

# United against violence: Keeping the window open

**Published On:** 03 April 2017

**Organisation:** Reykjavik Metropolitan Police

**Country:** Iceland

**Level of government:** Local government

**Sector:** Public order and safety

**Type:** Communication, Data, Human Resources, Organisational Design, Partnerships, Public Service

**Launched in:** 2013

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# Description

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The innovated practice is about the fight against domestic violence and how to prevent it. The new approach argues a fundamental shift in perspective on domestic violence by government, arguing that it is not a private issue but a societal one. At the start of every case the Police have a unique opportunity to influence the progress of the case. The approach argues a communal platform between all relevant services. The Social worker is summoned to the scene. The police performs a thorough on-scene investigation and arrange for the the victim to have a medical examination. The police provides the victim with the resource of restraining order and expulsion of home. The The stakeholders ensure that the victims and perpetrators alike receive appropriate and sufficient social-, psychological- and legal assistance. A detective and a social worker revisit the home to reevaluate the situation at home. Then we assess the risk to prevent repeated violations.

Main beneficiaries are the roughly 2400 people behind the 630 domestic violence cases police was called to in the last year. That are roughly 1400 more people the police has reached in this year of piloting the initiative or a 130% increase in cases. This is the narrow scope. The consequent changes to society as a whole will be evident in years to come but will take more time as research shows that children exposed to domestic violence are 6x more likely to be subject to similar circumstances in adulthood. There is huge increase in perpetrators seeking assistance following the project. This project has made a big difference for many families to prevent harm within families and social harm.

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## Why the innovation was developed

- We've had a legislation in Iceland containing articles on "restraining orders" and "expulsion from home" since June 2011.
  - We noticed that these articles were not being used and we wondered why. Our conclusion was that there was a lack of support for victims and perpetrators which resulted in them not requesting the methods available.
  - We also saw an inconsistency in handling cases and registration despite procedures. Domestic violence was definitely not considered sufficiently serious by the system. Certificates of injury from doctors were lacking, withdrawal of claims common and investigations were often incomplete. There was high percentage repeat offenders and no judgments being passed.
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## Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Enhance public trust, Enhance transparency, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve social equity, Improve user satisfaction, Increase citizen engagement, Other, Support economic growth

- Ensure a safer society
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## Main beneficiaries

Elderly people, Ethnic or racial minorities, Families, General population, High-risk populations, Other, People with disabilities, Young people

- Children

# Results

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## Efficiency

- More reports of domestic violence cases to the police, increase of cases, more cases go to court, more convictions are made
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## Effectiveness

- 130% increase in reach to victims
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## Service quality

### Accessibility:

- Easier accessibility to police and social services

### Responsiveness:

- The field has been made top priority so response of all involved is quicker and more effective

### Reliability:

- The implementation of new procedures has resulted in increased trust in law enforcement and therefor more reports of domestic violence.
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## User satisfaction

- Was confirmed with research from the University of Iceland, Gender equality division.

# Development

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## Design

The Pilot project was generated by law enforcement employees in Sudurnes Police district in Iceland. It was started in a working group of chief superintendents and the head of the prosecutions unit. All police officers in Sudurnes district participated as well as police officers in Reykjavik Metropolitan Police. The project is a cooperation between police, social services and child protection unit. The Sudurnes police district received a recognition for innovation in public service for the project in 2014.

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## Testing

- Number of cases was monitored
  - University of Iceland conducted research including subjective interviews with stakeholders
  - Number of perpetrators and victims that sought assistance was measured
  - All cases were screened for quality and statistics
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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- Philosophies of Servant Leadership and LEAN management

### Resources used:

- No additional budget was used. There was re-prioritisation and use of existing budget
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## Diffusion

- Identification of stakeholders
  - Idealized influence
  - Inspirational motivation
  - Intellectual stimulation
  - Individualized consideration
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## Challenges and solutions

- Changing law enforcement culture was challenging
  - Increased work load
  - Lack of funding
  - Lack of understanding of people in vulnerable positions
  - Solutions developed was information, education and providing a platform for open communication between stakeholders
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## Partnerships

### Multiple partners

Academics and Research Bodies, Civil Society, Other Public Sector, Private sector

Social services and child protections units in each municipality, NGO for Responsible men – Stígamót; NGO for victims – The Icelandic Womens Shelter – Icelandic Public Healthcare system – University of Iceland

The innovation could never have reached it's success without partnering up with the above mentioned partners. Each and every one of them has a part of the truth, and plays a part for the individuals involved. Getting all those partial truths together provided a bigger, more conclusive picture of what was actually going on and with sharing that information we were able to reach phenomenal results in a short period of time with limited financial resources.

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# Lessons Learned

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## Lessons Learned

- All experience of the project is worth sharing and we have quite a lot of statistics regarding the project that can be shared. We have to rethink the approach to law enforcement and increase focus on preventive policing in domestic violence cases. Challenges is to implement and develop better risk assessment.
  - To consolidate and unified understanding of the procedure within the police and its value as a toolbox to tackle domestic violence.
  - To guarantee that prosecutors work according to procedures.
  - To ensure judges awareness of the severity of domestic violence.
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## Conditions for success

- Positive attitude, political and social support, drive and passion. A willingness to improve society and increase understanding of people in vulnerable position.

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