An Examination of Adolescent to Parent Abuse and Violence Within England and Wales.

The Perspectives of Practitioners Within the Criminal Justice System and Surrounding Agencies.

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Abstract

The intention of this research is to present an examination of adolescent to parent abuse and violence within England and Wales. Through conducting semi structured interviews with four practitioners who work within the criminal justice system and surrounding agencies, this research aims to improve understanding on three key elements of the abuse; its prevalence, the impacts, and the resources available to support families experiencing it. Taking particular interest in the relationship between single mothers and sons, and how single mothers may be impacted differently, this research uses feminist methods to explore the gendered nature of the abuse. This research piece concludes that, as hypothesized, single mothers and sons seemingly are disproportionately impacted. While practitioners agree that this is a prominent issue within England and Wales, perspectives varied regarding how to respond to the abuse. This research found that the absence of a clear definition, legislation and awareness of the abuse prevents the criminal justice system and surrounding agencies from having unified response to combat the issue.

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Chapter I.

Introduction

This research is an examination of a type of family violence that is overlooked both academically and legislatively within England and Wales; adolescent to parent abuse and violence (hereafter APAV). There is currently no specific legislation defining APAV, but it is becoming "increasingly recognized as a form of domestic abuse" (Home Office 2015, p.2). The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) defines domestic abuse (hereafter DA) as "abusive behaviour of a person towards another person" who are "each aged sixteen or over and are personally connected to each other". Abusive behaviour entails "physical", "sexual", "economic", "psychological" or "emotional" abuse, or "violent", "threatening", "controlling" or "coercive" behaviour (ibid). Therefore, only APAV perpetrated by adolescents over the age of sixteen would comply to the standards of the legal DA definition, creating ambiguity when defining younger perpetrators. Consequently, this abuse receives numerous titles across academia including "child to parent violence", "parent battering" and "adolescent to parent abuse" (Bell 2018, p.8), demonstrating a lack of clarity surrounding how it ought to be defined. As there is no nationally agreed upon definition, 'APAV' within this research refers to any behaviour that is outlined as abusive within the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), perpetrated by an adolescent (between the age of ten and nineteen), and directed towards their parent(s). Noteworthy, is that APAV is described as "substantially" differing from "normative adolescent conflict", made distinct by an attempt from the adolescent to "dominate, coerce and control their parents" (ibid, p.7).

Further highlighting the lack of awareness surrounding APAV is the limited academic research conducted on the abuse within England and Wales. However, as will be

presented within the literature review, the statistics available and international studies suggest that single mothers (hereafter SMs) and adolescent males (hereafter AMs) are disproportionately impacted by APAV. Consequently, this research is particularly concerned with this dynamic and utilizes a feminist theoretical perspective to critically analyze the gendered aspect of this abuse. Due to the limited UK based literature and unclear legislation, this research employs the perspectives of practitioners within the criminal justice system (hereafter, CJS) and surrounding agencies (hereafter, CJSSA) to generate qualitative primary data that addresses this gap in understanding. The professionals involved with this research; a circuit judge, a family solicitor, a social work manager, and a Witness Service team leader, all have first-hand experience with APAV within their work. The perspectives of these professionals are intended to contribute towards improving academic understanding and awareness of APAV within England and Wales, thereby rationalizing the research. Additionally, prior to commencing this research, I have personally supported mothers through trials involving APAV through my role as a court-based Witness Service volunteer. This established a personal relatability to the topic, as I heard first-hand accounts regarding the impacts and observed the gendered nature of the abuse. Moreover, this experience made me aware of how overlooked some victims feel within both the CJS and society as a whole, further justifying the completion of this research.

Intending to address the limited understanding of APAV within England and Wales, this research has three relatively broad aims. Firstly, this research aims to understand the prevalence of APAV within England and Wales, and why it is seemingly most prevalent between SMs and AMs. Alongside this, the research aims to gain insight into the impacts of APAV, particularly considering how the impacts may differ for victimized SMs compared to parents within a two-parent household. The final aim of this research is to examine the quality and functionality of support that is currently available to

assist families struggling with APAV within England and Wales. To achieve these aims, the objective is to conduct semi structured interviews with the outlined professionals to find out how prevalent APAV has been within their careers, their perspectives on the gendered nature of the abuse, how APAV impacts those involved, and their perceptions on the support available. Inductive reasoning will be implemented to draw conclusions from their responses that address the research aims. Additionally, as the professionals within this study work within different fields, an objective of this research is to use a feminist perspective to critically analyze differing perspectives that emerge. To comprehensively examine and present the research findings, a fundamental objective of this research is to complete thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). Through completing these aims and objectives, this research intends to present an extensive examination of APAV.

To structure this examination, I will first review the existing literature (Chapter II). Chapter III will address the methodological approaches implemented. Subsequently, Chapters IV and V are allocated to presenting the research findings and discussion and cover the "prevalence and commonalities of APAV" and the "support available for APAV" respectively. The final chapter presents the conclusions from this research. I have signed a statement of originality (Appendix 1) to confirm that this work is my own, and all of the sources used to complete this research have been acknowledged and referenced.

Chapter II.

Literature Review

Limited recognition of APAV within England and Wales results in the research requirements, an examination of the abuse within England and Wales, being

unachievable solely through reviewing the literature. The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize existing research surrounding the topic area, much of which has been conducted internationally, to present what is known about APAV. In line with the research aims, this chapter has been organized into four sections to examine the prevalence, impact, and support available for APAV. The final section of this chapter outlines theories that are utilized throughout this research to explain APAV and justifies why they are applicable.

Prevalence of APAV

Determining the prevalence of APAV is challenging because, as of 2015, it was "not officially documented and therefore does not appear in any public records or figures" (Home Office 2015), and estimates vary across literature. Nam et al (2020, p.2) note that statistics on *violence* from adolescents range from 5% to 20% but increase to 60% when verbal abuse is considered, asserting that how the abuse is defined within research significantly impacts estimations. Consequently, the magnitude of APAV cannot be established through governmental recordings, and research statistics are not generalizable.

Metropolitan Police recently completed a "comprehensive needs assessment" of APAV in London that found an average of 692 instances reported to the Metropolitan Police each year between 2018 and 2020, with the "most common outcome" being that "the victim does not support further action" against their child (Lian et al., 2022, p.32-33). This reveals a reluctance from mothers regarding police involvement and suggests that many families impacted likely remain a dark figure to the CJS and unrepresented within figures. In line with this, the assessment found that reports predominantly involve physical violence (60%), or property damage (25%), signifying that parents are less inclined to report emotional abuse and indicating that police involvement is a last

resort. An APAV review for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office reaffirms this, stating that APAV is a "range" of behaviors, many go unreported, and the absence of "high-quality research" makes it difficult to conceptualize across England and Wales (Baker and Bonnick 2021, p.20). Despite this, the recent interest of Metropolitan Police, alongside the undertaking of this review, potentially indicates a change of attitudes as APAV is receiving increased recognition, alongside demands for increased research to better understand and quantify the issue.

Figures from 'Family Lives', a non-governmental organization providing a helpline to families with "challenging" adolescents (Family Lives 2022), grant insight into the magnitude of people impacted nationally. The latest Family Lives report stated that "44,000 calls, chats and emails were answered" in 2020, and of those, 45% were mothers and 26% were fathers (Family Lives 2021), highlighting a disparity of "challenging" behaviour that mothers are subjected to. Additionally, the report asserts that 48% of callers were single parents, which demonstrates that single parents are exposed to a disproportionate volume of APAV considering they account for merely 15.4% of family units in the UK (ONS 2022). Whilst this report does not include data specifically on SMs, the disproportionate contact from women and single parents suggests that SMs are likely most vulnerable to victimization, a notion reiterated across the literature. Research by Cottrell and Monk (2004, p.1073) found the "highest rates" of APAV occurring in "single-mother households", Routt and Anderson (2009) similarly outlined SMs as more impacted, and Ibabe (2019, p.8) affirms that mothers are also more exposed to "psychological violence". While high engagement with the Family Lives helpline represents many victims who do not contact the police, literature suggests that the isolating nature of APAV creates low engagement with support services, leading to an "underestimated" perception of APAV (Nam et al., 2022, p.2). Therefore, it is essential to question statistics as many parents contact neither the

police nor support services. Additionally, considering DA as an entirety, research suggests that men face alternate challenges when reporting victimization (Huntley et al., 2019). Therefore, this research does not discredit that male victimization will likely also be inaccurately portrayed within statistics, but it recognizes that SMs are targeted at a notably different magnitude.

Impact of APAV

Impacts of APAV can be physical, as is reflected in the Metropolitan Police reports, or psychological, as "tactics may be verbal, emotional and financial" (Clarke et al., 2017, p.1423). Research by (Eckstein 2004, p.370) found that psychological and physical abuse are often intertwined due to the "escalating" nature of APAV, stating that a teenager using abusive language can become a violent young adult. Additionally, Eckstein asserts that "escalation in intensity" occurs in all types of APAV, for example, emotional abuse progressing from "threats to run away" to more damaging threats such as "accusing parents of abuse to get them arrested" (p.368). This escalation may intensify the impact of APAV, as an Australian study found that mothers reported "walking on eggshells" in attempt to avoid worsening the abuse, thereby initiating "sleep problems" and "depression" (Howard and Rottem 2008, p.18). Considering how this impacts SMs differently, a New Zealand study noted that SMs are reportedly "more fearful" of violence, often due to the "size and strength of their abusive son" (Peck et al., 2021, p.6). Research by Jackson (2003, p.323) reaffirms this, stating that "physical size" not only insights fear, but can also make SMs consider themselves "ineffectual in dealing with acts of violence". This highlights the gendered nature of this violence as the expected authority of a mother can be undermined solely by the physical size of her son. Additionally, this demonstrates that APAV can influence how SMs perceive their parenting abilities, encapsulating the all-encompassing impacts of APAV as there is not only the threat of violence, but also self-criticisms.

Intimate partner abuse (hereafter IPA) refers to DA between partners as opposed to other family members and entails "an array of abusive behaviors towards an intimate partner" (Outlaw 2009, p.263). When considering how SMs are impacted by male perpetrated APAV, it ought to be considered that it may be further complicated by previous subjection to IPA (Calvete et al., 2020). Spanish research found that "exposure to parental violence was a significant predictor" of APAV (Gallego et al., 2019, p.53), indicating repeated DA victimization for many mothers. Due to the interconnected nature of APAV and IPA, APAV has been labelled "one facet of a double-edged sword of intergenerational domestic victimization" that can "reinforce trauma" of previous DA (Peck et al., 2021, p.7). In line with this, women who have experienced IPA are disproportionately diagnosed with "post-traumatic stress disorders" and IPA "has numerous mental health consequences for women" (Karakurt et al., 2014, p.693). This indicates that IPA victimization may further complicate impacts of later APAV. Although not all mothers experience IPA, and some mothers may not experience these symptoms, mental health issues may be relevant to how some SMs experience APAV. The impact of exposure to DA for adolescents will be explored theoretically within this chapter as it can also explain why some may develop problematic behaviors.

Impacts of APAV extend beyond the abuse itself, with research pointing to parents experiencing societal stigma and developing anxiety over being labelled a "bad parent" (Brule and Eckstein 2016, p.199). A 2010 study conducted interviews with mothers in the United Kingdom who have experienced APAV and found that mothers commonly reported feeling "stigma and shame" and were "reluctant to tell anyone" (Hunter et al., 2010, p.270). Other research considering mothers perspectives includes an Australian study by Jackson (2003, p.223) that stated women "felt they had failed as mothers", addressing the gendered aspect of this stigma. Feminist researcher O'Reilly

(2016, p.65) argues that "essentialization", meaning to "position maternity as the basis of female identity," is a normalized "assumption" of women. This suggests that some women may perceive motherhood as core to their identity, thereby "failure" as a mother may equate to feeling "failure" as a woman. Moreover, this "assumption" demonstrates a higher standard that mothers are held to as parents, thereby furthering the societal stigma they are subjected to should they not conform to expectations. Additionally, Holt (2016) comments that DA "is littered with highly gendered victim-blaming attitudes" and draws parallels between regressive attitudes towards victims of IPA (for example, "if you were a better wife it wouldn't happen"), and how mothers experience blame for APAV, thus exposing some mothers to repeated victim blaming. This, alongside findings that parents often believe their experience of APAV is "unique" (Howard and Rottem 2008, p.18), demonstrates the isolating nature of APAV.

Support Available for APAV

There is an absence of tailored support for parents experiencing APAV due to it being "largely unrecognized" in policing, youth justice, and domestic violence policy (Miles and Condry 2015, p.1076). In 2020, UK organization 'Who's in Charge?' adapted research from an Australian project called 'Walking on Eggshells', compiling it into a booklet of "suggestions and resources for parents and carers" dealing with APAV (Gallagher 2020, p.2). The organization acknowledges that there are "few agencies" in England and Wales responding to APAV, and the booklet is intended to address this lack of support. Whilst it contains relatively generic advice such as "explain to the child that their behaviour is unacceptable" or "develop a calm presence", (ibid, p.9) its recognition of the need for improved services is a progressive step towards improving support. Furthermore, they offer a nine-week programme across the UK to challenge parents' feelings of "guilt and isolation", exploring a range of topics over nine sessions.

This allows parents to educate themselves on APAV and preventative techniques. However, as the programme is delivered in a set structure, it may not be equipped to deal with the uniqueness of each experience of APAV. Whilst organizations exist to support victims of DA, such as 'Refuge' and 'Women's Aid', McCloud (2017, p.35-36) stressed the "incapability" of these services to deal with the intricacy of APAV, asserting a need for "specialist trained staff" as opposed to "generic parenting classes". Aymer (2019, p.857), similarly states the need for a meticulous approach, arguing that it is imperative for "battered women's shelters, mental health programs and domestic violence services to include young men in their endeavors to assist women" to proactively prevent boys from developing concerning behaviors.

Alongside inadequate preventative support, Holt and Retford (2013, p.366) argue that "frontline" workers "fail to respond effectively" to APAV. This literature contends that the professionals involved at a time of crisis, such as police and youth offending services, receive "no policy guidance". Whilst this is a relatively outdated source, no legislative steps have been implemented to assist professionals responding to APAV, and this therefore remains applicable. Whilst the definition of DA was amended in 2012 to incorporate 16- and 17-year-olds (Deputy Prime Minister's Office 2012), there remains uncertainty regarding how to respond to perpetrators under the age of 16. Williams, Tuffin and Niland (2016, p.598) argue that this lack of clarity directly impacts responses for APAV as "DA experts are not seen – rather this abuse becomes a police issue", and the police are unable to respond effectively. What's more, a plethora of reasons why mothers may be reluctant to contact the police have been established throughout the literature, including: "feeling that they are not taken seriously" or will be "blamed by the police" (Miles and Condry 2014, p.1085), not identifying as an "abuse victim" (Goldsmith and Freyd 2005, p.96), negative perceptions of the police (Awan et al 2019), and maternal instincts to protect their child from stigma and

"trouble" (Aymer 2019, p.854). This suggests that despite frequently responding to APAV due to the lack of preventative services, the police in England and Wales are not currently prepared to deal with APAV perpetrators, nor are they particularly trusted by victims.

Theoretical Explanations of APAV

Violence against women is a longstanding concern of feminism, and feminist movements have contributed towards evoking "policy change" surrounding DA (McMillan 2007, p.18). As this research addresses an often-overlooked form of DA and specifically concerns the victimization of SMs, a feminist theoretical grounding will be utilized. The organization Women's Aid highlight the relevance of feminism, stating that "DA perpetrated by men against women is rooted in women's unequal status in society and is part of the wider social problem of male violence against women and girls" (Women's Aid 2019). This is considered throughout the research as it provides insight into why some AMs may be impressionable to patriarchal, societal beliefs and ultimately participate in reinforcing women's "unequal status" within society through their abusive actions.

Connell et al (2005, p.832) explored the repercussions of "normative" patriarchal values and refined the concept of "hegemonic masculinity"; the socially constructed value that men should assume "masculine dominance" to attain the "subordination of women", alongside other heteronormative masculine stereotypes. This could not only explain why some AMs use violence, but also why male APAV is typically directed towards mothers. A study by Dalley-Trim (2007, p.203) considered AM perceptions of hegemonic masculinity. This research described a pressure to "perform to hegemonic standards" or be ostracized by peers, highlighting its influenceability. Applied to male APAV, societal ideologies of masculinity may influence AMs to conform

to hegemonic standards, sometimes presenting as APAV. However, despite the gendered nature of APAV, hegemonic masculinity cannot explain APAV in its entirety as it still occurs within other dynamics. A criticism sometimes made of feminist research is that it is bias, yet DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz (2007, p.876) argue that the "political agenda" of feminism does not equate to bias. As feminist approaches do not seek to "push men out", rather to "gender the study of crime" (ibid), this research is cautious to not disregard male victimization or female perpetrated APAV.

The likelihood of exposure to IPA influencing APAV is explored theoretically throughout the literature. Spanish research proposed that APAV would be more accurately understood if it was considered a "subtype of gendered violence", as it is almost exclusively experienced by mothers and sons and exposure to DA is a common attribute (Ibabe et al 2009, p.18). Their research hypothesizes that AMs have an increased likelihood of abusing their mother if they "have witnessed behaviors related to gendered violence, or situations of subordination to male authority", as they may perceive male authority as superior and regard violence as acceptable. A theory frequently used to elucidate the cyclical nature of APAV is social learning theory (Bandura 1977), which proposes that aggression can be learnt directly and vicariously in childhood through observation. According to social learning theory, "family aggression within the home provides a powerful model for children to learn aggressive behaviors", and peer interactions "reinforce" behaviour that was "initially learned at home" (Widom and Wilson 2015, p.27).

Expanding on the concept of social learning theory, De Bellis et al (2001, p.541-544) considers neurological implications of witnessing DA as a child. This research concludes that "exposure to maltreatment" ("witnessing DA" is outlined as the highest reported "maltreatment" within the study) "may cause delays in, or deficits of, multisystem developmental achievements in behavioral, cognitive and emotional

regulation". Alongside this, they assert that "extreme stress" experienced by children, such as when witnessing DA, can hinder their ability to respond to stress, with "destructive and impulsive behaviors" occurring later in life. Whilst social learning theory and the neurological model can be applied to APAV to explain why some AMs participate in DA, there are limitations. Social learning theory concentrates on the development of violence as an entirety, and whilst adaptations such as the neurological model do directly address DA, they somewhat overlook the adolescent age range, considering only 'childhood' exposure and adulthood repercussions.

Despite inconsistences in measuring APAV due to differing definitions, this literature review has presented a plethora of research and reports that suggest it is a type of family violence that is not uncommon, and yet is considerably underreported. The gendered nature of the abuse, alongside the regularity of SMs previously experiencing IPA, is reflective of intergenerational violence against women. While the highly relied upon international research provides insight into the impacts of APAV, it cannot be assumed that these findings are synonymous with the present reality of APAV within England and Wales as cultural and societal changes vary. Therefore, as is being increasingly recognized, there is a certain need for further research on APAV within the UK.

Chapter III.

Methodology

The research question requires an examination of APAV within England and Wales, and the perspectives practitioners within the CJSSA were considered necessary to sufficiently achieve this. As a result, four semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals working in the CJSSA to gain insight into their perceptions of APAV.

Adopting an interpretivist position, this research does not intend to provide definitive conclusions from these interviews, rather, "it aims to include richness in the insights gathered" (Alharahsheh and Pius 2020, pp.41-42). Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, there were numerous methodological considerations, such as the use of feminism as an analytical tool, ethics, and research design. Within this chapter, the methods implemented to answer the research question, qualitative primary data collection, will be justified and these considerations will be explored.

Feminism as an Analytical Tool

Speaking of feminist research, Webb (1993, p.418-419) stated the necessity to "examine the influence of wider social structures". For this reason, both the literature review and the interviews conducted address social and societal structures that harbor gendered violence. Feminist methodology "places gender centrally within the research" with an "emphasis on being for women and intended to facilitate change" (ibid). Of high concern to this research is the gendered nature of APAV, as it particularly considers the victimization of SMs. Additionally, all participants involved with this research are women. While the participants were interviewed as professionals, this was nevertheless a conscious decision to ensure that female perspectives are central to this research, following "centuries" of "having men speak for women" within research on women (Reinharz 1992, p.19).

Developed to define how gender and race are *both* relevant to the marginalization of black women, 'intersectionality' describes "overlapping systems of oppression" (Duran and Jones 2020, p.310). Alongside racial oppression, intersectionality is the recognition that there is no "universal category of womanhood", and a range of oppressive factors may be relevant to a woman's lived experience (Windsong 2018, p.136). Regarding the incorporation of intersectionality within this research, the semi-

structured format of the interviews allowed some participants to organically address the way in which experiences of APAV may differ dependent on, for example, social class. Suggestions from Windsong (2018, p.141) to "craft interview questions that specifically incorporate intersectionality" were also considered, as participants were asked if mothers face any social factors, "aside from gender or relationship status," that impact how they experience APAV.

Reflexivity is integral to feminist research, and "refers to a self-conscious reflection" about the part one plays within the research that ought to be maintained throughout the process (Fox and Murry 2000, p.1161). This entails the "researcher's positionality" being established and considered within the research (Nencel 2014, p.76). As my mother is a participant within this research, my positionality as a researcher was considered heavily throughout the process. Whilst my awareness of APAV was furthered through volunteering with the Witness Service and supporting mothers in court, I am mindful that my perception of APAV is likely influenced by my mother's. As a result, an array of literature considering alternative standpoints was explored in attempt to reduce preconceptions surrounding the topic, and I was cautious to explore different stances that emerged within the interviews. However, it remained essential to be cautious of my own potential bias throughout the research process.

Ethics

This research was conducted in line with the British Society of Criminology Statement of Ethics (2015), and as such the outlined "responsibilities" of the researcher were adhered to. All participants were provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix 2) and a debrief form (Appendix 3). These served to provide information about the interview process as a whole, explain that they would be audio recorded, confirm their data would be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018

principles, and provide contact details for myself, the research supervisor, and the university, alongside emotional support helplines. All of the professionals were provided opportunities to ask questions about the research and were forewarned about the sensitive nature of the research topic. To protect the participants anonymity and wellbeing, all names were replaced with pseudonyms, and they were informed of their right to withdraw from the research for up to two weeks following the interview. This information was accessible within the participant information sheet. Having read these documents, all of the participants provided fully informed consent to participate and signed consent forms (Appendix 4) accordingly.

Research Design

Whilst the sensitive nature of APAV hinders me, an undergraduate researcher, from conducting interviews with victimized mothers, valuable insight can nevertheless be gained from CJSSA practitioners who interact professionally with impacted women. Therefore, the methodological approach to this research is the collection of primary qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with four practitioners: a family solicitor, a circuit judge, a social work manager, and a Witness Service team leader. The interviews lasted between twenty-five and forty-five minutes. This approach allows for the advancement of knowledge, as is considered a "general responsibility" of research in the British Society of Criminology Statement of Ethics (2015), and the scope of professions enables insight into opposing standpoints. Given the complexity of the issue, semi structured interviews were utilized to allow for in depth, unrestricted responses. Furthermore, the semi structured approach allowed me to use prompt questions, ensuring that the interviews remained in line with the research aims. While rich data can be developed through this approach, there are also limitations. Interviews have been criticized for producing data influenced by the researcher's identity due to delivery of questions and data interpretation (Alsaawi 2014, p.155),

highlighting the importance of reflexivity. Furthermore, the participants can only comment on how they perceive APAV to impact those involved as opposed to offering first-hand accounts. They also cannot provide insight into the dark figure of victims who do not seek CJSSA support.

Non-probability sampling was implemented as the profession of participants was fundamental to the research aims. Two participants were recruited through convenience sampling methods, as the family solicitor is my mother, and the Witness Service team leader was my team leader at court. Following the recruitment of these participants, snowball sampling was used to recruit the final participants. The small sample of participants was necessary to make "cross-case comparisons, intuitive judgements and reference extant theoretical knowledge" in a way that cannot "reasonably be done" when using large sample groups, considering the time constraints of this research piece (Crouch and McKenzie 2006, p.493). However, as is reflective of the interpretivist epistemology of this research, the small sample of participants do not offer generalizable results, nor do perspectives of participants represent their professions as an entirety.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79), thematic analysis is a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" and entails six phases: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. These phases were followed to structure the data analysis process. Phase one was completed through transcribing the interviews verbatim, printing them, and reading them in full numerous times. Codes are "features" of the data that "form the basis of repeated patterns (themes)" (ibid, p.89), and the coding process was completed

manually. To do so, I used highlighters to distinguish potential patterns throughout each text. Phase three entails developing codes into themes and sub themes which were created by cutting up a copy of each transcript and physically creating groups of themes. Next, in line with phase four, themes were categorized according to if they were 'miscellaneous' or in line with a specific research aim (improving understanding on the prevalence, impacts, and support available for APAV). At this stage, some themes were disregarded as it became apparent that they were not relevant to answering research question, and the remaining themes were considered theoretically and annotated. Subsequently, the transcripts were re-read in full to ensure that the interpreted themes were coherent with each data set as an entirety. For phase five, each theme was refined and given a title. Having confirmed that the themes developed addressed the research aims, I used the guidance outlined in phase six to write the following 'findings and discussion' chapters.

The methodological approaches adopted within this research were deemed the most appropriate to obtain rich data on the overlooked research topic, and the implementation feminist methods and analysis was considered necessary to address the gendered nature of APAV. Brinkmann and Kvale (2018, p.8) state that "conversations, discourses and narratives are essential for obtaining knowledge on the social world", just as the interviews with the practitioners are intended to do. Whilst the analytical process relies on myself to interpret the data, creating a potential for biased findings, this chapter has summarized numerous considerations and actions that have been taken to minimize this possibility.

Chapter IV.

Findings and Discussion: Prevalence and Attributes of APAV

The intention of this chapter is to present the interview findings that address the first two aims of this research: further understanding the prevalence of APAV within England and Wales and gaining insight into the impacts of the abuse. Both aims are particularly concerned with understanding the victimization of SMs and why their treatment differs from parents within two-parent households. Feminist theoretical grounding will be used to critically analyze the gendered aspect of the abuse. Structurally, the subheadings within this chapter signpost overarching themes that were identified within the data, and sub themes are explored within the sections. As mentioned, much of the existing research that was reviewed is international, and so this chapter considers the extent to which professional perspectives within England and Wales reflect the assertions of global academics.

Prevalence of APAV in the Participants Professions

The professionals interviewed unanimously stated that they have encountered APAV numerous times throughout their careers. Lisa, a circuit judge, affirmed that in thirty years as a family barrister, and fourteen as a judge, she has encountered "lots of mums" struggling with the issue, and at the time of the interview had an ongoing APAV case, demonstrating its prevalence. Likewise, Alison, a partner in a law firm with twenty-nine years of experience as a family solicitor, stated that she has had "a number of clients" seek advice on APAV "throughout" her career. Kim, who has 24 years of experience as a social worker and presently manages eight teams, commented that there are "currently several cases on each team" with APAV present, continuing that this is "not a new phenomenon". Speaking of public perspectives, Kim affirms that there is an inaccurate understanding of its prevalence as the "public minimizes it completely". Amber, a Witness Service team leader, disclosed that whilst she has supported victims of APAV through court, this was something that she only saw "sometimes". Furthermore, she commented that, in her experience, it is "not as

common as you see with partner-to-partner DA" for APAV to go to trial. Considering the assertion within the literature that there is a lack of consensus surrounding the prevalence of APAV, it was somewhat expected that participant perspectives may range. The scarcity of mothers willing to proceed with charges that was presented in the Metropolitan Police report (Lian et al., 2022) could explain why a professional who supports victims in court has seemingly witnessed APAV significantly less than a social worker who handles families dealing with the issue daily.

Common Attributes of APAV Perpetrators

A key theme within the literature that was reflected in the interviews was the demographic of perpetrators. All participants outlined males as the dominating perpetrators of APAV. While Alison (family solicitor) commented that she had experienced "a couple of girls" be an issue, Kim (social worker) expressed that it is "much more commonly boys". Additionally, Kim outlined that behaviour typically becomes problematic "when they're about fourteen, but it can be as young as ten sometimes – it's just more manageable then". Of note, a study on childhood prejudice found that around a third of children aged between ten and twelve across two schools would use adjectives related to "weakness or a passive attitude" to describe girls and words related to "strength" to describe boys (Navarro et al 2018, p.8). While this research was conducted within Spanish schools and does not consider if these prejudices extend to family members, this nevertheless demonstrates that even with perpetrators as young as ten, gendered prejudice may be relevant.

The theme of manageability reoccurred within interviews as participants referred to APAV "escalating", as is in line with research by Eckstein (2004) that hypothesized that APAV typically escalates in harm. Whilst Kim addressed how young some children develop worrisome behaviour, other practitioners addressed APAV becoming

increasingly dangerous to victims as perpetrators age. Alison stated, "a difficult child becomes a teenager, or a man, and they start flexing their muscles and their mum is now smaller and weaker and they have the attitude of *what are you going to do?*". When discussing intervention points, Lisa (circuit judge) summarized the progression of APAV, affirming that a "troubled toddler" becomes a "terrible teen" and often becomes an "impossible adult". Elaborating, Lisa spoke of a woman with custody of her grandson, but due to her son's history of APAV an injunction was necessary to prevent him from visiting her home "because he'll go and kick off … and he has never been told no". This highlights the longevity of unchallenged APAV as it can continue beyond adolescence and have an intergenerational impact. The "age-crime curve" refers to criminal behaviour emerging around the age of twelve, escalating until around nineteen and "declining thereafter" (Bekbolatkyzy et al., 2019, p.108). The accounts from these participants contradict this school of thought and highlight potential dangers in assuming that adolescents will simply mature out of unchallenged APAV.

Considering other attributes associated with perpetrators, two participants affirmed that APAV does not guarantee poor behaviour at school. Alison asserted that "often these kids are model behaviour at school", recalling one mother with a "straight A son, but he was appallingly behaved at home because he knew he could dominate his mum". This is similarly acknowledged by Lisa, who hypothesizes that "children with these difficulties are often quite good at school" because "they don't know what their sanction is going to be, but they feel secure that they can get away with that behaviour at home". Lisa goes on to label this an "unhealthy security". Whilst this inconsistent display of abusive behaviour seemingly challenges the theoretical suggestion that boys develop hegemonic masculinity practices at school, Alison commented that the "straight A son" also experienced physical bullying from other males at school. Central to hegemonic masculinity is not only the domination of women, but also other men

(Connell et al 2005). Therefore, APAV may reflect treatment that AMs have been subjected to themselves, or the impression of "masculinity" they develop based on their peers' behaviors. In some instances, this juxtaposition of behaviour outside the home likely hinders schools from working *with* parents to develop preventative strategies and reduces external intervention points.

Common Attributes of APAV Victims

The demographic considered most likely to be victimized similarly reflected the literature, as interviewees proclaimed that mothers are most frequently targeted. Alison highlighted the disparity, affirming that "I have never had, at least in my experience, a child be so difficult with a dad that he seeks legal advice – in 29 years!" This does not discount that some men do experience APAV, but it indicates that a fundamental aspect of APAV, similarly to other forms of DA, is how it primarily targets women. This reiterates arguments made by Spanish researcher Ibabe (2009) that APAV would be more accurately understood as "a subtype of gendered violence".

As this research takes particular interest in the experience of SMs, the participants were asked if, in their opinion, the martial status of a mother impacts the likelihood of APAV occurring. Lisa stated that "they must inherently have more issues as they don't have someone to help fight the battle". Correspondingly, Alison stated that being a SM seems to "make it harder to stand up to" APAV. Kim agreed that victims are "commonly SMs, but not always." Elaborating that "often, you see mums in new relationships where there are assaults towards the mum, and then it more commonly than not ends up with that boyfriend assaulting that child." When considered from the perspective of social learning theory (Bandura 1977), this display of violence from a man in a position of power presents the adolescent with a distorted perception of "manhood" and promotes the use of aggression. Furthermore, this suggests that while

SMs are impacted to a notably different degree, family dynamics often fluctuate, and individual households have unique factors that further complicate APAV.

Alongside gender and relationship status, interviewees considered alternate qualities sometimes relevant to SMs' experiences of APAV. Lisa spoke of SMs with longstanding substance abuse problems that likely "impaired their ability to be emotionally, practically and physically available for their child", prior to APAV occurring. This critique of some SMs is shared by Kim, who states that mothers are sometimes subjected to APAV when the "emotional needs" of their child "have not been consistently met", possibly due to the mother "struggling with her own vices". This demonstrates that both professionals regard that, in some circumstances, mothers may hold a level of accountability over the abusive behaviour their child develops. This reflects the complexity of APAV, as was highlighted in the literature, as in other circumstances it would be incredibly controversial to place blame on a victim of DA. Contrastingly, Amber (Witness Service team leader) spoke of the vulnerability of victims, as the mothers she has supported have all been "elderly" or had "additional needs". For example, a mother whose son had been violent since adolescence, but she only pressed charges in her seventies because by this time she was also caring for her mother, grandchildren, and her own health was deteriorating. As Amber supports victims at a magistrate's court, perpetrators are over 18 as opposed to 'adolescents' and therefore it is expected that victimized mothers are proportionally older. However, this insight demonstrates the longevity of APAV and the importance to consider that mothers, of all ages, may be simultaneously struggling with an abundance of issues that could be relevant to their experience as an entirety.

Fear of Physical Violence

A direct impact of APAV can be physical abuse or fearing impending violence. When discussing APAV, the professionals spoke primarily of mothers who had been physically

assaulted, which was unsurprising considering the conclusions made from the literature that mothers appear less inclined to seek support, or report, psychological abuse. Lisa describes "countless accounts" from mothers of "he's hitting me or kicking me", demonstrating the pervasiveness of physical violence. Moreover, in Alison's experience, accounts of sons "lashing out", "often" describe more violent "full blown assaults", highlighting the difficulty in establishing the full extent of the violence. Amber spoke of misconceptions surrounding the severity of violence that adolescents may be capable of, stressing that "just because they're, say, fourteen, doesn't mean they can't do some real damage". Considering the legislative age threshold for APAV to be labelled DA is sixteen, it is notable that professionals repeatedly outline fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds as particularly relevant in perpetrating violence, indicating that this demographic is wrongly overlooked by legislation. Amber stated that APAV is consistently "not taken seriously", as incidents are often mistakenly assumed to be "minor assaults". Correspondingly, Alison validated that in reality, APAV can result in mothers "at their wits end because they are physically scared that their son will possibly overstep the mark in a way that… just, there's no going back from it." Whilst relatively ambiguous, this suggests that despite APAV frequently being perceived as unsubstantial abuse, mothers are sometimes subjected to such extreme violence that grievous harm may be a concern in severe cases.

Exposure to Violence

Undoubtedly, the highest occurring observation within the interviews was that prior to APAV, mothers have usually experienced IPA. Lisa stated that "watching that partner continuously abuse their mother, that's what they copy", which in turn impacts the development of their "anger management and coping mechanisms". This highlights the applicability of social learning theory as indirect exposure to gendered DA seems to directly impacts how children perceive violence. Arguably, this could rationalize

why an AM might consider violence towards their mother acceptable. Furthermore, Lisa comments that "under periods of stress or turmoil, you revert back to those early developed behavioral strategies". This conforms entirely to the neurological model (De Bellis et al 2001) that assumes that children who suffer "intense stress" from witnessing IPA are more likely to respond poorly to stress later in life and resort to violence. Parallels are also drawn by Alison who considers APAV learnt behaviour; "boys have seen their dads behave like this". Kim summarized that majority of adolescents displaying problematic traits "have witnessed some high-level parental DA." Considering that majority of perpetrators of APAV are male and most victims are mothers, and assuming that APAV is learnt from observing the dynamic between parents, it demonstrates the ingrained nature of violence against women. For this reason, it is necessary to consider that APAV may represent repeat DA experienced by the mother. Therefore, incidents of APAV ought to be considered contextually as opposed to as isolated incidents to avoid overlooking previous exposure to DA.

Continuing the theme of exposure to violence, other forms of "violence" such as corporal punishment and child abuse were deemed relevant to the emergence of APAV by participants. Lisa considered APAV a "reflection of parenting experiences", elaborating that if a parent incorporates smacking into their childrearing, they may present the child with a distorted perception of violence. Lisa stated that, in her experience, physical punishment can cause a child to "internalize it, and then become a young adult who smacks you back". Whilst this cannot explain the gendered nature of APAV as sufficiently as exposure to gendered DA does, it nevertheless aligns with the proclamation of social learning theory; violence is learnt from parents in childhood. Additionally, Kim addresses how "disciplines" sometimes exceed punishment and become abusive, providing an example of a "14-year-old, living in a caravan in his parent's garden. The reason *they* gave was he's violent to his mum, but the reason he said he was there was because he couldn't bare his stepdad who kept assaulting

him". As a social worker, Kim expressed the challenge of understanding APAV entirely as they receive "allegations and counter allegations and it's not always clear who is violent first". This suggests that sometimes parents may either lie about the extent of their own violence or justify it as a "punishment", disregarding the possibility that the adolescent may be retaliating to, or copying, their behaviour. What is evident, is that regardless of who initiates the violence, the professionals conclusively point to the correlation between childhood exposure to violence and perpetrating APAV.

To summarize, this chapter presented findings that indicate that APAV is a form of abuse that is rampant within England and Wales, despite often being concealed by the parties involved and overlooked within society. The practitioners are seemingly in agreement that the abuse impacts SMs and AMs to a notably different magnitude, just as the literature suggested. Considering reasons behind this disparity, practitioners repeatedly spoke of the relevance of AMs witnessing IPA in childhood. The frequency to which practitioners referred to this link conforms to the theorized causes of violence suggested within social learning theory (Bandura 1977) and the later developed neurological model (De Bellis et al 2001). Both theories aptly justify why AMs who have witnessed DA may be inclined to portray violence themselves, and the relationship that the behavior is modeled off reflects the gendered nature of the violence. While the professionals' views align on majority of the themes discussed, some differences can be noted in how they regard victims of APAV and causes of the abuse.

Chapter V.

Findings and Discussion: Support Available for APAV

A fundamental barrier to the implementation of effective APAV interventions is that more often than not, the abuse is hidden and there is a reluctance from parents to involve the CJSSA. Within this chapter, some of the factors that may prevent parents from seeking external intervention will be explored. Following this, the quality of the support available will be examined alongside limitations to the existing approaches taken by the CJSSA to tackle APAV, as is required for the third aim of this research. When discussing how to respond to APAV, practitioners' responses fluctuated and therefore this chapter will analyze the differing perspectives that occurred. Just as the previous chapter was structured, this chapter presents the research findings thematically.

Stigma and Shame

Stigma surrounding APAV can isolate mothers and prevent them from seeking support, particularly as women often experience "mother shaming"; a concept that refers to "mothers being held responsible for the behaviour of their (even adult) children" (Jackson and Mannix 2004, p.150). The research findings are reflective of this, as Lisa addressed mothers' concerns that APAV will be deemed "a reflection of their parenting", Kim affirmed that most mothers are "mortified", Amber stated that mothers are "always embarrassed", and Alison commented that "society does not expect mums to fall out with their children". Considering societal expectations of motherhood, Tummala-Narra (2009, p.8) labels the higher standard that women are held to as parents the "myth of the perfect mother". This standard may intensify the impacts of APAV for mothers as there is not only a fear of violence, but also anxiety to conform to societal expectations which suggests that many women likely suffer APAV is silence. In line with this, Kim asserts that "there's nothing more shocking really than a mother being physically assaulted by a child, and the public is quite good at closing their eyes to things they don't want to see." This encapsulates the

stigmatization of APAV and indicates why mothers may feel scrutinized if they are subjected to it.

Stigmatization, often rooted in patriarchal expectations of gender roles, may be present within the wider family. Alison described a SM who was under "immense pressure" from her family to "sort out" her son's abusive behaviour. This mother described that it would "wreak havoc" if she disciplined him herself, and her family "would have never forgiven her" if she sought external guidance. In this instance, the mother's family simultaneously blamed her for the APAV, undermined her parenting, and isolated her from external support, thereby furthering the impacts of APAV. Furthermore, the expectation to "sort out" the AM was not extended to the father, highlighting the double standard of parental expectations. This indicates a pressure for women to conform to expectations of motherhood, even if it entails tolerating abuse. Conversely, Kim stated that whilst *most* mothers are reluctant to seek support, "some would be banging down our door saying *take my child he's doing this and that…* any excuse really". Whilst this implies that some mothers may be unconcerned about being perceived as a "good mother", it could be argued that these mothers may consider it less shameful to place all wrongdoing on their child's behaviour than admit to an inability to parent the child. This reiterates the importance to recognize that each family presenting with 'APAV' is unique and complex. While Kim acknowledged this only occurs with "some" mothers, this nevertheless juxtaposes Alison's account within the previous chapter of mothers at their "wits end". This illustrates somewhat of a disparity in how professionals regard perpetrators and victims of APAV, potentially dependent on who they primarily support.

Perspectives on Police Responses

Having established that the majority of mothers only seek CJSSA intervention at a "last resort", participants revealed that mothers may be conflicted for a range of reasons; distrust in the police based off poor community experiences (Lisa), poor experiences with the court system, potentially regarding DA (Amber), "lack of confidence in services" (Kim), loving their child (Alison), and the shame associated with APAV (all participants), alongside other suggestions were raised. Concerning distrust in police, intersectionality is particularly relevant, as Lisa comments that "there is often an attitude amongst lower socioeconomic levels to not go to the police for anything." Therefore, despite professionals stating that APAV is prevalent amongst varying social classes, some mothers may face increased conflictions or external pressures to not involve police due to their social identity.

Both Lisa and Alison described police intervention as a "burden" to mothers, with Lisa commenting that "people generally don't want to be seen as a 'grass', let alone with their child… then getting your child a criminal record because he's assaulted you? They know that will ruin that child's life forever and they'll never get a job doing X, Y and Z". Alison similarly affirms that mothers often hide APAV because "something like that follows people around for the rest of their lives; it follows them in DBS checks and in social services if they go on to have families". This reiterates the sentiments presented within the literature that mothers only contact the police at a last resort due to apprehension surrounding the repercussions for their child. Therefore, if mothers feel uncomfortable engaging with the standardized police responses, they are evidently unable to effectively respond to the issue.

Support and Preventative Interventions for APAV

Considering support available, majority of interviewees had relatively negative perspectives of the present systems. Aside from Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, Women's Aid, and refuge workers, who are described by Amber as "incredibly helpful", and "invaluable" to women, particularly if they are "isolated" just as a SM may be. However, regarding the CJS as a whole, Amber considers it "not equipped to deal with DA in any form, let alone when it's a child and even more complicated". Alison similarly expressed the incapability of current methods to tackle APAV, stating that when a mother seeks legal advice the only options available are either "non molestation and occupation orders or referring her to the police". Furthermore, Alison pressed that she "can't recall any mums who have ever actually taken an injunction out against their child… it's been threatened," but ultimately mothers are too reluctant to implement them. This, again, illustrates the ineptitude of the CJSSA to support victims of APAV, as the "solutions" available are evidently not solutions mothers are willing to engage with. For a CJS strategy to be worthwhile, Lisa insists that engagement is crucial. Speaking of crime prevention programmes, Lisa comments that these are also "only as good as the engagement with them," and criticizes that and some programmes allow perpetrators to "play the system" and participate to "say they've passed the course". This presents clear limitations to the responses of the CJSSA for all involved with APAV.

Financial limitations were also considered, as many participants addressed under-resourcing. Lisa praised early intervention strategies that were implemented by "Sure Start centers, before they closed lots of them down". Some Sure Start centers still operate and offer "advice on child and family health" and "parenting" (GOV.UK 2012), however, "between 500 and 1000 Sure Start centers have closed in England since 2010" (Butler 2019). Kim similarly established previously available methods, such as "whole family" or "multi systemic" therapy that would be beneficial but is "very

expensive and doesn't exist in many places anymore." This reflects the "62% cut in council early years service spending since 2010" (ibid), which has seemingly prevented many parents, most of whom are SMs, from accessing support necessary to improve their situations. Underfunding of vital services extends to refuge centers, as Lisa comments that "I am regularly hearing that refuges are having to turn women away, they haven't got enough spaces". As has been outlined within both the literature and the findings of this research, witnessing gendered DA is a key facilitator to later developing APAV. Therefore, the insufficiency of resources for women attempting to leave abusive partners in turn increases the likelihood of future APAV. Not only this, but Lisa pressed that "there's not enough resources to cover everything", and there is "barely enough to support average DA between partners". This indicates that central to the lack of support for APAV is the absence of overall funding for DA services. Additionally, it is worth noting that this lack of resources could potentially create a hierarchy of DA harms, with professionals having to distinguish where to prioritize support.

Conflicting Opinions from Professionals

The absence of a clear definition, guidance and policy framework was heavily criticized within the literature, with Williams, Tuffin and Niland (2016) arguing that it directly hinders the CJS response to APAV. Numerous interview points revealed opposing opinions from professions regarding how the CJS ought to respond to APAV. Alison admits that whilst current strategies are ineffective, mothers often have unrealistic expectations of the CJS and "just hope for a magic wand to come and sort it out". Comparable sentiments were disclosed by Kim who commented that "a lot of the change they want isn't what we are able to deliver… they want us to *fix* their child." Whilst both professionals expressed similar points, they had noticeably different stances. Alison elaborated that mothers take this approach because they have already

"tried everything possible; doctors, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), all sorts of things" before CJSSA intervention. This stance positions mothers clearly as the victims, whereas Kim's stance that some parents are simply unwilling to partake in strategies that are "taxing" or a "long term process" is far more critical. This, again, highlights the potential unconscious bias that may exists amid professionals who have been influenced by vastly different experiences. Furthermore, this prevents the CJS from having a unified response to APAV, as was pointed to in the literature.

Grounded in experience with those impacted, participants had opposing views on how APAV should be classified. Lisa asserts "it should be considered DA! They have access to that person in an intimate way". Likewise, Amber agreed that APAV should be recorded as DA. Regarding the legislative requirement for perpetrators to be over sixteen for APAV to be considered DA, Amber expressed that "if they're at the age of criminal responsibility it needs to be classified as DA." Amber clarified that they should not receive the same responses but contends that the classification is "necessary" to ensure the "right support" is directed towards victims and offenders. Central to feminism is the advocation for DA victims to receive appropriate support (Nichols 2013, p. 178). However, contemporary feminists often assume "survivor-defined approaches" that "encourage women to make their own decisions based on individual situations", receiving "help and support rather than dictating women's choices through bureaucratic structures that force their decision making," (ibid). Arguably, the suggestion that all mothers experiencing APAV from a child over ten years old should be considered a DA victim may undermine the complexity of APAV and the wishes of mothers themselves. Ultimately, labelling mothers DA "victims", particularly if they have previously experienced IPA, may not be beneficial to the women impacted if they do not identify with the label and could further the reluctance to seek support. Regarding the impact of labelling the adolescent a "domestic abuser", Kim contests

that it "is a problem we face as professionals as, particularly schools, like to label it as such and want us to respond in a way that we wouldn't necessarily want to". Subsequently stating that she would feel "quite uncomfortable calling it DA", highlighting the conflicting approaches. This lack of consensus presents a fundamental flaw to the support available to mothers *and* sons within England and Wales.

This chapter has addressed the third aim of this research and examined the quality and functionality of the CJSSA support that is currently implemented to assist families impacted by APAV within England and Wales. With only four professions included in this research, there are notable limitations to the overall insight that can be gained. While none of the interviewees are involved with the police, they collectively had poor impressions of their responses. Aside from this, and the need for increased resourcing in preventative early intervention strategies and support, the professionals presented fundamentally differing takes on how APAV should be categorized and responded to. This lack of consensus is reflective of the limited academia and legislation acknowledging APAV within England and Wales.

Chapter VI.

Conclusion

This research required an examination of APAV within England and Wales and aimed to present, and critically analyze, the perspectives of practitioners working within the CJSSA. For the most part, the research findings surrounding the prevalence of APAV within England and Wales, alongside the impacts of the abuse, were reflective of the literature. Professionals agreed that this abuse is a substantial issue that primarily impacts mothers and sons, and verified SMs are disproportionately impacted. With

practitioners continuously addressing the parallels between DA and APAV, this research has presented findings in line with the premise of social learning theory as it suggests that adolescents often learn violent behaviour from their parents. Moreover, not only is violence itself learned, but it is likely that the gendered nature of the violence is also learned, thereby perpetuating intergenerational violence towards women. Aside from the prevalence, impacts, and causes of APAV, this research revealed that practitioners have vastly opposing, and even contradicting, perspectives surrounding how APAV should be responded to. For example, both the family solicitor and the social worker regard APAV as having detrimental impacts but have seemingly opposing perspectives on if mothers, or adolescents, are the true 'victim', whereas the social worker's stance on APAV being labelled DA directly contradicts the perspectives of the other practitioners. As a result, this research has found that while the CJSSA agree that APAV is an issue, different professions have conflicting opinions surrounding how to tackle the issue, creating an incoherent stance from the CJSSA as an entirety.

While APAV is becoming increasingly recognized and researched internationally, notably so within Spain, New Zealand and Australia, it remains considerably overlooked within England and Wales. With little contemporary literature conducted on APAV within the UK, no agreed upon definition, and no nationally recorded statistics, more evidently needs to be done to improve understanding of the issue. Whilst this research is by no means able to 'fill' this gap in understanding, it provides insight into the present reality of APAV and highlights social structures that harbor it. In order to begin quantifying the issue, there is a need for incidents of APAV to be recorded as such by police nationally, just as the Metropolitan Police have begun to do in recent years. To further understand the issue sociologically and develop effective responses, qualitative research with families who have been directly impacted would be valuable to future research. The CJSSA entails a plethora of professions, and as this research

was limited to four perspectives, further research with other professions would allow for different perspectives on the issue to be explored. Until APAV is more accurately understood within England and Wales, responses towards the issue will likely remain unable to efficiently respond to the direct needs of people impacted.

Word count: 10,000

Appendices

Appendix 1: Statement of Originality

I confirm that I have fully acknowledged all sources of information and help received and that where such acknowledgement is not made the work is my own.

Signed: *Imogen Allan*

Dated: 15th March 2023

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

This research aims to gain an understanding on the magnitude of single mothers who are subjected to violence at the hands of their children, particularly sons. All of the participants within this research work within the criminal justice system, in differing roles to gain insight into a range of perspectives. The interview will consist of ten questions surrounding the topic and will consider the scale of the issue, similarities between different victims and perpetrators, and barriers that women face when seeking support. The interview is expected to last roughly half an hour.

Depending on the preference and availability of the participant, this interview will take place at a public location of their choice, or over Microsoft Teams, on a date in either December 2022 or January 2023. The interviews will be audio recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password protected laptop. Only the researcher will have access to the data and will ensure that it is destroyed following completion of the project. As quotes from the interview may be used within the final dissertation, full confidentially cannot be assured. However, any names will be a changed to a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of participants. Participants have the right to withdraw from the research for two weeks following the date the interview took place and can do so by emailing the researcher on the email address provided below. All collecting and storing of participants data will be in line with GDPR.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, participants should only disclose what they feel comfortable to and should not divulge any information that would be damaging to others or violate their privacy. Participants should not divulge any information that would identify another person(s). Any cases of actual or potential child abuse, other harm to third parties, or illegal activity disclosed by the participants may have to be reported by the researcher. Whilst this research is not intentionally distressing, contact information for the 24-hour Samaritans helpline has been provided below should participants be mentally affected by the sensitivity of the research and wish to reach out to a professional.

Contact information:

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Extra help
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Appendix 3: Debrief Form

INTERVIEW DEBRIEF

Thank you for participating in this research. The perspectives of people working within the criminal justice system and surrounding agencies are vital in order to gain insight on the magnitude of single mothers impacted by violence from their children, particularly sons. Whilst there is clearly still a significant dark figure of women experiencing this issue, this study aims to consider how often women currently do interact with the criminal justice system and surrounding agencies regarding violence from children. The range of participants allows for a broad understanding on different aspects of the issue at hand; existing support for single mothers, barriers to seeking support, the cycle of abuse, and what leads to the involvement of the criminal justice system. An examination of these perspectives can allow for future recommendations and shed a light on the often-overlooked issue.

WITHDRAWING FROM RESEARCH

If you change your mind and no longer wish to participate in this study, you opt out of the research and withdraw any information with no explanation necessary for up to two weeks following the completion of the interview. As the findings from this study are due to be submitted within a dissertation in March 2023, participation cannot be withdrawn following this time. To withdraw, please inform Imogen Allan by email (contact details below).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Following this interview, if you feel at all distressed due to the sensitive nature of the research you may find it useful to contact the Samaritans helpline number: 116 123, which is in place to support people in distress.

If you have any complaints surrounding this research and how it has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor, Dr. Hind Elhinnawy, via the email address: hind.elhinnawy@ntu.ac.uk

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 4: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Please read the following information before agreeing to take part in this research.

I confirm that I am aged 18 or older as is required to take part in this research. I understand that the purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have been provided with a Participant Information Sheet explaining the process. I confirm that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. I understand that this research consists of an interview that will be audio recorded. I understand the how the data will be stored, and I know why the information is being used for the research. I am aware of my right to withdraw from the research up until two weeks following the interview datw, with no explanation necessary, and I understand how to do this. I understand that this research is voluntary, and I am participating in this research is unpaid.

Having read this information, please tick the box below if you wish to be a participant in this research and consent to the conditions.

☐

Name:

Date:

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