



Independent
Review of MDASS
Male Domestic
Abuse Support
Service - a
Partnership
between AMIS-
Abused Men in
Scotland and
Rowan Alba

*'I was isolated, now I have a head
full of hope'*

Eileen Shand Consultant
March 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank everyone involved in this report. First and foremost the men who agreed to help either by speaking with the consultant, or by giving written comments. Giving time to speak up about their experiences of the service was hugely important to this report and we hope that those who did so can see the value of their contributions reflected in the report. The report has only been possible due to their time, courage and honesty.

Huge thanks are also due to Craig Muir, Support Worker and his line manager Anna Russell of Rowan Alba. The report speaks volumes about the support being provided by Craig and the regard in which he is held by the individuals whom he supports. Thanks are also due to Iris Quar, Service Manager and Julia Gutsell, Helpline Support Officer of AMIS for sharing their thoughts on and hopes for the service and their time in explaining the role of the Helpline and links to the support service; that vital first contact with the Helpline is crucial and was spoken of very positively by individuals.

Partnership working remains crucial for the service and insights were also helpfully provided by Aaron Slater of Fearless, John Forsyth and Ian Maxwell of Families Need Fathers Scotland, Brandi Lee Lough Donnell of LGBT Youth Scotland and Irene McKie of City of Edinburgh Council.

The MDASS Service is funded by the Big Lottery whose support makes this service, forged out of partnership working between AMIS and Rowan Alba, possible.

Helen Carlin
Chief Executive Officer
Rowan Alba Limited

Alison Waugh
Trustee and Secretary
AMIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report draws on the views and experiences of 11 individual men who have recently been supported by MDASS – Male Domestic Abuse Support Service. Born out of partnership working between AMIS and Rowan Alba, MDASS is provided and managed jointly by Rowan Alba and AMIS – Abused Men in Scotland.

The report presents the findings of this first review of the MDASS service.

AMIS

Established, in 2010, to address the gap in service provision for men experiencing domestic abuse, AMIS is a non-profit organisation, unique in Scotland in being dedicated to this cause. As described on their website, 'AMIS provides direct support to men experiencing domestic abuse as well as helping to improve mainstream service responses and campaigning for further inclusion of male victims in the wider narrative on domestic abuse.

A Helpline Support Officer working 35 hours per week will normally be the first essential point of contact for men and sometimes family members or friends contacting the Helpline service.

ROWAN ALBA

In its twelfth year of operation, Rowan Alba a registered charity working in Edinburgh, Perth and Kinross offers a range of services to people who are, or are at risk of, becoming homeless.

MDASS

Established in 2014, and based in and operating in Edinburgh, MDASS provides individual support to men who have been, and in many instances at the time of being supported, continue to experience domestic abuse. The service is managed jointly with AMIS whose national helpline service

is the first point of contact and whose staff also refer on to MDASS, individuals requiring face to face support.

As evidenced by feedback, from individuals supported by MDASS, the service provides holistic support, reflected in the phrase 'Our Support, Your Choices'. One full-time Support Worker, (35 hours per week) employed by Rowan Alba, works to support a variable case load of around 15 individuals at any one time. Men are supported to lead lives free from abuse and independent of the service. The service focuses on the following areas:

1. Safety
2. Accommodation
3. Support networks
4. Legal issues
5. Health and well-being
6. Money
7. Children
8. Work and learning
9. Empowerment and self-esteem

with the specific focus of support tailored to the needs of the individual.

Other Organisations

The service works closely with a number of organisations, including Fearless which is part of SACRO; Families Need Fathers Scotland; LGBT Youth Scotland; City of Edinburgh Council, Housing Options Team and inputs to Police Scotland training and training in schools on healthy relationships.

Representatives of these organisations spoke of a continuing need for the MDASS service which they see as bringing significant value to individuals and in helping them to remain safe.

Key Findings

This review indicates that the MDASS service delivered in partnership with AMIS provides an individual, holistic and valued service to men who have and often still are experiencing domestic abuse.

A continuing need for this service is evident from comments provided by those supported by it, by staff in a range of other organisations and from research and statistics as referenced in this report.

Scottish Government statistics covering the period 2016-17 show that there were 58,810 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police; an increase of 1% from the previous year. Levels of domestic abuse recorded by the police have remained relatively stable since 2011. Clearly not every incident is reported to the police. Where gender was recorded the proportion of incidents with a male victim and a female accused was 18% in 2016-17, the same as in the previous year, increasing from 14% in 2007-08, with a substantial increase since 2000-01 when the figure was 8%.

Specifically

- 11 men took part in this review.
- The service is valued and respected by a range of staff in partner organisations.
- Satisfaction with the service was extremely high with evident trust and respect for the Support Worker.
- Individuals were hugely positive about the support they had experienced and about the AMIS Helpline Service.
- The MDASS service focuses on the following areas – keeping safe, accommodation, emotional support, making sense of the abuse, developing self-esteem and rebuilding confidence, helping the individual regain and take control of his life and manage his feelings, communication and support networks, legal issues, health and well-being, money, children, work and learning.
- Support is tailored to the needs of the individual – ‘Our Support Your Choices’.
- Support is available long term for up to 18 months and this was very much valued by individuals.
- There was a strong desire from those interviewed to see the service expand both in terms of staffing and coverage, offering access to social support including at weekends and operating beyond Edinburgh.
- Those interviewed ranged in ages from 26-76+; living in a wide range of accommodation, including owner occupation and no settled accommodation, with a mix of retirees, working full and part time, student and carer.
- Key themes from the interviews included – being believed, feeling safer, a sense of isolation, a sense of shame and stigma and a rebuilding of self-worth.

Recommendations

Some areas are suggested for further consideration by AMIS and Rowan Alba staff:

1. To continue to acknowledge the value of the current MDASS service as described by individuals supported by it.
2. To explore options for further funding for this exceptional service to enable it both to continue and to diversify, given the evident need for such a service.
3. To embrace suggestions from individuals supported by the service to obtain funding to enable people- led peer support to be progressed, drawing on the expertise of previous clients.
4. To increase the profile of the service by refreshing information available on the service – AMIS and MDASS – in a range of formats including web- based material and to set up, subject to staffing, a live chat platform on the AMIS website. It is recognised that increasing the profile of the service needs to go hand in hand with greater resources to assist in meeting additional need generated by this.
5. To seek ways of expanding the staff base to enable more men to participate in one to one support.
6. To consider, subject to the usual caveats about confidentiality and privacy, the use of Skype to enable clients, especially those living outwith Edinburgh to be supported by the service.
7. Subject to funding, consider establishing opportunities for social support/activities; including at weekends which, as shown in the Scottish Government statistics published on October 24 2017 (cited elsewhere in this report) are the peak times for incidents of domestic abuse.
8. To disseminate this review to a wide range of organisations to help build the profile of the AMIS and MDASS services and to highlight the need for this service.
9. To consider the benefits, or otherwise of a service level agreement between the two organisations, setting out respective roles and responsibilities and to provide a backdrop for annual review of working arrangements, funding streams and bids.
10. To look at creative ways in which the relative isolation of this service, as expressed by staff, can be reduced and more of the work main-streamed. For instance, the Outcomes Star tool used by the service was established for working with women who have been abused and as such is gender specific; with no equivalent for men experiencing domestic abuse.

11. To ensure, in conjunction with other services that the use of the refuge accommodation available in Falkirk to AMIS clients, is reviewed and effective and that there is clarity on who supports individuals living there.
12. To seek to replicate this model of access to refuge accommodation /temporary accommodation specifically for abused men, in other parts of Scotland, linked to a programme of ongoing support provided by MDASS where feasible.
13. Through this report and the outcomes reported to the Big Lottery (Scotland), engage with politicians, to highlight a continuing need for this service and for integrated services of social care and health, education, legal and the Department of Works and Pensions etc to be much more alert to the fact of male domestic abuse and to make appropriate referrals to this service.
14. To ensure that clear information is provided to individuals using the service on how they may comment or complain about it
15. Through the partnership between AMIS and Rowan Alba provide regular information to other organisations to enable this service to assist in forging new supports and services – such as a Caledonian type service working with women who have perpetrated domestic abuse.

Introduction and Background

What does MDASS Do?

The Male Domestic Abuse Support Service (MDASS) is a joint initiative between Abused Men in Scotland (AMIS) and Rowan Alba Ltd, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Scotland for four years until July 2018.

MDASS combines national telephone support with local one-to-one support, in Edinburgh. The telephone support is provided by AMIS, a member of the Helplines Partnership, and one-to-one support is provided by Rowan Alba, regulated by the Care Inspectorate. The two streams of work are brought together into a cohesive service with regular meetings and joint working arrangements between AMIS and Rowan Alba.

The way the service works is illustrated in Appendix 1.

REFERRALS TO MDASS 1:1 SERVICE

All referrals to the 1:1 service come via the telephone helpline. The referral criteria are

- Explicit consent from the client for the referral to be made
- Client Assessment Tool outcome is Victim or Violent Resistance
- Client able to access regular support in the Edinburgh area
- Helpline staff have spoken to the client, not just the referring agent

Other organisations can make a referral to MDASS via the helpline.

THIS REVIEW

In commissioning an independent review of MDASS, with the impetus being that current funding is time limited until July 2018, the aim is to have a report on how MDASS is working, what it is doing well and what, if anything could work better, recognising that as is the case with AMIS, this is a unique service within Scotland.

MDASS operates in Edinburgh and provides tailored one to one support to men who are or have been experiencing domestic abuse. Established in

2014 in partnership with AMIS the service is free working to support men to

- Feel and be safe.
- Deal with all and any issues relating to their abuse.
- Build self- reliance, confidence and self-esteem.
- Get in touch or support individuals to get in touch, with other agencies which can assist.
- Provide holistic, non- judgemental support.

A secondary aspect of this service is to contribute to raising awareness of male domestic abuse.

Funding

The service is currently funded by the Big Lottery, Scotland until July 2018.

All of the individuals supported by MDASS spoke very highly of its value and also of a desire to see it secure additional resources to enable more support to be available to a greater number of men.

Staffing of MDASS

One to one support is delivered by one full-time Support Worker, employed by Rowan Alba, who works 35 hours and who receives referrals from the AMIS Helpline, run by AMIS staff. In the absence of the Support Worker, who generally has a case load of around 15 individuals, some support may be available through his line-manager. Satisfaction levels with the support were unanimously high. There was a recognition by the Support Worker, AMIS and Rowan Alba staff as well as from clients that, skilled as he is, there are limits to what one individual may achieve in the time available to him and this is expanded on in the Recommendations section of this report. There are also times when the MDASS service is running at capacity and AMIS staff provide telephone support pending the availability of one to one MDASS support or provide this where an individual is living outwith Edinburgh and not able to travel to be supported there by MDASS.

Definitions and Legislation

The Scottish Criminal Justice System definition of partner abuse is consistent with the definition adopted by the police in recording domestic abuse:

'any form of physical, non-physical or sexual abuse, which takes place within the context of a close relationship, committed either in the home or elsewhere. This relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting or otherwise) or ex-partners.'

There is no single, universally accepted definition of domestic abuse. The Scottish Government defines domestic abuse, as follows: (Emphasis in bold added by author of this report)

*'Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate **women** and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends). (National Strategy for Domestic Abuse 2000).*

In Scotland, a public consultation on a draft offence of Domestic Abuse concluded on 1 April 2016. The draft offence provides for a general offence of "domestic abuse" that covers the whole range of conduct that can make up a pattern of abusive behaviour within a relationship: both physical violence and threats which can be prosecuted using the existing criminal law and other behaviour amounting to coercive control or psychological abuse, which it may not be possible to prosecute using the existing law.

In February 2018 the Scottish Parliament passed a Domestic Abuse Bill which creates a specific offence of 'abusive behaviour in relation to partner or ex-partner'. This includes psychological abuse such as coercive and controlling behaviour as well as violence; all of which may also be experienced by men in abusive relationships.

Context

Scottish Government statistics covering the period 2016-2017 show that there were 58,810 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland, an increase of 1% from 2015-16. Levels of domestic abuse recorded by the police have remained relatively stable since 2011-12 at around 58,000 to 60,000 incidents a year. Clearly not every incident is

reported to the police. Where gender was recorded, the proportion of incidents with a male victim and a female accused was 18% in 2016-17 (the same as in 2015-16). Over the longer term this percentage share has risen from 14% in 2007-08. Furthermore:

- The [Statistical Bulletin of Domestic Abuse](#) recorded by Police in Scotland in 2012-13 noted that of the 60,080 incidents reported 80% were female victims with a male perpetrator, 17% were male victims with a female perpetrator and 2% were same sex relationships; in 44% of cases the perpetrator was an ex-spouse/partner.
- The [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#) revealed that the police were involved in only 21% of domestic abuse incidents in 2012-13.
- [Stonewall Scotland](#) reports that one in four lesbian and bisexual women have experienced domestic abuse from a partner, which is the same as the general female population, while half of gay and bisexual men have experienced domestic abuse, and a third have experienced domestic abuse from a partner. This compares to one in six men in general who have experienced domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.

(Source www.healthscotland.scot gender-based violence July 2015)

Accurate information on the scale of male domestic abuse is very difficult to obtain and as Dempsey in 2013¹ comments:

*Reliable quantitative information about all aspects of domestic abuse is notoriously difficult to obtain for a number of reasons. However, what we do know is that significant numbers of men do take the difficult step of coming forward to report the abuse that they have experienced. **As noted above, there are difficulties in relation to the detail of such numbers but what is clear is that Scotland has a significant problem in relation to domestic abuse directed against men. In addition to a number of practical barriers such as a lack of accessible services to support abused men, and psychological barriers such as embarrassment and fear of being disbelieved, an additional major obstacle to men reporting the abuse they experience is the "public story" of domestic abuse which presents domestic abuse as something which male perpetrators inflict on female partners (Donovan and Hester 2010). This powerful insight was developed through consideration of the neglected and marginalised position of 'victims' and perpetrators in same-sex relationships and, it is argued, is as applicable to heterosexual men who experience domestic abuse as it is to trans, bi and gay men.'***

1 Dempsey, B 2013, University of Dundee Law School *Men's Experience of Domestic Abuse in Scotland: What we know and how we can know more.* <http://www.abusedmeninscotland.org/Final%20What%20We%20Know%20LitRev%20June%202013.pdf>

Writing in the Journal of Research in Nursing, Perrymanⁱ et al also comment

Although it is recognised that both sexes may be victims of domestic abuse, this phenomenon is more commonly understood from the perspective of male to female violence, supported by a substantial body of research and policy focusing on female victims of domestic abuse. However, evidence shows that significant numbers of men are victims of female-perpetrated violence, but as the issue is under-explored, the extent and effects of abuse are poorly understood'

Service Activities

The AMIS Helpline received 407 calls between July 2016 and July 2017, from 250 different individuals. During this period there was a focus on increasing levels of case work, which is shown through a 31% increase in repeat callers.

During the same period, twenty-four men engaged in the project throughout the year; 14 engaging more than once and 8 attended a one-off appointment. An initial appointment before referring to regular support continues to be offered and this has been positively received by clients reluctant to engage long term. Capacity issues are in part managed by offering an initial 1:1 meeting with the Support Worker, allowing more men to engage with the service.

MDASS supported 5 high risk clients, presenting 2 at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee) and referring 3 on to local support agencies. Use of the Safe Lives DASH RIC and the in-house client assessment tool has enhanced risk assessment and management.

Through use of the Outcomes Star, MDASS demonstrates continuity in providing stability and improvements in individual's mental and emotional health, legal issues, safety, among other areas of support needs.

Methodology

Questionnaire

A flexible approach was taken to engaging with individuals to seek their views on their experience of using the MDASS service. Face to face meetings were offered as were telephone interviews and to boost numbers self-completion questionnaires were also used. In order to provide a degree of consistency, the questionnaires used were the same

except that for the self-completion version an abridged questionnaire was used. A section relating to what support had been provided by the service was omitted from the self-completion version as it was felt that it both looked quite lengthy and because there had been high consistency in the responses given in the face to face meetings.

There are no discernible differences in the responses provided through the different approaches, save for the fact that the face to face and telephone interviews provided more opportunity for free comments which are included in Appendix 2 of this report.

Staff helped shape the questionnaire which was tried out and refined in light of experience and feedback given by a service user.

A copy of the questionnaire is available on request from MDASS staff.

Ethics, Confidentiality and Practicalities

Information and consent forms were explained to those who agreed to take part. Privacy and confidentiality was particularly important to participants. Reassurances on this and on anonymity and confidentiality were given and the availability of post-interview support was highlighted along with the interview being carried out by someone independent of the service and of Rowan Alba and AMIS. The interviewer also stressed the level of control available to participants in that he could opt out of any part of the questionnaire he wished.

It was agreed that interviews would take place at AMIS offices in Edinburgh and for telephone discussions care was also taken to ensure privacy and safety of participants.

Participants

The Support Worker made potential participants aware of the review and invited individuals to take part. Arrangements for getting to and from the individual interviews were clear and welcoming and the meetings generally took around 45 minutes each. Much emphasis was placed on the discussion being about the individual's experience of the support service and not about re-living the abuse.

Limitations

Caution must inevitably be exercised in over-extrapolating from the findings of this review given the number of participants–11 in total – equating to 73% of the Support Worker’s typical case load. Nonetheless the individual experiences are no less valid nor valuable.

Those who took part were self-selecting and still engaging with the service and it is possible that gratitude to and for the service influenced the decisions to participate. Whatever the motivation, the voices of the individuals were rich in their views of the service and the positive impact it has had on them.

All of the participants are male. Informal feedback to the Support Worker was that all participants had felt very comfortable with the ‘interview process’.

Satisfaction with the MDASS Service

Satisfaction with the service was exceptionally high – with 100% of participants indicating they were Fully Satisfied – with comments including ‘110% satisfaction, 11/10 and 10/10.’ Whilst high satisfaction levels may be anticipated, particularly during face to face meetings with an interviewer, this is still a hugely positive outcome, perhaps best summed up as follows –

‘I was given an excellent support, moral and practical’.

Information about the Service

Participants had come to know of the service – usually identified as the Helpline initially- in a range of ways. This is picked up in the Recommendations in this report.

Different ways of hearing of the service were through

- Families Need Fathers Scotland x2
- Female work colleague
- GALOP the LGBT+ and anti -violence charity
- Police
- Internet search x3
- Mankind Initiative based in England

- Social work and Police
- Changes

Staff of AMIS recognise that more individuals and their relatives are contacting them via the internet, including via email and they are keen to develop the service to include a live chat facility. The Rowan Alba website could also benefit from a refresh on the information available about MDASS.

Knowing how to Comment on or Complain about the MDASS Service

The service needs to ensure that individuals are provided with information on how to comment on or complain. Whilst all bar one of those completing questionnaires indicated they know how to do this, half of those interviewed did not know how to do this. This is commented on in the Recommendations section of this report.

Themes

A number of themes shone through from the experiences of the men who spoke with the consultant and these are extrapolated below, from the full scripts of the free text of the interviews which is recorded in Appendix 1.

Being believed was seen as a vital aspect of the service; either having repeatedly experienced not being believed or fearing this would not be the case was a considerable barrier to men in accessing help. This fear could be particularly acute when linked to retaining access to children –

I wasn't believed before-

Feeling safer – *I have a safety plan in place, that was a core concern.*

I feel more protected from my abuser.

Sense of isolation- typically comments included –

Men are trained by society to be self-sufficient. I was isolated now I have a head of hope.

I get by but in a lost way, just surviving starting to think of the future not just the present.

I really value the time being given to me to help me feel that I'm not alone – there is help for me.

Sense of shame

I am becoming an empowered man able to talk about abuse.

Stigma

Another big part that I have found extremely valuable was help with contacting other organisations on my behalf – via telephone – in my case homeless services. This has made a great deal of difference in how I was perceived whilst being assessed by the council social worker (in short, the difference was that my circumstance/case was taken seriously).

Loss of self- worth

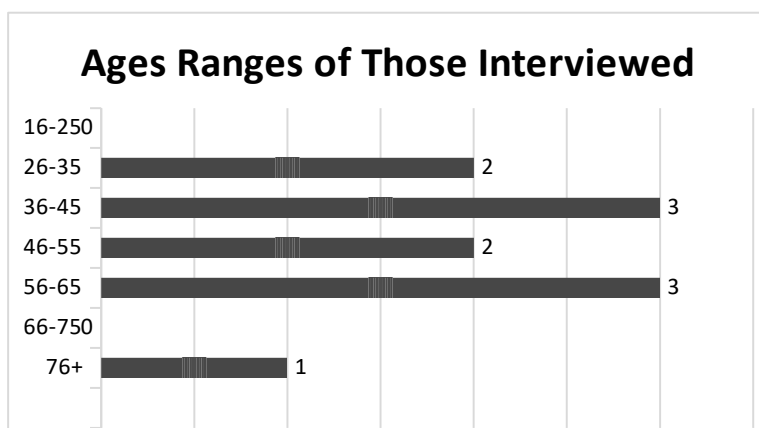
I got a bit of myself back.

Confidence growing, I have a new life.

I had become over whelmed. I am stronger now. Things (that weren't) had become normal, like not saying hello, that wasn't right.

People

This report draws on the experiences of 11 men supported by MDASS. Interviews took place in October-November 2017.



Of the 11 men, one identified himself as gay or bisexual. In terms of ethnicity the majority are white British, with one man being white American, one black African and one describing himself as of Other ethnic origin. The majority of the men did not consider themselves to have a disability; with 2 indicating they do and 3 not answering this particular question.

In terms of economic status we have the following picture

Retired	3
Full time student	1
Working ft - 35hrs or more per week	2
Working part time	1
Not able to work	3
Full time carer	1
Total	11

Fifty-four per cent of the men described themselves as having responsibility for children under the age of 18.

Housing Circumstances

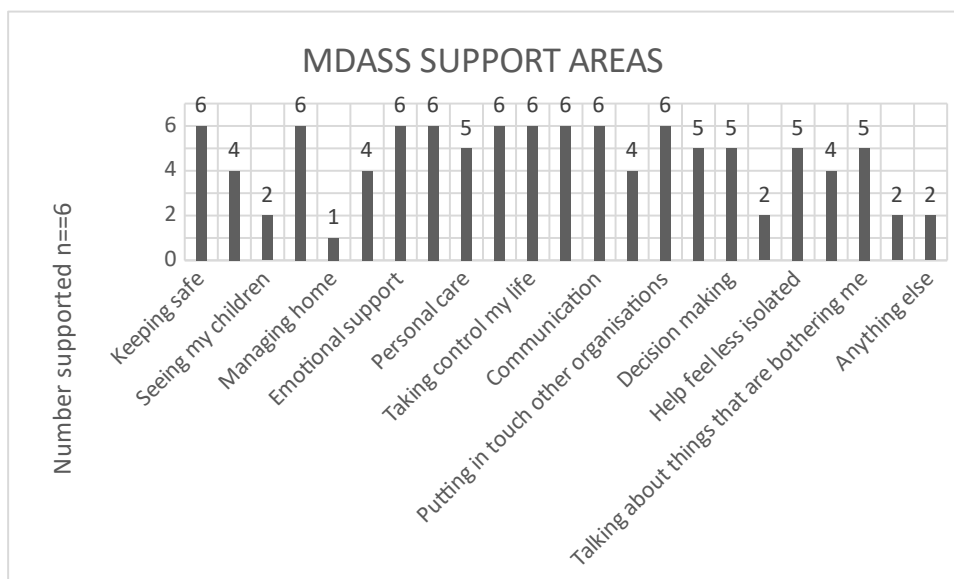
The participants were asked about their housing circumstances when they first made contact with the service and what their current circumstances were at the time of interview, with the following results. At least one of the participants remained in the marital home at the time of interview. He has a detailed safety plan in place and whilst on the one hand wishes to live elsewhere is reluctant to 'give up' on his family home.

HOUSING	THEN	NOW
Renting privately	3	4
Living with friends/relatives	2	
Owner occupier	2	3
Sharing owner	1	
Tenancy – local authority		2
Tenancy – housing association		1
Student accommodation		
No settled accommodation	3	1

Four of the participants live outwith Edinburgh and travel to appointments with the Support Worker. All spoke of a desire to see the service extend beyond Edinburgh, not just to assist them individually but to assist other men requiring support and one man commented on the affordability of travel for some participants. The columns above are simply reflections of housing circumstances at different points in time and are not transitional – so for instance the three individuals who were not in settled accommodation at the outset are now included in other headings in the table.

Support

Support Areas



In the six interviews, participants were asked about a range of support areas and whether they had been assisted in these by the Support Worker – the outcomes are summarised above. All participants spoke positively of being supported with the following areas –

- Keeping safe – *safety plan in place; a core concern*
- Accommodation
- Emotional support – *big thing, vital*
- Making sense of the abuse, with one participant wanting to gain further insight into how his behaviours may have contributed to this
- Developing self-esteem and rebuilding confidence
- Taking control of their life - *I had no control, I want my life back*

- Managing their feelings
- Communication – *help with assertiveness, CBT*
- Putting in touch with other organisations . Mention was made of CAB, legal organisation, Shelter, Foodbank, Edindex

Given the diversity of the participants, other responses were more varied, reflecting individual circumstances and needs. For instance, someone with no recourse to public funds, spoke very positively about assistance with this, someone else of assistance with starting college and another participant who is retired spoke of being assisted with winter fuel payments. This all reflects the holistic and person-centred nature of the service and the skill and adaptability of the Support Worker.

Length of time supported

The availability of long term support was of significant value to individuals; and there was a real sense of time being needed to establish a new trusting relationship with the Support Worker, particularly at a time when trust within a personal relationship had been broken. The table below illustrates the length of time the individuals had been supported up to the point of interview.

<6 MONTHS	6-12 MONTHS	13-18 MONTHS	>18 months
3 people	5 people	2 people	1 person

SUPPORT WORKER ROLE

Throughout the interviews the vital role of the MDASS Support Worker shone through and the trust in and respect for him was evident. Widely commented on was a sense of being believed, of being accepted and with options being presented by the Worker and with decisions remaining with the individual. It was evident that the Worker was flexible and adaptable in creating time to engage with individuals and one person spoke of needing to meet with him unexpectedly and of how he and the Worker had caught up whilst walking together between previously arranged appointments.

Typical comments included

Know I am not the only one support worker supports; very positive; Everything – that they would be in my shoes and believed me, taking me for who I am

The service is very aware of its reliance on one Worker and the Recommendations pick up on this point

HELPLINE SERVICE

The Helpline service, as mentioned is the first point of contact and the knowledge and skill of the Helpline Support Officer was evident in comments provided by an individual who had used this service –

Most valuable was `Initial advice on how to navigate my specific circumstance. Having no experience and no previous point of reference in such circumstances made it incredibly difficult for me to

- *Understand the situation*
- *Know how to act/navigate through the circumstances*
- *Know what help is available (counselling, housing...)*
- *Know what are my rights*

All of the points above were a mystery to me. AMIS helped me to understand those and helped me to navigate my situation 100%. Whenever I had a question or I was unsure about something, even a small thing that may have been obvious AMIS were there for me and I have always got an answer that was clear and to the point. What I have also found the most valuable was an option of contacting AMIS via e mail which in this kind of circumstances was very helpful.

Staff in Other Organisations

Feedback on the service was sought from staff in the following services

- Fearless which is part of SACRO
- City of Edinburgh Council Housing Options Team
- Families Need Fathers Scotland
- LGBT Youth (Scotland)

In two instances comments were provided via email, owing to the worker's availability and in other instances, the consultant met face to face with staff.

Staff of the above organisations were involved in either making referrals to the service or in providing training to the staff of AMIS and MDASS; training including working with the previous staff members to deliver gay, bisexual and transgender men's domestic abuse training to AMIS and Rowan Alba staff.

There was general endorsement for a continuing need for the service, typified by the following comment –

Continuing need for the service – unfortunately yes – takes time to establish relationship and perception is that there is a low information base about service and need for such services – eg low level of information available in GP surgeries

In terms of service development, perceptions tended to resonate with those of the staff teams of MDASS and AMIS, illustrated as follows-

Development wise would like to see more resources for the service, so not just the one Support Worker; more recognition of the service by other organisations, more awareness of it and the service having a higher profile; recognise that as this increases, so will the work load on the Support Worker.

Would also like to see the service building community capacity, perhaps through further work with men who have used the service; developing peer mentoring and support.

I think the service is brilliant as it's the only service I know of that support men who are victims of domestic abuse.

I think it should be advertised more and have more support workers that way they could have more drop-ins and offer more appointments to meet with the demand.

There are more men who are now feeling able to say they are victims/dealing with abuse at home.

CARE INSPECTORATE

The MDASS service is registered as part of Rowan Alba Outreach Service, Housing Support Service and is regulated and inspected by the Care

Inspectorate. The last unannounced inspection took place on November 13 2017 when the service was awarded the highest possible grade of 6 for Quality of Care and Support and grade 5 for quality of management and leadership.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the comments provided by individuals that the MDASS service, delivered in partnership with AMIS, is greatly valued and has helped develop resilience in those individuals who have been assisted to navigate their way through stressful, new and complex areas, often involving legal issues; financial matters; general health and well-being as well as personal safety. The high quality of the MDASS service is also acknowledged in the most recent Care Inspection Report and reflected in the views of staff in other organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of areas are suggested for further consideration by Rowan Alba and AMIS staff

1. To continue to acknowledge the value of the current MDASS service delivered in partnership with AMIS as described by individuals supported by it
2. To explore options for further funding for this exceptional service to enable it both to continue and to diversify, given the evident need for such a service
3. To embrace suggestions from individuals supported by the service to obtain funding to enable people-led peer support to be progressed, drawing on the expertise of previous clients
4. To increase the profile of the service by refreshing information available on the service – AMIS and MDASS – in a range of formats including web-based material and to set up, subject to staffing, a live chat platform on the AMIS website. It is recognised that increasing the profile of the service needs to go hand in hand with greater resources to assist in meeting additional need generated by this.
5. To seek ways of expanding the staff base to enable more men to participate in 1:1 support
6. To consider, subject to the usual caveats about confidentiality and privacy, the use of Skype to enable clients, especially those living outwith Edinburgh to be supported

7. Subject to funding, consider establishing opportunities for social support/activities; including at weekends which, as shown in the Scottish Government statistics published on October 24 2017 [cited elsewhere in this report] are the peak times for incidents of domestic abuse
8. To disseminate this review to a wide range of organisations to help build the profile of MDASS in partnership with AMIS and to highlight the need for this service
9. To consider the benefits, or otherwise of a service level agreement between the two organisations, setting out respective roles and responsibilities and to provide a backdrop for annual review of working arrangements, funding streams and bids.
10. To look at creative ways in which the relative isolation of the MDASS service, as expressed by staff, can be reduced and more of the work main-streamed. For instance, the Outcomes Star tool used by the service was established for working with women who have been abused and as such is gender specific, with no equivalent for men experiencing domestic abuse.
11. To ensure, in conjunction with other services that the use of the safe accommodation available in West Lothian to AMIS clients, is reviewed and effective and that there is clarity on who supports individuals living there
12. To seek to replicate this model of access to safe accommodation /temporary accommodation specifically for men, in other parts of Scotland, linked to a programme of ongoing support provided by MDASS
13. Through this report and the outcomes reported to the Big Lottery (Scotland), engage with politicians, to highlight a continuing need for the MDASS service in partnership with AMIS and for integrated services of social care and health, education, housing, legal and the Department of Works and Pensions etc to be much more alert to the fact of male domestic abuse and to make appropriate referrals to this service
14. To ensure that clear information is provided to individuals using the MDASS service on how they may comment or complain about it
15. Through the partnership between AMIS and Rowan Alba provide information on a regular basis to other organisations to enable this service to assist in forging new supports and services – such as a Caledonian type service assisting women who have perpetrated domestic abuse.

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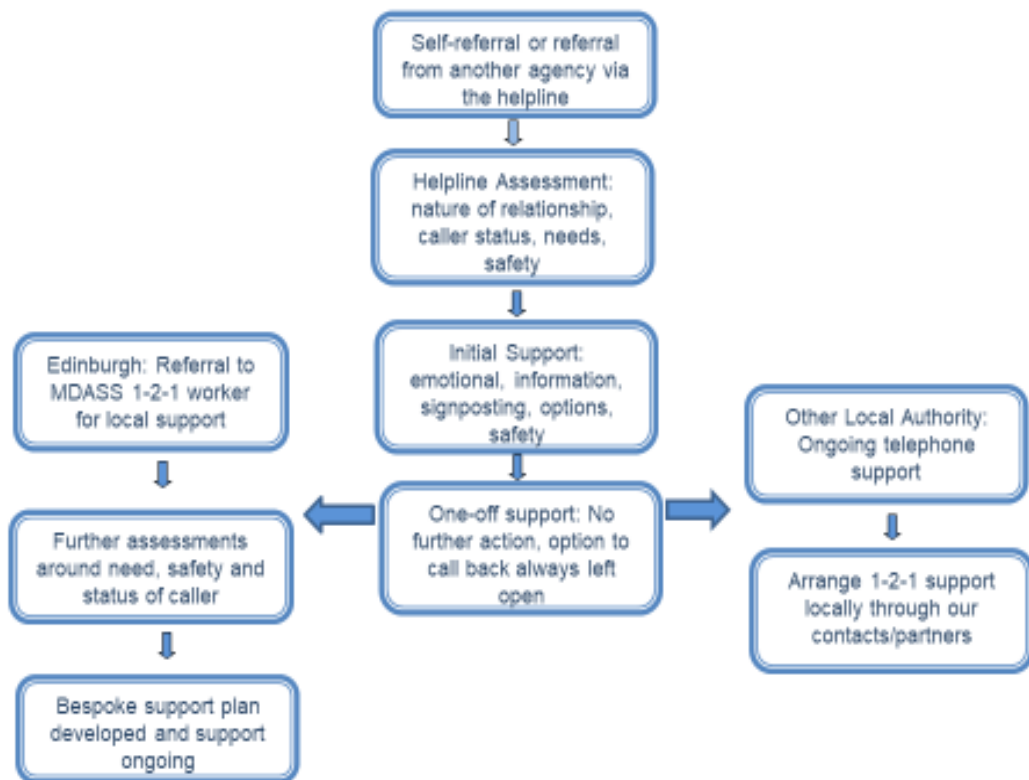
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APPENDIX 1

How Does MDASS Work

How does 'MDASS' work?



Appendix 2

MDASS – CLIENT INTERVIEWS – FREE TEXT

This section captures free text either where there were open questions or where additional comments were made. Comments are shown by either face to face interviews, telephone interviews or postal questionnaire.



Face to face interviews

Q 6 Is there anything else you would like help with from the service?

Got support with everything. Some place to stay.

Very effective, great. More time early on, support group, peer support – coffee/movie night – experienced sense of camaraderie at Families need Fathers.

No all covered. Nice to have on-going support. Support worker very on the ball. Asks me 'What's the worst thing that could happen?.'

Weekend service – isolation as vacuum when child handed over on a Saturday. Joint approaches eg with health organisations.



Phone Interview

Q6

Perhaps meetings outwith Edinburgh.

No nothing.



Question 7 – What do you value most about the support you receive from AMIS/ROWAN ALBA MDASS?

Can call at any time. Know I am not the only one support worker supports; very positive; Everything – that they would be in my shoes and believed me, taking me for who I am.

Someone outside my family, could concentrate on everyday things and spare my family. Just the understanding gave me confidence to unpick and understand what happened to me. Intangible. I set the agenda, what I wanted. A lot of my judgements were sound. Torture – not seeing my daughter for 6 months.

Everything important from financial to physical to mental health.

Humanity and moral decency when alone in particular felt not alone and supported.



Phone Interview

Q 7

Tend to meet outside the office – informal, almost forget why I am there, gives me strength.

Friendship when on my own. Person you could trust, never told what to do, have options – I've learned this is what you've got.

Question 7



– Postal Questionnaire

Someone to talk to that can understand what is going on.

Living with or being in a relationship with an abusive person is like being on a roundabout. AMIS was the only stable input I had throughout at the centre.



Question 8 What impact has the service had on your life?

The little smile, the little strength which you see today and a future is down to this organisation.

Don't know how long I would have taken to recover. Huge positive impact. Don't know how I would have gotten through without compassion and understanding.

Life changing – can see the light. Confidence growing, I have a new life. I have never looked back. I look forward to appointments [with support worker] Saw [another worker] when support worker on holiday. A great organisation. I have no fears of mentioning the service.

Help connect with brothers. Helps navigate the waters with me. Like saints who came marching in – process has been empowering and helped me overcome, positive impact. I am becoming an empowered man able to talk about abuse.



Phone Interview

Q8 -

Support worker is the friend/relative I don't have to get support from. Most of my friends from work my wife had said I wasn't able to meet up with them as my wife wasn't happy, she can't handle that [my meeting with them] They came back, I still have those friendships. I can phone/e mail support worker. Everything was inside me. Now I can maintain healthy friendships. I had become over-whelmed. I am stronger now. Things (that weren't) had become normal like not saying hello, that wasn't right. More helpful than my GP support worker looks at everything.

Big impact, huge. From where I was and meeting him – support worker last week I was a different person – brilliant.

Q8 –  Postal Questionnaire

Great help through all stages. Massive impact knowing there is someone I can talk to.

It has made me feel much more safe and secure, I feel more protected from my abuser.

This is difficult to put into words. Support worker has been the only person I know where I stand with, a reliable source of support and someone I can talk to. I have at times had no one I can turn to and without the Support Worker I would probably have succeeded in suicide already. This service has literally been the ONLY place I could turn to for support, with no family or friends partner or even supportive medical professionals. It's probably saved my life.

Allows me to speak with someone outside of family not those emotionally involved.

It has given me the confidence to finally speak about what I have gone through. Although I'm aware there is a long way to go I feel it is a step in the right direction in making significant life changes.

It is really difficult to describe the impact in words as it has been so great. To make it short; without help from AMIS I would be in a really bad place right now. Thanks to AMIS I was able to understand the situation I was in and with AMIS guidance take steps to get out of that situation. I can say that it would not be possible without AMIS help.



Question 9 – Are there any changes you would like to suggest to how the service works?

Support to others to access the service.

Nothing immediate.

I don't mind travelling [to meet support worker] but others might find that difficult the costs and going past my old address.

More evaluation – where were we up to in the last meeting, support to take things forward, lots to do, assistance to meet the goals we have set, bigger team.

 **Q9** **Phone Interview**

Have an emergency service – service bit invisible but so important. Available for meetings out with Edinburgh.

For me no

 **Q9** **Postal Questionnaire**

Support groups to meet others and feel less isolated.

Greater measures centred on how this issue affects men and their children.

Careful wording of the 'relationship' between client and support worker. I found it very unsettling at the start, coming to terms with abusive relationships and having a stranger talk about another 'relationship.'

No changes needed but they need funding for more visits, groups.

In my experience there is nothing to improve upon.



Question 11 Any other comments?

I am very grateful, I wish I could show my gratefulness.

Gratitude for service and length of service.

Can't praise support worker enough. Look forward to appointments.

Happy to give any further information. Need for such services, why don't we look at male abuse – there is an imbalance in services. Red pill.

(Red pill is a reference from the Matrix film a documentary about men's rights activists. <http://theredpillmovie.com/>).



Phone Interview

Q 11

Mental health wise much better since meeting support worker, stronger, able to cope with it and enjoy parts of [my] life, clear head. No future when I came to support worker. Enabled by support worker without that I think I would have been really ill, can be honest with support worker

Get support from xxx club I volunteered.



Q 11 Postal Questionnaire

A lifeline for the vulnerable and abused

I have greatly appreciated the support worker being open about his working experience and other details such as his age [it's the same as mine] and likes and dislikes. It's helped me trust him. Also being transgender has never felt like an issue or misunderstanding EVER and you all get 10/10 for that. I really appreciate the acceptance and how much of a non-issue it is.

Building on the experience it would be good to see services increased and funding to help all victims.

I really value the time given to me to help me feel that I'm not alone – there is help for me.



Non- Specific Comments

I wasn't believed [before] We moved here together my status was linked to that of my partner. I had leave to remain but no recourse to public funds. I was attacked in front of social worker. You can't touch a woman. Men are sometimes abused too.

There was a delay after getting in touch, couldn't assign support worker that was frustrating. Men are trained by society to be self -sufficient I was isolated now I have a head of hope

Human service professionally trained; very human boundaries very clear. Comprehensive service; skilled' openness, safe landscape of sustainable support. Vital life line.

Got a bit of myself back. Harder for men, more unusual, lifeline for me would have lost lot of friends by talking inappropriately about it, save things up to talk to support worker about.

Support worker has phoned me between meetings. Easier to sit down with somebody, initially phone was only option for me. I was angry at myself for not dealing with this quicker. I have been married over 30 years I wouldn't have got through without support worker, makes me focus. No quick solutions needs to be beneficial. Was going too fast in the beginning. Such a wrench to leave, invested in my life. I get by but in a lost way just surviving starting to think of the future not just the present I was overcome when someone was nice to me in a shop. Don't think I would have survived if the service hadn't been there. Can't thank enough grateful.

Support worker is a friend as well as a counsellor. Access to help when needed. Help to rationalise, discussing with someone not involved.

