

# **Non-police services for domestic abusive victims shown to decrease witness statement provision, but reduce victimisation**

June 8 2023

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Victims of repeat domestic abuse are less likely to provide witness statements to police when they have access to non-police services, according to a study from the University of Surrey.

The study, which was conducted in partnership with Leicestershire Police, was one of the largest randomized controlled trials (RCT) on [domestic violence](#) to date and involved a sample of 1,015 unique cases. The study evaluated an [intervention](#), which lasted for six months, that provided victims of police-reported domestic [violence](#) with dedicated caseworkers who facilitated access to the 24 different non-police [support services](#) available in the area.

The results of the trial revealed three key findings:

- The intervention led to a 22% decrease in victims providing a witness statement to police. Witness statements play a crucial role in building a case against perpetrators, making this finding significant.
- Surprisingly, the study showed no significant impact on the intervention to punish criminals. Victims in the treatment group who didn't give statements were less likely to retract them, which helped [police work](#) more efficiently. The intervention removed ineffective statements and reduced the workload for police officers. While it didn't increase arrests or convictions, it did reduce the risk of future victimization.
- Unlike previous programs, the intervention didn't cause an increase in the number of repeated cases of domestic violence reported to the police within two years. However, victims in the treatment group used non-police services more, showing that they had better access to help and support. Also, according to the survey responses, the treatment group had a lower risk of being victimized in the future.

Dr. Martin Foureaux Koppensteiner, lead researcher and co-author of the study at the University of Surrey said, "Our research found that while the intervention led to a significant and surprising decrease in witness statements, they also led to a reduced risk of future incidents occurring. The vast majority of victims of police-reported domestic violence are women, and it's key that existing services available to them can be accessed as easily as possible."

Domestic violence affects over 1.8 million people in England and Wales.

In the UK, domestic abuse non-[police](#) support services are available through a number of publicly funded and voluntary service providers. Such providers include charities like Refuge, Women's Aid, ManKind, and Galop.

By highlighting the effectiveness of interventions aimed at enhancing victim access to support services, the study stresses the importance of a multifaceted approach to addressing the issue of domestic violence.

The study is forthcoming in the *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.

**More information:** [www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10. ...  
pol.20210131&&from=f](http://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.20210131&&from=f)

Provided by University of Surrey

Citation: Non-police services for domestic abusive victims shown to decrease witness statement provision, but reduce victimisation (2023, June 8) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-06-non-police-domestic-abusive-victims-shown.html>

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