



Child Focused Courts

West Yorkshire IDVA Partnership

Impact Report 2025– 2026





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Executive Summary

The West Yorkshire IDVA Partnership (WYP) is delivered by Staying Put (SP) as the lead provider, alongside Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) (represented by Behind Closed Doors), WomenCentre (WC), and Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership (PDAP). Together, we cover the West Yorkshire Domestic and Family Justice (DFJ) area, providing consistent, high-quality support to adults, children and young people involved in Family Court proceedings where domestic abuse is a factor across Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield.

This is a highly experienced and well-established partnership, bringing together over 100 years of combined expertise in delivering specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services and holistic wraparound support. This depth of experience has enabled rapid mobilisation, timely service delivery and a consistently strong operational model from the outset.

The WYP has delivered a strong and effective pilot, underpinned by collaboration, shared expertise and high-quality frontline practice. A key strength of the service has been its contribution to strengthening the voice of the child within Family Court proceedings. Through close partnership working with Cafcass, the Ministry of Justice and Local Authorities, we have helped ensure that children's experiences, wishes, and lived realities of domestic abuse are

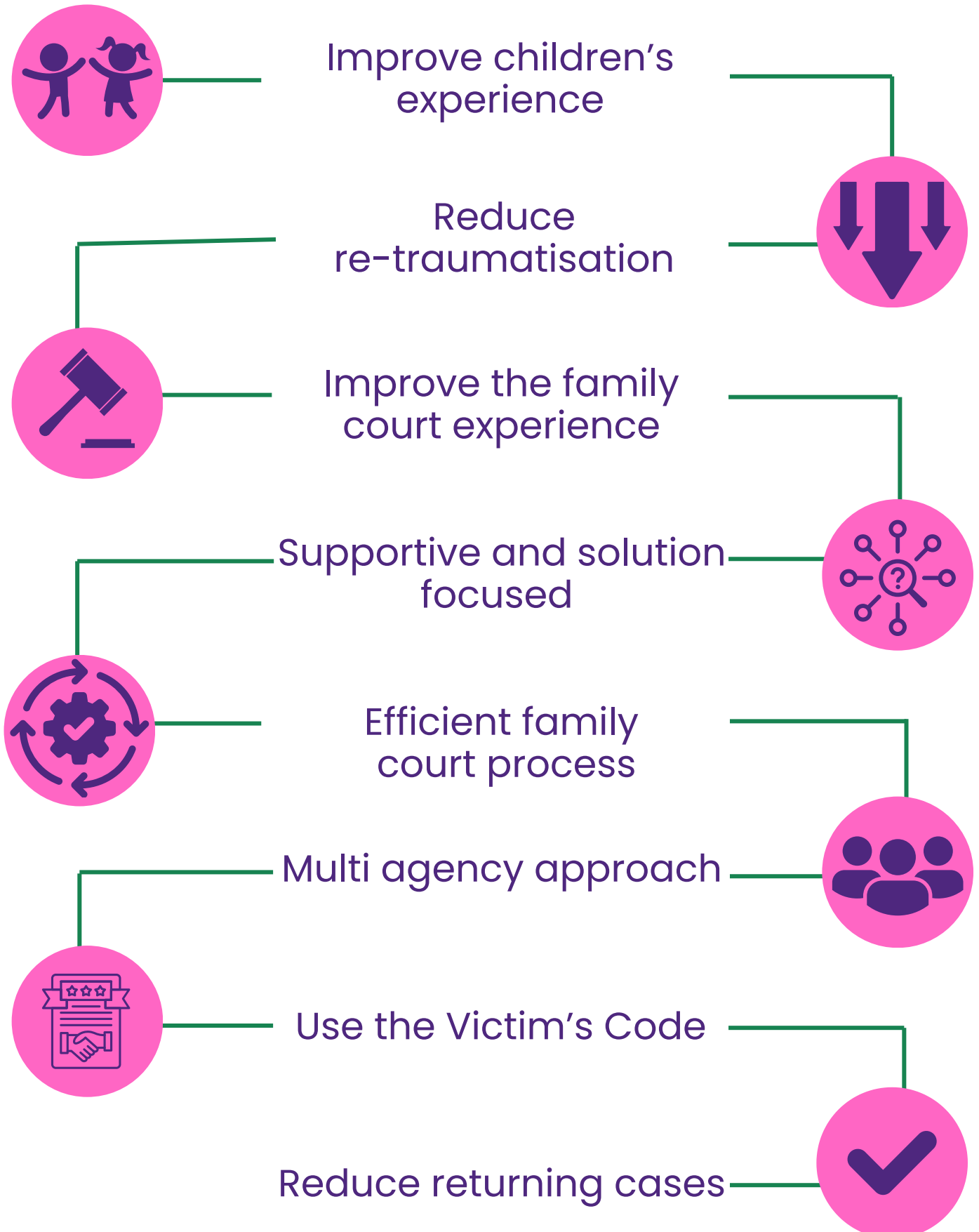
more clearly understood and more consistently reflected in court-related assessments and decision-making. We have also worked closely with Child Impact Report authors, ensuring that both survivor and child voice are central to professional recommendations to the court.

The service is trauma-informed, accessible and flexible, offering both in-person and remote support across the region. IDVAs support survivors throughout the court process, including preparation for hearings, advocacy to ensure their voices are heard and support to secure appropriate special measures. This approach not only strengthens survivor engagement but also contributes to safer, more informed outcomes for children.

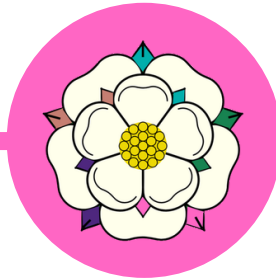
The success of the pilot is reinforced by strong leadership from Staying Put as lead provider, a skilled and committed frontline workforce and an effective partnership model. This has been formally recognised through a further 12-month funding extension, enabling continued delivery of specialist support to families experiencing domestic abuse within Family Court proceedings.

Looking ahead, the West Yorkshire partnership remains a core strength of the programme, improving system consistency, strengthening the voice of both survivors and children and enhancing outcomes across the Family Justice system.

Key aims

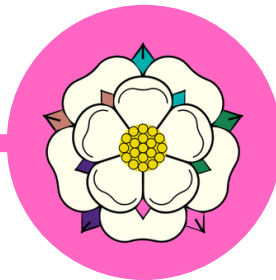


Our mission



To improve family experience through the family court system.

Our objectives



- Ensuring flexible IDVA support
- Providing early intervention
- Improving the voice of the child
- Supporting survivors post-court as required by signposting to suitable community services
- Feeding into the Family Court evaluation



Timeline

March 2025

WY Partnership established – SP, LDVS, PDAP and W.C. Successful tender for the Family Court IDVA Provision

May 2025

Interviews take place with over 200 applications across the areas. 92% of staff roles are successfully appointed. Private Law Conference. Partnership Event.

July 2025

Referrals start to increase. IDVA summary report created to standardise the process in collaboration with other pilot areas

September 2025

Family Court IDVA Service deliver first court support. Drop Ins arranged with Cafcass

November 2025

Volunteers introduced and trained to support capacity

January 2026

Training scheduled for LAs and Cafcass. New template for IDVA report agreed.

April 2025

Recruitment process begins. Mobilisation starts. Liaison with/learning from other pilot areas (Birmingham/Wales/Dorset).

June 2025

Programme goes live. Case management system goes live.

August 2025

Respect dual allegations training rolled out across the partnership

October 2025

Professionals Handbook created. Participation at IDVA network, led by MoJ. IDVA service deliver at Private Law Event. Participation at Child Impact Report Review Forum

December 2025

Volunteers actively engaged in supporting at court.

February 2026

Grant extension received. Client handbook created

March 2026

Staffing re-structure. Family Court IDVA morning briefings rolled out.

Our year in numbers

727

Total number of cases referred

597

Number of individuals receiving support

978

Number of children associated with the supported adult

80

Number of individuals supported at court

1.98

Average time (in days) to contact the client following a referral

2.42

Average time (in days) to allocate the case to an IDVA following initial contact

8.9

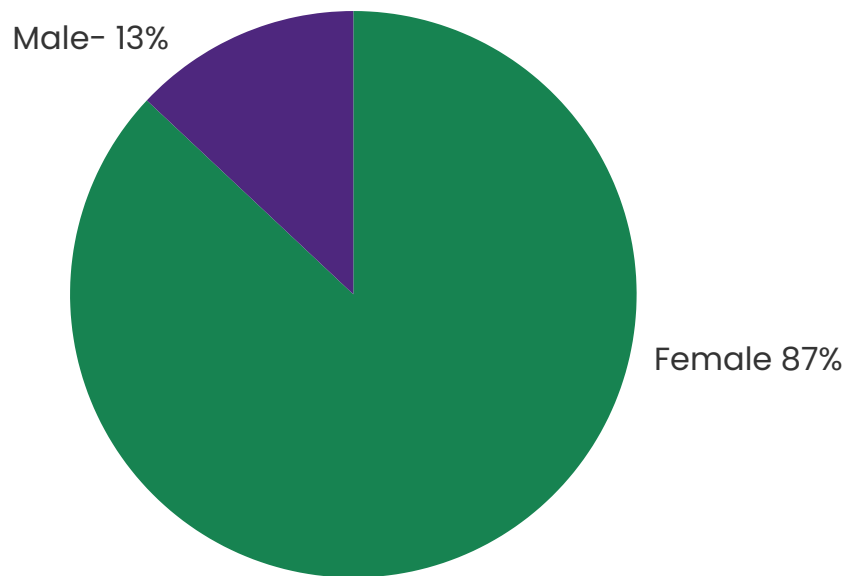
Average time (in days) to submit the IDVA report

11.2

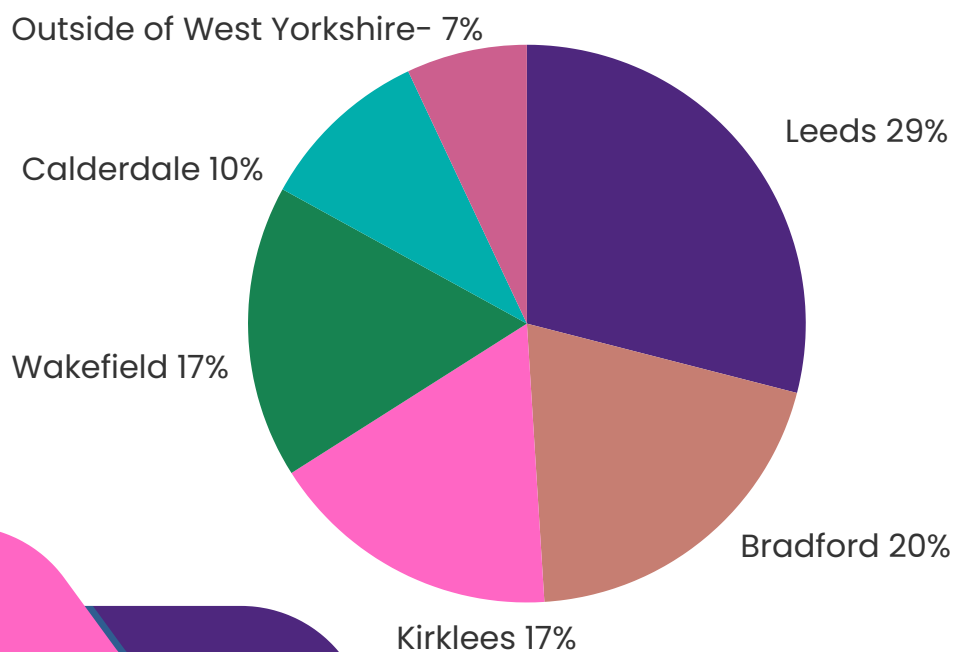
Average time (in days) from referral to report completion

Demographics

Gender of people supported



Referrals by area



Training and network events



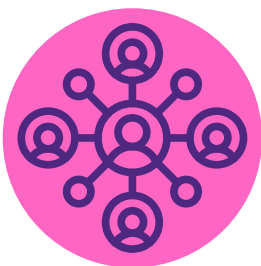
Working nationally to bring about consistent approaches and setting the standard process for West Yorkshire IDVA Partnership-Child Focused Courts court.



We provided training to professionals working within the Family Court setting in West Yorkshire on an introduction to the West Yorkshire IDVA Partnership-Child Focused Courts



Attended private law training events to increase networking with judges, magistrates, barristers and solicitors nationwide.

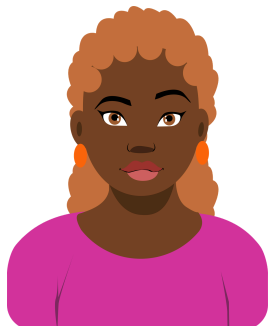


Participation at the National IDVA Network to map the pilot programme and help the Ministry of Justice and Cafcass understand the IDVA process.



We have supported our social work colleagues within the local authorities and Cafcass with Domestic Abuse training.

Client feedback



Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the IDVA assessment and for the sensitivity you've shown when discussing my situation. I truly appreciate the work that has gone into preparing the summary and your support throughout this process.



Thank you again for everything you've done and continue to do not just for me, but in giving voices to all victims of domestic abuse going through the family courts process. Whatever the outcome is it has been hugely beneficial to me to feel seen and heard.



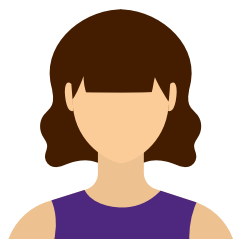
Thank you so much for all your support and guidance throughout this process. I really appreciate your advice and will follow it if any issues arise in the future. Your best wishes for [my child] and me mean a lot, and I'm very grateful for your help.



I appreciate support in court thank you. I think not having the support last time and feeling flustered, lead me to just agreeing to additional access for him, without really understanding what that meant.



Leah's story



Leah fled domestic violence with her 5 year old daughter, hiding her location. Leah has vulnerabilities including cognitive impairment and mobility issues.



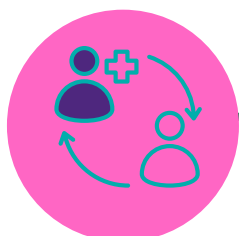
We supported by:



Completing a DASH Risk Assessment which highlighted other concerns that were not known to Social Care or Police. These included possession of knives and threats towards Leah and her family with the weapons. Also it was disclosed that Leah's ex-partner had a history of drug use including steroids and was unstable.



Completing a Summary Report and submitted for the attention of the court.



Making a MARAC referral and the case went to MARAC panel.

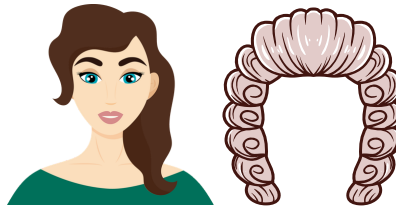


Advocacy regarding Legal Aid assessment and options available for Service User to consider.



Referring to Domestic Abuse Support Services for ongoing practical support.

Leah's story continued



Court support:



Special Measures implemented including separate entrance/exit, separate waiting area, screens in court.



Child Focused Courts IDVA attended the hearing to provide emotional support



A Legal Aid letter was provided to Leah and she obtained the legal representation for the hearing.

Outcomes



Social Care resumed their involvement with Leah and her family.



Responsibilities given to Police and Social Care for safeguarding Leah, her child and family.



Leah had contact from Domestic Abuse Support Agency.



Leah obtained legal representation as she had felt overwhelmed at the court process. She attended court with an IDVA as a support.

Child Focused Courts volunteers



Our volunteers are trained to carry out the following duties:

- Introducing and explaining the service and process to service users
- Making 'Keeping in Touch' calls once the IDVA report is complete and individuals are waiting to understand if they are required to attend court
- Providing information and offering reassurance around the court process
- Providing emotional support to service users pre, during and post court attendance where their IDVA is unable to attend
- Completing evaluation forms with service users once the case is concluded.

Did you know?

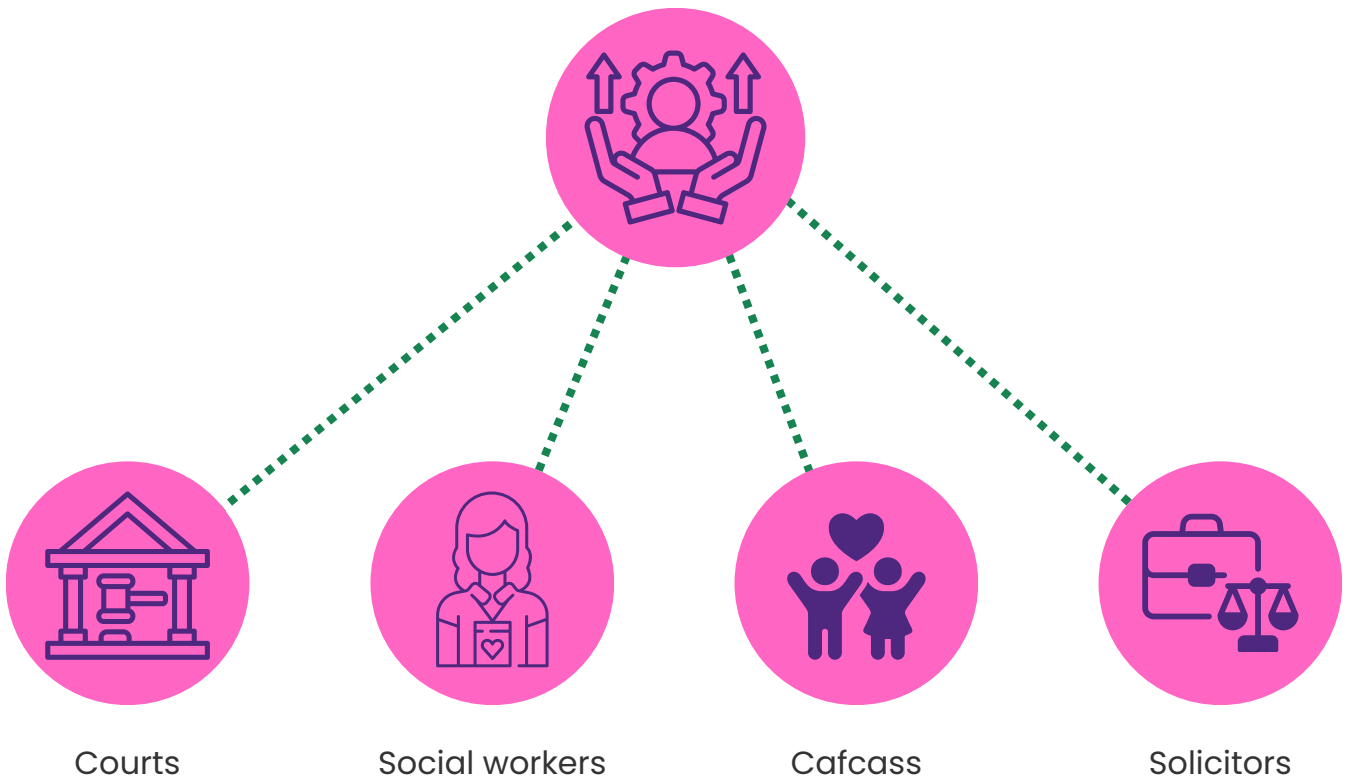
Our volunteers completed

209

hours of voluntary work

Next steps

Upskilling professionals including:



Increasing volunteers to support IDVA capacity

Referral form

To make a referral, please visit our website at

www.stayingput.org.uk/child-focused-courts

or scan the below QR code.

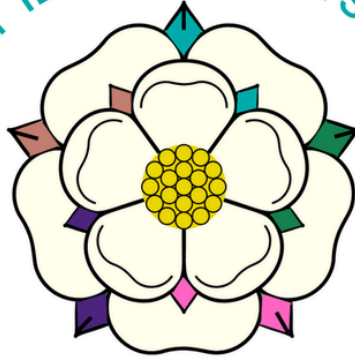


Contact us



Large empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a pink border, intended for contact information.

WY IDVA Partnership



Child Focused Courts

**Putting survivors and
their children's voices at
the heart of what we do.**