

PPIT-PRIORITY PERPETRATOR IDENTIFICATION TOOL

November 2016 (version 10)

This tool has been designed to aid practitioners in the identification of domestic abuse perpetrators who will be considered priority targets for multi-agency monitoring and management within a local partnership. Please refer to the additional guidance at the end of this document before using the PPIT.

PPIT Instructions: Evaluate each of the following items in relation to this domestic abuse perpetrator. Determine whether there is evidence for the item (0=absent and 1=present,) for both recent (within past 6-months) and historic (beyond 6-months) timeframes. Note additional information and supporting evidence on the next page, giving details of significant/critical '1' scores.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFENDING

	RECENT <6 mos.		HISTORIC 6+ mos.	
1) ACTIVE: Onset and duration of the domestic abuse <i>Identify whether the offending is recent, historical, or both.</i>	0	1	0	1
2) ESCALATION: Offending increasing in frequency and/or severity <i>Consider situational triggers e.g., relationship breakup, pregnancy, etc.</i>	0	1	0	1
3) REPEAT: Offending (2 or more incidents) against any single victim <i>Is there a pattern of physical and/or psychological abuse?</i>	0	1	0	1
4) SERIAL: Offending against multiple (2 or more) victims <i>Has the offending affected more than one victim?</i>	0	1	0	1
5) LINKED forms of offending (other violent/abusive behaviour) <i>For example, stalking, sexual violence, child abuse, elder abuse, HBV, etc.</i>	0	1	0	1

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFENDER

	RECENT <6 mos.		HISTORIC 6+ mos.	
6) Subject of a MAPPA <i>Consider the reason for the referral and the outcomes.</i>	0	1	0	1
7) Highly harmful to victims (psychological and/or physical abuse) <i>Events with significant consequences for victims; also consider MARAC.</i>	0	1	0	1
8) Noticeable worsening of mental health <i>Evidence of suicidality, PTSD, personality disorders, etc.</i>	0	1	0	1
9) Noticeable increase in alcohol and/or drug misuse <i>Changes in the frequency and/or type of substance used.</i>	0	1	0	1
10) Known history and/or current access to weapons <i>Threats and/or past use of any objects or weapons, including arson.</i>	0	1	0	1

What are your primary concerns in relation to this perpetrator? (e.g. coercive control)

TOTAL SCORE (ranging from 0 minimum to 20 maximum)	
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SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: *Note here specific examples, considering the robustness of the available information, and clarify when information was limited or missing.*

1) ACTIVE DA OFFENDING	
2) ESCALATING DA OFFENDING	
3) REPEAT DA OFFENDING	
4) SERIAL DA OFFENDING	
5) LINKED OFFENDING (RELEVANT TO DA)	
6) MAPPA (NOTE WHETHER DA-RELATED)	
7) HIGHLY HARMFUL DA	
8) MENTAL HEALTH	
9) ALC/DRUG MISUSE	
10) WEAPONS	
In your professional judgement, is this a PRIORITY PERPETRATOR?	YES NO UNSURE
Date of Completion (dd/mm/yy)	
Your Name	
Your Agency	

General Guidance for using the PPIT Wales:

Purpose: The PPIT is not a predictive risk assessment tool but can be used to focus agency resources on those individuals whose offending behaviour requires priority action (e.g., through multi-agency risk management and safeguarding structures).

Perpetrators of domestic abuse: The PPIT has adopted the Home Office definition of domestic abuse: *“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional.”*¹ Therefore, the PPIT should be applied to perpetrators who are intimate partners as well as family members of their victims. Young perpetrators (aged 16 and 17) are also covered by the revised definition and should be considered eligible for the PPIT.

The definitional scope of the PPIT is broad in order to facilitate more ‘joined up’ thinking about those perpetrating violence/abuse against their intimate partners and ex-partners as well as other forms of domestic abuse and ‘linked’ offending (PPIT item #5). This should enable the PPIT to be used across different safeguarding structures, including those that focus on domestic abuse (e.g., MARAC) as well as those which incorporate domestic abuse alongside other forms of offending (e.g., MAPPA and MASH).

Despite the broad scope of the PPIT, it is envisioned as a tool to be used primarily with perpetrators who have committed domestic abuse against their current or former intimate partners. Where this is not the case, and the perpetrator has no known offending of this type, partner agencies will need to agree and implement a shared approach for dealing with these perpetrators (which may or may not involve the use of the PPIT).

Priority perpetrators: Domestic abuse perpetrators (using the current Home Office definition) who, by virtue of their past and current offending behaviour, should be considered priority targets for multi-agency monitoring and management.

Professional judgment: Practitioners will need to use their specialist expertise and experience in relation to domestic abuse when completing the PPIT (i.e., the total score should be used as a prompt, in addition to the practitioner’s own specialist knowledge, expertise and assessment of an individual perpetrator). This is a multi-agency tool and thus a range of practitioners will be evaluating the items against their agency’s information and applying a score. Professional judgment should be used in order to promote the identification of those individuals considered to be most dangerous and thus requiring multi-agency monitoring and management.

Previous development² and testing³ of the PPIT revealed that some of the ten items are perceived to be particularly important by practitioners when judging whether a perpetrator should be considered a

¹ For more information, visit the Home Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

² Robinson, A. L. and Clancy, A. (2015). *Development of the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) for Domestic Abuse*. Cardiff: Cardiff University. Available at: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/75006/>

³ Robinson, A. L. and Clancy, A. (2016). *All-Wales Implementation Testing of the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT) for Domestic Abuse*. Cardiff: Cardiff University. Available at: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/92141/>

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‘priority’ for multi-agency intervention. These include #1 recent, #2 escalating, #5 related/linked and #7 highly harmful offending.⁴

Applicable information: The full intelligence picture held about a particular individual’s offending behaviour should be used to complete the PPIT. This should include domestic abuse as well as related forms of ‘linked’ offending (e.g., other forms of violence against women and girls, see item #5). The information considered should *not* be restricted to criminal justice outcomes such as arrests and convictions. Experiences of victims also should inform the scoring of the PPIT and as such the input from voluntary sector organisations (advocates and IDVAs) is particularly important.

Harm: Serious harm can be defined as an event, which is life-threatening and/or traumatic, from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.⁵

Coercive control: Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship. The new offence, which does not have retrospective effect, came into force on 29 December 2015. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.⁶

Evidence-Base for Items in PPIT Wales:

There is ample evidence to support the inclusion of each item, as all are strong correlates of repeated further violence and/or homicide; only select studies have been included here.

- 1) **Active domestic abuse offending:** The onset and duration of offending is one of the strongest correlates of any future offending. This item also indicates whether an individual is actively engaged in offending, which is a vital consideration when deciding whether and to what extent the perpetrator should be considered a target for multi-agency management. Other areas in the US, England and Scotland also use recency as a central domain to consider when targeting resources (e.g. the recency-gravity-frequency framework). Also see the SARA Manual (past physical assault, past assault of family members).
- 2) **Escalating offending:** Indicates a dynamic situation that is worsening and requires attention. Also see SARA Manual (recent escalation in frequency or severity of assault). Non-physical forms of abuse (jealous/controlling behaviours and stalking) have been linked to further physical assault (Robinson & Howarth, 2012), a reminder that escalation can take non-physical forms.

⁵ See MAPPA guidance section 5 on risk assessment (p. 39), <http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/820/05riskassessment.pdf>

⁶ For more information, see the Home Office Statutory Guidance available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482528/Controlling_or_coercive_behaviour_-_statutory_guidance.pdf and CPS Domestic Abuse Legal Guidance at http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/d_to_g/domestic_abuse_guidelines_for_prosecutors/#a92

- 3) **Repeat offending:** Domestic abuse is defined by its repetitive nature; the issue therefore it to impose a threshold that signifies the need for priority intervention. The DV perpetrator intervention in High Point North Carolina uses a threshold of 3 or more charges.
- 4) **Serial offending:** Recent research in Wales (Robinson et al., 2014) and in England (Hester and Westmarland, 2007) shows that a sizeable minority of domestic abuse offenders in contact with criminal justice agencies at any one time will be serial offenders (roughly 1 in 5). Robinson et al. 2014 found that nearly all serial perpetrators were also repeat offenders.
- 5) **Linked types of offending:** Domestic abuse is but one type of offending that disproportionately affects women and girls. Other types of gender-based offending (sexual violence and exploitation, honour-based violence, stalking) and offending against vulnerable groups (child abuse, elder abuse) must be considered alongside the domestic abuse otherwise the most dangerous offenders will be missed. Research clearly documents the multiple forms of offending of some serious domestic abusers (Richards, 2004; ACPO 2009) and the links to child abuse (Hester et al., 2007). Past sexual abuse correlated with further physical violence in a large sample of UK victims accessing IDVA services (Robinson & Howarth, 2012). The SARA tool also includes items related to sexual violence (past sexual assault, sexual violence in the index offence), in recognition of its relevance to domestic abuse.
- 6) **MAPPA:** Those who have ever been subject to MAPPA have been deemed to be high-risk offenders and this should be considered in the determination of who the priority perpetrators are in local areas. Information about the reason for the MAPPA (i.e. is it specifically related to domestic abuse) as well as the category and level of the MAPPA should be considered.
- 7) **Highly harmful to victims:** This item indicates those perpetrators whose offending behaviour has previously caused significant harm to one or more domestic abuse victims. This harm could be caused from the commission of any type of abuse (e.g., coercive control, stalking, physical assault, sexual violence) or a combination of abusive experiences. The role of coercive control and stalking has been documented in prior research as an important correlate of serious further violence and homicide (Home Office, 2013; Monckton Smith et al., 2014; Richards, 2004). Re-analysis of the Crime Survey for England and Wales found that women who experienced coercive control suffered significantly more physical assaults, physical and emotional injuries, and disruption to their working lives compared to women who did not (Myhill, 2015). Research has shown the importance of significant injuries in predicting future abuse (Robinson & Howarth, 2012). The perpetrator previously attempting to strangle/choke the victim is also a significant risk factor for further violence. The SARA Manual also includes similar items (severe violence in the index offence). MARAC referrals and the minutes of MARAC meetings might provide useful evidence of the harm caused by a particular offender to previous victim/s and should be considered (as well as the DASH for which would inform MARAC referrals).
- 8) **Mental health issues:** Are strongly correlated with serious incidents and have featured in domestic violence homicide reviews. The SARA tool includes several items related to mental health (suicidality, recent psychotic or manic symptoms, personality disorder).

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- 9) **Alcohol/drug problems:** Research with Welsh victims indicated that the perpetrator's drug use was correlated with more serious injuries (Robinson, 2003). US research shows that prior alcohol and drug crimes are linked to high-rates of domestic violence arrests (Richards et al., 2013). Also see the SARA Manual (recent substance abuse/dependence).
- 10) **Access to weapons:** The importance of evaluating the perpetrator's access to, prior use of, and/or making credible threats to use weapons is clear from research (Richards, 2004; Robinson & Howarth, 2012) and included in UK tools (DASH, SARA items on past use of weapons, use of a weapon in the index offence) as well as US risk tools (Campbell's Lethality Assessment Program). Apply a broad interpretation of what constitutes a weapon when scoring this item, including household objects, cars, tools, ropes, knives or guns. Previous fire-setting and/or threats to commit arson should also be considered.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1) What is the PPIT?

The PPIT is a tool for the identification of domestic abuse perpetrators who, by virtue of their past and current offending behaviour, should be considered priority targets for multi-agency monitoring and management. The PPIT is *not* a predictive risk assessment tool but can be used to focus agency resources on those individuals whose offending behaviour requires priority action.

2) How was the PPIT developed?

The PPIT was developed from a two-stage consultation exercise that took place in Wales in 2015. Representatives from Police, Probation, and the Third Sector were involved. The full report is available here: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/75006/>. The PPIT was then used by practitioners in different agencies (police, probation and IDVAs) against historical cases in their agency. This testing exercise resulted in some further refinements to the PPIT. The full report is available here: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/92141/>.

3) What types of perpetrators are covered by the PPIT?

The PPIT has adopted the Home Office definition of domestic abuse: "any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional." Thus, the PPIT should be applied to perpetrators who are intimate partners as well as family members of their victims. Young perpetrators (aged 16 and 17) are also covered by the revised definition and should be considered eligible for the PPIT.

4) How long is the PPIT?

The first page of the PPIT contains the 10 items to be scored. The second page is for noting the information used to determine the item scoring and the overall decision.

5) What is the rationale behind each of the 10 PPIT items?

There is ample evidence to support the inclusion of each item, as all are strong correlates of repeated further violence and/or homicide. Some of the research underpinning these items is included in this document.

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6) What types of information should I use to complete the PPIT?

The full intelligence picture held about a particular individual's offending behaviour should be used to complete the PPIT. This should include domestic abuse as well as 'linked' or related forms of offending (item #5). The information considered should not be restricted to criminal justice outcomes such as arrests and convictions. Experiences of victims also should inform the scoring of the PPIT (e.g., via the DASH).

7) How do I score the PPIT?

Each of the 10 items is scored 0=absent and 1= present for both recent (within past 6-months) and historic (beyond 6-months) timeframes. A total score is obtained by summing the item scores (for a possible maximum score of 20).⁷ This score should influence, rather than determine, your judgment as to whether the individual is a Priority Perpetrator (see next question). Critical events (with critical defined as imminence or severity of harm) should also inform your judgment. How the overall score and priority perpetrator judgment relates to specific actions undertaken by practitioners in each agency needs to be determined and agreed within a multi-agency partnership.

8) Does the PPIT allow me to apply my professional judgment?

Yes. Practitioners will need to use their specialist expertise and experience in relation to domestic abuse when completing the PPIT (i.e., the total score should be used as a prompt, in addition to the practitioner's own specialist knowledge, expertise and assessment of an individual perpetrator). This is a multi-agency tool and thus a range of practitioners will be evaluating the items against their agency's information and applying a score. All agencies involved in completing PPITs need to provide written comments to explain their answers on page 2, to facilitate cross-agency understanding.

9) What will happen to the information I provide on the PPIT?

The sharing of PPITs, and the storing of PPITs, should be undertaken in accordance with those policies and protocols put in place to support multi-agency work in each local area.

⁷ For the all-Wales implementation testing research, the recommendation was that at least 5 of the 10 items are considered Critical, and that this must include item #2 (Escalating) and item #7 (High Harm), for an individual to be considered a Priority Perpetrator. If these two conditions are met, the final question (Is this a Priority Perpetrator?) should be answered YES. However, based on the research, the item scoring was changed from 0=absent, 1=present, 2=critical to 0=absent 1=present for both recent and historic timeframes.