

IMPRoving Outcomes for children exposed to domestic Violence (IMPROVE): an evidence synthesis

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Disclaimer: This report contains transcripts of interviews from studies identified during the course of the research and contains language that may offend some readers.

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

Children who are exposed to domestic violence and abuse (DVA) are more likely to experience emotional and behavioural problems in childhood, adolescence and adulthood than children who are not exposed to DVA. There are existing programmes that try to prevent or reduce the damage that DVA causes to children. However, there is a lack of research on whether or not these programmes make a difference to children in the short and long term. Therefore, we do not know if the types of support offered to children in the UK and elsewhere are helpful and well received (acceptable), nor whether or not they represent good value for money.

The purpose of this study was to review existing evidence and opinion on the clinical effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and acceptability of programmes for children exposed to DVA. The aim of bringing together different types of knowledge was to identify gaps in the evidence and to identify promising programmes that should be studied and tested in more detail in future research.

We concluded that more experimental studies should be conducted in the UK to better understand which programmes work and which do not; that effectiveness should be measured against outcomes that are relevant and important to children, parents, service providers and policy-makers, rather than to researchers only; and that studies should examine whether or not different types of programmes are more or less effective and acceptable for different groups of people. We also identified three types of programme that we recommend should be prioritised for further evaluation in the UK.

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