one had moved to a refuge. One was working things out with the perpetrator and one said she had never suffered domestic violence. One left details with her mother to call, as she had her mobile phone, but no further contact appears to have been made, and one was unsure about contact with the project.

The EIP database is set up to hold information about violence witnessed or directly experienced by any children present in the service user's home. As has been noted in previous reports, this is something that has gone largely unrecorded in some agencies providing services to victims of domestic violence despite the numbers of service users who do have children. Over two thirds (70 per cent, n=177) of the 254 service users had children.

The database notes that one per cent (n=2) of this group of service users reported that children had witnessed violence. None of the children who had witnessed violence had also experienced violence themselves. Two service users disclosed experiencing violence during pregnancy. One had experienced physical and emotional abuse, the other physical, sexual and emotional abuse, both throughout the relationship. However the non-response rates to the two relevant questions here was 99 per cent. We noted in the final evaluation report (Regan, 2004) that staff, who routinely inform service users of their child protection obligations, may be reluctant to ask these specific questions, aware that fear of child protection concerns may deter women from seeking further support. The very high level of missing data supports the conclusion that this possibility still exists.

The lack of information in the database is not reflective of a lack of understanding of the importance of providing support to children who are or have lived with domestic violence within the Project. EIP, in conjunction with The Prevention of Youth Offenders Project, started a children and young people's group in November 2005. This is a client led group for children of EIP service users and attendance thus far has been extremely high.

Although only two EIP service users (less than 1%) are recorded as disclosing domestic violence during pregnancy, compared to 12 per cent previously, this is probably reflective of the lack of consistent enquiry by Project staff.

Those service users who did take up the services of EIP were asked at each contact about their intentions with regard to their current situation. Service users often reported the same intention more than once or reported a number of different intentions during one contact. As is evident from Table 4.10 below, the intention of the majority of service users was quite a basic one – simply to find support. It is also interesting to note that a significant proportion of service users were intending to find a way to leave or stay separated from their violent partner, rather than remain in the relationship.

**Table 4.10 – Service Users' Intentions**

Intentions	Intentions N	Intentions %	Service Users N	Service Users %*
To find support	963	54	216	95
To contact EIP	3	<1	3	1
To stay separated from perpetrator	395	22	104	46
To keep perpetrator excluded	130	7	59	26

To leave	115	6	53	23
To get perpetrator excluded	67	4	29	13
To get a Protection Order	42	2	26	11
To stay with perpetrator	82	5	50	22
Other	3	<1	3	1

\* Based on 227 service users where data available

One of the most interesting findings here is that no EIP service users intended to pursue a prosecution of the perpetrator. It is possible however that this may simply reflect a lack of enquiry about criminal justice system responses by project staff.

Table 4.11 below outlines the range of ‘need’ as identified by service users. A total of 3,791 ‘needs’ were noted by 229 service users – an average of 17 per client. Almost all cited ‘support’ and ‘information’ as their main needs (98 per cent and 94 per cent respectively) and in line with the large number of service users who intended to get away from their violent partners (see above), it is perhaps not surprising that such a large number (84%) cited safety/protection as one of their needs. It continues to be evident that the vast majority of EIP service users have needs that are ongoing, rather than simply ‘one-off’, and the type and level of support being provided by EIP staff certainly reflects this.

**Table 4.11 – Service Users’ Needs**

Stated ‘Need’	‘Need’ N	‘Need’ %	Service Users N	Service Users %*
Support	1,019	26	224	98
Information	881	22	216	94
Safety / protection	582	15	193	84
Housing	557	14	135	59
Mental health	192	5	89	39
Financial	197	5	82	36
Legal action – civil	196	5	68	30
Legal action – criminal	139	4	65	28
Physical health	110	3	62	27
Custody / access	91	2	49	21
Military issues	7	0	2	1

\* Based on 229 service users where data available

Services provided to service users by EIP staff directly reflect the ‘needs’ identified above, with ‘information’ and ‘support/listening’ the most provided forms (99% and 97% respectively). During the period of the evaluation, 235 service users were provided with 3,632 forms of support from EIP, with many receiving the same type of support more than once. Safety planning and liaison with other agencies continue to be used by a large number of service users. What this table does not properly account for is the referral and accompaniment services provided by EIP that are more fully recorded separately (see Table 4.13 below).

**Table 4.12 – Support Provided**

Stated 'Need'	'Need'		Service Users	Service Users
	N	%	N	%*
Information	989	27	232	99
Support / listening	1,049	29	229	97
Explanation of options	796	22	209	89
Safety planning	385	11	158	67
Liaison with agencies	252	7	107	46
Accompaniment to other agencies	81	2	53	23
Referral	56	2	49	21
Court accompaniment	17	<1	11	5
Advocacy	6	<1	5	2
Other	1	<1	1	<1

\* Based on 235 service users where data available

The identification here of 'support/listening', provided in a non-judgmental manner, is reflected in the comments of service user respondents.

*I just felt that I could talk without being discriminated against. They were like friends. (001)*

*The support. It was nice to have a friendly and private chat. I felt better after the conversations. (002)*

*I could phone them and, [by listening], they helped me calm down. (003)*

*They listened to my troubles. (005)*

*They helped lift a 23 year burden from my shoulders. (006)*

Information about options was also appreciated by these service users.

*They have given me choices about things that I didn't think I had. (002)*

A major strand of the work undertaken by EIP staff was, and remains, referral of service users to other appropriate agencies. Two hundred and sixty-seven referrals have been made on behalf of 110 service users, an average of two per user. Whilst there is some variation between clients, the vast majority (92%, n=101) had five referrals or below. In one case, however, 13 referrals were made on behalf of a service user: housing authority (n=7); temporary accommodation (n=3); social services (n=2); and local helpline (n=1); all over a two-month period. The level of input by EIP staff required by this one service user indicates the unpredictable nature of needed support. Nevertheless, the extent of referrals for certain service users evident in previous reports seems to have declined.

As noted in previous reports, not all of the work undertaken by EIP staff is recorded by the database. Staff may make a number of telephone calls that result in no contact with a client, and they may also have to make a number of calls seeking information for a client, referring

them and acting as advocates on their behalf. Unfortunately, due to staff shortage during 2005 there was a period when record sheets were not being completed and it is therefore impossible to provide accurate data on the number of calls made. However, it is unlikely that this has changed significantly since the evaluation of the pilot. At that time it was noted that the average number of calls per service user was six. In 2005 this would result in roughly 1,000 calls<sup>3</sup>.

Table 4.13 below illustrates the wide variety of agencies clients have been referred to over the course of the past year.

**Table 4.13 - Referrals Made**

Agency	Referral	Referral	Service Users	Service Users
	N	%	N	%*
Housing authority	97	36	54	49
Counsellor	33	12	30	27
Police	37	14	27	25
Refuge	16	6	14	13
Solicitor	20	7	14	13
Social services	9	3	7	6
Benefits agency	4	1	4	4
Women's Aid helpline	4	1	4	4
C.A.B	3	1	3	3
Local helpline	3	1	3	3
Mental health	3	1	2	2
Victim Support	2	1	2	2
Witness Service	1	0	1	1
Criminal court	1	0	1	1
Family court	1	0	1	1
Other**	33	12	23	21

\* Based on 110 clients where data available

\*\*Includes CPS, financial services, colleges, pet re-housing services, children and youth projects, youth offending team

One strand of work on behalf of service users not reflected in the table above is the practical tasks organised by EIP staff. This includes repairs, installation of locks and panic alarms and setting up of rapid response monitoring. One respondent described the service provided to her.

*They got all my repairs done and I had new doors put in. I had a spy-hole put in my front door, I had locks on the back door fixed, they were broken. I had the back window fixed as well because that wouldn't shut properly. They were brilliant. (004)*

Another indication of the level of work undertaken by EIP staff is the accompaniment of service users to other agencies. Table 4.14 details the range of agencies involved and that, for some clients, this involves multiple visits.

<sup>3</sup> Six calls per 163 service users with more than one contact with the Project.

**Table 4.14 – Accompaniment to other Agencies**

Agency	Service Users N	Times N
Housing authority	33	43
Solicitor	9	10
Criminal court	6	8
Civil court	5	10
Benefits agency	4	4
Police	3	3
Social services	3	4
Family court	2	2
Refuge	2	2
Other*	9	10

\* Includes RSPCA, B&B, hostel, school, racial harassment team, community action team.

Although the number of service users requiring accompaniment to court is small (n=11, the comment from one service user respondent supports the contention that without this provision even fewer might apply for injunctions or support their a case through the criminal justice system.

Accompanying me to court. I could not have done it without them. (004)

That EIP staff take responsibility for checking up on service users where there may be ongoing support needs is appreciated by service user respondents.

I have found it helpful as they have phoned me to see if all is well at home. (001)

### Summary

- Over one third of EIP service users were referred from hospital departments.
- The overwhelming majority of service users were female, over half were aged between 20 and 39 years and were White British and more than two thirds have children.
- 30 per cent had been in a relationship for five years or less.
- 90 per cent of perpetrators were male.
- 80 per cent reported physical violence and for over half the violence had happened 'constantly' or 'often'; for over one third it had happened throughout the relationship.
- Over one third of service users had experienced post separation violence.
- The Police had been involved in over two thirds of cases but only a tiny minority (1%) of perpetrators had been subject to a prosecution for a domestic violence-related offence.
- The majority of service users (76%) had between one and five contacts with EIP, and only two had been in contact more than 20 times.
- Almost all service users wanted generalised 'support' and 'information'.
- There was a high level of telephone support provided to service users by EIP staff and an increased level of face-to-face support compared to previous years.
- Referral to other agencies continues to be a major strand of the support provided to service users.

- The Project appears to have successfully reduced repeat visits to the A&E department for domestic violence related injuries.

## 5. Conclusion

There is no doubt that there continues to be a need for the services provided by EIP to be available in the Portsmouth area. This is supported by the continued commitment to the service by funders and referral by other agencies. The decision to fund and combine the service to victims of domestic violence with services to victims of rape and sexual assault and to house both within new expanded premises is further evidence of the success of EIP. In this monitoring evaluation, as in the evaluation of the pilot, the pro-active approach of EIP was welcomed by the small number of responding service users, as were the information, non-judgmental support, listening and options provided. Practical assistance, advocacy with external agencies and especially support through the civil and criminal justice systems, crucial for resolution and sustaining prosecutions, are also all appreciated. The only criticism made by any service user was the inability to contact EIP staff outside of normal working hours.

There are two areas where we would make recommendations. The first is the lack of recording by staff of information on children who may have or are living with domestic violence. Whilst it is understandable that service users may be reluctant to disclose information to project staff that may lead to the involvement of social services child protection departments we would argue that this should not be allowed to operate as a barrier to the provision of services to children. That such provision exists, and is being taken up, suggests that service users may be giving information to workers, voluntarily or in response to questions, which is not subsequently recorded on the database. It is also worrying that currently the Project cannot accurately gauge the number of referrals it has made to Child Protection social workers.

The second area here is the lack of information in the database about criminal justice outcomes. It may be possible that the extremely low level of arrests recorded is an accurate reflection of actual practice, however it is also likely that this is the result of lack of information within the project. We would recommend that steps are taken to ensure that this data is collected as part of that required for the new combined EIP/SARC. It might also be worth considering whether the lessons learnt from areas where specialist courts and domestic violence advocates have been piloted could be incorporated into the new combined service – for example the Home Office funded project in Croydon (Vallely et al, 2005).

Our main recommendation to EIP management is that data entry becomes the sole responsibility of one member of staff. This task holder should also be pro-active in collecting missing information. This should ensure consistent data entry and a reduction in empty fields. Experience elsewhere suggests that data is likely to be more accurate and complete where there is a dedicated staff member responsible for all aspects of data management. Added value can also be achieved by incorporating tracking of cases through the criminal and civil justice systems into this role.

The final word in this monitoring evaluation comes from a service user respondent and reminds us why this service should continue to be available to the population of Portsmouth.

EIP have been invaluable to me, I would not have known how to deal with my situation without their constant advice and support. (004)

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