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Voice Against Violence

Young People's Experiences of Domestic Abuse Policy-Making in Scotland

by

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Declaration

The thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Summary

This study, undertaken from a feminist and children's rights perspective, emerged from the growing body of literature on children's experiences of domestic abuse, the challenges of childhood studies and the opportunities arising out of the changed socio-political landscape of Scotland since devolution. It examines, with children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, their own solutions to improve help for children and young people, their perspectives on real and tokenistic participation in Scotland's policy-making and, their self-defined ethical and participatory standards to make sustained participation possible. Combining innovation in methodology and co-production of new knowledge with children and young people, the researcher contributes the three E's of Enjoyment, Empowerment and Emancipation to ethical principles focussing on safety, and recommends a new ethical approach to consent that recognises children's agency in their own lives and in deciding their own best interests. A Participatory Action Research Process over five years with 9 of the 48 young people, resulted in young people themselves becoming change agents to begin to tackle the issues that emerged from the wider study's qualitative first part, also action-orientated through children's political activism. For example, the lack of help, awareness and stigma attached to domestic abuse was tackled through their production of a public online awareness raising campaign and film; their critique of the previously most revered of services, Women's Aid specialist support, resulted in a multi-million fund and their analysis became the conditions of grant; the lack of respect for and inclusion of young people in policy-making they challenged through defining their terms of engagement which are explored here, sanctioned and legitimised by their emerging 'critical friendship' with Ministers. Unusually the young people participating in the study made a significant impact on Scotland's domestic abuse policy and practice, as well as repositioning children and young people in the democratic process.

Introduction

Feminist theory and children's rights

The voices of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse have been largely silent and silenced until recently. This study aims to give children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA) a voice and explore, with them, spaces for their views, opinions, perspectives to be heard, respected and acted upon. My theoretical underpinnings stem from feminist and sociology of childhood perspectives, merging understandings and frameworks from feminist theory with a focus on the child as an expert in their own lives (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6).

My strand of feminism is closely aligned to what Walby (2011) states is the ambitious aim of transforming gender relations and existing gender standards (Rees, 1998; Walby, 2011). This stems from my experiences as a woman in an unequal society and a theoretical and practice framework that asserts gender as central to understanding, contextualising and responding appropriately to domestic abuse (see, for example, Lombard and McMillan's overview, 2013). I share the feminist understanding, now mainstreamed in Scotland (Breitenbach and MacKay, 2001), that domestic abuse is caused by, sustained and persists because of structural and in particular gender inequality (Scottish Executive, 2000 and see, for example, Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007). What Kelly named as the 'continuum of violence against women' (1998, passim) constitutes male abuse of power, in the public as well as private sphere. Kelly (1994) was also, significantly, one of the first authors to identify that domestic abuse was the 'simultaneous abuse of women and children' (p.47). Therefore, children also are subject to such power and control of the abuser, which is reinforced and sustained through their own position in society and the family as a child, as well as that of their mother's as a woman.

In relation to the dynamics of domestic abuse, the recent work reframing domestic abuse, building on previous feminist including radical feminist thought, rightly describes the range of ongoing abuse women endure, that some re-name as 'coercive control' (Stark, 2007, passim) or 'everyday terrorism' (Pain, 2011, passim). It echoes moves in Scotland to rename domestic violence as domestic abuse to stress mental, financial, sexual as well as physical abuse, and bring to the fore the ongoing fear and courage domestic abuse entails. The focus on fear, control and framing domestic abuse as a 'crime against liberty' (Stark, 2007, passim) prescribes a need to connect with women's agency, decision-making and choices as well as safety, which is common practice within Women's Aid. What is relatively new in the field is the need to consider children's agency, children as active participants in domestic abuse, for whom active participation in decision-making about their lives has been found to be 'crucial to their ability to cope' (Mullender et al., 2002:100). This knowledge was produced through Mullender et al.'s (2002) ground-breaking approach in the first robust study respecting children experiencing domestic abuse as active participants in research: where children's lived experience has been explored in-depth with them and their voices brought to the fore.

Feminism's welcome refocusing of epistemology to include women's lived experiences as a valid way of knowing, needed not only to extend in relation to revealing differences between women, and intersectionality of other inequalities such as race (see, for example, Mama, 1997; Gill, 2013), but now needs, in my view, to merge more fully with the exploration of the lived experience of children and young people. This will necessarily include the intersectionality of age, the social construct of being a child and the diversity of children's experiences.

The feminist theory of 'studying up' (discussed in Harding, 2012:48) with women, to not only reveal and challenge understandings of power and social relations between men and women, but also principles and practices of dominant institutions (ibid.), I feel could also

be applied to children. By this, I mean researching with children about their views of state and feminist interventions, research disciplines and adult proscribed constructs of what it is and means to be a child. In particular, I want to explore and challenge with children and young people the dominant discourse that they do not have the competence to make their own decisions and speak for themselves, in both private and public spheres (see, for example, Edwards et al., 2004:104; Malone and Hartung, 2010:30). This allies itself to different modes of feminism (post-structuralist, critical) deconstructing or reforming dominant discourse, so that 'what previously seemed normal and natural [in my view not listening to children in domestic abuse situations, decision-making, research, service provision, policy-making] becomes unthinkable' (Gannon and Davies, 2012:68)

Feminist, particularly standpoint feminism's, assertion that methods are politically engaged, that the gaining of knowledge serves social justice aims (see, for example, Harding, 2012:57-60), is an important principle that I take further and relate to the emancipation of children and young people experiencing gender-based violence. In this study they are involved in what Lincoln and Denzin (2003) name as 'taking back "voice"…empowerment of the marginalised…the nameless, the voiceless' (pp.625-626) so that they, as a group (diverse as they are), 'come to consciousness "for itself", not just as the object of the gaze of others' (Harding, 2010:47 citing Jameson, 1988; Lukacs, 1923/1971). I aim to build on feminist principles by exploring spaces for children to be part of the social change they define as needed, to actively challenge their own democratic exclusion, should they so choose.

My research approach therefore stems from feminist theoretical understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse, that interlinks women and children's safety; feminist epistemology that puts lived experiences at the centre of knowledge; linked to a methodology and methods that gives voice to the voiceless using feminist principles of dignity, equality, reciprocity (see, for example, Skinner et al., 2005; Pain et al., 2010:30), so

as not to further disempower. This feminist approach is coupled with the children's rights assertion that children can speak for themselves, as 'agents of their own lives' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6) 'co-constructors of knowledge' (ibid.), 'co-producers of their own welfare' (Hallett and Prout, 2002:5), with their own, distinctive, voice.

Childhood theorists find that is still rare to involve children as the central research participants (Tisdall et al., 2009:2) or to recognise that 'children and adults can learn from children's own embodied feelings and experiences' (Alderson, 2012:185), without any mediation by, or triangulation with, the views of adults, which is certainly true in my review of the children and domestic abuse literature for this study (see, also, Humphreys and Houghton 2008a, Houghton, 2008a). I would agree with Alderson (1995) that the challenge is to raise children's voices higher than those who purport to speak for, or about, them. My approach to this study, meshing feminist and childhood theory, is to make children the central, active participants throughout. Their lived experience and solutions will remain central, to respect them as 'co-producers of knowledge' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6) and potential 'change agents' (Malone and Hartung, 2010:30). I unapologetically focus on their voices and explore spaces for the empowerment and emancipation of those previously voiceless.

Feminist activism and children's voices: a personal story

As a feminist activist, campaigning throughout my adult life for equality, I have had the privilege of working with children and young people experiencing domestic abuse for over twenty years, mainly in Women's Aid. The emphasis when I began work as a refuge children's worker was on play and childcare. It was wonderful to enjoy days out to the seaside, coaxing children to be noisy, wild, hold hands and run fully-clothed into the sea screaming with laughter, just because we could: we could because they were free. It disturbed me how their voices had been silenced by their abusive fathers or father figures.

It was only on rare occasions, down to chance, that I was with a child or young person on my own. Their pain and need for someone they trusted, other than mum, to be with, talk to and hear what they had been through, to listen to how they felt, was patent. Yet the way we were working was further silencing them, they weren't seen as needing support for themselves, their suffering was hidden to many, but not to many mothers, not to some children's workers who were listening. Children's workers voiced frustrations at Women's Aid meetings about their lack of hours to give children the support they needed, and the need for a transformation in how CYPEDA were supported. I can still see eyes holding so much unexpressed pain as they left, too often to go back to the fear and silence. I became National Children's Rights Worker in Scottish Women's Aid because I was disturbed that we were maintaining the silence.

Some progressive children's workers were listening to children and young people and developed innovate methods to enable children to speak out such as art, worksheets and games. They began to be recognised as unsung innovators (see, for example, Mullender and Morley,1994), their unique skills and contributions recognised in the first academic research studies on children's perspectives (Mullender et al. 2002; Fitzpatrick et al. 2003), the former recommending closer sharing of skills, the latter employing children's workers to conduct focus groups. Local children's workers motivated, grounded and inspired the national work and ensured that children's voices were heard and highlighted nationally. At that time, internal transformation was needed, children's rights did not sit easily with women's rights to some feminists, a rise in children's voices and need for their own services deemed a threat; I never noticed this threat being felt by the children's mothers. To me, children's rights are an obvious and essential part of feminist activism: in the field of domestic abuse even more so, where women's and children's abuse, rights and freedom are interlinked, yet both are individuals worthy of respect, a voice and empowerment.

The early 1990s focussed on how children were 'seen' within Women's Aid, ascertaining their right to equality and respect (Scottish Women's Aid, 1995); then it was time to tackle public awareness, the responses of agencies, the funding for support. Time for a not so popular, trailblazing 'roadshow' trio: Janette De Haan (nee Forman) arguing that the links between domestic and child sexual abuse needed to be taken seriously (Forman, 1991); Moira Andrew and Rory McCrae from the ground-breaking men's project arguing that we had to work with abusive men and keep women safe, and myself, backed by children's workers, saying that we needed to listen to children, support them and give them a voice. We used children's powerful testimonies with their permission. Sometimes, rarely, a young person would speak for themselves. We were breaking the silence.

Devolution transformed the feminist cause in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament filled (well, 39 per cent of MSPs) with women, many of those openly feminist; the much lauded power-sharing way of working would allow feminist activists access to power, evidenced by the National Children's Rights Worker new position on Government working groups. The feminist children's rights activists worked to ensure that children would have a voice in the new politics, such as Scottish Women's Aid's children's postcards to the new Parliament (Scottish Women's Aid, 1999), children meeting the Minister for Children the same year, and the Listen Louder Campaign 2002-4 (Houghton 2006, see Chapter 3). Yet it was not easy to get children heard. For example, when the Government funded research on refuge provision, the specification did not include the views of children, the majority of refuge residents. The approach was still silencing children. I lobbied for and then undertook focus groups, alongside children's workers, with children for the study by Fitzpatrick et al. (2003). The insightful, strong views of children and young people on their lives and support; their wish to help others; the innovative and creative ways their trusted workers empowered them to speak; the limits in that multi-faceted research study to bringing a great body of children's knowledge to the fore; the skill of the researcher in asserting children as 'co-

producers of knowledge' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6); all inspired this study. It would not be 'traditional' research though, through which adults related children's views to people in power, for when I asked what the children would like to say to the Government about refuges one young boy said: 'I'd rather tell them myself'. I did not only want children to have a voice but to empower them to make that voice heard, to speak directly to people in power themselves, to attempt to change the world for the better.

Researching from a feminist and children's rights perspective: the study

This research study focusses on children's own perspectives and solutions in relation to supporting children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA); their priorities for action for policy-makers or 'people in power' and, latterly, their perspectives on their involvement in Scotland's domestic abuse policy-making. The research consists of three parts, conducted over different time periods, in which I had different roles, as well as researcher, which I will discuss briefly here. There is a gap in the study between late 2004 and late 2007, when I left Scottish Women's Aid to become employed full time at the Scottish Government. It was an opportunity to manage a £6 million fund for children's workers and use Part 1's findings as conditions of grant, and then also to develop the National Delivery Plan for CYPEDA.

Part 1: what helps children experiencing domestic abuse? 48 participants

In 2004, over a three month period, I undertook a qualitative research process with 41 CYPEDA in contact with Women's Aid services, focussing on their views of help and support, their perspectives on what would make things better as well as any emerging themes from them. My position as National Children's Rights Worker enabled the research to happen, to be grounded in a feminist and children's rights perspective, conducted in partnership with skilled, known workers to the CYPEDA, using innovative participatory

methods developed with the advisory team of experienced support workers. It enabled greater access to the CYPEDA, partly because, although I was an 'outsider' researcher to the children and young people, a stranger; they were also reassured because I was from the national office, an 'insider' bound by Women's Aid strict rule of confidentiality as well as a skilled children's worker. My position also ensured that the young people had the opportunity to present their priorities direct to Ministers through the Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) Listen Louder film-making and event. In 2008 and 2009 I had the opportunity to conduct 2 further focus groups as part of a government project (Houghton, 2008 and see Part 2 of the study) which involved 7 new young people to the study who related their solutions for domestic abuse services, to me as an independent researcher. This meant the total participants for this part of the research was 48.

Part 2: young people's involvement in policy-making

From 2007 to 2012, I undertook a participatory action research (PAR) study with a total of nine young people with experience of domestic abuse and diverse services, who were involved in the development (2007-8) and implementation (2009-2012) of Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan (Scottish Executive, 2008). Six young people were involved in the development and 5 of those plus another 3 were young experts in the more intense Voice Against Violence group that monitored its implementation.

Development of the Plan

Initially I was employed through an external contract by the Scottish Government as an independent researcher, newly independent from Government policy-making, crucially independent from agencies in receipt of government funds and hosted by the University of Edinburgh to ensure distance in location and enhance neutrality. The project was to undertake action research with 6 young people to give their priorities for action direct to

Ministers in the development of the plan (2007-8), unmediated by adults involved in the development (Houghton, 2008).

The young people recommended continued involvement of CYPEDA to Ministers which they agreed to. Five of these young people opted to participate and I was funded as an independent researcher to continue the project and I adopted the participatory action research methodology of reflection and action although in this phase there was a time distance between. This culminated in their involvement in plan launch which included young peoples' critical assessment of the plan and speaking directly to Ministers of their concerns that included the hitherto piecemeal participation of children. This led to my conducting an evaluation with young people of their involvement and the production of recommendations for sustained involvement of CYPEDA in national policy (VAV Directives, 2008).

Implementation of the Plan: Voice Against Violence

The young people's recommendations for regular, sustained participation of CYPEDA were accepted and a year later I was recruited to manage the Voice Against Violence group of young experts who were participating in the implementation of the plan (2009-2012). Eight young people were recruited to become young experts advising the Government for this two and a half year project, including the five involved in the earlier stages. I was employed and the project funded by the Scottish Government. A key principle was that the project should be independent of the Government and involve a critical reflection on the integration of CYPEDA into policy-making. I was based at the Edinburgh University Centre for Research on Families and Relationships to provide the necessary distance from Government, a neutral base, not allied to any of the organisations funded by the Government, an independent researcher-practitioner. This base, alongside a specific regular, safe place for residentials, provided a 'home' for VAV, which was very important

for the young experts to feel comfortable and want to maintain involvement. It became a safe space for work, exploration and critiquing. To retain such independence and comfort was important to my researcher role focused on enabling a critical, unfiltered exploration of young people's perspectives on their involvement in policy-making.

An important part of that role was to acknowledge the young peoples' expertise: the Parliament named them young experts, the young people recommended this term (VAV Directives, 2008). They were keen that the manager's role was: 'like a band manager - different skills but behind us, with us, not better than us' (Declan, VAV Directives, 2008). I therefore endeavoured to design a research process and context that acknowledged this would be a swapping of expertise, learning together (often termed co-learning or co-inquiry) about this new policy approach. Together we developed a more equal, collaborative approach to reflection and action as time went by, which is explored in the Methodology Chapter. The sustained involvement of Voice Against Violence in particular, over two and a half years of regular residential weekends, enabled a building of trust and relationships that supported the PAR approach of collaboration. The young participants agreed that a process of action and reflection was essential for their effectiveness, so that my PhD study became: 'part of VAV work, wouldnae say it was two different things, two separate things, it was all just kinda tied in together' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). The developmental methodology and the tensions inherent in the research-manager role are discussed further in Chapter 4. The privilege of direct, regular contact over such a time period was an incredible opportunity for the researcher.

Part 3: a sensitive approach

During Part 2 of the study a further area for study emerged: young people recommended that a 'sympathetic approach' (VAV Directives 2008) and 'rules for engagement' (ibid.) should be developed with the 8 young experts of Voice Against Violence (aged 16-22 at the

beginning of involvement). This resulted in Part 3 of the study, which also used a PAR approach, with a slightly different role due to the more personal and sensitive nature in discussing ethics and therefore personal experiences of domestic abuse. I utilised more qualitative individual interviews, and confidential contact with myself as manager and researcher, to enable young experts to discuss personal experiences and concerns. Safety concerns such as contact with their fathers, dangers, mothers' worries or a need for anonymity could not necessarily be discussed openly, particularly in the first year when relationships and friendships were being built. This was in contrast to the more open, collaborative approach in Part 2, made possible by the less personal focus of reflection, for example, exploring what worked with Ministers. However, working alongside young participants, I created careful and creative methods (for example, an anonymous group exercise about the consequences of breaching confidentiality) to both tackle as manager, and explore as researcher, ethical issues in a group-setting. Over the two and a half year period of the study, the group and individual young participants began to develop their role in relation to the standards. This included VAV's young creative director working with the researcher and media company on the film agreement and Karen taking a role in co-creating workshops with the researcher to explore standards. Part 3 brought its own challenges, explored in the Methodology and findings Chapter 7, and presented a unique opportunity for the researcher to involve young people in setting ethical and participation standards throughout the lifetime of Voice Against Violence.

Children having a voice and being agents of change: an outline of the thesis

There will be three chapters of literature review which led me to identify the research questions as well as contributing to my ethical and participatory approach. The methodology chapter follows which explains how I operationalized those questions to answer my questions and how a third question emerged from the participants. There are

three chapters of findings and a conclusion that draws it all together and considers what it adds up to.

Chapter 1 reviews literature over the last century of children and young people's perspectives of experiencing domestic abuse, only possible through a shift in the way children are seen. The review focuses only on studies where children are seen as active participants in research (Christensen, 2000) and in domestic abuse (Mullender et al., 2002) to ensure that children's own voices reveal the reality of the mental, physical and sexual abuse suffered by women and children and their views of the abusive father. An essential beginning to any study with CYPEDA, informing the methodology as well as the questions.

Chapter 2 reviews the active participant literature in relation to children and young people's perspectives on what helps, as 'service users and co-producers of their own welfare' (Prout and Hallett, 2003:5). It explores the emerging literature in relation to informal help and professional help in the eyes of CYPEDA, grounding the study of services in Scotland in the rich but limited literature preceding it.

Chapter 3 explores the socio-political context that resulted in fertile ground for children's voices to be heard. It critically examines the emerging voice of CYPEDA over the first three terms of the Scottish Parliament, its democratic participative approach and the influence of feminist and children's rights discourses. It examines the shifts in the way children are seen through the policy-making lens; in particular children's voices within that process and the potential for young people's 'democratic inclusion' (Thomas, 2010:188).

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter that begins by further examining the feminist and children's rights framework used in the action-oriented study. Empowering children as 'agents of their own lives but also interdependent on others' (Moss, 2002:6) is examined in detail in Part 1 of the research focussing on qualitative research to ascertain children's

perspectives on help-seeking, working in a culture of partnership with children's workers and, to an extent, mothers. This develops into a more equal, collaborative theoretical approach for Part 2's Participatory Action Research (PAR) which discusses a repositioning of adults as well as children, alongside children. Ethics and participation rights emerge as an interesting focus for the study in Part 3.

Chapter 5 reveals the findings in relation to children and young people's perspectives on what helps and the solutions they bring to the policy-making table.

Chapter 6 explores young people's perspectives on their involvement in policy-making, their perspectives on what worked and didn't work and their experiences from token to real participation and every rung of the ladder, or other typology, in-between.

Chapter 7 emerges from young people's own perspectives on ethical considerations and participation rights, in relation to young people taking an integral role in policy making.

Chapter 8 concludes with the inferences we can draw after hearing the voices of children and young people with experience of both domestic abuse and policy-making in Scotland.

It is important to note here that I use the abbreviation CYPEDA for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, which is commonplace in Scotland: it may be seen as depersonalising which is not my intention, rather to save words when writing to a strict word count, for what CYPEDA themselves actually say.

Chapter 1
Children and Young People's Perspectives of Experiencing Domestic Abuse

International literature on women and children's experiences of domestic abuse (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008a; Stanley, 2011 for research overviews) reveals crucial evidence linking domestic abuse and child abuse and has transformed the domestic abuse discourse from adult victim only to children as victims also. Until a sea change in the twenty first century, children's voices were largely absent from this knowledge production.

When children began to be included in research, either self-reporting using psychometric tests in some of the US and Canada developmental psychology studies (see Kitzmann et al., 2003; Jarvis et al. 2005, Skopp et al., 2005; Sternberg et al., 2006; Edleson et al., 2007); or being interviewed/participating in focus groups for the first qualitative studies (see Peled, 1998, McGee 2000, Mullender et al., 2002), the authors found that the child's perspective was unique and differed to that of the adults involved. Children's awareness of domestic abuse, and the extent of that abuse, was often greater than many women thought and hoped (Hester and Radford 1996, McGee, 2000, Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007; Edleson et al, 2007). Children's perceptions, appraisals and the meanings they attach to domestic abuse incidents can be different or unknown to their mothers and others (Mullender et al., 2002; Skopp et al., 2005; Edleson et al., 2007; Fosco et al., 2007). Furthermore, siblings experiences are different, yet adults often think they are more similar than siblings do themselves (Mullender et al., 2002; Skopp et al., 2005).

Despite this consistency across the disciplines in relation to the unique perspective of children and young people in relation to domestic abuse, a review of literature involving children still elicits contentions such as 'women are experts in their children's lives' (Sharp

et al., 2011 citing Paddon, 2006) rather than children as the experts and even 'agents of their own lives' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6). Qualitative studies, mainly undertaken in the UK, USA, Ireland and Australia so far, are the means by which children's complex lives and meanings are being explored on their own terms, in their own words, reflecting this study's approach that 'the best people to provide information on a child's perspective, actions and attitudes are children themselves' (Scott, 2000:9).

Of course there are limits in the generalizability of data in these qualitative studies: sample sizes are limited, with the more in-depth having 30-55 child/young person participants (McGee, 2000, Mullender et al., 2002, Fitzpatrick et al., 2003, Stafford et al., 2007) but most between 11-24; most studies are with children who are accessing support; few studies focus on experiences of minority groups of children, with notable exceptions such as Black and Minority Ethnic children's experiences of contact (Thiara and Gill, 2012) through which we are beginning to hear excluded voices. Sample sizes in studies reviewed appear to be limited due to the resource intensive nature of sensitively interviewing a vulnerable group with major safety and trust issues, lack of adequate support services and problems with access due mainly to gatekeepers (see, for example, Stalford et al., 2003; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Sample size is not the only issue, many authors cite the need to build trust with research participants but only very few have the time to undertake the sequential work needed to build trust. Peled (1998) is unusual in that she is able to conduct a sequence of 3-6 interviews per child, most other researchers employ creative and varied methods within their one off contact to build relationships (as advocated in Borland et al., 2001) and some strive for limited contact (phone calls, ice-breaking activities) before the interview/focus group if possible. Some research protocols invite the child's trusted support to the interview/focus group to alleviate trust, support and power issues or (preferably) give the child options of support before, during and after the interview.

The studies are almost exclusively, multi-informant, and there remains a concern, first expressed by Alderson (1995), that researchers struggle in raising children's voices above those adults speaking for them, which I contend is evident in much of the domestic abuse literature. Mullender et al.'s (2002) study is unique in a number of ways: children are given the power to ascertain who else should be interviewed and in what order; space and time within the process is given for their own interviews and stories, including tracking for 18months and this is, arguably, the most successful study in my view to retain the integrity of the child's voice throughout the report. In other studies the child/young person's voice is subsumed by adult informants, perhaps due to comparative sample sizes and limited time with children (see, for example, Bagshaw et al., 2000; Thiara and Gill, 2012) or due to not being part of a (adult) group inquiry process (see, for example, Sharp et al., 2011), that results in very little space for children's perspectives within many of the reports. Stafford et al.'s (2007) study is the only to focus exclusively on young people as the experts in their own lives and this is reflected in its report and methodology which managed to give child participants space and time: 30 in-depth interviews creatively construct a child's journey with them and rich narratives ensue. Other authors note and tackle the validation of children's voices through articles specifically focussed on material elicited from children (see, for example, Buckley et al., 2007, Stanley et al., 2012) or reports/briefings published purely of children's words and messages (e.g. Mullender et al., 2003, 'Children's Messages' in Sharp et al., 2011).

The first two chapters of this thesis therefore focus specifically on studies and parts of studies that focus on children's perspectives of their lived experience, reflecting my theoretical approach that 'allow[s] children to be seen as competent beings dealing with complex social worlds…interpreters and creators of meanings rather than simply absorbing the meanings of adults' (Greene and Hogan, 2005: 49). Whilst acknowledging the limits in the data sets, there are commonalities and differences across the literature which both

increase our understanding of the complexities of children's lives and identify areas for further study. Chapter One has two sections: children and young people's perspectives on their exposure to domestic abuse; children and young people's perspectives on their domestically violent fathers.

Children's exposure to domestic abuse

> It was the worst part of my life – constantly being shouted at, frightened, living in fear. You will never know what it is like, thinking that every day could be your last. (16 year old Asian girl in Mullender et al. 2002:94)

Mullender et al.'s (2002) was the first domestic abuse study to shift theoretical stance and place children not only as active participants in research and domestic abuse but as 'the central' research participants, as advocated in Tisdall et al. (2006). This study remains the most in-depth on children's exposure to domestic abuse and therefore most illuminating in relation to the first part of this chapter. There are limits and gaps in that study of course, some of which the emerging literature in the field is beginning to address, such as direct interviews about fathers and contact (see, for example, Morrison, 2007; Thiara and Gill, 2012), rural issues (Stalford et al., 2003), evaluations of services (Stafford et al., 2009; Sharp et al., 2011) or/and focuses on specific professional responses (Irwin et al., 2002; Stanley et al., 2010).

What is clear across the literature is that children see themselves as 'integrally involved and as more than mere witnesses' (Irwin et al., 2006:21): the centrality of domestic abuse to their lives renders obsolete previous constructions of children living with domestic abuse as spectators, witnesses, hidden, silent or passive victims, disconnected from abuse 'between adults'. There are various critiques of describing children experiencing domestic abuse as 'witnesses', 'exposed to violence' or even more passively 'hidden' or even 'silent' victims of domestic abuse (see, for example, Irwin et al., 2006; Edleson, 2007; Stanley, 2011). Now

that children are 'active participants' in research, they eloquently and graphically describe the myriad of ways that the perpetrator forces them to be involved in domestic abuse, and the ways in which they act to intervene, protect, cope and make decisions. Children's perspectives research is now further increasing our understanding of the intertwined and deliberately manipulated experiences of women and children, illuminating the 'range of ways that "simultaneous abuse" of women and children occurs' (Kelly 1994:47). In the literature, children do not separate women and children's abuse, but speak of the fear and many facets of abuse inflicted on the family by the father/father figure/mother's boyfriend (hereafter the review will use 'father' to denote all father figures). Therefore the following summary is of children's depictions of the mental, physical and sexual abuse women *and* children are subjected to.

Mental abuse of women and children

Although children often began their descriptions of domestic abuse as 'parents' arguing and fighting, the picture of who was perpetrating the abuse soon emerged in the majority of accounts, where the father was shouting and mother was screaming and crying : 'I saw them arguing, shouting at each other and hitting each other. My dad used to do the hitting' (South Asian boy, 10, Mullender et al.2002:93). Children give numerous examples of women being mentally and emotionally abused, being shouted at, called names, being humiliated and also being named a bad mother and undermined in front of the children. The majority of children were present at incidents (sometimes forced to be present by the father), many overheard this abuse, and were frightened by the abuse. A 16-year-old South Asian girl described how it felt to them 'constantly being shouted at, frightened, living in fear' and for her, and others in the studies, the fear that their mother and the children would be killed was real, 'thinking that every day could be your last day' (Mullender et al., 2002:94). One 9-year-old watched, scared whilst his older sibling intervened 'He was grabbing her by the hair and trying to push her down the stairs… I was scared…N [12-

years-old] was there and tried to stop my dad from smacking my mum' (South Asian boy, Mullender et al., 2002:183). For other children, not knowing or seeing what was happening but knowing that their mother was being hurt, was worse: 'he could have stuck a knife in her for all I know, with the door shut. And the worst thing for me was actually not knowing what was going to happen next…' (Regina, 9, McGee, 2000:107)

Children and young people also described mental abuse directed at them in particular: the perpetrator being cruel to their pets in front of them, locking them in or out, lying, threatening them with anything from burning their bicycles if their mother left, to killing them all. Many children talked of the controlling and intimidating behaviour of the abusive father, regimenting a child's behaviour, play, movements, who they spoke to; silencing children, not allowing them to speak to mothers and others, keeping them apart from those they loved, ensuring they kept quiet at all times, staring, glaring at them, stalking them, being horrible in front of friends. Children, especially those for whom alcohol misuse especially was part of their lives and a 'trigger' for domestic abuse, also spoke of their rising fear and anxiety from the moment the drinking started (Buckley et al., 2007; Cleaver et al., 2011).

Physical abuse of women and children

Children had witnessed their mothers being hurt in many ways such as being punched, slapped, kicked, shoved, grabbed; being grabbed by the throat; having bleach/hot water poured over her/them; attempted murder:

> He was just hitting her with his hand and shouting and swearing at her -saying that she's horrible, she's wicked and that she's not a very good mummy. Just saying all horrible things to her and really hurting her, making her cry, and Mum couldn't do anything. I just called the police. (White girl, 12, Mullender et al. 2002:183)

Women were not uncommonly attacked when pregnant: 'he just wanted to boot the baby out of me' (McGee, 2000:43), when holding small children, or physically sheltering children, or intervening in an attack on a child. Children themselves spoke of being subjected to severe physical assaults, being hit, thrown, hit with flying objects or with weapons, being threatened with being hit when trying to stop an assault on their mother, being dragging and pushed, siblings being hurt, children being dangled over stairs or out of windows, and the perpetrator being horrible and violent to them all: 'He was lashing out at everyone for no reason. He's hit me before… He was using his fists on me.' (African boy, 12, Mullender et al., 2002:186)

Sexual abuse of women and children

None of the mothers or children in these two studies were asked directly about sexual abuse. Yet in McGee's (2000) interviews, six children spoke of being sexually abused themselves and fifteen women spoke of being raped, including conceiving through rape, being raped whilst pregnant, children intervening during a sexual assault or the man threatening to rape the child as a means of control. In Mullender et al., (2002) two women spoke of being raped with children present. For children, the fact that their father was violent made it more difficult to talk about their own sexual abuse. The abuser would make further threats of violence, being put in care, separation from mum, to kill mother. Or he would lie, for example, by saying the mother knew or told him to do it. Consequently, it took children a long time to tell (McGee, 2000). This is reinforced by a larger study that asked 164 young people (7 to 19 years old) at a sexual abuse clinic about domestic abuse (Kellogg and Menard, 2003); over half the children reported living with violence – 58 per cent of the child sex offenders lived at their home and physically abused the child's mother. The significant difference for children who also suffered domestic abuse was that they were more likely to delay disclosure because of fear of the perpetrator. Furthermore, children in McGee (2000) and in Mullender et al. (2002) gave examples of the sexual degradation of

women and girls in the family and of the father's possessiveness and control especially about the woman's and sometimes girls behaviour, for example, going out with friends. 'He said he knew what I was up to - I was a slut, I had taken after my mother, I was sleeping around…he hit me hard on my head…' (South Asian girl, 16, Mullender et al., 2002:185), with another girl in the same study fearing her father would use his control to force her into marriage.

Children and young people's perspectives on domestically violent fathers

The literature on children's perspectives on what Harne (2006, passim) calls 'domestically violent fathers' is limited but growing due to researchers' sensitive questioning and innovatory participatory techniques, such as artwork, vignettes and activity sheets to enable young people to talk directly about their father (see, for example, Morrison, 2009; Holt, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Mullender et al. (2002) chose to not ask directly about feelings towards fathers, but more generally about what happened leading to whether they still saw the person responsible 'in view of the particular sensitivity of the question' (Mullender et al., 2002:182), McGee (2000) only asked teenagers. What is clear from all of the children, across all of the studies reviewed, is that they are telling us they are frightened, hurt, and severely detrimentally affected by the actions of the perpetrator.

This section will therefore focus on children's views of domestically violent fathers drawn from the literature, sharing rich insights into the father/child 'relationship' from a child's perspective. It will explore children's feelings and the impact of the man's abuse, and situate the effects with the cause, retaining children's own focus on the abuser, a focus often lost in research and most especially in practice (Humphreys, 1999; Stanley 2011).

Feelings about fathers

In these qualitative studies tackling children's perspectives on fathers, there is a great deal of commonality. The most overwhelming feeling children had about their father was fear

and being frightened of him and also feeling sad; commonly children spoke of the abuse he had inflicted and of being scared. For many the violence filled their perspective of their dad (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Buckley and Holt, 2007; Morrison, 2009; Holt, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Children revealed complex emotions, almost all negative, of sadness, anger, anxiety, loss and of missing him, including the extremes of emotion – hate and, far less commonly in children's accounts, love (Peled, 1998; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Alexander et al., 2004; Morrison, 2009). Mullender et al. (2002) write about children speaking of 'early' love, in terms of younger children but more commonly of the father's violence killing the feelings children have for him over time. Some children in that study illustrate more complex feelings -that you can love and not respect, love and still be frightened at the same time but more children spoke of hate, and even more of sadness and fear. Peled (1998) writes more strongly of children being caught between the two emotions and the conflict of loyalties. Children have problems dealing with the contradictory 'sides' of their fathers, what children may name the 'good' and 'bad' dad (Scottish Women's Aid 1997), Peled (1998) suggests children either choose to see their fathers as bad or find ways of excusing or reframing his abusive behaviour and warns that we need to acknowledge children's positive perceptions of their fathers, too, and also their changing perceptions once there is intervention to help name the abuse and whose responsibility it is. For example, groupwork enabling children to name the father as responsible, not themselves or their mother, can bring a range of emotions to those children who are struggling to maintain a positive image of their father (Peled and Edleson, 1992; Peled, 1998; Peled, 2000).

His fault

Mullender et al.'s study (2002) asked children, most of whom had some form of support, whose fault the abuse was. The majority of children were very clear that the violence was his fault, though some said they did not realise this 'at first' or when they were younger 'I

know it was my dad's fault. I know my mum did not want to fight' (Asian girl, 9, p.191). However, when the child got caught up in the middle, for example, as the centre of an argument or accusations of bad behaviour, some children blamed themselves and a very small minority of children felt mums and even siblings may be somewhat responsible. McGee (2000) argues that older children were much clearer that their father's behaviour was irrational and unreasonable, whereas young children might look for a reason or cause. Mullender et al. (2002) note that their subsample of South Asian children (Mullender et al., 2002) were all very clear that it was the adult's fault, and seemed more able to take an 'objective perception' of their situation and personalise it less, compared to the 'white Western children' in their study (p.149). In a Scottish school study, children who had experienced domestic abuse were more likely than other pupils to point out that abuse was always wrong: 'You don't have any right to abuse women' (pupil, Alexander et al., 2004:12). Mullender et al. (2002) write about a clear picture of children's sense of fair play emerging – their dad is wrong to be hurting them, violence is wrong 'should have talked it over instead of hitting, shouting. He was unfair. The person who hits is in the wrong.'(South Asian boy, 14, ibid., p.192).

If we leave, will we be safe?

Children are very afraid of their father further abusing them all. This fear does not stop when and if they leave: children's fears are then compounded by fear of the abuser finding them, of seeing him again, further abuse, escalating abuse against their mother and them, being abducted, abuse of their mother at 'handover' points (Peled 1998, McGee, 2000, Mullender et al., 2002, Morrison, 2009). Children in Morrison's study, for example, spoke clearly of the fear of being held hostage, being 'stolen' or not given back to their mother: 'they'll hold them hostage and want custody of them' (boy, 12, Morrison, 2009:2). All children were unequivocal that they wanted the abuse to stop (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002, Barron, 2007, Morrison, 2009 Holt, 2011, Thiara and Gill, 2012). At least a third

of children in Mullender et al.'s study (2002) felt they could only be safe if their father did not find them. It is unsurprising that across the studies, children talk of resentment, anger and fear when their father pursues contact, reflected in the *Kidspeak* on-line consultation with children:

> I am very scared and frightened of my daddy. I am mad with my daddy for hurting my mummy and me and my sisters and brother, I want my daddy to stay out of my life but he is taking it to court to see us… I am very scared in case no-one listens to me, I want to be heard what if they don't listen?? I don't want to be made to see my dad please help me and my family. (Tara, 8, Barron, 2007:23)

Mullender et al. (2002) concluded that children felt most clearly that it was no longer possible to live as a family, although some younger children seem to hope that could be the case, perhaps unaware of the extent of violence (Thiara and Gill, 2012). In Morrison's study, all children thought their fathers were poor parents because they were violent fathers: 'they said that if a child was afraid of a parent or if one parent was afraid of the other parent, then contact was not positive' (p.3) However, a very small minority of children also talk of having good parents, and others do not want to be disloyal to their father (Mullender et al., 2002; McGee, 2000). Morrison (2009) reports a sense of loss 'concerned with an ideal conception of what a father "should" or "could" be like, rather than their own lived experience of their fathers' (p.3). Children in Holt's study (2011) also felt the loss of a father figure, even when they had decided he was too abusive and did not want to see him: 'I'm still scared of him. [In the letter I said] "I'm fed up waiting for you to be our Dad. We just can't forgive and we see this as the only way we can move on' (Leah, 12 in Holt, 2011:336). Children said that they were happier away from their father, even when they were sad, missed him, were confused and had mixed feelings about seeing him - though some children were quite clear that seeing him meant fear and not seeing him relief

and safety (McGee 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Morrison, 2009; Holt, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012).

Safe contact?

Once children had left there were a range of views about contact and a great deal of confusion. For many children there was often little choice and contact/fear of contact was a reality in their lives. Children report feelings of loss and confusion, of hating the violence but wanting to see him or in some cases just to have 'a dad', (Mullender et al., 2002; Morrison, 2009; Thiara and Gill, 2012): 'there's practically nothing good about him except from he's my dad' (boy, 9, Morrison 2009:3). Another child stated that though he's 'an arsehole' she did 'kind of love him too – because he's my father' (white girl, 15, Mullender et al., 2002:198). Others were very clear that they hated him and did not want to see him ever again, 'Can't stand him at all. I'm scared though because, he's, he's everywhere. (Mona, 17, McGee, 2000:84, see also Barron, 2007; Morrison, 2009).

Children felt strongly that the violence should stop for there to be contact and that they should be safe, and many children were very sceptical about violent fathers ever changing (Smith et al., 2008; Mullender et al., 2002; Morrison, 2009; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Others believed their extremely abusive fathers when they said they would change 'but my mum won't listen because my dad's saying I won't hurt you. But still my mum said no' (South Asian boy 8, Thiara and Gill, 2012:74). It was possible to interpret abusive behaviour as proof of how much their fathers wanted to see them 'He break down the door. He wants to see me and that's all…I want to see him.' (South Asian boy, 9, Thiara and Gill, 2012:74). Children in Morrison (2009) said fathers lied about changing in order to get what they wanted but they had not the willpower to stop: 'If you've always been violent you can't just stop, 'cos that makes you feel good it makes you feel big and strong.' (girl,12, p.3), with others saying he won't stop because he gets away with it and goes unpunished (Alexander

et al., 2004; McGee, 2000). Children's accounts across studies showed the manipulation and abuse of both women and children through contact, with Thiara and Gill's study (2012) revealing children's confusion compounded particularly when 'extremely abusive men manipulated children, making promises and buying them expensive presents in a bid to pressure women to reconcile' (p.77), the authors warning that some children did not understand the risk to their mothers.

Some children were very clear that they did not want contact, they hated the man and/or were still frightened of him, they could not forgive him, they were angry at him for hurting their mother, they were happier now. Unwanted contact gave them nightmares or was a nightmare and abusive in itself (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007; Buckley et al., 2007; Morrison, 2009; Holt, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Some children were concerned that the abuse would get worse or that the abuse would be directed more at them now (Mullender et al., 2002; Morrison, 2009). For many children, their biggest fear was their father finding them or seeing him in the street, describing vividly a range of effects such as freezing, hiding, stress and protective behaviours, for example, not sleeping in case he smashed the door in (Mullender et al., 2002). Children's accounts relating to future contact are full of anxiety, sleeplessness, fear and confusion. In Morrison (2009) they describe conditions necessary for them to feel secure enough to have contact, including CCTV and guards, 'someone there to watch us' (boy, 9, p.2). Thiara and Gill (2012) report some children blaming their mothers for 'forcing' them to go.

Children's accounts of actual contact include examples of abusive contact, for mothers and for children, and distressing effects of contact calls/visits/centres, including the father not turning up or of the child being, as one child puts it, 'pumped for info' (girl, 12, Mullender 2002:198) about their mother and her movements, or told to pass on abusive messages to mothers: 'Sometimes the messages would be so bad I couldn't even say it' (Niamh, 11, Holt, 2011:336; see also Humphreys and Thiara, 2002; Morrison, 2009; Holt, 2011). Across

studies, though, the abusive fathers show an enormous capacity to just not turn up, be neglectful or not make a lot of effort during contact, resulting in children feeling disappointed, betrayed, abused, hurt (McGee, 2000; Gorin, 2004; Holt, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012). For children this was nothing new and to be expected, one girl questioned why people assumed contact with fathers would be good for children, assumed that there was a relationship to be missed: 'how can you miss something if you've never rightly had it…' (Eva, 16, Holt, 2011:340). Another that 'Parents aren't supposed to say mean horrible things and make you feel bad.' (Ciara,9, ibid.). Many children remained confused 'I feel happy when I go to see him. I feel sad because when I leave I don't understand why he done that.' (child, Thiara and Gill, 2012:75; an 'ambivalence' also noted in Holt, 2011). It is important to note that, for some children, time with fathers was their route to grandparents – important quality time for some or emotionally pressured and manipulating time for others, as well as to see and play with friends and cousins (Holt, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012).

Crucially, children felt that not only should they have a say and be listened to about whether they wanted contact or not, and how it should happen, but that it should be their decision (Mullender et al., 2002) or at least theirs should be the most significant contribution to the decision (Morrison, 2009). Thiara and Gill's study (2012) warns that, when asked about their feelings about contact, children did not always see through abusive fathers' manipulation and did not see the risk of abuse to their mothers and no doubt themselves. Holt's study (2011) asks children about their participation in the contact decision-making process and concluded that children felt shut out and silenced, in the main their opinion was not asked or if it was it was ignored, particularly if the child did not want contact :'We didn't want to spend time with him at all. The guy [psychological assessor] did listen but the judge didn't', (Todd, 7, Holt 2011:339). Importantly, Holt reports that where

young people had been given choices, or exercised their will not to have contact, they felt empowered:

> When we wrote that letter to him saying we didn't want to see him anymore because he just kept hurting Mam and that hurt us too and we just couldn't take it any more…it's hard to explain but it's always been his move, like in chess, we were always waiting for his move…it feels now that we have check-mated him and he doesn't know what to do 'cos that never happened before (Eva, 16, Holt, 2011:340)

Holt concludes that children are too often 'silenced victims in an ideological battle fought on their behalf but in the absence of their voice' (Holt, 2011:342).

Feeling horrible inside and like we're losing everything

Children's accounts reveal common psychological impacts and their use of words and expressions reflect much of the psychological literature using psychometric tests to measure exposure, depression, anxiety, trauma (see Kitzmann et al., 2003; Jarvis et al., 2005; Sternberg et al., 2006; Edleson et al, 2007). They have told researchers that they felt they were going mad, their minds were too full, they had too many feelings inside, were frozen or even bleeding inside, unable to sleep, having nightmares, felt they were living a nightmare, felt sick, too scared to do things or go places, in terror, were having panic attacks, self-harming, feeling anger, having flashbacks, experiencing depression or overwhelming sadness, suicidal (Scottish Women's Aid, 1997; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Alexander et al., 2004; Stafford et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012).

Mullender et al. (2002) argue, however, that the major issues that dominate children's accounts of the costs and consequences of domestic abuse were not the psychological impacts but i) safety and ii) the loss of the familiar: 'He made me leave my home. He made me leave all my best friends. He made me leave all my things behind.' (white girl, 9, p.108).

Losing their home, as the vast majority of children did across all studies, was a significant loss, a cause of much resentment and wrought mixed feelings, including relief at leaving the violence.

> I wanted to move but I didnae. Because I widnae be able to see my pals any more. But I wanted to move to get away from the violence in the house. (girl, 11, Stafford et al., 2007:33)

Important to consider here is the effect of the initial move, usually precipitated by what Stafford et al. (2007) name 'the incident'. Children described a catalogue of terrifying incidents including: hiding inside or outside the house; witnessing severe life- threatening assaults; or indeed their mum witnessing assaults on them, often still causing terror and flashbacks - this is coupled with the trauma of leaving 'all that is familiar' very suddenly and most often with no idea what was happening. In children's accounts a significantly traumatic experience (Stafford et al., 2007; Stalford et al., 2007; Barron 2007; Mullender et al., 2002).

All children spoke about the loss of people close to them. In a number of the studies some children were separated from their siblings, which is particularly disturbing against a background of accounts of siblings protecting each other, hiding together, talking with each other, comforting each other (Mullender et al., 2002; McGee, 2000; Stafford et al., 2007). Another major loss would often be wider family, with a few children, in particular South Asian children, mentioning grandparents, who could also be their 'bolthole' (Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2007; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Losing friends was hard for children (Stafford et al., 2007; Barron, 2007; Mullender et al., 2002; McGee, 2000; Thiara and Gill, 2012) and this could continue when 'new friends' were lost through further moves (Stafford et al., 2007). Financial losses and the economic impact were felt strongly by children (also in Morrison, 2009; Stafford et al., 2007). Of significance to children too, was

the loss of possessions, if their father had not already wrecked them (Stafford et al., 2007; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Stalford et al., 2003) and for some children losing their comfort and friend in the shape of a pet (Stalford et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2007; Paws for Kids, 2002; Stafford et al., 2009).

Advice to fathers

Children in some studies were asked what their advice would be to fathers or what would they like to say to him. What is marked here is their anger towards their fathers. Alexander et al. (2004) state that the most common answer was to call him insulting names, the next to ask why he did it and the next that he should suffer like he had made others do, with the child often wishing they were involved in carrying out the threat: 'I wish I could drive a screwdriver through your heart' (Alexander et al., 2004:12). This death-wish was reflected, also, by some children who were still angry in Thiara and Gill (2012:45) 'I wish that he died' (South Asian boy, 11). In Morrison's study, children were asked whether fathers could do or say anything to make them feel better about the domestic abuse they had experienced. Whether and how violent fathers could be part of children's 'healing process' whilst maintaining safety of women and children is a dilemma of progressive perpetrator work at present (Peled, 2000; Stanley, 2010). This question elicited three clear messages from children: there was nothing he could do; stop being abusive; apologise for what he had done and be sincere in his apology. For other children, talking to him was futile: 'what difference would saying anything make?'(pupil, Alexander et al., 2004), reflecting many children's feelings of powerlessness that they could not help, could not stop him because he would not listen or take any notice (McGee, 2000).

Too scared of him to be safe: too scared to tell?

Children's 'headline message' is that they want to be safe and to be listened to (Scottish Women's Aid, 1999; Mullender et al., 2002). The threat to their safety, and sometimes their

lives, is the domestically violent father. The most common reason that children cite for not talking to anyone is fear of their father finding out and of the backlash - hurting them or their mother especially, but others too (McGee, 2000; Stafford et al., 2007):

> He threatened to kill me if I told anybody… I kept it quiet to every single person. (boy, 10)
>
> What was it like not being able to tell? (Interviewer)
>
> I just felt angry and half sad. (ibid.) (Stafford et al., 2007:38)

Conclusion

Children can clearly articulate the horror of being an active participant in domestic abuse, their feelings about living with it, their actions and inaction within the situation, and the risks when leaving. Their own unique perspectives on the abuse, risks and their own well-being are therefore crucial when adults - mothers, caring adults and professionals, are involved in making decisions about their welfare. It is important to explore ways of working with CYPEDA that respect them as co-producers of their own welfare, competent and reflexive in relation to experiences and risk, and therefore essential active participants in decisions.

Children clearly interlink the abuse of their mothers and themselves and it is important for responses to recognise that; domestic abuse can result in strong or broken bonds between them. Both women and children may not be aware of the extent of abuse each has suffered and the dangers facing each of them. Ways of involving both when planning for safety and in particularly assessing risk, an adult domain, seem therefore an essential consideration for this study's ethical approach. This is particularly significant in relation to contact. Developments to support children and mothers to be able to talk about such horror are vital (see, for example, Humphreys et al., 2007).

There is a huge diversity in each child's individual experience of domestic abuse, each child's reaction and the effects on their lives, even within the same family, but for all it is marked by fear. Whilst the literature to date does not produce any conclusive evidence or findings in relation to differences in children's experiences of domestic abuse in relation to age, gender, ethnic background, ability; there are some emergent themes worthy of further qualitative exploration. For example, in relation to: different experiences and coping strategies of younger and older children, including siblings; older children being more able to identify who is responsible than younger; additional barriers and support for black and minority ethnic children; issues of identity for boys, girls, black and minority ethnic children including and perhaps in particular dual heritage children; the effects of longer exposure and children's changing perspectives over time.

Children's perspectives on the abuse the family suffer at the hands of their fathers name men's accountability and responsibility for their children living in fear. Children describe clearly the horror of life as 'children of abusive fathers' (term suggested by Peled, 2000). Despite the domestically violent father building a wall of fear and abuse in their lives, many children, with their mothers and siblings actively seek a new life. Children have told us that their perspectives of violent fathers change through this journey, they, like women, go through a process, one that helping adults must acknowledge and explore with them. An important point from Peled (2000) is that children's images of their fathers can become partially based on the reactions of professionals to the violence and the perpetrator. It is important that helping adults do not collude with abusive men's perspectives of their abuse of their family - Hearne writes that almost all violent men studied '… did not appear to see violence towards women as child abuse, or vice versa' (Hearne, 1998:93). It seems also important to consider children's perspectives on whether and how helping professionals help them to talk about their father, a key consideration for this study.

The next chapter discusses children's perspectives on what helps and does not help in this perilous journey.

Chapter 2
Children and young people's perspectives on what helps

Introduction

Chapter One provides evidence that children's participation in domestic abuse research has led to 'significant knowledge gains' (Woodhead and Faulkener, 2000:31), literature revealing CYPEDA's perspectives has deepened our understanding of their experiences of domestic abuse, how they perceive domestic abuse; how they interlink their experience and fear of the perpetrator with the abuse of their mothers. By entering 'the discursive space…within which children are now seen as individuals, whose autonomy should be safeguarded and whose being can no longer be simply nested into the family…' (James et al., 1998:6-7) we have become aware of differences in experiences, actions and knowledge of each member in the family living in fear of the perpetrator and their different ways of coping (see, for example, Hester and Radford, 1996; McGee, 2000).

This Chapter reviews the growing literature in the field that explores children's own perspectives of what helps them through domestic abuse, rather than adults views on what is best, reflecting the theoretical position that CYPEDA are 'agents' in the process, 'social actors shaping as well as shaped by circumstances' (James et al., 1998:6) and as such they are 'citizens with needs and rights' (ibid.). Mullender et al. (2002) found that not only are children better able to cope if they are 'listened to and taken seriously as participants in the domestic violence situation' (Mullender et al. 2002:121) but also if they are 'actively involved in finding solutions and helping make decisions' (ibid.). This provides a moral imperative to involve CYPEDA in solutions that underlines this study's theoretical standpoint for exclusively seeking and re/presenting CYPEDA's views on their needs, rights and solutions. The literature review maintains the direct focus on children's

perspectives on what helps that are found in studies and parts of studies, valuing children in themselves not through links to adults (as espoused by Christensen and Prout, 2005:47). It explores the commonalities, differences and collective solutions CYPEDA voice across the literature. In its aim to be part of 'overcoming children's invisibility and muteness' (Greene and Hogan, 2005:56) in research, the literature review becomes 'a means of representation, a way to ensure that children's views and experiences are not only listened to but heard by other groups' (Tisdall et al., 2009:5), by bringing this small but insightful body of literature together .

Literature viewing children 'as service users and [sometimes] co-producers of their own welfare' (Prout and Hallett, 2003:5) has been mainly undertaken in the UK, Ireland and Australia at present. This review includes studies that focus on CYPEDA's perspectives on the response of specific professionals such as Stanley et al.'s (2010) study of the police and social service response or Stafford et al.'s (2007) exploration of moving home. Rarely, studies have directly affected or been part of policy-making. There are few studies that reflect fully the theoretical position that 'participation means direct involvement of children in decision-making about matters that affect their lives, whether individually or collectively' (Hill et al., 2004:83). Collective involvement of CYPEDA, through participation in studies that affect national policy decision-making, has mainly happened in Scotland (see Chapter 3) through Fitzpatrick et al.'s (2003) recommendations for refuge services that influenced the Scottish Government Refuge Development Fund allocation (see Chapter 3), and Stafford et al.'s (2009) evaluation of Children's Support Worker Services that influenced the continuation of a multi-million fund.

This chapter explores the perspectives of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse on what does and does not help, including their own solutions. There are two main sections. The first examines CYPEDA's perspectives on 'informal' help: CYPEDA themselves, mums, siblings, wider family and friends. The second, CYPEDA's perspectives

on 'professional' help: help to be safe; barriers to finding someone to talk to: accessing support services.

Children and young people's perspectives on informal help

Children most of all want to be safe and to have someone to talk to (Scottish Women's Aid, 1999; Mullender et al., 2002; Buckley et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012). It appears that the most important person they want to talk to is their mothers, for many not only their mothers, and their siblings, whilst also valuing their wider family and their friends. McGee (2000) found that friends were the main source of support with the possible exception of mothers. Talking to all of these familiar people had difficulties and limits in what children felt they could say, discuss, reveal. First of all though, CYPEDA attempt to keep themselves safe.

Keeping themselves safe

Children make decisions constantly about how to be safe, how to protect themselves, their mother and their siblings, whether or not to intervene and how. Mullender et al. (2002) argue that we do not yet know enough about the impact a child intervening has on the perpetrator, mother and child and that we must be careful to explore with children the meanings they attach to intervention and their feelings of safety. McGee (2000) suggested that safety planning, which includes any plan not to intervene, is important to give children a sense of control over the powerlessness they feel in a situation. However, care must be taken here, a significant number do intervene, verbally and physically, perhaps more older than younger, and for some this does 'help' how they feel and may stop or lessen the abuse at that time (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Irwin, 2006). Notably for some young people 'finding their voice and expressing anger' appeared to help build a foundation for determination to build different relationships in the future (Mullender et al., 2002:100).

Children's depictions of the way that they felt inside are striking: the many complex and awful feelings running around inside their head. Their common message to others going through it has been to 'get those feelings out' - what could be named one of children's 'psychological strategies' (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002). This involves: trying to get rid of sadness by crying and getting comfort from teddies, pets as well as hugs with mothers; trying to get rid of anger by getting your anger out by punching teddies, shouting at dad, writing it down, going out, doing things (Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007). Their key message to other CYPEDA is to tell someone they trust (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2007) even when many children have acknowledged that it is hard to trust again (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007). This appeal for children to talk to someone is often coupled with the other key need – to be safe:

> I think feeling safe is being able to be relaxed at all times. You wouldn't have things running through your mind like am I moving soon or should I expect to be treated aggressively today. Also I would feel safe if there is somebody for me to talk to if I have a concern about something (Marcus, 17, in Barron, 2007).

Children were keen for others to know that talking to someone is the beginning of getting through it 'when you do tell somebody, it feels good; you feel better because somebody else knows what you've gone through' (girl, 13, Stafford et al., 2007:50) and that ultimately . 'you can come through it for the better' (Jessica, 15, Barron, 2007:14). They felt that children needed to know that 'there are people out there that are like going to help you' (girl,13, Stafford et al., 2007:50), and to know that some of this support, like Women's Aid, was safe and confidential: 'if you've been hurt of sexually abused call Women's Aid, no 1 can find you' (Hamida, Barron, 2007:16). Children in refuges spoke of being relieved when they got there because preconceptions were of dirty, rough, scary places; whereas cleanliness, nice rooms or even flats, and security measures helped them feel safe

(Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2007), Stafford et al. (2007) recommended advertising the modern nature of some refuges so children and their mothers aren't scared of potential sources of help.

Although children tell other children to temporarily get away by hiding, going to someone else's house, finding safe havens, escapist activities, finding help; their key in their messages was to get others, adults, to take responsibility, get the abuse to stop and get away from the abuse as soon as possible (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007; Stafford et al., 2007). Many wished they'd left earlier whilst recognising they were all upset and needed to support each other: 'If your mum does not want to move or is scared, speak to her and let her know how you're feeling and how affected you are by the violence'(anonymous, Stafford et al., 2007:53). Children are able and want to talk and to be informed about what is going on, they do not want to be excluded from decision making with the family and when other agencies are involved (Mullender et al., 2002; Irwin et al., 2006; Stafford et al., 2007) and want to make plans to leave. Stafford et al. (2007) crucially argued that agencies must pull in the same direction as children's own strategies and ways of coping.

Children's perspectives on their mothers helping them

Children recognised their mothers as almost always their main source of support, and, for some, their only source of support (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002): 'My mum has helped me the most. No one else really talked about it… she explained everything' (South Asian boy, 13, in Mullender et al., 2002:211). Their main criticism was that mums don't talk to them about it and mums need to get away earlier, with them: 'it's a horrible thing but you dae it to get away from it' (girl, 13, Stafford et al., 2007:52). Most mothers did not know what their child has witnessed or the full extent of their awareness of the abuse (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002), nor that they needed to talk and know what was going on, and they want to leave. Whilst they were still living with domestic abuse it seems

that it was mainly children that initiated conversations about what's happening (McGee, 2000) and in most families mothers and children did not really talk about it. Most children were too scared, while mothers were trying to protect them (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002):

> Grown-ups think they should hide it and shouldn't tell us, but we want to know. We want to be involved and we want our mums to talk with us about what they are going to do – we could help make decisions. (group interview, Mullender et al., 2002:129)

After the event, children voiced good sense about being strong, leaving sooner, going to a refuge and starting a new life (Mullender et al., 2002:239).

Once children are safe there are many key messages for mothers and children alike: children could talk to mothers about things more easily, frequently they were only able to talk about their own abuse once they had left (McGee, 2000; Humphreys et al., 2006); anxiety symptoms like bedwetting could disappear (McGee 2000; Mullender et al., 2002); mothers could help them get other help too(ibid.); children were often proud of their mothers (Stafford et al., 2007) and saw her as their strong, non-violent role model, (Peled, 1998; Mullender et al., 2002); children loved to hear their mothers laugh again (Scottish Women's Aid, 1997; McGee, 2000; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Some children thought support together with their mother might help (Humphreys et al., 2006; Buckley et al., 2007), others felt proud 'of how we mended the hole in our family unit' (child, Stafford et al., 2007:35).

Children's perspectives on siblings helping each other

Children mainly spoke of siblings in the context of the incidents of domestic abuse – being together or protecting each other or one intervening with the other watching – and also of crying, talking and being together (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002). For many children, their brother(s) or sister(s) must be the only people who knew what they had

experienced, though some siblings (half in Mullender et al., 2002) did not talk about it whilst it was going on. Children's accounts depicted the perpetrators deliberately treating children differently at times through different forms of abuse, favouritism or scapegoating, treating biological and non-biological children differently, often trying to isolate children from even this source of support that is each other (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002). Almost every study included a few children who had siblings they are separated from, either who had stayed with the father or were in care, or kept out of the refuge by age restrictions on males (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Stalford et al., 2003). However most children's accounts showed siblings going to great lengths to protect each other and be together, helping each other through, cuddling, talking, staying in the same room or bed (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002): 'You stick together. We did…We're a team! We help each other'(white boy, 9, in Mullender et al., 2002:211). Some children tried to protect each other by not talking, perhaps hoping the brother/sister did not realise what was going on because they were younger or disabled, but they do. A girl with Downs Syndrome vividly recounted her experience of domestic abuse and the effects it had on her, whereas her sister believed she did not understand (Mullender et al., 2002). For a minority, they may have reached for sibling support only to find that the other child could not give it at that time 'I went to talk to her [my older sister] about it. She said no. And I said why and she said because it's too sad.' (Paul, 6, McGee, 2000:204).

Children's perspectives on wider family support

The wider family, particularly grandparents and then aunts and uncles could also be a crucial form of help and support to children. For some children their relatives were their 'bolt-hole' during their abuse (Mullender et al 2002; Stafford et al., 2007): 'My nan's house was my safe house… He couldn't trouble me there' (Mona, 17, McGee, 2000:203). Lots of children stayed with relatives when they left home (Stafford et al., 2007). Children hoped adults in their family most of all would help them get away, stop the abuse, or at least talk

to their parents (McGee, 2000): it was vital they responded appropriately, i.e. believed children, took them seriously, didn't shout at them for speaking badly of the family. Some children, though, were scared their family would get hurt as well (Mullender et al., 2002; McGee, 2000). South Asian children's expectations from the family to intervene may be higher (Mullender et al., 2002):

> Mum's family. They could have supported us more and told Mum, 'If you break up with him we will look after you.' But, this didn't happen. One uncle really helped and looked after us. They were there for her and for us. We would get love and attention – no violence. (South Asian boy, 14, Mullender et al., 2002:136)

For some black and minority ethnic children, in losing their family home, they were losing the place wherein they were most helped in developing a positive sense of self, and in dealing with racism (Mullender et al., 2002; Imam with Akhtar, 2005). The fear of ostracism from their own community and of racism from others and from helping agencies when escaping from domestic abuse accentuated this loss (Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Imam with Akhtar, 2005; Thiara and Breslin, 2006; Thiara and Gill, 2012). Family can therefore be 'both a source of support and abuse for children from black and minority ethnic families. Positive family contact could help children cope but its absence leads to greater isolation' (Thiara and Breslin, 2006:32). A positive, believing response to *all* children from their wider family can be vital to their safety and in helping them to move on.

Children's perspectives of help from friends

For children, friends could be their best support and often a different support from adults. McGee (2000) suggested that children were clear that their friends can meet their emotional needs while it was for the adults to sort out the problem and give practical help. However, many children were scared to talk to their friends, either as part of their overwhelming fear of their father and what he would do if he found out they had been talking or very

commonly because they were afraid of their friends reactions due to the stigma attached: 'I just get, like, embarrassed … in case they judge me.' (Girl, 13, Stafford et al., 2007:39) – that they will be labelled, judged (McGee, 2000; Stafford et al., 2007). The other major concern was that friends would not keep it confidential: 'Just like trying to tell somebody you think you can trust – who willnae go about spreading it' (Girl, 13, Stafford et al., 2007:50).

Some had friends who had been through it and that helped (McGee, 2000). Others lost friends because of their fathers actions including abuse, threats or fear of repercussions (Stafford et al., 2007; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Buckley et al., 2007) or were not able to see them because of refuge rules (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Stalford et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2009). In situations where there were opportunities to build new friendships with others who had been through it, preferably the same age, such as in refuges or groups for children affected by domestic abuse, this helped enormously (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Barron, 2007; Stafford et al., 2007; Stafford et al., 2009; Thiara and Gill, 2012), young people especially thought it important for refuge buildings to have chill-out space to be with other young people (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003). It was a relief that they had the experience of domestic abuse in common therefore no stigma was attached, and they were not alone: ' I could talk about it with all the other kids and they would say how they were angry and how they were feeling, I didn't feel out of place' (Marilyn, 15, McGee, 2000:166). Children, particularly those who went to refuges, spoke of a reality wherein 'I gained friends and I lost friends' (Mandi, Barron 2007:17): helping adults need to do their best to help children maintain their friends, new and old, throughout their journey out of abuse (Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007; Stafford et al., 2007; Barron, 2007; Stafford et al., 2009).

Children and young people's perspectives on professional help

Very few children place their trust in professionals or feel they will or do respond appropriately (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Stalford et al., 2003; Irwin et al. 2006; Stafford et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012), with additional fears of discrimination and stereotyping for children from ethnic minority families (Thiara and Breslin, 2006; Thiara and Gill, 2012). It seems appropriate to review the literature in terms of what adults need to hear from children in order to improve their response. Although different professions have been spoken about in some of the key studies (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2007) there is a lack of in-depth study of each agency, or the multi-agency, response from a child's standpoint, although Stanley et al.(2010) begin to address this with their study of police and social services response. Across the literature, there have been clear common messages from children that relate to all professionals who work with children or respond to incidents or disclosures of domestic abuse. What is more, some children do not differentiate between agencies (Mullender et al., 2002). The exceptions in terms of who has helped are children's support workers in Women's Aid (Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2008; Stafford et al., 2009) and a few individual shining lights in each profession who have provided some good practice examples of what does help.

Being Safe

Very few children spoke about feeling safe because the perpetrator had been stopped or because of protective measures; very few children felt protected in their own home. Many children did feel it was the police's job to stop the perpetrator through arresting him and taking him away immediately: 'they could like take him away straight away…a mum or child wouldn't call 999 just to get dad taken away for no reason' (Louis, young person, Stanley et al., 2012:196). In many accounts the police did not stop the abuser, the abuse was made

worse, police were useless, they let the perpetrator tell them to go away:(McGee, 2000; Barron, 2007; Buckley et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012): 'you're here to protect people, what are you doing just stood there saying "Oh we can't do this and we can't do that". So I thought, well you can't do anything' (Hannah, 15, McGee, 2000:140). Children need professionals to be powerful and effective; to rival the perpetrator's power over their lives (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008; Stanley et al., 2012). It appears that children only feel safe where they cannot be found, with security measures in case they are: 'I felt safer here…if somebody came they couldn't get in' (girl, 14, Fitzpatrick et al., 2003:56).

In relation to court responses, by far the concern most frequently expressed by children was in relation to safe contact: they described having to go to court and not being listened to about contact decisions and therefore remaining at risk (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007; Morrison, 2009; Thiara and Gill, 2012). There are no longitudinal studies tracking the case and involvement from a child's perspective, but literature on mothers' and adults' perceptions of harm (see Hester and Radford, 1996; Radford, Sayer and AMICA, 1999; Saunders with Barron, 2003) together with child death reviews (see Saunders, 2004), and children's web messages to the *Kidspeak* e-democracy consultation (Barron, 2007), show that children's fears in relation to future contact often become realised.

Some CYPEDA felt that involving the authorities made things worse (Barron, 2007) and most were sceptical about help or stopping the abuser (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2008; Stanley, 2012) while some children gave examples of protective orders not working or the perpetrator going to court and not being punished (McGee, 2000; Barron, 2007) which was most apparent in the children who had suffered sexual abuse (McGee, 2000). Children's feelings that abusers 'get away with it', and the injustice of it all, has permeated the literature. Action to stop him and to keep him away is imperative to children (Alexander et al., 2004, Morrison, 2009).

Finding someone to trust, or someone to trust finding them

Finding someone to trust was of immense importance to children across the studies (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Irwin et al., 2006; Barron, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). It was especially difficult to trust someone when a trusted adult, their father or father figure, had already hurt them and frightened them, also children may have tried to talk and not got the response they wanted from others (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Barron, 2007). This would have been compounded if the child has also suffered sexual abuse (McGee, 2000). This trust would take a while to build up and children did not necessarily want to talk about domestic abuse at first (Stafford et al., 2012).

A key question for children is how to know who they could trust, and they say adults need to tell them, make it clear that they're there to listen, give them 'permission" to open up (Irwin et al., 2006): 'Sometimes kids will open up if they trust someone. But if …no one's saying that they're here for you, they're not going to say anything' (Tara, 18, Irwin et al., 2006:22). Children want to be listened to, taken seriously, believed (Barron, 2007, Mullender et al., 2002), bad experiences deter them from confiding. Children want adults, especially teachers, to respond to cues, because the CYPEDA will have low self-confidence and 'wait for it [help] to come to them, which it never will' (Ben, 15, Irwin et al., 2006:22).

Stafford et al. (2007) write that children who had moved home due to domestic abuse were notably more sensitive about confidentiality than young interviewees in their other studies; confidentiality *is* of paramount importance in children's view (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2008; Stafford et al., 2012). These are children who have had to keep a secret, even within the family, are frightened of telling about domestic abuse in case of repercussions, are scared of the father finding them or hurting their mum and themselves, and who may be frightened of the person they tell being hurt (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002); even more important for children in ethnic minority or close rural communities (Mullender et al., 2002; Stalford et al., 2003; Thiara and Gill, 2012).

It is not only fear of the perpetrator that prevents children from talking, the majority of the children fear being judged, labelled, put down by people (and have examples of that happening with professionals and peers), they feel embarrassed, humiliated, ashamed, different (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Buckley et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012) and some feel that it is private and their business (McGee, 2000); for black and minority ethnic children these fears can be accentuated the fear of racism and insensitive responses from anyone they talk to, and for some children cultural beliefs can add to the pressure and silencing effect (Mullender et al., 2002; Ravi and Gill, 2012). For all children there is a 'veil of secrecy' (Buckley et al., 2007) that can result in them being invisible to all: to agencies if they do not believe that adults will help, make them safe and listen to them.

Ability of professionals to understand

Children's views across the studies related to practitioners lack of understanding about what it is like to live with domestic abuse or how to respond to children, in particular they had very little faith in the ability of staff in schools to understand and help them (see, for example, Irwin et al., 2006; Buckley et al., 2007; Stafford et al.,2007; Stanley et al., 2012); 'the school counsellor …she asked what was happening, and when you tell her, she just sits going, "um, yeah".' (Tanya, Stanley et al., 2012:197). Teachers were the key adults who most children thought could have helped, although for some children it was their social workers (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Irwin, 2006; Stafford et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012). Despite common problems of bullying or being bullied, lack of concentration, problems with homework and attendance - sometimes through fear for the safety of their mother, several studies found CYPEDA blamed and punished for being late, labelled as bad pupils, with very few teachers making allowances (most recently, Buckley et al., 2007, Stanley et al., 2012). The few examples of good practice showed teachers just being nice, sparing five minutes to recognise what is going on at home and make school easier or organising specialist support sessions in school (Stafford et al., 2007:7, McGee, 2000:145);

some children were disappointed when there was little action once they had opened up to someone, like help for them and their mother. Children want adults to do something.

Many children saw telling a professional, especially social workers but any statutory agency, as risking being taken into care (Alexander et al., 2003; Barron, 2007; Stafford et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2012):

> It's like if social workers get involved, and then me, my brothers, would get taken off my mum and she'd be all on her 'ain, so you cannae speak to, like teachers about it. (Girl,13, Stafford et al., 2007)

Some children do experience the care system as a result of domestic abuse. Their views on this have not been researched and there is little data on the numbers of families for whom this happens.

Accessing support

To access support a child has to be able to talk about the domestic abuse, and some children have told how difficult it is to find the right language to talk about it or to understand words adults are using (McGee, 2000). McGee in particular writes about children not having the language skills to talk of domestic abuse, though this could translate as adults not finding the words to help children find a language. Children have revealed a lack of knowledge of available help (McGee, 2000; Stalford et al., 2003) and this needs addressing in ways that use their own channels of communication and locations, recognising these are limited in rural areas (Stalford et al., 2003), while not identifying themselves (Stalford et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2009). The flexible support and counselling that many children rate highly – at homes, school, outreach – is still out of reach for many children and a particular need in rural areas (Stalford et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2009).

One-to-one support: a specialist support worker

From those who have received support, there have been many examples of who and what this trusted adult should be. Children have spoken consistently highly of support received from Women's Aid children's support workers, and there are further, though far fewer, good practice examples relating to individuals in other professions such as youth work, social work and teaching (Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Irwin, 2006; Stafford et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2008). It cannot be over-estimated that children need someone other than their family to speak to, indeed they need to speak about their mum/family (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002,) and may also need help in speaking to their mother (McGee, 2000; Stalford et al., 2003; Humphreys et al., 2006). For some children, the worker is the only person they speak to (Stafford et al., 2009); one child in Stafford et al. (2007) said it was a matter of life or death. Studies have revealed many children without access to specialist support, including counselling, with particular gaps in 'in depth' mental health support (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Stalford et al., 2003) and, even with the expansion in Scotland in recent years, the support has not been found to match local need (Stafford, 2003; Stafford et al., 2009).

Across the literature reviewed here, children spoke of the value of a trusted children's support worker – their own worker (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2007; Stafford et al., 2009). This had to be a named trusted person who would maintain confidentiality: 'you can talk to them privately or out loud and you know you can trust them and your secrets are safe with them'; who understands domestic abuse 'they know what you've been through and you can talk to them and open up and they understand'; available at times the young person needs them 'They are around when you want to talk to them' (anonymous questionnaire responses, Stafford et al., 2009). It had to be the same continuous worker who they can get to know and trust (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2009). Some children were devastated when support stopped

particularly at times of another move (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003). According to McGee (2000), the timing and how children see the service has emerged as crucial, as is location (McGee, 2000; Stalford et al., 2003). In relation to timing, children in a number of studies wanted support at times they needed it – flexibility in terms of in school-time, after school, evenings, weekends (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003, Mullender et al., 2002, McGee, 2000). In relation to place it should be in places where children already go, especially school and also youth and leisure areas (Stalford et al., 2003) and also should not be merely associated with the place you live, e.g. refuge, but follow you through all the changes (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003, Stafford et al., 2007). In relation to how children see the support Children speak about being seen as 'problem children' instead of 'children with problems' or of being told they need help/punishment because of behaviour problems (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Stalford et al., 2003), rather than intervention because of the domestic abuse they have suffered.

The literature does contain some positive reports of counselling: 'I found that it does help, eh, because it's like me, it's making me like open up a little bit more and that' (girl, 13, Stafford et al, 2007:46) and 'He's the only man I trust' (boy aged 8 about his counsellor in McGee, 2000:172). There are also a few strong examples of social workers giving good support through listening and taking children's views seriously, keeping them informed with regular contact and direct support: 'We just talk about things…they really helped me…about feeling uncomfortable…and about domestic violence' (S in Stalford et al., 2003:65). However these contrast with some negative views of children's involvement in 'child protection' procedures and with concern that some social workers are avoiding the issue (see, for example, Stanley et al., 2012).

Women's Aid workers also, of course, use counselling and therapeutic techniques but advertise the service as 'support'. Stalford et al. (2003) concluded that a multi-agency response, with advertising, would decrease the stigma and increase access to domestic

abuse 'support' workers, from whatever agency, for children. A promising development in Scotland is that Women's Aid outreach support in collaboration with secondary schools has begun to reach young people still living with domestic abuse, young people can access services in their own right, not necessarily with parental permission (Stafford et al., 2009). As well as individual support, children rated very highly activities, fun, sport, chill out time and space with their peers (Humphreys and Thiara, 2002; Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2007; Stafford et al., 2009). These were important ways of children feeling better mentally and physically both with others that have been through domestic abuse and with people their own age in their area, helping to build confidence, networks and self-esteem (Stalford et al., 2003; Stafford et al., 2007; Stafford et al., 2009).

Groupwork

Children's accounts of being involved in groupwork have been positive, including fun activity based group outings or workshops as well as more therapeutic based groupwork, both definitely having a place (Mullender et al., 2002; Stafford et al., 2007; Stafford et al., 2009). Children do not necessarily feel groupwork is for them, for example, some young people have not wanted to attend due to confidentiality concerns (Stafford et al., 2009), or interestingly because they were young teenagers, as opposed to children, and 'people our age mightn't want to talk about it as much' (14-year-old reflecting other teenagers views also, Buckley et al., 2007:305). For some, support needed to be just one-to-one or at least individual support initially (Loosely et al., 2006; Buckley et al., 2007). Structured groupwork programmes may impose selection criteria, such as excluding children still living with the abuser (Mullender et al., 2002; Loosley et al., 2006; Sharp et al., 2012).

In the UK, pioneers in Sutton and Scotland have piloted versions of the Canadian Ontario groupwork programme (Loosley et al., 2006). Initial reports shared children's perspectives on the benefits (a small sample in Debonnairre, 2007) while an action research evaluation

of the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) project in Scotland has provided a more thorough evaluation reflecting and building on all of those themes (Sharp et al., 2011). Children and young people (27 in total) interviewed as part of a 2 year evaluation reported on outcomes from child and mother involvement in the twelve- week concurrent programme. In summary: it was a positive, welcoming environment, where children made new friends with a good balance between fun and talking about domestic abuse; children liked being listened to and taken seriously; developed a greater understanding of domestic abuse, for many this was transformative 'It helped me understand why I felt how I did about what happened' (Alan, aged 15) and also not to feel alone and apportion blame for the abuse; children learnt to manage their emotions and actions in response to domestic abuse; had greater knowledge of safe behaviour; a positive impact on relationships between children and mothers was noted for most but not all children (this could be positive already or no change). Children and mothers feedback was 'positive and compelling' (ibid p.vi) though nuanced which provided rich insights: CEDAR was not enough for some children, which makes sense considering children have reported wanted support for as long as they need it and a mix of one-to-one support too; not all children's relationships with mums improved and they had not shared safety plans; siblings relationships were not necessarily improved particularly if one was on the programme and one wasn't. A multi-agency response, cascading training through using co-facilitators from multiple agencies including schools, did have a profound effect on children and young people's well-being, coping mechanisms, education, health and for many, relationships with mums, in only twelve weeks, did reach many of CYPEDA's recommendations for good support.

Conclusion

The evidence suggests that CYPEDA are very comfortable with being experts in their own lives, and in reflecting on the services they have or have not received:

> Perhaps it is unethical to overprotect children from research, not only because this excludes them (Alderson, 1995) but because we will then end up intervening in their lives in ways which adults have established to be best, without understanding how children and young people perceive or experience these well-intentioned but perhaps misguided efforts. (Mullender et al., 2002:9)

Children would remove the word 'perhaps' from this sentence, twice – for from children's perspectives it has been evidenced that interventions and (lack of) efforts are far from reaching the mark and there is a 'paucity of effective service provision' (Baker 2005:281).

Children are not being protected from their domestically violent father; they see this as the responsibility of adult agencies and they are failing (see, for example, Buckley et al., 2007; Stanley et al., 2010), for many, it seems, their only escape is to run. There are many barriers to accessing help including finding someone to trust, information, accentuated fears relating to confidentiality and stigma. Professionals, particularly teachers, should be picking up on cues, children feel especially invisible and punished by teachers (see, for example, Mullender et al., 2002; Stalford et al., 2003). Police incidents should result in help and support and action to remove the perpetrator (see, for example, McGee, 2000; Stanley, 2010). Children's perspectives on specialist support are positive though lack depth (Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003), new approaches such as outreach and key workers for CYPEDA in Scottish Women's Aid are a key opportunity to examine the specialist services in more detail in this study.

A rich understanding emerges from a review of literature but it remains a small body of literature limited in scope. Children's views on the role of education and more good practice examples would be helpful. Children's perspectives on justice would also be useful and an obvious gap in specialist court evaluations so far (for example, Reid-Howie, 2007). There are many groups of children whose voices are only beginning to be heard, such as

CYPEDA who have not accessed refuge services or are accessing new pilot projects in Scotland which is a key gap for this study, rural CYPEDA, black and minority ethnic CYPEDA, CYPEDA also experiencing domestic abuse and substance misuse or/and mental health problems. Some groups of CYPEDA are largely unheard, such as disabled CYPEDA, CYPEDA who go through the care system.

Then, the challenge is the 'ability to do something meaningful with what we find, making appropriate links with research findings, policy and practice' (Roberts, 2003:32), one study in this review directly affected policy (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003) but it is incumbent on researchers and policy-makers to ensure that CYPEDA's valid views and evidence are taken seriously in relation to collective decision-making and actually help those that the research participants want to help, which this study will consider in its methodology.

Chapter 3
Domestic Abuse and Devolution: Power to all the People?

Introduction

> There is a crucial connection between the voice of children in public discourse and policy-making (their political representation) and the socially and culturally constructed ways in which children are seen (their social and cultural representations). (Prout, 2003:22)

In the 1990s, Scotland's feminist activists, in particular children's rights advocates within Women's Aid, campaigned to ensure that children were actually seen at all in relation to domestic abuse. Domestic abuse was seen as an adult issue with an adult 'victim', at worse a private problem between adults; it was not an issue for children's services or child protection, although this was beginning to be challenged in the literature (see, for example, Mullender and Morley, 1994; Hester and Pearson, 1998). Children were conceptualised as hidden or silent victims if the effects were recognised at all (Abrahams, 1994), their voices were absent from the debate. In Scotland, ground-breaking conferences, research and publications ensured the links between domestic abuse and child abuse, woman protection and child protection began to be taken seriously (Forman, 1991) and, uniquely, that children's own voices in relation to their experiences and rights were heard (Scottish Women's Aid 1995, 1997, 1999). Tisdall and Hill (2010) note a concurrent 'turn' in generic children's policy due to New Labour's success (1997) and devolution, from children being 'largely 'hidden' within the social category of households or treated as passive recipients of public intervention' (p.29) to recognition 'as service consumers with rights as well as needs, who might potentially play a role in governance' (ibid.). The emerging theory of childhood 'rupturing…the perceived passivity of children's ideological placement' (James et al

1998:69) was now envisioning the child as 'no longer marginal, 'the child' is positioned as a social and political actor, a person with opinions, a decision maker' (ibid.). Children were beginning to be seen as people who had experienced domestic abuse alongside their mother; more generally as having rights to participation as well as protection and provision through the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child UNCRC (UN 1989) and through the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (see, for example, Cleland et al., 2009, Tisdall et al., 2012).

This chapter examines the emerging voice of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA) in Scotland's policy-making over the first three terms of the Scottish Parliament: the fertile ground offered by the new Parliament and its 'participative approach to the development, consideration and scrutiny of policy and legislation' (Consultative Steering Group-CSG 1998, Section 2 (2)); the influence of feminist and children's rights discourses and the changes to how and whether children are 'seen' - from needs to rights to an eventual role in governance.

Power to the People? The Labour/Liberal Democrat Coalition 1999-2003

The inauguration of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 radically changed the political and policy-making context in Scotland. Tisdall and Hill (2010) note a substantial increase in policy scrutiny and activity, greater access through both location and outlook, the changed structure seen as a driver for change. That 39 per cent of the 139 Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) were women, amongst the highest in Europe, was a tribute to a vociferous women's movement that had greater representation of women and tackling violence against women at its core (Breitenbach and MacKay, 2001). This critical mass in terms of the symbolic representation – the presence of 48 women (81 men), brought great hopes for substantive representation- an increase in opportunities for 'women's issues' to be heard (ibid.). That prominent Labour feminists took powerful positions as Ministers

and Conveners of Committees, and both moved and informed debates, ensured this happened from the beginning; women made 'a difference to the way politics in Scotland is being conducted as well as influencing the issues that are being debated' (Alexander, 2001, p.xiii). Four debates on domestic abuse and violence against women were held in the first term and annually from then on. It was notable that many new MSPs across parties had recent experiences from practice (including as support workers, journalists and lawyers) that made both the discourse and action real, issues raised in the Chamber and Committees from the beginning were translated into policy and legislation: for example, in relation to widening interdicts and powers of arrest (Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001, Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011) or that abused women should be treated as vulnerable witnesses (Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004), 'It [was] wonderful, that…the Parliament has the powers to address one of the biggest problems facing Scotland' (Scottish Parliament 2000: Col 433). Ministers immediately set up a new Equality Unit in the Scottish Executive 'to ensure that equalities will be at the heart of policy-making in general' (Alexander, 2001:xiii), appointed a feminist to lead and approved secondments over the years of feminist activists to work inside government and take forward domestic abuse strategies. Femocrats (see, for example, Murray and Powell, 2009), within all strata not just politicians, became what Childs (2009) names 'critical actors' working within the system 'to bring about women [and eventually children] friendly policy change' (p.129), key change agents both individually and through strategic alliances (ibid.:138-141) more motivated than others, including other women political actors, to initiate reform.

Women [and children]

The parenthesis [and eventually children] typifies the struggle to get children's rights noticed within the feminist movement and the violence against women discourse (Mayall, 2006), to get specialist services for children recognised as essential as and linked to services for women and for CYPEDA voices to be heard within the power-sharing structure: this reflected the wider on-going marginalisation of children as policy and political actors (see, for example, McLeod, 2009:4). However, there were several major breakthroughs in the first term of Parliament: the *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse* (Scottish Executive 2000), in terms of its implementation structure as well as its content and the funding attached; a review of Child Protection and, less significantly for these purposes, children's services, Parliamentary moves to hear the views of children generally and CYPEDA being quoted and then heard in Parliament.

The 'National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland' (Scottish Executive, 2000)

The National Strategy was launched in Parliament with £18.3 million attached, 'the largest amount of money ever committed to domestic abuse in Britain' (Scottish Parliament 2000: Col.459). It gained cross party approval both for its strategy and crucially, its gender-based definition of domestic abuse:

> Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse…sexual abuse… and mental and emotional abuse….
>
> Domestic abuse is associated with broader gender inequality, and should be understood in its historical context, whereby societies have given greater status, wealth, influence, control and power to men… (Scottish Executive 2000:5)

That excuses of alcohol or poverty or blaming women would not be tolerated were made clear in the document and parliamentary debate to launch the Strategy. The overwhelming pattern of men's abuse of women was challenged almost annually by very few MSPs but the definition had been agreed and therefore drove the government's work and mainstreamed feminism (Breitenbach and Mackay, 2001).

The Strategy further states 'it must be recognised that children are witness to and subject to much of this abuse and there is some correlation between domestic abuse and the mental, physical and sexual abuse of children' (p.6). This signalled the beginning of children as an integral part of the discourse on violence against women, just as they are an integral part of the violence perpetrated (see Chapter 2). The strategy explicitly cites the UNCRC Article 19 right to protection, yet also implicitly their right to participation (UNCRC, Article 12), perhaps inadvertently due to a late decision to include children with women throughout:

> All women or children who experience abuse must receive the support and services to enable them to identify their needs, to make choices and to have these needs addressed, as well as participate in developing services to address their needs in the future. It must be recognised that children require services which meet their specific needs. (Scottish Executive, 2000:7)

The good practice guidelines contained within advocate 'empowering women/children to take control of their lives' (National Strategy, 2000:32). This was a progressive viewpoint in relation to children, new to feminist discourse and earlier principles that focussed more on empowering women and keeping children safe (see, for example, Burke, 1999:264), rather than proactively empowering children as 'active participants' in domestic abuse (SWA 1995, Mullender et al., 2002:121), able to identify their own needs and improve services.

Scotland's subsequent review of children's services *For Scotland's Children* (Scottish Executive, 2001) traces just such a shift in how children are 'seen' by the government and

society: a shift from welfare and passivity to both welfare and rights. It recognises this shift in how we see children and recognise their rights, as a challenge for adults:

> the developing view of a child as an active agent in their world and a commitment to empowerment [as] key in any change or recovery process…fosters the view of children as being of equal worth to adults with the capacity to play an active part in decisions made about them and in society generally (ibid.:42-3).

However in this review of children's services, CYPEDA were largely invisible, despite it being published after the Strategy, symbolic of the distance between government departments as well as violence against women and children's rights discourses. The Strategy, however inadvertently, had begun the necessary process of meshing children's rights with women's rights (as advocated in Mullender et al., 2002:5) through its inclusion of critical actors advocating for children; for children's workers such a meshing was par for the course, as was care that their enunciation of children's rights encompassed the complexities of living with abuse (Kelly and Mullender, 2000).

The Scottish Parliament recognised the need and challenges in 'ensur[ing] that the views of children can be meaningfully sought in the policy and legislation' (Borland et al., 2001:1) and commissioned research with children (and adults) to inform and guide MSPs on consulting children (Borland et al., 2001). It uses Hart's (1992) ladder of participation to identify three steps: research/consultation to children; with children; empowering approaches to children (see Chapter 2) and stressed that children had 'thoughtful, clearly held opinions on relevant matters' (Borland et al., 2001:2). The Minister convening the National Group to Address Violence Against Women devised an infrastructure of expert advisors and 32 multi-agency partnerships covering all local authorities. Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) were a key part of that group and its working groups. When research with women on the preferences and priorities for refuge provision was proposed in relation to

the distribution of the £12 million refuge development fund, SWA endeavoured to ensure that 'children…benefit from 'adults organisations' access to 'invited spaces'" (Tisdall, 2008:427) and secured extra funding to ensure CYPEDA were included in the research. Researchers looked to children's support workers as the experts with the skill-set for such sensitive research and the adults best placed to assess children's maturity and understanding in giving consent working alongside their mothers also; SWA conducted the focus groups in partnership with workers known to the groups of CYPEDA. Fitzpatrick et al's (2003) analysis exemplified children as 'co-constructors of knowledge' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6); their recommendations closely adhered to children's strong views, often raising them higher than the adults (Alderson, 1995). Children's clear preferences were for a new model of refuges where families had their own flats alongside communal spaces which included age-specific space for CYPEDA; the views were taken on board in the distribution of funding with the notable exception that not all new refuges had children and young people's spaces for peer support. Unusually, young people had immediate impact (Kirby with Bryson, 2004) in that they had directly influenced a large funding package resulting in new/refurbished buildings, enabling not only immediate (Borland et al., 2001) but very tangible feedback. For the first time in domestic abuse policy-making, children were seen as 'the best people to provide information on a child's perspective, actions and attitudes are children themselves' (Scott, 2000:99).

Child and woman protection

The audit and review of child protection in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2002a) also sought CYPEDA's views through children's workers. Significant comments related to lack of action if mother or child had reported incidents and lack of punishments for abusers so children were unsafe and even more at risk (ibid. see p.115 for examples). 'At least' a third of child protection cases reviewed involved domestic abuse and the audit's broadened definition of abusive situations clearly included 'domestic abuse (primarily of mothers)

which caused the physical or emotional abuse of children' (ibid, p.36), both key factors in the recognition of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse as 'children in need'. However, the review warned that progress is undermined when increased awareness leads to haphazard, unhelpful practices such as immediately viewing children as in need of 'child protection' and not recognising 'that protecting the mother may be the best way to protect the child/ren' (p.154). The strong case review evidence and conclusions, the views of CYPEDA, the expert groups' inclusion of Scottish Women's Aid as a children's organisation and feminists from 'mainstream' professions, all culminated in domestic abuse strategies and Women's Aid being brought from the periphery to a more central role in child protection and thereafter children's services. The partner report *Growing Support* (Scottish Executive 2002b), focusing on vulnerable young children, challenges the key concept of 'parental responsibilities' without any distinction on the grounds of gender in relation to vulnerable children and further highlights the need to support, not target, non-abusing mothers and target - make visible- abusive men (p.97). The review recognised that agencies have major difficulties in helping children in these situations: that children's reporters were being overwhelmed with referrals and that providing for the needs of children experiencing domestic abuse should be a priority for interagency planning.

Listen Louder

In the first Parliamentary term, empowering, participative approaches to children and young people (Borland et al., 2001) remained largely the domain of non- governmental organisations (Tisdall et al., 2006) and in the field of domestic abuse, Scottish Women's Aid (SWA). A postcard campaign from children direct to the Minister for Children also lobbied Parliament (Scottish Women's Aid, 1999) with their messages. A leading children's rights advocate, now MSP, invited Parliament to:

> …reflect on the sheer scale of the impact of domestic abuse on children. We have responsibilities to those children...The clear message that comes through from the children's comments is that they need services in their own right…the most telling comments are the two words at the end "Please listen". Listening in itself is not enough. We need to hear the voices of children and act upon them. (Scottish Parliament, 1999:Col. 191)

Three years later, not the funding package of millions attached to the Strategy, nor the child protection review, nor the children's services agenda had made a significant difference to the number of specialist support workers on the ground. Scottish Women's Aid's children's support workers, fully cognisant of children's ability to speak for themselves – to speak about domestic abuse, to reflect on their services and make recommendations - created a new space for direct action: the 'openings and spaces…[for children] to articulate their oppressions and their own solutions' (Tisdall, 2008:427). Annual events as part of the Listen Louder Campaign gave the opportunity to CYPEDA to speak direct to Ministers.

There has been criticism that the children's rights movement is led by adults or is adult driven (Shucksmith and Hendry, 1998, cited by Tisdall, 2008) and that children's participation benefits adults (Tisdall et al., 2008). It is certainly true that SWA were focussed on gaining more children's workers, though, it must be said, motivated by children's views of an unsatisfactory service (SWA 1999; SWA focus groups for Fitzpatrick et al., 2003) and their frustration at not been heard 'Listen more loudly please' (anonymous child postcard, SWA), as well as evidence in practice of the impact good and poor support could make: 'we want support from adults not sympathy' (ibid.):

> You spoke about feeling more confident once you got to know your child support worker. How did you feel before your support worker came into your life? (Member of Scottish Parliament)

> I did not know what to do. I had no-one to talk to. All my feelings just crammed up inside me, and sometimes they got the better of me. I do not know what I would do if I did not have a support worker. ('Mags', age 14)
>
> (Scottish Parliament Public Petition Committee, 2002: Col. 2433)

The Campaign was adult-led in some ways, with elements of children initiating (Hart, 1992); only children could sign the petition and they chose to deliver it to Parliament without adults (PE560); only children (no adults) could speak at events with Ministers on any subject that mattered to them – issues they identified themselves (Lansdown, 2010), unfiltered by adults; only young people chaired the events. The young witness at the Petitions Committee proved reflective in terms of her experience and that of others: for example, challenging the government about the domestic abuse advert on television which showed the effects on children without ensuring help was available to a child who might then look for it, mirroring Parliamentary debates calling for services to cope with higher demand. The convener felt the presentation of the young person and her team was excellent, she was 'as good a petitioner as we have seen' (Convener, 2002, Col. 2432), emphasising the transformational opportunity of greater children's involvement 'challeng[ing] the dominant discourse that represents children and young people as lacking the knowledge or competence to be participants in policy debate' (Edwards et al., 2004: 104).

The actual engagement with enthusiastic Ministers effectively brought together their portfolios of Education and Young People (including children's services and child protection), Social Justice (including violence against women and housing) and Health, with the Justice Minister who was invited to the stage to answer a question about very unsafe contact. This, crucially, resulted in the Cabinet Delivery Group for Children finally expressing collective cross-government responsibility for action. Domestic abuse was no

longer siloed; CYPEDA were invited to the expert group taking forward the domestic abuse strategy where the continued participation of CYPEDA in the action was agreed.

Ministers immediately dedicated interim funding (£0.5million in total) to those Women's Aid groups without a children's service 'while longer term solutions are explored' (Scottish Parliament 2002: Col 15906). The young petitioner had ensured that these solutions would be scrutinised by a cross-party committee. CYPEDA had accomplished what feminist activists had lobbied for over years, illustrating the efficacy of children speaking for themselves (White et al., 2010), they had also challenged findings from the childhood literature that found UK participation projects 'having little impact on public decision-making' (Kirby with Bryson, 2002:15). 'Children and young people's participation is neatly bracketed off from political campaigning' notes Tisdall (2008:347) and, whilst children and young people weren't getting party political, they were getting political, for the first time in their lives and for the first time in domestic abuse policy-making history.

Political Activists: The Labour/Liberal Democrat Coalition 2003-2007

Through the powerful listen louder campaign, young activists raised their own issues with the Scottish Executive and Parliament. We have moved as a nation from ignoring children to recognising that they are affected by domestic abuse and need support in their own right. Young people have shown they can eloquently state their needs. (Scottish Parliament, 2006: Col. 29209)

In the second term of the Scottish Parliament, the Labour/Liberal Democrat Coalition continued and they joined the UN in celebrating women activists against violence against women in 2004. For the first time children and young people were also 'seen' as political activists; they had made themselves heard through the effective independent campaign coordinated by Scottish Women's Aid, ending that year. What young people said about their needs, in research and directly to Ministers, is fully explored in Chapter Six (phase 1

of the research study)and its impact in Chapter Seven. It is essential to say here that this is a transformative period of Parliament for the rights of CYPEDA. Parliament 'notes in particular the traumatic effects on children as well as women' (Scottish Parliament 2004: motion S2M-1943) and the Scottish Executive, scrutinised by the Parliamentary Committee, translated that into significant action: a £6 million fund specifically for children's support workers was announced at the final Listen Louder event. The new Minister for Communities, Malcolm Chisholm, paid specific tribute to women activists, Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) and for the first time specifically children's workers 'who raised awareness of the effect of domestic abuse on children and young people' (Scottish Parliament 2004: Col. 29209) and congratulated SWA activists on now campaigning for 'both women and children, emphasising the resilience and bravery of both and the fact that their protection and well-being is inextricably linked' (ibid.: Col. 29207).

Feminist activists within the Parliament were recognised: especially but not only Labour politicians, as policy entrepreneurs and champions (MacKay, 2010), such as Margaret Curran, Johann Lamont, Elaine Smith, all of whom held influential positions in the first two terms, as Ministers (a third of Cabinet Ministers were women), as gender reporter to the Equal Opportunities Committee; unsurprisingly 'clear concrete gains' were emerging at this stage (McKay, 2010). Margaret Curran MSP stated ' I have been involved in the debate on domestic violence for 20 years…have spent a political lifetime arguing for the equality of men and women in political representation, and I am very proud that we have two women ministers committed to advancing this [domestic violence] agenda' (Scottish Parliament debate, 27 October 1999); she joined other women in chamber in declaring openly her feminism and role in the women's movement 'Many of us in chamber and elsewhere have taken part in the long struggle [in the women's movement against domestic abuse]' (SP 2000, Col. 457-458). Activists' role in Parliament's adoption of the gender-based definition of domestic abuse was celebrated by most, though it must be said few

Liberal Democrats and Conservatives were persistently uncomfortable with the definition compared to Labour, SNP and the few other women activist MSP's; the ideology of the overwhelmingly left and centre left Parliament (Labour 50 seats, SNP 27, Lib Dem 17, Conservative 18) mattered as well as having feminist critical actors (MacKay, 2010). 'The importance of having a critical mass of women in Parliament should never be underestimated.' (Scottish Parliament 2003:Col. 3704-5) but also rising were male as well as female critical actors (Childs et al/. 2009). Although many non-violent men were accused of remaining silent on the issue, exemplified in their absence from the Parliamentary chamber (see Col .29221); actions of the male MSPS in the debates raised their voices and profile, especially pro-feminist Minister Malcolm Chisholm, pro-feminist men in the Strategy working groups and young male political activists (see Chapter 6) and also the emerging White Ribbon Campaign. The 'institutionalisation of women's concerns and gender equality' (MacKay 2010:376) enabled Scottish Women's Aid and other key feminists such as the Women's Support Project and Rape Crisis to have an influential and increasing role in policy development: regularly giving evidence to Committees, acting as key members of the National Group to Address Violence Against Women, chairing as well as participating in its working groups; the newest 'a working group to develop a co-ordinated strategic approach to provision of support services for children and young people in families where there has been domestic abuse' (Scottish Parliament 2003: Col. 3679).

Integrating Domestic Abuse into Children's Services and Child Protection

The children's services working group brought together key senior players inside and outside the Executive, crucially including the Integrated Children's Services lead in the Executive as well as the Scottish Children's Reporters Association (SCRA) who reported concern that 43 per cent of referrals to the reporter (Scotland's Children's Panel system) were of children who had experience of domestic abuse (Scottish Children's Reporters Association, 2004). The group mapped services to CYPEDA across Scotland (Stafford,

2003): funding was ad-hoc, mainly local authority but almost half through the Executive's domestic abuse funding; there was no apparent relation to need or population density; Women's Aid was the lead service provider (over 90 per cent of services) and a significant gap of service to children in the community was identified (Stafford, 2003). The group also considered children's views on gaps in services (Scottish Women's Aid, 1999; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003; interim findings from Houghton, see Chapter 6), the child protection review (Scottish Executive, 2002a) as well as new research on women's views on housing and support factors (Edgar et al., 2003) in which the authors recommended distinct workers for CYPEDA. The working group decided to recommend the funding of specialist support services to CYPEDA as a local and national priority.

For the first time, Ministerial *Guidance on Integrated Children's Services Plans 2005-8* specifically named CYPEDA as 'children in need', as that was not explicit in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and such children were named a priority for action. The working group also produced *Children and Young People Experiencing Domestic Abuse: Guidance Note for Planners* (Scottish Executive, 2004a) to advise and encourage local authorities to meet the needs of CYPEDA. The guidance recognised that the agenda of the *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse* (Scottish Executive, 2000) had progressed locally more in relation to women than children, and gave action points for improvements at strategic and service level, ending with the key element of 'empowerment of women, children and young people' (p.37). Unfortunately, there was limited accountability for those plans, so, in effect, the guidance had no 'teeth' though it had some positive effects locally (see, for example, Scottish Parliament: Col. 21480-21481 in relation to Fife).

Nationally, Ministers agreed to a ring-fenced fund with outcomes based on children's stated needs, ensuring a minimum of three full-time equivalent workers to offer refuge, follow-on and outreach services in each Women's Aid group in Scotland, with action to ensure all local authorities were covered by this minimum. It promoted partnership

between Women's Aid and local planning partners in signing off plans for the fund but did not insisting on match-funding in local authorities like the other central funds (see Henderson, 2007) recognising the reluctance of some local authorities and multi-agency domestic abuse partnerships to recognise this issue or/and Women's Aid's expertise in the area. The limit of £6 million ensured a minimum standard but that was not yet related to population or need (Stafford, 2003).

Increasing specialist support, though a vital component, was just one aspect of progress. Margaret Curran, the openly feminist Minister with responsibility for Violence Against Women and Equalities, brought in an activist, a Scottish Women's Aid specialist, to look at a wider strategy: 'Supporting those children is everyone's responsibility…a multi-agency, cross Executive approach [is needed] to secure better outcomes for children' ((Scottish Parliament 2006: Col. 29209). The Cabinet Delivery Group for Children and Young People was to address domestic abuse; accountable to this was a 'National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group: Getting it Right for Every Child' of senior stakeholders and civil servants; reporting to this a pathfinder testing out an improved multi-agency approach in four local authority areas.

Scots law recognition of domestic abuse and children's rights

The first 'explicit statutory recognition' of the effects of domestic abuse on children (Norrie, 2011:60) took place in this term. The Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006 amended the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 by introducing Section 11 (S.11 (7A)-(7E)) which requires courts to take account of domestic abuse when considering residence and contact applications. Courts are specifically directed to protect the child from abuse or risk of abuse, even when the abuse is not directed at the child concerned – it states the child is affected by it and there are effects of abuse and risk of abuse on the child. The definition of abuse is wide and includes fear, alarm, distress, oft-cited by children (see Chapter 2), as

well as violence and harassment; it also specifies conduct such as speech or presence in an area that could cause distress, such as abusive fathers appearing outside school. Whilst these amendments did not go so far as the rebuttable presumption of New Zealand (see, for example, Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b), where there is a presumption of no contact between an abusive parent and their child, the court now had to have regard to the ability of the abusive parent to care for or meet the needs of the child, the effect any abuse or risk of abuse might have on the non-abusing parent and whether it was appropriate to order the adults to cooperate.

Sutherland argues that 'courts were already alert to the problem…reforms were a legislative response to a very adult and gendered debate on the assessment of welfare' (Sutherland, 2009:102), whereas others comment that, although there are other provisions that could be used (such as safeguarding welfare, exclusion orders and interdicts in various laws), explicit recognition is necessary for an appropriate response (Norrie, 2009). To the Parliament, taking account of the gendered nature of domestic abuse was essential in producing a law that could be used to protect both women and children. To the Government, there remains a need in 2012 to pilot ways to improve how the voices of children are heard in proceedings, promote better risk assessment where there is contact, thereby improving reports to court (in process). Mullender et al. (2002) state that 'children's rights cannot be fully pursued unless women's rights are also taken on board in any situation where both are being threatened' (p.5). This law brings the abusive father's responsibilities into the equation also.

Surely, though, this debate cannot remain adult-centric. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is said to be the most radical across the UK in specifying the requirement for children's participation (Tisdall and Morrison, 2012:157) and offering sheriffs a wider set of participation modes (ibid:159), yet the views of CYPEDA on contact, residence, and, critically, contact centres in Scotland have not yet been sought (Morrison and Wasoff,

2012). An examination of case law in relation to contested contact and residence cases reveals a shift in family law in relation to children's rights (ibid.) and their relation to CYPEDA. Tisdall and Morrison (2012) find that most children in Scotland, especially age three and upwards would meet the low threshold of 'practicability' for their views to be considered (ibid.:170). It is not, then, whether children's views are attained but how they are attained that poses the challenge, with early critical feedback from CYPEDA (ibid., Morrison forthcoming) including issues about methods and confidentiality. They warn ' practice [needs to be] exemplary in gathering children's views' (Tisdall and Morrison, 2012:171) and skilled practitioners are needed, particularly when children who have been abused have been found to want a greater say than other children in decisions about residence and contact (Smart et al., 2001 cited in Tisdall and Morrison, 2012). Tisdall and Morrison conclude that participation has to be 'part of ensuring the improved well-being of children' (ibid:173) and not just offered out of respect. Hunter (2007) marks, optimistically perhaps, a shift from the welfare paradigm in law 'children are no longer conceived as dependent, vulnerable, at-risk victims of divorce and passive objects of law, but are seen as subjects with agency' (p.283); in relation to domestic abuse we need to hear children's views on contact and proceedings as 'co-producers of their own welfare' (Prout and Hallett, 2003:5).

Children's participation: women and children….and men?

The second term of the Scottish Parliament marked a shift in the rights of CYPEDA to participate in decisions about their lives and service development; statutory recognition of the effects of domestic abuse, the links to the abuse and protection of women; recognition of abusive fathers' responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of their children and not to continue the abuse of the child's mother; and a significant increase in investment in specialist support for CYPEDA based on their views. There were also considerable steps taken to tackle the perpetrator more effectively and quickly: a more victim-centred and

educated response through Scotland's first domestic abuse court, in Glasgow (Reid-Howie 2007) accompanied by the ASSIST advocacy and support service (Robinson, 2006) and a national pro-arrest and pro-prosecution protocol between the police and crown office (ACPOS/COPFS, 2005 updated 2008).

Meanwhile, and quite separately at first, children's policy was being transformed into the all-encompassing *Getting it Right for Every Child* approach (GIRFEC, Scottish Executive 2005, 2006, 2008). The question was how to mesh GIRFEC's generic 'fundamental shift in how children are helped and supported' (Scottish Executive, 2006) to the hard-won targeted developments in relation to CYPEDA, which necessarily included women and was beginning to link more strongly with action against perpetrators (Robinson, 2006; Reid-Howie, 2007).

Lastly, CYPEDA's journey from political activism to political actors (see Chapters 6 and 7) started with recognition: 'The work to give a voice to young people who are experiencing domestic abuse is particularly important' (Scottish Parliament 2003: Col. 3710) but it took years for the Parliament and Executive to see it as their job to 'open up the political process to new previously marginalised actors' (Mackay, 2010:378), announcing '…exciting plans for children to participate in a delivery plan for their future' (Scottish Parliament 2006:Col 29209). There was UK-wide criticism that the rhetorical battle for children's participation in national policy making had been won but the problem for the next term was how to involve children effectively and meaningfully, ensuring they had an impact (Hill et al. 2004; Sinclair, 2004).

Young Political Actors? Scottish National Party 2007-2011

The Scottish National Party narrowly won the Scottish elections in 2007, with 47 SNP MSP's over 46 Labour MSP's (Conservatives 17, Liberal Democrats 16, Green's reduced to 2 and only one Independent). That SNP were a minority government meant an inability to

legislate without the support of other parties, including for a referendum on independence. There was a decrease in the representation of women to 33% reflecting an 'overall pattern of decline' that continues into the 2011 elections (Kenny and MacKay, 2012). Significantly, the Labour women who stood out as 'explicitly and unequivocally feminist in their contributions' (McKay, 2010:377), were no longer in government but in opposition, which raised concerns that progress would be lost. There were women (and men) in power and powerful positions, notably Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP, who had pledged Parliament support to tackle domestic abuse and who welcomed gender-based initiatives (Scottish Parliament 2003: Col. 3682). The First Minister reinforced this when signing the Women's Coalition Statement to work to address violence against women in all its aspects and adopt the feminist definition (December, 2007).

Other concerns related to the SNP Scottish Government (no longer Executive) decentralisation of power through the Concordat with local authorities (Scottish Government 2007). The 'settlement' in effect meant greater distribution of funding direct to local authorities to address local need as they saw fit. Such decentralisation accentuated concerns around how national policy on gender equality (strengthened by the Equality Act 2006) and violence against women was 'led, implemented and monitored at a local level' (Scottish Women's Aid, 2010). It was feared that Single Outcome Agreements would not make local authorities recognise or be accountable for action/services to address violence against women (Scottish Women's Aid, 2008; Scottish Parliament, 2009: Col. 12721) and that there would no longer be central government ring-fenced funding for violence against women and CYPEDA. Although local authority funding has stalled or reduced over the last few years (Scottish Women's Aid, 2012), and part of the ring-fenced funding did go into the settlement (£1.4 million), there was actually an increased Government budget for Violence Against Women including £10m from the Education Department for the first time (Scottish Parliament 2007:Col. 3771-2). Mid-term fears arose with cuts across

Government departments for the interim 2011-12 budget but the Equality Unit budget and funding of local projects were uniquely protected.

The role of CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) became key in relation to policy on violence against women. A pro-feminist Labour male councillor was the spokesperson on Community Safety and Well-being (Cllr Harry McGuigan). At ease with the gendered definition and, as an ex-teacher, he was keen to improve the response to CYPEDA. Ministers and CoSLA launched *Safer Lives: Changed Lives* (Scottish Government 2009) to promote a shared approach to tackling violence against women throughout Scotland - 'a consequence of continuing inequality between men and women' (p.1)- citing the UNCRC in relation to CYPEDA's rights to participation as well as protection and provision. Under the Gender Equality Duty, Ministers prioritised tackling violence against women for Scottish public authorities and monitored progress (Reid Howie Associates and Equality Plus, 2010).

The first debate on Violence Against Women in this term was entitled 'a better future for Scotland's children: ending domestic abuse against women' (S3M-894). Significantly in the name of the new Minister for Children and Early Years rather than the Equalities Minister, whilst acknowledging 'we cannot ensure the well-being of children unless we also protect their mothers and hold the perpetrator to account' (Scottish Parliament 2007:Col. 3741). Ministers identified £40 million over three years, including £10m focussed on the cross-cutting approach delivery group for children. Following a meeting with a group of CYPEDA (see Chapter 7), Ministers added a fourth 'P' of participation to the three P's of protection, provision and prevention in the strategic work against violence against women and committed to working 'in partnership' with children as well as women: 'the work has been and will continue to be informed by the involvement of young people' (Scottish Parliament 2007:Col. 3742). This potentially moved Parliament and the Government from 'one off or isolated consultations to a position where children's participation [could be]

firmly embedded within…cultures and structures for decision-making' (Sinclair, 2004:116). Before concluding with the challenge of such participation, there were many developments across protection, provision and prevention during 2007-11, mainly but not only through the implementation of the *National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan* (2008-11). Key developments relating to CYPEDA are discussed below.

Protection

The GIRFEC domestic abuse pathfinder offered opportunities to test and integrate best practice approaches to improve outcomes to CYPEDA across four local authority areas. The starting point began as a police incident but it aimed to widen out to any identification of CYPEDA by any agency. The aims amalgamated the integrated approach to the child – one plan, one lead professional, integrated working - with best practice of supporting and protecting the non-abusing mother and tackling perpetrators. Key was an agreed approach to risk assessment and ensuing action. An expert on MARAC – the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing approach to domestic abuse cases had worked with the Violence Against Women Team to enhance the approach, which raised contact, separation and women's perceptions more highly on an evidenced-based scale to assess risk (Robinson 2004; 2007). GIRFEC benefited from contemporary thinking on assessment and managing risk in child protection (Aldgate and Rose, 2007; GIRFEC 2008:22) incorporating eight well-being indicators - safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included (SHANARRI) and a 'my world triangle' for assessments, as well as a resilience matrix for more complex cases (adapted from Daniel et al., 1999). Unsurprisingly, the first well-being indicator, 'safe', dominated practice and the new processes helped make children exposed to domestic abuse safer. Local approaches to, and particularly awareness of, CYPEDA were somewhat transformed; practitioners' understanding of changes in children's behaviours had certainly improved. There was a significant improvement in assessment of risk and sharing information with services relevant to a child's life; there was

greater consistency in police action against perpetrators and an increase in special bail conditions. Outcomes for children were not tracked in practice or in the evaluation, although there was evidence of CYPEDA being directed to services despite a lack of clarity of lead professional role. There was little assessment in terms of well-being indicators and resilience for example (Stradling and MacNeil, 2010). Significant gains were made then, but children's views were still missing: there was no consistent integration of CYPEDA's perceptions on distress, comments or fearful behaviour into the risk assessment - listening to them at the scene, recognising them as active participants in domestic abuse. The evaluation found that professionals, including the police, needed training on talking to CYPEDA; reports in practice lacked children's views and the evaluation did not include the views of CYPEDA.

Pre-screening in the pathfinder areas stopped automatic referral of CYPEDA to the reporter or social work and made referrals more appropriate, usually high risk cases (Stradling and MacNeil, 2010). Other local authority areas also put measures in place due to the unmanageable rise in domestic abuse child protection referrals which resulted in a Ministerial Task Force on the subject. More robust ways of tackling the perpetrators (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008) were taking place elsewhere, meshed with the MARAC risk assessment and providing new opportunities to mesh with children's rights. The court evaluation (Reid-Howie, 2007) identified the need for 'independent support to victims and their children at all stages by an organisation with expertise in domestic abuse' (ibid. p.3). The service attached, ASSIST, has been progressive in developing women and child-friendly risk assessment linked to safety planning and empowerment, gradually expanding its children's service. Scotland's Caledonian perpetrator programme is the first in the UK to include a children's as well as partner service (Stanley, 2010). This shift to include children in traditionally adult-centric yet progressive victim-centred (Reid-Howie, 2007) or avowedly pro-feminist (Caledonian) responses, offers the most exciting integrated response meeting

children's need for a powerful response (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b; Stanley et al., 2012), as well as support and protection for themselves and their mother. The role of the children's workers in the perpetrator programme is to contribute to the integration of the GIRFEC approach through their concentration on bringing services together for the child, sharing information sensitively key holders of the information about the perpetrator, the woman and the child or children, specifically assessing children's well-being and ensuring there is a lead professional for every child. However, unlike the women's service, their role is explicitly not for therapeutic intervention (the ratio is four male workers: three partner workers: one children's worker) and direct contact is limited if it happens at all. A third of the men in the Caledonian system still live with CYPEDA and many more have regular contact (Sinclair, 2010). This is a real gap in services (Stafford et al., 2003) that one worker per local authority will not cover; the provision of therapeutic support on the level of that with mothers would have been truly historic.

Child-centred practice also made inroads in this parliamentary term. The legal grounds of referral to a children's hearing recently changed to include 'if the child has, or is likely to have, close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse' (s.62 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011) which, instead of focusing on lack of parental care – previously a label often assigned to the non-abusing mother rather than the perpetrator, focusses attention on the perpetrator and the effect of his behaviour on the child: 'avoid[ing] the double trauma for the primary victim being a victim of abuse and then being blamed for not preventing that abuse from harming her children.' (Norrie 2012: 67). The Child Protection Guidelines (Scottish Government, 2010) missed the opportunity to include domestic abuse explicitly in its definition of abuse, despite statutory recognition, although they mention 'causing a child to feel frightened or in danger' (ibid.:13). Later they state that domestic abuse is an indicator of risk, that 'domestic abuse involves both an adult and child victim' (ibid. p.108) and that decisions about contact with the perpetrator by civil

courts and social work services should be based on an assessment of risk to both (ibid.:107). Other action to tackle the perpetrator is not mentioned. The Guidelines assert that 'the best way to keep both children and non-abusive parents/carers safe is to focus on early identification, assessment and intervention through skilled and attentive staff in universal services' (p.108). The Guidelines are laudable in their recognition that domestic abuse is under-reported to the police but heavily reliant on a skilled workforce and a shift in recognition of the centrality and pervasiveness of domestic abuse that the document itself struggles to make.

Although it is true that there are still far too many children in other areas of Scotland whose exposure to domestic abuse 'is neither recognised nor factored into assessments made in their regard' (Tagg, 2011:204) and who, even if identified, would not get a service or meet adults skilled at listening to CYPEDA, it does seem that Scotland is making strides forward in achieving the good practice advocated in the plan's literature review (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008): safety and protection of children; empowerment and safety for women; responsibility and accountability of perpetrators (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b:264, citing Burke, 1999); strengthening the relationship between mothers and children (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b:86).

Provision

Key to strengthening the mother-child relationship are two approaches of groupwork and individual linked support (Edgar et al., 2003; Humphreys et al., 2006). The delivery plan funded a 2008-11 pilot of the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) concurrent groupwork programme for children and their mothers, adapted from the Canadian model (Loosely et al., 2006) and positively evaluated (Sharp et al., 2011). It has recently (2012) been rolled out in twelve areas of Scotland through the Big Lottery fund, with national co-ordination by Scottish Women's Aid. The fund for specialist children's

support workers has been retained year on year since 2004, whatever party has been in power. Bar a few exceptions for reaching city and rural demand, support mainly remains at the minimum standard of three workers per Women's Aid group (or in a few cases, local authority service providers). Forty-one services across Scotland cover the 32 local authorities, half these services receive part- funding from local authorities with the Government now as the largest funder. The service has broadened dramatically with investment; from predominantly support to children in refuge, to include follow-on support to CYPEDA once they leave and now equally an outreach service to CYPEDA.

The £12 million investment to refuge development in 2002-4 has not been replicated since; 229 of 515 refuge spaces remain shared, the rest self-contained (Scottish Women's Aid profile 2009). Yet almost half the women who seek refuge are turned away, with over 6,000 children a year accompanying them. Domestic abuse is given as a cause of homelessness in over 1 in 10 homeless applications in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2010a). Yet only four local authorities identified the need for additional refuge accommodation in strategic housing investment plans 2009-2012. The right of women and children to stay in their own home with the perpetrator excluded is gaining momentum. In some local authorities a multi-agency approach, also tackling the perpetrator, is making it more possible for some to do so - in Strathclyde, for example. However, there is a lack of use of exclusion orders in Scotland and many barriers to using them, including lack of information and access to legal aid (Dickson et al., 2010). Children (Scotland) Act 1995 exclusion orders are also rarely used, particularly in cases of domestic abuse, even though they are potentially a less costly intervention for women and children.

In the last three Parliamentary terms, whilst the Scottish Government has developed a more strategic approach to violence against women and core funding, distributed more equally than the rest of the UK (Coy et al., 2007), and has included CYPEDA in that approach, it is a long way from addressing population and need. This funding has been

maintained at previous levels by the, now majority, SNP government in its budget for 2012-15; the vital services of the Caledonian system have continued if not been rolled out; ASSIST has had a rare expansion in the current financial climate. Identification of CYPEDA through enhanced practice in traditionally adult or child-centred fields has undoubtedly led to increased demand for specialist support, as well as identifying a major skills gap in universal services.

Prevention through Education

Periodic research with boys and girls showing shocking attitudes towards excusing and accepting violence against women (see Ellis, 2008, for an overview) garnered Parliamentary agreement to a prevention strategy including 'Education…[as] the principal mechanism by which society is able to influence future generations' (Scottish Executive, 2003:9). In a time of decline for government advertising, public education on domestic abuse has retained its importance with an annual campaign including innovation in targeting CYPEDA online (see Chapter 7). The delivery plan recognised the unique position of schools in helping children to address domestic abuse and assist children, reflecting on children's views (Scottish Executive, 2008). However, despite a national tool being developed (DARRTS) and a website for children (www.safehub.org), there has only been limited mainstreaming of this approach and local rather than national inroads to teacher-training. The domestic abuse *Training Strategy* (Scottish Executive, 2003) had 'pre-qualification and post-qualification for all education sectors' (ibid.:7) as a long term goal, yet this remains a long way from happening. Hurley et al. (2007), in their review of training on violence against women in Scotland, state that such training across services is still seen and resisted as a '"single issue", rather than a universal problem affecting a significant proportion of the population' (p.1).

Participation

The (in) visibility of CYPEDA and the lack of statistics in Scotland to demonstrate the scale of the problem constitutes a gap that Scotland's new Commissioner for Children and Young People is determined to address. He undertook '*a right Blether*' consultation (SCYPP, 2010) through which 74,059 children across Scotland informed his priorities: their top four choices through a national vote included 'help us to be safe and secure in our home' and 'help us feel safe and respected' (SCYYP, 2010:9). The Commissioner has chosen to prioritise domestic abuse and has begun to consult young as well as adult experts: 'strengthening the recognition of young citizens at a political and policy level' (Sutherland and Cleland, 2009:21). Despite specific guidance on consulting CYPEDA (Stafford and Smith, 2009), attached to the plan, the streams of work mainly failed to deliver in terms of including the views of CYPEDA in the design, development of evaluation of services (Sinclair, 2004), with notable exceptions (Sharp et al., 2011), although they undoubtedly took the comprehensive literature review on board (Humphreys et al., 2008; Houghton, 2008).

It is in the overall implementation of the plan, across the four P's, that Scotland was to have a chance to move from consultation to participation. The Scottish Government, in launching the delivery plan, recognised the 'tremendous expertise, insight and enthusiasm' (Scottish Government 2008:4) of CYPEDA consulted in its development (Smith et al., 2008, see Chapter 7); that their views are 'reflected' in the document and that CYPEDA will continue to be 'the driving force behind our [the adults'] work.' (Scottish Government 2008:4) The plan's implementation offered the opportunity for young people to become partners, so that intergenerational collaboration is a natural driving force, and also an outcome, part of [the] process' (Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010:360): an empowering approach to and with CYPEDA (Borland et al., 2001).

Chapter Seven explores the views of CYPEDA on real and token participation. It is important to note here the critical issues facing Ministers, the critical policy actors and the adults supporting young participants, in order to bring young people over the 'threshold' to participate and influence (Tisdall and Davis, 2004:134). These include: the need for a shift in how children are seen, not only as social actors, young experts in their own lives and in relation to domestic abuse, 'most importantly, as capable of being change agents or active citizens in transforming their world' (Malone and Hartung., 2010:30). The challenge is for children to have a voice in how children are seen, what childhood is and how they should participate (see Smith, 2010:64); to resist institutionalising them, either in roles as mini-adults (Smith, 2009:33; Malone and Hartung, 2010:29) or making them 'fit into adult ways of participating' (Prout, 2002:75); to work with CYPEDA collaboratively - real dialogue with 'mutual respect and recognition' (Thomas, 2010:195) - and for CYPEDA to have real impact on public decision-making (Kirby with Bryson, 2002), to have real power in decision-making (Smith, 2009) and to make a difference to children's lives (Scottish Government 2008:6).

Conclusion

The last twelve years have marked a definite change in the way children are seen and, specifically, the way CYPEDA are seen in Scotland, markedly through their loudly raising their own voices. Many elements of progressive practice, policy and law that have been driven forward by their voices and those of critical actors in Parliament, policy-making and service provision, present a challenge for practitioners in relation to their ability and skill to listen, hear and respond effectively. A challenge across the world, and a condition for empowerment, is for children and young people to have access to people in power (Hodgson 1995) and actually to have power within decision-making structures (Smith, 2009), a challenge Scotland vowed to meet in its implementation of the delivery plan 2008-12 (see Chapter 7). It has been argued that Scotland is at the cutting edge of gender politics

and democratic practice (Breitenbach and Mackay 2001:1), in the context of gender-based violence. Could Scotland be at the cutting edge of young people's 'democratic inclusion' (Thomas 2010:188)? This will be explored in the findings chapters to follow the next chapter on the methodology of my research.

Chapter 4
Methodology

Introduction

The aims of this research study emerged as: firstly, to explore children and young people's perspectives on what helps children and young people with experience of domestic abuse, with particular attention to their own solutions to improving children's lives and their own priorities for Government action; secondly, to critically examine *with* a group of young people their active participation in Scotland's domestic abuse policy-making, in order to ascertain their views on the process and impact, and, finally, to explore the principles necessary to sustain the participation of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. The first two aims arose from the literature review (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4) whilst the third was added in conjunction with young people themselves during the course of the research. This will be explained further below.

This first section of this chapter begins with an explanation of the emergent nature of the research methodology over Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the study. As the study spans three parts and many years, a short summary is contained in this chapter outline for ease of understanding and also to explain my differing roles.

The second section of this chapter describes Part 1 of the study, mainly undertaken in 2004 when I was National Children's Rights Worker with Scottish Women's Aid. I used a qualitative empirical approach developed in partnership with children's workers, known and trusted to the child and young person participants (see appendix A for a full profile) and their mothers. My insider status in relation to Women's Aid allowed for: greater access to children; a collaborative approach with workers; enhanced trust due to Women's Aid strict confidentiality rules; the developmental of an ethical approach respecting children's

competence, status as active participants and therefore informants on domestic abuse and risk (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), as well as the interlinked nature of abuse and solutions (Chapter 1). Furthermore, the research protocol (see Appendix 2) ensures that a key role for children's workers was to ensure the approach was part of the therapeutic approach to support and empower women, children and the mother-child relationship. My status to the CYPEDA as an unknown national worker and outsider-researcher, enabled a critical approach to the services received (see Chapter 5).

The third section of the chapter focusses on Part 2 of the study which spans a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process with a small group of 9 young people involved in domestic abuse policy-making from 2007 to 2012. In the development of Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan from 2006 to 2008, I was initially a Scottish Government employee coordinating the plan, a temporary femocrat and critical actor (see Chapter 3) in ensuring the Government included participation of CYPEDA in the plan development. Once my contract was over, this culminated in the opportunity to undertake research with a small group of young people to ascertain their priorities for action and relate these direct to Government Ministers, the government finally recognising the capacity for CYPEDA's active participation in public decision-making (see Chapter 2 and 3). The PAR cycles continued through young people's insistence on a continued role in the plan's implementation (see Chapter 5): in 2009 my role became manager of the Voice Against Violence young expert group as well as researcher, which enables a more intensive, regular, collaborative approach over 2.5 years, as well as mutual consideration of my role as manager as well as researcher (see below and Chapter 7) including the implications this has for adult: child power relationships and the pre-eminence of children's own voice .

The fourth section focusses on part 3 of the study which explores a research question that emerged when these young people advised Government that the sustained, planned, on-going participation of young people with experience of domestic abuse in policy-making

required 'rules of engagement…a sympathetic approach' (VAV Directives, 2008). They recommended that this approach needed to be developed by young people with experience of domestic abuse. Therefore a PAR process, linked to policy-making yet quite different in approach, took place over 2009-2012 with the 8 young members of Voice Against Violence. The researcher sensitively facilitated the development of standards for participation (explored fully in the data analysis section), whilst endeavouring to maintain safety at all times as manager and researcher, a necessary role and comfort for the young people involved (see Chapter 8). The PAR researcher role in this differed from that relating to policy development as, due to the very sensitive and private nature of domestic abuse (see Chapters 1 and 5), issues that arose could not always be raised in the group by young participants. This was true in the first year especially, when the young people did not know each other well and trust had not been built, and changed somewhat as trusting relationships were built. Some concerns were more comfortably raised privately to the researcher by individual young people, for example about individual risk and relationships with perpetrators, or a greater need for anonymity than others.

An illustrative example follows in relation to the need for sensitive facilitation and other examples are discussed in the Data Analysis section of this chapter. One young participant did not want any peers to know she was in Voice Against Violence after negative experiences when she opened up about domestic abuse, including bullying. However, another young person who lived near her wanted to be open and proud of it within their community, which was a risk to her. The researcher devised an individual and group reflection process on anonymity relating to being involved in VAV. The researcher actively elicited personal views on the issue (phenomena for analysis) from individuals beforehand and ascertained that there was a majority view that there would not be identification of each other as VAV outside the residential meetings. Therefore the group exercise became a fun training on how to keep anonymity, what to say to each other, where to say you were

going – to friends, to perpetrators, to peers. This elicited further discussion but, as the decision had been made, was no longer a personal problem with another young person, more a problem that all of VAV had to creatively deal with.

Therefore, group reflection in Part 3 of the study entailed creative, sensitive, facilitation by the researcher, unlike the constant changing of roles between young and adult that typified the rest of the PAR process; it was necessary to tackle individual concerns often in anonymised ways. The PAR process did allow for the gradual, sensitive, group creation and ownership of their own standards in the end (see Chapter 8 and appendix 7), discussed in more depth in Chapter 8.

The fifth section of this chapter considers the dual role of researcher-manager in Parts 2 and 3 of the study. This chapter ends with a section on data analysis for Parts 1, 2 and 3 leading on to the findings chapters.

Research methodology

To answer the research questions encapsulated in these three aims, I decided to ask children and young people directly, reflecting 'the move to study real children or the experiences of being a child' (James et al, 1998:208) through the competent, expert and illuminating perspectives of children as 'social actors' (ibid.). Children and young people, and only they, are at the centre of the research as I recognise them as competent in reporting on their own lives (ibid.) and in critically assessing the services purportedly for them as service users (see, for example, Hallett and Prout, 2002). When I began this study (2004), the first robust study of children's perspectives of domestic abuse revealed that children's active participation, being listened to as participants in the domestic abuse situation and being involved in solutions and decisions, was crucial to their ability to cope (Mullender et al., 2002:121). This further influenced my theoretical perspective that children should be 'active participants' (Christensen and James, 2000) in the research

process in as many aspects as possible, which led into seeing children and young people as able to be reflexive (Mayall, 2000), just as I endeavour to be, and to comment on their own commentary, how it was arrived at, whether it has been heard, and so on. This required an epistemological and methodological approach that recognised socially and culturally constructed children as 'co-constructors of knowledge' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6), predicating an ethical and rights approach that acknowledged children as 'co-producers of their own welfare' (Hallett and Prout, 2002:5), experts in their domestic abuse experience (Chapter 1).

As researcher I 'mesh' a feminist and children's rights framework, stemming from recognition of parallels in women and children's marginalised positions in society and that their statuses and representations are inextricably linked (Oakley, 1994) through the way they are treated and the ways they have been expected to relate to one another, whilst recognising the diversity within and between each category of 'women' and 'children' (see, for example, Skinner et al., 2005). I further recognise that such structural, generational and gender inequalities have violence against women and children as a product (UN General Assembly, 2010); that men's abuse of women and children is inextricably linked (see Chapter 1 and also Stanley, 2010, for a robust review of research); that children themselves say they experience domestic abuse *with* their mother (see Chapter 1). In saying this, children's perspectives are unique, diverse, different from those who purport to speak for them, including mothers (see Chapter 1). Children and young people have the agency to build their own solutions and a right to be involved in both individual and collective decisions about them (UNCRC, 1989). I agree with Mullender et al.'s (2002) warning 'the UN's consideration of children's rights should be meshed in with its work on women's rights' (Mullender et al., 2002:5) and, throughout this chapter, I explore meshing children's rights with a feminist understanding and approach. I engage with the necessity to balance the empowerment of children and young people, as the 'agents of their own lives but also

interdependent on others' (Moss and Petrie, 2002:6) aware that for these participants, their safety, risks and well-being are overwhelmingly interlinked with their mothers (see, for example, Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b).

In the Part 1 of this research, undertaken with Scottish Women's Aid, I developed a 'culture of partnership' (Orme, 2000) with children's workers, devising a research protocol with them (see Appendix 2) that covered an ethical and emancipatory approach, enhancing best research practice in relation to ethics (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; 2011), participatory methods (see, for example, Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010) and the sharing skills, experience and best practice (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). Support for the child-mother relationship was a key principle of Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) practice (SWA, 1995, see also Humphreys et al., 2006a, 2006b), whilst maintaining a children's rights perspective. This allowed for the development of a different, more collaborative, ethical approach *with* children *and* their mothers, aiming to ensure that the research was part of the ongoing support and safety planning for/with the child (Houghton, 2006), whilst protecting their participatory rights as an individual expert.

If children are to be 'active participants', Sinclair (2004:111) argues that this 'could be taken to imply some presumption of empowerment of those involved – that children believe, and have reason to believe, that their involvement will make a difference'. This was certainly the intention. Empowerment is a principle of my research approach, which not only has a 'very specific purpose of enabling children to influence decision-making and bring about change' (ibid.), but also provides opportunities for children and young people to become political activists and actors. What is more, the study takes place at times of key influence, unashamedly 'research with a purpose' (Sinclair, 2004), reflecting the belief that one of the most important reasons to hear children's voices should be 'making children's interests visible in the social and political process of directing and garnering resources for children' (Hallet and Prout 2003:6-7) and the concern that their influence is currently minimal (Hill

et al., 2004). Parts 1 and 2 of the study provided opportunities for children to influence decisions for the Scottish Government budget 2006-8, 2008-11, 2011-12 and 2012-15. Feminist methodology has long stressed the importance of 'politically active' or political activist and indeed emancipatory research (Skinner et al., 2005:14, citing Bergen 1993, Cancian, 1992, Renzetti, 1997 and Oakley, 2000). In Part 1 young people get politically active in the dissemination stage, outside the political system but finding ways in through spaces created by Women's Aid (see Chapter 3). In Part 2 it is very clear that 'the child' as 'no longer marginal, the child is positioned as a social and political actor, a person with opinions, a decision- maker' (James et al., 1998:69); the small group of young people are positioned as 'part of' the policy-making system. Uniquely, the more emancipatory Part 2 of my research study explores *with* them their perspectives on being political actors, participating with a recognised 'integral' status in Scotland's domestic abuse policy-making.

When (re-)considering the issue of power in Parts 2 and 3 of the study, central to the subject of domestic abuse, and the attempt to minimise power imbalances in any feminist (see, for example, Skinner et al., 2005) and children's rights research approach (see, for example, Holland et al., 2010), I came to question the concept relating to the deficit notion of 'becoming' in relation to children's rights. The child as social actor, as 'being', took us rightly away from the idea that the child was 'becoming' and would only be competent when s/he *became* an adult (James et al., 1998:207). However, the politics of Participatory Action Research (PAR) practice is theorized as 'a politics of *becoming* (Mountz et al., 2003; Cameron and Gibson, 2005) and *betweenness* where knowledge, analysis and action emerge between co-researchers and participants' (Pain et al., 2010:29) which best describes my approach or shared approach with the young experts in Parts 2 and 3 of the research, especially the final intense 2.5. years when the Voice Against Violence young expert group existed. It is not that I question their competence, reason, expertise as a social actor, or that they can be understood in their own right (James et al., 1998:207) but when considering

relations between us over a sustained period I sought a more collaborative theoretical approach, with the proactive young people recognised as 'change agents' (Malone and Hartung, 2010:30).

The Participatory Action Research of Parts 2 and 3 of the study therefore moved to an ontology of human beings (not just adults) as 'dynamic agents capable of reflexivity and self-change' (Kindon et al., 2010:12), as 'becomings' and an epistemology that 'accommodates the reflexive capacities of human beings within the research process' (ibid.). That adult and young person, researcher and researched, are 'becomings' or perhaps more accessibly 'change agents' who work collaboratively together does not negate or ignore power differentials, that I need to negotiate, explore and acknowledge as an adult researcher and minimise (Skinner et al., 2005; Alderson and Morrow, 2011) with additional strand to reflexivity in that I was the manager of the VAV group (research-practitioner) which is further explored later in this chapter. However, the PAR approach allows for 'negotiating changing and fluid understanding of being inside or outside throughout a project's life.' (Pain et al., 2010:30) and allowed me to engage in more collaborative processes and knowledge production reflecting 'feminist principles of equality, reciprocity, partiality and valuing the voices of ordinary people as expert and authoritative in their own lives' (ibid, p.26). PAR's challenge to, mainly but not only poststructuralist, criticisms of the approach is to see power as a positive as well as a negative linked to a real 'empowerment' that entails authority and recognition of expertise to pass between researcher and researched and back in an open transparent way (my reflection and summary of Kesby et al's 'retheorising of empowerment', 2010:19-25). This more accurately defines the empowering and collaborative approach developed through a long research relationship with the Voice Against Violence young experts, which allowed time for attention and mutual development of 'dialogue, relationships and inclusive methods'

(Pain et al., 2010:29) resulting in 'a mutual respect, dignity and connectedness between researcher and researched…' (Ellis, 2007:4).

The methodology for Part 1 of the study is therefore qualitative empirical research with 48 CYPEDA (see Appendix 1 for a Chart of Participants for the whole study), using a feminist and children's rights approach developed in partnership with their support workers (See Appendix 2 for research protocol), incorporating action in relation to the political engagement of CYPEDA. For Parts 2 and 3 the methodology is that of participatory action research (PAR) from a feminist and children's rights perspective with smaller groups of young people. The rest of the chapter relates this to the three research questions and details the methods used in each part of the study:

Part 1 of the study explores the research question 'What can children and young people tell us to help plan domestic abuse policy and practice for children?' It is mainly answered through the qualitative research I undertook with 41 children and young people, drawing on participative methods and learning from practice through a 'culture of partnership' (Orme, 2000) with Women's Aid Support workers (See Appendix 2 for the Research Protocol). The subsequent phase with a much smaller number of young people (7 additional young people) adds and provide richness to some of the themes explored and are included in the analysis;

Part 2 of the study explores research question 'Can processes avoid tokenism for both policy-makers and young people? Can children and young people have an impact?' This is answered through a longer process 2007-2012: an initial cycle of action and reflection with 6 young people involved in the *development* of a Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan followed by the opportunity to explore issues in depth when 8 young people formed Voice Against Violence funded by the Government to be a critical friend to the *implementation* of the plan;

Part 3 of the study explores the research question 'What ethical and participation principles do young people think are important to enable their sustained, regular involvement in domestic abuse policy making?' This emerged from work with these young people who advised the Scottish Government that there needed to be 'rules of engagement…a sympathetic approach developed *by* young people' (VAV Directives 2008) for the *ongoing* participation of young people in the implementation of the plan. To answer what those principles would be, I used a PAR approach with VAV young people to develop ethical and participation standards from a young person's perspective from 2009-2012.

Part 1: What can children and young people tell us to help plan domestic abuse policy and practice?

To answer this question the researcher undertook a qualitative research study with 48 children and young people with experience of domestic abuse, mainly through an intensive Listen Louder phase in 2004 (41 children and young people) and complemented through smaller groups in 2008 and 2009 (7 additional young people alongside 2 from 2004). All had experienced domestic abuse. For all these children their father or mother's partner was the perpetrator of the abuse. The majority had 'escaped' to a place of 'relative' safety with their mother, a few children sometimes or always lived with grandparents. A 'Chart of Participants' is included as Appendix 1.

Part 1 Sample

Age: The researcher did not put an age limit on participants due her theoretical position that even young children can give their views if explored in an appropriate way (see for example, Clark and Moss, 2001) and due to previous experience with young children giving their views using creative methods and a partnership approach with their support worker/mum (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003). Children's support workers were gatekeepers for this study (see below and Appendix 2 for Research Protocol, Appendix 3 for Information

and Consent Form for CYPEDA) and it is interesting that the majority of young participants were aged 8 and over and that the participation of three of the total four children under 8 was unplanned.

Table 1: Part 1 Age

Age range	No.	Further points	Gender
4-7 (young children)	4	For 3 of these young children, participation was unplanned and spontaneous. The researcher visited the refuge they lived in, all the families decided they wanted to give views. One 6 year old boy wanted to come along with his 9 year old brother and vice versa, with his mum staying nearby.	2 boys 2 girls
8-12 (mid age range)	20	13 of these are aged 11-12. I included 12 in the mid age range as most focus groups had mix of 11 and 12, 11 is secondary school age which could have been my demarcation but 11 and 12 year olds most often raised similar issues and different to teenagers	15 girls 5 boys (This was 'skewed' due to a group interview with a girls groups of 8)
13-19 (teenagers)	24	8 were aged 16-19 including 3 boys (reflecting the opportunities of outreach and families own flat to widen age range of Women's Aid service plus one independent young man who had gone into care at 15 following 1 night stay in refuge)	7 boys 14 girls (some WA groups had 16 cut off for boys still –see findings)
Total	48		32 girls, 16 boys

Notes to table

1. It was unusual to have a girls-only group but this was an established outreach group, all outreach services were targeted as it was a pilot service, the findings relating to this group were mainly relating to lack of 1:1 support and bullying rather than the female-only status.
2. Knowing that this group formed part of the sample, the researcher worked with children's support workers to access some boy only or majority boy groups - 2 focus groups of boys targeted from different Women's Aid group's dropped out due to personal circumstances and other commitments.
3. All other focus groups were mixed gender reflecting young people's views that support groups should be mixed
4. Particular efforts were made to include teenagers, as although traditionally more young people than children are asked their views in research, Women's Aid statistics showed that this age group was least likely to access the service and the new outreach service in particular was targeting young people in the community.
5. 4 additional teenagers took part in a focus group in 2008, 3 additional teenagers in 2009.

Analysis according to age groups (4-7, 8-12, 13-19) proved helpful in displaying some commonalities within each age group, such as mums being most important for younger children, taking your mind of things being important for the mid-age range and teenagers commonly speaking of a number of factors being important for resilience, including talking to someone you trust which was mainly workers but sometimes mum and rarely a friend, having friends to hang around with and getting your own flat. There were many common factors across all age groups, however, such as disliking shared refuge for almost all those who experienced it and, for a few children and young people, from 9-19, sharing suicidal feelings before receiving support.

Ethnicity: The researcher deliberately involved specialist refuge provision in one of the two specialist Black and Minority Ethic (BME) Women's Aid groups in Scotland; at that time BME provision very much focussed on, but was not exclusively for, South Asian families The other specialist group with a wider reach was feeling over-researched and therefore decided not to take part. Children's support workers also actively targeted hard to reach groups: four of the Asian participants were not from the specialist refuge and were from three different areas and services, while seven were from the one specialist refuge that took part.

Table 2: Part 1 Ethnicity

No.	**Ethnicity**	**Comment**
37	White Scottish	2 of those self-defined as mixed white ethnicity - Scottish/European – they felt very strongly of dual heritage, the particular country in questions is deleted here for confidentiality purposes
8	Scottish/Asian	8 South Asian, 1 Middle Eastern
1	Scottish/Middle Eastern	Middle Eastern
1	British/Asian	South Asian
1	Middle Eastern	Middle Eastern

In relation to Scotland, an overwhelmingly white (98%, Census 2001) country, this is an over–representation of BME participants at 24.5 per cent, with South Asian children and young people at 18.75 per cent of participants. It does gives voice to the largest minority group: over 70 per cent of the visible minority ethnic population in the census 2001 was South Asian, majority Pakistani, almost half of whom born in Scotland, the next largest group was Chinese, closely followed by Indian (Census 2001). There were Scottish Pakistani and Scottish and British Indian participants but no Chinese participants, two young people had moved from two different Middle Eastern countries. In relation to domestic abuse work, it has clearly been successful in bringing a marginalised group of children's voices to the fore (adding to the work of Mullender et al., 2002). Although a small sample cannot be generalised from, analysis of it is helpful in relation to specific issues raised only by this group, such as the fear of racism (adding weight to previous findings in Mullender et al., 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2003), as well as beginning to explore whether certain resilience factors, (such as strong relationships of teenage boys had with mum as against the lack of support or non-take up of support) may be particular to this group.

Demographics: The Women's Aid groups approached were an almost equal mix of urban and semi-rural/rural with one islander taking part. Many of the children and young people had moved from their 'home' area; at least 3 children had moved country. Many of the children and young people had moved more than once. Specific rural issues were raised in relation to accessing support and expense of transport; the specific urban issue raised was the racist areas in big cities.

Services received: 46 of the 48 children and young people involved had received or were in receipt of support of some sort from Women's Aid. This study deliberately targeted areas that were piloting the new follow-on and outreach services to the community, a previously

un-researched area (Stafford, 2003),and also areas that had developed the proposed new model of refuge, that is self-contained flats with communal areas (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003).

Table 3 Part 1 Type of service received

No.	Type of service received from Women's Aid	Comment on service
12	Living in refuges at the time of the study	At least 5 teenagers were not receiving a specialist support service, others limited
19	Previously lived in refuge	14 of these children were receiving a follow-on (aftercare service), albeit extremely limited or intermittent for a few
	A small minority of these children had lived in more than one refuge. Almost half of the 31 with refuge experience (13) had lived in new refuges with self-contained flats for each family and communal living/support/play areas	
15	Outreach service in the community and had never been to refuge	8 of these were groupwork only and belonged in the same group – girls group, the rest mainly 1:1 with some groupwork – the advocated model
2	Had not received Women's Aid support but were graduates of a pilot outreach groupwork programme	These 2 young people were part of the later focus groups as members of Voice Against Violence

Notes to table

1. 8 young people had not experienced Women's Aid specialist children's worker support and for others this could be minimal. Any effect of not having a worker could begin to be explored with this group, although many of those currently with support could also relate how they felt beforehand and could be specific about the difference support had made.
2. Children with experience of newer, self-contained refuges were included to explore issues relating to this style of refuge as well as children's views of traditional shared refuge; the views of 55 children had previously (and recently) been explored in Fitzpatrick et al., (2003) study, particularly, but not only, in relation to the buildings.
3. The follow-on service was targeted as the majority of children in Fitzpatrick et al.(2003) recommended a key worker, all the way through receipt of services until *they* ended it and the majority of children in Scotland were not able to access such a service *yet*, with a few interesting exceptions that we could learn from.
4. Research with children experiencing domestic abuse who lived in the community, and had not been in refuge, was a gap in relation to previous studies (Stafford et al.,2003)that this study begins to fill.
5. 2 young people were graduates of the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) concurrent groupwork programme with their mothers.

Focus groups/interviews

The researcher chose focus groups as the preferred method of interaction with and between the young people for many of the reasons cited in Kitzinger (1996) that are expanded and have particular resonance in much of the childhood studies literature. The reasons include: decreasing or diffusing (James et al., 1998:190) the power differential between researcher and researched, adult and child; encouraging participants to explore their own knowledge and experience in their own language; in particular, to facilitate 'the expression of criticism and the exploration of different types of solutions' (Kitzinger, 1996:39) about a service that is most often lauded and for which they may feel loyalty, especially if a worker was present; to decide their own priorities for change and contribute to the process of analysis through developing and debating group perspectives; and reflecting the theoretical position of the researcher in recognising children's own agency in contributing both to policy and service improvements and to the research process.

I took specific steps to address the perceived limitations of focus groups, mainly through a repertoire of interactive techniques discussed shortly. I noted that groupwork is not suitable for all participants, especially some children and young people experiencing domestic abuse which can inhibit their ability to speak openly with others, their stage of recovery, their need for individual support first and foremost and often relates to fears of breach of confidentiality (see Chapter 2)). Consequently, a choice of methods was offered in the information literature (see Appendices 2 and 3) and some young people chose individual or sibling interviews.

Table 4: Part 1 Methods

Method	**No. at any one time**	**More details**	**Presence of support worker present and location**
8 semi-structured focus groups Topic guide; repertoire of interactive tools, tools for individual and group contributions, option to record individually	3-8	6 Women's Aid (WA) groups took part; the 7th and 8th focus group participants came from a mix of areas and had contact with range of WA groups and other services. Within one focus group, I split them up half-way through as they had experienced different services - some outreach, some refuge only. I was then able to use evaluation tools they could fill in themselves, and bring them back together for discussion.	6 chose to have a support worker present at all focus groups, most for part of the time, some for all. The 7th and 8th the young people no longer had support workers. 4 took place in Women's Aid office or centres. 4 groups decided they would enjoy a trip to a big city, where hotel meeting rooms were used. 2 latter focus groups were part of residentials. 1 was planned for a refuge but resulted in house tours and interviews below.
2 sibling interviews	2		Chose not to have support worker. 1 in own flat in refuge, mum around. 1 in Women's Aid office private room.
4 individual interviews		1 interview was planned as just one young person from that WA group was very interested in taking part 3 interviews (in one day) as that was the teenage boys' preference on the day - they were a lot older than others who had congregated in the (young) playroom, such a wide age range of focus group would not have worked and they did not want to be there.	This young person wanted her support worker present as she was very nervous and 'good friends', chose WA office. These 3 boys did not want anyone else present, they also did not feel they had a support worker 'for them'. Took place in their flats and mums were around.
2 family house tours (3 boys aged 4-8 with their mum 1 girl aged 6 with her mum)	3,1	Impromptu method when 2 families wanted to take part as the researcher was in their refuge. Researcher decided to employ mosaic techniques due to young age of children and also to help mum's focus on children's views and not own.	Mum's present, children's worker around in playroom, own flats within refuge and tour rest of refuge.

Numbers of participants in focus group: The received wisdom in literature and practice for groupwork was 4 to 8 participants (Kitzinger et al., 1996; Scottish Women's Aid advice). In practice, however 3 to 5 worked best with young people in an established and functional support/friendship group, in relation to comfort, interaction and debating solutions. Individual and sibling interviews worked well for the richness of young people's own experience.

Homogeneity of experience of services: This was a solution-focussed study focussing on what helps and on children's views of what did or did not work in the services they had received. Although some children chose to use personal experience to illustrate their points, I purposely did not explore personal biographies as this would have required a different, staged technique. The commonality of their experience of abuse did not provide homogeneity in the groups; this came from their shared experience of a particular service being investigated. Where this service was disparate, there was a lack of common ground : for example, some children wanted to speak about refuge and moving on which was alien to those living at home or in the community. It was not possible to capitalise on people's shared experience (Kitzinger, 1996) and the researcher had to be flexible. For example, I needed to split one group which risked my missing key discussions and debates but provided a focus on each service. Once the young people were 'on a roll', for example in relation to a service and what they would change about it and what would help a young person, then diverse experiences, for instance, of school, were discussed and elicited good debates. It seems the initial focus, at least, needed to be common.

Diverse experiences within focus groups: The two focus groups conducted later (2008 and 2009) did bring young people together from a diverse services and this was advantageous in helping to 'maximise exploration of different perspectives within a group setting' (Kitzinger, 1996:39). The resources and time in the study actually allowed for individual/small homogenous groupwork on each specific service followed by group

discussion and sharing their own priorities, considering other children's views that they had heard and working out what they felt was most important together. This approach was based on learning from the limitations of the 2004 focus groups and was much better resourced in terms of time, including an overnight residential, not just a 1/1.5 hour focus group.

CYPEDA in the 2004 focus groups were given the option of taking part in film-making to get across their most important messages: this included further focus groups, led by young people, to decide the themes, target audience and approach. Around 75 per cent of CYPEDA chose to take part: these focus groups included all the children with a range of experiences and services, from all over Scotland. Through these focus groups potential for children and young people to contribute to the thematic analysis was realised: albeit a partial contribution as they decided to focus on positive messages. It is important to note that a minority opted out following the focus groups: some did not want their confidentiality breached or to speak in front of strangers, so locally known groups worked best for access and also for critiques of the service.

Age: a small age range spanning around two to three years was the preferred model, again reflecting groupwork practice. Due to the messiness of research and the chaos that can be refuges, two potentially large focus groups unexpectedly spanned 10 and 12 years. One went ahead with flexible tools and small groupwork, making use of the facilitation skills of a support worker as well as the researcher and brought the young people together to discuss common ground such as what helps children and young people speak out and their messages for others. The next group (potentially of 9 children and young people aged 4-16) I dissolved in view of the unworkable age range. In consultation with the children, young people, mothers and worker we called it a research day and they kindly welcomed me into their lives for the day: I stayed in the refuge and undertook house/refuge tours with the young children and mums who opted in; I undertook 3 individual interviews and 1

sibling interview in their own flats with mums around at times that suited them and their social lives; the children's support worker meanwhile undertook art workshops with children, to which the younger ones in particular opted in, where they would draw or write what helps them or what they liked/did not like about support.

Repertoire of tools

A mixture of task-centred and talk-centred tools (James et al., 1998) formed the researchers focus group repertoire, ensuring a recommended variety of methods (Borland et al., 2001), discussed and chosen for particular groups with the children's support workers who knew the children, their interests and abilities and what had or had not worked in their work with groups over many years. These groups were designed specifically to address the perceived limits of focus groups - silenced voices, group hierarchies and the anxieties of participants (Kitzinger 1996), -to diffuse the adult/child power imbalance and to shift control to children to 'become enthusiastic informants rather than reluctant subjects' (James et al 1998:190). The work acknowledged the difficulties these children and young people might have: about talking openly about domestic abuse and naming it (see Chapter 2), for example using vignettes; to enable 'safe' criticising, if young people wished, of, perhaps, the one person they can speak to– their support worker - and doing that in front of her, while facilitating others who wanted to praise the service only by using evaluative tools(reflecting participants in Kitzinger 1996). What is more, this was only the first stage and children/young people are invited to take part in a film after this as a way of involving children on a more equal footing (James et al., 1998, Hume-Cook et al., 2010) and also to elicit their contribution to analysis (see analysis below).

Table 5: Part 1 Research tools

Research repertoire: tools	**Reflections on use**
i)Semi-structured topic guide • icebreaker and information about research • Tell me about being in touch with Women's Aid (1 thing they like/dislike) what's [this one] like? What's the living and/or children's space like? • Tell me about the service for children - refuge/follow on/outreach (prompts what is it, where, who, how often) • What happens when you get to refuge/leave refuge/ contact WA? (same/any worker when leave refuge?) • Describe what support is? What does a support worker do? Do you get a say? (prompts individual or/and group and what's good/not about that) • What do you like/dislike and what you would change about support (tool below) (if you got support how it felt before/after) • Who helps you? (friends? mum? siblings?) Is there anyone you can talk to about feelings and stuff? • Have any other adults helped? (like at school? etc) • What you've been through – what helps or stops children getting help? (if you got support how it felt before/after) • Any message for other children going through domestic abuse? • Your personal message to the person in your area who is in charge of money to improve area? Brief information/question time about what's available for children across Scotland.	Individual interviews of all ages, sibling interviews and very small teenage group interviews all followed this guide and did not need any of the additional tools. The children and young people preferred just to chat, sometimes asking their support worker for aide memoirs (photos, when they got here, who was there etc..), felt comfortable with the researcher and their chosen method. Interviews mainly lasted between an hour or an hour and a half, after an hour young people got tired. The topic guide was over-long and complicated, as the researcher gained experience it became more refined and a tick-list to ensure things were covered and wrap up a little more quickly. For some young people they were too tired when it came to their messages for people in power although almost all chose a message and their preferred way of saying it. Individual/sibling interviews all elicited criticisms of the service whether with the support worker or not. Invoking a spirit of camaraderie (young people, worker, researcher) to improve things for all children and taking some pressure of criticising the current service. If there were silences or reluctance to speak I would use techniques to change tac , or sometimes reach a maybe positive end to justifiably critical interviews – like switching to helping others that made the participant feel good, or asking what would you say to someone going through it/to those in power and if they'd be happy if someone else took their complaints there. In the sibling interviews one sibling would dominate and my main role was to ensure the other spoke and was valued by all and reassuring them it was ok and normal to have different ways of thinking about and coping with things. The children and young people were very

• What would you say to a Minister- one of the people who run the whole country? • Would you like to say that in person? Explanation of the Listen Louder film option and event, questions. • What do you think about being asked your views?	interested in what other children and young people across Scotland had/did not have and why, and discussing what could be done about it, reflecting Freire's (1972) process of 'concientisation' through facilitating the development of an informed critical perspective. This was limited obviously due to the time (explored further through the Voice Against Violence phase) but the event and literature provided further political education and overviews, beginning a more emancipatory process.
ii) Vignettes 'There is a child X, same age as you, whose mum and him/her are being hurt by his dad/her boyfriend.' • How might they feel? • What do you think would help? (wouldn't help/stop him speaking out) • What would your message be to someone going through domestic abuse? • What would a good friend do/say? • Anything else you'd like to say?	The vignettes worked well when used. I particularly used them when groups stalled or weren't going well - I felt naming domestic abuse hadn't happened in one group, like the elephant in the room, which did raise concerns about the therapeutic nature of the group as a whole. This was a safe way of not only defining it but giving a language, it also took young people away from speaking about their group and service which had a very troubled dynamic and inherent bullying.
iii)Evaluation visual techniques a) Large H diagrams of what worked/didn't or what they liked/didn't with smiling and smiling emoticons and various faces at their disposal (from support/evaluation work), then what *they* would change, or b) a tree of 'helping leaves' individual fun leaf stickers – individuals to write their own views about what would help them (or child in vignette), group reading and discussion/ additions. Ask questions from topic guide if working well who? etc	This was used in almost all the focus groups and was incredibly effective at eliciting criticism of the service and ideas for change. With the large disparate group I split into small groups with different H diagrams about different services, although the data was brief it actually elicited critical and interesting messages from each participant as they had stickits each which a full focus group would not have managed. One very shy group of 3 was not working, everyone had clammed up and it appeared they weren't too well informed about what to expect though mainly they were shy of strangers. We abandoned the focus group, sat on a floor with a huge H diagram, lots of stickits, pens and drew pictures, wrote points and then very gradually the young people explained things, like decorating their own children's room, and became enthused and forgot heir shyness. The helping leaves worked with the troubled group who I felt needed a positive outcome and

	building a helping tree with their own leaves but feeling good about a group product seemed more important than getting the things that didn't work from them. Both approaches worked when there were silent individuals in the group and promoted more equal participation.
iv) Options for individual/smaller group recordings in private space where possible	This was very much used by the group that was very difficult and elicited very good, moving, advice for children going through it, as well as complaints about bullying in the group. It was not possible for all participants to do this due to space and time and that would have been preferred. Some young people enjoyed to 'go in to the room and say like my name and everything. And then your real opinion without anybody sitting there cause you might just be saying stuff according to like the other people that's in there as well…' (R, girl, 11)
v) Art materials for opting out whilst staying around and thereby also opting in when want to, or to tackle a question based on what the participant already said e.g. draw about what helps e.g. build/draw your own fabulous support service	This was used for the young boy with two 9 year olds who chose to speak with his brother sometimes and at other times drew a picture of him and his mum with the words 'I feel safe with just my mum' whilst the others were talking. The shy younger children used it too and it was a huge advantage that this 'focus group' took place in a playroom.

Further reflection

If I were to start over and if time and resources were unlimited, I would conduct one-to-one interviews with all children and young people if they opted in and then very small focus groups which I would make task-orientated, using fun/creative evaluation techniques. This would have provided the richest possible data from each person. However, some groups, like the group of three who had had intensive therapeutic one-to-one work that had changed their lives, followed by a support group, followed by a kind of moving on friendship group, did not require individual interviews at all as they were open and critical about their own experiences as well as challenging and able to refine one

another's ideas. All focus groups, even those I thought went less well, elicited rich data through one or other of the mixed tools, proving this was an effective method when combined with the very flexible attitude and previously acquired skills of the researcher.

Ethical and participatory principles in Part 1: how they were applied.

There is a balance to be struck both in relation to children's participation, provision and protection rights, and in relation to children's rights alongside women's rights including their parental rights. Much of the literature assumes children's participation rights erode parent's rights (challenged by Alderson, 2012:182); others warn about a potentially dangerous tendency of elevating children's participation rights above the right to protection and provision (Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010:xxi); literature reviews in Chapters 2 and 3 evidences children's need to participate and be listened to including in decisions about their protection and provision. Working in partnership with a management group of children's support workers, including the key worker for each child involved, provided an opportunity for a safe and empowering approach to a 'participatory ethics'. There seemed to me the capacity for a shared approach empowering children and their mothers which accepts their shared and unshared knowledge (see Chapter 2), supports their relationship and talking to each other, whilst accepting that 'if children are to be accorded due respect, myths about their deficits have to be exchanged for due recognition of their intellectual, emotional, social and moral capacities' (Alderson, 2012:182) Through sharing skills and training each other on research ethics (following the good practice in Alderson, 2004, Mullender et al., 2002, Fitzpatrick et al., 2003) - enhancing this with the Women's Aid's Code of Practice together with safety planning and knowledge of participating children's abilities, preferences and talents, a research protocol was produced (see Appendix 2). Trusted workers' regular access to and support work with the family, coupled with their training and familiarity with the research purpose and process, ensured that children and women were well informed and supported to discuss potentially difficult areas of whether

to participate, whose consent was or should be required and managing confidentiality and risk, thus helping them to opt out or in to the approach that suited them.

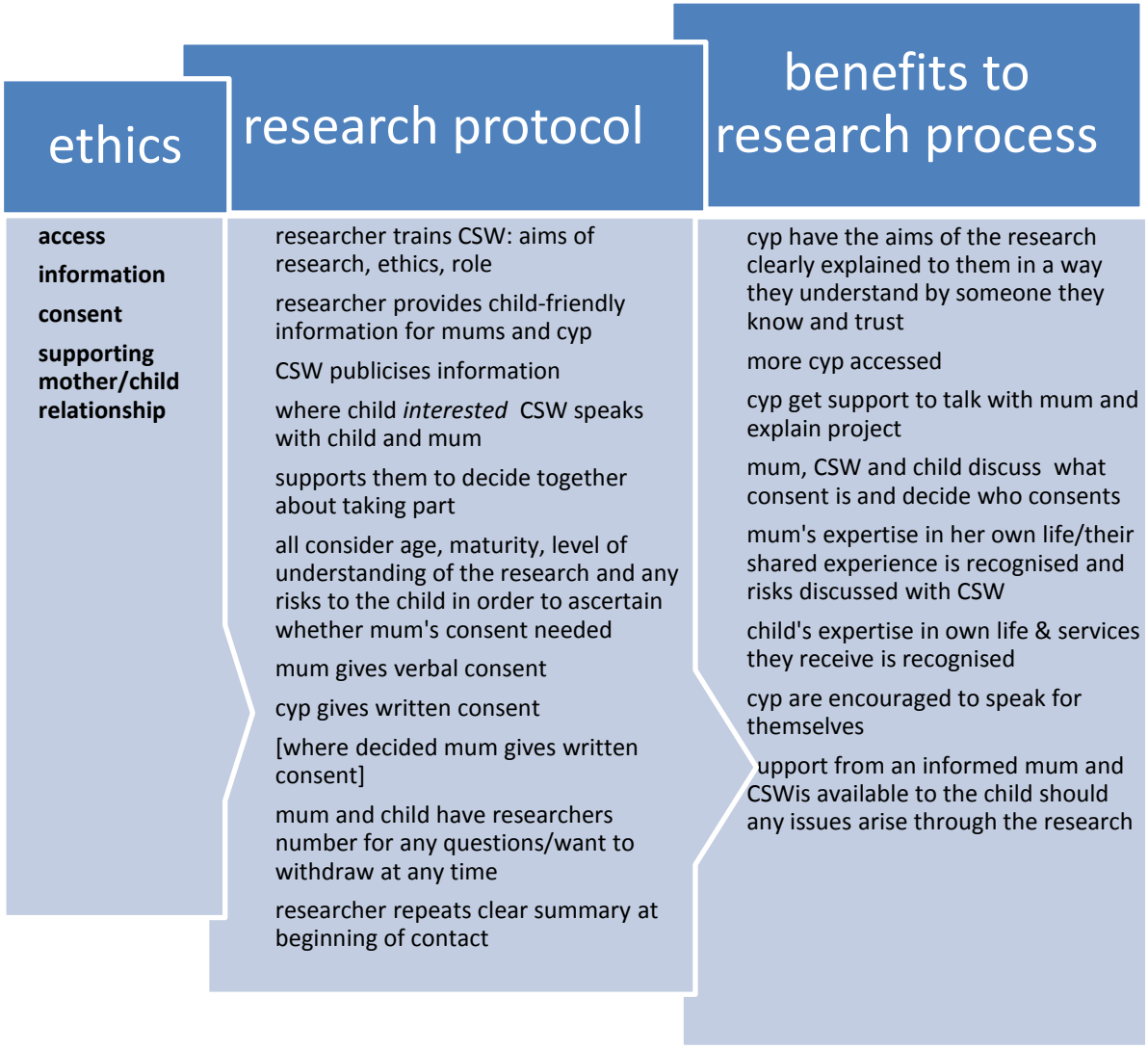
Meshing a feminist understanding with a children's rights perspective brings its own challenges (also found in McCarry, 2005) such challenges and risks are outlined below and introduce tables outlining the research protocol to mitigate risk, empower children and benefit the research process. Mullender et al.'s (2002) useful mnemonic of three C's of consent, confidentiality, child protection, which encompasses three D's of danger, disclosure, distress are used for the first three tables.

Consent

Whilst most of the children's perspectives literature ensures children are informed, express views and have their view taken into account, it struggles, like most other research with children, for children to be the main decision-maker or a shared decision-maker in relation to consent (Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Alderson, 2012). In the main women control access and it is deemed their right 'to decide what would be safe and helpful for their children' (Mullender et al., 2002), particularly after power had been taken away by the perpetrator (Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b). This study's research protocol (see Appendix 2) does not make ethical considerations the child's domain only, which risks bypassing a child's right for protection and advocacy from their [non-abusing] parent (Alderson and Morrow, 2004); it heeds warnings that children may be unaware of dangers that their mothers are aware of (see, for example, Thiara and Gill, 2012) whilst recognising that children have their own knowledge. Women are therefore key, but not the only, informants and decision-makers in this ethical approach as we attempt not to take power away from the active participant of the research – the child (James et al., 1998; McCarry, 2005) and to recognise the child's agency in keeping themselves and others safe and to 'know their own best interests' (Alderson, 2012:178). It acknowledges the shared

experience of domestic abuse, supports shared decision-making and supports mothers and children to talk (Humphreys et al., 2006). Through training and support, the children's support worker as a skilled practitioner is a co-assessor of competence, trained to explain the study clearly, resolve any misunderstandings, assist children and women in reasoned choice-making, respect children and women's decisions without undue pressure (as espoused in Alderson, 2012:186), acknowledging that competence 'depends on how much children are informed, respected and encouraged' (ibid.). In practice, the children's support worker (CSW), as a skilled practitioner, ascertains a child's interest in the study, informed them that the next step is to discuss the research with mum, supports and informs this discussion thus promoting of openness between mother and child and ensuring they are fully informed. Time is given to respecting that women and children may be aware of some risks or views that they want to talk to the support worker or researcher about separately. They then come together again to discuss any issues, talk about consent and risk and ensure the research, and what is being consented to, is sufficiently understood by all (Children [Scotland] Act 1995). Great care is taken to explain according to a child's age and ability, the information and consent form (see Appendix 3) is read through carefully and then care is taken to agree whose written consent is taken and gain the mother's verbal consent as a minimum. The protocol, and its benefits in mitigating risks and empowering CYPEDA in relation to consent, is explained in the table below.

Table 6: Part 1 Consent



Reflection

The researcher and children's support worker recognised that the above approach carried a risk of disagreement about whether a child or young person should take part. We minimised this risk through the approach and support workers did discuss protectionist concerns with mothers that did not relate to risks of abuse, as well as discussing with both women and children any risk from perpetrators as well as concerns of re-traumatisation. Every family with support came to a shared conclusion, for two families this was to opt out for reasons women and children jointly agreed: for one family a fear of confidentiality breaches as they were very scare, for another they were moving very soon and wanted to

concentrate on that. Once opting in was agreed and an approach – interview or focus group agreed, it was very easy for the families to agree who would sign, in the majority of children and young people signed proudly and their mother's gave purely verbal consent. In two cases, women wanted to meet the researcher on the day before anyone signed which reassured them: that the researcher was to be trusted, the questions were not too heavy or personal and it would be confidential. A small number of mothers stayed around during interviews, this applied to all children 8 and under but also some teenagers. They were often at a discrete difference and usually, but not always, they could not hear what was being said. Where the interview was in their home there was often good rapport between the family and young people did not mind their mother coming in and out. In the research site where there had been a lack of training for the children's worker and an alternative research day took place (see earlier), the written consent of the children and mothers was sought, knowing that the longer process of information giving and risk assessment had not been possible.

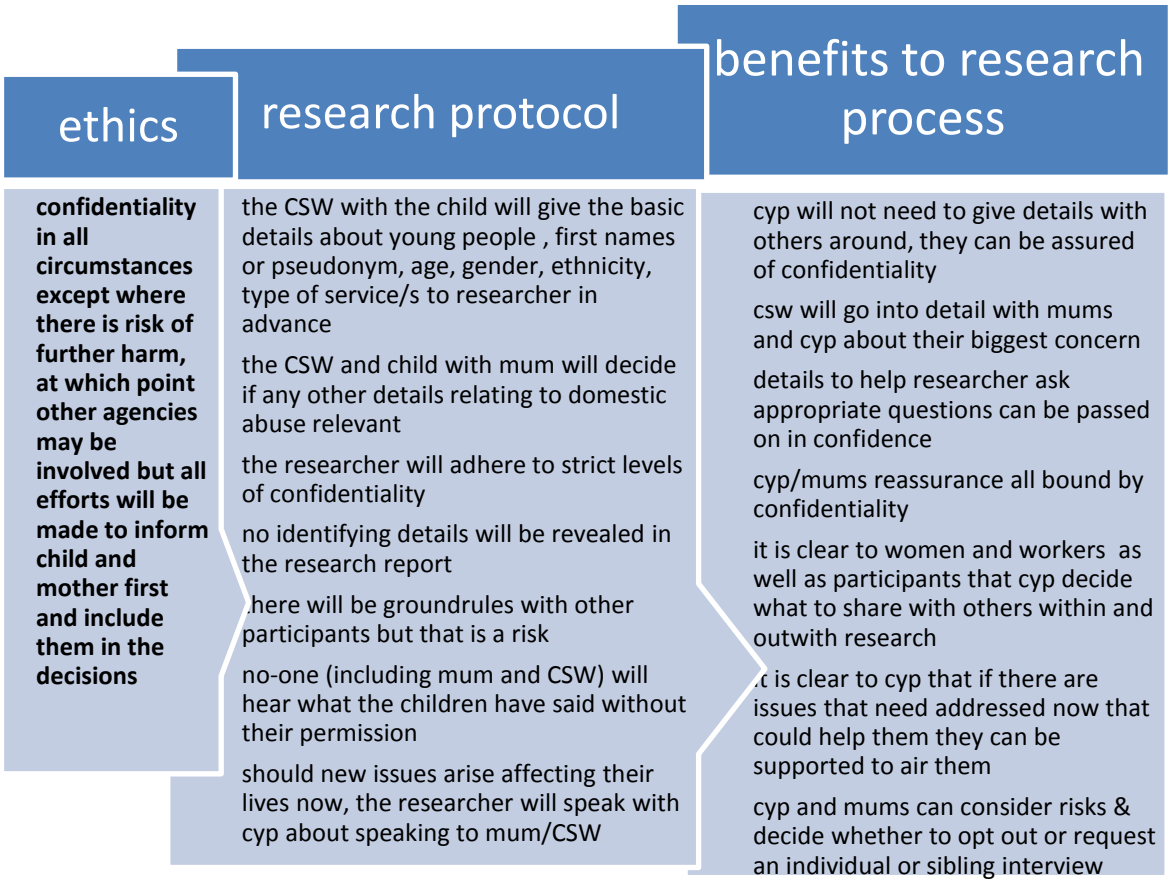
Therefore in consultation with workers, mothers and children it was felt that a confidential focus group, in the refuge or office with mums and/or children's support workers nearby, with a researcher who was bound by Women's Aid Code of Practice as well as research ethics, was a relatively safe place for children only to give consent for their views to be recorded and used. Mothers did verbally consent to involvement and were fully informed.

Confidentiality

The researcher and support workers were very aware that confidentiality was of particular importance to children and women with experience of domestic abuse (see Chapter 2, Stafford et al., 2007), especially at the high risk time of separation. Confidentiality fears are also a barrier for children in being able to speak out and in taking part in group-work. Therefore, a sensitive approach was undertaken giving women and children control over

the information that the researcher got and control over how and if they wanted to share information, with options of individual and sibling interviews for those who did not want to participate in groups.

Table 7: Part 1 Confidentiality



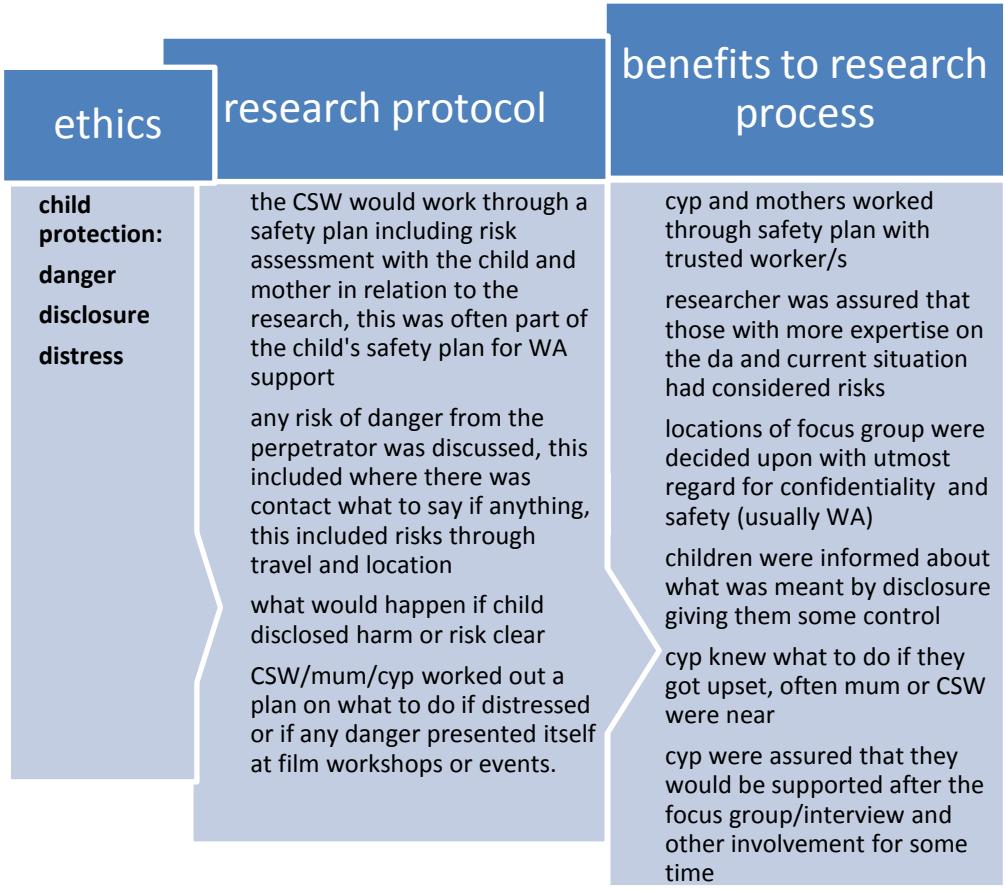
It is important to note here that children and mothers were more reassured by all adhering to the Women's Aid Code of Practice, with which they were familiar, than by research ethics, although this double reassurance may have helped children and young people to participate. Some children in discussion with their mothers, did opt out of group interviews for confidentiality reasons, showing the need for options. Young people were au fait with the limits to confidentiality and comfortable, as they had already discussed confidentiality with children's support workers in relation to support.

Young people were encouraged to speak to children's support workers, especially when deeply unhappy about the service or their lives. In one case they agreed that the researcher could speak directly with a worker about sorting out bullying in the group that their mums did know about. In another case, the unhappy young people did not want the local group complained to despite encouragement and whilst this was respected, fortunately the workers seemed already aware of their lack of service and sadness and were hoping to improve it. Part of the research protocol was to give rewards after the involvement, young people did not know about this in advance (see, for example, Alderson and Morrow, 2011, for a discussion on this). Following this specific interaction, the researcher gave the worker and teenagers cinema tickets as rewards for involvement, reflecting one of the things the teenagers missed most and suggested they could do with workers whilst subtly acknowledging the very limited budget workers had.

Child Protection: Danger, Disclosure, Distress.

The risk presented by the perpetrator was the key risk that the support worker discussed with women and children, recognising the child as an active participant in the domestic abuse situation and solutions, with options to raise fears individually, recognising the actions of abusive fathers to destroy relationships and sometimes keep abuse separate (see Chapter 1). The risk of identification, which applied to all members of the family, including the perpetrator , was a major issue and potential risk factor for further abuse. In relation to the focus groups and research report, reassurance was given that no identifying details would be used. In fact, very few identifying details were given to the researcher, and pseudonyms were decided beforehand and used in the focus groups. Where the group was an established and friendly group, real names were often used but not recorded. A safe location was also sought. However, following the focus groups or interviews there were options to be involved in film workshops and a Listen Louder public and media event which involved more risks.

Table 8: Part 1 Child Protection: Danger, Disclosure, Distress



In the study, no children disclosed further abuse, nor did any become visibly distressed, all had a support worker nearby and some had a mother nearby. All had been assured of support from both after they took part. In relation to risk, it was the further options of the film and associated event that presented most risk. For these public productions with a wide reach, the consent of the women and children was sought as involvement threatened their anonymity and there needed to be greater attention given to location, contact with the media, and so on. The film contained no faces but there was a risk of voice recognition by perpetrators, peers, relatives and others. All mothers and young people were invited to the rough cut to reconsider any risks. There were a number of cuts to the film and others accepted risks involved, with various creative measures to limit this. There was a far higher degree of opt-out for the event, including some children speaking for their friends and a 'no media' section of the audience, respected by the media, managed well by the Scottish

Women's Aid media spokeswoman and public relations support. However, a chance to let off 100 balloons with a Minister led to a surge of children (it must be said and their mothers!) and complete lack of control and there were no repercussions, they were fully informed, but it did serve as a warning about the relative lack of control a researcher has at such an event, even when carefully managed.

Three E's: Empowerment, Emancipation and Enjoyment.

Traditionally the ethics of participation relate to the endeavour to protect children from further harm (Alderson and Morrow 2004) and Mullender et al's (2002) mnemonic of three C's and three D's is extremely helpful in applying this to research with children experiencing domestic abuse, yet less has been explored about 'doing good' (Manzo and Brightbill, 2010:35). The literature reviews (Chapters 2 and 3), years of working with CYPEDA and collaboration with children's support workers ensured that empowerment of children was a key principle for this study, that the experience was part of their therapeutic experience (Houghton, 2006) and the ethical and participative approach promoted children's capabilities, competences and personal development, most importantly their own voice as experts. The research process was designed to enable children to speak for themselves and develop solutions, to develop skills, awareness, confidence, critical reflection and abilities, communication including film-making and scripting skills (see, for example, Shier, 2010). Emancipation is obviously closely linked to empowerment but my addition of an overtly political element to the mnemonic was inspired by a young boy in a previous focus group I conducted (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003), who, when asked what he wanted to say to people in power, said 'I'd rather tell them myself' (unpublished, ibid.). I agree with Lansdown (2006:143) that 'Ultimately children need access to sources of political power. Without it, opportunities for their voices to make a difference will never be realised'; the adult-dominated space of domestic abuse policy-making was not at that time giving children a voice (see Chapter 3). In this research

study, Scottish Women's Aid, and enthusiastic Ministers, opened up a space for children to become political activists and relate their own concerns, the study's key messages in their view, direct to people with the power to help them make a difference. In the focus groups and interviews CYPEDA were given information about the powers of the Scottish Parliament, the situation for services for CYPEDA across the country and the option to become political activists, 'empowered to set and pursue their own agenda for change' (Shier, 2010: 224), supported to say what they wanted to say: at the event only CYPEDA and politicians could speak, it was their agenda, chaired by a young person. Obviously true emancipation requires a vote but the opportunity to take part in politics, to be aware of and promote their rights to take part in Scotland's Parliament's decision-making (see Chapter 4) and thereby influence politicians was a truly emancipatory process (see Chapter 6). Enjoyment speaks for itself in a way but I felt that fun and opportunities for fun could be forgotten easily in both support and research processes. The way sessions were run emphasised enjoyment and informality, lots of nice food, good art equipment, nice locations; rewards of fun trips, meals, activities for the group or individuals were given. Film sessions involved outdoor activities children had said they had enjoyed in the focus groups (see Chapter 6) and the event included a trip around the science centre and meals out. Enjoyment was not only a reward though, it was a right as part of participating and helped children to feel comfortable and open up. Having fun was a key part of their support and the research was there to enhance it.

Working in partnership with support workers and with children and young people, I learned that that protection from harm is not enough for children's active participation. The principles of enjoyment, empowerment and emancipation were not only participation rights of children/young people, but also conducive to children feeling able and comfortable to speak out about domestic abuse. This was essential for children's own voices to be heard and for children being part of the action, making their involvement so

much more meaningful to them and with less risk of being exploitative as the researcher using for his or her own purposes.

Table 9: Part 1 Empowerment, Emancipation and Enjoyment

ethics	research protocol	benefits to research process
empowerment **emancipation** **enjoyment**	cyp should speak for themselves, no adults should speak in the focus groups/interviews unless asked for prompts/to help make cyp comfortable cyp to have control over where their own opinions went participation builds confidence, cyp learn & gain new skills cyp given options to contribute to analysis & dissemination through a child-led film making option and... cyp have direct access to people in power to give their own messages/ criticisms/ priorities for action cyp should have fun in the process and get rewards	through the written information given /CSW support/researchers approach and methods cyp were clear that it was their expertise that was valued, their voice and their opinion mattered yp contributed partly to analysis and dissemination yp received outcomes in their own time - production and launch of film, direct contact with politicians yp had lots of fun including some fun activities, great refreshments & outings as reward to plan, especially in filmmaking trips & fun activities at event yp received either individual rewards of gift cards or leisure cards (not stated at outset)

Such an emancipatory approach became a condition of involvement for Women's Aid and changed the perception and preconditions of children's involvement in research. Although stemming from children's views – the young boy asking to speak to government, children saying they are only taking part if it was not boring or like school, support workers knowing what participants would enjoy and be comfortable with and what helps children speak out - the three E's were developed by myself and this exciting development in research practice, I felt, needed further exploration from a child's perspective which I had the chance to undertake in Part 3 of my study(see Chapter 7 and this chapter).

Part 1 The role of the researcher and the Children's Support Workers

At this time, the researcher was National Children's Rights Worker for Scottish Women's Aid (SWA), the national office for 39 local groups in Scotland. The research project was managed by the Children's Policy Group of highly experienced children's support workers, and the Directors of Scottish Women's Aid. The research ethics and protocol were overseen by the University of Warwick. The information for women and children made clear the researcher's role as an 'outsider' who would positively encourage honest and frank discussion about their services. At the same time, in practice, women and children felt safer and more comfortable because the researcher was an employee of Women's Aid and bound by their good practice, therefore an 'insider' to a point. That I was a skilled children's support worker with the requisite sensitivity, understanding, knowledge of domestic abuse was also useful to the research process (Green Lister, 2003), reassuring children, their mothers and workers of my ability to hear children's voices without reacting inappropriately even when hearing of abuse (Bray, 1997).

In relation to the children's support workers' role, they were obviously 'insider', known and trusted by the children, young people and mothers. Many of the benefits of their involvement to the research process, outlined above, applied to all the focus groups, reflecting a closer link between research and practice skills, techniques and values - a partnership approach advocated in the literature (see, for example, Thomas and O'Kane, 2000, Orme, 2000, Mullender et al., 2002.

Although the researcher did train the children's support workers there were a few instances where the partnership or protocol did not work as well as hoped, for example, last minute focus groups where the training was not as thorough as hoped, too diverse a range of CYPEDA turning up from a focus group, workers attempting to speak for children. One concern was that children and young people would feel unable to express criticism about

the service and the worker with her present; some young people opted for her not to be present while most focus groups, in a good humoured way, asked the support worker to have a 'wee break' while they discussed the pros and cons of support and workers. However, the main solution to this dilemma was to develop evaluation tools which, as soon as I felt children felt comfortable in the group, helped them feel less constrained in taking a critical, as opposed to an overly positive, approach. Furthermore, I asked the children's workers in their preparation with participants to reassure them that they, too, thought things could be better and that everyone wanted future children to be better supported; most of them did this naturally, and of course, improved resourcing would not have flowed from a ringing endorsement of the status quo.

A related challenge was to train the support worker in research skills, during the groups' lives. One worker, for example, started part-answering questions and prompting young people with leading questions; the researcher and a young person reminded her that it was not her views I was interested in. So that, even though she was nervous, and was trying to encourage a shy participant, she apologised and the focus group went well thereafter. In another focus group, and particularly in the ensuing film-making and event, the researcher tried in many ways to counteract a strong influence from the worker for the group to mention money and resources. In fact, the focus group tools elicited information from the young people that more than proved this need. The worker's initial approach had the unfortunate effect of it sounding like young people speaking adults' words, whereas their own words about the importance of groupwork were compelling and true without any interference.

Finally, despite very clear information and protocols, I still arrived at two research locations to find large groups of varied ages of children and young people, and, though it was dealt with in ways outlined above, it required quick thinking, making use of my experience as a support worker in speaking empathetically with the families, being able to work with very

young children and mothers, and having familiarity with the refuges and workers. It was nevertheless stressful, the days were far too long, four interviews and house tours in one day would not be recommended for a researcher and it was important, of course, not to show any frustration. Nevertheless, the unparalleled access I had to children and young people escaping violence more than compensated for all the dilemmas outlined above.

Part 1 of the research resulted in rich data on children's solutions for improving help and support to CYPEDA (see data analysis section and findings Chapter 6), the opportunity for many CYPEDA to become political activists and began the process of developing a new participatory ethics for research on with CYPEDA. Part 2 of the research offers exciting opportunities for CYPEDA to become political actors, integral to the system and to explore a participator ethics from a young person's perspectives.

Part 2: Can processes avoid tokenism for both policy-makers and young people? Can children and young people have an impact?

Part 2 of the research study spans 2007 to 2012, in which the participatory action research (PAR) process of action and reflection is summarised in the tables below for ease of understanding. Firstly it covers a rather piecemeal engagement of 6 young people in the development of a *National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People* (Scottish Government, 2008), then largely through their insistence, persistence and directives, ongoing participation of the Voice Against Violence group in the implementation of the plan (see Appendix 4 for the Research Protocol).

For Parts 2 and 3 of the study I adopted a PAR approach to work *with* the young people as 'change agents', reflecting a dual process of understanding and analysis of their experience of policy-making (Malone and Harting, 2010). Part 1 had established that 'reflexivity is not only common to the discourse and practice of researchers but also a stance adopted by the

children who participate in research.' (Christensen and James, 2000:5) and that active participation could 'enhance critical thinking, ability to analyse their situation, incorporate other evidence, reach a decision' (Crowley and Skeels, 2010:189, citing Kirby et al., 2004). It also demonstrated that young people had the agency and capabilities to engage effectively in politics. This new, planned, regular engagement with a group of young people, who had a position integral to the public policy-making structure, gave me the exciting opportunity for a shift to a PAR approach *with* these young active participants. Kindon et al. (2010:14) summarise the key characteristics of PAR that I adopt and explore throughout the key periods and aspects of the study about to be described. Young participants were encouraged to 'use and share their competent and reflexive capabilities in all aspects of the research process' (ibid.). One constant aspect of review in this study, detailed shortly, was how young participants felt about the PAR process itself, as well as progress in terms of issues for CYPEDA and perspectives on their involvement in policy-making. Young participants were encouraged by the researcher to actively discuss aims, topics, questions throughout, resulting in the addition of research question 3 to the study. Young people advertised and recruited participants for the VAV period of study; they discussed and devised methods (e.g. use of anime and IT to explore pseudonyms and purpose), decided roles for each of them in the process (e.g. project leads including review, creative director, chair, etc.) and discussed the researcher role – whether they wanted the researcher and/or young lead to facilitate/ co-facilitate or write up, for example. PAR 'involves participants and researchers in collaborative processes for generating knowledge' (ibid.) and the young people's involvement in data collection and analysis provides the evidence for this (see data analysis section). The fact that it was a new, unique project helped foster PAR's focus on the participants and researcher actually generating 'new' knowledge, valuable to others who were invested in learning about the approach – the Government, civil servants, agencies, CYPEDA involved in the plan. I endeavoured through the design and process,

the action involved, to empower young people as 'change agents': there were regular stages of reflection and action and all were collaborative, none undertaken as researcher/practitioner only. Young people began to see themselves as a role models for a different way of participating in the future ('let's revolutionise participation' (John, VAV Film Review)) and were keen to share their 'construct[ion of] new meanings through reflections on action' (ibid.), particularly with other young people (see data analysis and Chapter 6).

Participants

Five boys and four girls took part in the project; they were aged 15-20 at the beginning of their involvement, one of the boys was involved for one year only and then opted out (see table below). The young people were living in different areas of Scotland: Islands, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, Fife, Tayside, Central, Glasgow, Fife. All of the young people had had to move home more than once because of domestic abuse but the route to safety and services for each family was different. For their initial move: two of the young people had to move to rural towns from a Scottish city, two moved country - one from England and one from the Middle East to refuges in Scotland, one briefly into refuge for an overnight stay and then into foster care, one to relatives, two to temporary homeless accommodation. Six had contact with Women's Aid services at some point in their lives but the nature of this, and the support received, varied considerably. The young people had a wide spectrum of experience, including separation from mothers and/or siblings and grandparents, care, social work involvement, mental health support and legal proceedings, all had been homeless as children, three also as young adults. The young people all came into contact with a range of agencies over a number of years and had experience of a wide variety of professionals, in particular education, health, the police, social work, Barnardo's and housing services and the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery)

groupwork pilots. All the young people had experienced domestic abuse and its effects for a number of years.

These young people had all taken part in previous participation, research and pilot projects in Scotland: two in the CEDAR pilot and publicising it, one the new outreach service for children in the community including publicising it through creating animation and publicity materials. Five young people who had been previously involved in research made reference to the fact that their recommendations were agreed by many other children over the years: 57 children were involved in the refuge research (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003), 33 children in the moving house research (Stafford et al., 2007), 45 children in phase one of this study and well over 100 children and young people in the total three years of the Scottish Women's Aid's Listen Louder campaign. Consequently, they felt that they were reflecting the views of many young people in stating their priorities, whilst acting as 'representatives' to an extent (VAV Directives 2008). Three had been involved in public speaking, with one young trainer involved in multi-agency and Children's Panel training. Three of the young people were invited to speak at the National Delivery Group (June 2007) developing the plan which inspired and motivated the group to make participation a reality.

Table 10: Part 2: Sample

Young person-alias	Gender/ ethnicity	Age when start engagement	**Previous involvement in Participation Projects in Scotland**
Raya	F British Asian	15 (2008-2012)	Research Advisory Group member for SWA's 'The Support Needs of Children and Young People Who Have to Move Home Because of Domestic Abuse' (Stafford et al 2007) , spoke at the Delivery Group about the research.
Marc	M White Scottish	17 (2008 - 2012)	Research Advisory Group member for SWA's 'The Support Needs of Children and Young People Who Have to Move Home Because of Domestic Abuse' (Stafford et al 2007) , co-prepared presentation for the Delivery Group.
S	M White Scottish	16 (2008 only)	Involved in refuge research (Fitzpatrick et al 2003) and plans for the new local refuge. Involved in Listen Louder Campaign 2002-4 returning in the final year of the campaign to check up on progress of research recommendations.

Chloe	F White Scottish	19 (2008 - 2012)	Created and produced DVD on follow on and outreach support at a time when only 6 Follow On and 3 Outreach workers existed in Scotland. Involved in refuge research (Fitzpatrick et al 2003), Listen Louder 2002, petitioner at Public Petitions Committee of Parliament (2002), celebrated as young person's advocate at Edinburgh Castle 2006.
Declan	M White Scottish	20 (2008 - 2012)	Involved in local campaigning from 2001 and then the Scottish Women's Aid Listen Louder Campaign and Ministerial events 2002-4. Involved in refuge research (Fitzpatrick et al 2003) and Listen Louder research (Houghton, forthcoming). Celebrated as a young Person advocate at Edinburgh castle event 2006, speaker to the Delivery Group.
Karen	F Scottish Asian	16 (2008 - 2012)	First young person to train Children's Panel members and multi-agency groups in conjunction with Scottish Children's Reporters Association/Aberdeen University. Spoke at the Delivery Group of experience and concerns.
Jack	M White Scottish	16 (2009 - 2012)	One of first young people to receive new outreach service in the community, 1:1 and groupwork support. Developed animation and literature about the service to publicise service locally.
Lola	F White Scottish	16 (2009-2012)	One of first young people to attend the CEDAR concurrent groupwork programme alongside mother and take part in evaluation reflection cycle and publicising the approach.
John	M White Scottish	16 (2009-2012)	One of first young people to attend the CEDAR concurrent groupwork programme alongside mother and take part in evaluation reflection cycle and publicising the approach.

Part 2 Methodology

The PAR research focussed on policy-making and was undertaken over four key periods outlined in the tables below:

1. Young People's (YP) involvement in the development of the plan from 2007-8 - originally conceived of as a one off consultation in 2007, with token involvement in the plan launch 2008;
2. The formation of the young expert group Voice Against Violence (VAV) in 2009 and involvement in implementation up to Scottish Election period 2011;

3. VAV's involvement in the final implementation of the plan and beyond to VAV's end in 2011, a most prolific year marked by a shift in adult to child relations
4. VAV's involvement in the final review and looking to the future in 2012.

Part 2 undertook a PAR process of reflection - on issues, process, standards, PAR itself and action - meeting Ministers and CoSLA (Scottish local authority spokespeople), key moments in Delivery Plan progress; meeting the Programme (adult) Board (PB) and events. The terms are explained below for ease of reference.

Table 11: Part 2 Explanation of terms for PAR action and reflection cycles

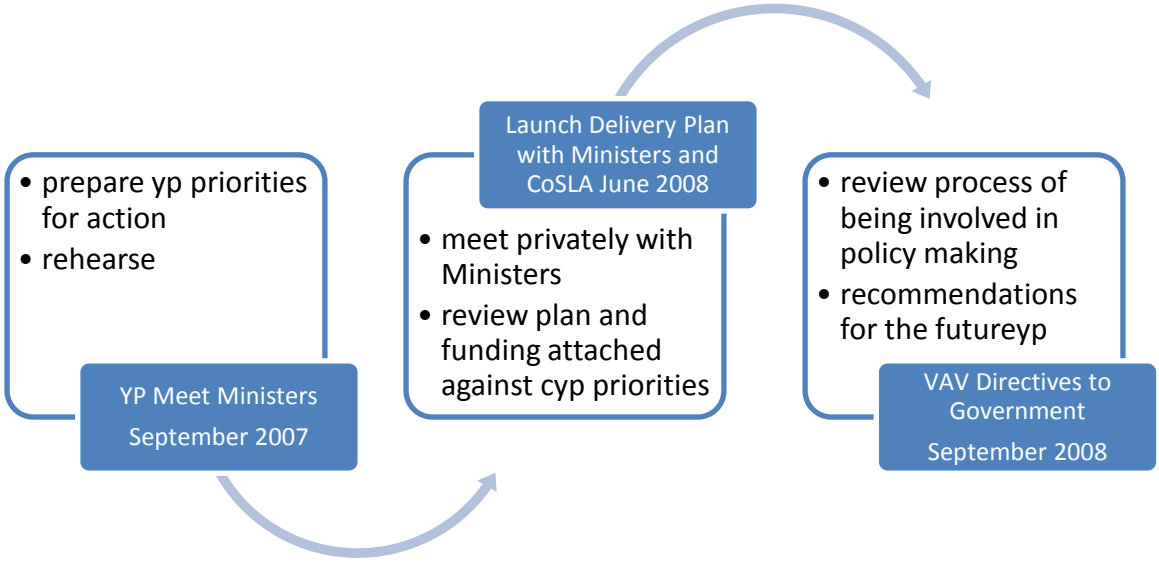
Reflection : issues review	young people's priorities by which I mean what needs to improve in children's lives & what progress if any there has been (review plan, status reports, fact finding), done to inform meetings with Ministers/CoSLA and at the end/key points of projects i.e. support workers, schools, housing, CEDAR, justice
Reflection: process review	review of their involvement in policy-making including equal relationships, two way dialogue respect, impact (Ministers/PB/ co-clients projects)
Reflection: standards review	ethical and participation rights (how far met within group, with adults), development, further discussed in section 3
Reflection: review of PAR methods	Review, design, development of research tools, methods and review of overall methodology, pace etc.
Action: meeting Ministers and CoSLA	Young people's direct meetings with Ministers and CoSLA to discuss their issues, priorities, progress also includes key shared public platforms – launches etc..
Action: Delivery Plan progress	Key moments in delivery plan progress, launch, report, end! Co-client project launch – joint Scottish Government/VAV projects
Action: Programme Board	Meetings with the Programme Board (PB)and the Chair
Action: Events	VAV annual events & launches

Young people's involvement in the development of the plan 2007-8

The Scottish Government funded the researcher to work with six young people to ascertain their priorities for action and relate them direct to Ministers (*Making a Difference Report*, 2008); this was originally conceived as a one-off consultation, albeit multi-staged with direct access to politicians. It was established by the Delivery Group of Adults who were developing the plan and funded by the Scottish Government. The young people involved insisted on acting as a check on adults, and Ministers agreed to continued involvement. At the launch of the plan over 6 months later, the young people refused to be

token participants 'smiling for photos' (MAD Review), instead critiquing the plan including its lack of continued engagement with CYPEDA so far (see Chapter 7). Ministers responded positively and asked the young people to devise recommendations to Government for a young advisory group (VAV Directives 2009), taking on board their evaluation of the engagement so far. The process and methods used are described in the table below.

Table 12: Part 2 Young People's Involvement in the Development of the Plan 2007 – 2008



Phase	Activities	Methods
Setting up	Scottish Government employs researcher to undertake participation project with yp to inform plan - direct access to Ministers unfettered by adults views & work that had already taken place Establish group PAR ask yp preferred method of communication and preparation – groupwork and residential	Individual/friendship group interview to establish means of communication & own priorities
Reflection	Issue review: Yp negotiate and review their group priorities – issues –for government action Standards review: ground-rules for one-off consultation (we think)	Residential workshops Group discussion and previous research tools used by yp of pros & cons.
Action	Yp present priorities of action to Ministers	Prepare, rehearse, yp chair, yp speak first, yp lead on a priority celebrate

	*researcher presents yp's priorities to the delivery group- adult board of the time	
Reflection	Policy Review :debrief after meeting; Parliamentary Debate £10m; lack of engagement yp; continued engagement Invite to launch PAR review: researcher not to speak for them; Yp want to critically assess plan before meeting Ministers or speaking at plan launch Issues review – Yp review progress in plan/££ Standards review – speak for themselves/public nature of launch/media/ photos/consent	Digi record group interview reporter style (each other) Email and phone contact, debate on internet, views sent in Residential group workshops yp compares plan and action to what children have said Focus group discussion re process: lack of engagement, researcher speaking for them Group discussion- like friendship group now and gradually more equal relationship with researcher
Action	Yp private meeting with Ministers welcome and critique plan Yp launch positively but with reservations Yp named co-educators and invited to continue involvement	Plan, rehearse, yp chair, yp positive and critical YP collaborate on speech, refuse to be positive only, promote continued involvement
Reflection	Yp review experience of being involved – process and outcomes Policy review : recommendation direct access to power, equal relationship, dialogue, equal and defined status to adult board Standards review: conditions of ongoing involvement, sensitive approach PAR: self-evaluation and indicators for future; yp want extra residential to consider and amend draft of their report	Evaluation techniques re process and outcomes, sun- what worked, cloud- didn't, rainbow –what yp would change Creative workshops devised by researcher and facilitator to enable yp devise own recommendations for the future: dragons den – why it's needed, what it is, blind date- relationships, success-evaluation techniques, indicators Researcher drafts report using cyp words Extra residential to accommodate yp wish to have control over final report and sign it off. YP request to meet Government (without researcher) about next steps to ensure they're informed
Action	Yp meet representatives of Government without researcher about next steps once they receive VAV report; final *VAV Directives* to Scottish Government for a new Advisory Group including	Waters break as I send it off to the Government! Yp do not receive any/adequate communication from Government during maternity leave, very annoyed and concerned

Reflections on PAR methodology

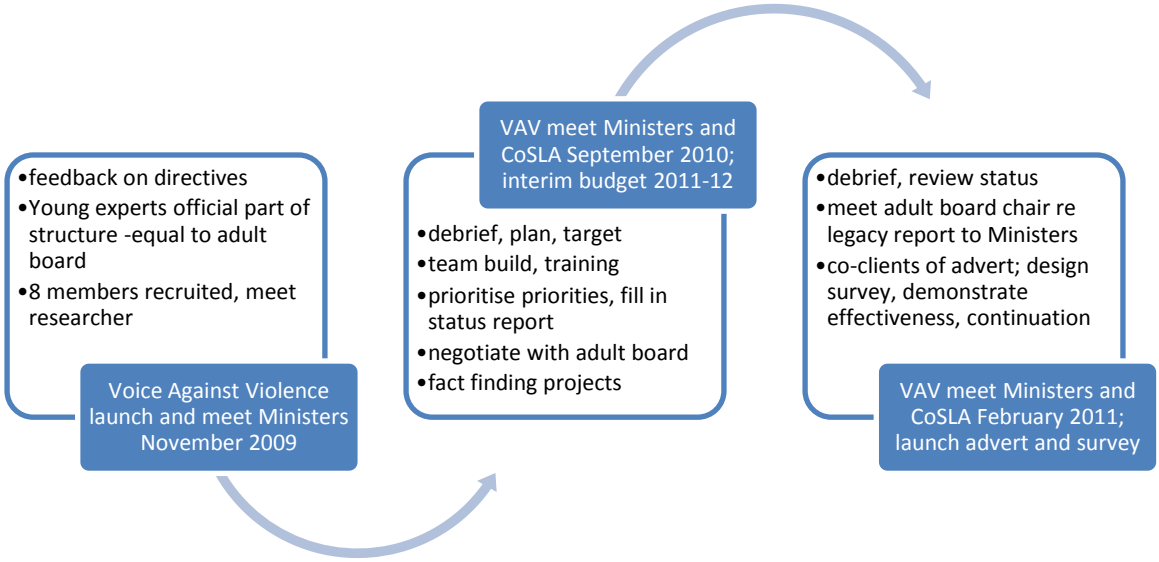
Young people were frustrated at the piecemeal involvement in the plan's development, separated by 9 months rather than continuous engagement, which they felt indicated a lack of respect and a tick box tokenistic attitude on the part of the Government and adult group

(Borland et al., 2001; Hill et al., 2004), they wanted a more genuine, sustained dialogue which is missing in young people's participation (Lansdown, 2006; Tisdall et al., 2011). However, a more positive relationship was emerging with the researcher: through meeting again to review the plan, then to review their involvement in policy-making and make recommendations: a dynamic PAR reflection and action process emerged with the researcher through the relationship of dialogue, creativity and respect developing in research session. Initial mistakes of the researcher speaking for them to the adult group were mutually agreed as such, in research sessions their words and views were paramount and valued, their expertise valued. Their wish was for control over the report and the analysis: for *VAV Directives* to be their recommendations not the researchers. Thus the PAR methodology emerged from and was grounded in young people's experience of and perspective on, more tokenistic participation.

VAV's formation and involvement in implementation up to the Scottish elections 2011

In Autumn 2009, Voice Against Violence, a young expert advisory group on the Delivery Plan was formed. It consisted of 8 members, 5 of whom had been involved in the plan's development stages. Significantly, this was over a year after the plan's implementation had started and a year after the young people's directives had been put to Government, which would have a great impact on adult to young people relations (see Chapter 7). The first priority for the young people related to evidence-building (fact-finding) to give informed views to Ministers about budget decisions that could affect children's support worker funding; followed by work towards a shared view with the adult expert group to advise Ministers about the plans legacy. The young people begin to also develop participation projects with key adults (see Chapter 7).

Table 13: Part 2 VAV's formation and plan implementation up to Scottish Election period 2009-2011



Phase	Activities	Methods
Reflection	Policy: Chair of adult board feeds back on directives for new group and negotiate group PAR: Yp reflect on membership and direct/take part in recruitment and induction Standards: all 8 yp reflect in their own standards for involvement PAR:8 yp agree aims and purpose Issues: 8 YP agree priority issues for Ministers	Chair comes to yp place for meetings, straight talking on directives and update on plan Group discussion/exercises on diversity, purpose, advertising, yp design and create recruitment materials. Yp creatively induct wary of equality and group dynamics/power relations, ask researcher to take over until confidence grows Individual interviews, their own rays of sun first, ethical and Listen Louder prompts Researcher facilitates equal discussion, negotiation agreement, all 8 have voice Fun teambuilding activities
Action	VAV meet Ministers in private meeting followed by launch in Parliament with mums, adult board	Preparation (limited but cooperative for new members) rehearsal, each speak, young chair All 8 yp present aims
Reflection	Policy: debrief, plan, target, inform Standards: agree present to adults Issues: negotiate those that are priorities in the limited time available before budget setting Policy: negotiate relationship with	Insider knowledge workshops with friendly Government and CoSLA Teambuilding away weekend, mainly fun plus hot debates re standards Peer education and discussion, researcher facilitated pyramid exercise VAV place, fun creative workshops more yp than adults in small groups, upbeat

	adults PAR review: too many adults, request named contacts real/civil servant, need good communication Issues: status reports from board is the system – 20 pages PAR: need participation section in adult <-> yp progress report Issues: Fact finding summer projects, engage with 'spend to save' arguments Policy: present to PB	discussion, VAV present standards and prioritisation Individual questionnaire followed by group reflection on relationships with adults Development of website led by yp YP input to status report, limit to issues can cover Project planning training; site visits to experts including limited young people, yp gathering evidence, conducting interviews and consultations One yp (by coincidence -sickness, etc.) speaks to PB twice re VAV priorities and why
Action	Meet Ministers and CoSLA with evidence from the ground on progress & use the jargon! Focus on spend to save to advocate funding for support workers to continue –interim budget	Prepare evidence, do presentation include other cypeda words
Reflection	Policy: positive, improve dialogue? Are we doing enough? value? Issues: support fund continued Policy: meet Chair of adult board to agree legacy report to Ministers – recommendations for budget PAR: review relationship adult board: unhappy re adult:child relationship, better after meeting Chair but meeting boring for some PAR: review relationship with Ministers/CoSLA & how far achieving aims before first anniversary	Digitally recorded debrief Prepare, rehearse, VAV agenda, concerns, raise relationships, prepare for dialogue on issues, do not agree to joint report as some not within experience can't agree to it Use huge ratings posters and walk around views, review these and how the method worked, liked 1-5 unlike status reports, need aide memoires, start working on template for all reviews with Declan
Action	VAV (delayed) meeting Ministers and CoSLA after legacy report received Public launch of advert and survey VAV anniversary event	Yp chaired, focussed, present on VAV developments – advert and VAV *Shaping the Future* web survey, promising new funding. VAV involvement and PR workshops and contributions Yp organise whole event from catering, venue to creative presentations to music re journey so far, press etc., invite adults/Ministers full attendance, all have role

Reflections on PAR process

This phase of the research project involved some training organised by the researcher emanating from young people's ideas and concerns, for example, we need to manage time, know our stuff, be credible, we do not quite get who does what, how do we answer back. The training was provided by adults with expertise including: insider knowledge on

government systems and responsibilities; project planning and management; PR and media and research approaches, studies and skills. This has been critiqued as a deficit model of participation, training young people 'in adult ways of acting and researching' (Malone and Hartung, 2010:29), but our PAR reflection revealed that it empowered the young people in the main: giving the knowledge and confidence to take part, informing choices about whether to or how to take part anonymously and helping find ways to equally participate. The only stumbling blocks were if the adults had not prepared sufficiently to impart information in a young people-friendly way or if they took over by force of personality, both of which the researcher tried to prevent through co-preparation and facilitation on the day. On reflection, adults working with young people in this way need training and preparation themselves for this to be a truly collaborative meeting of equals. Preparation with a young lead would work well.

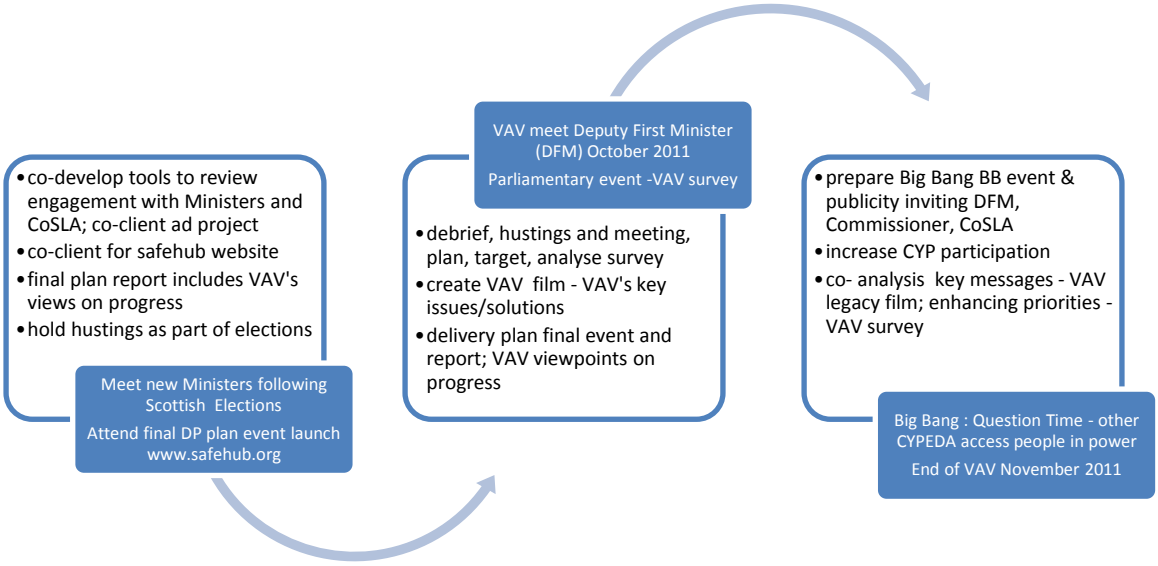
Individual questionnaires revealed the concerns and anxieties of the quieter members, particularly but not only those newer to the group, such as too many adults at one time, too much jargon, unclear roles, unhappiness with the adult-designed status reports as a way of communication with adults. These were picked up and explored as a group and solutions sought, such as named contacts on particular issues (one from the Board, one real person working in the field), although this excellent idea was rejected by the board (see Chapter 7). The intention from then on was to continue a personal reflection approach, perhaps on-line, to feed into the group, which particularly helped young people raise issues such as lack of confidence. Demands were such that there was very little individual reflection in the rest of the project, until the final review (Table 4), which resulted in concerns not being addressed as quick as they might. However, each young person having a leading role in reflection and action, whether in the issue, in dealing with policy makers or in designing and conducting the PAR reflection, an approach born out of anxieties and pragmatism, did alleviate many of the newer members concerns it was revealed at the final review.

A simple rating technique was used for young people to put on their views on how far VAV was reaching its aims in terms of equal and productive dialogue with adults, involvement in solutions and decisions, taking part in and monitoring progress. This relaxed method with music in the background, options for private stickits, enabled a very private reflection on how well things were going and what to try to tackle next. Young people began to reflect on the review process and suggest what was missing, for example, more group discussion, a funky template.

Young People's involvement in the implementation of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan 2011

The year 2011 marked a shift in adult/child relations evidenced by respect as equals as the first co-clients of a government advertising campaign, Ministers recognising young people as a crucial part in policy-making as they were awarding continued funding, Government funding a VAV film project without any further control or demands, trusting VAV's judgement and skill and respecting their choice of output. Voice Against Violence had been co-clients with the Government in a successful advertising campaign launched just before the election period, this co-client status was then attempted with the development of a website for CYPEDA. The final Delivery Plan report included VAV's views on progress and what is more Ministers agreed that VAV should continue as they felt there was much more to be done. The absence of an adult board resulted in more time for young people-led participation projects: co-analysis of their own survey with a government researcher, the production of a VAV legacy film, funded by the Government without any adult interference; a peer project mentoring CYPEDA to speak direct to people in power at VAV's final event – the Big Bang, November 2011.

Table 14: Part 2 VAV's Involvement in the implementation of the plan 2011



Phase	**Activity**	**Methods**
reflection	PAR and policy: Review engagement with Ministers/CoSLA- VAV continues! PAR and policy: Review co-client ad project Policy review and action: co-client activity with safehub, meet adult experts and interview/work with them Issues review: adult *expert* input	Debrief info, developed template Arty co-development of VAV Review tools (see reflection below and data analysis section), adult involvement as co-clients Creative meeting with schools civil servant re status of progress and website PAR group discussion review at end, 1:2/3 discussions interview the way to progress an issue
action	Hold Hustings Meet new Minister for Children Input to final delivery plan report Share platform with her at final delivery plan event	VAV young political advisor leads on Hustings organisation to educating peers, chairing and review Rehearse, prepare for Minister meeting, savage cuts due to time allowance Group discussion and editing of VAV viewpoints for report, very little adult support necessary Young public speakers launch safehub, individual support VAV stall and publicity by VAV
reflection	Policy: debrief re Ministers, concern re lack of PB to coordinate from now, Hustings and new govt Issues: happy with viewpoints and	Good meeting but some unhappiness, VAV didn't make it real, lack of joint prep – too much on! Project lead led review – good method, lead proved self-critical too!

	take forward survey Standards/issues/policy review -> Create film of legacy messages Event with participation project PAR: happy with template Policy: how to make it real in 30 minutes and impress DFM	VAV are THE clients for the film work closely with film-makers, researcher and project lead, co-editor and producer over Summer, design, animation, filming peer interviews, decide themes through individual flipcam work and group sessions facilitated Jack, researcher and sometimes filmmakers Yp co-running sessions Young lead creates participation sessions and web materials Negotiate and prepare own introductions-real, raise issues with statistics Thorough prep sessions individual and groupwork plus information seeking on DFM
action	Launch survey – event in Parliament Meet the Deputy First Minister of Scotland about the Comprehensive Spending Review 2012-15	Yp organised all , media action pulled by Government in case critical! Prepare, rehearse, immediate debrief with digi recorder
reflection	Policy: great meeting, evidence excellent, made real, mandate	She has power over all don't just target her brief but all her Ministers
action	Big Bang Event, launch of legacy film, public launch of VAV survey CYPEDA participation in Question Time through peer education and support, Deputy First Minister, Children's Commissioner and CoSLA lead on panel	All young people with different roles contribute, script, speak publicly, created film, young host, very little adult support Yp idea that their *Shaping the Future* survey findings are used as themes for question time, slides designed by yp Yp pass the mantle by mentoring other cypeda to direct questions at those in power

Reflection

The PAR technique and sharing of power reached its peak in this phase, as Lola said 'we were running it ourselves' (VAV final review), Karen added: 'it was down to us, Claire disappeared from view'. It was not only the action that was led by VAV but the reflection, mature reflection and immediate changes to have the best effect with the Deputy First Minister; intense and creative reflection on their key messages to children; to adult professionals and to policy-makers in the making of their own film. All of this contributed to analysis and promoting participation in their own time.

The film-making required intense and hotly debated anonymity issues resulting in a media agreement (discussed in Chapter 7) and strong principles of equal participation challenged by filmmakers who wanted the 'best voice', most graphic story. Young people did not feel respected as the client at times, especially as the film company didn't 'get' that they had messages about participation and transforming the world, not just about domestic abuse. The group reflection on filmmaking experience reflected a joint researcher/active participant view of the issues involved, again with more time the researcher alongside a young project lead, could have prepared more with the media company. Participatory video is a very intensive, time consuming method where the professionals you work with are key.

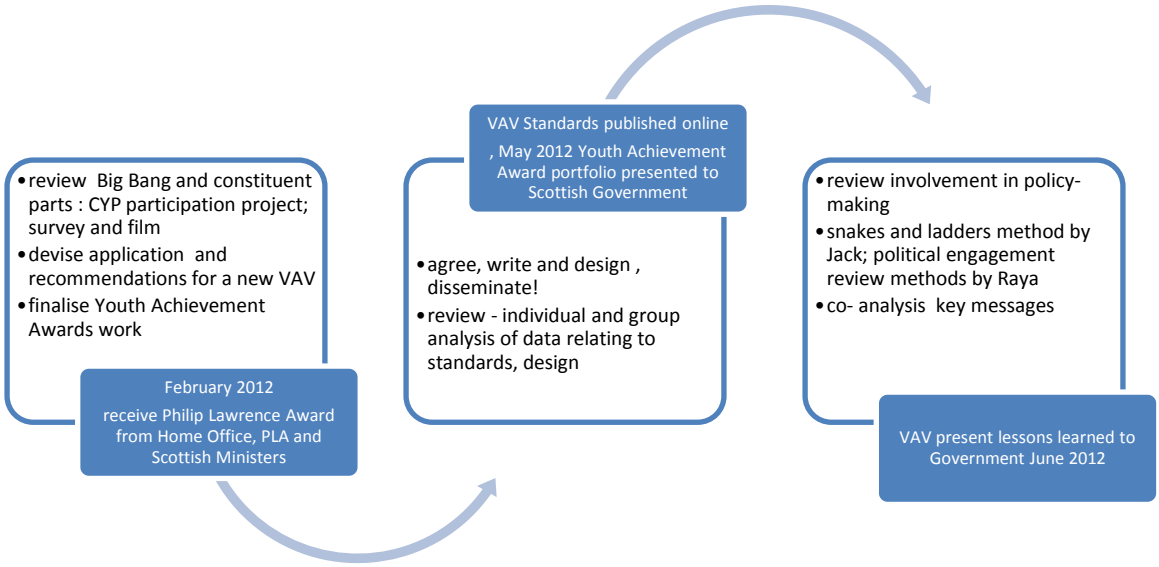
During the reflection in his period, tools for reviewing are co-developed by the researcher and young people, and a template for each review is finalised (this is explored in full in the data analysis section). Young people said they found it hard to review without an aide memoire and that they had enjoyed input from adults but the 'journey' should be from a young person's view and the adult should not be present for the whole review as it limited what they said. The VAV co-facilitator developed a colourful and photographic power-point timeline montage for wall display at each residential and Jack began to set photo montages of the whole journey to music. Individual young project leads created various arty aide memoires such as interactive power-points, pictorial representations of journeys, skits on 'we said, they said, what changed', all supported with sorted and synthesised data, including recordings, from the researcher. The researcher facilitated a workshop through which the young people decided exactly what they wanted to review and therefore what was needed on a review poster. The young people agreed they wanted to review what worked and did not work, to rate and comment on the participation of CYPEDA as well as VAV, to comment and find evidence for the political impact as well as impact on CYPEDA. Declan graphically designed a poster that could be printed A1 so that there was

the required space to write on it in their own words. Space for future action was incorporated into a fun, colourful, co-owned 'VAV Review Tool'.

VAV's final review of involvement in policy-making

The researcher asked the young people if they would continue the PAR process following the end of their public involvement in VAV: all young experts agreed. In 2012, the young experts reviewed components of their work using their own template: the event, survey, film and peer project. At their request the researcher facilitated a review and agreement of standards for future participation, which they wrote and designed (see Appendix 7) and Part 3. Finally, the researcher facilitated a review of their involvement in policy-making, based on some very creative ideas from young experts and the young people designed a power-point presentation for the Scottish Government of the snakes and ladders of participation.

Table 15: Part 2 VAV's final review of their involvement in policy-making 2012



Phase	Activity	Methods
reflection	Policy/event: CYP participation review: Survey: Film: Policy-making: young people use reviews to make recommendations for a new VAV *Youth Achievement Awards: personal reflection through work with colleague employed	Young people followed the template and reviewed their projects, different leads, all involved. Young person coordinated the whole session. *Colleague employed to do 1:1 reflective work with young people in order to achieve an award
action	UK Philip Lawrence Award at Parliament, Ministerial speech of appreciation	Researcher controlled whole event and kept things secret! Mums attend and families.
reflection	Standards review and finalisation: equal participation of group, researcher facilitating	Day workshops, all opt in: Young project lead advised but researcher prepared and facilitated at VAV choice: Individual reflection on own original and current sun (see table 1); group negotiation of final rays through analysis of anonymised data provided by researcher; equal contribution to summaries. Design of booklet and artwork.
action	VAV standards to web Youth Achievement Awards personal reflections presented to Scottish Government lead contact	Facilitated by colleague, wonderful testament to young people's reflexive skills
reflection	Final review: Policy making, issues, participation projects, co-client projects	Residential weekend using snakes and ladders idea from Jack, reflecting on templates. Political engagement review designed by Raya, political makeover flipcam recordings before, during and after with recommendations to future young people and people in power
action	Young people present the snakes and ladders of participation to the Scottish Government at a bespoke policy seminar	Declan designs slides, researcher speaks individually over phone/email to prepare speeches, truncated rehearsal at Government

Reflection

Whilst young people led on the tools and reviews of their specific projects, when it came to the final overall review of policy-making they wanted the researcher to take the lead role, informed by their creativity. The final residential review became a wonderful coming together of alternative review ideas, a huge snakes and ladders board from Barnardo's, props, film-making, recordings of adults, skits on adults and was utterly fun and emotional,

resulting in a very professional presentation for Government (see Data Analysis section and Chapter 7). As researcher young people wanted me to bring it together and with their input facilitate – it was my job and role, young people wanted to sit back, relax and let rip!

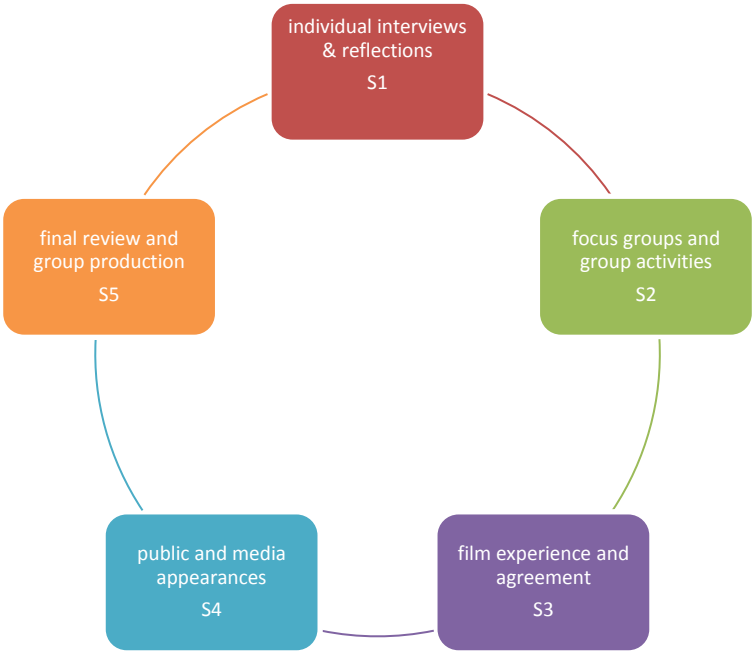
Part 3: What ethical and participation principles do young people think are important to enable their sustained, regular involvement in domestic abuse policy-making?

This research question emerged out of young people's insistence that continued sustained engagement required 'rules of engagement …a sympathetic approach' (VAV Directives 2008) to ensure that their engagement was safe, positive and that they were respected by adults as equals. It is unusual for children's perspectives on research to be asked, with some progress in relation to research methods (see Hill, 2006) but little evidence of children's views on research ethics. I felt CYPEDA's perspectives were lacking in the process of development of good ethical practice: the 3 C's of consent, confidentiality and child protection encompassing the 3 D's of danger, disclosure and distress (Mullender et al., 2002), my additions of 3 E's of empowerment, emancipation and enjoyment in phase one. True respect of children as active participants and equals would require the researcher to encourage children as 'ordinary people to actively participate in ethical decision making and praxis' (Manzo and Brightbill, 2010: 35), a 'missing component' in research processes (ibid.) and to recognise that children have the competence to make decisions about what is in their own best interests (Alderson, 2012). Manzo and Brightbill (2010) also write that 'shared control over the research creates ethical conundrums that emerge throughout the process and are not easily predicted at the outset' (p.35), which certainly emerged through this study's PAR process.

In Part 3 of the study, a PAR approach was used with the 8 young experts of Voice Against Violence over two and a half years. Constantly emerging issues led to a constant and flexible approach to reviewing ethics, particularly at key times reflected in tables 1 to 4 (above) such as filmmaking and public events, or contact with policy-makers or other professionals. New threats to anonymity occurred, such as seemingly innocuous connections on Facebook that a father may see. In addition there were diverse opinions on the levels of mother's involvement arose and outside threats to equal participation from awards and film/PR people which were defended. Young people moved gradually towards considering the colleague at most risk as the litmus test and this was altered over time as families changed minds about risk, the risk of identification from peers became more important, adults did not promote equal dialogue, and so on. This became a necessary example of 'ethical decision making within participatory projects' (Manzo and Brightbill, 2010:35) the young people through group negotiation and discussion also changed their minds about issues such as use of pseudonyms, voice recognition and media work which will be shown further in Chapter 8.

Problems that arose in relation to ethics, such as confidentiality, or participation, such as the degree of equal participation, were a lot more difficult for young people to raise in a group setting in comparison to views about policy-making; for many reasons, privacy being key. They did not want to explain the personal safety issues another's behaviour might be risking and were worried about upsetting people or affecting group dynamics if there was unwanted confrontation through others not understanding or being more cavalier about confidentiality. Therefore, although there were a couple of peer facilitated sessions, in the main as researcher I took the lead role and collated young people's opinions, solutions and ideas for design of workshops, and facilitated them myself over the two and a half years. The following table summarises the fluid process and the referencing used in Chapter 8 alongside their chosen aliases or 'group' if there was group agreement:

Table 16 VAV Standards PAR process



Reference	Methods	Date
alias/alias mother ,S1	Welcome individual interview and consultation with mothers about safety and involvement Individual private reflections with researcher	Nov 2009 – March 2010 2009-2012
Alias, S2	<u>VAV residential group discussions/agreements</u>: Team building Purpose Consequences exercise Presentation to adults re standards.	 Feb 2010 April/May 2010 June 2010 June 2010
Alias, S3	<u>Film</u> Flipcam input re what's most important, group agreement, media agreement Film individual and group interviews (young people interviewed each other, topic guide young project lead Film residential – booklet (group 8) Film booklet- data analysis (Raya and Chloe)	 April/ May 2011 June 2011 September 2011 September 2011
Alias, S4	<u>Public and Media appearances</u> Group discussions and consultation with mothers Anniversary event, media launch of advertising YoungScot awards ceremony Scottish Parliament event to welcome survey Big Bang Event, movie premiere Philip Lawrence Award ceremonies: Scottish and Westminster Parliaments and Downing Street	 Feb 2011 June 2011 October 2011 November 2011 February 2012 September 2012
Alias, S5	<u>Standards final review</u> Project lead preparation - Karen Review of standards and data analysis – writing web document – 8 young experts, one by email Individual private reflection on how well standards reached–to researcher; shared flipcam re difference VAV made	May 2nd 2012 standards workshop – review/ write June 12-13th 2012

There were many ideas from the young people that were really useful in designing workshops. For example, in response to a number of young people being worried about consequences, I co-designed a workshop using the old folded paper method of each person telling the line of a story in order to collate their or any a young person's response to a real life scenario: for example, your friends find out you have experienced domestic abuse, your film gets shown in school and your brother's friend recognises your voice. As discussed in Chapter 7, some feelings were very strong and fearful but were expressed in a way that did not identify the young person, as well as using real life scenarios, slightly altered, to explore the issues thereby validating young people's concerns.

After the initial induction and welcome interview, which included a session with mothers to discuss risks and safety planning, there were not individual set interviews except where requested. Mostly young people spoke directly to me by telephone or in private when there were issues. Were I to do the work again, I would argue for greater resourcing to allow for more one-to-one contact for this purpose.

The final review of standards entailed a mix of individual and group reflection, using an anonymised technique with permission to employ data from individual interviews and discussions on standards. The young people were committed to producing summaries that reflected all views. The hottest debate, again, was in relation to anonymity and whether, if one young expert could not take part, all would not: see Chapter 7 for a full discussion on young people's perspectives and decisions.

Parts 2 and 3: the participatory ethical approach

The approach for the PAR parts of the study is summarised here due to the amount of detail in Chapter 7 (see also Appendices 4 and 5 for Research Protocol and Information and Consent Form). At the beginning of the project the researcher met with the young person and his or her mother and went through a risk assessment and safety planning process in relation to involvement in the project. One mother proved elusive but the young person had lived in care and independently from her for many years so it was felt unnecessary and not appropriate to telephone as she lived with the abuser. When this mum attended the final event the delight of the young person and mum was a joy to see and that was the right time in their relationship for that to happen. Both the young person and his/her mother agreed to contact the researcher if anything changed in their situation that would affect the degree of risk and the wisdom of participating.

For every residential the researcher produced an information and consent form (see Appendix 5). The information was for the mother also. The young people felt this was important and age was irrelevant as it was due to the fact they had been through domestic abuse together and shared the risks, including of identification. It was for the young person to provide written consent but this included confirmation that they had considered the risks with their mother for any activity. Steps were taken to protect confidentiality, including using pseudonyms and making agreements in dealings with other professionals. All personal details and data were kept under lock and key. Where there were threats to anonymity the mothers consent was sought and more information was provided, such as for the film.

All agreed to the limits of confidentiality if there was risk of further harm, even for those over 18. All agreed to risk assess all VAV activity including locations, leading to some changes in locations. Young people and their mothers kept the researcher informed of

changes in contact arrangements. Young people actively used the opt-out clause if they were distressed or did not want to take part in any activity or meeting. The researcher would support these choices.

In relation to my 3 E's of participation - empowerment, emancipation, enjoyment: all young people were committed to equal participation, respect, having fun, taking a lead, taking over, making the best use of their direct access to power, adequate preparation, taking full part in reflection and action, empowering each other and getting political.

On reflection it is very difficult to have time to ensure that all of this happens, for example being available at a residential for a young person who is struggling, at the same time providing adequate preparation, even with another colleague present. Individual and group support for young people involved in this level of participation needs to be enhanced and sustained if there is to be a real commitment to a participatory ethics.

Parts 2 and 3: The researcher-manager dual role in the PAR research process

In this PAR study I sought to create a 'collaborative intergenerational space' (Percy-Smith 2006:168) that entailed a shift to the researcher becoming 'a co-inquirer or interpretive learner with children and young people' (ibid.). There are tensions and opportunities inherent in this co-inquirer role, accentuated by my position as a researcher-manager/practitioner for the final two and a half years of the study when Voice Against Violence was in existence. These tensions and opportunities are explored in this section with a particular focus on researcher/manager tensions; adult/child relationships; insider/outsider status; researcher/participant relationships; researcher-manager/young participants relationships in particular protectionism and reward, and ownership and dissemination including tensions such as 'whose findings?'. My role in relation to data analysis is explored fully in the next section.

Researcher/manager

From the early stages of Part 2 of the study, and all of part 3 of the study, I was paid by the Scottish Government to be Voice Against Violence manager. Therefore I was no longer an independent researcher focused only on the study. Although the job description included 'pieces of work that are aimed at promoting, reviewing or evaluating the effects of children and young people's active participation in policy and practice development', this did not cover, and the Government did not fund, the PhD. The main purpose of the job was the meaningful participation of CYPEDA in policy and to ensure that work was undertaken with the best interests, views and wishes of the young people being paramount.

From the beginning, the Government agreed that the review work could be part of the PhD. Indeed, that was one of the reasons that they recruited me. They felt the PhD, based at Warwick University, supervised by Professor Audrey Mullender, added an extra level of credibility and independence to the review of the pilot. My line manager decided that one day a week should be for research-focused work, to allow time for the researcher role of managing the research design process, stepping back, keeping objectivity, reviewing the literature. We were, however, very naïve in terms of the amount of time and resources a national participation project needed and the amount of support a group of young people with experience of domestic abuse would need. There was a constant tension between managing the project and undertaking PhD research work, particularly standing back and reviewing progress or updating literature.

I tackled this through a research design that incorporated regular focused reviews of progress during the VAV residential weekends, in relation to issues, policy-making and the PAR process itself. This maintained a focus on the research process and there were distinct parts of each residential where I was researcher or co-inquirer, and my role in reflection and data management and analysis was clear. However, I did not have one day a week to

prepare for these sessions, I did this mainly in my own time, in evenings, familiarising myself with the data and preparing the sessions. As the review process became more collaborative, I managed to integrate research into work-time through working alongside individual young people to sort and synthesise data and develop review sessions. I constantly worked outside of my paid time to manage the research process. There was very little writing-up as we went along, my field-notes kept me up to date, as did digital recordings of the young people, discussing key issues, capturing the interaction and challenges – there was a great deal of data to manage due to the ongoing and intense nature of the project and the PAR process.

As researcher, I would also have preferred more time to individually interview the young participants at key stages about their own feelings about participation. This, I felt, would enrich the data significantly and also inform future action. However, as manager, I did not have enough time to support them at key times in their lives – bereavement, homelessness, trauma and therefore it was difficult to prioritise their thoughts on the research question! I felt there was a tension in both roles in relation to lack of individual time, this is discussed further in relation to the manager role in Chapter 7. In terms of the researcher role, I worked with the young political advisor help address this gap in personal data, and helped her to devise a video exercise that enabled each young expert to reflect on their own personal political journey.

An open, honest relationship with my Scottish Government line manager was helpful in managing the tensions between my manager and researcher role. This resulted in more staff for the project, increased funding, a child protection advisor from the adult board (who the young people knew and trusted), She was appointed for the manager/young person to discuss any support/protection issues as and when they arose. However, day to day, the preparation for direct contact with Ministers, and the support for young people, took

precedence over the study and at times the academic endeavour of a PhD was extremely difficult to pursue.

As Voice Against Violence came to an end, I requested extra time for a final review that involved time solely as researcher - for preparation, data management and synthesis, descriptive and exploratory analysis. The Government agreed to six months part –time work - I had time and resources to step back, be critical, focus on the data and research questions two and three. I brought together five years of policy review, focused on the research question, the preliminary analyses and data on identified themes. I had time to ensure that I was up to date and informed by the literature relating to real and token participation. Two and a half years of debate and development relating to ethical and participation standards were brought together and anonymised for the standards co-analysis, VAV production and final discussion. I applied for funding for the young people to come together and be involved, if they opted to be. This funding was granted on condition the young peoples' version of lessons learned were presented to the Government/others in their own, chosen medium, at the end of six months. This was resource intensive (e.g. design time and working with a web company) but an inherent part of the PHD in terms of young people finding their own voice. Again this time was hugely interrupted by time-consuming additional demands, such as the winning of an award and a celebratory event in Parliament and Downing Street, which meant I reverted to a rather practical role as manager. Nevertheless, the VAV Final Review was a focussed series of day workshops and a final review weekend in my researcher role.

The writing up was then undertaken mainly out-with the paid time, which in some ways helped me with the possible tension of whose research it was – in relation to the Government and the young participants. It was my study, I was undertaking the full write up and exploratory analysis, and managed the whole research process including Part 1. Helpfully, the Government and University collaborated to ensure I had subsidised physical

space for the write up once I was unemployed. The Government has requested (paid) research briefings relating to all three findings chapters, and academic advice is mixed as to what I get out of that in terms of furthering my academic career – there is a constant tension between academia and policy and practice. However, a key tenet for my study is to bring research, practice and policy closer together, as others now demand – putting research into practice (for example, www.rip.org.uk) and for these findings a Government /University briefing is a key way to influence future policy, particularly as there is a new Violence Against Women Strategy underway.

Adult/child relationships

My role as an independent researcher in the development of the plan was to ensure CYPEDA were 'empowered to set and pursue their own agenda for change' (Shier, 2010: 224). I used creative methods to alleviate adult: child power differentials, to encourage interaction and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and power between participants rather than child to adult. I encouraged young people's own use of their decision-making powers, such as a 'dragons den' exercise to sell ideas to each other and co-decide which to take forward –their findings. The Voice Against Violence phase of the study was unusual in that it was set up by young people with a 'repositioning' of adults involved, directed by young people, as advocated by Tisdall and Davis (2004:140). Young people were the VAV members, I was their *staff* : I, with my co-facilitators, was 'lending my skills and resources' (ibid.) to the young people to 'enhance their status' (ibid.). This young person-led repositioning was helpful in reducing potentially power-full roles of adults and researchers. It not only recognised young participants' expertise and therefore help neutralise power differentials, but elevated the expertise of the young participants over that of the adult. Nor was the adult role negated, the young participants requested a manager/researcher – they wanted the skills – groupwork, facilitation, support, training, policy, research and evaluation, that an adult could bring. They very much wanted to work *with* the adult 'to co-

create new spaces…acutely aware of the necessary presence of adults to provide support or facilitate the activities' (Mannion, 2010:333).

Due to the sustained nature of the study there was time to develop skills, confidence and ability in relation to PAR, so that young people began to lead and facilitate in relation to reflection and action, using more interesting and innovative methods than the researchers skillset, such as art and IT, as well as providing new insights. I endeavoured in the project as manager to limit my role, in meetings, media and public appearances, whereas in the process of reflection, as researcher, I maintained a 'critical facilitatory role' (Davis, 2009:163). As young people's critical abilities developed they often co-facilitated review sessions. The study became a more developmental emancipatory process for all through co-learning and co-creating, swapping expertise, developing into a force – 'a reciprocal linking of roles that will constantly change' (Mannion, 2010:338). By the end of the project, I noticed a change in the young people's discourse on VAV: 'we', as VAV, was no longer just the young people but 'we', VAV, was the young people with the adult staff/researcher. By this point both adult and young people were 'becomings' (Lee, 2001).

Insider/Outsider Status

In the PAR study, the background of the researcher was very important to the young people, most importantly that she was a skilled and experienced practitioner in children's support work in Women's Aid. This immediately put young participants at ease. It was vital to these young participants to know that the researcher, unlike many adults (see Chapters 2 and 5), understood domestic abuse and the risks and need for confidentiality involved. Also, that she was experienced in individual and groupwork with CYPEDA helped young people 'feel comfortable to open up' (Raya, VAV Directives 2008). They were all aware of Women's Aid standards relating to children's rights and participation and became quickly confident that the researcher could 'build an environment where we were constantly

surrounded by support and understanding plus utmost care for our rights and beliefs' (Lola, S5). Tensions inherent in meeting other adults (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7) were greatly diminished because of the researcher's background, almost akin to insider status.

However, the researcher's background as national representative in relation to CYPEDA in Scottish Women's Aid and Scottish Government, as well as position as independent researcher and then researcher/ manager did result in tensions when other adults such as Ministers, government officials, adult boards, Scotland's Commissioner and journalists, requested that the researcher-manager to speak on behalf of VAV in relation to preliminary findings: 'they think you're the "real" expert' (Karen, Big Bang Review). The researcher and young people agreed at an early stage that any requests for young or adult involvement went to the group first, following tension caused by the researcher delivering findings to the adult delivery group in the development of the plan. A key tenet of my approach was to 'encourage autonomy and reduce dependency on adult facilitators' (Shier, 2010:225) which young people felt was achieved gradually until 'Claire disappeared from view' (Karen, VAV Final Review). The young people also felt it was very helpful that the researcher had experience in Government: 'insider knowledge of the politics involved because it's a different world to us' (Chloe, VAV PP Review).

Researcher/participant

The study was affectionately described as 'Claire's PhD' throughout and young people were clear about the wider academic study from the start and au fait with the research questions. The researcher involved the young people in discussion about the questions, the young people wanted include issues of real and token participation in question 2 and consider impact and the young people themselves added question 3. The PAR approach enabled the study to be seen as helpful and integral to the work, which took precedence over any academic study and reduced possible tensions on researcher/researched. My role was

recognised as akin to 'principal investigator' with the overall research, design and focus, funding, administration and management my role but the regular reflection and action became more collaborative and intrinsic:

> It was better because you were more in-depth in the sense that you knew what you needed from us but were helping us at the same time … [using] the PhD to say "what do you think of that?" … got a better response…we needed to reflect regularly on whether we were effective to do our best – I didn't feel like a research participant' (Chloe, VAV Final Review)

Researcher-manager/young participants' relationships

As the young people's manager, (and a responsible researcher), the young people's welfare and safety was of utmost importance. Alongside the development and exploration of ethical standards as Part 3 of the study, there were of course, ethical dilemmas that presented themselves through the course of the work and needed resolved. Of course safety issues were not only interesting and complex subjects for exploration but needed to be resolved immediately. My role as manager was to keep the young people safe and at times individual young people felt I was guilty of protectionism, for example, making the decision for blanket anonymity despite a vulnerable young person and his mother being happy for him to speak out publicly. However, I was privy to information, not only about him but how other participants would feel, as well as having experience of unintended consequences of public appearances (discussed fully in Chapter 7). There was some tension in film-making in relation to issues of recognition as I would err on the safest measures, for example insisting faces were further blurred, despite the young people and mothers accepting risks. By the end of the project most of these tensions were resolved, minds were changed, and young people advocated for a manager for such issues and training on consequences for future young participants.

As manager I was also aware of a tension in that young people were getting little reward for their involvement (fuller discussion in Chapter 7) and personally I could not help but compare this to myself, both in terms of financial and academic rewards. I involved the young people in decisions about participation fees and they were satisfied with that (see, for example, Alderson and Morrow, 2011). I employed a facilitator to take them through Youth Achievement Awards which they all achieved. We discussed my role, and what was involved in the whole PhD study, and they were either not interested in academic research or were aware of the huge endeavour it was and of which they were proud to be part: 'happy to have helped you while helping ourselves' (Marc, VAV Final Review).

Ownership and Dissemination

Davis (2009) writes about the tensions between adult and child researchers/participants: adult researchers who feel they own the analysis and are wedded to pen and computer, 'whereas children may feel more suited to presenting their findings in a dramatic, musical or artistic format' (Davis, 2009: 163-4). This begs the question, and possible tension, 'whose findings are they?' Ownership and authorship I felt was a tension to be managed during the PAR part of the study and a critical question in relation to how participatory a study is.

Although I was clear, as were my supervisors, that conventionally I could claim authorship of reports and outputs of preliminary findings, it felt uncomfortable to be sole author, yet for use in the PhD that was the advice. In the development of the plan, the *Making a Difference* Report was published by the Government (Houghton, 2008b), traditionally I had facilitated this originally as 'one off' qualitative study and authorship was clear from the onset; I had managed and analysed the data with young people providing key themes, similar to Part 1 of the study. When involvement continued, I facilitated two residentials in which young people devised their own directives for the Government. The second

residential was requested by the young people so that the young people could edit, rewrite sections, agree additions, feel a sense of ownership of the report: the young people were beginning to take more of a role in analysis and writing up findings/recommendations. Although I was uniquely familiar with all the data, facilitated and designed the process as well as analysing for the report, I felt this report should at least be 'Houghton with the young people'. The supervisors advised I should be sole author, which I then discussed with the young people, they came up with a solution that they felt OK that I was author of the report (Houghton, 2008c), so long as it stated that the directives were from the young experts.

The Voice Against Violence project provided valuable time to consider these tensions fully with the young experts, for various research outputs. As researcher, I facilitated discussions about their 'legacy' and gave young people the choice (or young people had ideas such as a legacy film) about how far they were involved in the data analysis process (see next section) and the medium in which they presented their preliminary findings and any research outputs. In relation to Davis' (2009) concern about the tensions between adult researchers and academia versus child-friendly/creative presentation of findings, my dual role was very helpful in managing that tension. As PhD researcher, in this study I was necessarily wedded to an academic write up, but as manager of the project I had the freedom to seek funding to support young people to present their findings and lessons learned in the ways they chose. They produced a film and booklet (see Appendix 6) for Part 2 of the study and a web standards resource targeted at young people and workers for Part 3 (see Appendix 7). The organised events including political question time, drama and interactive work with other CYPEDA using findings and a multi-media final presentation to the Scottish Government. This alleviated any potential tension in relation to ownership - for the publications the young people agreed the 'author' would be the 8 young experts of Voice

Against Violence, using their pseudonyms, which did leave the adult contribution absent. I felt this adjusted the balance somewhat.

Tisdall's work (2009:194) distinguishing 'passive' and 'active' dissemination or engagement helpfully reflects the distinction young people made in relation to when they wanted ownership to be 'Voice Against Violence' and not Houghton. Tisdall (ibid.) argues for the importance of a more 'active' dissemination, where researchers seek to engage targeted audiences and this includes interactive seminars, media, training and I would argue targeted web outputs (rather than more passive traditional online reports). During the life of the project young people (only) were the public face of VAV - in seminars, training and media, and the researcher's role was to support them in presenting their preliminary findings. Young people agreed and were content that I would be sole authorship of the more 'passive' dissemination, such as publishing the study, writing for academic journals and website reports (ibid.), particularly as they had reached saturation point in relation to co-analysis, were content with their own authored products, and did not have the time, skill or motivation to be involved in an academic write up.

What happens with findings after the project could be a source of tension, specifically as young experts have applied for funding for promotion of their lessons learned, and want to be involved, but that has not been made available as yet. However, the researcher will want to promote her work in order to progress her career, raising the uncomfortable tension of the adult promoting herself as the expert in young people's participation. I will try and resolve this tension by involving young people where possible but this does require funding. Anonymity issues also come into play and the risk is that young people may want their contributions accredited to them, using their own names, which is an ethical dilemma more fully explored in Chapter 7. Anonymity in dissemination could risk blurring the voices the study is trying to raise.

Parts 1, 2 and 3: Data Analysis

The study uses thematic analysis as the method to identify, analyse and report the themes within the data (see, for example, Braun and Clarke, 2006). This section will outline the data analysis process for Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the study. I designed the research process with a particular methodological focus on the potential for CYPEDA to contribute to analysis. This reflects the study's ontological position that children are competent agents who actively contribute to shaping the social world and are experts in their own lives, competent political agents (see, for example, Cairns, 2006). Following from this, the study's epistemological view is that listening to children's views as active participants will increase our knowledge and understanding, that knowledge about children can be created together by researchers and children, that children are co-producers of knowledge. This section will examine my research design which aimed to enable young people to increasingly influence the thematic analysis process. I will contend this led, gradually, to 'participants as collaborators' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:97) and explore the analytical methods I used to ensure the study remained grounded in the data and retained a child's own voice (hallmarks of qualitative research according to Spencer et al., 2003:210).

It will be helpful to outline the stages and processes of qualitative analysis here that form the building blocks of analysis in each part of the study; are used to examine the contribution of CYPEDA and importantly, in making transparent the researcher's active role (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Braun and Clark, 2006). Davis (2009:157) usefully summarises young participants' involvement in different stages of research, beginning with pre-data collection, data collection, analysis, reporting and finally policy development/campaigning. He states that children and young people's contribution to analysis usually takes the form of identifying themes. I will argue that each part of the study involved CYPEDA in identifying themes but that the PAR process in Parts 2 and 3

contributed in additional ways to analysis. Spencer et al.'s (2003) 'analytic hierarchy' tool (p.212) is useful here in that it identifies three aspects of analysis: data management, descriptive analysis, then explanatory analysis (as an iterative process). Taking these three aspects in turn, firstly I will clarify the role of young people and the researchers in data management – identifying initial themes, sorting data and synthesising/summarising data within a thematic framework. Secondly, I will discuss the extent to which young people were involved in arriving at the descriptive accounts wherein the ordered data were used to identify key dimensions, together with the range and diversity of each phenomenon, to refine categories and to develop classifications or typologies. Thirdly, it is rare that participants, particularly young participants, are involved in the explanatory account - deemed to be the 'higher' stage of analysis (ibid.) wherein patterns are detected, explanations developed, wider theory and policy applied.

Important for this study, focussed on raising CYPEDA's voices, will be to describe how the entire process is 'data-driven' (Braun and Clarke, 2006), and identify the efforts made to ensure 'key terms, phrases or expressions …are retained as much as possible from the participants' own language' (Ritchie et al., 2003:229), not only in data management as espoused by Ritchie et al., but in the development of descriptive and explanatory accounts. CYPEDA's own language is used 'to portray how a phenomena is conceived, how important it is, the richness it holds' (Spencer et al., 2003:214), CYPEDA themselves in this study were supported by the researcher to consider the data and prioritise what was most important. The data analysis process for each part of the study will now be described. All stages will include what to Davis (2009) are the final stages - reporting and political campaigning; these are spread throughout this study's lifetime, following the good practice of drawing out outcomes in children's own time (Borland et al., 2001), not just at the end of the study.

Part 1 Data Analysis: Young people's perspectives on what helps

The initial data set consisted of the transcriptions of 8 focus groups, 2 sibling interviews, 4 individual interviews and 2 family tours of the refuge, revealing the perspectives on help of 48 CYPEDA. Children's perspectives when using the creative tools identified earlier were recorded through transcription of verbal discussion or individually coded stickits to ensure that each child's view was recorded and assigned. Further data were gathered and recorded from 31 CYPEDA involved in film workshops (flipcharts, filming that was transcribed, storyboards written by CYP) and the Listen Louder political event (questions for Ministers grouped into themes and recorded on the day, including small speeches by a small number of CYP involved in the study). The focus group and political engagement for the 2008 focus group took place over two weekends (Houghton, 2008) allowing deeper exploration of issues, with 2 additional CYPEDA in 2009 contributing further particularly in relation to structured groupwork. This did result in more in-depth data on some themes from this small group of young people, which presented a challenge in integrating this with the other data. In conversation with supervisors, I endeavoured to ensure that their voice did not dominate, and to limit the data used to their initial priorities and then identify the group action they took to address it. In effect, the themes identified by the 2004 participants did not change and the later focus groups merely added some depth and action points.

CYPEDA contributed by various means to data management through the identification of key themes. The interaction within each focus group contributed (Kitzinger, 1996), alongside creative tools focusing on the research question of what helps CYPEDA (for example what helped/did not help/should change in relation to a specific service), while open-ended questions, such as what would help a young person, elicited 'new' areas of importance, such as friends. The end of each focus group/interview included a period of concienticization (Freire, 1972) about the situation in Scotland for their service and who the people in power were. Following this, the participants were invited into the process of

contextualising their issues and asked to identify key questions they felt were important to ask, and these became key themes for the analysis. Thirty-one CYPEDA took part in the Listen Louder film workshop in small group discussions wherein they met participants of other groups, contributing to the cross-sectionality of analysis through discussing and agreeing key messages. This was limited in breadth due to the fact that the first priority of film-making is deciding your target audience; this group of 31 decided that should be CYPEDA and that key messages would be positive. Through this process, CYPEDA did contribute both themes and categories for the thematic framework of analysis: to encourage CYPEDA to speak out; families to get out; to reassure them Women's Aid was for CYP too and was confidential and safe. It began to explore phenomena of importance, for example the need for children to talk to someone (main theme) and the reasons why it was important or/and why it was difficult (categories of how it feels, barriers and so on) which were further investigated by the researcher in her final analysis. Therefore we attained further rich data, exploration and cross-sectional data (recorded or transcribed flipcharts/storyboards/interviews) on the positives aspects of the 'children's support workers' theme but little critique. This did give a clearer picture and more substantive content in relation to children's perspectives of the importance of the 'phenomenon' of specialist support to CYPEDA, and in that aspect contributed to the descriptive analysis.

The researcher supported the focus groups (2004, 2008 and 2009) to contextualise their perspectives, informing them of the position of CYPEDA's services in Scotland (for example, that half the refuges had shared bathrooms, kitchen and family space, the limited numbers of follow-on/outreach workers) and the structure of power that influences provision, which CYPEDA then discussed freely. CYPEDA's development of questions for a panel of politicians therefore contributed a more critical, as well as solution-orientated, contribution to analysis. This provided a set of headline themes and further developed categories for the data management (for example, refuge provision: shared

space; child/young people's space, aftercare.). It also further developed/reinforced classification for the analysis emerging from what participants felt was important such as geography (postcode lottery), service received, rurality and age (different needs).

CYPEDA's contribution to analysis in this part of the study is mainly to the thematic framework and was part of my effort to ensure analysis was not only 'from my armchair' (Kitzinger, 1996). Nevertheless, I, as researcher, took a more traditional role than that in the next two parts. I undertook preliminary and final analysis on my own, the sole person to be familiar with all the data. I undertook preliminary analysis of the 2004 transcribed data in order to introduce the film workshops – identifying broad themes in their own language to re-engage the CYP, and also shared the thematic mapping to brief/familiarise the film company with the most important issues and dimensions of it. I also felt it was important to 'check' that politicians were hearing the key themes across the data – not just the CYPEDA able to be involved, so once key questions were received I grouped them and re-read the data for any voices potentially unheard, leading to a young person reading out statements from some CYPEDA too scared to take part. Scottish Women's Aid were also presented by the researcher with the preliminary findings (see research protocol, Appendix 2) to ensure they took immediate action to improve their services and inform local groups of the need for change, in particular to inform their engagement with politicians who were considering funding.

I undertook the data management manually, and attained a systematic overview of all the data through familiarising myself through reading and re-reading, colour coding according to initial themes, sub-themes and categories mainly supplied through CYPEDA. I developed a thematic framework (through a visual mind-map type approach of themes and categories, beginning to note associations). I had initial themes/labels through the tools that focussed on evaluation of specific services (refuge, group, follow on, outreach) but developed more abstract themes (e.g. the nature of good support) and identified emergent

themes (e.g. stigma, trust, confidentiality, friends, mothers, importance of school). In particular, I explored further categories and dimensions under every theme (e.g. friends: able to speak to about domestic abuse; distraction from domestic abuse?). Each data source was individually coded using a colour scheme and a cut and paste approach used to sort the data according to themes and categories. To synthesise the data, I began to identify verbatim quotes relevant to each category, pertinent quotes that illustrated what was commonly said on specific subjects, or differed from that, and ensuring this was from a range of participants.

In Part 1 of the study I undertook the descriptive and explanatory analysis. I began to explore classifications of age, gender and ethnicity, noting limitations in the sampling also, alongside type of service, issues relating to sibling groups, how and if their relationship with mothers/ friends helped or did not. Through this emerged interesting inter-sectional issues and patterns of association. For example, I explored the perspectives of a small sub-data set of teenage boys who had identified themselves as, in the main, particularly content with their lives despite the hardships. I identified that they all had someone to talk to (it did not matter who), strong relationships with mothers, a good peer network, their own flat and that this was particularly true for South Asian boys in the study. I remained data driven (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to retain children's voice but highlighted interesting deviations or agreements with the children's perspectives literature (Chapters 1 and 2) and particularly where this study added more depth (for example, in critiquing services). One illustrative point could be that, for example, unlike McGee's (2000) study, CYPEDA in my study generally could not talk to their friends about domestic abuse. Throughout, I attempted to achieve a balance between further interpreting children's chosen and negotiated priorities; ensuring all participants' voices were heard through interpreting lived and common experiences that emerged from the data, and illustrating the analysis with children's own

words to the fore (Alderson, 1995), reflecting my ontology and epistemology whilst pursuing rigorous analysis.

Reporting and Dissemination:

Through their political engagement and the Listen Louder film (Scottish Women's Aid, 2004) the young people expressed their views and developed their key messages to the audiences they felt were most relevant (Borland et al., 2001; Davis, 2009): politicians and other CYPEDA. The announcement of the Children's Support Worker Fund stated that the preliminary findings of the research would be used as conditions of grant and as evaluation criteria. This successfully matched the nature of this part of the research to its purpose (Sinclair, 2004) which was to make things better and improve services. Both researcher and politicians recognised children as 'co-constructors of knowledge' (Moss, 2002:6) and the young people involved achieved new political commitment to progress the issue across key portfolios of Ministers of the Scottish Government (see Chapters 5 and 6). Their perspectives, their analysis, transformed the range and quality of the support service across Scotland. CYPEDA were informed of how the findings would be used but were not part of the researcher's final analysis and report, as contact had finished by then.

What the researcher intended to do, but did not do in the event, was to reflect *with* children and young people (France et al., 2000) on what they thought about the processes and how and if they were enabled to speak out. Nor was there time to consider, with children, processes that would work in the future to ensure sustained and not tokenistic (Borland et al., 2001) or one-off (Sinclair, 2004) participation. This was partly because it was felt that the wonderful event, and unexpected announcement of £6 million funding for support, was a fitting celebratory end. It was also because many of the young people had contributed a good deal of their precious time through all three stages (focus groups/interview, film, event) and had reached their own 'saturation point'. In addition,

the researcher decided that was a fitting end to her time employed by Scottish Women's Aid. Part 2 of the study would enable a more considered data collection and analysis in relation to CYPEDA's engagement with politics and policy.

Part 2 Data analysis: young people's involvement in the policy-making process

Data analysis was a collaborative process within the five years of this part of the study: the Participatory Action Research approach entailed a continual cycle of reflection and action. There were two main methods of data collection and analysis which will be clarified in this section. The first were 'major reviews' residentials that focussed on group review, analysis and action. These took place at the end of the development of the Delivery Plan, and the end of Voice Against Violence, alongside key sites of preliminary analysis (and identification of new themes) such as the film development as VAV's legacy. Review residentials were mainly facilitated by the researcher with different levels of collaboration in relation to data collection, management and analysis that will be explored in this section. Young people co-produced their own preliminary analysis at these key stages with differing levels of support from the researcher: VAV Directives to Government on a National Young Advisory Group (2008); VAV Legacy Film (2011) and VAV's final presentation to the Scottish Government: the snakes and ladders of participation (2012). The second method of data collection and analysis was devised specifically for the intense activity in the latter two and a half years of the study, when Voice Against Violence existed. There were eight young experts in VAV alongside myself as their manager/researcher. Key activities – sites for data collection and analysis - were identified as 'cases' for study: meetings with Ministers/CoSLA; integration into policy-making/monitoring with adult boards; conducting projects (later co-defined as three distinct types useful for cross-sectional analysis). A co-produced analytical tool, the 'VAV Review Tool' was developed to cover the key activities and used/developed to review and analyse each activity at important

stages/the end of each activity. These building blocks of analysis are described below, making clear the active roles of the young participants and researcher.

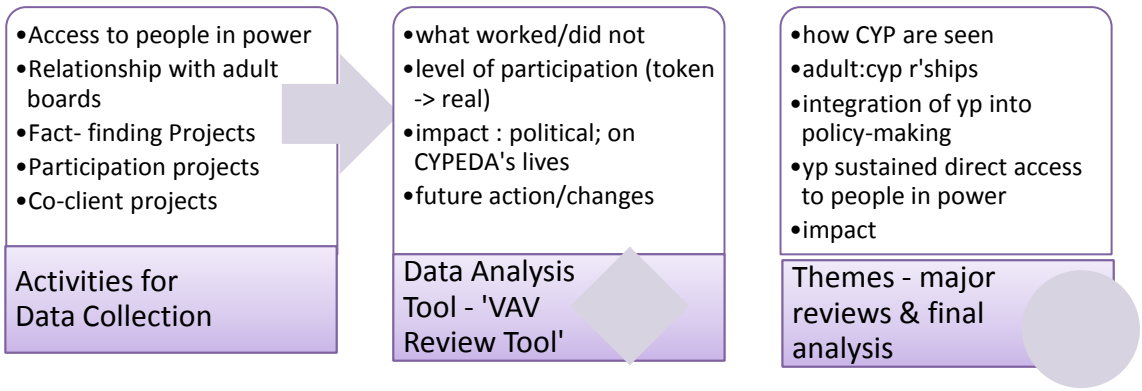
First major review

As the researcher, I designed and facilitated focus group activity to examine the process and outcomes of being involved in the development of the delivery plan. I recorded the young people's views using artwork and posters, capturing individual views using individual stickits, and flipcharts for group agreement, as the method of data collection. The annotated huge drawing of the sun, clouds, rainbows of involvement remained on the wall for young people to familiarise themselves with in the process of producing recommendations for future involvement. The researcher designed creative workshops, (such as 'Dragons' Den' – sell the need for an ongoing young advisory group), based on eliciting young people's perspectives on tackling issues they had raised so far. These included a lack of respect and not being listened to because they were children. I explored young people's ideas to address these issues such as being named as young experts, being given status by politicians and creating their own identity. This iterative process developed initial themes and sub-themes, many of which remained prevalent, with their dimensions being further explored throughout the next two and a half years. For example, 'how children are seen' had sub-themes/categories of status drawn out: status; identity; speaking for ourselves; representation and independence. Of particular relevance here was the Government's request that young people should make recommendations on the roles and responsibilities of VAV alongside Ministers/CoSLA and the adult boards involved. Direct access to people in power remained a theme, with young people's major focus on the sub-theme of lessons learned, so that 'we can be role models for children's participation' (group agreement, VAV Directives 2008).

Young people in Voice Against Violence (VAV) decided that there should be data collection and analysis on what worked and did not work, over the two and a half years of the pilot, and that this should be given key importance in the findings. Young people also began to develop categories relevant to working with adults which they named 'our terms of engagement': their emphasis was on equality, dialogue and input to problem solving (VAV Directives, 2008) which became key categories when reviewing activities with adults. I later decided that they should become two themes of adult/child relationships (which in effect explored terms of engagement) and integration into policy-making (specifically exploring relationships with the adult boards) due to their prevalence and dimensions. Above this the most important aspect to measure and analyse for young people was 'making a difference to children's lives', actually making an impact, and this became a key theme and tool for analysis also.

The involvement of young people in the implementation of the plan necessitated a different approach to data collection, management and analysis due to the level and regularity of Voice Against Violence activities over two years. This involved meeting Ministers/CoSLA, integration into policy-making and monitoring with adult boards, conducting projects (which were later defined as three distinct types useful for analysis/comparisons). This provided the necessary iterative process in terms of development of themes, sub-themes and categories for the final analysis and included preliminary analysis at key times such as the film development.

Table 17: Part 2 PAR Data Analysis Process –young people's involvement in policy-making



VAV Review Tool

This tool, how it was co-developed and the continual contribution to thematic analysis is explained in three stages below: data collection and familiarisation; analysis and action for a particular data set; ranking success.

Table 18: VAV Review Tool Stage 1: Data collection, familiarisation and sorting on each activity

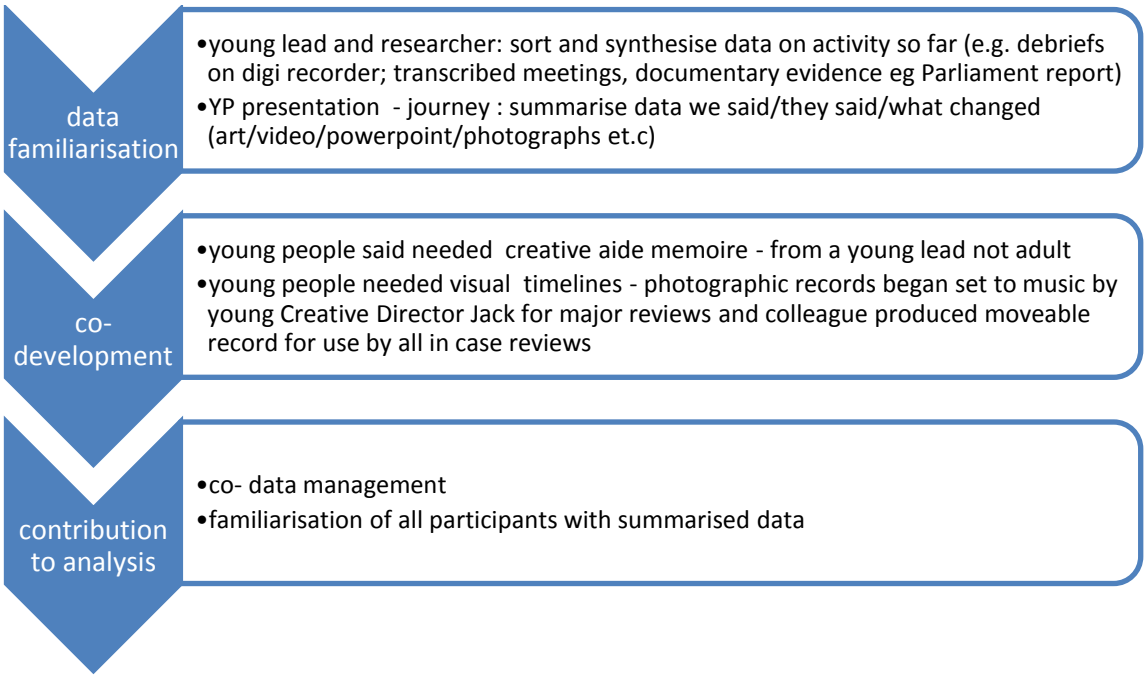
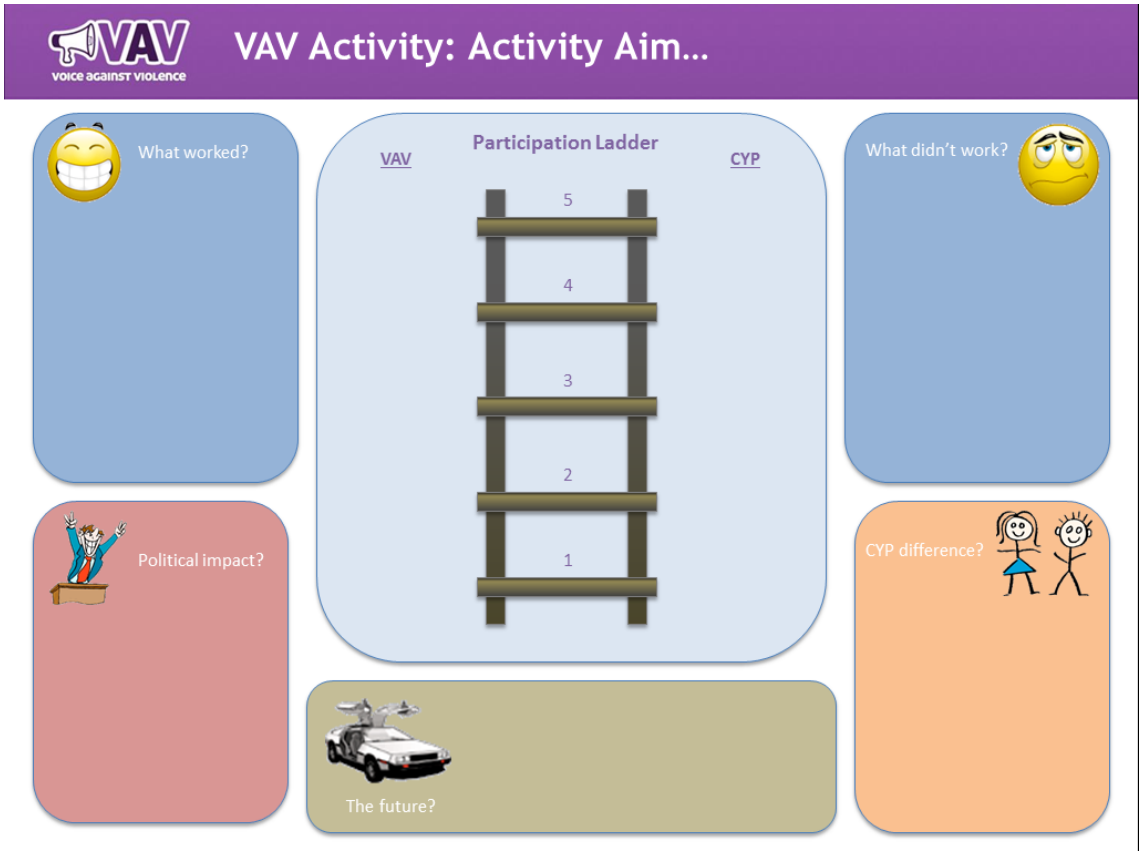


Table 19: VAV Review Tool Stage 2 – VAV Group review poster

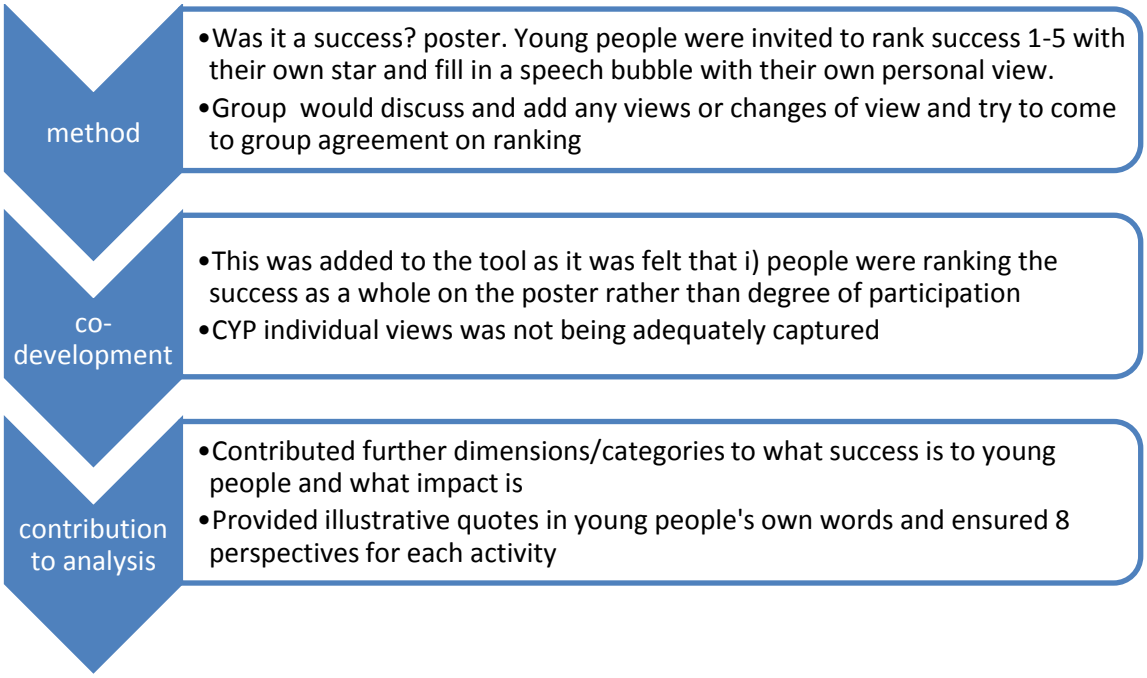


method	•young people would write directly on large poster (A1) collating data on the same initial themes for each activity •young leads would facilitate and easy to use
co-development	•this developed from positives/negatives/ what you'd change, to Declan designed poster •young people identified key gaps -participation, impact, action •decision to not involve adults as integral to review - could inform
contribution to analysis	•data collection & synthesis; cross sectional analysis easy on common themes •development of sub-themes occured - Impact:political; CYPEDA. Participation: VAV; other CYPEDA. Lessons learned: what worked/did not work;what you'd change/future action.

The ladder from real to token was used to assess and rank participation, firstly of VAV and then of other CYPEDA. Young people felt that Hart's Ladder of Participation (1997) was too complex as the language was not helpful and they preferred to use their own words to describe the steps from real to token participation. This was very helpful for the analysis, including cross-sectional analysis, and also ensured that the analysis was data and not theory driven (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

When adults were invited to a project review, the young people decided this limited young people's honesty. However, adult's involvement could provide a useful dimension, for example their views on how a meeting had gone and/or necessary evidence as in evaluation of the advert campaign. Consequently, young people decided that adults could be informants for stage 1 but not part of stage 2 and 3. In the final review, the absence of adults' views, in particular in relation to impact, was identified as a gap for further research.

Table 20: VAV Review Tool Stage 3 - Rating for success



For the final review, the researcher sorted the sheets and relevant data into activities/cases and used this as a reminder and aide memoire for the overall review and analysis of the whole process of involvement.

Major review - final

The final group review and analysis took place over a residential weekend, though key 'legacy' messages had been developed through preliminary data analysis for the film and booklet, producing key summaries that were useful in analysis (see Appendix 6). Young people agreed to commit to a major review after the end of VAV, but set conditions, in that their time was limited, they wanted me as researcher to lead and they wanted it to be different to their regular reviews: 'we've done enough' (Karen, VAV Big Bang Review). The young people recognised my skills and time to conduct this final stage of analysis, and that only I had the time or enthusiasm to re-familiarise myself with all the data. Young people did contribute to the final analysis through suggesting creative tools; identifying gaps in data; identifying themes and sub-themes worthy or fuller exploration, and that contribution is discussed below.

Young people identified tools to enable cross sectional analysis for descriptive and explanatory analysis: Jack suggested the use of 'the snakes and ladders of participation' idea as an analytical tool for the whole journey, and provided a video to music of the groups' and individual's key moments. The researcher found a room-sized snakes and ladders board and further developed the idea, devising workshops using the thematic framework developed with the young people. Ladders represented the key activities which was useful in refining activities and synthesising the analysis thus far. In discussion with the young people we separated projects into participation, co-client with the Government, and fact-finding. They used and further developed their own categories of participation to discuss differences and dimensions within each type of project. For example, the data for the co-client projects

covered both a largely tokenistic sub-category and another involving real participation, with various explanations of the difference. This discussion was recorded. The young people used the review posters as aide memoires and used large stickits to agree and synthesise the main 'snakes and ladders' of each activity of involvement.

Young people co-identified gaps in data: Researcher discussions with the young political advisor Raya in relation to direct access to power identified gaps in data and creative methods to synthesise previous data and collect new data. The aide memoire – familiarisation – consisted of selecting recordings of the politicians voices within meetings, documentary evidence (extracts from minutes, Parliament Official Report) to demonstrate influence and issues, combined with a hilarious skit that Raya and Jack filmed of the politicians involved, ending with the politicians leaving VAV and laughing together ' who the f**k do they think they are?' (VAV Final Review). The group had identified during the film process that young people and adults felt they could not participate at this level. Raya felt that, though we had devised lessons learned, we had not explored what it took to become personally confident and able with politicians: each young experts journey, which reflected my concern about lack of individual data. She sought group agreement and devised a political make-over video exercise to seek each individual's views and experience on this subject: adding a further dimension to the phenomenon of young people's access to power.

Young people and researcher identified themes and sub-themes worthy of fuller exploration and analysis at this stage. Impact, in particular, was a phenomenon that young people felt was most important but which they, and the researcher, felt had not been fully explored. The researcher devised an exercise pulling together the data set on impact, including young people's initial thoughts on impact in their first interview. Young people redefined impact and designed their own impact mind-maps. The researcher then facilitated group decisions on key sub themes and categories in young people's own language, then the researcher was tasked with re-reading the data and further analysis and illustration using quotes from

them. The researcher did include prompts from other existing evaluative frameworks (for example, the Research Excellence Framework) but mainly this helped to group the different categories rather than become theory or policy driven. Young people identified a gap in evidence, which was the perspectives of adults, and also noted that only short-term impact could be measured here. The researcher identified that they had not explored fully the impact on themselves as members of VAV – a sub-theme that gained prevalence mainly through the film making. I devised a video exercise that brought new data, making the situation very real. Their videos were a wonderfully personal ending to the review.

The whole weekend was recorded either on digi recorder, video or through stickits and noted discussion. A great effort to synthesise the key findings was made by Declan, with the researcher, in devising the young peoples' powerpoint presentation as their final report to Scottish Government. This provided descriptive accounts and elements of explanatory analysis, in young people's own words and realising an outcome, or what they called closure, in their time. The young people did not want to contribute any further to the full report and decided it was time to end their involvement. They did want to check the briefing – summary of findings - in the future, though.

Researcher's role in the writing up

I re-familiarised myself with all the data, re-reading again and again, including the notes and transcription of the final review. The thematic framework was developed in collaboration with the young people. I had a considerable role throughout in the data management, so was very familiar with the data. Nevertheless, I surrounded myself with all the posters and piles of transcription and looked again at whether to refine the thematic framework. In the final review, young people had identified adults who were allies – members of agencies and boards with specific qualities/understandings/approaches/communication skills. This resulted in me rethinking the theme relating to adult policy-making, and distinguished the

theme of adult/child relationships from that of the relationship with the boards involved in policy-making. Also, the fact-finding projects were essential to the lessons learned for accessing power, and therefore became a category there. The co-client comparison became an illustrative example of real and token participation under those themes. In relation to the researcher bringing in theory in the latter stages of the analytic hierarchy (Spencer et al., 2003), the young people had raised their position of 'being a child' from the beginning of their experience, proving very capable of 'examining way in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:81), for example: 'they think 'cos we're kids we can't do this' (Chloe, MAD Review). So, although I could refer to the sociology of childhood literature relating to competence, tokenism, absence, social and political actors (see Chapter 3), young people had lived and challenged the theory and dominant discourse throughout, and were very aware of the challenges the literature sets out. This enabled me to retain the focus on the material whilst using the data to progress what John called the 'revolution in participation' (VAV Film Review).

Part 3 Data Analysis: ethical and participation principles for sustained, regular involvement in domestic abuse policy-making.

The research question emerged from Part 2 when young people were making recommendations for a new CYPEDA national advisory group to Government (VAV Directives, 2008). The group felt the development of standards was necessary to ensure 'a sympathetic approach' (ibid.) that included 'terms of engagement' with adults (VAV Directives, 2008). The eight young experts of Voice Against Violence took part in a PAR research process with the researcher over a period of two and a half years. The sun and its rays were agreed as the visual methods of representing the standards and are useful in demonstrating the process of analysis. The sun's body contained the main themes of safety and happiness or positive participation. The rays were the sub-themes and there were

eventually categories within each sub-theme. The co-development of standards was a necessarily iterative process which entailed ethical decision-making within the process (Manzo and Brightbill, 2010). There were various stages of data collection and management, and preliminary analyses for specific purposes, for example, key standards became agreements with adults who were to meet the young experts, which contributed to both descriptive and explanatory analysis.

Part 3's process of data collection and analysis (data management, descriptive and explanatory accounts) is explained in the flow diagram below

Table 21: Part 3 flow diagram of data analysis process, incorporating VAV's sun of safe and happy participation

At each individual intake interview, each individual created their own sun and wrote sentences on each ray of the sun and explained what things would help them to feel OK participating. This data item focused on young people's identification of what was most important to them (to be developed into group themes) and sentences on each ray of the sun that would help them feel safe and happy to be involved (to be developed into group sub-themes), young people wrote their own words of explanation on the rays of their sun and expanded further with the researcher which was digi-recorded (data illustrating each sub-theme in own words).

The researcher familiarised herself with all eight suns, identified common 'themes' and sub-themes for initial coding and anonymous data (interview) extracts relating to these themes. No ray was excluded, although a few were amalgamated.

The completed sun was presented back to the group, discussed and agreed. An explanation (preliminary analysis for others they work with) was devised using young people's own words and agreed by the group, followed by synthesis of data and group choice of illustrative quotes. Safety concerns predominated at this stage (and continued to be the issues with most prevalence) and categories developed including safety, confidentiality, anonymity, working with adults as a safety issue, location, but also trust, friendships and fun.

Individuals were invited to raise concerns and issues at any stage relating to the sun. A young person was appointed to lead on the standards development. The manager was requested by the group to be the key person for further individual contact. The manager's role in this PAR process was discussed 'you need to keep us safe…there are some things I can only talk to you about, not the group' (Declan, S2). Issues arising in group or at residentials were noted by young lead and researcher (fieldnotes), phone and face to face contact was recorded and an individual data file created. If an individual raised a problem, such as potential breaches of confidentiality, the researcher would work with that person and the project lead to design a safe way of further exploring that issue as a group.

Group discussions on specific phenomena were recorded and transcribed. For example, confidentiality as a sub-theme was explored further and revealed dimensions to the sub-theme e.g. whether adults/young people thought about consequences; what they might be, whether pseudonyms were necessary and why. This provided categories and began the process of cross-sectionality, e.g. how could there be equal participation when different young people required different levels of anonymity? There were two key sites of data

collection and analysis about prevalent sub-themes identified by the group: public appearances and film

The film process entailed many focus groups/discussions and points of agreement, with the film company as well as between the group, which were recorded or noted as data. The group's interaction on these major sub-themes brought new depth and insights, e.g. the degree of anonymity: would all young people be comfortable with the risks of voice recognition? The peer interviews on principles for participation, undertaken for the third section of the film, were recorded as data items for this PAR study. They further explored what was most important to each young person, including principles such as having fun, trust and friendships. Equal participation, a standard resisted by the film company (as some spoke better than others), began to gain more prominence and prevalence in the analysis. For the data analysis, this would provide a means of refining sub-themes and categories and exploring/collating further data on the dimensions of a phenomenon such as 'young people speaking for themselves'.

Public and media appearances: the risks and demands of public involvement meant that young participants began to contribute to descriptive and explanatory analysis through exploring relationships between themes, such as dilemmas of equal participation when participants had differing levels of safety issues in relation to public appearances. Young people engaged with what could be named as theoretical challenges such as participation rights versus welfare (see, for example, Woodhead, 2010; Alderson, 2012), contributing to the explanatory analysis.

The researcher re-read all the data and sorted the data set (S1 individual, S2 group, S3 film experience; S4 public and media appearances) into the initial thematic framework – the sub-themes and their categories were identified through the process. The researcher anonymised the individual data and requested permission from individuals to use it. A particular effort was made to retain original language and quotes from young people that illustrated the sub-themes and categories. Data that provided challenges to analysis, for example an individual changing his/her mind about a phenomenon, or group decisions that changed (e.g. blanket anonymity) and were still being debated were used as topics for further exploration in the group. The group session was recorded.

The researcher conducted a group exercise (S5) for the young people to agree the rays. Part of the exercise was the young people each familiarising themselves with their own data and re-checking that their issues/concerns were represented on the sun. They also gave permission for their anonymised individual data to be shared with the group. This gave an opportunity for checking and validating decisions along the way and for any new issues to arise. Young people then reconsidered the sun as it stood and discussed whether there should be changes and what remained most important. Whether safe and happy could be separated, as it had been in some presentations, elicited a discussion contributing to the explanatory analysis about the integral nature of both, for example, 'if we weren't having fun I wouldn't feel comfortable enough to speak out' (Raya S5). Young peoples' contribution to the explanatory account of the balance between safety and rights provided typologies/classifications young people felt necessary to further explore the data set. This included the relevance of levels of safety/risk from perpetrator, contact with perpetrator, type of relationship with mother. For example, one young person was asked by another if he felt his mother should be named as support considering his independent status and experience of care, other nuances were also discussed. The final agreement was that 'mums

involvement' remained a key principle, as the shared experience of domestic abuse was more important than the type or quality of relationship.

Sub-themes and categories were refined. For example, the group decided that 'equal participation' of each member of the group should be separated from 'no discrimination' as they were two separate and substantive issues. Equal participation of each member was an oft-recurring issue in different circumstances and young people would stick to it, even in their preliminary analyses, such as equal voice in film and booklet, i.e. all eight had a quote in the booklet/film rather than perhaps selecting the best quote to illustrate a theme or choosing the best speaking voice on film. However, the group had been less successful at addressing and educating in relation to anti-discrimination within the group, and this was felt to be a sub-theme in its own right. The main themes of safety and happiness were retained, and the body of the sun was to contain both to demonstrate their interconnectedness. The young people agreed to a final version of the sun. Data was re-sorted by the researcher into files, to accommodate the additional sub-themes or amalgamation of initial sub-themes (e.g. fun, teambuilding and friendships).

The young people's final report and analysis: the young people decided that the most useful way of presenting the data analysis would be a web document for use by future participation groups and would be young-person friendly (group agreement, S5). They also felt that the sun would be a useful tool to use, so wanted most of the key words used in the sun, rather than perhaps grouping some into sub-theme categories. The young people then each took responsibility for different sub-themes of the sorted data and agreed that they should summarise it into a paragraph under each. Each young person summarised the data under a ray, using their own words and judgement, as well as quoting others. The process, most closely aligned to descriptive analysis, continued. All read out, amended and agreed the statements under each heading. It was agreed that confidentiality and anonymity remained the most important and nuanced sub-theme and would have the most space in their web production and the final report. The complexities of it remained a struggle and young people decided they would set out 'guidance' (Chloe, S5) 'helpful pointers and warnings'

(Karen, S5) on the issue, rather than coming to any conclusions such as advising not to appear on television. They also agreed, cheerfully, that 'we've had enough heated debates on this one, we've all changed our minds' (Declan, S5) 'and back!'[group laughter] (Chloe, S5). They felt their new summaries were adequate to explain the issues rather than individual illustrative quotes in the main (see Appendix 7 for the full document). The young participants agreed at the workshop that they had reached their saturation point and wanted no further involvement. They were happy with their findings and their chosen method of communication. They agreed that the researcher should do a fuller interpretation of all the data and develop an explanatory account, which detailed the complexities of such an approach 'our struggles and er heated debates.' (Karen, S5). There was further agreement that all their voices should be used.

As researcher, I re-read all the data for the final explanatory account, including the transcriptions of the final review with the young people. I then revisited and refined the themes and subthemes, revisiting the literature, such as discussions on the balance of rights and welfare (see, for example, Woodhead, 2010:xxi). I considered my earlier addition of the 3 E's of Empowerment, Enjoyment and Emancipation to Mullender et al's mnemonic of three C's and D's of Confidentiality, Consent, Child Protection (Danger, Distress, Disclosure). I remained rooted in young people's perspectives on these and adapted earlier principles or key sub-themes somewhat, to address the complexity not only of their lives but of being involved in sustained national participation. I had discussed with young people a particular concern that emancipation was not a young people's word, not 'data-driven' (Braun and Clarke, 2006), whereas empowerment and enjoyment (they preferred fun) emerged from the young people's language and subthemes of importance. However, when discussing it the young people felt it was 'really important to have the positive stuff in or you wouldn't get us here or keep us motivated' (Marc, S5) and emancipation was OK 'it's

like getting political yeah? (Raya, S5), 'going right to the top, no less' (Karen and Chloe, S5), 'young people doing policy' (Marc, S5), 'revolutionising participation' (John, S5), so I retained it. Part of this was the idea that it did cover the participation principles young people felt were most important, and was easily transferable to other contexts, as other researchers were using the C, D mnemonic already (see, for example, Sharp et al.'s (2011) use of 3 C's, D's and E's). The diversity of this group's experience of abuse, their journeys, and also gender, age and sexuality, were felt to be important by the young people and researcher, in order to gain as much of a breadth of knowledge as possible in such a small group, but not as a classification to interrogate the data. The young people were happy not to be involved in the final report, although most wanted a copy and all wanted to see the research briefing for the Government pertaining to standards.

To conclude, the reporting/political campaigning stages (Davis 2009:157) are vital to each part of this study in relation to retaining a child's voice. CYPEDA chose the key messages and proposed changes to funders and politicians throughout the study. They chose the form of reporting to key audiences in Parts 2 (film, presentation to Government, web document of snakes and ladders of participation) and 3 (web document of standards). They also agreed that the full report (the PhD) and government briefings (Houghton, forthcoming) would have the researcher as sole author, as long as the products named above were by Voice Against Violence. The young people wanted an option to check the author's main findings briefings for the Government for Parts 2 and 3. Active dissemination (see Tisdall, 2009) took place throughout, mainly by the young participants. Young people spoke to the media in Parts 2 and 3, the researcher in Part 1 (with the press release including CYPEDA's spokespeople). Young people 'spoke' to other CYPEDA through the advert, film, booklet and their distribution to all schools in Scotland and through mentoring other CYPEDA to speak to politicians using their own 'lessons learned'. Young people-only revealed findings to the Scottish Government through

presentations and young people delivered their messages directly to politicians. Young people in VAV want to disseminate the findings for Parts 2 and 3, alongside the researcher, across Scotland as 'VAV Ambassadors'. They have given written consent to the researcher writing peer reviewed journal articles, 'the boring academic stuff' (Group agreement, Final Review).

To conclude this section outlining the data analysis process for Parts 1, 2 and 3, I will argue that the study was original and innovative in involving children and young people in the data analysis. It remained rooted in the data, and through the continuous PAR process of analysing and reflecting with the young participants, maintained children's own voices in the process as well as the outcome. The findings will be considered in the next three chapters, organised around the themes of CYPEDA's solutions on what helps (Chapter 5); young people's involvement in policy-making (Chapter 6) and young people's ethical and participation standards (Chapter 7).

Chapter 5
Children and Young People's Solutions

Introduction

A small body of domestic abuse literature has evolved where children are viewed as 'active participants' in the research respected as 'social actors' (James 1998) with valid views as experts in their own lives. Children and young people with experience of domestic abuse (CYPEDA) have eloquently articulated the horror of being an active participant in the domestic abuse situation (see Chapter 2) and asserted their role as active participants who should be listened to and taken seriously, be part of decision-making and action in their own lives (see Mullender et al., 2002:121). Their perspectives on help and services (see Chapter 3), although limited to date, show the crucial, though complex need for help from family and friends, and that commonly agencies are not responding appropriately, or even noticing their suffering, with notable exceptions. CYPEDA's main motivation to take part in the studies was to help others (see, for example, Fitzpatrick et al., 2003), to inform the development of services, as expert service users, co-producers of their own welfare (see, for example, Prout and Hallett, 2003:5). This study focuses and provides further depth to CYPEDA's perspectives on help-seeking solutions for CYPEDA, exploring new services in Scotland as well as differences in relation to age, gender, siblings, being black and minority ethnic children and young people. It attempts to draw out in more details the key finding across the literature: that children want to be safe and talk to someone (see, for example, Mullender et al., 2002).

This chapter examines findings relating to the first research question: what can children and young people can tell us to help plan domestic abuse policy and practice? In this first part of the study, 48 children and young people with experience of domestic abuse, aged 4 to 19, took part in a qualitative research study to explore their solutions in helping

CYPEDA. 46 of these children had accessed Women's Aid services, but, unusually, the researcher involved CYPEDA accessing pilot services: the new follow-on (aftercare) service where a key worker supports a child through refuge to their new home, and a new outreach service to CYPEDA in the community (and who had not been to refuge). Age groups proved most useful in examining difference: for ease of reference there were only four 'young children' aged 4-7; the mid-age range is 8-12 of whom there were 20; there were 24 teenagers aged13-19. Two thirds of participants were girls, 9 of the 16 boys were teenagers: three quarters of participants were white Scottish, 11 Scottish or British/ South Asian and two were Middle Eastern.

The main challenge noted in research with children, is 'to do something meaningful with what we find' (Roberts, 2003:32). In this study, CYPEDA themselves were given the opportunity to do something meaningful with what they found as the final stage of the research was an opportunity to speak directly to Ministers of the Scottish Government about their issues, at key times of influence, as young political activists.

The Chapter has five sections:

- CYPEDA's perspectives on talking to someone;
- CYPEDA's perspectives on who they can talk to
- CYPEDA perspectives on specialist support services
- CYPEDA perspectives on agency responses;
- Children and young people's priorities for people in power.

Children and young people's perspectives on talking to someone

Like the groundbreaking research before it (Mullender et al., 2002) the most consistent and overwhelming message from all children and young people who took part in the present study, all ages, genders, ethnicities, experiences, was that children need to talk to someone: 'Don't keep your problems and experiences to yourself, speak to someone' (C, girl, 17). They knew of the fear, shame and stigma attached to domestic abuse but encouraged children to 'break the silence' (B, boy, 13). Trust was a prerequisite of speaking out; a couple of children encouraged others to 'test' adults with bits of information to check they could be trusted. All children said things like 'talking helps. Find someone you trust' (N, girl, 19). Before exploring in some detail who and what that 'someone' could be, I felt it was important to add some depth in terms of children's perspectives on: why it was important to talk; how it felt to talk; the barriers to actually talking .

Why it was important to talk to someone

Almost all the children and young people thought that they were alone, that no one else was suffering domestic abuse and that they would not be believed. The extremely common feeling and metaphor was of children/young people's bodies and minds being full of the most awful feelings and pressures: bottling up, full of hurt, anger, misery, too much inside of them, experiencing disturbing amount of worry, fear and pressure, of things piling up. The youngest focus group elicited clear descriptions of feelings shared by all ages of children about talking about the 'bad and sad...and lonely' (WS, boy, 6) experience of living with domestic abuse: the huge amount of bravery it takes to open up; the fear of others reactions, often reinforced by adults responses; the consequences and physical and emotional distress of not letting it out; the relief of telling: '[It felt like] I'm only one; just me, naebody, there's a key in chest but don't have the guts to open and let other people see and let other people know what's inside.' [Draws chest with secret inside and key.]. (E, girl,

9). Her friend appeals to all children: 'Sometimes it's OK for people to know. Sometimes it's in your mind and builds up and builds up and hurts your arms and head. Get it out and get better' (CS, boy, 9). The only way he could empty his body of worry, pain and secrets was to eventually talk to his mum and teacher.

Disturbingly, his friend of 9, like some of the teenagers in the study, talked about how she had contemplated suicide to escape from the abuse: 'Dad didn't like me, hated my guts…Thought he would murder me, thought had to commit suicide, dad would kill me, others thought joking.' (E, girl aged 9). Like many in the study, she had tried to talk but felt stuck in the middle, yet proud when her mum listened, cuddled her and left. She described how her mother stood up to the perpetrator now, even when he stalked them, (texting E: 'I know where you live'), so 'E' now felt free. M (boy, aged 17) warned Ministers of dire consequences if CYPEDA did not get support, although M was amazed at some children's resilience: 'some people get through it', he warned of young people self-harming, taking the effects through to adulthood and that 'some people don't get through it and don't get a chance to, because they take their life' (ibid.). M warns against saying that children 'get over it'. However, the majority of children and young people, especially the younger children, expressed the view that you could 'get over it and have a normal life' (CS, boy, 9) once they were safe and with support, or at least that it was possible to make a good start quickly considering the extent of domestic abuse and the length of time they had suffered it.

Boys and girls spoke a lot about their feelings coming out in anger or bursting out of them: 'Don't keep it bottled up inside. It's always best to let somebody know cause if no-one knows then nobody can help you and you just end up exploding' (L, girl, 13). From younger children waking up angry to young people talking explicitly about anger management problems, anger was a major theme. A few of the young people, mainly children 9-11 years old, did not express anger but seemed to feel 'scared' a lot of the time:

the fear did not seem to relate proportionally to any threats, but more to their almost constant feelings inside of trauma that dominated their lives and experiences.

How it feels to talk to someone

The resounding message to other children and young people was that they will feel better after talking: 'If you tell it lifts the weight of the world off your shoulders' (E, girl, 9, exact words of J, boy, 16 also) and that relief begins the moment you 'blurt it out' (E, girl, aged 9) to someone sympathetic. A few teenagers, in particular, indicated their lives would have been at risk if they had not received support: 'I would not be around now' (L, girl, 16). Many had crossed the line into self-harm and depression, some had turned to alcohol, drugs, the wrong crowd or crime. For many children and young people, support had turned their lives around; they had recognised the 'need to leap over the brick wall from bad to good' (E, girl, age 9). Often, but not always, talking to someone seemed to make a huge difference within a short time, however long they had experienced domestic abuse.

The young people with anger problems talked first of all how it was normal to be angry after experiencing abuse but secondly the calming effect of talking to someone. Through support they described finding different methods of handling their anger, for example 'counting to ten maybe fifteen' (K, girl, 12). Often they said they needed someone other than their mother to help them sort that out. Almost all children advised talking to someone to get those feelings out, even those who had received a poor response the first time they spoke out, reassuring others that it is possible to be happier once safe and with support.

Barriers to talking to someone

One emerging theme was that children did not know how to talk about domestic abuse and especially what to call it: 'children don't say "domestic abuse"'(M, girl, 17). Domestic abuse services and advertising campaigns were 'geared towards adults' (ibid.): they did not

tell children what domestic abuse was, what Women's Aid was, that there were services for them. A few children said ChildLine was not for them and all gave the same reason in that ChildLine was about child abuse, some also expressed a wish for face-to-face contact. Others thought helplines weren't right for them anyway.

Children and young people considered that many people felt domestic abuse was a problem between adults, and that, therefore, services should be directed at the 'real' victim:

> I always noticed that my mum had somebody to speak to, there was plenty of help for adults but I was quite jealous of it…I always felt that I wanted somebody to speak to, to help me unload some of the things off myself. I couldn't really talk to my mum about things, no matter how close we were, because it was her that I was trying to protect. (L, girl, 16)

A quarter of children had been with their mothers when the latter were accessing services such as drop-in offices or lunch clubs and it is of concern that these children raised common negative feelings of being unwelcome, in the way and felt ignored and irrelevant.

Children and young people expressed an acute sense of the stigma attached to domestic abuse, this was mentioned more than fear itself as the reason for not speaking out: 'There's a great stigma attached to people experiencing domestic abuse, or who have lost their home or who are in a refuge' (SC, boy, 17). One young person found that it was acceptable to say that her parents had split up but not the reason: 'not 'your dad does this' in case got bullied… make a fool of you…pass it on' (J, girl, 11). The commonly expressed position was that CYPEDA did not want to identify themselves to others as experiencing domestic abuse: 'You DON'T want to let your pals ken' (L, girl, 16). Some young people suggested sensitive advertising of services and private locations for support.

The type of support on offer was also important to young people, with a major fear of being 'branded' or labelled being described and a distinct sense expressed that people

would judge them. Despite the huge effect on mental well-being and health outlined, many CYPEDA felt they did not want to be judged, blamed, branded as 'mental' or doomed because of domestic abuse; that there was something wrong with them when 'it's everything else that's wrong, but you' (SC, boy, 17). A young child spoke with shame about the whole 'family being bad' (C, boy, 6). Young people felt that professionals did need to know 'how it affects you psychologically' (J, girl, 17). Different types of support were compared in the teenage groups, for example 'formal' mental health support, social work and Women's Aid support, young people expressing a preference for 'support' rather than 'counselling': 'Counselling is kinda branding that there's something wrong with you, but there's no nothing wrong with you, you're just been through an ordeal' (MG, girl, 16). Breaking down these barriers is really important in order for CYPEDA to speak to anyone, for adults to have the knowledge to respond well and for services to be available and appropriate for children and young people.

Children and young people's perspectives on who they can talk to

Talking to Mothers

The very young children all talked of or drew 'me and my mum' being safe, happy (now), having fun and those that gave tours of their refuge talked of cuddling up, watching nice TV in their nice flats; their mum was the most important person to them. The 8-10 year olds described talking to their mothers eventually, though some were frightened to at first. They spoke affectionately about loving their mum. From 11, there were very different stories. The majority of girls were not able to talk with their mother about domestic abuse and only a few could talk to mothers about everything. Most of the teenage boys did talk to their mother, most often only their mother, about what was happening, if not necessarily about all that they were feeling: 'It's just me and mum, so I talk to mum a lot' (SC, boy, 17). Group discussions elicited some of the reasons that this may be the case and a number of

factors emerged. These included protecting mothers from further hurt and worry, believing that mothers had their own issues and problems and you shouldn't add yours, or not getting on with mothers:' 'cause you're a teenager, like all the other teenagers, rather than the shit that's happened in your life' (KM, girl, 17).

Asian teenage boys in the specialist refuge immediately said they would talk to their mothers, no one else. The notion of support for themselves seemed alien and had not been offered. They said that the workers could be helpful for practical things like help with transport, activities, getting work sorted, but it felt like there was not a worker 'for them'. There was in fact a children's worker in this refuge but the support seemed to focus on play and the younger children. These boys did not seem unhappy. In fact, a mixture of factors shared with two other (white) teenage boys seemed to help some of them to be resilient and content: they could talk to their mother who was getting good support for herself; they had their own private family flat in a refuge in a nice area and they had many school-friends nearby. Four individual interviews did start to explore some issues that they could not speak with mothers about, such as: frustration that mum's did not leave earlier, 'It's never the right time you've just got to do it' (J, boy, 16); shame at the secrecy and the lies they had to tell about where they were, and a desire for a support worker for teenagers. It would be interesting to explore in more depth what support these teenage boys would have been comfortable accessing, for example, who that would be, whether the model of support other teenagers receiving outreach services would work, where support would take place.

Talking to Siblings

Mullender et al. (2002) found that half the siblings did not speak to one another about domestic abuse whilst it was going on. In this study that this was confirmed and some siblings continued not to speak with each other once they had left, or at least until they had

had individual support. Strained relationships were accentuated by shared living arrangements and if any sibling had anger management problems, their sibling could often feel the brunt of that anger or be annoyed their sister or brother was upsetting their mother. The younger siblings seemed to stick together the most and some very young children immediately said they would speak to their big brother or sister, whilst some siblings slept together: 'all cuddled up to feel safe and nice' (RX, girl, 8). Older siblings, on the other hand, did not seem to see each other as a main source of support until sometime after they had left the abuse, and the eldest sibling would most often not speak to what were considered 'immature' siblings. For some siblings, the shared experience of getting through domestic abuse could result in a great sibling friendship, but only after a good deal of individual support: 'we never used to get on but we seem to get on a lot better now, since we've been through hell and back…fought all of it…we've actually come out together fine' (KZ, girl, 17).

Talking to friends

The majority of the children and young people in this study said that they would not talk to their friends about what was happening, with very few exceptions. These tended to be best friends or friends who had been through domestic abuse. A few children had tried to talk to friends and not been believed or even ridiculed. Some spoke of 'fair weather friends' who didn't want to know once trouble started and others were scared their lives would be ruined if their location was found out. Mainly, the children and young people did not talk to friends about domestic abuse: 'tell everything else to them [friends] but not abuse' (B, boy, 13). Nevertheless, having and seeing friends and just being with people of the same age, was incredibly important to the happiness of all ages, common reasons being having fun and feeling normal. If they had not lost friends through moving schools or home children and young people described feeling a lot happier. For many, losing friends was awful 'miss my best friend X and cousin, no got their phone numbers when we left' (B,

boy, 13). Secondary school aged young people were much happier generally if they were 'allowed' out and could hang around with friends, including new friends from the area.

Making friends with other children and young people with experience of domestic abuse was also important and described as transforming for many. For some it was an alleviating factor if the adult support was found wanting, especially if there was space and free time for mingling in the refuge so they could talk privately: 'Loved playroom, don't worry about anything, adults don't wander in, own private place to talk to friends. Have kept in touch' (E, girl, 9). For teenagers, especially, there was no private space for this unless they were part of a regular group. Being around others who had been through domestic abuse and were doing OK 'makes you strong' (ibid.), helps you feel you are not alone and that you can get through it. Talking with others who had been through domestic abuse was viewed as really important to the majority of young people from 9 upwards in the study, further discussed under groupwork below, and more important and possible than speaking to friends.

Talking to a support worker

Most children and young people spoke about needing a support worker just for them, someone who wasn't family or friend, a stranger who knew about domestic abuse and whom they could trust: 'I could speak to her about anything 'cause she was somebody I could trust and someone I could rely on and plus keeping my confidence to herself and not ever repeat it' (KZ, girl, 15). CYPEDA spoke of wanting their own trusted worker, to be 'seen as an individual and taken seriously' (N, girl, 19), for as long as they needed support.

Those who had regular support from a named worker spoke very highly of them and the positive effect the worker had on their lives. This positive effect could be felt immediately, relief at being believed, supported, that there was an end to suffering, getting answers to questions: 'Was I to blame? Is this a normal part of life?...questions I would never have got

the answer to if it had not been for …my support worker' (J, boy, 16). Also, it was clear from children and young people accounts that workers could help them see a brighter future ahead: 'helping me make sense of my life and teaching me that not everything has to be tough.'(ibid.)

For children and young people of all ages, they said it was essential for the support worker to have the credentials of knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse: 'Talk to someone who knows your problem, your situation with parents rather than someone who doesn't know' (D, boy, 12). Children and young people felt emphatically that most adults and peers did not know or understand about domestic abuse. For a large minority this meant knowing what it is like to experience domestic abuse: 'they don't appreciate it 'cause they've not been through it' (KZ, girl, 15).

Common themes arose through exploring participants' perspectives on what makes a good support worker. These included the warm approach of being friendly, generous, kind, understanding. The phrase 'like part of the family' was expressed by most of the younger children. In relation to groupwork the workers needed to take good care of them and teach them to look after themselves and each other. It was important to children that they felt respected –like adults and also that they each were liked equally within a group, and that the worker could understand what they were saying about domestic abuse. Within a group they did not want any secrets; they wanted opportunities to speak privately about problems and reassurance that the worker did not want any harm to come to any of them.

Younger children talked of a good worker being like family, even a second mum, who gave cuddles and trips and were fun. Children of the 9 to 12 age range wanted to be taken care of and feel safe. They also wanted respect for them growing up and learning about right and wrong, while at the same time doing fun things, 'to take their mind off whatever is bothering them' (J, girl, 11). Furthermore, they spoke eloquently of the pride and

confidence gained from outdoor and group activities especially. Teenagers were clearer that the worker was separate from family and comfort, though an equal, informal relationship was important- more 'like a friend' (M, boy, 17), especially in terms of being able to trust them. Building trust while not having to speak straight away about the abuse was really important: 'you didn't have to talk about anything, any of your difficulties… as it went on you'd trust the person more and more' (SC, boy, 17).

Once trust had built up the worker actually helping, not just listening, was vital. Help about knowing what to do and how to deal with things, including giving tasks and goals to move on and deal with things such as anger: 'not just talking, how to cope with things, what to do when I am angry like counting and going upstairs' (CZ, girl, 16). Evidence of 'in depth' individual work was much more common from the participants receiving the outreach and follow-on support than those in refuge.

Children and young people identified that support needed to be separate from that received by their mother, although some stressed that it should be linked ''cause it's not *just* you; it's, like, your family that's gone through this' (M, girl, 19). Although the new outreach service in some areas could be accessed independently, women's help-seeking was more usually the route through which CYPEDA accessed support, though not necessarily immediately. This link had its downside, with one young person stressing that the worker had to be someone 'who listens to you as an individual not as someone's daughter' (N, girl, 19). Yet, mainly, it was positive, both to have support and see each other feeling better, so long as there were separate workers. SC talked about times when his and his mother's support workers took them both out: 'to work through stuff …we would discuss problems from both ends – my mother's point of view and mine as well' (SC, boy, 17). Young people in his group thought this was a good approach, although it was seen as needing separate support because: 'you'll be scared in case they tell mum' (KZ, girl, 15) and 'you can talk to workers about stuff you can't talk to your mum about…stuff you don't want to talk to

them about' (SC, boy, 17). Interestingly, two of the sibling groups interviewed, one involving young children and one teenage, spoke of separate workers for the siblings too, so workers would not 'doublecross' (CS, boy, 9), although most simply appreciated getting individual support. It all came back to children's need for the strictest level of confidentiality and trust: 'you can speak to them [the workers] and know it won't get out' (CZ, girl, 15) and this strongly included keeping confidences from mums and siblings.

Different 'innovative means of communicating support' (SC, boy, 17), used by many support workers, especially impressed all the young people and helped them speak out, such as: using computers; artwork and worksheets; talking about anything and everything as well as difficult stuff; going out to eat; trips and being informal. These were appreciated as 'you're not sitting there talking to someone about what's going on at home, you're relaxed, in a relaxed atmosphere' (L, girl, 16).

Older teenagers were even more emphatic that every child needs a support worker and as soon as possible, some reflecting that many years were wasted or suffering was prolonged because they had not spoken out. Young people considered that this meant that intense support was needed now because they did not get support as soon as they had spoken out or their mum had accessed help. Of particular concern was that there were some teenagers living in refuge who did not know what a support worker was. Some felt that workers were there to have fun and take younger children on trips, confirming Fitzpatrick et al.'s (2003) concern about the lack of 'in-depth' work in some refuges. Some of the children and young people felt clear they wanted a support worker, but they either did not get one at all, or they waited weeks or months, or the support was intermittent. Although this was sometimes due to resource restrictions, there were also serious problems with the welcome and information children and young people were getting when they arrived at services.

Furthermore, for young people to access a service their transport would need to be paid for. Some young people, especially those living in rural areas, could not reach the follow-

on or outreach services as they could not afford fares. Also, they said they would have appreciated more support in their home or home area. Location of services was also found to be important, children wanted to feel comfortable, welcome and that it was a young people's place.

Children and young people's perspectives on specialist support services

Refuge Services

For many CYPEDA, moving into a refuge was the way that they became safe: 'If there was not a refuge, adults and children would have no place to go to get away from men!!!' (TA, girl, 14). The common message to their mums and other children was to get out and move away: 'Don't suffer in silence. Lots of wee flats so no one can get abused… while waiting for [own] flat' (B, boy,13) and that children and mothers could make new friends.

Children and young people's satisfaction and happiness with living in the refuge directly related to whether the refuge was shared (sharing flats, kitchens, bathrooms) or whether the family had their own flat with communal areas. Shared refuge brought out the most unhappiness, especially but not only for teenagers. Teenagers with their own family flat, but limited support, appeared to fare well if they had a good relationship with their mum and friends around: 'it's just normal, innit' (J, boy, 16). Phrases like 'treating it as your own home', 'feeling normal', were not used by children in shared refuge: 'It's not homely, it doesn't make you feel better. It just makes you feel worse really. Sharing things…' (AH, girl, 13).

The welcome was extremely important from the descriptions of many children and young people, and the improved welcome recommended in Fitzpatrick et al., (2003) had still not materialised in some places. All ages of children and young people reported nervousness, worry, cautiousness, being scared and embarrassed when they arrived. Those not sharing seemed to settle in a lot more quickly and most shared this boy's view that 'It looked like a

bit scary but soon I got used to it' (Av, M, 13). Not all children and young people in shared refuge were desperately unhappy, but all said that they hated sharing with a number of common complaints arising. These included: disgusting hygiene, having to clean toilets before you used them, being *scared* of shared things like going into the kitchen, putting what you want on the TV, even going to and flushing the loo at night so holding it in; noise, lack of privacy and loss of sleep. Only two young sisters preferred a shared refuge, but that related to the lack of support in the new-build they had moved to, compared to excellent support in an old shared refuge with a worker they described as wonderful and a park nearby. They still did not want to give up their own family flat.

A number of factors were indicated that could alleviate or accentuate initial feelings, which related to the support offered: 'any time if you felt down about something, they [support workers and others based on site] were always here to talk' (L ,girl, 13), as compared to mainly absent workers '…never asked our story…mind… think it's bad' (AH, girl, 13). Other things that helped were regular trips and activities; designated spaces for children and young people that remained open when workers left; workers based on-site or around a lot especially at weekends; and well-used pleasant communal areas that were 'good for meeting other families that were there so you could get pals' (J, girl, 11). Children who had sessions with workers enjoyed and looked forward to them, all liked summer play-schemes and trips. Children liked the children's room but teenagers 'didn't think it was for my age' (L, girl, 13); dedicated space recommended in Fitzpatrick et al. (2003) had not materialised. Open access and borrowing books and equipment helped: having something to do or play with out of hours was important. All young people wanted access to computers, for homework and something to do, despite some funding for laptops from the government, most did not have access to them.

Some CYPEDA reported feeling alone the majority of the time; the words being 'stuck in' the refuge or flat, were used a great deal. Activities outside of the refuge, in the evenings

and weekends, are vital, therapeutic and enjoyable to CYPEDA, they wanted to escape, have fun, have things to look forward to, not to sit and dwell and get down:

> If there was nothing to do you would be, like, why are we here? This isn't our fault … 'cause there were trips, it took your mind off things and it made you realise… why just sit and get depressed or get yourself dead upset when you can just go out there and enjoy yourself and get on with your life?(L, girl, 13)

Those that left refuges spoke of good memories replacing the bad, highlighting that activities, especially those they had never done before, made them feel glad to have moved.

The difficulty children and young people have with 'refuge rules' have been well covered elsewhere (see, for example, Fitzpatrick et al., 2003) and this study demonstrated again that they were important to children and young people for both good and bad reasons. 'No visitors' was really difficult for those with friends to cope with. Rules restricting access to children's rooms and communal areas were frustrating. However, the rule which caused more anger and resentment than others related to restrictions on boys over 16: 'my brother's older than 16, [so we] can't bring him in. Don't get it, not fair.' (Ta, girl,14). This girl's friends agreed he 'should be allowed in', as did other participants in the study.

A few CYPEDA participated in planning the programme of activities and really appreciated this. Children wanted at the least to know what group activities would be happening each week. Most refuges, one follow-on and one outreach service did not seem to provide the one-to-one support that the majority of children and young people felt was important to help deal with feelings and transitions.

Moving multiple times was really difficult for participants. Children of all ages knew the intricacies of the housing priority system and many were sick of waiting, although a few, especially those with their own flats did not want to leave. Many children talked of the losses they had had to endure, contact with grandparents, best friends, cousins and

brothers was most dear; possessions including things that would help them feel better now, whether teddies or computers were missed acutely. Some children attributed these losses angrily to their father or father figure. A minority talked of the loss of their father and of being part of his wider family. This was accentuated if he lived in their home, a nice area, near their friends, with all their things. Participants referred to individual support as a key route to talk about feelings of sadness and loss, including feelings about their fathers and whether and how to have contact. Not tackling children's feelings about fathers could be dangerous as when a couple of young people ran off to see their father because they missed him, the area and family/friends. Gentle exploration revealed that he did get angry sometimes, but that they did not dare mention him to workers. For some young people, workers had encourgaed far more open discussion about feelings about fathers and loss which was appreciated, this even led to renewed contact for one young person, on his own terms.

The one distinctive concern mentioned by three Scottish Asian young people was the additional fear of getting racist attacks if the refuge or new flat was in a rough area: 'I may get jumped and get called racist remarks and that' (J, boy, 16).

Follow-on support

Previous research has demonstrated that the majority of CYPEDA did not get any support once they have left refuge (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003). In Scotland, the follow-on pilots discussed in this study and children's action as part of the study, see below, were instrumental in extending the service. This young person spoke of the devastation she and many felt when they moved on from a refuge:

> Women's Aid rejected us now we're not in refuge, we don't matter anymore, not ever going to see them again…maybe trips but when was last one? Feels you're rejected: You've got your house so doesn't matter; still need help. There should be

> aftercare workers to check if we're getting on alright…Can't just drop them, it hits you in yer face… It's hard, I tried to tell a friend, friend said "it's rubbish"... (E, girl, 9)

Many children recommended that support continued with the worker you know: 'so that I don't feel stuck or lonely' (C, girl, 17). Children and young people who had moved on talked of feeling lost and isolated, scared of the new area, being poverty stricken so unable to go out and meet new people, having issues with new schools, yet their support had stopped. Those in receipt of support said it helped, having your own worker and still seeing them regularly, it was often the only way of keeping in touch with new friends which was really important. As indicated earlier, being with others that had been through the same thing had helped a lot. Again, the only criticism was if the service was restricted in its length or because of a cut off age for boys.

Outreach Support

Outreach support is a relatively new support service in Scotland, the definition of outreach in this context meaning to support CYPEDA who have never lived in refuge, not prevention work in schools or aftercare. For the first time, in this study, children involved in the pilots were asked about the service. The reports were mainly extremely positive, with most children's support workers being described by the young people as examples of best practice, as illustrated by young people in the support worker section above: 'it's whatever's good for you…they can go out to see the people but you can also go see them at their office or whatever so that's great' (SC, boy, 17)). The flexibility about where support could take place was important, with different young people enjoying workers coming to their houses, their schools or going to a young person's room in an office that was, usually, quiet and private. The opportunities and benefits for schools were obvious to the young people: 'schools was dead supportive because [the support worker] must have been in before to see other children in my school and the teachers got on really nice with

her 'cause the school understands what she's trying to do to help us get on and settle in' (KZ, girl, 15).

Locations, especially for groupwork, were a problem with young people preferring a young people's place rather than a boring adults' room one night a week, with the decoration and feel of the place important, so it felt like 'theirs'. In children and young people's accounts there were new signs of cross-agency working, examples include: social work offices sharing their young person's place and being friendly and confidential; taxi companies sending the same person to pick children up every week; teachers and Women's Aid workers getting on well and protecting the anonymity of the young person receiving support. Children spoke highly of trips, except that some invited wee siblings and mums that they did not want, and friendship clubs, in particular making new friends who had been through domestic abuse.

Most of all, young people said that they appreciated one-to-one support, with one group speaking about how it was important to receive that individual support before they moved on to enjoying an outreach 'club'. When comparing Women's Aid one-to-one support with that provided through mental health services, social work or befrienders, all other services were found distinctly lacking and inappropriate, or, at worse, damaging. Women's Aid support was viewed as informal, creative, and went at their pace for as long as they wanted it: 'It's like you're talking to someone you know, you have the same support worker for a long time, you get to know them and they understand what you're talking about and stuff' (SC, boy, 17). The support workers attained a fine balance between not making young people talk about domestic abuse 'asking questions, too direct like' (KZ, girl, 17), which they found pressured and stressful, whilst naming domestic abuse as the problem 'noone else, all those people, social work and that, had mentioned domestic abuse' (CZ, girl, 16) and reassuring young people that the worker understood all about it. This understanding was not shared by other agencies, in children's view, and they focused

instead on the child's anger, behaviour or problems. It was a huge deal to confide in someone about what had happened as highlighted by this young person who had received multiple interventions from several agencies over years

> What I could not do was confide in anybody, I always kept it in but I could not talk to anyone else and without any pressure [the support worker] sat down and listened and understood what I was talking about and she did actually help us (KZ, girl, 15).

Being asked lots of questions in formal surroundings, 'like some sort of strange person talking to you…questions, yes, lots of questions' (SC, boy, 17) was not the way to go about helping these teenagers talk about domestic abuse: 'You feel more relaxed when you're doing something and you're talking to someone' (CZ, girl,16). Having choices and options was vital, whether of methods of communication, whether you wanted to talk at all, what about, and whether and when you wanted to come back. The other thing was not seen to work was adults 'who talk at you not to you…they're telling you what to and how to do it' (ibid.). This young person had had five social workers and befrienders, she said the 'support' felt more like threats and orders for her to obey, if not she would be excluded from school or back at the Children's Panel. Children and young people felt that many responses from agencies, teachers especially but also social work, treated the young person as the problem and did not acknowledge the reasons behind their difficulties

Choosing and controlling how long you needed to access support was vital, and the young people talked of gradually becoming stronger and calmer and not needing the worker any more. For some, casual friendship groups, where they did not need to talk about things any more, unless something arose, were important transitions: from the more intense individual support to just having supportive, fun friends.

Outreach services seemed to be developing more structured as well as informal groupwork, the shared experience of domestic abuse helped all the groups gel: 'these are people who've

understood your darkest moments' (SC, boy, 17). This was the first opportunity for some to make friends with others who had been through domestic abuse, to be able to speak about it openly and to relax, so very important. Groups that worked best seemed to have a narrow age range and be smaller, with mixed genders: 'don't want it branded [as a girls problem]' (M, girl, 17). Two young people, without experience of Women's Aid, went through the twelve week CEDAR (Children experiencing domestic abuse recovery) concurrent groupwork programme for them and their mothers and this stood out as transformational in the way one-to-one had been in the outreach services: 'we learned that we are not alone in a world out to get us, but together a family fighting back against the pain of abuse' (S, boy, 16). There were several crucial elements of intensive support identified by the young participants and this related to either individual or structured groupwork support. The young people all needed help to name the abuse, explore how to deal with it and how to be safe. They needed help to talk about domestic abuse and then to talk about dad, talk to mum. All young people needed to feel more confident and better able to cope with stress and anger, and find ways to support each other. For all these young people it seemed that a mixture of approaches could work well and the intensive support work (group or individual) needed to happen before more informal groups, perhaps less focused on domestic abuse and more on fun.

Groupwork was not seen as a positive for everyone though. Two passionate advocates for one-to-one,'in depth', support were adamant that groups were not for them: 'I wouldn't have liked it at the time, a group, I need light-hearted not deep and meaningful, I don't do deep and meaningful' (N, girl, 19) and for another 'Depends on the person, I think, 'cos, obviously, not everybody, no many people want to go to a group and make it be identified' (M, girl, 19). It seems there is potential to mix follow-on and outreach CYPEDA of the same age, but one girl would not have attended if it had not exclusively included children

she already knew from living in refuge: 'I would like need to be friends with them first and be able to trust them…know who they are' (L, girl, 13).

Children and young people's perspectives on agencies' responses

Talking to a teacher

When asked if they would talk to a teacher the majority of CYPEDA responded with a resounding 'No'. In a few groups, this led to interesting discussions about how, if it was handled well, it could be helpful for a teacher to know: 'I talk to head-teacher…she talks to me and says what's the best thing to do and that' (CS, boy, 9). All the children and young people mentioned school as an important place to them: 'School's, like, an important part of children's life, so there should be support there' (J, girl, 15). Many were sad that they had had to move school to be safe; those that stayed at their own school with their friends were happier. Most felt their education had been badly affected: 'I went from a straight 'A' student to failing every class because I was concentrating on what was going on at home' (L, girl,16).

For the majority of CYPEDA, they considered that their teachers had made their experiences worse. The main problem described was the attitudes of teachers and being reprimanded for very real issues that CYPEDA had little control over: getting homework done when they lacked space, quiet, computers; poor attendance and lateness because they lived a distance from the school or waiting to use shared facilities, or not been able to leave their mum; decline in standard of work; mental health problems and anxiety, sometimes caused by school. Children and young people spoke of teachers shouting, judging, coming to their own conclusions, blaming the child and punishing them, saying they were lying and making up excuses. Respondents were clear that, even if they tried to explain, teachers did not and would not understand domestic abuse: 'I think them just having knowledge of domestic abuse would probably help' (M, girl, 17). If they told, CYPEDA were clear that

the perception people had of them at school would change in a labelling way: there would be a 'stigma attached to it [domestic abuse] and how teachers and students view you' (SC, boy, 17). Many of the above points were summarised by this girl:

> No, couldn't tell 'em [teachers] at first, mum said tincy wincy bit and got into trouble, they didn't 'get' why we moved house…don't want special treatment or reminded, want OK to talk, don't want whole school to feel sorry for me… Teachers would tell whole school. Don't want to talk all the time constantly, all time is not good (E, girl, age 9).

Children and young people commonly spoke about the dilemma experienced about whether to tell a teacher about domestic abuse, what one group agreed was a 'double-edged sword' - if you told the teacher they might understand more and make allowances, but on the other hand they may feel sorry for you, try and make you talk, tell others and at worse not believe or judge and label you. Young people wanted to be treated the same as others, for children school was their normality and for some an escape, they did not necessarily want to talk at length about what had happened and anyway schools staff 'didn't have the knowledge of domestic abuse so wouldn't know how to sit and talk to someone about it' (M, boy, 17)). They just wanted some understanding and empathy, not sympathy, alongside strict confidentiality and respect for privacy. Some did want teachers to tell relevant colleagues so the young people did not have to repeat their story, whilst others wanted it kept strictly to those who most needed to know.

Individual support coupled with a sympathetic approach from key teachers, could make a huge difference to children's schooling: 'my head teacher listened, then my head stopped hurting and I could concentrate in my lessons again' (CS, boy, 9). The young people that were offered outreach support sessions from Women's Aid workers were appreciative of this and others recommended such an approach: 'make more help available at school as

well as outside school' (M, boy, 17). These young participants felt that workers could educate teachers at the same time, so the young people were less likely to get into trouble and be stigmatised. Where they received individual support and sensitive responses from teachers, young people said that this had raised attendance, educational achievement and pride in achieving through adversity: 'At one point I didn't want to go to school. Now I'm looking forward to going to school through a lot of help and listening and understanding' (KZ, girl, 15).

Many of the children said their lives had been made even more miserable by other pupils. They were called names, teased and ridiculed about what had happened, not being treated kindly at all. This produced different reactions, such as 'being very depressed and not wanting to go to school at all' (SC, boy, 17) or lighting an already short fuse: 'I probably would have been chucked out of school, 'cause they were calling me names and stuff like that and I would have swung for them or something.' (CZ, Girl, 16) It was her outreach support worker meeting her every weekend that 'calms me a hell of a lot down' (ibid.). Young people recommended 'maybe teaching people who are not necessarily in a domestic abuse situation about domestic abuse' (SC, boy, 17) and, basically, raising the awareness of all children and adults, in particular teachers.

Talking to other agencies

Some young people stated that it did not have to be one particular agency who gave the support, they just had to match the credentials in the support worker section (above) and have the time to offer support. Any agency they came across could make a huge difference to how they felt if there was a sympathetic response and respect for the child as an active participant in domestic abuse, as well as sufficient heeding of confidentiality. Respondents just wanted one specialist (domestic abuse-trained) support worker to guide them through the bad times so that they did not have to keep telling their traumatic story to strangers:

'many, many a time I've had to repeat myself to so many different people and I just can't do it anymore. There's no point' (KZ, girl, 15). Only a few children and young people mentioned other agencies as potential sources of help. Police were seen as there to protect them and jail abusers. It was very positive if they treated the incident seriously 'they just treated it as assault' (L, girl,16), spoke to the children, and let others, such as school and housing, know what had happened, Court orders had not worked for a few participants as the perpetrators still came back. Many young participants felt that domestic abuse needed to be treated as a crime and punished more severely. For some, social workers were seen as lacking understanding and as focussing on the prevention of trouble -'barking orders' rather than listening and understanding more. For a few young participants who had received support through the National Health Service, they felt that Health the response received had been too formal, timing too rigid and that NHS staff asked too many questions. Most young people had experience of dealing with housing agencies and reported that this was negative, hard to understand and that they were waiting for a new home for too long. Responses from the above agencies often came years too late, when children had mental health problems and chances for early Women's Aid support had been missed.

Some children had multiple resource-intensive agency interventions before they considered an adult actually helped them to open up about domestic abuse. As already discussed, too many adults focussed on the child as the problem rather than the domestic abuse. Respondents did not see any agencies cooperating or communicating with each other and thought that, if they did so, this might help them get support quicker: like 'if there's been an incident of domestic abuse then they [school, health authorities, housing, Women's Aid] could know about it but it's still private enough that it's confidential' (SC, boy,17). The main concern of other agencies being involved was the threat to their privacy: 'why should

they know your personal life if you don't know theirs? That's the bottom line: only the people thats supposed to know should know.' (KZ, girl, aged 15).

Children and young people's priorities for action for people in power

Children and young people were asked about what they would like to say to people in power in their local authorities and in the Scottish Parliament, then given different opportunities of directly communicating their messages through film-making or/and directly speaking to Ministers. Many were sceptical about politicians listening to them and quite clear what they felt should happen in their view

> What would you want to say to the 'big bosses'? (researcher)
>
> It's a waste of time if you don't read it [the research] and if you don't listen. (L, girl, 11)
>
> Bosses please, please give us more money, more things to do more materials, more people. Just to make sure everybody is safe (K, girl, 12):
>
> Just listen to … listen to what people got to say and take it in mind and do something about it. Tell 'em not to be mean and be very, very, very good. (R, girl 12)

These girls were clear that they should be listened to, that their views were written down for politicians to read; these girls thought it was for others, the researcher, to 'tell 'em'; others were clear that it was for children and young people themselves to speak out: 'Don't have adults speaking for you' (Ta, girl, 14). Listening was not enough, they wanted action in relation to support workers, they wanted these adults in power to actually do something. L appealed to Ministers to 'make your plans worthwhile' (L, girl, 13) and Ti explained how this should be done: [We're] telling our ideas… ideas put into plan and help other people who need help.' (Ti, girl, 13). Unhappy children and young people, in particular, appealed to them to 'walk a mile in a kids shoes' (E, girl, 9) and 'if you were in our shoes, how would

you feel? Wouldn't you want the Minister to do something? It's so unfair' (AH, girl, 13). The Listen Louder film they created (Scottish Women's Aid, 2004) powerfully walks the viewer through their journey.

The majority of the children and young people in the research study opted to speak directly to Ministers; others opted to take part in the film or more anonymously send their questions to the researcher. The following table shows the questions they asked and demonstrates capacity for reflexivity in the respondents in the study.

Table 22: Part 1 Children and Young People's Priorities for Action to Ministers

Children and Young People's Priorities for Action to Ministers
Not a lot of children and young people that go through domestic abuse know where the help is and how to access it and you need to let them know. Increase understanding of domestic abuse and STOP the stigma. (M, boy, 17)
Mums have support and so should we. Going on trips or doing fun things in the playroom helps you take your mind off things and helps you get on with your life. Why should we be punished for someone else's mistakes? Why should we live in the past let's look to the future. (L, girl, 13)
Get more children's helpers because there's not enough children's helpers, people to talk to throughout the country because a lot of people are going through bad situations and not getting help. They are actually killing themselves cause they've not got anybody to talk to (CX, girl,16)
I was part of the refuge research and I was pleased to hear [in the research study] that there are plans to build a new refuge where I was, with a flat for each family and a young person's space. Is this going to happen all over Scotland? (S, boy, 13)
I am asking this question for two teenage girls [from the research study] who did not want to come today to protect their confidentiality – 'we are really unhappy in an old style refuge

where we have to share our bedroom with our whole family and there's nothing for teenagers, when are there going to be new refuges in every city?' (KH and AH, girls, 15 and 13) Why isn't there a room for teenagers in every refuge? (AO, girl, 12)
Where I was we got a follow on service but not all people get this. The research showed this was a very important thing to young people. How are you going to make it happen? (J, girl, 11) ; Can we please have aftercare workers to check up on us because when you've got a new house you feel rejected and not important? (E, girl, 9)
Make moving home smoother and provide cash help so we can start again (J,girl,15)
There should be groups for children all over Scotland, groups help you make friends, have fun, take your mind of things, know what's right and wrong, talk to a worker if you have problems. We're in a girls group do you think there are enough groups? (girls 11-13)
Make more help available at school as well as out of it, school is *the* key place for children, ensure there's someone for children to speak to actually in school, teach teachers better and teach students to so they can have a better understanding. (M, boy, 17)
Make agencies cooperate better, communication needs to improve between them but still keep it private enough that its confidential (SC,boy,17) so we don't have to repeat our stories again and again (KZ, girl, 15)
Make sure every child gets an outreach worker. They take you places and talk to you and you can tell them that how you're feeling and I've got help and I feel happy. It changed my mind about how I want to grow up. (D, boy,13)
All there has been is positive feedback from other services and attendees of CEDAR. However we hear that funding is planned to be stopped for this vital service. All we ask is why? We understand money's tight, but the support and prevention this programme brings is phenomenal. (L, girl, 16)
Make sure everyone knows and understands about domestic abuse. Professionals don't know how to help, knowledge of domestic abuse would help. (M,boy,17)

Campaigns directed at children that aren't dark or scary that they can associate it with ending the abuse and getting help. Central support linked to multi-media communication like text, helplines, children-run websites linking to local face to face support. (M,girl,19)
'How can you spend so much on building the Parliament when we haven't got any support?' (J, girl, 11).

Discussion

Children and young people with experience of domestic abuse have proved themselves eminently capable of critical reflection on their lives and services and they contribute clear recommendations to domestic abuse policy and practice.

Children's priorities in this study reflect findings of others in relation to the importance of being able to speak to someone about domestic abuse (see, for example, Mullender et al., 2002, Buckley et al., 2007). This study provides additional depth to the barriers children find in speaking out and their perspectives on the effects speaking out has upon them. The significant barriers children of all ages identified were the stigma attached to domestic abuse, the lack of understanding of domestic abuse and the need for confidentiality. Most children and young people also said that they needed help to name the abuse, and to find a language to talk out about it, echoing earlier literature about women's struggles to name abuse and speak out (see, for example, Kelly, 1998). Interestingly, data showed that CYPEDA were frustrated with professionals who struggled to name or identify the abuse and who did not have an understanding of domestic abuse: this provided the most effective barrier to children speaking out. Young participants stressed the need to be taken seriously as a 'victim' of abuse along with their mother rather than the child being identified as the problem. The effects of speaking out are revealed in more depth in this study: the release and relief, the need to express and deal with anger – for girls as well as boys, the prevention

of further depression and, according to a minority of children and young people, the prevention of suicide. For most it would take time and patience to tell their story

Unlike other studies (for example, McGee, 2000), the majority of CYPEDA in this study could not talk to their friends about domestic abuse which is an important finding in relation to policy direction, and a further indicator of the stigma attached to domestic abuse. However, having friends of your own age was shown to be very important to participants (reflecting Stafford et al., 2007) and a key factor in resilience. Data showed the importance that CYPEDA place on having fun and a sense of normality in their lives. In this study, children's shared inability to speak to friends about domestic abuse meant that their experience of meeting other children who had been through domestic abuse had a significant, positive, transforming effect on their lives. Peer support, through living arrangements and group programmes, was of crucial importance to these children in many ways. Their accounts revealed that being with other CYPEDA helped them to feel less alone, begin to move on, speak about what happened and feel better about themselves.

Mothers were a key support to many children in this study and analysis by age and gender brought an extra dimension to this common finding. It seemed that, although younger children struggled to speak to their mum, they wanted to, and usually found, a way to talk, especially once they felt safer. For younger children in this study it was their mothers love and comfort that they craved and needed, and she was the person they wanted to speak to. Once the children reached 11, however, different perspectives emerged in the data. Older children, girls especially, related that they could not speak to their mum about domestic abuse, for a range of reasons. These included reasons relating to domestic abuse, such as protecting their mothers, but also reasons they related to being a teenager, whom they felt did not speak much to parents anyway. Interestingly, most of the subset of teenage boys, who were mostly South Asian, did speak to their mum and this was a key factor in resilience. For these participants, having someone to speak to (not necessarily a support

worker), their own flat (within a refuge) and a circle of friends (whom they didn't speak to about domestic abuse), all combined to make them feel 'normal' and relatively content.

Sibling sets in this study raised interesting questions in the data. Again, younger children seemed to be a good support and comfort to each other (reflecting Mullender et al., 2002) but, interestingly, older siblings felt in the main that relationships were very difficult, whilst abuse was taking place, and once they'd left. The siblings in the study stressed the need for support about their sibling relationships, not just their relationships with their mothers, even suggesting a possible need for separate workers. This suggests that there should be an additional key tenet in relation to woman and child protection (see, for example, Burke, 1999), that as well as support for the mother-child relationship (see Humphreys et al., 2006, Humphreys and Houghton, 2008b), there needs to be support for siblings to rebuild their relationships.

The study begins to address a gap in research in relation to children's critique of specialist services (see, for example, Fitzpatrick et al., 2003). Individual support from a specialist worker with an understanding of domestic abuse was of vital importance to the vast majority of CYPEDA in this study, reflecting most other studies (see Chapter 2). Young participants indicated this support had to be regular, sustained, at their own pace and address domestic abuse (but not necessarily immediately). Unusually, this study revealed a difference between younger children who wanted someone to listen to them, and older participants, who stipulated that adults had to take action or help them take action and take steps in dealing with things, emotionally and practically. Comparison across children's data on the different services revealed that there was a lack of structured individual support in some refuges, compared to the pilot services focussing on CYPEDA in the community, what mothers in Fitzpatrick et al. (2003) named as a lack of in-depth work. At the same time, most CYPEDA did stress the importance of fun group activities that were more commonly provided. Reasons given included release from loneliness and boredom,

especially within their rooms in refuges, and the distraction needed from the myriad of traumatic and depressive feelings they had inside.

Data reveals that CYPEDA have clear recommendations for the future of services; they want one named, specialist worker who can support them through their journey for as long as they need it. They want group peer support opportunities and for many children in the study this was as important and transformational as other support. Comparing data from CYPEDA in refuges where living accommodation was shared, compared to where families had their own flats with their own front door within a refuge, revealed stark evidence that shared accommodation had a negative effect on children's well-being and ability to begin to deal with the effects of domestic abuse. This provides further evidence for Fitzpatrick et al.'s recommendation for an end to shared refuge (2003).

Evidence and actions from CYPEDA in this study re-asserts their position as active participants in domestic abuse (Mullender et al. 2002). It appears that, in their experience, many adult professionals struggle with that repositioning. They did not feel that their rights to have a voice, get support, be involved in decisions, were respected, or that some adults saw them as a victim of domestic abuse. Many children reported insensitive and at worst punitive responses from education and social services, and expressed fears in relation to breaches of confidentiality. Young people in receipt of pilot outreach services provided more positive evidence in promoting a new approach: education and Women's Aid were working together to support CYPEDA at school, and data showed this was positively affecting the school's response to the child and the child's educational achievement. CYPEDA repeatedly stressed the lack of understanding about domestic abuse in society as a whole, indicating the need for public education and training.

Children and young people with experience of domestic abuse have again provided evidence that they experts in their own lives, and, in this study, they contribute significantly

to solutions. This provides evidence that young people with experience of domestic abuse can participate in policy-making and contribute not only their perspectives but their solutions in relation to what helps CYPEDA in relation to domestic abuse. It seems that this participation can happen for many, though not all, even if the experience of domestic abuse is relatively recent, especially if anonymous contributions such as film are made possible. Participation requires safety, and support from a specialist support worker and their mother. Furthermore, if feminist activists and critical actors in Government open spaces for political engagement (see Chapter 3), CYPEDA reveal themselves as competent and reflexive political activists. They tell us in this study that they do not want to speak through adult intermediaries: 'I want to get up there and tell them what we need' (K, girl, 12). Unlike most participation projects and research, CYPEDA in this study did make an impact (see, for example, Kirby with Bryson, 2002). It could be argued that they are more effective than adult activists: their Listen Louder campaign culminated in £6million funding for a wide range of refuge, follow-on and outreach support services for CYPEDA across Scotland.

Children and young people had no doubt that they had the knowledge and competency to be participants in policy debate (Edwards et al., 2004). Once CYPEDA have engaged with politicians, some children in this study felt they had a responsibility, and right, to come back to Parliament and check that politicians take action to improve children's lives; they wanted to become political actors. Many children and young people experiencing domestic abuse in this study became political activists; what was lacking in this stage of the study was asking children their views on their active participation in politics. Part 2 of the research allowed the researcher to examine, with young people, their views of active participation in Scotland's domestic abuse policy-making process.

Chapter 6
From tokenism to real participation: young people's involvement in the development and implementation of Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan from 2007 to 2012.

Introduction

For children to be involved at all in national policy-making is an achievement and unusual. It is now widely acknowledged that the argument for children's participation has been won, that children are social actors and experts in their own lives as well as able to contribute to collective public decision-making. It is said that the challenge is to make their participation meaningful, effective and sustainable (see, for example, Hill et al., 2004, Tisdall, 2010); there remains deep scepticism that this proliferation of participation activities has had any influence on policy (see, for example, Kirkby with Bryson, 2002, Hill et al., 2004, Smith, 2009). Rarely are children and young people active participants in institutionalised policy-making; they are either consulted along the way, supported by adults to be activists or part of councils that replicate adultist structures. There seems to be a threshold over which one has to leap to become a participant with influence (Tisdall, 2012), recently managed by adult activists within the Scottish Government system. Children and young people are further marginalised, for their participation requires a change in the way children are seen. Should they become active participants, it is largely unknown what ways of participating work for them and whether young people and adults can truly work collaboratively together as change agents.

This chapter discusses the findings of a participatory action research process in Part 2 of the study (see methodology chapter) wherein the researcher undertook a process of review,

reflection and action in relation to participation in policy-making in Scotland with a total of nine young people over five years. The research questions examined with the young people were: Can processes avoid tokenism for both policy-makers and young people? Can children and young people have an impact?

The key findings are split into five sections

- young people's perspectives on: how children are seen
- young people's perspectives on adult/child relationships
- young expert's perspectives on monitoring the plan with adult experts
- young people's perspectives on direct access to people in power
- young people's perspectives on impact.

The chapter critically examines what worked and did not work in a process eventually aimed at integrating children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA) into policy-making. The importance of a shift in how children are seen, their status and their relationships with adults involved is explored. Their differing experiences of adult experts (members of the adult boards) and people in power (politicians - Ministers of the Scottish Government) are then examined in relation to lessons learned as well as real and tokenistic participation. The chapter ends with an exploration of young people's perspectives on impact and the changes made during their time of involvement.

The following table summarises the stages of the young people's involvement in the development of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan and the formation of the group *Voice Against Violence* for the plan implementation. A total of 9 young people devised their own pseudonyms which are used throughout with the referencing here:

Table 23: Part 2 The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan

Part 2 The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan		
Plan stage	**Action and reflection stages, participants**	**Referencing**
Development of the National Domestic abuse Delivery Plan: Adult delivery group Dec 2006-8, young people's consultation project Sept 2007	*Making a Difference* project which was the 'unfiltered' presentation of 6 young people's priority issues for action in relation to domestic abuse are given direct to Ministers (people in power – PP) in September 2007, with immediate feedback	MAD PP Review 2007
Publication of final plan June 2008: young people invited to launch and meet Ministers	Invite to the launch of the plan and to meet Ministers privately about their views on the plan in June 2008, 5 young people accept	MAD DP review 2008
Young people review the experience September 2008	Group review of lessons learned in relation to the process and outcome of their 2007-8 involvement in the development of the delivery plan, 5 young people	MAD Final Review 2008
Implementation phase of the plan: Scottish Government asks young people to recommend ways of including CYPEDA in the plan implementation	The researcher facilitated 5 of the young people to produce directives for a national young people's advisory group, Voice Against Violence (VAV) for the implementation of the plan in September 2008	VAV Directives 2008
Voice Against Violence formed November 2009: Participatory Action Research Approach	Voice Against Violence (VAV) review of their engagement with people in power at key times – 5 meetings with Ministers and CoSLA, 3 events, 2 Executive meetings of CoSLA Nov 2009-Nov 2011	VAV PP Reviews (2009-2012)
Final report on plan June 2011, adult board ends, VAV continues until November 2011	VAV review of the Delivery Plan progress for final report	VAV DP Review June 2011
VAV reviews of relationships with adult policy-makers 2009-12	VAV regular reviews of engagement with adult policy-makers - the Programme Board and Participation Steering Group Nov 2009-June 20011	VAV PB Reviews (2009-2012)
Vav review of fact-finding, participation and co-client projects 2009-12	VAV review of their projects as they finished and if/when they were launched which were: fact-finding on specific issues (research/evidence gathering); co-clients (creation of Scottish Government Advert and Safehub website) and participation projects (such as their website, film, survey, children's participation project for their final Big Bang Event).	VAV Project Reviews (2009-2012)
VAV final review 2012 and lessons learned presentation to Scottish Government	VAV's final review and presentation to the Scottish Government on lessons learned in June 2012.	VAV Final Review 2012

This in-depth process consisting of many residential group meetings allowed the researcher and young people to review the participation of young people in national policy-making over a long period, a unique group – the first time any such young people's group has functioned as an integral part of policy-making over such a period of time in Scotland, UK and as far as we can see the world, and offered a unique opportunity for the researcher, who became research practitioner for the VAV stage as their manager 2009-2012 (see methodology chapter for discussion on this).

Young people's perspectives on how children are seen

Young people involved in the *Making a Difference* project were acutely aware that it was unusual for children to get the opportunity to share their views with Ministers of the Scottish Parliament and they felt that most adults would ignore or undermine children's views due to their age: 'They'll just think "She's just a wee lassie, dunnae listen to her" but I think it's dead important' (Chloe, MAD 2007). Their expressed fear was that Ministers would ignore what they said, yet they were all very fierce about their right to speak to those in power and that Ministers would benefit from listening to children: 'If they're in charge of the government, they should want to make the country the best place they possibly can, so they should listen to children and young people' (Raya, MAD 2007).

It was vital that the children involved had direct experience of domestic abuse and it was good that the group had a range of experiences and routes to safety ' 'cause you're getting from *them* what they felt like through it all, and that they wouldn't want to see anyone else go through it as well' (Marc, MAD 2007). Their experience made them very motivated to help others.

The young people did feel that they were listened to and that their views were respected when reflecting on their first meeting with three Ministers. Their evidence for this related to the high degree of interaction and discussion within the meeting, with Ministers asking

questions, commenting on every issue raised, quoting the young people and raising concerns. Also, Ministers said at the end that the young people presented well and were very clear, that the Ministers had learnt more about domestic abuse from the young people's straight-talking than the mounds of papers from civil servants. Ministers promised that young people's views would be considered in the imminent funding decisions and in the proposals of the adult group developing the plan. Young people still expressed caution as to whether the Ministers would do something with what they said and said only action would show they really listened:

> I think that it went great as everyone got their point across, we were all listened to and the Ministers even stayed ten minutes extra! The Ministers also felt that they were more aware of the effects of domestic abuse after listening to us…I thought it was very good that the Ministers showed an interest and asked questions, which shows that they want to know more about domestic abuse and hopefully do something about it. (Raya, MAD 2007)

Adults speaking for young people - tokenism

Young people felt very strongly that adults should not speak for them for reasons relevant to being a child, as well as being a child with experience of domestic abuse. They felt that adults change children's words and lose the meaning because adults think they know what children think, feel and know but they don't; adults aren't young. In relation to domestic abuse adults did not get that children 'were there - it really affects them' (Karen MAD 2007). Adults did not understand that a child's experience is different even from that of an adult experiencing domestic abuse (group discussion, MAD 2008) and parents think they know what a child thinks but 'a child knows' (Marc, MAD 2007). Also adults already got more help than children, in their view. 'I think they should listen because an adult's point

of view isn't always a child's perspective, so they should listen just to get a child's point of view' (Raya, MAD 2007)

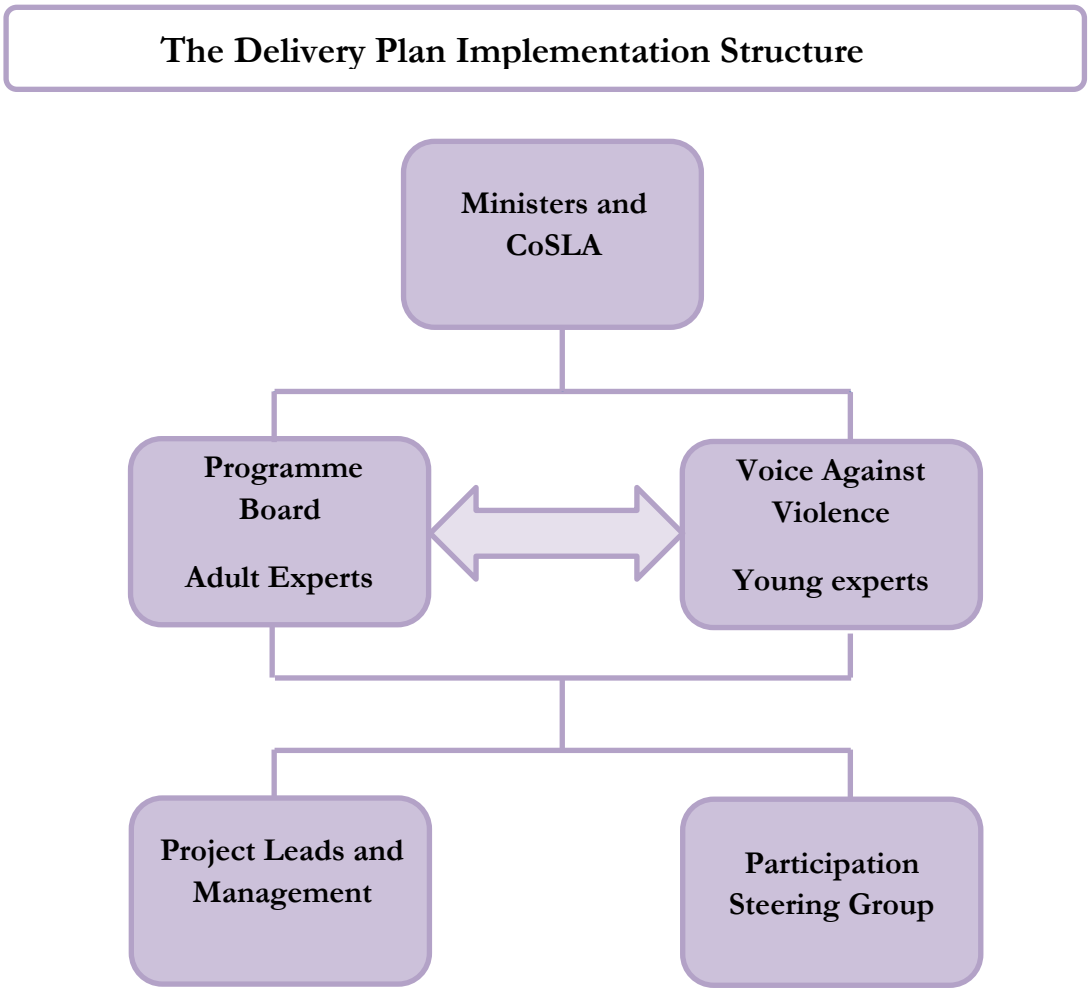
In their review of the development phase of the plan, the young people were very unhappy that the researcher was asked to present their priorities for action to the adult board: 'we should have spoken to them, we don't need you to speak for us, in fact children should have been on that group throughout' (Chloe, MAD DP Review 2008) 'yeah' (group agreement). They felt that the lack of direct contact with the delivery group showed their involvement: 'it was just a 'tick box' exercise so that they could say young people had been spoken to' (Declan, MAD 2007). They felt they should have been asked to be part of the delivery group, that they should have been regularly informed about what was happening by the group and that the group and the plan would have been more informed if they had had direct contact with the young people: 'it would have been even better, more focused on kids' (Marc, MAD Review 2007). The launch of the plan gave them 'public status' which meant that people 'knew who they were' and 'they became more important' (group discussion, MAD Final Review): they felt would be useful in order to get 'recognition and respect from adults' (group, MAD review 2008).

Status and position

The young people decided that they wanted to be named 'young experts' in the implementation of the plan (VAV Directives), to reflect that they were not only experts in their own lives and various routes to safety but also that they had previous experience of participation, research and training that gave them knowledge of a wider group of children's views, as well as their experience in the development of the plan. Crucially it was to 'help adults recognise and respect us as equals in the delivery plan process' (ibid.); they wanted to become active participants rather than 'a one way process where young people are consulted or asked for advice only' (ibid.). They recommended that 'the young expert

group should have official status in the implementation structure with real influence, clear lines of responsibility, accountability and two-way communication' (ibid.) which was agreed by the Government. They felt that adults – the government and all involved in the structure - needed to commit to this publicly to ensure that young people's involvement was not tokenistic and that they really worked together with 'real influence and where young people feel valued, validated, involved, equal' (ibid.) This resulted in the following implementation structure from the Scottish Government:

Table 20: Part 2 - The Delivery Plan implementation structure



Of key importance here is the equal status given to both the Programme Board (PB) consisting of adult experts and the Voice Against Violence group of young experts. There was a requirement for regular, equal dialogue between the two expert groups, both had direct access to Ministers. Both were supported by the Participation Steering Group (PSG), whose role was to monitor and advise on participation across the plan, and the project leads who reported on progress on each of the plans priorities, mainly through the status reports.

In VAV's final review, the young people agreed that their status and position in the structure had been really important to ensure their engagement was meaningful and that other adults respected and included them:

> There was no point in the Government funding us to be a group of young people that advise them on things if we're not on that same wavelength [as the Programme Board] and we can't go straight to the top. What would be the point in that? (Chloe)
>
> No tokenism. (Declan) (VAV Final Review)

The young people were unequivocal that their established status as equal to the adult board, and especially their direct access to Ministers/CoSLA, was the reason why such senior adults worked with them: it gave 'some sort of legitimacy…that sort of authority type thing…professionalism' (Declan, VAV Final Review). The fact that the Ministers agreed to their categorisation and wanted them back ensured that the other adults had to work with them, 'it gave us status, privilege…they'd listen to us' (Karen, VAV Final Review.) Without that status, conferred by those at the highest level, there was 'not a chance' (Karen, VAV Final Review) that this engagement with senior adults and projects on the ground would happen, 'we needed that [status] though. It wasn't even just a privilege, because we needed it' (Declan, VAV Final Review). They thought of a couple of allies within the civil service and within charities who might work with them, but on reflection felt like the former would not have done it if not part of the plan and work time and the latter would have been too busy but would have tried to help. Being at the highest level to Ministers also impacted on the credence adults should give to their views: it meant to them that they should have 'as much say' as the Programme Board, so that any advice to Ministers should include them or, if views differed, both views should be included.

Independence

'We're in that structure on a status level, but we are independent.' (Marc, VAV Final Review). The young people were very keen to retain their independence (VAV Directives) and felt that gaining such unusual status should not make them accountable or managed by the adults or Ministers, or give adults authority over them. They needed to ensure that they kept their own voice and were critical, that they focussed on young people's own priorities and monitored the plan from a child's view (VAV Directives). 'We didn't want them telling us what to do. We were advising them on what we think needs to change so why would it even work if they told us what to do?' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). The Programme Board challenged this recommendation in the *VAV Directives* and, through discussion, came to an agreement that VAV were only part of the 'inner circle' in so much as 'say we had something bad to say about the Government, that we would tell them first before going to, like, we wouldn't say anything to the media' (Raya, VAV Final Review). VAV would treat reports in confidence if requested as long as they could use any information in evidence to Ministers. The young people were also very keen (as were government) that they were independent of any of the organisations involved with and funded through the priorities, so they created their own identity (VAV Directives) logo, website and insisted on a neutral base of a university - not hosted by government or agencies. In one meeting with Ministers/CoSLA the young people felt that one adult thought they were Women's Aid lobbyists and they were keen to be seen as critical friends to all – they felt that much could be done to improve the Women's Aid service also and ensured Ministers and CoSLA and Women's Aid knew this (particularly in relation to services to older boys).

Though young people were keen to learn from adults and from projects and young people on the ground, they maintained their independence in relation to taking *their* and other children's priorities direct to Minister and CoSLA, not those of the board or agencies they

worked with. Their fact-finding and participation projects were crucial to this as they promised that they would ensure 'priorities are as representative and informed as possible' (VAV Directives). The Ministers and CoSLA welcomed and insisted on this independence, naming VAV young experts their 'critical friends', a name the young experts loved.

Representation

Throughout their involvement young people were very aware that they could not represent all CYPEDA in Scotland (VAV Directives 2008, VAV Final Review 2012), VAV were 'a voice for CYPEDA' (VAV aims), as legitimate a voice as the adult board but not the voice of all CYPEDA in Scotland. In VAV Directives (2008) young people recommended that they should be seen as 'active participants not representatives, who participate as experts in their own right with their own valid views' whilst committing to hearing from a wide range of children as possible and advocating for their views or enabling them to speak for themselves.

There was pressure from the Programme Board for the group to be bigger and therefore more representative but the young people resisted this as they didn't think the group would work if too large (VAV Directives 2008). They were keen that the group was as diverse as possible, in terms of gender, age, ethnicity but particularly in the experiences of domestic abuse: original members had very different routes to safety, recruitment specifically targeted areas in which they had least experience. This resulted in members who were CEDAR groupwork graduates, with no experience of Women's Aid or individual support, and one who had experienced the new outreach service. The group also felt they also had a sound evidence base that included the views of a far wider range of children due to the fact several members had been involved in the only three research projects with CYPEDA in Scotland (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003, Stafford et al., 2007, Part 1 of this study, see Chapter 5).

However, young people did reflect that there should have been far more participation of other CYPEDA across the plan: 'we didnae hear from enough children and young people' (Chloe, VAV Final Review), 'doing this project [involving other CYPEDA in the Big Bang Event] reminded me what we're all about, this is real participation, we should've heard from more kids' (Karen, Big Bang Review). They were also angry with the adult boards for the lack of participation 'we can't do everything, what was the point of the participation group?' (Jack, PSG Review): they had advised from the beginning that other groups of children and young people needed to be heard and named the gaps including different ages, teenagers who had been through abuse in their own relationships, minority groups. They rated the PSG very low in relation to the representation of other CYPEDA and made specific steps towards the end of involvement to increase involvement of CYPEDA in VAV work.

VAV's own participation projects, peer mentoring and fact-finding work with local projects did empower them, give them a mandate that was not possible in relation to their own communities – they were not able to be identified locally. Young people said that they saw their role as enabling others to represent themselves wherever possible, or to give VAV their words to relate to people in power if they were not able to speak up: they were proud of their mentoring project for young people to address politicians in the VAV Big Bang event 'we inspired them, mentored them, trained them a wee bit and they spoke up to those in the highest power, it was awesome' (Declan, VAV Final Review). Young people also lobbied for and promoted local VAV's and a national network (VAV Final Review presentation): at least one local VAV is being developed, so there may be a case for more representation.

Young people's perspectives on adult/child relationships

The need for ongoing participation

The shared concern for young people from the start was that even if they felt listened to that it might be a token effort, the Ministers and adults involved in the plan might not take children's views into consideration and nothing would happen as a result of the meeting: there would be no answers or action:

> They say 'Aye right, OK' but …they're kinda clever 'cos they don't make promises…. It's basically just, 'We hear what you're saying, we'll dae something about it' but they don't say 'I'm going to do this' in case they're quoted on, and so, when we hard back a couple of years later, we can't say 'You said you're going to do that but you actually didnae'. (Chloe)
>
> AKA politicians. (Declan) (MAD 2007)
>
> [laughter from group]

Following their first positive meeting with the Ministers the young people said 'if you don't do nothing we'll get ye' (Chloe, MAD 2007) and that they 'should come back and check' (Marc, MAD 2007). There was no further involvement in the development of the plan until it was published; a condition of future participation was that ongoing, regular involvement was planned, funded and committed to: 'there should be fixed timeframes for meetings – when it's relevant and more often, feedback = straight away' (group, MAD Review 2008). Lack of communication, for different periods of up to ten months, left young people insulted, down, feeling useless, 'the worse thing for me was waiting so long to get feedback…nothing happened' (Marc, MAD Review 2008). In the plan development this left young people feeling that the plan had failed, 'Does it matter what I say?' 'Am I actually doing anything?' (group, MAD Review 2008), when actually adults were bringing

the plan together and including their views. After promises of future involvement in the plan implementation they heard nothing for many months and felt as if they had been used for the launch media publicity. They felt strongly that adults needed a 'check' and that young people acted as 'quality assurance for the plan' (Chloe, VAV Directives 2008).

An integral part of the plan structure but bad timing!

When the Voice Against Violence was formed, as an integral part of the implementation structure, this was seen by the young people as a huge step forward. If only it had been at the right time.

> Not to go overly positive or anything but at least we were part of this process in some way. That is a good first step but these things are for improvement now...Having said that it sucks we missed half of it. (Declan, VAV Final review)

It was incredibly positive that a policy-making system integrating young people was set up, the major problem was that the young people came into this system very late, which had various repercussions discussed below, especially the relationship with the Programme Board but also the time pressures the young people felt, with incumbent budget reviews from the onset. 'It makes zero sense. Work together, start at the same time.' (Lola, VAV Final Review). Not only that, the Programme Board and Participation Steering Group:

> …didn't seem to meet very often…we probably have such a negative view of the PSG and PB overall because they work so differently from us. They come together for a very specific five hour meeting or whatever…whereas we come together for full weekend residentials, more than every two months, generally. (Declan, VAV Final Review)

The adult groups also finished before the plan ended in June 2011 'have the Programme Board not finish before the bloody group' (Lola, VAV Final Review 2012). The young

people and some priorities were still going strong or were unfinished and VAV asked to continue beyond that, which was agreed. There was real concern when delivery plan structure disappeared in June 2011, though it also gave VAV more time and opportunities to pursue and launch participation projects (survey, film, question time). Young people remained concerned that no-one was ensuring the delivery plan priorities continued, there was no coordinating body and no children for quality assurance 'Will there be anyone checking it?…Is anyone actually keeping on top of it, because there's obviously no PSG or PB anymore? We're not doing anything to do with the plans…' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). They did not feel any priority was finished, saying 'the problem with even the best ones, like support workers, is that there's always gaps' (Marc, VAV Final Review). They felt strongly that the adult groups did not have a long term strategy – surely it would have made sense to continue the work until the next budget at least? The young people ensured that their political engagement continued, meeting the Deputy First Minister in October, relating children's priorities enhanced by their own survey findings, in an attempt to influence the Comprehensive Spending Review 2012-15.

Dialogue

Young people did not just want to raise problems such as the inadequate response of schools, housing, agencies and the stigma and isolation felt by children; they wanted to take an active part in finding solutions:

> 'Cause everybody's got different opinions and views and experiences, so they should really listen and take on board what we've got to say and, if they're gonna change it, *how* they're gonna change it. We're giving them ideas as well, so it's not just them plotting 'what we're going to do'. We're saying to them, we think you should do this…so it's helping them as well. (Chloe, MAD 2007)

They expressed frustrated that adults did not see them as problem-solvers, but just advisors. They felt adults did not recognise that they could help: 'we know what works and what doesn't' (Raya, MAD DP Review 2008). They raised this frustration with Ministers who then acknowledged them publicly as 'advisors and educators, directly involved in helping steer us towards the most successful outcome possible' (Minister Stewart Maxwell, launching the Delivery Plan June 2008). Young people actively identified areas where they felt they could be involved in solutions, such as training, public education and multi-media support and requested action on this: through the period of their involvement this did eventually happen to an extent.

The young people also wanted honesty if no action was going to be taken and the group agreed that 'we want definite answers – exactly what they'll do', 'we want the truth – even if it's not what we want to hear' (group, MAD Review 2008) and got very frustrated by vague answers or 'Ministers not taking action – on the fence responses' (Raya, MAD Review 2008). Even when £10million was announced towards the plan they were keen that it was spent wisely: 'That's a lot of money that they are planning but as long as it helps change the future I am happy' (Marc, MAD 2007).

The young people had recommendations about how adult/child communication could be improved and initially VAV and PB members had fun creative workshops at VAV residentials about how they would communicate. Ideas such as short, regular updates, using VAV's web, texting good news, emailing updates one priority at a time, monthly magazines, etc., were put forward but:

> We all talked about how we could communicate with each other and then we got some great ideas out of that and then nothing really happened. They just went off and did their own thing again. (Declan, VAV Final Review 2012)

Young people agreed that face-to-face contact was best where possible and when things were not working very early on (June 2010), young people recommended that their small project groups had direct contact and regular communication/updates with a named PB member on a certain priority (such as justice) perhaps coupled with a 'real person' who was doing the work on the ground. This idea was refused by the board, although in other ways VAV made it happen. The young people felt there was very little direct dialogue and they had made it clear they wanted a relationship not just to advise or report:

> …at our residential we did say…they were like 'How do you want this relationship talked through?' We were like, 'Don't treat us like kids. …if you want to criticize us then do because we're a group of young people, we know what we're, kind of, talking about and we don't want you just to palm us off and say 'Oh that's great, that's great, that's great.' If you don't like something, tell us about it, but they didn't. (Chloe, VAV Final Review)

Lack of adult expertise

When there were joint meetings, some members of the PB/PSG did not seem to have any relevant expertise to the young people, this was felt as a complete waste of time and insulting and it put some of VAV off inviting adults to VAV residentials. They were concerned that most adults didn't have an understanding of domestic abuse, they were worried about them sticking to crucial standards like confidentiality. It was considered that some adults had little experience of the priorities 'they have no investment, seem detached' (Karen, Group PB review). Young people directly questioned the commitment of members to tackling domestic abuse and being part of the delivery plan:

> All eight members of VAV *wanted* to be part of VAV, I don't know if all the members of the PB and PSG wanted to be part [of them] and it's also not their primary job (Declan, VAV Final Review).

The young people felt that it was 'just another meeting' to some members (Group PB review), the young people did not know who they were or what their role was, and that some 'people we got were a waste of time' (Chloe, PB Review). On the whole they did not see what the group did except the status reports and were not aware of what most members did in relation to domestic abuse. When the young people had spent valuable time preparing, they were unhappy this was not reciprocated and this reflected their negative experience of adult professionals who did not help them on their way to safety:

> When we're prepared but the adults aren't, talking to adults that don't have a clue isn't useful. We expect adults to do a bit of research, read our survey, know a bit about domestic abuse and VAV. It feels like VAV has had more commitment than people who do it as their job professionally. (John, VAV Final Review 2012)

Young experts' perspectives on monitoring the plan with adult experts

A capacity for scrutiny

The young people demonstrated good analytical and critical abilities in scrutinising the plan, as well as a commitment to it, some enjoying it more than others. On receipt of the plan just before its launch they scrutinised it by getting up at dawn: they checked if the issues they had raised were in it; if their views were represented; if there were gaps; what the adults had put in. They were mainly pleased that the issues they'd raised were included; such as 'new' ideas for a campaign with multi-media support, quotes from them relating to key areas such as education, they felt like they were 'in' the plan. They immediately noticed gaps or limits 'delighted our top priority is there [funding for children's support workers'] but will this reach every child in Scotland?' (Chloe, MAD DP Review 2008). They agreed with the CEDAR groupwork pilot, but raised concerns that there was not support for other, fun groups. They recognised that refuges did not have enough importance and there was no money attached to them causing much frustration: 'children recommended refuges

should be improved six years ago' (Raya, MAD DP Review 2008). They discussed the adult priorities such as perpetrators' programmes -some were glad to see it, others thought a waste of money 'a leopard disnae change his spots' (Chloe, MAD DP Review 2008). Where safe contact was concerned, they agreed it was a priority and felt it should be a child's choice whether to have contact and they should get respite first. The young people's public presentation highlighted gaps and vagueness on certain priorities like housing, not the resounding endorsement the adult group had hoped for and they also pointed out gaps more strongly in a private Ministerial meeting as well as their disgruntlement with lack of involvement.

Integrated Monitoring?

The system for monitoring the implementation of the plan integrated the young experts. The Programme Board and Voice Against Violence were to ascertain whether the plan was making a difference, for VAV in relation to CYPEDA, for PB in relation to all stakeholders. The 'status report' was a progress report received by VAV and the Programme Board 3 times a year in relation to each of the 13 priorities of the Delivery Plan. The method used by VAV/PB/project leads and PSG to communicate how well a priority was going was the traffic light system – the RAG of red, amber or green to ascertain how well a priority are was on track to achieving the plan objective.

> We and they should have started at the same time… they were like, 'Here, this is a status report. This is what you call it. This is what you do. This is what we think it is' and we were just like, 'What?' (Chloe, VAV Final Review)

There was a major problem identified by the young people in that VAV were not involved in setting up this system and there was no discussion and agreement on what red, amber, green meant and whether to use RAG at all. One member especially hated 'lumping things into three categories of red, green and amber. There's more to it than just those three

labels' (Marc, VAV Final Review). The young people did accept that the status reports fulfilled a purpose:

> I thought they were very effective. I thought it was really good to see something from the start and…the excitement half-way through of when we get it back, are they going to be…is it green?!' (Chloe)
>
> It's a good way of seeing progress. (Declan)
>
> Can we tick it off? Is it going to be amber? It's a really good way of seeing progress…The only thing I would fault it, obviously, [is] the way they write stuff.
>
> The language? (Declan)
>
> The language that they use, obviously you're just 'What on earth does that mean?'...And the length of it. It was just like really, really, long. (Chloe)
>
> …I don't think they were the most exciting things to read but I think they were practical and, I mean, for adults who don't have a vivid imagination…to get things done, that's a good way to show that [progress]. (Raya) (VAV Final Review)

What did work was that projects were accountable to VAV and VAV were fully informed through the reports and received the same information as the adult board: 'As crap as they [RAG statuses] were for me, I think they did keep us informed about things…About how like, things were going' (Marc, VAV Final Review). However, the status report was never received on time (request from VAV was 2 weeks before) and rarely had VAV had time to read it before attending their residential. It was long and covered all 13 priorities, it was usually the only mechanism for updating VAV at their residential and despite requests for regular short updates it was usually all VAV received. VAV requested that it include a paragraph reporting on children and young people's participation in monitoring the

priority, for example, children's involvement in an evaluation, in recruitment, in developing a resource which was omitted when the reports were streamlined:

> For the sake of reporting and everything…it would be nice if we could have met together to do it… it would have been nice if, at the beginning of the process, we'd agreed on what the report structure should be.'(Declan, VAV final review)

The system was set up so that VAV members were updated first. The young people considered the evidence and decided the RAG status, then their RAG was considered at the Programme Board two weeks later. If VAV's RAG was red or differed from the Board it was a priority for the adult agenda Therefore they were an integral part of decision-making, their views were taken on board:

> But the Programme Board, at every meeting, takes the views of what they're getting from Voice Against Violence very seriously. It's on the template, they look closely at what's said and also where there's a difference of view. There's a lot of time spent understanding why there is a difference, where it's coming from and talking about what needs to be done about that. (Liz, Chair of Programme Board meeting with VAV)

The meeting with the Chair of PB, due to concerns raised by VAV, did reassure the young people that their views were taken on board and that they did not exist in a vacuum 'there has been a lack of communication and a lack of enthusiasm but we were equal' (John, VAV PB Review). The problem to the young people was lack of dialogue and direct contact with them, discussing what needed to be done and solutions to the problem – they did not feel that the adults respected their potential contribution to problem solving. Declan from VAV did give presentations twice to the PB on VAV's priorities and RAG status: 'The Programme Board listened intently, there were questions. Having the presentation helped them make sense of what was in the templates, made it real.' (Liz, Chair of Programme

Board, meeting with VAV November 2010) but, again, VAV did not want to just 'make it real', they wanted an exchange of views, to problem solve together. Most felt it was only Declan that actually knew the Board and some young people became totally disengaged 'What's the point? What do they do?' (Jack, VAV PB Review). Joint meetings were discussed but the board was huge: 'the problem with the groups is they're so big. There's eight of us and then, like thirty or whatever in each of theirs' (Marc, VAV Final Review). Young people did not like there being too many people and, in those kind of meetings, wanted to say their piece to ensure their priorities were covered and then go.

Communication did improve with direct contact between VAV and the Chair and it was unfortunate she retired before the end of the plan. Strong relationships between Chairs of VAV and the Chair of the board, as well as direct contact with all of VAV, proved essential for this interaction to work. The young people thought that the PB group did do their job in terms of overseeing the delivery plan, monitoring it, making sure it was running effectively and keeping it going (VAV Final Review), they just did not do it with or alongside VAV:

> I think they did oversee the delivery plan because…they always did have their rag and rate stuff on the status report so they, kind of, did that. I just think the problems was that they werenae interactive with us. They lacked giving us information and giving us criticism, or like what they think that we should be doing or 'tell us what you think we should be doing?'…It was never really a two way relationship but I don't doubt that they never done the job they were signed up to do…just not enough interaction between both. I mean we very, very rarely saw them. (Chloe, VAV Final Review)

On the one occasion they had a positive residential creative workshop about a priority with a PB member, where they produced materials and had an equal dialogue about RAG status,

they persuaded her to change her mind – though activities were going well it was a long way from training all teachers and pupils, but the following PB did not change the RAG.

In their final reflections some of the young people felt VAV had not done their job as they had not engaged with all 13 priorities of the plan. This was considered to be mainly due to 'the fact that Voice Against Violence didn't start until half way through the delivery plan and that's tokenistic' (Raya, VAV Final Review 2012), but there was also a good point made that for a few priorities that were not within their experience and therefore expertise, however they could have sought advice from other young experts. Due to the time constraints the young people decided they could not get their heads round the whole Delivery Plan and in fact it was impossible, so they decided to prioritise within the 13 priorities whilst: 'we had a positive impact on the Delivery Plan [as a whole] in terms of making sure that participation and the interests of children were kept at, like the top agenda at all times' (Raya, VAV Final Review 2012).

Prioritising the priorities

The young people made difficult decisions at an early residential based on insider knowledge they had gained, most importantly that there was less than a year until budget decisions were to be made about key services: Autumn 2010 decisions for interim budget 2011-12, 2011 for comprehensive spending review 2012-15 about services. They felt building evidence for continuing the Children's Support Worker fund was top priority (it was by far the thing they felt would most help children), followed by Housing and Homelessness (improving refuge accommodation in particular) and Schools (improving the education response, most especially training teachers). Underneath that was improving the Justice response, the CEDAR groupwork pilot, in particular its roll out, and some interest in improving the multi-agency response through the Getting it Right for Every Child Domestic Abuse Pilots which soon waned when the evaluation did not involve children.

Therefore priority 13 – participation was for the first year at least not VAV's priority, neither was Training although they felt strongly that all professionals needed it. They decided to focus on teachers only, under the schools priority, as that was the professional viewed as most important to children experiencing domestic abuse.

The fact that they had clear priorities and ranked them was instrumental in what was discussed with and at the Programme Board. They influenced the Board most especially in their discussions about support workers (both within their adult meetings and in discussions with VAV) –whether specialist or 'mainstream' support workers were needed/should be funded centrally. The PB recommended strongly in their report for continued central fund after heated debate in meetings.

Older optimists?

VAV young experts felt that the adults were far too willing to use the green label, they were far too optimistic. Adults seemed so keen to show progress that even if one part of the priority was being progressed, or something was planned, it went up to green: '…they just instantly went "I'll tick green if something's been done"' (John, VAV Final Review), whereas the young people considered the multiple issues in each priority and were more critical: '… we would look at it and say "Well you forgot about this, this, this" We sort of stuck to the gaps a bit more' (Marc, VAV Final Review),'we didnae want to change anything until it had actually happened' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). A specific point that VAV checked was whether other CYPEDA were involved in saying whether the project was working and this was a key factor in the RAG status given, unlike the PB. This led them to be very disappointed in the PSG, to the point of calling their part in the structure tokenistic: 'Actually in the PSG because their whole point was to…make sure children were participating in every single stage and they severely failed that task' (Karen, VAV Final Review 2012).

In November 2010, the PB drafted a 'legacy report' direct to Ministers and CoSLA about what to prioritise in relation to the interim budget 2011-12, which the Chair brought to VAV to discuss. VAV would not agree to sign it as a joint statement but did have a very positive and equal discussion about the qualms they felt. The young people did not consider that there was as significant progress as the adult board did, nor did they agree they were going to be where they wanted to be by June 2011: 'we feel that was just a bit too positive' (Chloe VAV Chair in meeting). The young people were very positive that the fund for support workers was prioritised although felt ambivalent that the perpetrator programme was prioritised: 'whatever you think, [about the money being prioritised for perpetrators], it is good that the men's programme will include support for children' (Declan, VAV PB Review). The young people felt the civil servant's explanation of a new 'housing options approach' was vague and that the approach would not tackle the problems that children had been raising for years. Chloe reflected that Ministers: 'We [the adult and young people's groups] were supposed to interact really, really well to inform Ministers' (Chloe, VAV Final Review 2012) but it was 'no the wee triangle it was supposed to be' (ibid.)

Working more collaboratively with adults

What worked was when adults were experts: in either a project area like justice or schools; or in how the Government/CoSLA worked, like the civil servants who became 'insiders' sharing expertise in how things worked; or were expertly skilled in the type of work being undertaken, for example, research or media campaigns for example. The young people were open to learning from adults: 'their opinion was useful and gave us further insight into stuff' (Jack, VAV PB Review) and also to changing their minds through dialogue, whether this was on housing issues, spend to save arguments, shared evaluations of services, facts and figures.

It was important they worked directly with the young people in a small group session 'equal status with them is when we got one or two of them… because they always spoke to us on an equal level' (Marc, VAV Final Review). A good relationship with the young project lead was important, small group sessions with project groups, with key-decisions made as a whole group decision sessions. Young people described aspects of successful relationships with adults: meetings had to be purposeful and regular; adults had to understand domestic abuse, be supportive, understand participation; relationships respectful, a swapping of expertise, equal (VAV Final Review). The young people highlighted positive relationships such as with the government analyst with whom they worked alongside in creating their survey 'real participation' (Lola, VAV Final Review) and the government policy lead who was co-client on the government ad 'so equal in fact we were more equal than her!' (VAV Project Review) and who had regular supportive contact with the young people including at Ministerial meetings.

Young people felt that they did move from advising on domestic abuse to actually 'doing policy' through 3 specific projects that took priorities forward and significantly had a result – an advert, a website, a survey. They were the first co-clients (of any age) with the Government for the national domestic abuse advertising campaign that was run every year:

> Real participation to me is when young people are involved right from the start of a project to the end, like the campaign and their views are respected and taken on board. (Jack, VAV Final Review 2012)

The civil servant with whom they worked closely made the terms clear –VAV had ultimate right of veto, it was VAV's idea, VAV influenced decision-making on the target audience (13-16 year olds as they were not accessing support), messaging (you're not on your own, there is help), theme, look and tone. The problem was that it had to be turned around quickly as the funding had been under threat but rescued, so time could impact on

participation but they did try their best- young people did feel 'a bit rushed with decisions' (Chloe, VAV Advert Review). The advertising company worked with the researcher to design creative, fun, sessions, equal participation in decision-making, for example, private feedback on two designs so no-one's ideas took precedence. VAV project lead Jack was part of all stages including the shoot, an experience he valued, and which reassured other members that VAV's views influenced the process throughout.

VAV discussions revealed strong views on the advert and PR which were presented to the adults involved and taken on board. For example they were happy with 'feel like you're living in a warzone' as the strapline but definitely did not want soldiers in the advert; it had to be real young people (VAV Advert Review). The PR surrounding it had to be hopeful, not too negative, include emotional abuse and most importantly where to get help (ibid.). The key message that VAV young people agreed was to let CYPEDA know that there is light at the end of the tunnel and people who can help (ibid.).

Although Ministers were very positive about supporting new multi-media interactive support behind the advert (which was in the plan and a recommendation from CYPEDA), when the young people arrived at the advertising agency an hour after Ministerial meeting, civil servants told them it would just be ChildLine, which the young people found 'very frustrating' (Chloe, VAV Advert Review). However young people did conclude that the advert did feel very much like theirs 'it's our advert, we're so proud of it' (Karen, VAV Advert Review). The results of the very successful online campaign , which got 2.5. million hits, were fed-back to both adult and young clients at a VAV residential, with a very positive response from both, young people rated the project high in terms of real participation and impact on CYPEDA.

The Government tried to replicate this co-client status with the construction of the www.safehub.org website but delays, lack of clear roles and responsibilities, poor

communication, tension, lack of joint decision-making made it feel tokenistic in parts to young people involved (VAV Safehub Review): 'when they say that we are co-clients but they are making decisions behind our backs and then we found out later, it's quite depressing'(Marc VAV Final Review 2012). The young people expressed disappointment that the site had not been integrated or promoted in the education system or as an integral part of government education policy: 'no teeth' (Lola, VAV Safehub Review). The group did agree with Declan that 'it's a great site to be proud of – you [3 of VAV] created it and co-designed it, wrote the stories, looks really professional' (VAV Safehub Review). The young people did promote it with a Minister but in their final reflection they were unhappy with it: there was 'no follow through' (ibid.); it was unfinished as there was no map of local support many months later; it was unmonitored so they could not know how many young people it had reached; 'it's like no one wants to look at it again' (Marc VAV Final Review 2012).

VAV felt that they had worked extremely well alongside the plan analyst: 'real participation to me was when I co-authored the survey with a Government researcher because …we were involved all the way' (Lola, VAV Final Review 2012) and Ministers and CoSLA were extremely interested in the results. Again they were involved in every stage from design to analysis and promotion, with project lead Lola working very closely with the analyst. The results from over 600 young people across Scotland on priorities to tackle domestic abuse validated the priorities the 8 young people had been advocating. They were welcomed by Parliament (survey event October 2008) and the Deputy First Minister, VAV was asked to the CoSLA Executive to speak for an unprecedented half hour and the report was distributed to the 32 local authorities.

Working together

The young people were aware that multi-agency and cross-government department ways of working were essential to improve a child's journey through domestic abuse and had seen this working in practice, for example in Glasgow, to the benefit of women and children. They saw the point of this kind of Board but found it hard to see the knowledge exchange working well nationally: 'you need services to work together in good communication and that's relatable anywhere, so why shouldn't it be found at the most important stage – the top?' (Raya, VAV Final Review).

As far as VAV's interaction with the adult board went: 'There were plenty hiccups along the road' (Karen, meeting of Chairs) and despite some outstanding efforts from individuals and some rare fun, creative sessions with members, 'well, it wasnae that great to be honest' (Chloe, VAV Final Review):

> Considering we're the same, you know on the chart…we should really have had the same dialogue and communication that we had with Ministers, but really I think our relationship was better with them [the Ministers].' (Karen, VAV Final Review)

Young people's perspectives on direct access to people in power

The young people's reflections on meeting Ministers during the development phase of the plan and the more regular access to Ministers *and* CoSLA in the implementation of the plan are in the main extremely positive. The remit for the young people involved was to communicate their priorities for action direct to Ministers and for VAV to also give their views on whether the plan was making a difference to CYPEDA.

This section articulates what works and does not in order to make the meetings meaningful and effective, and crucially in order to build young people's confidence in

'getting political'. The young people were keen that the findings reflected their lessons learned in relation to: confidence, evidence, preparation, influence, controlling meetings and improving capacity for dialogue. The section ends with young people's discussion on direct access to people in power as 'real participation'.

Confidence

The first stage was to feel confident in each member's individual expertise and the diverse expertise of the group itself: 'We've had the support. We've seen what's right and what's wrong, so we would have the best perception of how to improve it' (Declan, MAD 2007). All the young experts were very nervous as well as excited about meeting politicians, Jack's message to future participants was: 'people in power should be nervous about meeting you, you know more about domestic abuse than they ever could. They want to meet you.' (Jack, VAV Final Review).

One way of settling nerves was to do some fun research and quizzes beforehand, to get to know about them and their personal interests, make them human. This helped young experts to relax a little especially when first meeting and greeting them which they found stressful. There was always that: 'element of intimidation…we always felt tiny wee fish in a big blue sea. But now…' (Karen, VAV Final Review), '[Harry from CoSLA said] he's now scared every time he meets us. At the beginning we were scared every time we met him' (John, VAV Final Review). This sort of nervousness became irrelevant when VAV young experts got to know Adam, Alex (Ministers) and Harry (CoSLA), they felt like friends and had a laugh together, but immediately important when Ministers changed part way through.

All agreed to first names only and this helped as did fun practising of informal hellos, as well as more formal introductions. The first ten minutes meeting a new Minister was: 'tense and like wading in water' (Jack, PP review Nov 2011) and VAV ensured their introductions to the next new Minister were a balance of VAV role and personal experience/motivation

for meeting her. At their review of the meeting with the Deputy First Minister (DFM) young people felt their introductions 'worked brilliantly' (group agreement), 'she was on our wavelength immediately, she spoke about my experiences when talking about policy, she got it' (Lola, PP Review). Young people recommended 'getting to know them [Ministers] personally if you can, break the ice' (John, PP Review) and gave examples of informal chats at events, speaking at launches with Ministers, having fun in photoshoots, doing joint visits or tours.

Evidence

The second stage was to try and ensure that the group brought depth to the priorities identified 'you've got to have something substantial to show them' (Declan, VAV Final Review) and ensure this developed over time so there was something new to consider. This included asking/hearing from children with recent experience and different ages, which young people did through fact-finding projects and participation projects. Interviews with adults workers, CYPEDA and visits to projects on the ground were vital to young people's confidence in meeting a Minister, some young experts did not feel confident until a good deal had been done:

> Alex Neil recommended that we go out and do our own research, and I feel research and fact-finding legitimised us but we didn't hear from other children and young people [enough].' (Raya, VAV Final Review 2012).

Ministers advocating peer research was a 'light-bulb' moment for Lola who went on to lead the first survey by young people experiencing domestic abuse of young people's views in Scotland (*Shaping the Future* VAV 2011). The young people realised that they were becoming a valuable resource for Ministers, this was a gradual realisation as evidence-building took time:

> Every meeting we have is different and the more we meet them the better, it's a totally two way thing now, I think that the knowledge we are gaining has a lot to do with it as well, they respect that we are actually out there doing something and gathering information to take to them, the last meeting was fantastic they totally love VAV and want us to stay where we are, so they obviously believe in us so that means a lot. (Chloe, PP March 2011 review)

In VAV's final review they devised some helpful points for building arguments for Ministers and CoSLA and feeling confident in presenting and debating the priorities for action:

Table 25: Part 2- Know your stuff

'Know your stuff' (VAV Final Review, 2012)
1. **Reflect on your own experiences e.g. what was good with services or what didn't work**
2. **A good plan of action for your project - Knowing what you want and want to find out – prepare to succeed**
3. **Interview adults – learn what professionals in the field think are gaps and needs, it brings the project alive**
4. **Research what's been done, both good and bad, for comparison/evidence - It helps to know what the flaws/gaps are and what to look for – read any research or better still ask adults to present it**
5. **Visit projects to learn about these services directly and compare projects**
6. **Speak to other young experts and identify their issues and what they want to change**
7. **Gain trusted relationships adults and professional allies, invite them to residentials**

8. **Good communication with everyone involved – VAV, professionals, policy-makers**
9. **Use your own experience to 'keep it real'. Stick to what you know, play to your strengths. Support another young expert speak out directly to Ministers (if possible or at least their own words used)**
10. **Research funding options and budget times and responsibilities**
11. **Use evidence gained to form arguments for Ministers and CoSLA and make sure you target the right Minister and link it to their policies/responsibilities**

Preparation

The next was to put your evidence into a succinct argument as described by Karen: 'Know your stuff, know your Minister, know how to direct concise questions at the right Minister' (Karen, VAV FINAL Review). It took time and experience to get the pitch right and to get 'better at phrasing our questions' (Jack, VAV Final review) mainly so the adults could not waffle when answering. Preparation was crucial and time consuming. Half-way through, VAV decided the group needed more time in preparation, which could be as much as 1.5 days per meeting:

> We had to have time to do it [the fact-finding] and then time to prep for a meeting and then time to go to a meeting and present it… we couldnae have a Ministers' meeting without a prep session (Chloe, VAV Final Review).

When young people did not feel prepared and that it was all their own words, they were extremely nervous. They reflected that each needed one-to-one time as well as group preparation and rehearsal (VAV PP Review). At times, when half the group prepared for others whose school or life commitments had got in the way, the meeting did not go as well (VAV PP Review). This was therefore a resource-intensive endeavour for young

people and staff which needed to be recognised: 'To do effective preparation for talking to Ministers we need regular team meetings between team members because that relationship is vital … and at least a day and a half just before' (Declan, VAV Final Review). The young experts agreed to recommendations that a future group did not meet the people in power too often, they reckoned 2-3 times a year maximum, but at the same time should keep up consistent, regular access in order to build momentum and relationships (VAV Final Review).

Influence

It was very important to get the right people there. The first meeting with three Ministers covered portfolios of children, education, equalities, justice which meant that they could answer most of the questions but some things were local authorities' responsibilities. Young people learned about the Concordat that was in place (see Chapter 3), that local authorities had control over the mainly decentralised budget, so direct access to local authority representatives (CoSLA) was essential: 'so there's no passing the buck or avoiding responsibility' (group, MAD final review). It is unusual ever to get more than one Minister at a meeting, yet VAV managed to maintain regular contact with the two Ministers with responsibility for Children and Young People and Equalities (which included domestic abuse and at this time included housing) along with CoSLA's spokesperson for Community Well-being and Safety who attended all meetings. Ministers also set up a meeting for VAV with the Minister for Justice at an appropriate time. A couple of times a Minister dropped out at the last minute, which was difficult and left questions unanswered with limited and late written feedback.

Meetings lasted 1-2 hours at the Parliament and young people found that: 'at times we really could have used some more time to ask questions' (Raya, VAV Final Review), however partly it was using the time wisely and asking shorter more concise questions. In

the beginning young people just asked a question and all three politicians answered. As experience grew, they learnt that: 'Ministers and CoSLA have a brilliant tendency to ramble and pass the buck if the issue being discussed wasn't related to them' (Raya, VAV Final Review) so they directed questions at specific Ministers who were responsible for funding something or resolving an issues, specifically asking CoSLA what local authorities were going to do about the problem.

Following the 2011 elections, VAV met the new the Minister for Children and Young People immediately, many of the priorities were out-with her responsibilities and young people felt rushed because it was only 30minutes. Although she was impressed and wanted continued quarterly engagement, the young people agreed with Jack that they: 'didn't make it real' (VAV PP Review). She advised them to speak directly to the Deputy First Minister before budget decisions. To meet the Deputy First Minister (DFM) Nicola Sturgeon on her own for 30 minutes the young people felt was 'really brilliant, really worth it, the most effective meeting we've had, we made all our points she answered them' (Chloe, VAV PP Review). She made clear that she was not only as Cabinet Secretary responsible for Equalities, but DFM with power over other Ministers and young people felt they should have been more aware of that. They felt she had not only listened, she said she was impressed with the young people's evidence and survey and had promised that she would ask 'her Ministers' to tackle the issues and gaps.

It was essential to understand about the government spending review and local authority settlement, times of key influence for budgets and for that VAV received insider training: VAV ensured they met Ministers/CoSLA at times of optimum influence on funding. The young people felt that there should be more honesty about who has the power, what authority the adults they were meeting had, what control over the money they had, whether it was local authorities or Ministers or both that could tackle the problem (MAD Review 2008). They asked for 'input into resource discussions and to receive honest information

and feedback about what resources were available' (VAV Directives 2008). Young people in the MAD project wanted Ministers to hold local authorities to account and 'make' them do what was in the plan. However, they learned through feedback from the Government that this was no longer the way things worked with the new administration from 2007, the principle of the Concordat was that funds were decentralised and it was for local authorities to decide how to address local need. It was, however, more realistic in getting these services going and to this day a central fund continues to resource local authority support workers as VAV convinced Ministers/CoSLA that this essential resource for children would not be taken over by local authorities in the current economic crisis.

Young people also felt it was worth understanding some of the government jargon, at first to help understand the politicians and give confidence, but if it made sense, they used it: 'know the lingo such as spend to save arguments, early intervention etc., repetition and prepare to be patient, government takes a long time!'(Raya, VAV Final Review). It was easy to relate spend to save to their lives, examples include: if money had been spent on support workers when they were first identified, they would not have spent five years in expensive NHS counselling or have mental health problems now. Early intervention had different meanings, but they all felt suffering could have been stopped sooner if agencies had responded better. Multi-agency approaches made complete sense for those who had to tell their story to lots of different services. For all of VAV the school had been ineffective, but sometimes ignorant of what was happening. They saw excellent examples of multi-agency working where it had made a difference to children's lives: notably the multiagency approach in Glasgow and the CEDAR groupwork programme. So it was not that difficult to: 'learn the lingo but you don't want to sound like adults either' (John, VAV Final Review).

A year in, VAV had new fact-finding evidence, had created a website, co-created the government advert and designed their survey to launch. It was then that they felt they were

proving their worth: it was a turning point for some of the young experts. Before that Jack was concerned about whether VAV was worth the money spent on it; Ministers and CoSLA confirmed publicly at their anniversary event, what: 'a valuable information resource for Ministers [we were], their critical friend' (Karen, PP Review March 2011).

Controlling the meetings

The young experts built up a good rapport with politicians and also learned how to 'take control of the meetings. Don't let them go on and on' (Karen, VAV Final Review). All Ministers and CoSLA agreed to the young people setting the agenda in advance, to first names only being used for adults/young people alike, and to a young chair for each meeting. VAV gradually learned to set a realistic agenda, timing themselves beforehand and setting times for discussion, whilst also keeping it real.

The co-chairs and others learned how to politely 'butt in' and move discussion on if Ministers were being repetitive or off subject. They did appeal to people in power in their final review: 'don't talk political language, don't waffle on, it's confusing! Keep it simple, engage and interact with us, instead of rambling!' (Raya, VAV Final Review). Chloe was delighted that: 'Nicola Sturgeon said I was the best chair she'd come across' (VAV PP Review), 'you were really spot on' (Declan, VAV PP Review).

Dialogue: debating skills education

A success factor for each meeting was that 'everyone got their points across, we were all listened to' (Raya, MAD 2007). However, ongoing participation in VAV required actual dialogue with Ministers/CoSLA and this was difficult for some:

> We deliver our evidence and put questions across professionally but we need to learn how to fight back so to speak but that will come with experience. (Karen)

> I think we should be a bit more forceful… it takes a lot more confidence though. (Jack) (PP review)

Jack recognised that some had more ability than others to 'get stronger at answering back', John was concerned about being assertive in discussions without being rude and aggressive. The group had some limited debating training through VAV, but they recommended more for future groups. This group were all very bright yet had all had had severely interrupted schooling and were therefore perhaps less likely to have confidence in writing and in public debate. Noticeably, those closer to the 'eye of the storm' were less confident; they agreed: 'you need good self-esteem to talk to people' (John, PP Review). It was the team that gave them strength: 'if you know people are rooting you on, your confidence level goes higher' (John VAV PP Review). Rehearsing with each other, making sure each person was comfortable with what they were saying, being friendly with each other all: 'increases our chances of making it a successful conversation by helping each other and sort of training ourselves beforehand' (John VAV PP review). Their last meetings with people in power was with the Deputy First Minister for Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, they were at their best, despite the time limit and were unfazed by questions:

> We did take a lot of questions from Nicola [Sturgeon]…(Lola)
>
> A bit more two-way ? (Declan)
>
> …we were put quite a bit on the spot …[at the start] everyone would just go [blank]…tell her, say something…now if she asks someone a direct question that's not on the agenda, they find a way to answer it...(Chloe) (VAV Final Review]

Real participation with people in power

Data shows that regular, direct access to people in power was considered by the young people to be VAV's most successful engagement with adults: to VAV, this was 'real

participation'. Their reviews showed a gradual development of a successful relationship and increasing influence. At first, they were not sure they had any influence: 'think views may be listened to. Don't think views influence politicians or change their mind' (Jack, VAV PP October 2010); which moved to: 'most successful group of adults …gaining equal status, our voices seem to be making a difference and they are taking our ideas on board' (John, VAV PP Review March 2011). This then moved to evidence of real change alongside real dialogue such as funding, support, projects getting off the ground: 'we work so well because of the access we have, we've managed to change so much because we can go directly to the people and tell them straight, basically' (Karen, VAV PP review November 2011). The relationship rated far more highly than that with PB which they described in the end as distant, in advising Ministers and CoSLA it was 'like two separate attacks' (Declan, Final Review) not two groups working together:

> I think it was easier though for us to talk with Ministers and it's always easier to communicate with the most powerful and to think that you're achieving the most when you're talking with the most powerful' (Raya, final review)

This begs the question of how much a young advisory group should be expected to interact with adults in the policy-making system as well as with people in power. Young people certainly felt it was time consuming and too often ineffective. Interestingly, the young people reflected that they could have made more of the direct access: 'I don't think we took advantage of it as much as we could have' (Karen, VAV Final Review 2012), but the time committed to the programme board and delivery plan priorities meant they were limited: 'there are so many different kinds of projects you can do with that level of access that we had to just say no to at the time, because of what our priorities were' (ibid.). There were also other Parliamentary opportunities to influence that were not taken due to lack of time. Mr Maxwell went on to convene the (cross party) Education Committee which he

invited VAV to target with their frustrations over the schools' response and government lack of action, but they ran out of time.

Their meetings with Ministers and CoSLA and direct projects with CYPEDA met VAV's criteria for the highest level of participation. Both came together in their last peer led project, where young people in the 'eye of the storm' of domestic abuse were supported/trained/mentored by VAV to question the Deputy First Minister, Scotland's Children's Commissioner and CoSLA. That was their ultimate goal - 'it's what we're really about' (Karen, VAV Big Bang Review 2011):

> Real participation to me is when VAV leads our participation project for young people to be directly involved and have their voices heard at the Big Bang Event' (Declan, VAV Final Review),

The only other type of participation matching that above in terms of 'real participation' in the policy-making process, was a very hands off one for the Government. Launched at the event was VAV's legacy film, *One Voice at a Time*, backed by the Government through significant extra financial assistance but an: 'independent project, no one was pushing us to do it' (Jack, VAV Final Review) and no-one from the Government got involved. VAV were trusted and given the freedom to deliver a useful resource as their legacy and this meant a lot to them. Young people as the clients of a media company brought its own challenges: 'they try and overpower us and don't really listen to what we are wanting, just try and kind of push us into things that they think will look better when it was actually our movie' (Chloe, VAV Final Review 2012). Young people agreed this was because VAV were kids (VAV group project review), but also because the company did not 'get' participation or how to promote it and educate others about how to do it. They were more au fait with awareness raising about the horror of abuse, as with all the media involvement VAV had. The film shows the reality of domestic abuse with a darkness to light theme that

emphasises hope and help; VAV edited out more graphic examples and insisted on equal weight to moving on and getting out. It moves on to advise adult professionals on what works and does not, mainly focussing on schools in the film, but all agencies in the accompanying booklet. It ends with the promotion of participation, appealing to young people to get involved, adults to support them, people in power to fund it. This, to the group, was their ultimate achievement, and it was backed publicly in the film and its launch by their most powerful ally:

> Voice Against Violence is unique, the first group of young experts to participate as equal partners in the development and implementation of policy on domestic abuse anywhere in the world. Individually, they are really impressive young people and together a force to be reckoned with. They have proved that genuine participation of young people is not only possible, it is a vitally important part of developing good policy. The Scottish Government is very proud to have supported this groundbreaking and important initiative and to have proved that working together really works. (Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister, Scottish Government, 2011).

Young people's perspectives on impact

For all the young people the main reason for being involved was to 'make a difference to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse' (VAV Final Review). They wanted to 'make an impact' (VAV Directives 2008) which they defined as 'changing things' (VAV Final Review). It was important that I, as researcher, designed a process that guided discussion on impact throughout and co-examined dimensions of the phenomenon with young people throughout their involvement in policy-making. For each activity, I regularly collated data on young peoples' perspectives on whether things had changed, extracted relevant documentary evidence of impact (such as Parliamentary Official Reports, funding

announcements, minutes of meetings) and facilitated group discussion on impact. As time went on we undertook this more collaboratively (see data analysis section in Methodology).

Early in Part 2 of the study, young participants widened the review of impact to include political impact as well as impact on children's lives (see 'VAV Review Tool'). This followed researcher-facilitated discussion about the impact politicians' said young people were having on their awareness of domestic abuse. Young people reflected that this would not necessarily affect CYPEDA's lives, at least immediately, but was an important change that could influence policy-making. The researcher supported the young people to identify and agree the main areas where they had hoped to effect change in the final review. To CYPEDA's lives and political influence they added educating adults to respond better, changing societal attitudes and promoting young people's participation, all of which this section explores. The titles in this section relate how the young people expressed the key impacts they wanted to make (key themes for analysis), and the subtitles agreed by the young people as steps needed to make that impact (categories for analysis). Their perspectives on the impact they made and/or wanted to make are explored, including the action taken and documentary evidence they considered, alongside the researcher, in reviewing impact.

It is widely reported that young people's participation has little impact, leading to cynicism about it and demands for standards from children's rights and advocacy organisations to measure 'what's changed?' (see, for example, Kirby with Bryson, 2002). Part 2 of this study provided an opportunity for young people to continuously examine impact with the researcher and to explore the changes of which they were part. At key junctures throughout the study, the young experts reviewed the impact they were making with the researcher (see data analysis section of the Methodology Chapter) through their main activities - projects (fact-finding, co-clients, participation - 'project' reviews), direct access to people in power

(PP reviews) - meetings with Ministers/CoSLA and work with the adult Programme Board (PB Reviews).

We wanted to improve children's lives

The main impact young people agreed that they wanted to make was to 'improve services – have more of what did work, easier access for all' (Declan, VAV Final Review) and ultimately 'to give children and young people living with domestic abuse the services they need' (Karen, VAV Final review). Voice Against Violence focused on making an impact in services that they felt were priorities for CYPEDA: individual support, groupwork, schools, housing, justice. In order for CYPEDA to name domestic abuse and access support (see Chapter 5) young people decided they needed to take action to 'let children and young people that experience domestic abuse know there are people out there that can help' (Chloe, VAV Final Review).

To let CYPEDA over Scotland know that they're not alone, there is help out there and there's light at the end of the tunnel

A key impact that all the young experts wanted to make was summarised by Jack: 'to be a voice for others going through domestic abuse and teach others there is a way out' (Final Review). The young experts decided that key to making that impact was the use of 'child-focused advertisement campaigns, using children's own media' (MAD 2008). This resulted in the Government finding resources and inviting the young experts to be the first co-clients for a Scottish Government Campaign, 'that's pretty cool that they actually funded it and we were alongside every step of the way' (Jack, Advert Review). VAV made the decision that it should be online and targeted at teenagers and the Government agreed: 'it was our idea, they funded it, it's our product' (Declan, VAV Final Review), 'we're so proud of it' [everyone claps] (Karen, VAV Final Review).

It was important to the young people that it was effective and the PR and Advertising Company gave feedback and were accountable to VAV alongside the Government colleague at their residential. The PR company revealed that the advert was viewed over 2.6 million times with 16,481,701 impressions: 'wow that's a lot of children we're reaching, even if I did click on it a few times' [laughter] (Marc, Advert review) The click-through rate to ChildLine's site was revealed as 0.15per cent, above the industry average of 0.1per cent and there were 23, 987 visits to the site in six weeks: 'that shows we're getting to the people we want to, children are looking for help' (Declan, Advert review), 'yes there's no point otherwise, if the young people don't go for help, I wish there was more' (Chloe, Advert Review). The young people were disappointed their recommended national and local web resource had not been set up 'broken promises' (Chloe, Advert Review) but were pleased that ChildLine website traffic saw a 206per cent increase during the campaign period: 'that's brilliant, we need to check their training went ahead and they are giving local children's support numbers' (Chloe, Advert Review). At the young people's request, posters went to every secondary school in Scotland in 2011 ''cos that's where young people are, most of the time' (Lola, Advert Review). It had a letter of Ministerial endorsement 'but we don't really know what's happened with them' (Marc, VAV Final Review), 'yeah we need you [the Government representative] to monitor that' (Declan, Advert Review).

The first part of VAV's *One Voice at a Time* film is focused on the experience of domestic abuse and the fact that children can get through it. It also directs young people towards help. The impact young participants wanted to make was summarised by Raya: 'to raise awareness for CYPEDA in Scotland – that there is light at the end of the tunnel and help available' (VAV Final Review). The film continued the advert's work with a wider reach in terms of age and teachers/agencies. VAV Creative Director, Jack, here reflected all participants' views on the personal aspect to VAV taking the risky decision of putting themselves on film: 'I wanted to show that domestic abuse didn't defeat me, I felt like I

really needed to take a horrible experience and make it something good' (VAV Final Review), a sentiment echoed by others in relation to the personal impact of involvement in VAV more generally (see below). Anecodotal (especially at the final event) and email feedback from many in receipt of the film show that it is being widely used, in schools and also agencies - for example in training police officers in Scotland. Again, young people identified that impact was not being measured as VAV was ending, and this longer term impact was an area for further study.

To improve children's access to a range of resources

The young people agreed that the biggest success of CYPEDA involved in the whole study was 'campaigning for support workers and influencing the budget to ensure there was funding for them – justifying their importance and significance to a young person' (Karen, VAV Final Review). Part 1 of the study resulted in the start- up of the £6 million (2006-8) Children's Support Worker Fund which Malcolm Chisholm MSP, then Labour Minister, attributed to the CYPEDA involved. Their findings were conditions of grant and there were support workers across each local authority in Scotland covering refuge, follow-on and outreach (community) support for the first time. In Part 2 of the study, this fund was under threat at several key budget decision points due to factors such as decentralisation, the financial crisis and a policy move towards universal and mainstream services improving responses (GIRFEC, see Chapter 3). The young people in Part 2 of the study cited their influence on the adult board as evidence of success: 'we were challenged by our adult colleagues whether other mainstream workers could do it – they can't - whether local authorities should take over – they wouldn't be able – we met these challenges with evidence and funding continued' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). John summarised for all in the Final Review that 'Individual support workers for CYPEDA was always everyone in VAV's top priority – some of us didn't get any support at all leading to loads of problems, costs to the health and justice services and to our education'. Project leads Declan and Jack

felt that they had used the government's 'spend to save' mantra well in making this point, particularly when the Programme Board agreed it was the top priority for continued funding after earlier resistance. Voice Against Violence young people were delighted when Ministers acknowledged that VAV were key to decision-making and budget decisions in their meetings: 'did you hear that, Alex said we were key' (Raya, PP Review), 'Yeah and Harry said he couldnae do without us' (Chloe, PP Review). The young people acknowledged in their final review that although they had wanted 'to make sure that every child that wants/needs a support worker has one' (Chloe, VAV Final Review), they could not influence an expansion of the fund to meet need, but 'we were lucky to hang onto the fund, with the financial crisis 'n' all that' (Chloe, VAV Final Review) 'yeah, there will always be gaps' (Marc, VAV Final Review).

Young people did cite success in increasing the range of CYPEDA accessing support: 'there's more outreach workers than refuge now, there were only 3 when I started' (Declan, Children's Support Worker Review), 'Yeah and only 6 follow on workers, they all [all the Women's Aid groups] have to do that now [provide aftercare]' (Chloe, Children's Support Worker Review). Also Jack had gained the groups agreement from the onset to 'change the 16 year old rule at Women's Aid' - that support for boys stopped immediately they turned 16. The Deputy First Minister announced the continuation of over £10m Children's Support Worker Fund (2012-15) at VAV's final event and the final closed meeting with the Government revealed that a condition of grant would be access to the service for over 16 young men and women. The young people all agreed with Lola that 'it was kinda the accessibility to them [Children's Support Workers], to get more…with the funding and things like that getting renewed and things like that, we kind of did make that impact' (Lola, VAV Final Review).

The two CEDAR (Children experiencing domestic abuse recovery programme) graduates were strong advocates for the groupwork programme and used their own experience

alongside the CEDAR evaluation to persuade their VAV team, Ministers and the Government officials that roll out of this programme 'can make a real difference to children's lives, heal a family' (John, PP Review), 'it literally saved our lives' (Lola, PP Review). However, Government funding did not result - 'we met a block so we met with the Big Lottery and influenced their decision to direct £6m funds at CEDAR – now there's at least 13 areas of Scotland running CEDAR…which is fantastic' (Chloe summarising for the group, VAV Final Review). John and Declan informed the group of positive praise from the Big Lottery about the meeting with VAV in relation to priorities for CYPEDA. 'They said we were clear and professional– better than the adults they met' (John, CEDAR Review), 'they listened and took all that we said on board' (Declan, CEDAR Review). VAV were told and felt they had been extremely influential in 'improving CYPEDA's lives by expanding the CEDAR project' (John, VAV Final Review).

To improve the way schools respond to CYPEDA

The young people agreed that 'education – improving the way schools respond was important to all of us as we felt they were the most important place for kids and they let all of us down' (John, VAV Final Review). The professional practice they most wanted to improve was that of teachers 'we want to educate teachers or educational people about domestic abuse and the effect it has on young people, what to look out for' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). They all agreed with Marc that 'a better understanding of domestic abuse…mandatory training for teachers was needed and we're still a long way off that, we've no made that impact' (VAV Final Review). The young people did advise on a teachers' CYPEDA resource but felt disappointed that it was not mandatory in training or for a specific part of the curriculum: 'i.e. with no teeth' (Lola, VAV Final Review). Marc, Lola and John co-created the 'safehub' young person's website to be launched alongside the schools resource 'which is great and VAV young people designed it, created content' (Declan, VAV Final Review), 'ae but unfinished, no-one cares about it' (Marc, VAV Final

Review). The young people did not rate schools improvement as a success in terms of impact (VAV Schools Review), in terms of the support for CYPEDA they wanted and also 'the way children learn about domestic abuse and equality' (John, Schools Review). The young people specifically targeted the second part of their legacy film at teachers, focusing on the effects of a poor versus positive school response on CYPEDA. They requested that the Deputy First Minister support the film's distribution to all schools in Scotland, which she funded and recommended to head-teachers. It was the young people's own solution to continue to make an impact, direct to teachers and pupils: 'we don't know what they're doing with it but it is good to hear it is really popular' (Lola, VAV Final Review).

To bring refuges up to a twenty-first century standard and improve CYPEDA's housing journey

The young people reflected that they had persistently campaigned for refuges to be built/refurbished to the model advocated in previous research with CYPEDA (Fitzpatrick et al. 2003): 'we were all homeless due to domestic abuse. Many of us stayed in low quality refuges where you had to share bathrooms and, maybe without your own support worker. We wanted this changed …' (John, VAV Final Review). They decided that this had had little impact: 'We got f**king nowhere' [group laughter] (Chloe, VAV Final Review). The group did feel that they had made a political impact in relation to changing Ministers'/CoSLA's minds about the importance of refuges: 'they thought refuges were old-fashioned but we persuaded them they werenae' (Chloe, Housing Review), 'we changed their minds, just didn't get any money' (Raya, Housing Review). They also agreed that an explanation from government officials about a new approach was very unsatisfactory: 'a "housing options" approach? ie. nae options? That was just vague, didnae make sense, a ramble, it's not gonna work for most people to stay at home just to save them money' (Chloe, Housing Review). The group agreed their final statement to the Government on the lack of impact:

> Despite our best efforts only 2 new refuges opened, almost half the refuges in Scotland still have shared bathrooms and kitchens which we think is a disgrace. Nothing happened because money was not set aside for housing from the beginning. We know there are developments about keeping people safely in their own home which we are sceptical about but supportive if and when it's possible. (VAV Final Review)

To campaign for a better response to domestic abuse as a crime and improve children's justice journey

The young people in VAV had had a mixed experience of the justice response, summarised by John:

> some of us got lost in the justice system, were disgusted with sentencing, let down by solicitors, the police, etc. Others had the best most sensitive response ever including good experiences in court. So we tried to trace a child's journey from a police incident to court and beyond and examine issues for children (VAV Final Review).

The young people agreed from the beginning that they wanted to influence 'a better response to domestic abuse as a crime' ((John, VAV Final Review) and to 'give other children and young people the experience I had through the criminal justice system' (Karen, VAV Final Review), - Karen's experience of the police and being listened to by the sheriff was very positive. The young people investigated the new approach in Strathclyde: specialist courts alongside the support and advocacy service (ASSIST), a police domestic abuse task force, all instrumental in ensuring a 'good and effective multi-agency approach' (Karen, VAV Final Review). Following their fact-finding the young people decided that they wanted to impact on the roll out of the specialist approach across Scotland and spoke to Ministers: 'we complained to Mr MacAskill [direct audience with Justice Minister] about

lack of progress…and are pleased to see a pilot court in Edinburgh this year and a few other areas using their own specialist approach'. The young people were aware that they were not the only people making an impact, in this legal area in particular, for example they noted good adult advocates for the approach 'that Sherriff was good and Janette from Glasgow was brilliant' (Karen, VAV Justice Review). They did feel their voice could be powerful, especially in terms of funding decisions for ASSIST and support: 'Ministers did listen about the need for expansion of ASSIST and we did our best, we spoke direct to the Justice Minister for god's sake!' (Karen, VAV Final Review).

They also wanted to impact on the police response and change practice so that the 'police listened to children at an incident' (group agreement, Justice Review). When reviewing the impact made, the young people felt that the adoption of the film for ACPOS (Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland) training, the support throughout the project of allies at Strathclyde Domestic Abuse Task Force and the invite to speak at Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit's conference were all evidence that they were being listened to and beginning to influence the police. However, Raya (project lead) warned that 'those police on the ground we met weren't listening' (VAV Justice Review), noting that short term impact was limited, with potential for longer term impact through training.

We wanted to make a political impact

To challenge the political system- raise the platform for children and young people at a political level.

The young people wanted to 'prove young people can be actively involved, can help decide things, can have equal status to adults in the policy process' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). They felt that this was a challenge both because they were young, and because they were young people with experience of domestic abuse 'people think we're doomed' (Lola, VAV Final Review). This dual challenge is reflected in this discussion at the VAV Final Review:

Raya: We've proved that young people can be actively involved in policy and can have active roles in helping decide things.

Lola: Challenged, really, the stereotype.

Researcher: What stereotype are you challenging?

Raya: The whole thing against young people…as well as domestic abuse

Karen: That adults always know better?

Raya: Yeah and that young people don't know what's good for them.

Young people all felt that the continued engagement, and resourcing the involvement of CYPEDA, by politicians and policy makers was an indicator of success (VAV Directives 2008). Parliament acknowledged children's 'priorities and views had shaped the development of the delivery plan' (Scottish Parliament 2007: Col 3741-3779); added a 4th P of participation to the domestic abuse strategy as a result and promised to increase children's involvement in that work. Voice Against Violence young people agreed that the fact 'that we actually exist at all, the first group of its kind, is a success in itself' (Karen, VAV PP Review); they had effected a change of policy direction in Scotland and the terms of that change - of sustained engagement of CYPEDA, were defined by the young people (VAV Directives 2008).

Young people felt they had effectively changed the status children were given in policy-making – they were now 'expert advisors' (Scottish Parliament, Col. 21719). They felt that they had changed how CYPEDA were seen: 'before VAV anyway, we were told a lot of "no we can't do that", whereas now it's more a change of attitude in "well we'll see what we can do about that"…there's no roadblock anymore.' (Declan, VAV Final Review). Although it was difficult to achieve equal relationships with policy-makers in practice (see earlier), they felt they had 'made our case, devised a template for participation' (Declan,

VAV Final Review). They cited as evidence that Ministers agreed they were integral to the system

> Young experts … play an equal and active role in influencing, delivering and providing part of the governance for the overall plan – in partnership…[they are] key to …actions as well as implementation…' (Minister for Children and Young People, Angela Constance MSP, Delivery Plan Final Event).

Young people reflected that evidence from other policy-makers that they were considering transposing the model to other areas of work with children, was a positive impact, as was the promise from the Deputy First Minister to continue funding VAV: 'you've done a great job and you can evidence the value of the work you've done…'(Nicola Sturgeon, DFM, October 2011). The young people reflected that to effectively raise the political platform for children and young people they had to show adults 'that just because we're young or maybe we don't have certain things that adults do, we can still do a fine job' (John, VAV Final Review).

To persuade Ministers and CoSLA that young people know what we're talking about, can be professional and responsible and that things needed changed

The young people reflected that their relationship with Ministers and CoSLA, their regular meetings as their 'critical friend', was their biggest success and reached the highest level of real participation (see earlier, VAV Final Review).

> Chloe: The biggest impact I wanted to make was to kind of let Ministers know that we…to show them …we know what we're talking about and that we are wanting things to be changed.
>
> Marc: That we can take responsibility.
>
> Chloe: Yeah that we can take responsibility and be the professionals.

(VAV Final Review)

The young people reflected that they had become useful to Ministers, dialogue had improved and Ministers seemed to want to see them, making themselves available (VAV PP Reviews). Young people felt that they had been successful in making an impact when Minister Alex Neil acknowledged 'this group is…a key element and a key source of ongoing advice for Ministers…we should be thinking of continuing…' (Ministerial meeting with VAV, 2011, VAV PP Review). Young people agreed with Karen that VAV had managed to 'show the people in power that children and young people have a voice worth listening to' (VAV Final Review).

To influence domestic abuse policy – to make sure the plan made a difference and work continued after the plan

'We wanted to influence the system and prove that children can do it, but the obvious one is practically influencing' stated Lola in the Final Review. Data shows that practical influence to the young people meant not only improving things that were of importance to children through influencing the decisions of the Board and Ministers/CoSLA in relation to awareness, support, housing, justice, but also actually practically 'doing something ourselves, doing policy' (Marc, PB Review). Examples of this active impact included 'provided continuous advice, educated others about domestic abuse, affected funding positively, created valuable resources- advert, film, survey, websites, made powerful allies' (Lola, VAV Final Review).

Young people reflected, in their review of impact in relation to people in power (PP reviews), that to do this they needed to keep things real and be confident in their own expertise: 'using our own experiences just to prove that we know what we are speaking about' (Lola, VAV Final Review). Although it was important to remember 'we are the experts' (Karen, VAV Final Review and also VAV Directives, 2008), and that they could

achieve a great deal of influence by using their own experiences, the group reflected that they needed more than that to sustain participation: 'We suddenly realised, right, we need some facts and figures, it's not enough for me to say how it feels' (Lola, VAV Final Review). They agreed with John who stressed the importance of 'sharing knowledge, fact-finding and gaining powerful allies' (VAV Final Review) in influencing change.

Young people did agree that the group had managed to retain 'our own voice – equal status with adults' (Declan, VAV Final Review), despite difficulties described earlier and that the fact that they remained an integral part of the system throughout was a success in itself (VAV Final Review).

To influence funding

The young people from the beginning wanted to influence funding for services (VAV Directives 2008), they wanted to retain funding as a subtheme of political impact (see data analysis section) – distinct from influencing policy- because it was of such importance and because this was their 'proudest achievement' (VAV agreement, Final Review). In their impact reviews young people cited evidence from the Chair of the Programme Board and Ministers, in meetings and funding announcements, that gave credit to the young people for ensuring that the Children's Support Worker fund was retained and became an agreed priority. They also felt that they had been a key influence in the expansion of ASSIST through highlighting the importance of the children's support element to Ministers who had been very interested in the meetings (VAV Justice Review). John and Declan were proud that the Big Lottery said that VAV's views were influential in their £6million decision to fund CEDAR. Young people had also been successful in getting funding for VAV in the first place and in lobbying for the continuation of VAV after the plan- the Minister responsible for Equalities and the DFM assured them there would also be funding

for a new VAV (VAV PP Review): 'if the DFM agrees with us surely it will happen?' (Chloe, VAV Final Review).

To be a voice for children and young people and get their voices heard at top level

The young people felt that there could have been more participation of other CYPEDA and that they could have made 'better use of direct access to power, more participation' (Karen, VAV Final Review): They particularly focused on making more of an impact in relation to participation in their final year of existence, when they had achieved a continuation in VAV funding. They conducted and presented their own survey findings (VAV, *Shaping the Future,* 2011) outlining the priorities of almost 600 young people to the Deputy First Minister at budget time, she had received this positively and stated that she was impressed with the evidence they presented. The young people had also interviewed and quoted CYPEDA from fact-finding projects to illustrate housing issues in meetings with Ministers/CoSLA: 'that was really effective, should have done more of that' (Raya, VAV PP Review). Most effectively, they mentored groups of CYPEDA from Women's Aid and ASSIST to participate in their final event. They wanted 'to inspire other children and young people to get political and create opportunities for them' (group agreement, VAV Final Review). They felt they made that impact through organising and chairing the political Question Time Event where they mentored other CYPEDA to ask their own questions of the DFM, Scotland's CYP Commissioner and CoSLA. They agreed that this was the 'pinnacle of success and real participation' (Declan, VAV Final Review – agreed by all), 'we inspired young experts to speak out and direct change' (group agreement, VAV Final Review).

Young people created resources to promote future participation and maintain an impact. Their film booklet gave advice on the participation journey, how to set up a group (see Appendix 6) as well as messages to young people and politicians to encourage participation.

The final section of the actual film focused on their key messages relating to participation and through this they hoped to encourage others to take a stand against domestic abuse. The young people applied, with the researcher, to the Scottish Government for a new VAV and made recommendations direct to Government in their final presentation. They produced standards that encouraged safe and happy participation for CYPEDA (see Appendix 7) and aimed to 'break down barriers to participation' (VAV Standards).

We wanted to educate adults to respond better

One of the main impacts that young people wanted to make was to ensure there were 'better equipped professionals working with children and young people to support domestic abuse survivors' (Lola, VAV Final Review). Whilst this particularly applied to teachers (see above), young people felt that many professionals had let them down (see Chapter 5) and targeted all agencies with expert advice in the film booklet (see Appendix 6).

A crucial part of an improved response was 'to get adult professionals to work as a team and ensure children's confidentiality and privacy is respected whilst still getting services' (Karen, VAV Final Review), which the young people began to name as a 'good and effective multi-agency approach…teamwork' (VAV Final Review). The young people promoted this at every opportunity and collated examples of good practice (Glasgow), stressing an approach where

> Confidentiality, anonymity and respect are always at the heart of it; just so there's no chance to their story ever being leaked or their confidentiality ever being breached. And also so that…no child was to go into a different service every month and explain their entire story over and over. (Karen, VAV Final Review)

The group all felt that they had worked with allies in the field to promote this and to share examples of good practice with policy-makers and politicians as well as their own

experiences. They felt that the GIRFEC domestic abuse pathfinders (see Chapter 6) had been a lost opportunity to both hear from CYPEDA about how agencies were working together (Multi-agency Review) and also to create a model for 'better effective working' (John, VAV Final Review). However, the young people were pleased to hear that Police Scotland were rolling out a version of MARACs that they had recommended to Ministers/CoSLA: 'we were delighted to see the multi-agency approach in Glasgow' (Raya and Karen, Justice Review).

We wanted to change societal attitudes to domestic abuse

Young people felt that the majority of people, children and adults, did not understand domestic abuse and that there was tremendous stigma attached to it (see Chapter 5), therefore they wanted to change societal attitudes and increase awareness: 'At a certain point we are almost teaching people about the definition of domestic abuse, because there are people who just don't know about it, they don't understand it' (Declan, VAV Final Review). They were particularly keen that society knew that 'it's different in every case…different forms' (Lola, VAV Final Review), 'it's more than physical…it's children too' (Marc, VAV Final Review). Also that they needed to 'get everyone involved because it affects everyone… more boys and men working away against domestic abuse…it's not just a women's problem' (John, VAV Final Review). They felt the best way to make an impact in 'tackling domestic abuse, [is] basically knowledge-sharing and participation' (John, VAV Final Review).The action they took to tackle this issue was through various media – the online advert, the PR surrounding the advert, the film and the PR surrounding the film and the final event, the creation of the Voice Against Violence website.

Working with the researcher and a PR company, funded by the Government, they achieved the greatest reach of any Government domestic abuse campaign and exclusives in Scotland's most widely read newspapers, articles in magazines and BBC and Scottish

Television Main news coverage over the advert and film. In the review young people felt they had improved public understanding of domestic abuse through their multi-media work although the effects had not been monitored and they agreed they had 'done their best to let others know about domestic abuse so they can do their bit too' (Marc, VAV Final Review).

Declan supported the group to develop and maintain its own website (www.voicegainstviolence.org.uk) and presented statistics that revealed 275,000 hits in 1.5 years of existence, 'that's good for a non-commercial site' (Declan, VAV Final Review). He had evidence of wide interest including international visitors and revealed that interest peaking at key blogging times (e.g. events) which the group hoped would be used in the future to target and inform the public even more effectively. There is continuing high demand for VAV online resources and the young people felt that this was evidence of impact.

We wanted to promote children and young people's participation

In the final year of the project young people began to widen their view of impact in relation to children and young people's participation. They wanted to influence the future inclusion of CYPEDA in domestic abuse policy-making as well as 'be[ing] a voice for others going through domestic abuse' (VAV Directives 2008) and providing opportunities for CYPEDA's democratic inclusion (see above). Furthermore, they wanted to 'influence other children and young people to do something about what they believe' (Marc, VAV Final Review), to make an impact on wider participation of children and young people, not just about domestic abuse. They felt they were a role model (VAV Final Review), not just because they had experienced domestic abuse or that they had been involved at the highest level, but because they were a 'normal, diverse bunch of kids - gender, sexuality, ethnicity, different abilities' (Lola, VAV Film Review); 'yeah we cover everything, mainly not got

many certificates and we're not posh' (Marc, VAV Final Review). They agreed with Raya that the impact they wanted to make was to

> Inspire other children and young people as well to feel empowered that their opinions count too. And also, in doing so, create more opportunities for participation…And from this to lead on, for more opportunities, so children can participate, just so it's not so elitist. (Raya, VAV Final Review)

The young people felt that winning the high profile YoungScot Award for Diversity and Citizenship in 2011 and the UK Home Office Funded Philip Lawrence Award for 'young people capable of great things' in 2012 was a great way 'to gain publicity and inspire others' (Lola, VAV Final Review). They felt their potential impact had widened due to the resultant wide publicity and this differed in that it did not just concentrate on domestic abuse but participation and young people's strengths.

The final section of the VAV film and booklet focuses on inspiring participation and they felt their legacy was to continue to make an impact in the field. In 2012 4,000 copies of VAV's film *One Voice at a Time* were distributed to all schools, youth workers, childcare, training establishments in Scotland, with a letter of endorsement from Nicola Sturgeon. There has been no monitoring of these resources as such, although the film is in high demand: 'that's great but we don't know what effect it's happening' (John, VAV Final Review).

They felt their creation of resources, including the development and publication of their own standards for participation (http://voiceagainstviolence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/standards-booklet.pdf) should bring about 'change in how participation projects are run' (Lola, VAV Final Review). They agreed that future local and national VAV's were potential proof of that. They were pleased with an early positive response from the final Scottish Government seminar, and the network of VAV allies,

which indicated that there is a strong interest in using and adapting these materials for participation work with CYPEDA.

Measuring impact and lack of impact

There were various areas where the young people agreed that they had had little impact and the main ones were: improvement of housing; improving elements of the justice response including police incidents but also safe contact 'we raised safe contact with perpetrators as a vital issue for children from the start – it was a long time before anything happened on that' (John, VAV Final Review) and 'speaking out for/looking into minority groups, how they can be better supported' (Karen, VAV Final Review). They were aware of other areas where the impact was not only to be attributed to them, for example where others such as Women's Aid had campaigned for years. However, they did feel that once CYPEDA got a political position they made a greater impact than adult advocates: 'we're hard to ignore, we tell it straight, Ministers and CoSLA said we "injected an urgency"' (Raya, VAV Final Review). They also reflected that some of the impacts they wanted to make would take longer, and that many impacts were unknown, and unmonitored, due to the limits of the study 'we need to ask adults what they think' (Chloe, VAV Final Review) and the project ending. They also felt that if they had tried their best to make an impact, then they should be proud of that:

> Declan: We gave it a damn good try.
>
> Chloe: Aye, we did…We did change attitudes.
>
> Declan: Exactly, exactly
>
> Lola: So we changed something… that's still an impact that will prevail into the future.

The young people also discussed realistic measures of impact: 'the one I put down is an impact which will probably never happen, I'm just being optimistic, was eradicate domestic

abuse' (Lola, VAV Final Review); Declan replied 'I said that on a lesser scale. I said hearing from less people in my specific situation'. They reflected that they had asked for better statistics on CYPEDA from Government and agencies and this had not happened which made it even harder to measure impact (VAV Final Review). Although the group agreed with Chloe that 'I don't think there's any sort of impact that we can say we definitely, a hundred per cent, that's a done' (Chloe, VAV Final Review), the young people did reflect that they had made a political impact and had improved many children's lives across Scotland through increasing support.

Although data shows that impact was continually analysed from a young person's perspective, and young people felt it helped to ensure effectiveness, the measures were limited. There was a perceived lack of adult perspectives, statistics relating to CYPEDA but also in relation to longer term measures: 'what we did was really effective whilst VAV was running, just to a certain extent, but we're not 100% sure what we're doing now, not the VAV group necessarily but what our stuff is doing' (Karen, VAV Final Review). When asked by the researcher all the young people were supportive of what Marc named 'the need to follow this up through research and promotion' (VAV Final Review) and Lola 'we should look at impact and evidence that participation works'. John stated that '*We* know a new VAV is needed but we need to give the Scottish Government more evidence, need to interview adults about the positives and negatives of working with VAV' (VAV Final Review). Whilst all the young participants felt that further study would be interesting and worthwhile, most of the group felt that 'we've proved ourselves already, Nicola Sturgeon said that, we need to get on with it, children are suffering out there' (Chloe, VAV Final Review).

Impact on the children and young people in VAV as individuals

The impact not to be underestimated is the impact on the individual young people who worked hard in VAV for over two years. Their reflections produced common themes.

It helped them turn something negative – their experience of domestic abuse- into a positive: '…sometimes I'm still in disbelief that something so dark and supposedly crippling has become a spark of something that's the best thing I've ever done in my life' (Lola, VAV Final Review). It helped young people to reframe domestic abuse, so that it had less negative connotations, it no longer defined them: 'what we do is turn our past into experience and I now see it in a different way.' (Chloe, VAV Final Review). Raya said:

> my association with domestic abuse isn't all that bad [now], obviously it's bad…[it's] made me almost come to terms that I'm never going to see my brother again, maybe, but things like that…that it's ok, the life that you're living right now, is the best 'cos you're away from domestic abuse' (Raya, VAV Final Review).

They considered that being involved in VAV had helped them continue their recovery from domestic abuse and accept themselves for who they were: 'I feel more myself now and it's made me be more me, rather than the person I used to be when I used to hide who I am, I can be me and openly admit it now.' (Marc, VAV Final Review). They built lifelong friendships, could talk freely about domestic abuse and be open about it at last.

They felt that it helped them get their lives back on track and look to the future, it gave direction in lives that were still fraught with health problems, homelessness and the impact of a disjointed education:

> Obviously CEDAR was my first stepping stone but VAV helped me cross the river, it gave me a focus point and stopped me ever going over to the wrong side of life again. I started making conscious decisions to try to improve my future whereas

beforehand I didn't give a damn where I was going to end up' (Lola, VAV Final Review).

It built self confidence and self-esteem that was sorely needed; and young people all felt they came out of it a better person: '…it's also taught me that I am a capable young person that can really do things when I put my mind to it (and don't stutter too much!), which is really good 'cause I don't have a lot of self-confidence half the time and so this is good, it's been really self-affirming' (Raya, VAV Final Review).

The young people learned many new skills and built their CV's, essential for all young people and especially CYPEDA: most young experts had not been in education, employment or training during this time. They made connections and allies in professionals that may be useful in later life. They were motivated to continue to campaign, for a better world as well as against domestic abuse: 'on a personal level it has inspired me to make change, to fight for what you believe and to be accepting of others no matter who or what you are' (Jack, VAV Final Review).

They shared an optimism that young people could effect change and make an impact, 'I now know that if you try hard enough you can do whatever you want, you can make a difference.' (Karen, VAV Final Review). They wanted to inspire other young people to do so, to challenge apathy: ' it's important these days for young people like us to do something and help in some way to change [the world] and make a better place for people to live in.' (John, VAV Final Review).

The young people felt they had developed a framework for the future participation of CYPEDA and cited the planning, recruitment, structure, support from Government, status, position and direct access to Ministers as key (VAV Final Review). Karen said 'we've built it in stone - the structure, the standards, the goals - not to knocked down'

(Karen, VAV Final Review) which was a real achievement as 'before VAV it was a bit of a jumble…' (Declan, VAV Final Review).

> I would hate for our hard work over the last 2 years to go to waste if participating in this way is not done over and over and over, rolled out just like all the projects we've been fighting for' (Karen, VAV Final Review).

Discussion: tokenism to real participation

The Scottish Government and Voice Against Violence should be commended for progressing the cause of young people's participation in policy-making. It is unusual for young people to be asked to recommend how they would like to participate (VAV Directives 2008); many of their recommendations were put directly into action and legitimised their status as well as supporting the way they worked as VAV. It is unfortunate that the young people had to enter late into an adult-centric system for the three year plan. It would have been interesting should the adult/young experts begun together or if adults had continued to listen to young people's preferred ways of participating. Supporting effective, equal dialogue therefore proved more elusive, though less so with adults with the greatest power. Over the time we have certainly learned what worked and did not work; and about the challenges of young people's real participation in policy-making.

Young people are aware of the need to change how adult and society see children in order for young people to be taken seriously in policy-making. Being named publicly as young experts, critical actors, with a real status within policy-making systems emerged as key components to legitimising their involvement in reluctant adult eyes: direct access to people in power is the driving force. Young people are very much aware of tokenistic efforts: when their views are not acted upon, there is no feedback, there is a lack of respect, no ongoing participation - they are only asked once for advice but not to be part of the

solution, adults speak for them. Data showed young people's great capacity to contribute to solutions and that young people feel strongly that they are not just there to 'make it real'.

It proved difficult and time consuming to achieve equal relationships and dialogue between young and adult experts. Systems for communication and ways of working need to be built together, adult traditional methods do not work. Some adults needed training in participatory approaches to and with young people, all adults should educate themselves about domestic abuse before meeting CYPEDA, each adult should have expertise to offer the young expert in pursuing goals. Both adults and young people need preparation time before meeting and creative, small group methods when they do meet, where young people outnumber adults.

Young people need to retain their independence so that adults do not tell them what to do and they retain their own power to set their own priorities, they should be encouraged to be a critical friend and not to conform. Young people should be appreciated as experts in their own right, not representatives. At the same time they need resources to fact-find and research with other young and adult experts so they can bring depth and new evidence to their arguments with politicians.

Young people want to 'do' policy, to find and be part of solutions. Young people define real participation as taking forward projects with young people that originate from their own ideas. Such projects should actively take forward policy priorities and are backed by government funding. Within these processes young people need to be respected as experts and equals, their opinions need to be valued and it seems essential to that both young people and adults have fun learning new skills and exchanging knowledge. This shared process is helped if there are clear responsibilities, shared decision-making and power sharing, such as young people's right of veto. Young people feel they need to be involved all the way through – from the idea, design, creation, to the launch, promotion, monitoring

and feedback. It seems to work well when one informed government adult, plus creative agencies if needed, work closely with young project leads, keeping the group informed and involved at key decision points giving time for debate and equal participation. If this happens it actually feels like a young person's project which is important, a product/output to be proud of. Feedback and evaluation given to young people and adults at the same time on young people's terms worked well and a clear difference to CYPEDA needed to be demonstrated or valuable evidence for ministerial/local authority decisions produced. (VAV Project Reviews and VAV Final Review 2012).

Regular, direct access to people in power is the highest form of participation to CYPEDA: straight-talking meetings where only young people and Ministers speak are appreciated by both. Young people need dialogue and debating skills education, as well as presentational skills, to support them in this. Informal meetings on first name terms with a young chair work well, taking place at key times of influence, as does building a relationship through regular contact with the same Ministers and CoSLA representative. A good deal of preparation time is required and it is helpful for young people to chair and set the agenda.

Young people feel real participation is enabling and empowering other CYPEDA to participate, particularly those nearer the eye of the storm who perhaps can't participate over a long period but have a right to be heard by those in power. For this there needs to be time and co-education between adult and young experts in relation to methods, communication and ethics, with continuing direct access, enthusiasm and commitment of Ministers and CoSLA.

For these young people, there was not the over-riding value on their own personal benefits (see for example, Percy Smith, 2007): increasing support for CYPEDA and ethical and participatory principles were key conditions to positive involvement. That said, any long-term group of this sort for CYPEDA has a great therapeutic quality as well as capacity for

action: skilled workers need to be resourced to support young people individual and as a group, through their trials of life, often accentuated by their experiences of domestic abuse.

Young people and Government have revolutionised participation in Scotland, they have shown that CYPEDA can make an impact and that adults can work alongside them to ensure that. The next challenge is to make the new VAV even more participatory and collaborative, a true bringing together of equals.

Chapter 7
Young people's perspectives on ethical and participation principles

Introduction

A missing component in research processes is to 'encourage ordinary people to actively participate in ethical decision-making and praxis' (Manzo and Brightbill, 2010:35); for young people to be seen as those people would require a shift to seeing children and young people as active participants, competent in deciding their own best interests (see, for example, Alderson, 2011). Whilst children's perspectives on research methods have been sought (Hill, 2006), it is rare for children's perspectives on ethics to be sought. In the emerging literature seeking children's perspectives on domestic abuse (see Chapters 2 and 3), researchers adopted sensitive research ethics with children (see, for example, Alderson, 1995) and adapted them in relation to the specifics of the domestic abuse situation: Mullender et al.'s (2002) three C's of consent, confidentiality and child protection which encompassed three D's of danger, distress and disclosure, became instrumental in ensuring good practice in such research. In Part 1 of this study, the researcher challenged the approach of women's consent over children's (see also Alderson, 2011) and added the three E's of empowerment, emancipation and enjoyment, reflecting on the key elements of participation that marked that phase. Although informed by children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA), it remained adults that asserted the child's best interests in the research process. Part 3 of this study allowed, for the first time, the voices of young people experiencing domestic abuse to define their standards for participation.

When young people with experience of domestic abuse were asked their views on a more integral, continuous role in Scotland's policy-making (see Part 2 of the study), their first thoughts were that greater attention needed to be given to 'a sympathetic approach' (VAV

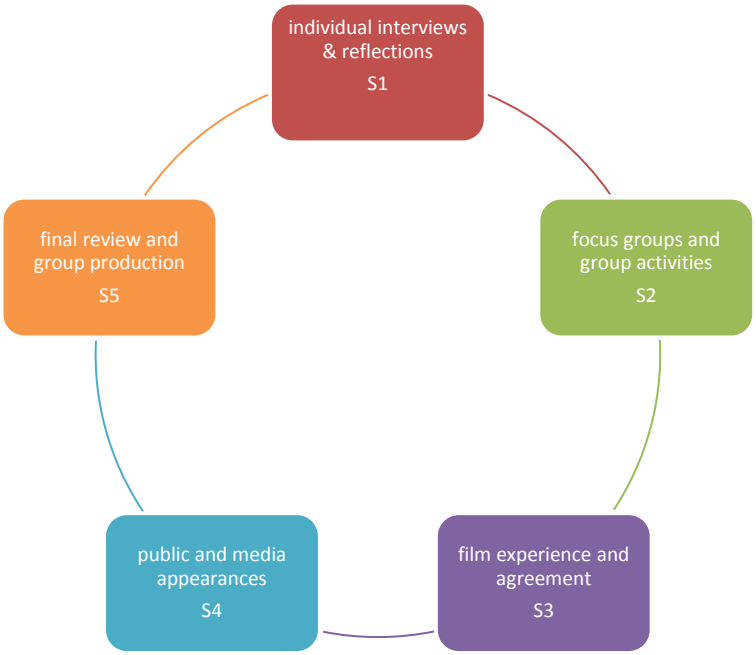
Directives, 2008) and that it was 'very important that the group developed its own standards' (VAV Directives, 2008). Their safe and happy participation required not only 'ethical standards', key tenets being safety and confidentiality, but also 'rules of engagement' (ibid.), which included how they were seen by, and related to, the adults it was proposed they worked with, as well as asserting their 'rights'. From their concerns emerged the third research question: what ethical and participation principles do young people think are important to enable their sustained, regular involvement in domestic abuse policy-making?

Part 3 of the study was a Participatory Action Research Process with the 8 young experts of Voice Against Violence (VAV). It took place over two and a half years of regular contact. The young participants were aged 16-22 when this part of the study began. Five had had previous experience of participation in the development of the plan (see Chapter 6). Four participants were male, four female and the young people were from diverse backgrounds. Each had different routes to safety from domestic abuse and therefore different experiences of services. Important for this part of the study is that all shared the experience of domestic abuse with their mother and maintained a relationship with her, seven also had siblings. Although all had escaped with their mother, half of the young adults now lived independently; one had lived apart from his mother since the first night in refuge, in care and then independently. Five young people had some form of informal contact with their father. All had experienced domestic abuse for many years before they left and were keen that people understood 'the severity of their experiences' (Chloe, S1).

Part 3 of the study focused on their perspectives on the ethical and participation principles they felt were important for sustained participation of CYPEDA in policy-making. Voice Against Violence was a pilot - the first participation project to integrate CYPEDA into the national policy-making process, so all ethical dilemmas were not apparent from the start. This necessitated 'ethical decision-making within [and throughout the] participatory

project' (Manzon and Brightbill, 2010:35) at various junctures over the two and a half years, summarised in the table below.

Table 26: Part 3 VAV Standards PAR process - referencing



The process is described in full in the data analysis section (in Chapter 4). This brief overview explains the referencing system for this Chapter: the young person's chosen alias, then S for Standards, 1-5; or where there is group agreement VAV will be used and where contributions are anonymous this will be stated. The research process was one in which young people defined their standards for safe and happy participation from the initial interview (S1) and agreed them as a baseline: safety and confidentiality were key here but coupled with how they were seen and respected by adult policy-makers. Young people were encouraged to raise issues with the researcher throughout the project (S1). The researcher then prepared group workshops (S2), based on the ideas of the young expert who raised an issue, anonymising the issues and enabling safe group discussion at residential meetings. The making of a film and producing a booklet initiated many issues, such as anonymity and equal participation (S3), as did public and media appearances (S4). The young people agreed to take part in a final review, the researcher anonymised data

gathered across the 2.5 years and supported the young people to produce their own standards as a tool for others to use (S5, see Appendix 2). The young experts reflected with the researcher individually and as a group on the 'ethical conundrums that emerged through the process' (Manzon and Brightbill, 2010:35) and any issues in reaching those standards (S5).

For their online resource (http://voiceagainstviolence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/standards-booklet.pdf), young people agreed to use the sun as a symbol of their ethical and participation principles which they named safe and happy: it represented warmth and comfort, a brighter future for children experiencing domestic abuse, a happy experience but could also burn, be dangerous, unsafe and a negative experience.

Table 27: Part 3 - VAV's sun for safe and happy participation

A significant issue here is that the young people decided that 'safe and happy are together as one as each contributes to the other' (VAV, S5): their welfare, best interests and participation rights were 'part of the same thing' (VAV S5). For them, protection, provision and participation went hand-in-hand, they integrated 'ethics' with the right to participate, they recognised the specifics of their situation necessitated a balance (see Chapter 5): 'Even though we are a positive group, we all come from backgrounds of domestic abuse, so there are always going to be issues of safety and things that are dangerous to us' (VAV, S5). Their reflexive, competent and nuanced thinking on these principles, and the balance, is explored in the chapter.

The first section of the chapter will focus on safety, including issues of risk, consent, privacy, distress and location. Key to safety is confidentiality and anonymity which has its own section due to its importance to the young people and the challenges that arose. Support follows in the third section, including the manager's role, peer support and support workers. Safe, respectful working with adults was important to young people covered in section four here and in more depth in Chapter 7. Section 5 explores the 3 E's I added to the Mullender et al. (2002) mnemonic, empowerment, emancipation and enjoyment from a young person's perspective. The Chapter ends with a conclusion considering what we have learned from young people with experience of domestic abuse and implications for the future.

Safety first

'Bring safety before everything else' wrote Chloe (S1): that safety was of paramount importance was agreed by VAV from the beginning (S2). Declan's advice to other young people was: 'make sure you're safe and happy, then participate' (S3). This section discusses not only the main risk which was from the perpetrator, but also other risks related to identification by others (see Chapter 6 also); shared risks with mothers; risks in speaking

out about domestic abuse and being known as a young expert in relation to domestic abuse. The robust information and consent process required is considered to end the section.

Risk from the perpetrator of domestic abuse

The main risk identified by the young participants was from the perpetrator of domestic abuse; some of the young experts remained closer 'to the eye of the storm' than others: 'I always felt safe but this is because it has been years since abuse – different for other members' (Raya, S5).

Some fathers and father figures posed more of a risk than others, ranging from a recently released, extremely violent father living nearby who posed such a risk that alarms were fitted around the house, to a father who had not been seen for so long he 'wouldn't recognise' the child. Three of the eight young people had no contact with the perpetrator and two felt safe as it had been a long time: 'I feel completely safe; there's no threat from anywhere, really' (Raya S1). Contact with their father was a major consideration for the other five in relation to safe involvement and also in what to say they were involved in, they were extremely concerned that their father would find out:

> I have a relationship with my dad now…my dad doesn't know I'm involved in this at all. I don't think he'd react well to me being involved in anti-domestic abuse stuff because it just reminds him of what he's done. (Declan, S1)
>
> He'd go off his nut! (Declan's mother, S1)
>
> [Both laugh].

As time went on, two of these young people were open with their father about their involvement in the project though, for one this was towards the end of the project: 'I've told my dad I'm involved…he respects that…he has no choice!' (Lola, S4) Her contact was

informally supervised by her friend but felt very much on her terms now, although she also had to consider threats relating to a different perpetrator. Another young person felt he could have been more open as his father recognised what he had done, had stopped it and was supportive alongside his mother with whom he was living. For all those who had contact with their father, their relationships with him went through ups and downs during the two and a half years of the project: a warning that feelings, circumstances and relationships would change over time. It is very significant that other risks were identified beyond risks posed by the perpetrator (reflected in Chapter 6 also).

Risk of being identified as having experienced domestic abuse

Young people were very concerned about the risk of being identified as having experienced domestic abuse if identified as involved in VAV: 'I would feel panic, embarrassment, denial, worry, exposed' (anonymous, S2). Young people said that they were scared that identification would re-traumatise them: 'it would open up painful memories' (anonymous, S2). They were concerned about the stigma surrounding domestic abuse and also of their and their family's privacy being invaded, 'it could prevent your family from moving on with their lives and your friends might tell other people your business' (anonymous, S2). Young people wanted to choose who knew. For most, hardly anyone knew what they had been through, or that they were in VAV.

The directives group recommended the name 'Voice Against Violence' so that young people could say they belonged to VAV without being linked to domestic abuse. However, it quickly became obvious that this could not be the case as VAV's public persona developed, not least since VAV's 'unique selling point' was that VAV's young experts had first-hand experience of domestic abuse.

Risks of speaking out about domestic abuse

All of the young people were concerned that being a member of VAV, where it was openly known they had experienced domestic abuse, would lead to invasions of privacy and expectations for them to talk about a very traumatic experience. In relation to peers it was a comfort and relief to meet others who had been through it, they felt that only those who had been through domestic abuse really knew what it was like including how hard it was to talk about it. The young people's peer group was the only safe place to speak openly about their experiences, not with adults they met: 'We want a real feeling of openness in the group, though, when it's just us' (Raya, S1).

There was recognition that the subject of domestic abuse would be raised a lot in the course of the work and that this might be distressing: 'We're coming along with our experiences and we're discussing it more- it keeps those memories fresh, therefore it can cause problems beyond that as well' (Marc, S1). There were times when each young expert became distressed: this could be triggered by hearing from others, personal circumstances such as depression, homelessness, arguments with mothers, insensitive adults: 'being in VAV can bring stuff up…can get very emotional…I phoned mum…be careful -things can come up' (Chloe, S1).

It is significant that all young people decided to share the horror of their reality when living with domestic abuse during the making of the film, over a year into the project: their motivation was to educate the many people who did not 'get' the reality of domestic abuse and to say to those children and mums who did to 'get out' and to let children know there was help available. It was possible because they felt safe, they had built strong peer friendships, trust in the whole team and it was their project over which they had full control: they developed the topic guide and chose which of their peers would interview them, they had control over the edit. It proved an emotional and revealing experience, the

first time each had heard the other's full story, all eight together; it was distressing but also bonding and empowering. In this, and only this, situation, it was worth the distress and risk of being fully open about their personal experience.

Shared risks

It was obvious to the young people that their mothers, as well as young people themselves, had to be involved in checking risks and safety planning, due to the interlinked nature of domestic abuse. Mothers were identified as the most important person to consult, ask for consent at risky times, invite and include, as VAV was about domestic abuse and she was: 'the one who went through it with you' (VAV, S4). It did not matter that they all had very different relationships with their mothers or that not all lived with their mum, domestic abuse had affected their relationships, positively and negatively, as had the support or lack of it they both had: 'The only reason I could speak to my mum totally frank was because we'd already had the support before we even started' (Lola, S4, CEDAR graduate). Some spoke openly together at home about what had happened, some did not: nothing took away from the fact they had experienced domestic abuse together, that VAV was about domestic abuse and that their mother was their key person. All the young people named their mother as their support and guardian, the person with whom it was essential to share information and the one person trusted to see photos that included other members of VAV. Young people felt that, because mothers had also been through domestic abuse, they understood the need for confidentiality. The woman's privacy and safety would also be under threat should there be any breaches. The young people wanted to share their VAV experience with them and for their mum to be proud, so mothers were in the VAV circle of trust (VAV, S2): 'I don't mind that people are talking to mums, that's cool but as long as we stay safe and aren't really identified outside that' (Raya, S1).

Information and consent

At the beginning of their involvement with VAV, the manager met with young people, their mothers and sometimes their support worker, to discuss risks and safety planning for involvement in the project. The young people had written a letter to the recruitment panel which explained their current situation and any perceived risks for involvement, including assurance that they felt they could campaign against domestic abuse as they had 'moved on' from their experience and had received support (VAV Directives, 2008). The young people felt that young people were at most risk from the perpetrator if their experience was more recent, if there was contact or risk of the perpetrator seeing them, if the young person and/or mother was frightened still. The severity of the abuse was also a factor, especially if recent and stalking continued, but two of those who had saved their mother's life did not feel threatened due to changes in circumstances.

They felt that they were well aware of risks and could make decisions about their best interests, but if their mother felt under threat, or 'thinks you're going to be found' (Chloe, S3), or were 'easily recognisable' (Declan, S4), then that should stop involvement in whatever activity. Young participants brought to the fore that it was shared process. There was no distinction on the grounds of age: 'I'm 24 now and I still consult my mum on pictures that go in the press and stuff like that, because it's always going to be: is this going to be an issue…?' (Chloe, S5). They recognised feelings and circumstances may change also. There were some concerns over mothers being over-protective or having too much power in decision-making. Raya (S4), for example, was concerned that her rights were being usurped: 'their [the mother's] consideration should be less important…ours should be the most important'. However, in the end young people felt it was down to what they wanted to do (VAV, S5), unless there were fears of being targeted by the abuser when it became a shared decision.

The young people decided that information they received with their regular consent forms should be shared with their mother and that it was the young person him or herself who should share that information with her. The information should include where they were and who they were with most importantly, plus what they were doing; this would enable mothers and young people to check there was no risk in location or travel; it should also include a travel itinerary and tickets: 'A safe journey to and from VAV is important' (Raya, S1). Interestingly, this was true for those who lived independently from their mother also. As part of the consent form the young people agreed they should confirm that they had discussed things with their mother 'as a check' (VAV, S2).

A location was found in a city where none of the perpetrators lived, which was an essential factor and also had to be borne in mind when the young people conducted fact-finding visits: 'it would be majorly uncomfortable to meet in [my home town]' (Jack, S5). A condition of involvement for all young people was: 'Having a base that's safe and mums know who we're with and where we are' (Chloe, S5) and, importantly, that no-one else knew where it was: 'a private space with people I know…barely anybody knew our secure, happy workplace…less people that know the better' (John, S5). Crucial to feelings of safety and comfort were privacy: young people had their own en-suite room and it was important this was not questioned as there were personal reasons relating to abuse, mental health, sleep was elusive for some. All had experienced shared refuge or homeless accommodation and found that traumatic. The venue found gave the group a private breakfast room also, friendly known staff maximising confidentiality, VAV insisted on exclusive use of the meeting rooms so other groups were not there: it became 'like a home away from home, a VAV environment that is permanent and comfortable' (VAV, S5). This was not only important for safety and comfort but for the work planned: 'having a secure place to work from…don't have to worry…get on and work a lot quicker' (Karen, S1). Each residential included team-building activities away from the venue, Declan (S1) warned that 'there's

also comfortable in that [young people] don't feel threatened when they're out and about with [VAV]'. To young people this meant not too many strangers, no alcohol or drunk people around. This was easily accomplished in a private cinema screening, for example, but less so in more usual and inexpensive youth activities. The young people insisted on a strict no alcohol, drugs or sexual activity rule, though sometimes this was questioned as these young people all became of age and acted responsibly. However, in the final review, it was reflected as a good idea to keep a strict abstinence rule. Some young participants had personal issues around alcohol relating to the abuse/perpetrator including how they or their mother coped with it. The agreed it 'kept everyone on an even keel' (John, S5) and feeling safe, they were here to work: 'we have to be strict – it just doesn't happen, we're funded by the Scottish Government so we can't end up on the news "group of experts to Government get guttered"!'(Karen, S1).

Consent for any of the young people's views to be used and what they would be used for was the young person's to give; this was a unanimous view and seemed obvious to all. They agreed: 'they're our views…not her [mum's] views or her words…you don't need anyone else to sign…that's an insult' (VAV, S2). It was only when there was a significant risk of identification involved –public appearance, filming, voice recognition, media -that it was agreed that their mothers should be involved; again this was due to the shared experience of domestic abuse and the shared risks to safety, privacy, reputation as a result of potential stigma.

In relation to siblings, matters were not so straightforward. The study and project risked identifying them too, especially younger siblings through the VAV film's distribution to schools. This brought to light how siblings experienced and reacted to domestic abuse in individual and different ways. This included: younger siblings who had not been aware of the abuse as they had been too young or not even born when it went on; siblings who denied it had happened; siblings who did not want to talk about it, then or now; siblings

who felt they had moved on and did not want to be reminded; siblings with their own problems whom it was not appropriate to bother; and estranged siblings through the abuse, through leaving or through events since. Young people felt it was a good reminder to think about their siblings, and some did speak to some siblings, but in the end, they concluded that: 'it's my own choice not theirs' (Chloe, S4).

Safety did come first in their time in VAV: 'I have always been asked for my consent. My safety has always been at the heart of all the meeting and with any other form of contact I've had with the group' (Karen S5). In practice it was not so straightforward. One young person warned that it was easy to forget safety and consent stuff and, therefore, it was important for the manager to keep it in mind. Information and consent forms were sent in advance electronically and in hard copy. Each time all eight signatures were collected but some young people took greater care than others to read and discuss in detail with their mothers: 'I always informed her of everything' (Lola, S5). For some, there was just laziness or forgetfulness or boredom with forms so it was just minimal information for mothers: where they were, that they were with VAV, and were safe. One young person raised the fact that no matter if the manager was 'excellent with consent', the media or social networking could leak information and this was a real concern: 'Safety first – deffo. Info and consent could be read more; it's for our safety' (Chloe, S5).

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Safety and confidentiality were linked; the most important thing to young people and their mothers, a condition of involvement: 'as long as we stay safe and aren't identified' (Raya, S1) and, for Jack (S1), 'not so much what is said stays within the room but, like, so it doesn't lead back to you'. Most adults they had come into contact with did not understand domestic abuse, so: 'our biggest concern is that adults/strangers do not understand the severity of our experiences' (VAV S5). Aliases were used; there were agreements made with

adult professionals; no identifying photos were to be taken or used. It was essential in getting involved in the first place: 'being able to get involved in the work and still remain anonymous with no fear of that causing a problem means you really want to get involved and not feel bad about it' (Declan, S1). It also helped the work process: 'it definitely made me feel like I could get a bit more personal and I think it's a good way to get the best out of people'(Jack, S4).

Anonymity

For some of the young people there was no option but to remain anonymous: 'yes, there has to be anonymity no matter what, no matter who it is' (Declan, S4) and, for most of VAV, measures were taken in consultation with the young people in order to protect the identity of the young experts. These included: first names only with each other and board members; where full names were given (e.g. Parliament security, hotels) the nature of the group was not revealed and agreements were made with fact finding project staff and young people. This helped the young people to be safe, but also to feel safe, and feel safe to open up. Jack's reflection on the use of pseudonyms and the growing realisation of its importance in public projects is illuminating: 'Pseudonyms wasn't one of my most important at first but I've definitely realised the importance of it as time went on…it adds to how safe you feel to open up and give it your best publicly(Jack S4).

These agreements (formed by the group, S2) included the more 'usual' ethical considerations such as: use of pseudonyms; no identifying features relating to the family to be disclosed; permission from young people to use stories; blurring of details if those stories were used including specific incidents; no recording or photographs although creative anonymous photos welcome. There were also important practical things like: 'don't say "hi" in the street unless we say "hi"'. The young people themselves struggled with this, they practised what to say if they inadvertently met each other like 'we're in a

youth group' or 'it's just someone I know': there were many concerns about fathers and friends wondering how they knew someone from Government, for example. Another tricky area was 'don't talk about VAV on social networking sites': the young people thanked each other's permission to be friends on Facebook and did not write about VAV business there. Some of their fathers were on Facebook, which made this incredibly important; they felt strongly that nobody should reveal details of meetings and locations to anyone. Adults working with VAV were asked to be creative about involving VAV, protect their anonymity: 'Don't forget there are consequences for us and our families' (S2).

Blanket anonymity?

Karen summarises VAV member's frustration with a blanket anonymity clause well:

> Some members felt that nobody should tell them what to do and others felt angry that it seemed the perpetrator was still controlling them, was still making them live their lives like they were constantly 'at risk'.(Karen, S4)

Another key point expressed by John was that he wanted to stand up and be counted; to show other young people that it was nothing to be ashamed of, that you can get through it and that boys could grow up to stand against it : 'I can *show* that I can be better than it and help stop it' (John, S1). Others were empathetic but were worried: 'we're proud of doing it and understand others are proud of helping the Government and want to tell others but they're not thinking of the consequences: heart overrules head' (Chloe, S1).

The young people were sure that adults would not think of the consequences for them and their family and that strict rules of engagement with them were needed (see above). There were also concerns expressed from the beginning that consequences were not being thought of enough within the VAV itself: 'I know we're all enthusiastic…but there are real world harsh consequences if we don't follow a respect system' (Declan S3). Although there was a great deal of comfort in being able to relate your stories to others who had been

through it and 'know it's confidential, so it kind of stays within the group' (Marc 1), keeping the fact you were in VAV, and therefore had experienced domestic abuse, secret took a little more thought and even practice of what to say in different situations. Previous experiences had illustrated the necessity for this: one young person's full name being published with a conference paper; a friend who had spoken out whose father had died and no risk was perceived but her aunt threw a brick through her window. Similarly, there had been a slip up by a member of VAV on a social networking site, others had unwanted 'friends' requests. Current members had their own reason, for example, 'my gran would die of embarrassment' (Karen, S1) and 'my dad just can't find out I'm doing this' (Declan S1, Jack S1).

This led to a need in the research to create an anonymous group exercise on consequences, to help the young people investigate the potential problems and to challenge the more *laissez faire* attitudes of some, without each young person having to reveal their personal issues and fears as such. Potential scenarios were discussed that led to identification of the young people and their family members as having experienced domestic abuse; the negative feelings that this would induce were stark. Peers finding out would cause embarrassment, fear and an unwanted pressure: 'pressurised to tell peers what VAV was about, this would lead to more questions and bring up the past' (anonymous, S2). At worst, it would put them in danger: 'I would feel vulnerable to attack wherever I went' (anonymous, S2). The young people felt that though peers may feel proud of their VAV work, it was more likely that they would not understand, would broadcast their private experiences and would be 'shocked and a bit freaked out' (anonymous, S2). There were particular concerns for those who lived in small communities, who felt that they would not only be identified but attitudes were such the community would not feel it was appropriate for her to speak out.

The group were shocked about their lack of thought about consequences and the potential for harm and developed a warning list for current and future participation: 'you don't

realise the effect, the possible aftermath, how you and everybody else can be identified; identify perspectives other than your own, like your mum, dad, siblings, gran, cousin in class watching a film; learn from things that have happened, open your eyes to different outcomes and situations; realise why we use pseudonyms; remember circumstances change over time; you may change your mind, play safe; you may not want someone to know in the future for all different reasons like you've left it behind, don't want to upset someone, fear of being labelled; you can't trust adults to understand; contact is a major issue; it does make you angry, having to be careful' (VAV, S2).

Whether to have blanket anonymity for a participatory project like VAV was hotly contested within the group right to the end, with everyone changing their minds: for example, the young person asserting they would never use their voice but in the end feeling safe to do that on film; the young person who felt there should be spokespeople but ultimately thinking it went against what VAV's about; the young advocate of showing faces and standing up to be counted concluding that VAV were a team and it should be 'all for one, one for all'. What is interesting in this discussion is how the young people try to balance the dichotomy between the crucial safety ethic with their participation rights to speak for themselves and equally participate.

For most of VAV business, the principle of equal participation was important to young people (see below), the group was 'all for one, one for all'. All the young people felt that in VAV core business – residential, meetings, fact-finding, Parliament and to a certain extent events – all members; confidentiality and anonymity could be protected with the agreements above, enabling all to participate. To have a media spokesperson would therefore:

> take away completely from the idea of Voice Against Violence …for equality reasons, you can't have one person being less anonymous, because then they become the face, and then the other person fades into the distance (Lola, S4).

All agreed that it was taking away from those who did not want to or could not do it, with the recommendation that the young person most at risk in the group would be the 'litmus test' as to what work was undertaken by the group: 'the same safety measures which are applied to that person, should be applied to everyone' (Raya S4). Young people were content to recommend this for VAV business and even VAV productions – they agreed that if one young person had opted out of using their own voice on the film all would. However, agreements in relation to public speaking and media work proved more difficult and over the two and a half years there were several high profile events through which the group reflected and learned a great deal.

The researcher facilitated VAV to produce good practice guidelines for equal and safe media participation: this would entail: media training for all members; group decisions on key messages and media outlets to be used; co-writing of the press release with statement from 'VAV'; the researcher supporting young people to write anonymous short testimonies for the press package, short profiles of experiences with identifying features removed; writing 'viewpoint' opinion articles together, which promoted young people's right to an opinion, controlled the agenda, as well, promoted VAV's work and not just personal experience; use of creative anonymous photography techniques with all eight young people (VAV, S4). VAV could be equally involved in a professional and anonymous press package that was sent out. However, this did not guarantee equal press for each young person, as of course journalists would heavily edit stories and use those with most graphic violence, which did hurt young people's feelings.

The decision to have a media spokesperson was carefully considered. Key factors agreed were whether it would raise the profile of domestic abuse or VAV in a profoundly greater way than the equal press package and, then, the degree of risk it exposed an individual young person to, from perpetrator or peers. If it went ahead, the mothers' consent would be sought and on reflection a couple of members felt that their mother's direct involvement would have been comforting, for example, being present for decisions about photos, or sitting nearby for interviews. Ultimately, they felt the researcher as manager had responsibility: 'You've got a sensible manager that's never going to expose the person to risk' (Karen, S5). The choice of who would be the spokesperson was fraught with difficulty, not only in relation to risk but also who had a talent in interviews, for this element media training and reflection with trained objective experts was helpful. Ultimately this decision was the managers as group decisions were not possible when all experts were not aware of each other's private situation and therefore the risks to which they were exposed: 'Tabloids will try and get you to spill your guts about everything personal that happened to you, not the project. You have to keep consciously linking back to stuff that VAV's done.'(Lola, S3).

The researcher facilitated the development of good practice principles for working with the media should this approach be taken (S4). Individual preparation and training should include: rehearsal of difficult questions; anonymising your story by switching time, place, gender of siblings and so on; deciding the main things you want to get across; getting support from your mother, including when the article or programme appeared, which could be really emotional. The group would agree to exclusive interviews only that were undertaken in advance of the event or launch, this meant less pressure and risk on the day for all VAV members, the journalists were to be on-call should the young person wish to withdraw any or all of the interview, if possible they were to share the article in advance. It also meant that it was less pressurised, the interview was in a safe, comfortable place, the

interview could be stopped at any time and details deleted, there was more control for the young interviewee. The manager would seek a sympathetic journalist and speak to that journalist in advance: to remind him or her about confidentiality and anonymity issues, including no identifying features to be mentioned and also to set the tone of the interview. For VAV that meant no doom and gloom, not just a 'sob story'. It had to include the message 'you can get through it', it had to include telling people where to get help and that there was 'light at the end of the tunnel' and it needed to talk about VAV and what VAV was doing. It was essential for the manager or support worker to be present at all interviews, mainly for support, to check it was anonymous enough, to agree and check with the young person that she or he got across his or her main three messages across, to stop the interview at any unwanted questions that the young person had stated beforehand, and for support afterwards. The young people stated clearly that they did not want an adult to speak for them: 'it's the young people that speak, not the manager' (Lola, S5), and the manager had to resist pressure for the adult, the real expert, to be interviewed in every single interview. There were inherent risks of identification that all young people needed to be aware of and it had to be accepted beforehand that 'all journalists [and their editors] do want the gore, a shocking story of brutality.' (Lola, S4).

Various techniques were used in the film and media interviews: blurred faces, other parts of the body like hands or someone walking, images not relating to the person talking. However, voices could be recognised, although some young members did not think so at times, and a further option for anonymity would be to use an actor. Young people felt strongly that they did not want actors to say their words in their film or in TV interviews. They felt that the actors would not have the passion like them, because 'it's everything we believe in…they're just going to say it like they're reading a script' (Chloe, S4), they all agreed that 'it is the voice that counts' (Marc, S4). Lola tempered that with safety issues 'I don't agree with actors, but I think it's necessary. If someone was identified by voice they'd

be in major trouble' (S4). In the end, the young people agreed that 'There is a risk, no matter what you choose' (Marc, S4). VAV's final interview on national television was celebrated at the awards evening as the most sensitive, un-intrusive and effective yet. However, the young spokesperson, chosen because of her role in VAV, talent and high degree of safety, became unhappy in the weeks following due to being recognised by a friend of a friend:

> I've got a very distinctive voice…. didnae actually realise how distinctive it was, and I'll never do it again. And I've always been very media, and I'll be the face of this and I'll do this and I'll do that but voice…will never do it again. It's far too risky. (Chloe, S4)

Despite this, VAV as a group felt they could not recommend that future groups did not do media interviews, as they were particularly concerned that their right to speak for themselves would be taken away should this be policy.

> If they're [the media] not getting things from the young people, then what are they going to do? They're going to speak to the manager…that's no what we're about. We're all about young people speaking for themselves. (Chloe, S4)

Although the group felt they had got a reasonable balance with some people speaking out and others not, they were left with an ethical conundrum in relation to their media involvement, which is typified by the following two quotes: 'It shows that young people can do it, and no matter what adults say, there's now proof that young people can take it to, as we say, the highest level, and we can spread the word across the nation' (Marc, S4); 'I think the safest thing, unfortunately, despite our experiences, is…We have to take the most dangerous situation in the group and adhere to that person's [limits], for everyone, unfortunately... it's a problem, we do lose things…[but] That could ruin their life, and I know that sounds extreme, but…' (Declan, S4). The discussion also raised issues about

lack of recognition for individual young people, and sadness about not being in the press photos at their award ceremony. The researcher would agree with a conclusion offered in the discussion: an appeal to consider the group as a role model for other CYPEDA, VAV's 'duty' to be a voice for others who can't be identified:

> At the end of the day we were standing up and speaking for other children and young people, it wasn't about us. Yes, having your photos on it, having your picture on a film for the rest of your life, is in a way, recognition, but it came back to what the film was about and it was speaking for others' (Karen, S4).

Support

Recruitment for the project recommended that the young members of Voice Against Violence had their own specialist support worker; it did not take on board the fact that the target age range of 15 and over meant that these young people were the most unlikely to have a specialist worker, particularly if they were male (see Chapters 3 and 6). Also, in its appeal to young people who had 'moved on' from their experiences they were appealing to young people who had moved on from their support workers: support workers from various agencies recommended young people they had previously worked with, only two offered to continue any support, furthermore, the young people felt they grew out of that: 'It just kind of petered out because I didn't need her' (Lola, S4). It is without doubt that the relationship with the peer group and the researcher became their main support: the group met at least once every two months for two and a half years building trusting, reciprocal relationships between young people and between young people and the researcher, the implications of this are discussed below. First though, it is important to consider their views on their mother as their main support as well as the support they felt was required before participating.

Support from mothers

For some young people, their mother was their main support: 'mum is my closest support because we've been through domestic abuse together' (Karen S1) and continues to be their best friend 'I tell my mum everything' (Lola S1). Others felt strongly that their mother was their named trusted person who gave permission about anything public but not whom they spoke to about domestic abuse:

> My mum had mixed emotions when I first started…because it was something we never, never, spoke about. It was one of those things that I didn't want to speak about because it would make her upset, so I had a co-worker that I confided in as well as my mum. When I started all this it was like hell's going to open up. (Chloe, S4)

This mother in fact was quietly supportive, always present and very proud for the duration of VAV. Other young people were shy or their mums were, most were protective towards their mothers as they had been when she was being abused, not wanting to upset or worry her 'I try not to worry my mum too much about things' (Marc S1), or they just didn't speak to mums about anything personal like a lot of teenagers (S5, Chapter 6) It was important for all involved not to assume that young people could talk to mums about domestic abuse issues (see Chapter 6), except the safety discussions which had to be handled very sensitively, or to presume that because young people could be open about their experience then the women could. It was important to create a welcoming supportive environment for mothers though; all young people appreciated their involvement from the first launch, event, where their wishes and fears were acknowledged and discussed, their strength acknowledged publicly in the Scottish Parliament. Mothers were invited to all events and this widened to all of the family for their final event and awards ceremonies;

which were amazing sources of bonding and pride in what could still be a fragile relationship.

Support before participation

The young people felt strongly that members of VAV should have been supported to 'move on' from their experience of domestic abuse before they took part in VAV: 'When we all got involved we had some form of support before we got to where we were…[it's] just how we all got to where we were'(Marc, S4). They were very firm about this to the point that, when the Big Lottery asked what they felt were priorities in relation to local participation projects or local multi-agency support projects. like CEDAR, it was obvious to the group that support services came first but also that you needed to have received them before being able to be involved in participation work. Although recruitment for new members was targeted through agencies, all the young people felt that they no longer needed a support worker; five of the young experts had taken part in previous stages of the research study, were therefore well known to the researcher and were no longer in receipt of support: 'speaking of the requirement on the form for that [a support worker], I probably just looked at you [the researcher] and went, "you're close enough!"'(Declan S4, others nod). The researcher was very conscious of the limits of her role both as manager and researcher and engaged the young people in finding a local support should they need one. As researcher I had to think very carefully how to manage this, I employed a co-facilitator for the group who also had counselling experience and would support the young people. Despite recognition that the researcher 'is not our individual support worker' (Karen, S5), in reality I met the need, however partially, for a constant, trusted adult who was not their mother (Chapter 6), who also understood domestic abuse: they felt particularly comfortable that I was an experienced Women's Aid children's support worker and over such a length of time, I did become a researcher-friend (James et al., 1998).

In the final reflection (S5), the researcher encouraged group members to explore other options: they accepted that it would be different in future groups as young people would not know the manager in advance and would be younger when starting, therefore a named support worker was recommended, particularly for the beginning of the process. They discussed whether VAV's role should be to provide support or to get a commitment from a support agency 'can VAV help someone get support more than they'd be able to get support themselves?' (Declan, S4); the manager's role would be to ensure the young expert has a named support 'as part of VAV life' (Declan and Karen, S4). Young experts did warn that some responsibility lay with potential participants to ensure they were ready to speak out about domestic abuse safely and to have the confidence to speak in front of other people, as VAV 'was not a support group' (VAV, S5). They also recognised that problems caused by domestic abuse continued into later life and should not exclude young people from participating, such as sleep and mental health issues, they recommended 'someone to talk to on a regular basis – can be friends family or a worker' (group agreement, S5). They also rated 'support for young experts' extremely highly in their individual and group reflection and related this to supporting each other and support from their manager and project worker and felt that they had developed links to further support: 'Being in VAV helps us heal and gives us options that we didn't have before and, if trouble comes along, we have our support and links to keep us and our families safe' (John, S5).

The researcher and manager's role and support

Reflecting on my role with the young people revealed interesting perspectives, their manager was to: 'support all the young people through their journey in VAV and to keep [them] safe and listen to [their] concerns' (VAV, S5); undertake a process of reflection and action to ensure 'we are the most effective we can be' (VAV, S5); 'know their background and the ins and outs of what the group are trying to achieve'(VAV, S5). To encourage an environment where young people were 'constantly surrounded by support and

understanding plus utmost care for our rights and beliefs' (Lola, S5) was my role as both researcher and manager, linked to individual support, for this I was research-practitioner.

The PAR process was essential to their work and integral to my role as manager, for this I was research-practitioner up to a point. It was the academic writing-up, rather than facilitating the young people to create their own final productions of standards, film and snakes and ladders of participation (see Chapter 7), where my role as researcher became separate: 'the boring stuff…Claire can do that' (VAV S5). In relation to knowing what the group is trying to achieve, the young participants felt it was important for the research-practitioner to have an overview and impart knowledge gained from practice and policy experience. However, they did agree 'it's too much work for one person' (Chloe, S2) as the workload became significant. They agreed to the employment of a project manager who would share knowing the ins-and-outs of projects. The time for negotiating with policy leads, intense fact-finding visits and interviews, plus a personal development programme for young people's own goals, were not essential to the research-manager role or possible in the time allocated. After reflection with my Government manager, the young people and their positive, safe, experience took precedence, my time with them was prioritised over time with adults (that could possibly have enabled more positive adult/child relationships). I employed a co-facilitator with considerable policy, personal development and support experience. On reflection with my co-facilitator, this should have been in place from the beginning of the project and both jobs should have been full-time, the young people agreed with this in their application for a future VAV. They felt another co-facilitator who was a designated support worker would have been useful, and there needed to be support, perhaps through a research and event administrator. With those caveats in relation to time and effort, the role of research-practitioner was intrinsic to the positive reciprocal experience of all, 'we worked together, getting better all the time' (Marc, S2). The benefits of a small trusted team for the PAR lifetime were considerable and the trusted

supportive relationship seemed inevitable. Time for support, therefore, needs to be built in to lengthy PAR processes, as some young people would have preferred more one-to-one meetings (S5) and there were times I did not have time or resources to travel to meet young people even at very significant and traumatic stages of their lives – bereavement, homelessness, childbirth.

A key role for the research-practitioner (researcher for ease unless a specific manager role is being discussed) was that of an equal relationship of respect with the young people, it was a prerequisite that the researcher 'speaks to us as equals' (Karen, S1) and recognised their expert status. It was a respectful sharing of expertise, the researcher's expertise was appreciated and relied upon in order to enable and empower young people to speak confidently and safely to different audiences. It was important that the young people did not feel there was hierarchy like a child/teacher relationship and that other adults did not look at the researcher as being above the young people: the 'real' expert (see Chapter 7 also). The young people felt most strongly that the researcher did not speak for them and that as 'manager' was not seen as the 'boss': they were the experts (VAV Directives, 2008 also). They made the decisions about where and if the manager went to meetings on behalf of VAV and in practice the manager did not attend any except preparatory meetings with individual adults involved in VAV sessions. The manager was invited to be on groups like the Participation Steering Group (PSG) and the Commissioner's Expert Group but the young people decided that they would represent themselves as and when appropriate at the PSG and that a young person could attend the expert group with the manager if that went ahead. The research-practitioner's role was definitely to be behind the young people, supporting them, equipping the young people to do the job others expected an adult expert to do. She would not speak for them, they would speak for themselves, they were the experts and it was essential to be 'great at making it obvious it's <u>our</u> project' (Jack, S5). Creating a supportive PAR environment was a vital element of the process to the young

people: 'revisiting the experience in a safe environment, plus using it to help others was awesome' (Lola, S5).

Remaining firmly in the background is a skill in itself and grew easier as the young people grew in confidence, spent more time together, learned and prioritised as a group and grew into their own roles. Young people took roles such as being the lead expert in a particular policy area and the co-chairs took an unpopular responsibility for strategic overview of the whole delivery plan. All agreed the plan was 'too big to get your head around' (John, S2) but one young person read everything and monitored progress, another took a particular role in maintaining and developing standards and raising very sensitive issues with the manager.

Consistency was really important to this group of young people: building trust and respect with the manager and researcher was vital. The young people did not want to deal much with strangers and were happy that the eventual co-worker was someone they already knew. A turn-over of staff would really have affected this group and it was important to have dedicated staff for the whole period, leading the young people to recommend more staff for the whole time of the project in the future. They also recommended more time for and with the manager and some seemed very conscious that she did not have enough time for them: 'an extra one-to-one meeting would have been nice' (Jack, S5). All the team joked about sacrifices to her home life – for one to one work, for preparation for important meetings, for support: insightfully a few members mentioned the manager should spend less time on travel/arrangements and administration which the back-up team should be doing. Knowing and trusting all in the team was important, especially the person making travel arrangements who was therefore privy to their full names, locations and circumstances.

Peer support

The researcher's role was to encourage a safe, supportive and friendly environment, shared by the group as it developed. It is very clear that the peer support, being able to speak about domestic abuse openly, being with others that had been through it, trusting everyone, being able to choose to talk about it or not –'when discussing abuse we all know our boundaries and we know we can opt out' (Marc, S5), was key to young people's safe and happy participatory experience. Talking about domestic abuse could become a key factor in being happy rather than traumatising: 'you talk about it, you meet other young people who have been through it and are getting on fine, it's quite inspiring. The project brings out confidence and the best in people' (Jack, S5). It was important, also, to have the team behind you in the more difficult task of speaking to adults: 'we support each other within the team especially when speaking of our experiences, like when we're trying to make our issues 'real' to get our point across' (VAV, S5).

Working with Adults

As VAV, the young people were expected to work with a number of adult policy-makers, particularly the Programme Board of adult experts for domestic abuse policy development and adults who were responsible for policy priorities, for example, the specialist approaches to justice or the groupwork pilots that were part of Scotland's Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan. This made the all young people feel really unsafe and nervous in the beginning. Chapter 7 explores the detail of their interaction and the repositioning of young experts to ensure adult respect and attempt an equal dialogue; in this Chapter I will therefore focus on key points relating to safety, comfort and happiness.

The young experts experience of adults had previously in the main been negative, exemplified by a complete lack of understanding about domestic abuse (see Chapter 6). There was a particular concern about privacy, what was expected of them when meeting

with adults, including what the adults would be told about their personal experience of domestic abuse in advance. They were reassured that the adults would know they had experienced domestic abuse but no details. However, they were then concerned that adults might pry: 'meeting other adults…they shouldn't inquire into our past – they shouldn't know anything about us unless we tell them' (Raya, S1). There were also concerns within the group that some young people were more open than others about that experiences, even causing some discomfort in that some young people would 'go on' about personal experiences too much, when it was important to talk about services for all children.

> I think this gives adults an open door to ask…to expect details…not what some people would be willing to give…good to use personal experience to emphasize a point , in certain situations feels like a window to ask 'what did your dad do?' (Karen, 1)

Young people did stress that there was a personal responsibility in being careful about what you revealed, and that it was the groups/managers responsibility to ensure that young people were clear that it was their choice and never to feel under pressure to tell their story. Karen's advice to others was:

> Young person – are you safe with what you're saying? Choosing your words carefully? Don't put yourself in a vulnerable situation with what you choose to say about your experiences of domestic abuse. (S1)

Other young people said that it was something that a young person needed training and education about, to go through their story and think about what felt safe to say and was not too distressing. Practice in answering or not answering questions in different settings was recommended, especially before meetings with adults: 'how to keep composure and keep calm even under fire with questions you may not feel you want to answer'(John, S1). It was

vital to continually restate that young people could opt out at any time and the manager would support them in that, this option was well-used.

The young people did recognise that it was their personal experience that made them experts and found ways of telling their stories with which they were comfortable and, importantly, that the whole group agreed to. Mostly, they used snippets of their experiences – and comparisons of one another's experiences to comment on services such as schools, housing, justice, support and lack of it: 'to get the point really across you have to share personal experiences' (Lola, S1). They also used their experience to set the scene and make it real from the beginning, for example, 'I'm involved in Voice Against Violence as I received no support and went down the wrong road of truancy, crime and drugs' (Lola meeting the Deputy First Minister). These comfortable, prepared, agreed methods of telling personal stories proved very effective as well as reassuring for the group, as they knew beforehand what was going to be said, had rehearsed it, and knew that they would not get distressed. One member of the group felt their experience had not been made the most of e.g. if you were not in the housing project group your experiences about homelessness weren't necessarily heard, whereas another was stated 'we need to be careful we're not prying' (Raya S1). On reflection I think there could have been more openings on particular issues where young people could choose to share their experience and knowledge, if done on an 'opt in', sensitive basis, before meeting any adults.

The greatest concern and frustration was that adults would not 'adhere to minimum standards of privacy, respect and disclosure…keep our identity safe and not do anything outside the meeting room that would identify us as VAV' (VAV, S5): all adults were therefore asked to sign up to an agreement covering 'do's and don't's' in terms of safety, confidentiality and privacy (see earlier). At initial residential meetings with adult policy-makers, young people felt there were just too many adults; this added to stress, was overwhelming and just did not work. So VAV recommended that there should always be

more young people than adults in the room: indeed, there should be as few adults as possible - the wider that ratio the better. One adult was fine! Where young people were attending an adults' meeting they presented first and decided whether they would stay and if they would answer questions. Young people would rather build up a strong, trusted relationship with one or two people, like the Chair of the Programme Board, or the person with expertise on a specific policy area such as schools rather than be expected to deal with many members all at once. Small group interviews or creative sessions with one adult with expertise and three to four young people worked well (see Chapter 7). Adults also were not clear who they were or why they were working with VAV: 'Knowing who you're working with' (Jack, S1) would help young people feel safe and comfortable. Young people needed more than just a line on the information sheet about who was coming in order to feel comfortable. They needed preparation time to learn about the adult, their role, their place in relation to the delivery plan priorities and the purpose of the meeting. They needed fun induction time with each adult and to clarify together the point of meeting them. Then it was important to have equal dialogue respecting each other's expertise: 'we want adults who empower us, don't dominate or lead' (Declan, S2). It quickly became very obvious that the adults needed to learn a lot more about domestic abuse, the policy area and its relevance to children and participatory work with young people. The young people's review of working with adults is stark reading (see Chapter 7), they did not feel that adults coming to initial meetings were educated enough or prepared, they felt insulted by this and were very frustrated by anyone who wasted their time, they felt patronised - as one young person said 'I don't have time to be fucking nice' (Karen, S4).

Some relationships did work well though, particularly consistent relationships with policy experts and VAV agreed the key elements for positive relationships with adults: friendliness; being there the whole way through, support us, be there for us; have a good understanding of domestic abuse; a good understanding of how to work with young

people; DO something! (VAV, S5). It is significant that there were all key elements of positive support received (see Chapter 6). In their policy-making roles adults needed to: 'be committed to the anti-domestic abuse agenda; attend our events and speak to us; give us new opportunities to work with you, create stuff with you; help us to access and influence people in power – give us insider knowledge, tell us how to tackle things and take issues further; tell us what your role is and what power you have, be honest; train us or co-facilitate with us; work closely with our project leads, let us visit you and find out more; give advice, be respectful; challenge us respectfully (don't just praise us!); be our ally (VAV, S5). The young experts were keen that adults did not: have inconsistent relationships with us- forget us, promise stuff then disappear, vanish; have one off meetings with us – follow through!; have no impact; not turn up to events; patronise, be condescending or undermine us – challenge positively; forget we have family and life commitments – it can be difficult for us to meet in your work time (VAV, S5). In their final review of working with adults the young experts did feel that they were 'safe meeting new people' (Marc S5) as adults were informed about things such as anonymity and that 'we always knew we were safe' (ibid.). They did feel there was real room for improvement in relationships though and that it had been hard working with adults: 'due to I think them being cynical and not giving us the best chance' (John, S5); participation could have been a more positive experience.

Enjoyment, Empowerment and Emancipation

The young people were aware that their participation rights were linked to their feelings of safety and happiness: that fun was intrinsic to their wish to be involved and the way they wanted to work, almost equal to safety as a precondition to involvement (VAV, S5); that they needed to feel confident, develop personally and be 'empowered to make a difference to others' (Declan, S1); that they had a right to access to power and, in fact, 'getting political can be fun' (Raya, S5). The following section explores the key elements for participation rights to be fulfilled from their perspective.

Enjoyment: Having fun

The young people all agreed that 'having fun' was a core principle of VAV, that 'a humorous and successful atmosphere' was vital and was a significant factor in retaining the commitment of VAV members (VAV, S5). Every residential had a fun team-building activity, separate from the work, which was protected even and especially when 'work' pressure was high: 'to bond as a team we need our down-time when we are not working' (Karen, S3). This was not all that made VAV enjoyable and effective though: 'through participating we also have fun which is very important because that's the only way you're going to really say what you really feel' (Raya, S3). Fun was a means to opening up about experiences (see Chapter 6) and also to being open and exploring the changes that young people wanted to make. Both elements were vital: 'we get to know each other a lot through it and when it comes to doing the hard work we get right into it and we do try to be creative, imaginative and fun' (John, S3). It was very important that the serious stuff was not like a job or school, it was respected as hard work but young people could have 'an insane laugh' (Lola, S3). A major contribution to that was the creative methods that were used, which were (co-)educational but unlike school, work or adult meetings: 'we have fun, creative methods, we use a lot of graphics, we do computer work, we do anything that will get us up and moving and keep us motivated' (Declan, S3). These creative methods also worked well in supporting fun communication and dialogue with adults (see Chapter 7). It was important that time in VAV was relaxing and not a stress and, most of all, that young people built peer friendships and trust. Making friends in VAV was also transformative in terms of their lives: 'it's given me the courage to make new friends within other circles…it's great to have such a lot of friends'. For motivation, for alleviating the effects of domestic abuse, for helping young people open up, for their continued involvement, fun was vital.

Empowerment: Young people speaking for themselves

A central tenet and success indicator in the setting up of VAV was that 'young people speak for themselves' (VAV Directives, 2008). They maintained this principle throughout the life of the project (see Chapter 7): 'always felt like we spoke for ourselves' (Marc, S5). VAV were recognised as experts; their words were not changed or professionalised by adults, there were no adult intermediaries in dealing with policy-makers and people in power: 'our manager has never spoken for us and neither has any other adult' (Karen, S5). They felt this brought huge advantages to the policy-making process: 'a different edge to the discussion, indeed for adults I feel young people are essential in gaining a full understanding [of domestic abuse and issues]' (Raya, S2); they shared their insights to enable and educate adults. They were different to many adults involved as they 'say things like they are and [do] not paint over the cracks…young people know what young people want' (Chloe, S2). They felt not only their domestic abuse expertise, that they knew 'what support works and what support let us down through that difficult time' (Declan, S2), was advantageous to policy-making, but also their youth: 'we have much fresher minds that haven't been spoiled over time' (John, S2). They were well aware of the efficacy of children's own words and politicians told them they were more likely to listen to them: 'when children and young people get involved with their own words and ways of presenting it, it's hard to ignore' (Declan, S2). As research-practitioner this principle was easy to develop and maintain in dealings with Ministers and CoSLA, but other adults working with VAV proved more difficult. There was often pressure for VAV to put things 'more professionally' than the young people's own words, especially if critical' or adults would try to 'lead' young people to the decision they wanted, which had the opposite effect. As manager, this principle had to be discussed regularly with adults coming into contact with VAV.

Empowerment: equal participation

It was extremely important to this group of young people that they had equal say and specifically that no voice was silenced, every voice heard: 'everyone gets a say, everyone always listens'. This applied to meetings with Ministers and CoSLA, to the way VAV worked – each young person had a couple of 'lead roles', to VAV decisions and to VAV productions – the film, the standards, the survey and to dealings with outside agencies. This principle was hard to maintain in dealings with adults, there was often pressure to have a spokesperson or pressure to have just one person speak about their experiences, for example, in the film or award videos: VAV young experts stuck to their guns and were creative. In the beginning it was difficult, particularly as there were older co-chairs and by coincidence one young person in the main spoke to the Board; but as all the young people began to 'own' the projects they were leading, a real respect for each other's different talents and skills emerged, creating a feeling of equality across the team (VAV, S5). Very important to this was to have a VAV participation project that all eight members were heavily involved in, the film cemented this, young people were adamant there was equal time for each voice, quotes from each person in the booklet, even if the film-makers thought one voice sounded better than another: 'we made sure everybody within the group got a say, and got a full say' (Karen, S3).

Young people were also keenly aware that voices that had been silenced through domestic abuse were not further silenced by discrimination due to homophobia, racism, sexism and that each member was accorded respect. It was important to recognise though that 'sometimes people just don't know, so VAV should be fair and help teach each other about certain political correctness when needed' (VAV, S5). This was done by young people themselves informally but when the issue of racism and language was raised, the researcher immediately organised a fun workshop with a trusted adult from the Government Equality Unit but unfortunately this did not happen due to time constraints. More could have been

done to promote equality as a group, including exploring issues of gender equality and domestic abuse. Individuals and small groups did engage with gender equality, the White Ribbon campaign and LGBT issues, but whole group discussions were lacking due to time and could have improved individuals feelings, considering the diversity within the group, as well as being part of Freire's (1972) process of 'concientisation'. In the main though, any issues were raised either privately with the researcher or in peer groups; they were tackled openly and young people felt respected and able to be themselves (VAV, S5): 'we have several different types of minority groups in the group…we don't want anybody in the group to be discriminating anyone else…the group's very open and very accepting' (Lola, S1).

VAV promoted democratic decision-making and major decisions would be taken by all eight members, each of those members should be able to express their own opinion and have it validated by the team, even if opinions differed: 'we are pretty much a democracy, we take on board what everybody has said: we are a group voice, we make sure everybody is happy' (Declan, S3). Again this became easier as group dynamics improved, when more openness and respect became established: there were on occasion 'verbal scuffles, people were saying their own thing…you can feel the tension when people don't listen to each other, because we all want our voice to be heard' (John, S1). It was important for the researcher to use group facilitation skills at such moments, skills that most young experts did not have as well as instances where the young experts wanted to feel equal, most were afraid of tension and it was appropriate for the researcher to step into a lead role. Equity amongst the young people was also important which built on individual strengths and experiences. They established this through everyone having lead roles and taking part only 'as long as I know I can help in the subject' (John, S1). On reflection, these lead roles could have been promoted more from the beginning, with more attention focussed on personal talents and goals, although some of course emerged from the process, such as creative

director Jack. The most positive comments in promoting equal participation related to young people taking over lead 'adult' roles: 'We build our skills as the group progresses and by the end we're practically running it ourselves' and becoming equal to the adult staff : 'the end result is a group of mostly independent contributors'. It was a slow process but ultimately empowering (VAV, S5).

Empowerment: group effectiveness

In order to be empowered to make a difference, young people were very aware of the need to use their limited time effectively: 'having a group that works together is very good as it makes everyone feel relaxed and know what they are doing'. The late entry of the young people into the policy- making structure (see Chapter 7) made prioritisation and delegation of work essential, but another factor was personal preference and expertise, for example in relation to support work or housing. It was an incredibly focussed team that requested time and project management training from the staff team at the beginning, so they could have the greatest affect: ' as long as we make as much difference as we can in the time that we've got…if we don't achieve anything then we're not being successful' (Raya, S1). There was a constant check on progress and several members asked the manager to keep the group on track: 'to maintain our forward thinking…focus' (Raya, S1). It was also important to have a realistic number of projects, which meant that at times the manager was asked 'to rein people in' (Chloe, S1). The young people did an incredible amount of work, which was sometimes too much of a commitment for some, and could be a bit 'full on' (VAV, S5): 'we don't want to take on too much…everyone's got their lives' (Declan, S1)

Empowerment: personal development and reward

The young people received a great deal of training, from more formal input to on the job education and co-education amongst staff and young experts. The major criticism of this was that it was in the main un-certificated: these young people, all of whose education had

been severely affected by domestic abuse, required particular attention to progressing their education and building Curriculum Vitae. Being in VAV itself was good for the CV: 'looks good you're helping others' (Marc, S1) but this did not get across the transferable skills the young people developed in the group including their leadership qualities. To tackle this the research employed a trusted person to undertake Youth Achievement Awards with the young people and the group as a whole recommended this should be part of the approach from the beginning (VAV, S5): this would also ensure a focus on personal as well as group goals. The subject of participation fees was hotly debated. When they were first discussed there were fears that it would be like the Government employing them and therefore the government would have power over them, as well as concerns like 'I don't want anyone to think we're doing it for the money. It's never been for that'(Raya, S1). In the end it proved really helpful to all the young people, especially at particular hard times as all young people and their families had been poorly affected economically through escaping domestic abuse. The young people wanted participation fees maintained but not publicised as part of the new VAV to maintain the fact that 'it was not the reason why we do it' (VAV, S5).

Emancipation: Direct access to people in power

The young experts felt that it was their right to have direct access to politicians, that they were competent witnesses and advisors with the most important perspectives on how to improve the lives of CYPEDA in Scotland: 'behind all the government jargon there should be real people being heard, especially young people if it affects them' (Jack, S5). They felt empowered by their experience of meeting Ministers and CoSLA over the years, of being part of the democratic process: 'we take our ideas to the Scottish Parliament and have our views and opinions respected and acted upon' (Karen, S2). Their relationship with Ministers was the most positive relationship with adults they had (see Chapter 7) and the fact that they were the first young people to have such access was a source of great pride and indicative of how far they had moved on from abuse: 'the relationship we have with

Ministers is the first of its kind, we are all unique and although we have all had a traumatising past we have came through' (Chloe, S5). They also felt that VAV had proven the advantage of involving young people in policy-making per se, that their views had been taken on board and used to improve children's lives showed it could work for any issue or group of young people: 'At the end of the day who knows what we need but us?' (Karen, S2). Although some of them did not have a vote as they were not yet 18, a point they did not agree with, they felt that they needed to be listened to because of their competence now but also to improve the future of the country: 'we are the future, the ones who need to live in this country, we do know what we're talking about' (Jack, S2). Their policy-making experience is explored in more detail in Chapter Seven, including a critical element of the VAV standards, which is success and making an impact. Here it is safe to say that young people were clear that they had a right to be involved in public decision-making, at the highest level and that they could and did make an impact:

> Young people have the right to direct access to people in power! Young people have the right to express their opinions and to use their voices to influence future government decisions. … Getting political can be exciting! Being part of the action means that you can make a difference to something you believe in! (VAV, S5)

Discussion

For the active participation of CYPEDA in policy-making at all, a great deal of attention needs to be paid to ensure that participation is safe with particular concerns in relation to confidentiality and anonymity as well as CYPEDA's fears and concerns about working with adults: a condition of their engagement is that it is enjoyable, empowering and emancipatory which is strongly linked to being able to speak out.

The factors that can make the participation experience a positive one, alleviating some of the harm done through domestic abuse, closely relate to those factors needed for good support (see Chapter 6). There are additional particular challenges relating to policy-making which include: the need for adults to see young people as competent actors in the policy-making process; to recognise the need for additional care to be taken with any more public engagements; to be creative, knowledgeable and sensitive in how they relate to CYPEDA. The number of adult policy-makers young people interact with should be limited to those that need to engage and are helpful to the young people: young people prefer a few key relationships with adults that have expertise in domestic abuse, specific policy areas and are senior civil servants whose job it is to have an overview and influence. Straight talking as Minister and CoSLA's critical friend pose the least threat to their safety, can be very positive and effective, and engage young people in politics.

Young people alongside a trusted research-practitioner can develop strong ethical and rights conditions for involvement in policy-making. The PAR approach works well as a tool for this but there is a need for sensitive facilitation from the trusted adult that enables anonymous and equal debate. Young people are extremely able to actively participating in welfare and rights debates; their experience of domestic abuse and the privacy that entails predicates not only a sensitive approach but a real understanding of dilemmas. Working alongside young people over a length of time can develop ways of working around those dilemmas to enable effective, safe, empowering, emancipatory and enjoyable participation.

This group of young people, with unique experience over two and a half years of policy-making, send a clear message to CYPEDA and policy-makers that young people with experience of domestic abuse can participate in a fun and safe way; the development of these standards for participation is a tool to help break down some of the barriers to participation. Although a template, any future project should begin from young participant's own wishes, fears and views.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

The Study

This study was undertaken from a feminist and children's rights perspective and consists of two key phases. In the first phase, the researcher undertook a qualitative action-oriented study, with 48 children and young people with experience of domestic abuse (CYPEDA), aged 4 to 19 at the beginning of their involvement, the majority of whom were receiving a range of services from Women's Aid in Scotland. This conclusion will examine how far the study answered the first research question: What can children and young people tell us to help plan domestic abuse policy and practice? In the second phase, the researcher undertook Participatory Action Research (PAR) with 9 of these young people over their five years involvement in the development and implementation of Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People (Scottish Government, 2008). This collaborative approach of reflection and action examines the second research question: Can processes avoid tokenism for both policy-makers and young people? Can children and young people have an impact? Emerging from this PAR research, young people in 2008 stated that, for a less tokenistic, sustained engagement of young people for the implementation of the plan, there needed to be a sympathetic, ethical approach including rules of engagement with adult policy-makers: not only that, such standards for participation in policy-making should be developed by young people themselves. This led the researcher to undertake a PAR process with 8 young people, over two and a half years, to answer the final question: What ethical and participation principles do young people think are important to enable their sustained, regular, involvement in domestic abuse policy-making?

This conclusion examines the extent to which the research questions have been answered, it establishes what we now know as a result of this study of children's perspectives, and reveals innovations in methodology, in young people's own examination of childhood theory, in ethical approach and latterly in young people's involvement in defining an ethical and rights-based approach.

What can young people tell us to help plan domestic abuse policy and practice for children?

The most important and original finding relating to this question challenges the question itself: children and young people want to tell politicians directly what the priorities for actions should be, facilitated by adults but not through adult intermediaries such as researchers. Children and young people in this study reinforced and illustrated childhood studies theory that children are competent and reflexive in informing policy and practice developments; the study's original methodology included the opportunity for CYPEDA to become political activists and speak directly to Ministers of the Scottish Government.

The question emerged from the literature on children's perspectives on domestic abuse that ascertains children as active participants in the domestic abuse situation and in finding solutions in their own lives. This study is the first to enable children and young people to become active participants in policy-making to improve the lives of other CYPEDA.

The knowledge gained through this study in relation to improving help and support for CYPEDA is significant in reinforcing and sometimes challenging key findings from the small body of literature, providing more depth on certain issues, raising some new issues including further areas for study: It is unique in its focus on solutions and young people being involved in action to impart and take forward their solutions.

This study reinforces the findings that children and young people feel domestic abuse happens to them and their mothers, they too need help to name the abuse, a language to

enable them to speak out about it and, vitally, someone to listen. This study challenges previous assertions that mothers are the main person children and young people speak to. Although that was true for younger children, it became significantly less so once they reached the age of eleven. However, these young people still see their mother as the key support for their lives, just not necessarily someone to speak to about domestic abuse, for their own reasons and also because some mothers do not speak about it. Significantly for the ethical approach I employed, it is their mother and only their mother, who they see as sharing the experience and risks and who should be involved in decisions to take part in research of participation in policy-making.

Some previous studies found that siblings and friends are children's key sources of support. In this study it emerged that sibling relationships were complex and it was not easy to speak about the abuse, despite the shared experience. Through examination of services children raised potential solutions for individual support that moved onto support for sibling relationships: the recommendation for attention to be given to rebuilding those relationships adds to the current tenet of rebuilding the mother/child relationship. In relation to friends, this study reveals a more negative perspective on friends' capacity to support than others: the majority of children and young people in this study could not speak with friends about domestic abuse. Having friends around was crucial to their resilience though, just not who they could open up to. It was new friends, peers who had been through domestic abuse too, that were the key support for CYPEDA in this study, whilst we already knew that being with others was important, for children in this study they were, with very few exceptions, the only peers that they could be open with.

This study was limited in the fact that it mainly involved children aged 8 and over, so young children's views have not yet been ascertained and therefore it cannot be presumed that these findings apply to all ages. Despite efforts there were no disabled CYPEDA in the

sample, their communication needs are unexplored and a significant minority ethnic group in Scotland of Scottish/Chinese CYPEDA were also not represented.

The key adult and, usually only adult, with whom most CYPEDA could speak was a specialist domestic abuse-trained support worker, reflecting previous studies. This study used evaluative techniques with children and young people to examine this oft-lauded service more critically. This study found that there were many children within the refuge system who were not able to access an individual support service. Although most accessed group activities and support, some had no service at all including particular groups such as Asian teenagers and a few older teenage boys, an area worthy of further study. If they did receive support this reflected other findings in its positive effect on their lives, unique in its child-led nature and ability to name domestic abuse and deal sensitively and gradually with feelings. If they did not receive individual support, or the service did not last for long, there emerged a feeling of loneliness, isolation and rejection.

A dual approach of individual continuous support leading to options of groupwork was the preferred approach for CYPEDA and this was most often attained in new outreach and aftercare support services to children in the community. This service was also beginning to tackle the lack of support and understanding in schools, also found in other studies, through collaborative work between teachers and Women's Aid that encompassed a respect for CYPEDA and their privacy. Children and young people's relationships with support workers were explored more fully in this than other studies, and age specific expectations emerged. Children aged 8-11 very much wanted a worker who was like family and who could provide escapist group activities as much as talking; teenagers wanted focused, informal individual support, that focused on solutions. The comparison between different services in this study, including the pilots, was useful in ascertaining the common factors for good support and the progressive features that should figure across the Women's Aid services and beyond, bringing new knowledge to Scotland.

CYPEDA's political activism in this study resulted in the service they recommended (refuge, aftercare, outreach with individual and group support) existing in every local authority in Scotland. A larger study could now more fully evaluate the service effectiveness from a CYPEDA's perspective, including how far such progressive work practices permeate the range of services. Uniquely in this study, young people communicated demands for continuous support through moves, individual one-to-one support for everyone, groupwork options for all, outreach to those in the community, direct to Ministers. Children's recommendations became conditions of grant for a Scotland-wide fund of £6 million which continued through influence of young people in Part 2 of the study.

This study also adds weight to a Government funded study in 2003 (Fitzpatrick et al. 2003) through which children's views on refuge provision were obtained, leading to a recommendation that shared living conditions should be phased out. It was already known that children hated sharing (ibid.), but this study found that having your own flat was one of three key factors to resilience, along with having friends around you (not necessarily to speak to about domestic abuse) and someone to talk to openly, usually mum or a support worker.

It appears, disturbingly, that domestic abuse remains an experience made more horrific by the stigma surrounding it, reinforced and further explored in this study. CYPEDA spoke about services branding them as the problem or as mad, being labelled as doomed because of their experience. CYPEDA tell us that the perpetrator is not being named as the cause or the problem. CYPEDA, in their exploration of solutions, reflected other findings: that public and school education was needed to raise awareness of the nature of domestic abuse, the effect on children, its cause, the need for sensitivity and understanding and to signpost avenues to confidential support. Unlike other studies, the action cycle of phase two PAR research included the co-creation of an online advert for teenagers experiencing

domestic abuse that also tackled CYPEDA's problems in naming it: 'feel like you're living in a warzone?' (VAV/Government advert 2011), young people began to be involved in solutions (http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Sf5yjJq7ubU).

In some areas, it would seem that adult-centric notions and approaches to domestic abuse exist, children are still largely hidden, silent, ignored victims in relation to mainstream services and this study also found that was true in a small minority of women's services. It has been widely commented upon in the wider domestic abuse literature that once a child is identified as experiencing domestic abuse, abusive men disappear from the rhetoric, they are not tackled and the woman often becomes the problem for lack of ability to care. From a child's perspective in this study, CYPEDA concurred that professionals, even some support workers, did not seem to mention the father, as the cause of abuse or as someone with whom they may need to build communication with. This adds another key component in support for relationships, though less safe and more complex.

Like other studies, this study found that professionals in contact with children struggle with repositioning children as experts in their lives, active participants in the domestic abuse situation who therefore have a right to support and protection and to participate in decision-making. CYPEDA report insensitive, inappropriate and even punitive responses from professionals, particular in schools that they see as the next important place to them after home. It would seem that the skills deficit in teachers in respect of responding to the many CYPEDA in their classrooms is a priority for action to children. Young people took forward a key recommendation in Mullender et al. (2002), that children themselves could take part in education packages. Voice Against Violence created a website for pupils as part of schools' policy development, www.safehub.org, and created a film and accompanying booklet to educate others, with a particular segment on expert advice to professionals and teachers, (see appendix and film available at http://vimeo.com/29908502). Young activists were unerring in their demand for mandatory training of teachers on domestic abuse which

has still not happened. Whilst this study explored with the majority of participants the response of schools which was on the whole very negative, like other studies it produced only scant findings on the role of other professionals. There remains a gap in children's perspectives on the response of specific agencies, in particular justice and the police response but also social work, the care system and the Children's Panel system.

Can processes avoid tokenism for both policy-makers and young people? Can children and young people have an impact?

The fact that children and young people with experience of domestic abuse are experts in their own lives and are able to contribute significantly to solutions is reflected in this study and those in the literature reviews. Furthermore, the childhood studies literature is critical that such participation of children and young people in studies or projects does not make a significant impact on policy-making. This study finds that CYPEDA can and do have a significant impact. This has been attained through creating a unique space for political activism where CYPEDA, and only CYPEDA, speak directly to Ministers at an event about their key messages from the study. Such an event, as an integral part of this research study, proved that CYPEDA can be effective in their political engagement, even if this is a one off occurrence which if often criticised for being 'token'. For the children and young people involved in Part 1 it was commensurate to the time and energy they had and had an immediate positive effect, made possible through announcements but also ensuring the methodology included such opportunities at times of influence. It seems that this can happen even if their experience is relatively recent, if their participation is supported by a specialist support worker and their mother and they are safe. Furthermore, if feminist activists and critical actors in Government open spaces for political engagement, CYPEDA are competent and reflexive political activists who do not want to speak through adult intermediaries. It seems likely that political activism, from the 'outside', may be the most appropriate form of engagement for some CYPEDA nearer to 'the eye of the storm', with

creative planning it was also inclusive in including younger children, with short term outcomes and empowerment: it is 'real' participation. Whilst Part 1 was limited in its lack of reflection with the child activists on their views about participation, it did leave a legacy in that CYPEDA and their advocates in Scotland are now reluctant to take part in research that does not guarantee direct access to politicians to give their analysis of the situation!

Part 2 of the study provided an opportunity for young people who were more integrally involved in policy-making to involve children in both the action and reflection cycle of political activism. Young people felt real participation was also enabling and empowering other CYPEDA to participate, particularly those nearer the eye of the storm who perhaps cannot participate over a long period but have a right to be heard by those in power. They undertook a peer mentoring and education project which resulted in children asking questions direct to a panel of the Deputy First Minister, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, and a key CoSLA representative. The VAV young people reflected with the other young experts their views of the process, engagement and outcomes with many key lessons learned outline in the young people's report (http://voiceagainstviolence.org.uk/category/resources/.)

The opportunity to undertake a Participatory Action Research study with young people experiencing domestic abuse over five years, during which they become a unique, integral part of Scotland's policy-making, marks this study as original and innovative and offers a thorough exploration of the research question from a young person's perspective. Childhood studies literature states that the missing component is children themselves in the emerging theory of childhood. In this study children actively engage and make real this debate. Young people feel there is a the need to change how adults and society see children, in order for young people to be taken seriously in policy-making. Young people can grasp what are seen as theoretical concepts about children's competence. Young people advised Government on the inclusion of CYPEDA and ways of real participation (VAV

Directives, 2008). It appears that being named publicly as young experts, critical actors, with a real status within policy-making systems are all key components to legitimising their involvement in reluctant adult eyes. Direct access to people in power is the driving force. Young people are very much aware of tokenistic efforts to involve them and provide many instances of this during the course of this study. Examples include, when their views aren't acted upon, there is no feedback, there's a lack of respect and no ongoing participation. They do not want or need adults to speak for them, they need to be asked more than once for advice so that they can be part of the solution. Young people reflected that even some of the more progressive policy-makers felt that children were there to 'make things real' rather than acknowledge the young peoples' capacity to contribute to solutions.

The structural integration of Voice Against Violence as an equal partner in the policy-making system provided an excellent opportunity to examine adult/young people relations, and the study reveals many challenges for adult policy-makers if they are to sustain such an approach. It appears difficult and time consuming to achieve equal relationships and dialogue between young and adult experts. Systems for communication and ways of working need to be built together and if there are separate adult and young expert groups they need to begin at the same time. Children think adult traditional methods of communicating don't work. Some adults need training in participatory approaches to and with young people, all adults should educate themselves about domestic abuse before meeting CYPEDA, each adult should have expertise to offer the young expert in pursuing goals. Both adults and young people need preparation time before meeting and creative, small group methods when they do meet, where young people outnumber adults. Young people with experience of domestic abuse will have had their lives and education disrupted. Skills to participate need to be built throughout a project, and must transfer to their lives and CV's, as part of undoing the harm done to them by domestic abuse.

It appears that young people's status, and independence, conferred by Ministers, is of most importance for real participation. Young people need to retain their independence so that adults do not tell them what to do and they retain their own power to set their own priorities, they are encouraged to be a critical friend and not to conform. Young people are experts in their own right, not representatives. At the same time they need resources to fact-find and research with other young and adult experts so they can bring depth and new evidence to their arguments with politicians.

It appears that some young people want to 'do' policy and, if given the opportunity, can find and be part of solutions. Where such opportunities arose in this study, young people reflected in what was 'real participation', which reflect typologies designed by adults in the literature (Hart, 1997, for example). Real participation involved; taking forward projects with young people that originate from young people's ideas, recognising these as policy priorities and provided with funding. Adult/young person relationships need to ensure that young people are respected as experts and equals, their opinions valued and are involved all the way through – from the idea, design, creation to the launch, promotion, monitoring and feedback. Young people felt the best way of exchanging knowledge was to have fun, for adults and young people to learn new skills together. In relation to decision-making there needed to be clear roles and responsibilities, shared decision-making and power sharing and clarity where the power lies, for example, giving the young people a clear right of veto. Above all, the project must feel like theirs and make a difference.

In relation to such typologies, the study gave an opportunity to examine what, if anything was on the top rung of their own ladder of participation. Regular, direct access to people in power is the highest form of participation to CYPEDA, which is elevated further if they mentor other CYPEDA to access power. It seems that great care needs to be taken to make meetings with Ministers effective and not tokenistic: young people need dialogue and debating skills education, as well as presentational skills, to support them in this; informal

approaches such as first name terms, a young chair with a young person-set agenda seem to work well, a good deal of preparation time is required. Most importantly, young people recommend meetings taking place only at times of key influence, particularly in budget-setting, real participation is when politicians recognise them as a key aspect of that process. The relationship grew into one in which Ministers felt they were a key and essential component to decision-making and where all enjoyed their straight talking, respectful dialogue, the PAR approach was key to that. Of course this phase of the study was with only eight young people, all of whom were fifteen and over, although diverse in gender, ethnicity and sexuality, there remain significant gaps in knowledge as to younger children and disabled CYPEDA's views on policy-making.

Mindful of the fact that the literature criticises the lack of impact of the plethora of participation activities in the UK, and that 'impact' is currently seen as a critically important, if contested, benchmark of successful research; the researcher encouraged young people to define their own impact framework which correlated closely to that of the Research Excellence Framework, they definitely made an impact which was related in Parliament: they shaped the policy of the plan, were key to decisions and influenced the future of domestic abuse policy by causing Ministers to add a fourth P of participation to provision, protection and prevention; they increased the democratic participation of CYPEDA and challenged the lack of engagement and how children were seen; they improved access to services through the creation and retention of a multi-million fund for support services; improved public understanding through production and promotion of materials and key messages through the media and there was a phenomenal impact on their lives as individuals as on many adults who worked with them. Young people and the Scottish Government have revolutionised participation in Scotland, they have shown that CYPEDA can make an impact and that adults can work alongside them to ensure that. It is a resource intensive exercise and such an approach cannot separate therapeutic support

needs from social and political action, it seems young people are empowered in their lives as well as their policy-making but it must be recognised that this requires substantial support from adults.

What ethical and participation principles do young people think are important to enable their sustained, regular involvement in domestic abuse policy-making?

In phase one of the research, the researcher developed the good practice in ethical research with CYPEDA established by Mullender et al.'s (2002) mnemonic of 3 C's of consent, confidentiality and child protection which encompassed 3 D's of danger, disclosure, distress. She developed a new ethical approach where the child's rights and competence to consent was achieved through mutual decision-making with the mother and support worker. The researcher developed and added 3 E's to that approach of enjoyment, empowerment and emancipation: new research studies in Scotland are now following 3 C's, D's and E's. Most innovatively, phase two of the research allowed for an intense two and a half year PAR process with eight young people through which young people's principles for an ethical and children's rights approach was developed. They agreed with and further developed the approach above adding particular concerns for policy-making which involved a consideration of the risks of working with adult strangers, the right to direct access to people in power and equal participation of all involved, their right to have a strong and equal voice in Scotland's policy-making. The fact that they had experienced domestic abuse brought very specific issues in relation to anonymity, privacy, education, speaking out: all were ethical dilemmas that could be got around and result in effective, enjoyable participation. For the active participation of CYPEDA in policy-making at all, it would appear that young people set strong ethical and rights conditions as well as advocating the need to collaborate as equals throughout the project to continuously negotiate safe and happy involvement as new opportunities arise. Young people actively

engaged and overcame dilemma's in literature about the balance of protection, provision and participation rights and the balance of women's and children's rights and produced their own clear standards to reduce barriers to the participation of CYPEDA in policy-making, or in any project, in the future.

Claim for originality

The study contributes new knowledge in relation to who children can talk to, a deeper critique of specialist support services, challenges in relation to abusive fathers and is the first study encompassing the new types of services in Scotland. Never before have a group of young people become integral to domestic abuse policy-making; this study reveals new perspectives on such engagement, what CYPEDA feel is real and token participation. Uniquely, the PAR approach resulted in the production of their own, unique, terms of engagement through which young people themselves, unusually, engage with the theory of childhood and a repositioning of adult/child relations. Unlike most research or participation projects the children and young people had real impact as political activists and political actors, in terms of domestic abuse policy, practice and, vitally, policy-making. Innovation within the study allowed for young people to produce and co-produce solutions to issues that emerged in the first phase, such as conditions for the multi-million fund based on their analysis of priorities for action, creating an advert to address stigma, knowledge and lack of access to services, giving expert advice to the unresponsive adult professionals, in particular teachers through a film. The mnemonic of 3 E's adding to good, safe, practice, along with a new collaborative approach to consent as part of CYPEDA's therapeutic experience, enhances the ethical and participatory approaches found in the previous literature. Furthermore, young people themselves have meshed their rights and safety to produce their own standards for further engagement, in order to break down the

many barriers that exist to enable CYPEDA to be active participants in their services, local communities and national policy-making.

Concluding thoughts

Finally, it has been a privilege to listen to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse over the period of this study: to explore with them their solutions for policy and practice; to work alongside them to articulate those views powerfully to politicians and policy-makers in Scotland; to review with them their active participation in policy and explore their conditions for, and principles of, involvement. It appears, though, that too many adults in their lives are not listening, they are not able to acknowledge children and young people as active participants in their lives and solutions, are not recognising their suffering or their strength. Furthermore, if children and young people are to be empowered to speak out, adults need to collaborate with them as equals to change their world and the world of others. This conclusion sets out the challenges ahead of us all to ensure children's active participation in a brighter future.

The Scottish Government and Parliament, along with Voice Against Violence, must be commended for revolutionising the participation of young people experiencing domestic abuse. Although there are many ways to do it better, young people have had unprecedented involvement in policy and regular access to those in power, they have had a real say in how it worked and achieved real impact: services and access to support services has improved across Scotland, based on conditions set by CYPEDA. Children's lives have been transformed, including those who were part of Voice Against Violence: hopefully adults lives and perceptions have been transformed as well – that is also for further study. Most importantly, this new way of working has transformed the democratic participation of children and young people:

I feel proud to be Scottish, I never imagine in a million years this would have been done in Westminster. It's too posh, big, grand. Our Government is very Scottish, very relaxed. I'm proud of the way the Government run themselves; they're happy to include children and young people. It's the first time it's been done in the world - it's groundbreaking, hats off to them. They said 'we need kids there let's do it': well we said that actually! Hats off for finding us, no one could have done it better! (Karen, co-Chair of Voice Against Violence).

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Appendix 1
Parts 1, 2 and 3 Chart of Participants

This table includes all children and young people involved in the study. The colour coding denotes their focus group or interview in phase one of the research. The final column indicates if they took part in Parts 2 and 3 of the study.

No.	Group/ classification	**Service received**	CYP (initial)	gender	age	ethnicity	Parts 2 & 3?
1	SAWA Semi-rural	Outreach 1:1 and group	SC/Declan	M	17	White Scottish	Yes 2007-2012
2	SAWA Girls been in Refuge- shared bedroom and ensuite bathroom but shared kitchen	Outreach 1:1 and group [Girls had been in refuge but had no support there]	KZ (sister CZ)	F	15	White Scottish	
3	SAWA	Outreach 1:1 and group	CZ (sister KZ)	F	16	White Scottish	
4	EAWA Semi-rural	Outreach Girls group	RX (twin sister CX)	F	11	White Scottish	
5		Outreach Girls group	CX (twin RX)	F	11	White Scottish	
6		Outreach Girls group	SX (big sister of CX and RX)	F	12	White Scottish	
7		Outreach Girls group	K	F	12	White Scottish	
8		Outreach Girls group	N	F	12	White Scottish	
9		Outreach Girls group	R	F	11	White Scottish	
10		Outreach Girls group	LY (sis EY)	F	11	White Scottish	
11		Outreach Girls group	EY (sis LY)	F	11	White Scottish	
12	NAWA Semi-rural	Outreach 1:1	D	M	12	White Scottish	
13		Outreach 1:1	KN (brother of N)	M	9	White Scottish	
14		Outreach 1:1	NK (sister of K)	F	13	White Scottish	

15	NAWA cont. Shared refuges	Refuge/Follow on (RFO)- support after refuge)	J	F	11	White Scottish	
16		RFO	L	M	9	White Scottish	
17		RFO	N	F	19	White Scottish	
18	NAWA cont Semi rural Shared refuge	RFO accessed Refuge/follow on in own right escaping child abuse	C	F	17	White Scottish	
19	ERWA Semi-Urban Own flat in refuge with communal areas	R and limited FO/drop in	L	F	13	White Scottish	
20	Stirling WA Urban Shared refuge (new one being built)	Refuge support Follow on group (intermittent)	S	M	13	White Scottish	Yes 2007-8 Part 2 only
21		Refuge support Follow on group (intermittent)	J	F	11	White Scottish?	
22	Edinburgh 1 Urban	Refuge Limited follow on	E	F	9	White Scottish	
23		Refuge Limited follow on	CS (brother WS)	M	9	White Scottish/ European	
24		Refuge Limited follow on	WS (brother CS)	M	6	White Scottish/ European	
25	Edinburgh 2. Urban Shared refuge, family sharing 1 room, all amenities shared	Refuge	KH (sis AH)	F	15	Scottish Asian	
26		Refuge	AH (sis KH)	F	13	Scottish Asian	
27	Midlothian Semi-rural Shared refuge	Refuge/scatter flat	L	F	8	White Scottish	
28			Ni	F	10	White Scottish	
29			Na	F	13	White	

						Scottish	
30	Glasgow Urban New refuge own flats, big playroom and sensory room.	Refuge	Ti	F	13	White Scottish	
31		Refuge (6 months ago)and limited follow on	B	M	13	White Scottish	
32		Refuge	Ta	F	14	White Scottish	
33	Hemat – Gryffe WA Asian WA – check Refuge own flats, shared areas	Refuge (no support service for YP, wee kiddie playroom, trips for all?)	S (shown round house)	F	6	Scottish Asian	
33			I Individual interview	M	14		
35			Av – individual interview	M	13	Middle Eastern	
36			AQ (shown round house with 2 siblings ArQ and CQ below) and mum in backgroun d	F	4	Scottish Asian	
37			ArQ (sibling house tour)	M	8	Scottish/ Asian	
38			CQ (sibling house tour)	M	6	Scottish /Asian	
39			J- individual interview	M	16	Scottish Asian	
40			AO (2 sisters interview)	F	12	White Scottish	
41			NO (siblings	F	11	White Scottish	

			interview) Wee bro and mum backgroun d				
42	2007-8 start: urban	One night refuge->foster care split form family	Marc	M	17	White Scottish	yes
43	urban	Shared refuge, no support	Raya	F	15	British Asian	yes
44	island	L: shared refuge no WA CYP support (mum had worker) , 5 years mental health support	Karen	F	16	Scottish/ Middle Eastern	yes
45	Urban/semi-rural	Mix of refuges all shared mainly, refuge and first follow on group	Chloe	F	19	White Scottish	yes
46	2009 start-: urban	OR WA	Jack	M	16 at star t	White Scottish	yes
47	VAV: Semi-urban	homeless, health family support, CEDAR	Lola	F	16 at star t	White Scottish	yes
48	VAV Semi-urban	Homeless no support, CEDAR	John	M	16 at star t	White Scottish	yes

Appendix 2
Part 1 Research Protocol

The Perspectives of Children and Young People Experiencing Domestic Abuse on What Helps.

Abstract: This qualitative research will be undertaken to ascertain the views of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA) of help and services, including their solutions for improvement. The first UK competitively funded research (Mullender et al., 2002) asserts that children are better able to cope if they are 'listened to and taken seriously as participants in domestic violence situations and actively involved in finding solutions and helping make decisions' (p.121). Scotland's first study with CYPEDA (Fitzpatrick et al., 2003) asserts that children are 'service users and co-producers of their own welfare' (Prout and Hallett, 2003:5) and utilises CYPEDA's strong opinions in its recommendations for action. Both these studies reflect that practice could be further informed by of CYPEDA's perspectives on support, more thorough evaluation of services and CYPEDA's solutions for help. This study aims to explore with 30-50 CYPEDA their perspectives on help and support, including Women's Aid pilot services of follow-on support and outreach to the community. There will be a particular focus on the solutions of CYPEDA. There will be opportunities in the short term for CYPEDA to deliver their key messages to target audiences as part of the study. The study will be Part 1 of a longer term study undertaken by Claire Houghton of Warwick University.

Key people and contacts:

Funders of CYPEDA participation: Scottish Women's Aid Directors, Scottish Women's Aid.

Management Group: Children's Policy Development Group, Scottish Women's Aid.

Researcher: Claire Houghton, Researcher, National Children's Rights Worker, Scottish Women's Aid (self-funded PhD).

PhD Supervisor: Professor Audrey Mullender of Warwick University.

Background:

Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) has been at the forefront in terms of supporting children and young people experiencing domestic abuse and publicising their views (Scottish Women's Aid 1997, 1999), more recently through the Listen Louder Campaign in enabling young people to speak directly to politicians. This research would give the opportunity to undertake credible, independent and academic research into CYPEDA's perspectives on the Women's Aid services for the first time. Their perspectives on Women's Aid services, as well as other relevant services and supporters, will inform future provision and current

policy and political developments in relation to CYPEDA. SWA will particularly encourage access to young participants in receipt of pilot services.

As part of the Scottish Women's Aid Listen Louder Campaign and following research good practice of outcomes in their own time (Borland et al., 2001), young participants will receive support and resources to deliver their own key messages to target audiences in the estimated 3 months of study. Options will include film-making and the Listen Louder event where the young people will have direct access to politicians. The data will form part a larger independent PhD study by Claire Houghton, overseen by Warwick University. This part of the study will be undertaken in partnership with children's support workers of local Women's Aid groups in Scotland and managed by their representative body of the Children's Policy Development Group.

The researcher will inform SWA of preliminary findings in the short term, so that SWA will be in the position to improve the organisation's response to CYPEDA, train workers and provide evidence for funding bids. This is a key time to provide new evidence as Ministers have provided interim funding for part time children's support workers in every Women's Aid group whilst The Government has declared that a long term solution is being sought. SWA's objective for this study is that CYPEDA's voices need to be heard at every level and as a result best practice based on this should be replicated throughout the country. The range of services offered by local Women's Aid groups needs to be considered and children's solutions for improvement heard. At the same time SWA wants to ensure that CYPEDA's views are part of longer term, independent and credible research and not lost in a one-off event, building on previous experience. SWA believes this study will provide evidence that CYPEDA need to be a national priority. To provide credibility for SWA 'sponsored' research it is important that the study is undertaken independently by Claire Houghton with Warwick University and this has been agreed by SWA Directors.

Research Design

The study will be a qualitative study, using focus groups and interviews to gain CYPEDA's views. It will be undertaken from a feminist and children's rights perspective, with a research design focus on CYPEDA's own agency, voice and solutions. The study will be conducted by the researcher Claire Houghton in partnership with Children's Support Workers, managed by the Children's Policy Development Group. The ethical approach and research process will be participatory and part of the young person's support. The ethical and participation protocol below has been developed (and will continue to be developed and enhanced) by the researcher with Children's Support Workers (CSW's), sharing best practice in support and research. Creative, evaluative techniques will be developed by the researcher with Children's Support Workers (CSW) and each focus group/interview will be tailored to the young participants abilities and needs, with advice from the CSW.

Sample Size: 30-50. Diversity in age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity will be sought alongside CYPEDA accessing a range of services including the pilot services. Scottish Women's Aid will encourage groups to advertise the study. The researcher will train the children's support workers on the protocol.

Data handling: all data will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher, there will be no identifying details and pseudonyms will be used, hard and digital recordings will be kept in a locked secure cabinet.

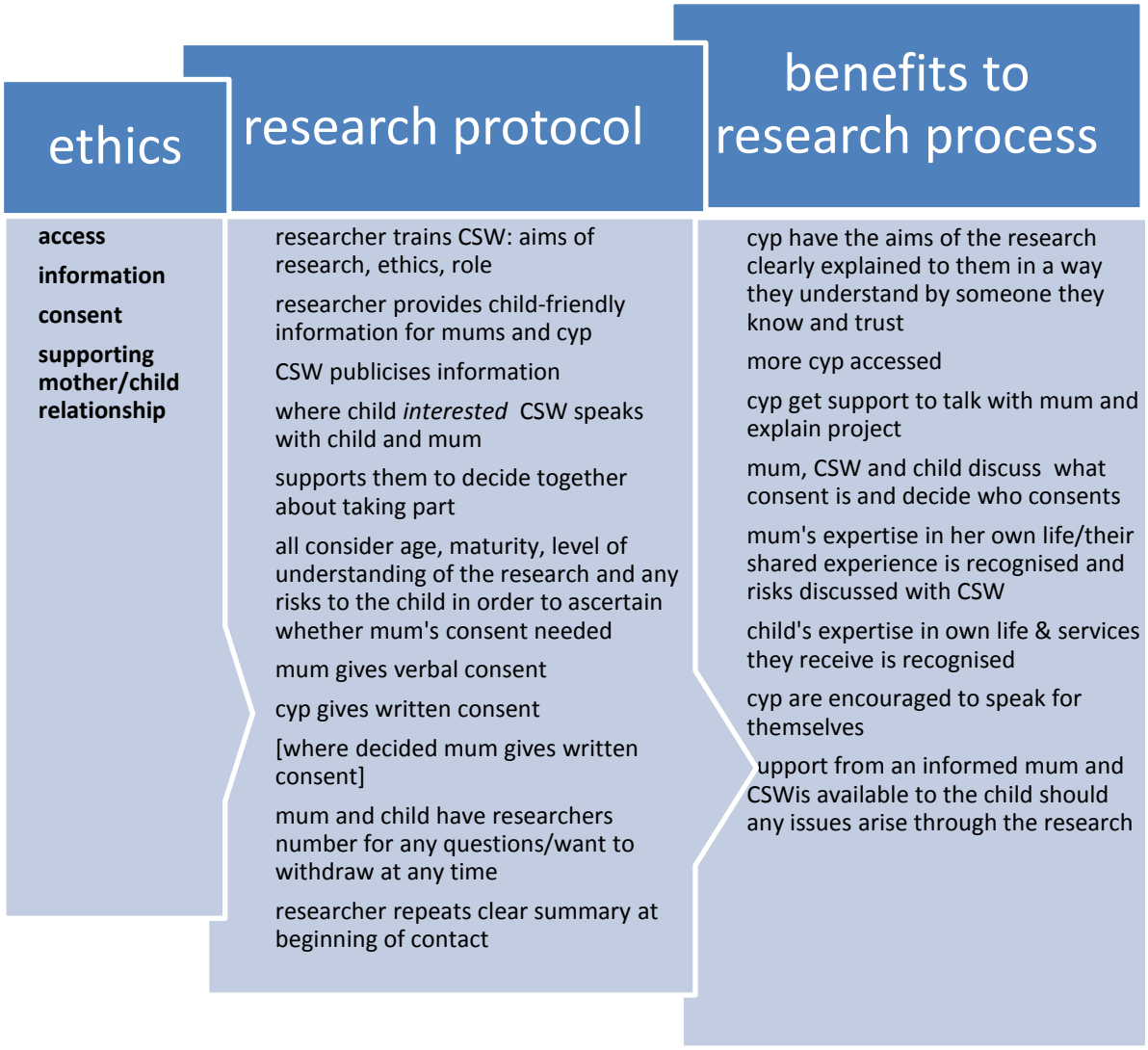
Data analysis: the researcher will undertake thematic analysis and design workshops to encourage CYPEDA's contribution to that. Preliminary data analysis will be made available to Scottish Women's Aid, researchers and young people involved in the Listen Louder event to ensure a range of CYPEDA's views heard.

Dissemination: young people will deliver messages to target audiences and preliminary findings will be delivered to SWA and potential funders if requested at the time. The researchers will have ownership of the full findings and will write up the study as part of the longer term study.

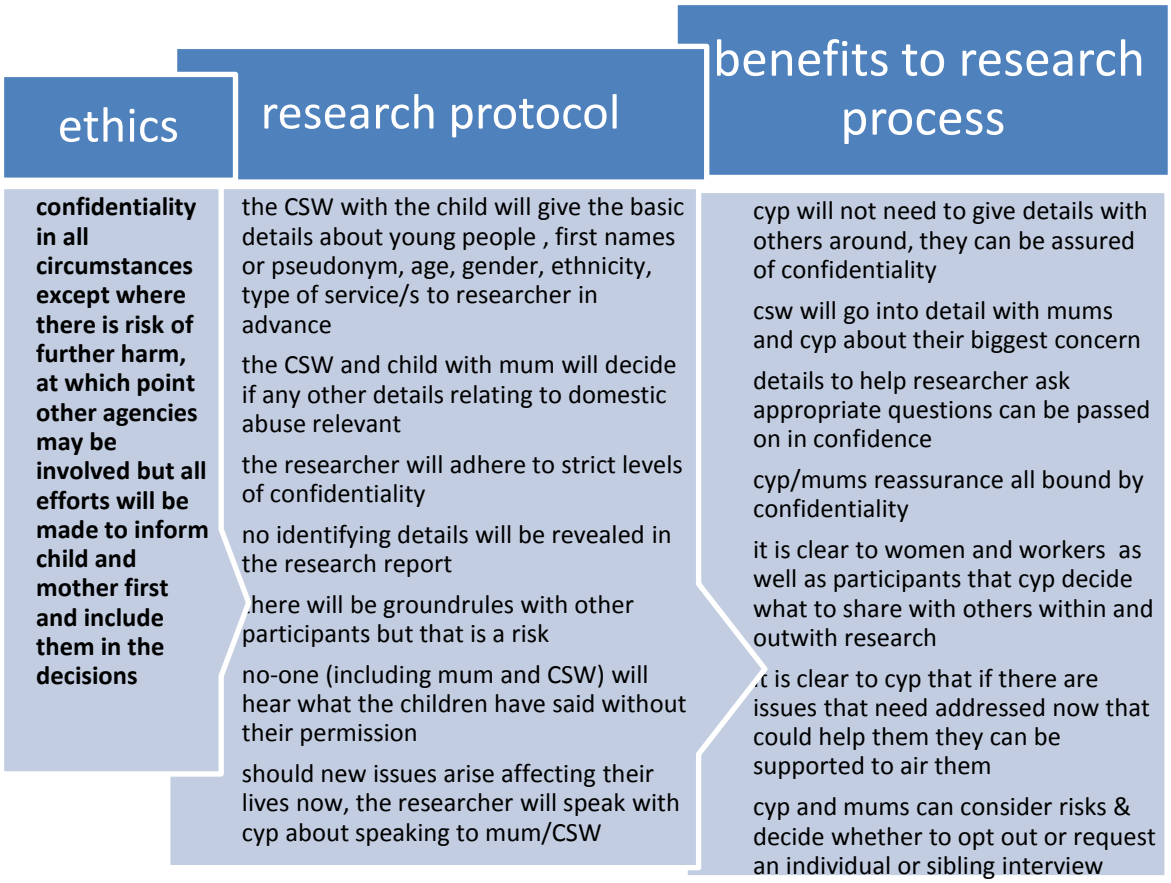
Research agreement on process, ethical considerations and informed consent

The research agreement below contains information for the researcher, children's support worker, young participant and their mother. It has been developed by the researcher with the Children's Policy Development Group. It explores Mullender et al.'s (2002) mnemonic of three C's Consent, Confidentiality and Child Protection incorporating the three D's of Danger, Disclosure and Distress. It focuses on ensuring that the research is part of the CSW and child's support process; the mother-child relationship is supported; the woman and child's expertise in relation to risk is part of assessment for involvement; the CYPEDA's agency to consent to giving their own views is respected (See Appendix 3 : information and consent form for CYPEDA). As part of the researcher's innovation in participatory technique and reflecting SWA innovation in practice, the researcher developed the three E's of Enjoyment, Empowerment and Emancipation to reflect the participatory and politically engaged way of working that has been agreed. The researcher and support workers are also bound by the SWA Code of Practice which covers many of these ethical and participation principles. The young people and mothers will be informed throughout by their CSW and will receive an information and consent form from the researcher for each stage of CYPEDA involvement (focus group/interview, film, Listen Louder Event). For the CYPEDA participation in the public event and film, which risks identification and therefore danger for the whole family, the mother's written consent will also be sought and measures will be taken by the researcher and SWA to protect anonymity.

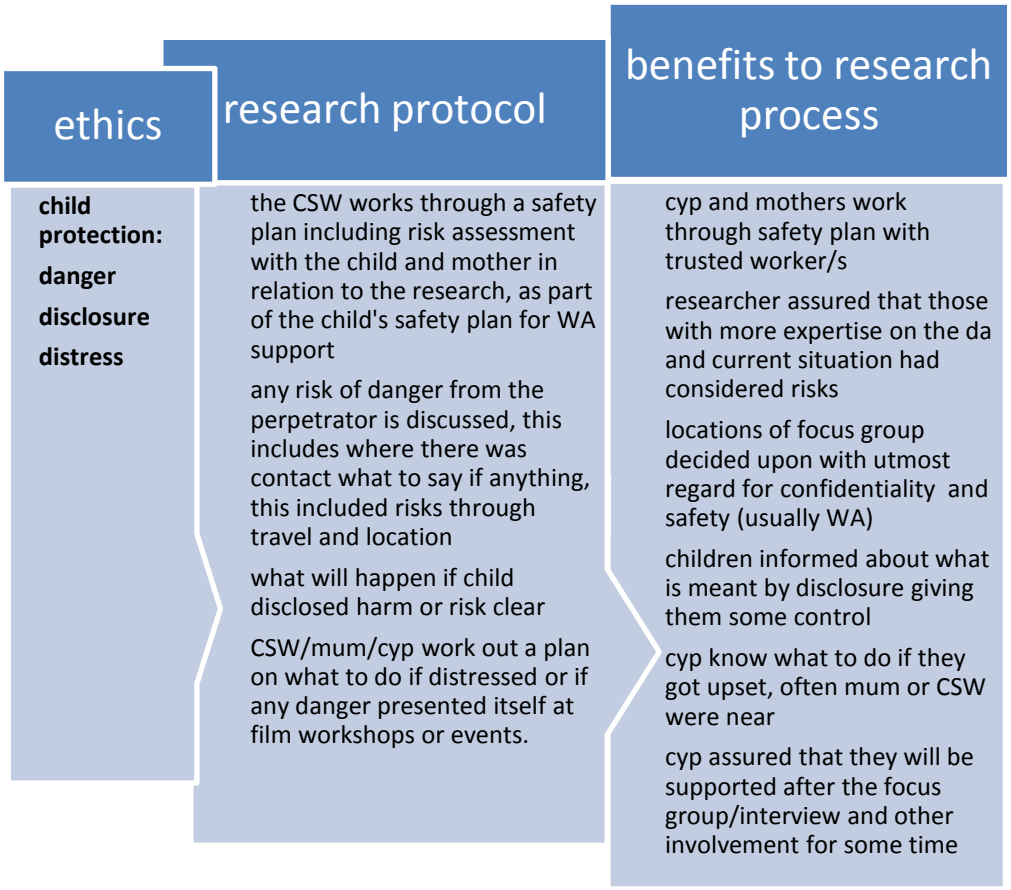
Consent


ethics
research protocol
benefits to research process
access
information
consent
supporting mother/child relationship
researcher trains CSW: aims of research, ethics, role
researcher provides child-friendly information for mums and cyp
CSW publicises information
where child *interested* CSW speaks with child and mum
supports them to decide together about taking part
all consider age, maturity, level of understanding of the research and any risks to the child in order to ascertain whether mum's consent needed
mum gives verbal consent
cyp gives written consent
[where decided mum gives written consent]
mum and child have researchers number for any questions/want to withdraw at any time
researcher repeats clear summary at beginning of contact
cyp have the aims of the research clearly explained to them in a way they understand by someone they know and trust
more cyp accessed
cyp get support to talk with mum and explain project
mum, CSW and child discuss what consent is and decide who consents
mum's expertise in her own life/their shared experience is recognised and risks discussed with CSW
child's expertise in own life & services they receive is recognised
cyp are encouraged to speak for themselves
upport from an informed mum and CSWis available to the child should any issues arise through the research

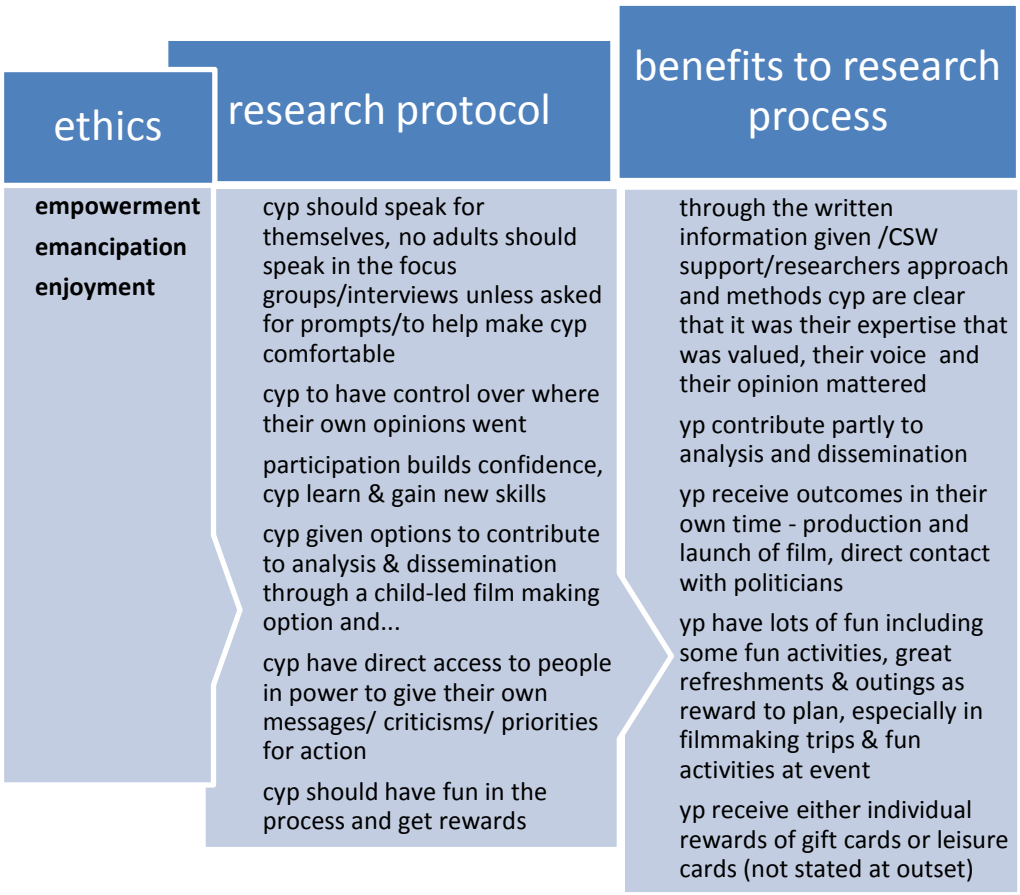
Confidentiality



Child Protection: Danger, Disclosure, Distress



Empowerment, Emancipation and Enjoyment



Appendix 3
Part 1 Information and Consent Form for CYPEDA

Young People's Views –young people meeting Claire Houghton

(I'm a PhD student from Warwick University and National Children's Rights Worker at Scottish Women's Aid)

Stage 1 - Information for interviews/focus groups:

Thank you for letting me come along to meet you and ask your views about support for children and young people who have been through domestic abuse. I'm asking lots of young people from around Scotland their views, then gathering it all together in research with a University to tell adults what young people want.

I'm from the national office of Women's Aid in Edinburgh and work with lots of people including the Scottish Parliament and the people who give money for children's workers. I really want them to hear what you say. I want to find out what YOU think about Women's Aid services so that we can try and make things better for young people in the future.

With your support worker, I will be coming along to meet you to ask you your views, either on your own or with others – it's up to you. You could also choose to tell us by email or letter, drawing or poem – it's up to you. I/your worker would tell you more about the Listen louder campaign and you can decide if you want to be part of it.

What you say will be recorded if that's OK, that's just so I remember all that you say. No-one will know who said it except for me, your support worker if she is at the meeting and the other young people in your group. Your views will also be part of longer term research by Claire with Warwick University to listen to lots of children to improve support, no-one will know what you have said for this bit. We are hoping that research will back up what you're saying and those with money will listen. Is this OK? YES NO

Don't worry if you change your mind, you can decide not to do it at any time, just let me or your support worker know. Your worker will support you if you want to talk about anything or if this brings things up for you, and will help you feel Ok and be safe, as usual. We will try our best to make this fun as well as taking what you say very seriously as it is really important. If you want to add anything later you can talk or write to me at Claire.houghton@scottishwomensaid.org.uk, 0131 475 2478, or Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh.

Do you agree to take part in this research and for your views to be recorded and used, by Claire in her PhD research, and Scottish Women's Aid?

I agree: name……..

signature ……

age

gender (male/female)

ethnicity (I'll help you)

Stage 2 Information- Listen Louder! Film and introduction to Campaign Event

Listen Louder! is a campaign for action for children and young people in Scotland to make sure they get the help they want when they need it. Lots of children across Scotland are part of this year's campaign. We are going to campaign with Ministers of the Scottish Parliament in October to make things better.

We want you to decide what they should hear, and how they hear it. You may want to make sure your views are heard and we will help you find a way of doing that soon, especially as the research will take a long time. Depending on what you want to do we may need to talk to your mum, (brothers/ sisters) to make sure it's OK.

Film: Women's Aid are going to make a film about what young people go through, the support they get and how great they are!! You are invited to a film-making workshop - you won't necessarily be talking on the film, you could help write the story that's being told, write about you life, a poem, draw, speak, -bring things along with you that you think will help. You will need to talk with your mum and maybe brothers and sisters about whether your voice can be on the film (but mainly a few voices will be recorded for the film *after* the Saturday workshop). On the Saturday the filmmaker will take film that shows young people together but does not identify you – e.g. of your hands feet drawings backs etc.. There will be NO faces on the film.

Listen Louder is a campaign for action for children and young people in Scotland to make sure they get the help want when they need it, and we are going to campaign with Ministers of the Scottish Parliament in October to make things better. We want you to decide what they should hear, and how they hear it...

……

Do you agree to give your views and have them recorded, so long as we make sure its confidential? yes/no

I would like to take part in the film-making workshop yes/no

It is Ok for anonymous shots to be taken of me yes/no

Me and mum agree that my voice can be recorded for the film yes/no

Name …….

Signature ……

Mother/carer's signature ……

Stage 3 Information- Listen Louder! Campaign Event

You may also want to come to the Listen Louder Event on 27th October in Edinburgh and your worker will talk to you and your mum about that. There will be risks involved as this is a public event and there will be media present, although we will try our best to make sure the media do not take any photos of young people we can't guarantee it, also we don't know exactly who is coming though we know lots of people want to come and hear your views. There will be lots of fun activities on the day.

There will be 3-4 Ministers from the Scottish Government – politicians who have a lot of power- coming including those in charge of funding, support, refuges, housing, we will send you more information nearer the day. If you have a question you would like to ask or something you would like to say please send it in to Claire with your support worker. Your Children's Support Worker will give you all the information you like about the event nearer the time

……

I would like to take part in the Listen Louder Event yes/no

It is Ok for anonymous shots to be taken of me yes/no

I wish to ask a question yes/no

I would like to sit in the 'no photo's' area yes/no

Me and my mum have considered the risks about coming to

a public event with media present. yes/no

Name …….

Signature ……

Mother/carer's signature ……

Stage 4: If you do not want/aren't able to come to the focus group/interview or Listen Louder we are still interested in your views

Some information from you would help me if you would like to give it.

Name or pretend names ……

1)How long (roughly) have you been receiving support from Women's Aid?

2)Why did you come?

3)What kind of support have you got in this time?

-Have you lived in refuge? Y/N (More than one? Y/N)

-Have you had talks with the worker on your own? Y/N

-Have you been meeting a group of young people? Y/N

-Have you and your mum and family got help together? Y/N

Is there anything else you'd like to say about the kind/s of support you've had?

4)Has it helped you? Y/N

What are the *good* and *not so good* things about the support? You can say anything here, your worker/s won't see it!!

What do you think would make things better for all young people?

You might want to write or draw a lot more- your story or your views –please do and bring them/send them along to the film-making day, and feel free to write or email me at any time. Claire.houghton@scottishwomensaid.org.uk, post Claire , Scottish Women's Aid, Norton Park, 57 Albion Rd., Edinburgh (ask Women's Aid for a stamp)

Appendix 4
Parts 2 and 3 Research Protocol

The Perspectives of Children and Young People on Involvement in Policy Making

Abstract: This Participatory Action Research study will focus on young people's perspectives of involvement in policy-making in relation to Scotland's domestic abuse policy-making. It will examine, with young people, their perspectives on real and tokenistic participation the development and implementation of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People (Part 2 of the study). Current childhood studies literature argues that the argument for children's participation has been won (see, for example, Hill et al. 2004) but note that where it happens, children's participation is 'having little impact on public decision-making' (Kirby with Bryson, 2002). The study will examine whether young people's involvement is meaningful, effective and whether it can have an impact on policy-making.

[Added 2008] In the first year of this study, young people identified that ethical and participation standards were necessary for the sustained participation of CYPEDA in policy making, and that CYPEDA should be involved in developing these. Part 3 was therefore added to study in which a PAR process will explore ethical and participatory principles with the 8 young people involved in the new established group, Voice Against Violence (2008-2011).

Key people and contacts:

Researcher: Claire Houghton, self-funded PhD student Warwick University. Independent researcher for the development of the plan (2008-9); Voice Against Violence Manager (2009-2012).

PhD supervisors: Professor Audrey Mullender of Warwick University/Ruskin College; Dr Cathy Humphreys then Dr Ravi Thiara, University of Warwick.

The Scottish Government funded the researcher to undertake specific pieces of work and write reports during the delivery plan process with agreement that they would form part of the researchers PhD and the researcher had sole authorship and ownership of findings:

1. Scottish Government commissioned the researcher to undertake *Making a Difference* (Houghton, 2008) and *VAV Directives* (Houghton, 2008) projects:
   Contact: Yvonne Strachan, Head of Equality Unit, Scottish Executive

2. Scottish Government employed Claire Houghton as Voice Against Violence Manager. The job remit included to 'contribute or undertake specific time focused pieces of work that are aimed at promoting, reviewing or evaluating the effects of children and young people's active participation in policy and practice development' . Again this was agreed

that this would be part of the PhD as well as the Government funding outputs during the lifetime of the project.
Scottish Government line manager: Lesley Irving, Equality Unit, Scottish Government

Background:

Claire Houghton undertook Part 1 of her research study focused on CYPEDA's perspectives on help and services and how this could inform policy. Political engagement of CYPEDA in Part 1 of the study led to a research question relating to whether processes can be developed involving CYPEDA that were not tokenistic.

The Scottish Government identified the participation of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse as a priority in developing a new plan to improve outcomes for CYPEDA. They commissioned Claire Houghton to conduct a small study with a small group of CYPEDA to identify their own priorities for action and present these direct to Ministers, agreeing this could be part of the PhD study. This began a more sustained involvement of CYPEDA which the researcher explored with the young people, as independent researcher and then manager of the young expert group Voice Against Violence.

Research Design

The study will use the Participatory Action Research approach for Parts 2 and 3 of the study. The researcher will design a process wherein young people are active participants and their expertise respected. Through a constant and developing cycle of reflection and action the researcher will work alongside young participants to develop a collaborative approach to the study as the involvement continues. There will be a focus on young people's own agency in constructing knowledge about this new process of young people's participation in national domestic abuse policy-making.

Sample Size: Young people aged 15-20 were targeted through support agencies . [9 young people in all, 6 young people in the development. Then 5 of those plus 3 new recruits in the implementation (Voice Against Violence)].

Data handling: All data will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher, there will be no identifying details and pseudonyms will be used, hard and digital recordings will be kept in a locked secure cabinet.

Data analysis: the researcher will undertake thematic analysis and design a process wherein young people are increasingly involved in data management, descriptive and explanatory analysis.

Dissemination: Young people will deliver messages to target audiences and publish preliminary findings through their own chosen media. The researcher will have ownership of the full findings and will write up the study as part of the longer term study.

Research agreement on process, ethical considerations and informed consent

The researcher will meet with the young person and his or her mother to undertake a risk assessment and safety planning process in relation to involvement in the project.

For every residential meeting (or any activity) the researcher will produce an information and consent form (see Appendix 4). This information will be for the mother also in the light of shared risks in relation to domestic abuse. Information will include purpose of the meeting, who will be present, location and include travel tickets and arrangements. A safe regular location will be sought for the residential meetings of the group and young people will asked to assess possible locations for safety from the perpetrator. The young person will provide written consent but this will include confirmation that they had considered the risks with their mother of any activity. Steps will be taken to protect confidentiality, including use of pseudonyms and making ethical agreements with other professionals who meet the young people. The project will begin with a limit to confidentiality if there was risk of further harm and this will be discussed with young participants. All personal details and data will be kept under lock and key. Where there are threats to anonymity, such as public appearances, the mother's written consent will be sought and more information was provided.

Ethical and participation standards will be an integral part of the informed consent form and process [and will be developed over time alongside young people]. These will cover the three C's and D's of Mullender et al., (2002) Consent, Confidentiality, Child protection which encompasses danger, Disclosure and Distress, and also Houghton's Enjoyment, Empowerment and Emancipation from Part 1 of the study. However, young people will develop this. [The young people's sun containing standards became the checklist for each activity the young people were involved in and an integral part of the information given]. See information and consent form for more details on the checklist.

The adult researcher, facilitators and young people will all be enhanced disclosure checked, young people will be informed about the status of adults they will meet. There will be a child protection advisor, ……., from SWIA (Social Work Services Inspectorate) and part of the Participation Steering group for the Delivery Plan. She is experienced in working with young adults, will meet and get to know young people during recruitment, and appointed for the whole study. She will be available to contact by phone at each residential meeting should any issues arise and also available for debrief for the researcher in relation to support issues.

Appendix 5
Parts 2 and 3 Information and Consent Form for Young Experts

Information and Consent form

Details of the meeting/activity: date, location, time

Hello ace young experts,

What are we meeting about?

The purpose of the residential/activity would be made clear here, including any review sections or if it was a major review. For example, we are meeting to review our involvement in VAV, to discuss how you're feeling about VAV, to prepare to meet Ministers and reflect on our last meetings, to develop our standards resource, to meet the advertising company, to create our film messages.

Who will be there?

Young people requested specific information about who would be there and why, their role, their full names and where they were from. This was so that the young people and mothers could highlight any dangers or risks in relation to identification and the perpetrator. Also it was very important for the young people to feel informed and safe meeting strangers. The young people would also be reassured in this section that the 'new' people had agreed to adhere to the standards checklist and had been in direct contact with the manager beforehand to agree to this.

Travel and arrangements

Travel tickets and information were sent in advance.

Preparation & Updates

Young people wanted to be informed about anything they needed to do in advance and also if the status reports or information from the Government needed to be read in advance (not all would do this). For example, flip-cam recording of key messages for children, read status reports, rehearse presentation.

Programme

A detailed programme for each day would be given including details about the recreational activity to ensure young people felt safe with that.

Information and consent

Anything unusual would be highlighted especially additional risks e.g. voice or public recognition - that would also be detailed in the tick boxes to follow, eg. are you and your mum are happy that you will be in the film in shadow?

How the meeting relates to the PhD is explained explained here, e.g. all that you say in this review weekend could be used for Claire's PhD. Opt out options highlighted.

Our Standards checklist

The checklist sun developed through the course of the study; each relevant ray would be considered for the meeting and information given. There are examples below

Safety First, Information and consent: *from my information XXXX offer no risks for you or your mum in relation to family and perpetrator, then details about the specific activity e.g. if we see anyone you know you can say it's about some youth work you've been doing – let's have a story OK? Or, there will be lots of strangers there from the Scottish Government, we will stress the need for confidentiality at the event*

Confidentiality & Anonymity: *e.g. No-one knows you're with VAV for this or Ministers know about the need for strict confidentiality*

Privacy, Distress & Opting Out: *There is a risk of adults asking intrusive questions but we have asked that they don't. Feel free to just opt out by saying you don't want to talk about stuff or use the tactics/prepared lines we have practised*

Family involvement: *Your mum is invited to this event and you need to consider what you both want and any risks*

Support: *I hope to give you any support I can on the day and also Artemis the co-facilitator will be there for you*

Young people speak for themselves: *The Co-facilitators are here to back you if needed but after the rehearsal session it's over to you*

Success and Making an Impact*: you will ask to debrief on how it went on digi*

Recognition & Building skills: *e.g. we will ask the film/ad company for a reference*

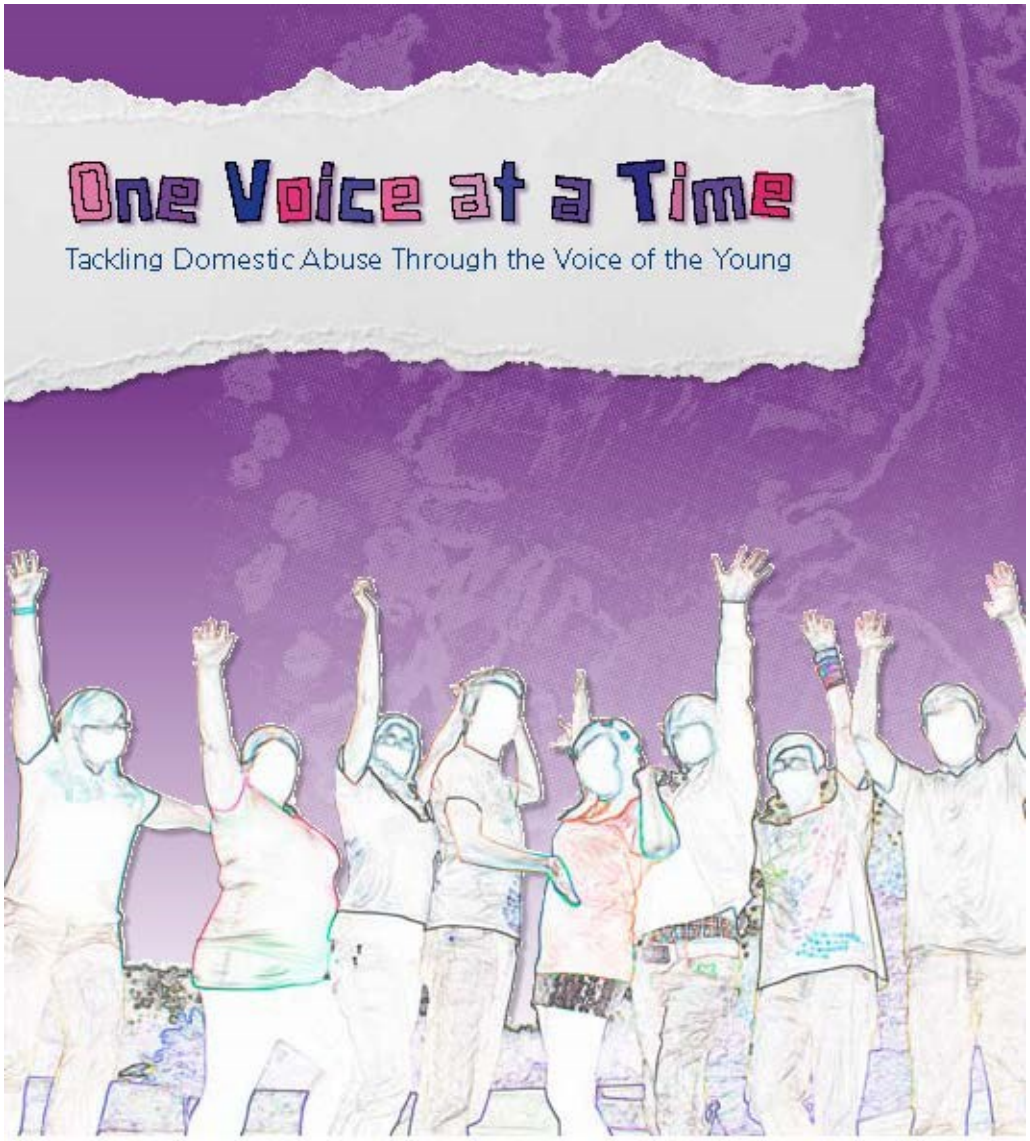
Fun and friendships: *e.g. details about what we'll do*

This is to give consent for …*details of activity*

Consent Form	**yes**	**no**
I have been given information about what the meeting/activity is about and understand it		
I have talked to my mum about coming along and informed her what it's about.		
I have considered confidentiality and safety issues for myself and my family		
Me and my mum are happy that I am safe to take part, including travelling on my own and staying overnight if applicable.		
I am prepared to talk about my experiences and views		
I agree to keep the confidentiality of other young people taking part		
I have considered the support I need to take part in this project and am happy to talk this through with Claire at a later date		
I am happy to have my views recorded throughout the meeting		
I am happy to have the information/photos/recordings I give used as long as it's anonymous (doesn't identify me or my family) and I know what it will be used for		
What I say can be used in feeding back to the Government and in Claire's PhD – I understand my views and the group review are findings of the PhD		
I can be contacted after the meeting to give my views		
I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting Claire Houghton. This includes not taking part on the day if I feel it's not right for me.		
I give permission for Claire Houghton or XXXX to seek professional medical help for me in case of emergency		
I assure Claire that nothing has changed in relation to my family's safety or my health since our meetings/phone conversation about our safe and happy involvement in VAV. If no, please give details		
Thank you, this gives the Government and Claire Houghton permission to record and use what you have to say within confidentiality limits and lets us know that you/your family are happy for you to be involved and you are safe . Contact Claire anytime on XXXXXXXX		
Name …….. Signed ……. Date …….. Age ……		

Tick boxes would be added according to the activity. For the film agreement and major public events the mum's written consent would also be sought and given.

Appendix 6
VAV Film Booklet



Our film and booklet are all about VAV's experience of domestic abuse and participating. We know that there is light at the end of the tunnel! Some of our stories may be upsetting to you (they could bring back memories or correspond with what's happening now) BUT by listening to us we hope you can see a brighter future around the corner.

VAV
voice against violence

We're Voice Against Violence, 8 young people with first-hand experience of domestic abuse and different services. We made this film because we want a brighter future for the children of Scotland.

You Can Get Through It!

We want to help children affected by domestic abuse because we've been through it and know what it's like.

Want Some Expert Advice?

We want to reach all adult professionals because they could really help.

Take a Stand

We want to encourage young people to get involved: let's inspire young people and people in power to stand together against domestic abuse.

You Can Get Through It!

Domestic abuse is when someone harms another person on purpose, often they are a control freak. The harsh reality is it's here and many of us go through it.

Emotional abuse is like mental violence, it's just as traumatic as physical. Getting hurt or watching someone get hurt is horrible as well, I felt terrified at times.

It can happen to anyone no matter if they're rich or poor, their race, sex, sexuality, religion, I think it's a universal problem for the world.

Everyone's experience is different, no two situations are the same.

... I could see that my MUM was like really upset but I didn't KNOW what to do ... I was scared to go home ... it's not like you choose ...

We as young people have the right to be listened to, the right to be ourselves, without any stigmatisation, not to be judged and most of all we have the right not to suffer in silence.

Don't give up hope. There's always someone out there that can help you, there's always someone out there who wants to help you. Give them a chance ... And if you know someone who's going through domestic abuse help them.

To escape domestic abuse is brilliant. Just to know that you are no longer going to experience it anymore and to know that there are people out there who actually care about you. You think the whole world is against you and there's no way out, but there is great support out there, give it a try, what do you have to lose?

For a long while I felt there was so much pain and no glimpse of hope or light at the end of the tunnel but now I know that there is.

You just need to believe in yourself and believe that it's not your fault.

It's going to take a bit of time but you have people that will support you so just take the plunge and get out!

Try and talk to someone you trust, like a teacher or find a local support worker (see www.safehubscotland.org). Or talk to someone confidentially on Childline 0800 11 11 webchat www.childline.org.uk.

I started to become myself again ... The support made a huge difference to the way I think about things... It gave me a lot more freedom and helped me relax a bit more about it.

Want Some Expert Advice?

... Some bottle it up, some go nuts, some completely hide their personalities because they think that they're not good enough any more ...

Don't

- Treat me as a victim, I just need you to listen.
- Look at the kids and see the problem, see what's causing it
- Assume it's like any other problem, it isn't, it affects the home, the social status, the day to day health, mentally, physically, everything ... you've no idea
- tell everyone my business
- make decisions for me
- judge me
- let me down
- just let it happen
- make the situation worse
- forget we're in danger
- break my trust

I USED EVERYTHING AS AN ESCAPE, THE TRUANCY, THE CRIME, THE DRINKING, DRUGS, EVERYTHING ...

School was my escape, then the library, anything to put off going home ...

You're the most privileged person, because, firstly for a child to open up is very very hard the child or young person places a lot of trust in you, which shouldn't be damaged in any way.

Do

- Take the time, listen to me and pay attention to how I feel about it all
- Look behind the behaviour, see what's causing it
- Introduce me to local workers and groups that support me with domestic abuse stuff
- Educate yourself about it, read a leaflet, give that leaflet to me, educate others about it
- Tell me different steps of how to deal with it at home
- Speak about it, be open about things, as open as you feel you can
- Be very careful with the information I give you, you don't have to contact home, or if you do speak to me first!
- Have patience with anyone going through domestic abuse - you have no idea what it's like
- Be confident that you can make a difference
- Listen to young people if you're the adult because they are important

It is their tomorrow, it is their future. Make sure young people can speak out.

Take a Stand
Voice Against Violence wants to ...

Stop domestic Abuse.

Be a voice and give a voice to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

Build a more positive and brighter future alongside Ministers and COSLA.

Empower all children and young people.

Represent the fact that just because you've been abused you're not doomed.

Influence policy.

Defend what's right and that is that domestic abuse is wrong.

Amplify children and young people's voices to campaign for their rights.

1. Convention of Scottish Local Authorities – represent local councils

We asked Ministers & COSLA

- To train teachers better because they aren't listening to children
- To improve the quality of refuge buildings, so that no family has to share a bathroom or kitchen
- To fund more support workers because we were lucky enough to have support -it changed our lives
- To improve the justice system as like me, children and young people were being lost with no support and no justice
- To spread the CEDAR groupwork project all over Scotland because without it I wouldn't be here - it saved me
- To make sure that agencies talk to each other because children weren't being listened to enough
- To listen to the results of our survey of children and young people's opinions of domestic abuse in Scotland
- To encourage participation to help all young people have a say, like us
- To support a campaign to reach out to vulnerable children and young people who don't know where to get help regarding domestic abuse

See the campaign VAV co-designed at http://bit.ly/VAV_video

We created www.safewithscotland.org so children and young people have easy access to learn more about domestic abuse and the dangers of it

VAV developed a website so you can follow our progress and methods we use www.voiceagainstviolence.org.uk

Find the exciting results of our survey at these websites too

From Caterpillar to Butterfly ...

PARTICIPATE!

What's participation? It's taking part, wanting to make a difference to something you believe in. Anyone can do it, speak for yourself – don't let adults speak for you. Be part of the action! Here's some inspiration from our amazing journey ...

I'd got support ... given my views ... spoken out ... spoken to a researcher ... advised on research ... been part of a groupwork pilot ... shared my experience ... been part of a campaign ... trained adults ... wanted to make things better for other kids

We joined a group ... all of us different ... shared experience of domestic abuse ... different experience of services ... had our own views ... shared opinions ... held peer-led discussions ... used creative methods ... lots of talents and skills ... built trust ... built a team

We wanted equal say ... different roles to suit strengths and talents ... everyone's voice equally heard ... team building and fun every step of the way ... rewards ... help with careers ... to build our skills and confidence ... a sense of pride ... to agree our own priorities ... democracy ... a group voice

We convinced people we were as important as adults ... told adults what needed changed ... listened to others ... got some allies (choose adults that can help/experts) ... listened to other children ... read stuff ... went on fact-finding trips ... developed our arguments ... got equal status as advisors to people at the top ...

We needed safety first ... trust ... comfort ... our own space ... privacy ... to get out sometimes ... no discrimination ... friendships ... confidentiality ... anonymity ... our own trusted manager ... not too many adults ... adults who empower us/don't dominate or lead ... support from our mums ... respect ...

VAV SAYS:
Target the top ... talk direct to people in power ... set the agenda (or if it's their meeting go first) ... invite the right people (so they can't pass the buck) ... chair the meeting ... have clear individual roles ... know your stuff ... know them and what they could do for you/children ... have more young people than adults (if poss.) ... prep loads ... focus ... show you mean business!

Working Together Works

Young Experts...

We are ...
equal to adults, on a par
problem solvers
co-designers and creators
web-developers, researchers
campaigners

We've become ...
good communicators
awesome public speakers
great team players, great friends
skilled, confident, proud

We ...
make it real and accessible
take information to them from other children so they can use it and make change

We have ...
influenced policy and funding
made an impact
revolutionised participation of young people

People in Power say...

We're their ...
critical friends
expert advisors
co-educators

We're now a key ...
element in budget-setting
source of ongoing advice

We ...
make it real
make it better
say it like it is
help them understand
know what can help

We're unique:
a real exemplar to others
the first of it's kind
we've made a real impact
'more power to your elbow'
they'll continue to hear our voice

Making a difference to Childrens Lives

Our Messages...

... to Young People

Let your voice be heard, because it's very important for your future, for your kids, for their kids and so on. Just speak out and be open about it. Help shape the future.

Let's work together for a greater cause, we can make sure other children in Scotland have a better tomorrow and make it safer for them.

Let's raise equality and get a better society where women and men are looked at as equals and not one over the other, then we have a lot better chance of tackling domestic abuse

Let's make sure you're safe and happy, then turn something negative into a positive; give something back for the support you got, it's an amazing personal journey, it's wonderful being part of a dedicated team

Let's make a change: it's a great feeling to know that you're influencing where the money goes, what decisions are made, what those pieces of paper called policies say. It's a real confidence boost, makes you proud.

Let's **be the generation that doesn't** stand for domestic abuse, that won't tolerate it. Join us. Educate others. Strive to end it.

VAV got the ball rolling but there's a lot of work for children to do ... if you've got the drive and the will to change something, you can do it. We've proved it. We hope the spirit of VAV lives on.

... to People in Power

Why can't we tell you what we want? You're our government, our decision makers - the holders of the credit cards: who knows what we need but us?

Many adults said we'd be too young to handle such adult responsibility but we've proved we're not.

We are the experts. We know what it's like to go through domestic abuse, we know what it takes to come out, who better to listen to than an expert?

Listen to us, it's our future, our tomorrow, our choice.

Take on board what we've said, how we've said it, there's a reason why we're asking you to change things, change policy. It will save you money in the long run.

Use what we say when making decisions to make children's lives run smoother, to improve services.

Work with us to change society's attitudes toward equality, relationships and domestic abuse.

Fund participation because you need young people's views, freshness, first-hand knowledge, experience and views on the way forward/what needs changed ... and young people will benefit too.

VAV, our wonderful Ministers and friends at CoSLA have proven that young people's participation at the highest level works ... make sure all children who want to participate actually can!

Stand together against domestic abuse!

Appendix 7
VAV Standards

We're 8 'young experts' called Voice Against Violence who have had the privilege of working alongside Scottish Government Ministers and CoSLA (local councils) to tackle domestic abuse and improve children's lives. We believe that for young people with experience of domestic abuse to have such a loud and powerful voice we need to make sure they're safe and happy. So we developed our own participation standards to help and empower children and young people to participate and break down barriers for children who have experienced domestic abuse. Please use and adapt! ☺

VAV
voice against violence

Introduction

What are standards? Standards are a set of basic rules and regulations that help protect members of Voice Against Violence (VAV), they say how our group should operate and make sure we work efficiently as a team. They are also criteria for good participation and we make sure others that work with us (especially adults) keep to the standards too.

We base our standards on the idea that everyone should feel safe and happy whilst being a part of VAV, so every rule helps this in some way. Even though we are a positive group, we all come from backgrounds of domestic abuse so there are always going to be issues of safety and things that are dangerous to us. Standards are important as they give structure to the group as well as making it clear that if you break these rules you could jeopardise your place in the group. Safe and happy are together as one as each contributes to the other; it's practically impossible to be only one or the other. Most of all, we want VAV to be a fun place for everyone involved, which is why these rules exist ☺

We want to be a role model for children's participation so please feel free to use and adapt these standards; our message to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse is that you CAN participate in a fun and safe way and these standards could help break down some barriers to participation.

1. Safety first, information and consent

Your safety is the most important thing, it comes before anything else. Being in VAV mustn't pose any threats to you or your family. When you initially become involved, your manager will check with you and your parent/guardian (your 'named adult') about risks. If circumstances change, you must inform your manager. If your manager or a VAV staff member is concerned that you are in current danger/risk then they will try to talk with you and your named adult first but will alert other agencies if needed. All young people and staff will have enhanced disclosure checks, so will most other professionals you work with – the manager will let you know. Prior to residentials and meetings both you and your named adult (usually your mum) will be given clear information about where about and what you are doing so your risk can be considered. Your consent is asked for the recording of your views and how they are used. For public events your mum's consent is also asked for and you are both asked to consider and chat to any other members of your family who may be affected (like brothers and sisters).

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity

This is the most important thing to us and our families, our biggest concern is that adults/strangers do not understand the severity of our experiences, that we may not want to be identified as survivors of domestic abuse or members of VAV, that if we're identified our families are too and of course so is the perpetrator - our dads and maybe their new families.

Due to the sensitive experiences of Voice Against Violence members, confidentiality and anonymity for all members is strictly adhered to at all times within the group. All professionals that work with the group must sign and agree the standards. Aliases are used when working with outside people involved in VAV work. There should be no identifying photographs in photos or film. In most of VAV's work – like residentials and regular meetings we can maintain our confidentiality in a small circle.

In VAV public productions/ participation projects we adopt a one for all, all for one methodology where if one member needs an actor to play him/her so does the remainder of the group e.g. for our film we checked with those most at risk about the dangers of voice recognition but all families agreed to do it.

Any public or media work must be properly risk assessed with individual, mum and manager to uphold confidentiality and anonymity as far as possible. Creative methods can be used to prevent identification like written anonymous statements/ photos, artwork, to promote the good of the group not the individuals.

At times certain members at least risk have taken a well informed step into the media, with training, but there are always consequences you don't think of.

Here are some things to think about

- "being able to get involved in the work and still remain anonymous with no fear of that causing a problem means you really want to get involved and not feel bad about it"
- "VAV is a role model for other children who are in danger and for whom being identified would be a massive barrier to participate."
- "It's my personal stuff.. it's me that's doing it... it's up to me who I tell what to"
- We can all do this "so long as we stay safe and aren't identified"

- "we could be in major trouble if found"
- " I don't think my dad would react well to me being involved in anti-domestic abuse stuff" "He'd go off his nut"
- "people don't want it broadcast that they're part of this group. They don't want people to know that they have experienced domestic abuse and the stigma that comes with it..."
- "let's face it, the media want the gore" "tabloids will try and get you to spill your guts about everything personal that happened to you, not the project"
- being anonymous - "some members felt that nobody should tell them what to do and others felt angry that it seemed the perpetrator was still controlling them, was still making them live their lives like they were constantly 'at risk'"

3. Privacy, Distress and Opting Out

You have the right to keep your private life private but at the same time you know that it remains private within the group. There is a limit to what people feel comfortable saying and sometimes we have a lot going on in our lives. If something is being spoken about, watched or you feel uncomfortable for any reason, feel free to leave the room. You should never feel like you have to sit there. You can opt out on anything that you aren't comfortable doing or saying/ talking about.

4. Family/Guardian involvement & support

During VAV you may be talking about stuff that not only affected you but your family as well. It's important that you keep them up to date with what you're doing, not only so they know you're safe but so they are too. They may even want to go to events and support you through them. Remember to check that they're happy with what you say and do as it will affect them as well. For example, if talking about a specific incident that also included your siblings or parent, you should check they're happy talking about it and their identity is protected as well as yours. Your named adult (usually your mum) is your emergency contact in case you're sick etc., is trusted with VAV information and also they get to see any photos or information usually restricted by the confidentiality agreement.

5. Supportive manager and team

New members must have a supportive manager and team (VAV and people behind the manager) because to have your own manager that knows your background and the ins and outs of what the group are trying to achieve is essential, also having a consistent manager is a must. The manager is there to support all young people through their journey in VAV and to keep us safe and listen to our concerns. To have a supportive team means a lot also, not just VAV colleagues but the people behind the scenes that help the manager as it makes it happy and comfortable to be involved.

6. Adults who work with VAV

Adults who work with VAV must ensure they adhere to minimum standards of privacy, respect and disclosure. They must keep our identity safe and not do anything outside the meeting room that would identify us as VAV – like saying hello when we're with others. They must tell us who they are and why they're working with us. They must respect us and our past - don't ask for unnecessary info, understand that we are experts and don't belittle us. They must respect our time - they should actually be helpful to us by being experts in their own areas, they should give us time to prepare and combat anxiety. Remember, young people need time to be educated before doing something new.

7. Location and comfort: home away from home!

Find the right location for the team, somewhere comfortable, safe and a location suitable for all members - like a home away from home, a 'VAV environment' that is permanent and comfortable (like your own room, nice food and breakfast away from other guests). Have safety rules like an alcohol and drug free environment and no sexual activities so it doesn't soil VAV's good name. Research all the trips to places so you can feel safe knowing the location, you can let someone know if you don't wish to participate and have fun as a group whilst feeling comfortable.

8. Supporting young experts

We are not a "support group" but we support each other within the team especially when speaking of our experiences (like when we're trying to make our issues 'real' to get our point across). Some form of support outside VAV is strongly encouraged, in particular in the beginning. Support outside of friends and family is highly recommended to ensure you are supported and are in a good place personally and emotionally. Support can be from a support service (a professional), family or friend, for as long as you choose or feel necessary, as each person 'moves on' differently.

9. Young people speaking for themselves

One of the reasons that Voice Against Violence is unique is that fact that we, as young people, can speak for ourselves. We are the experts as we have been through domestic abuse and know what needs to change. Speaking directly to Ministers and CoSLA has worked really well as they listen to us like we are the experts. It is vital that we speak for ourselves as if it was to go through adults the wording would probably be changed and as young people we have the knack of saying things like they are which is what the Government and CoSLA should hear.

10. Direct access to people in power

Young people have the right to direct access to people in power! Young people have the right to express their opinions and to use their voices to influence future government decisions.

We know what we are talking about so why shouldn't we be able to influence our government? We should have equal status to the adults involved, we're equally important, there should be recognition that we're experts. We should have the right to regular meetings, dialogue, good communication and feedback. Getting political can be exciting! Being part of the action means that you can make a difference to something you believe in!

11. Equal Participation and Respect for Each Other: All for one, one for all

VAV should always be fair. For any workforce to work well you need to respect them, their ideals, opinions, even if they oppose yours. VAV should be a democracy, an open box where everyone can pass an opinion as long as it doesn't purposely offend or discriminate against anyone.

All members should take part equally which means everyone having a say, everyone listening – if we make sure of that we bring out the best skill and talent we each can offer. All members should be made aware of choices VAV need to make so all can agree on decisions. Also it's good to have equal say when there is peer led and co-facilitated meetings so everyone can pass on knowledge, information and opinions.

12. Breaking the Barriers: No discrimination

The new VAV should stand tall as a beacon to other groups as it doesn't matter what our differences in life are but to have the same compassion in our hearts to proudly stand together against domestic abuse and help the people of Scotland.

In VAV there should be zero tolerance on racism, sexism, homophobia, everything but sometimes people just don't know, so VAV should be fair and help teach each other about certain political correctness when needed, so everyone can be and feel happy in a non discriminatory environment and also feel safe. VAV should be open to everyone, we want everyone to feel safe and happy, within this we want it's members to respect others no matter background, gender, sexuality or race as we see discrimination makes the group unequal and not as strong as it can be.

13. Having fun, teambuilding, friendships

A core part of VAV is having fun. Having fun stops us young people turning into the adults we're trying to influence. It helps us bond as a group and keeps us motivated to turn up and work hard. Just as VAV members work hard at everything we do, we also play hard. In addition to the creative and fun methods we use to produce work we take time at each residential to wind down and socialise through various activities, such as going to the cinema, performing karaoke, or having a meal together. Through these interactions we build up friendships based on trust, which bolster our confidence and help us achieve our aims.

14. Keeping work interesting

As a way of keeping the work we do interesting and fresh, we often use different methods like powerpoint, presentations, [clip]art, improv acting, graphs, and discussions amongst many others. Using creative methods sometimes makes us think differently and helps us learn even more. This is when having committed and fun staff really helps. They prep each session beforehand and try to think of creative ways to present information, a little bit of laughter goes a long way.

We build our skills as the group progresses and by the end we're practically running it ourselves. The staff support and train us on how to lead sessions, do public speaking or even become project leads. It's a slow process but the end result is a group of mostly independent contributors.

15. Working as a team

It is important for the group to work as an effective team and have good communication; everyone has their own areas that they would like to cover so prioritising is key. Having a group that works together is very good as it makes everyone feel relaxed and know what they are doing. They have to take on a realistic number of projects as members have their own lives (school, college, and working).

Voice Against Violence will offer plenty of time to prepare for sessions that you have as it is vital you are comfortable with what you are learning about. The team has to respect each other in what they are doing, as well as having fun, also they need to remain focused. Good communication is really important also so that we know what each other are doing and are there to lend a hand if need be. There has to be a close eye kept on the progress also so that projects can be ticked off. A message to a young person would be to only commit to what is humanly possible, don't bite off more than you can chew, projects can be very in depth and you should fit in round your life as you have to live your life as well!

16. Good communication

For VAV to work young experts need to communicate well with each other, update and inform each other and be supported to do that. Communication between young people and their manager and team is crucial and so we'll need to make it easy and not too overwhelming. Different methods will be used according to what suits the young people but you will be expected to use private web space, email and text/phone contact, snail mail (hard copies of stuff in the post). VAV young experts will be expected to regularly blog on VAV's website to keep the public informed about what VAV is up to and will be given training on this.

Two –way communication with adults and people in power is what VAV's all about. Young experts will be trained to do this and build skills and confidence. VAV ask the adults we work with and the Government to keep VAV up to date by maintaining regular contact and ensuring communication is: concise, to the point, short- not overwhelming, not too much paperwork, plain language, no jargon, says it like it is – is honest and is received in plenty of time for residentials/meetings so can be read in advance. Remember to 'be creative' as young people are bored by paperwork and we also prefer face to face contact (e.g. with staff to prepare stuff, with experts, with trusted contacts in the government).

17.Recognition and building skills

Even though being a VAV member is on a voluntary basis it is essential for young people to gain recognition for the hard work they put in in their own time. Young people should be supported to transfer the skills they build through participation into their personal lives in areas which are important to them.

This should include:

- working towards a Youth Achievement Award
- training to be provided to equip young people for their role in VAV – evidenced by certificates
- strong references to help in careers and further education
- developing communication skills and confidence
- building a CV

"My CV is great now and I've built loads of new skills"

"it really helps"

Participation fees really help us young people but none of us want anyone to think we are doing this for the money. Organising travel and expenses is recognising that their expertise is worth the money; a participation fee can help young people and also recognises their worth and in turn promotes confidence.

18. Commitment to our cause and VAV

Being part of VAV we need to have an interest in ending domestic abuse and raising awareness - letting others know so we can hopefully reduce domestic abuse. We do know that you have a life outside of VAV but we ask for a good form of commitment from the young people in the group such as attending meetings and residentials. We expect a similar commitment from the adults we work with. We each bring a value to being part of the group, with our own knowledge and experience, so we can talk to allies in order to reduce abuse, raise awareness and in time hopefully end domestic abuse.

"to know it's a group, all close, same domestic abuse and goal... taking off, knowing what we're doing.. it's brilliant"

19. Success and making an impact

When we started off we focussed on what did and didn't help us and what needed to change to improve children's lives – you can all do that. We still think that the biggest success for us would be that children experiencing domestic abuse all over Scotland know that they're not alone, there is help out there and they get support in every aspect of their lives. That we exist at all, and the team has worked so well together is a success in itself and we're proud that we've helped improve support for children. We've created our own resources - help us to continue to make an impact by using them:

www.voiceagainstviolence.org.uk

Link to film TBA

www.bit.ly/VAVResources

www.safehubscotland.org

You can make a difference...

VAV got the ball rolling but there's a lot of work for children to do ... if you've got the drive and the will to change something, you can do it. We've proved it. We hope the spirit of VAV lives on.

Stand together against domestic abuse!