

Dual Reports of Domestic Abuse A Contradiction in Terms?

Findings from a Pilot Study in Scotland

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Scotland's approach to domestic abuse

Gendered definition

“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. It is part of a range of behaviours constituting male abuse of power, and is linked to other forms of male violence.”

(Scottish Executive 2000: 5).

Gender inequality also recognised in new strategy on VAW - *Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls* (2014)

Policing domestic abuse in Scotland

- Domestic abuse identified as a strategic priority by Police Scotland
- Joint protocol on domestic abuse between Police Scotland and Crown Office (2007 and 2013)
 - *proactive approach, presumption in favour of prosecution*
- Over 60,000 reports of domestic abuse to police per year – an increase of 50% over the past decade
- Increase in incidents reported with *male victim* and *female perpetrator* (from 9% in 2003/04 to 17% in 2012-13)

Dual reports of domestic abuse

- Two reports of domestic abuse made to the police at the same time; one against each party in the relationship
- Results in both parties in the relationship simultaneously being recorded as a perpetrator and a victim
- This might happen in the context of a counter-allegation or self-defence, but it may also be the dual perpetration of violence/abuse

Pilot study aims:

- i. To establish the number and proportion domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police as dual reports
- ii. To gain an understanding of the nature of dual report incidents
- iii. To identify the police action taken in response to dual report incidents
- iv. To explore the value and feasibility of identifying a sample of cases for further in-depth qualitative analysis

Pilot study methods

- Using quantitative data from a police database
- Analysis of all dual report incidents across three police divisions over one year period (2012-13)
- 616 incidents with matching date and time identified
- Incidents matched by coincidence (n=84) and incidents within same-sex relationships (n=30) excluded



Final sample = 532 incidents

(266 dual report 'cases' – i.e. 2 incidents per case)

Study Findings

- 1) How common are dual report incidents?
- 2) Profile of dual report incidents
- 3) Comparisons by gender
- 4) What happens to dual report incidents?

How common are dual report incidents?

- Across 3 divisions studied: 9,913 DA incidents reported in 2012-13
- 5.4% (532) of these incidents were dual reports (2.7% male/female)

As an estimate drawing upon national statistics for Scotland:

- 3% of incidents reported to the police with a male accused and female victim are occurring within context of a dual report
- 16% of incidents reported to the police with female accused and male victim are occurring within context of a dual report



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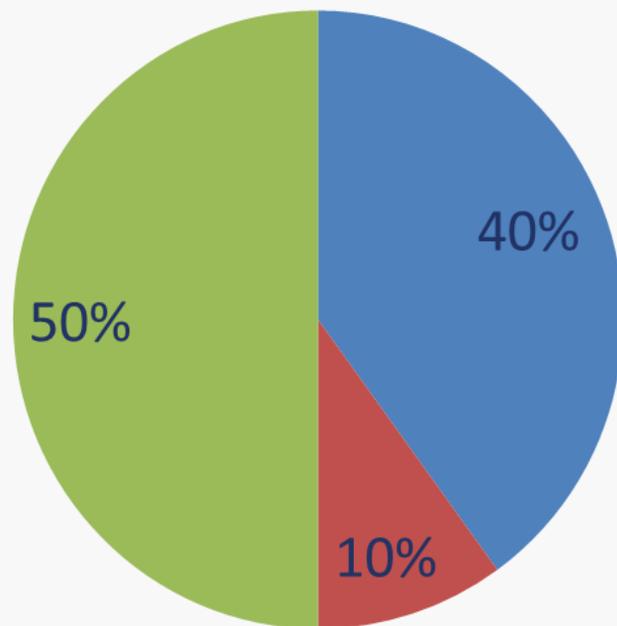
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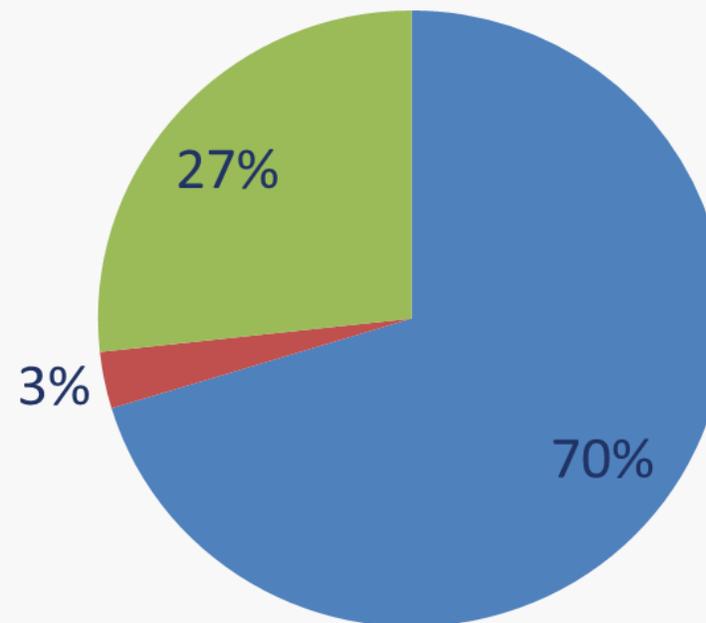
Profile of Dual Report Incidents

Who are dual reports made by?

DA incidents - dual report



DA incidents - Scotland



■ Victim ■ Accused ■ 3rd Party
Scottish data: McQueen (2014)

Comparisons with DA crimes in Scotland

2012-13	DA crimes recorded in dual report sample (n=516)		All DA crimes recorded in Scotland (n=30,259)*	
Threatening & abusive behaviour	176	34%	5,685	19%
Common (minor) assault	158	31%	12,778	42%
Breach of the Peace	90	17%	2,406	8%
Bail offences	78	15%	4,005	13%
Att. murder & serious assault	5	1%	313	1%
Other	9	1%	5,072	17%
TOTAL NUMBER OF CRIMES	516	100%	30,259	100%

*SOURCE: Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin on Domestic Abuse, 2012-13

Comparisons with DA incidents in Scotland

2012-13	Dual report sample (532 incidents)	Scotland (60,080 incidents)
Occurred within a dwelling	80%	87%
Within a current relationship	73%	56%
Repeat victimisation	55%	44%

Comparisons by gender

Comparing Crimes by Gender

	Female victim (n=266)	Male victim (n=266)
Threatening & abusive behaviour	34%	32%
Common (minor) assault	31%	29%
Breach of the Peace	17%	17%
Bail offences	14%	15%
Other	2%	3%
No crime recorded	2%	4%
TOTAL CRIMES	100%	100%

Comparing Incidents by Gender

Domestic Abuse Incidents 2012-13	Female victim (n=266)	Male victim (n=266)
Weapon present	2%	11%
Physical contact	44%	37%
Injury	28%	33%
Incident recorded as a crime	98%	96%
Report to the fiscal	62%	65%

Repeat victimisation by gender





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What happens to dual reports of domestic abuse?

Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (2013)

*“...in cases where the perpetrator makes a counter allegation, **it will not always be necessary for a full report to be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal in respect of that counter allegation. In particular, where the circumstances of the offence, history of the relationship and criminal history of the parties suggest that the counter allegation may be without substance, it will be sufficient, following investigation for full details of the counter allegation to be contained within the report submitted against the alleged perpetrator... If it is required the Procurator Fiscal can then request a full report in respect of the counter allegation.**”*

2012-13	Dual report incidents (n=532)	All DA incidents reported in Scotland* (n=60,080)
Incidents recorded as a crime	97%	50%
Crimes reported to the fiscal	91%	78%

In the 200 cases (pairs of incidents) where at least one report was made to the fiscal, **69%** had a report submitted in relation to **both parties**

Summary and conclusions (1)

- Dual reports account for 5.4% of all reported DA incidents
 - *dual reporting over time likely to be far higher*
- Over five times as many incidents recorded with a female rather than male perpetrator occur within the context of a dual report
 - *women are disproportionately represented as perpetrators in dual reports*
- Gender differences less related to type of offence and more to dynamics of offence
 - *in terms of use of weapons, injury and repeat victimisation*
 - *may reflect women acting in the context of 'violent resistance' (Johnson)*

Summary and conclusions (2)

- Compared to other DA incidents, dual reports are more likely to occur in current relationships, public locations, be reported by a third party and contain a public disorder element
 - *Some dual reports may be more typical of what Michael Johnson describes as 'situational couple violence' rather than 'intimate terrorism'*
- High proportion of dual reports are recorded as crimes and reported to the fiscal
 - *may reflect profile of offence and 3rd party reporting (providing a witness)*
 - *but may also suggest that police difficulty in taking appropriate action in cases of counter-allegation or 'violent resistance'*

Further research required to examine:

- The context that dual reports are occurring in (e.g. counter-allegations, dual perpetration of abuse, or self-defence)
- The reasons why such a high proportion of dual reports are recorded as crimes and reported the Procurator Fiscal (PF)
- What happens to dual report incidents when they are referred to the Fiscal
- The antecedents and implications of dual report incidents from the perspective of practitioners and victims/survivors

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