Rapid video response (RVR) for domestic abuse

An immediate and optional video frontline response service for domestic abuse calls for service, rather than emergency response.

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Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Operational policing Violence against women and girls Violence (other) Vulnerability and safeguarding
Organisation	Kent Police
Contact	Stacey Rothwell
Email address	stacey.rothwell@kent.police.uk
Region	South East
Partners	Police Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services)
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.

Key details

Start date	May 2022
Scale of initiative	Regional
Target group	Adults Families General public Victims

Aim

The aim of the intervention is to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, by improving the police response to non-emergency reports of domestic abuse at the point of call.

Rapid video response (RVR) improves the victim journey in relation to timeliness of response, expediting safeguarding of victims to reduce risk and capturing evidence faster.

RVR also enables victims to receive a police response who:

- would otherwise be physically unable to attend police stations
- are worried about reprisals
- are anxious about police attendance

Intended outcome

RVR intends to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reduced victim anxiety.
- Increased victim satisfaction with the police.
- Increased trust and confidence in the police.
- Reduced time taken to respond to domestic abuse victims.
- Increased arrest rates.
- Increased efficiency through a reduction in officer taken time per call and a decrease in call backs.

Description

RVR is a virtual policing response available to victims of domestic abuse. Victims receive the same service as they would if an officer attended in-person, but without any delay. This service involves:

- the reporting of any crime
- completion of a risk assessment
- receiving safeguarding advice
- investigative steps needed to advance the case

Eligibility

RVR is only eligible for:

- mid-level domestic abuse victims (category two 'priority response', category three 'scheduled response' or above)
- those over the age of 18 years old
- cases where the perpetrator is no longer present or at the scene with the victim
- those who have a stable internet connection and sufficient phone battery

Once a domestic abuse victim calls 999, a RVR dispatcher reviews the caller's eligibility. If the caller is eligible, the call is then directed to a RVR call script reader. The call script reader talks with the victim and explains how RVR works. If the victim consents to receiving this service, they are sent a link via GoodSAM (an internet platform) where they can access the live video call.

Resourcing

Initially, Kent Police received Science Technology Analysis and Research (STAR) Home Office funding for a randomised control trial (RCT). A small team conducted a block design RCT within Kent. The RCT enabled analysis of cases by type (male/female, intimate/familial). Significant analysis of the trial data supported the case for implementation of RVR in Kent.

Kent designed and built a team to deliver RVR within their specialist domestic abuse hub (which also performs other domestic abuse safeguarding and administrative tasks). Kent continued to analyse data to inform multiple post-implementation reviews. RVR has been operational for a year and the domestic abuse hub has serviced more than 3,000 domestic abuse RVR calls and

continues to deliver positive benefits.

Blueprint

The Home Office provided further funding to the Eastern Region Innovation Network (ERIN) for replication of RVR in five other Eastern region forces. ERIN completed a blueprint, which is a tactical instructional guide for project managers and staff to implement RVR. Attached to the blueprint are the required force policies, standard operating procedures, process maps, and governance forms. The blueprint was commissioned by the Kent Chief Constable. The replication of RVR is supported by all the regional chief constables, enabling collective efficiency and effectiveness benefits from collaboration.

Inclusion considerations

The RCT data showed that 14% of victims described themselves as non-white and one in three described themselves as having a disability. Efforts are being made to make the service more available to those that are partially sighted or deaf, although there is more work to be done in this space. Work has been undertaken to ensure that those with no internet data allowance on their telephones can use the service.

Evaluation

A police-led evaluation was conducted by the Cambridge Centre of Evidence-Based Policing. This evaluation involved victim satisfaction telephone interviews, which were administered using strict scripts and data collection techniques. There was an 80.5% response rate. Surveyors were instructed to conduct the survey 10 days after the call (to ensure attendance). Numerous attempts were made to contact each victim at different times of the day to reduce bias. The interviews collected data including levels of anxiety, satisfaction, and trust and confidence in the police.

Tracking data was collected from the geo-location on officers' radios and vehicle systems to calculate officer efficiency and victim delay. It is worth noting that the journey times were halved in the RCT to calculate overall time taken, to be on the side of caution (based on the assumption that the officer will go from job to job).

It is suggested that the following data are collected for comparison against RVR.

- Response delay for the victim.
- Number of calls for service that received attendance.
- Number of officers in attendance.
- Journey time (arrival time minus dispatch time).
- Officer time at scene (departure time minus arrival time).
- Domestic abuse type (intimate or non-intimate).
- Call grading.

The Kent RVR RCT showed the following efficiency and effectiveness benefits.

- Effectiveness – improvement in satisfaction for female victims of intimate domestic abuse rising from 78 to 89%.
- Effectiveness – reduction in response delay for victims from a mean of 32 hours 49 minutes to three minutes.
- Effectiveness – 50% increase in the number of arrests.
- Efficiency – reduction in officer taken time per call of one hour 23 minutes.
- Efficiency – prevention of 25% call backs into the force control and incident room.

The implementing regional forces also found that they can complete a swift risk assessment, and identify and arrest high-harm perpetrators at speed.

Overall impact

Kent and the Eastern-region implementing forces continue to service an increasing number of calls for service by RVR. This has enabled forces to provide a swift first response service to victims of domestic abuse who choose to use this service at the first point of call.

Forces using RVR are seeing:

- an increase in victim satisfaction
- improvement in response timeliness
- resourcing efficiencies
- swift evidence capture and pursuit of offenders

RVR for domestic abuse has continued to provide a high quality first response to victims of domestic abuse and deliver comparable benefits when implemented in line with the Kent model.

RVR for domestic abuse is being replicated by Digital Public Contact with a further blueprint to support forces nationally in building this capability in line with the proven Kent model.

Learning

- The risk assessment and golden principles adopted and detailed in the blueprint should be adhered to. This will ensure that the service is as intended and that victims are not put at risk. Any deviation from the model cannot be classed as providing a RVR as per the blueprint.
- Data should be collected to evidence the impact of RVR including improvements in victim satisfaction, trust and anxiety, and response delay to produce an evidence base.
- The business model services victims when they call for help, as opposed to when resource is available. Work needs to be done locally to model call demand, which is difficult to predict.
- The technology (video software) and information security requirements that sit behind the intervention need to be considered.
- This intervention bridges the gap between frontline response and emergency call centres with experts in protecting vulnerable people. All stakeholders need to be engaged.
- Adherence to the blueprint is essential to ensure successful delivery of RVR for donmestic abuse.
- RVR is about improving the service to the victim. While it may provide demand efficiencies, these should be considered secondary to the improvements it can provide to victim care.
- An ongoing communications strategy and continual feedback internally is key to identification of suitable incidents and optimising call flow.

Best available evidence

The crime reduction toolkit does not currently include best available evidence on the use of RVR in domestic abuse cases. It does include the best-available evidence on second responder programmes, which take place following the initial police response.

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Tags

Operational policing   Violence against women and girls   Safeguarding   Domestic abuse
Force control rooms