
Hitting Home: Exploring housing and home(lessness) in the context of domestic abuse

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between Domestic Abuse and home (lessness) and considers implications for the effective prevention of homelessness. Domestic Abuse (DA) is the biggest cause of homelessness for women in Europe (FEANTSA, 2020). Research shows that DA is still predominantly viewed from the lens of anti-social behaviour by housing professionals and there is a lack of focus on the issue from a housing studies lens (Irving-Clark & Henderson, 2020). There has been a lack of a holistic consideration of women's experiences of DA and homelessness, too often the focus has been limited to one aspect of their experience with a particular intervention, field or sector. A further gap has emerged in the homelessness prevention literature with a lack of focus on prevention in the context of DA.

The objectives of this thesis were to explore the housing pathways of survivors, to investigate the service interactions of survivors across the three planets of Domestic Abuse, Child Protection and Child Contact from a homelessness prevention lens, and to explore the meaning of home in the context of DA.

Data was collected using a feminist participatory approach: 38 Survivors created housing maps, participated in focus groups and created art. Through this approach, four housing pathways emerge. These pathways and the options and choices made by survivors are shaped by interactions between three key factors: Risk, Resources and Relationships. The study found the impacts of abuse exist long after the abusive relationship. In addition, dynamics of abuse are strongly influenced by the wider community and communities play passive and active roles in the perpetration of abuse.

Service responses to DA are characterised by lack of coordination between agencies across the planets of DA, child protection and child contact, resulting in survivors experiencing prolonged periods of crisis and cycling between crisis, emergency, and recovery. If a survivor is housed but feels unsafe, that cannot be a home and they cannot recover while still being victimised.

The Research found that perceptions of home are constructed in relation to three primary influences: choice and control; community, family and networks; and safety and security. To understand home, previous experiences have to be included with trauma, loss and grief being understood and accounted for.

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Introduction to the thesis

1.1 Introduction

It has been argued that there is a lack of focus on domestic abuse from a housing studies perspective and that there is a need to generate a body of literature exploring this issue from that lens (Irving- Clarke & Henderson, 2020). Research shows that people who have experienced domestic abuse often face challenges related to their housing situation as a result of the violence and abuse that they are subjected to, and that housing is often a key concern for survivors when attempting or planning to flee (Kelly et al, 2014; Abrahams, 2010; Woodhall Melnik et al, 2016). Studies in the field of domestic abuse have often considered survivor's housing situations and the impact that domestic abuse has upon them, but this is usually as one factor in a survivor's wider experiences (Hague & Mullender, 2006; Berru, 2008; Harne & Radford, 2008; Abrahams, 2010; Anderson et al, 2012; Kelly et al, 2014; Howard & Skipp, 2015). Likewise, there is research focussing on the housing and homelessness experiences of women in which domestic abuse is often a factor that emerges within a wider set of experiences and does not fully explore the dynamics of abuse (Pleace, 2000; Casey et al, 2006; Johnson et al, 2008; Fitzpatrick et al, 2013; Jackson, 2018; Reeve, 2017; 2018). Furthermore, the literature that does specifically explore domestic abuse and housing solutions together tends to focus on refuge provision, target hardening/sanctuary schemes or street homelessness and does not reflect the wide and varied housing situations and options that survivors experience (Levison & Kenny, 2002; Netto et al, 2009; Jones et al, 2010; Olsen et al, 2013; O'Campo et al, 2014). Numerous studies from a housing pathways approach have been conducted with different groups (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Mackie, 2012; Clapham et al, 2014; Mackie & Thomas, 2014; Tutty et al, 2013), however there is a gap in our understanding of the housing pathways of survivors of domestic abuse over time and outside of the traditional solutions in the context of increased policy focus on homelessness prevention.

A significant body of evidence shows that there is a direct link between domestic abuse and homelessness (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Spinney & Blandy, 2011; Mackie & Thomas, 2014). Typically, housing responses to domestic abuse have centred on interventions at crisis point and once the household has already become homeless (Spinney & Blandy, 2011; Tutty et al, 2013; O'Campo et al, 2014; Henderson, 2018). However, in recent times, and particularly in Wales, there has been a significant paradigm shift in both policy and practice towards a homelessness prevention approach (Mackie, 2015). This has resulted in new and emerging methods to address the housing needs of people who have experienced domestic abuse. Part of this prevention agenda has seen the introduction of a duty via the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 on local authorities to assist in preventing homelessness for anyone at risk in Wales. This has been introduced along with the ability for local authorities to discharge their homelessness

duty with a six- month tenancy in the private rented sector. With high demand on a residual social housing stock there has been an increase in the use of private rented housing (Clapham et al, 2014; Whitehead & Scanlon, 2015; Wilson et al, 2016; Bailey, 2020). However, evidence shows that the private rented sector offers less security, affordability and quality of housing compared to social housing (Cookson & Sillet, 2009; Kemp, 2011; Teixeira & Sanders, 2012; Walker & Niner, 2012; Barnes et al, 2013; Warnes et al, 2014; Smith et al, 2015).

The shift towards homelessness prevention has occurred over time and in the context of domestic abuse has been dominated by campaigns and discussions to ensure that survivors are able to stay at home and efforts are focussed to remove perpetrators. These discussions have centred around the need to improve the experiences of survivors and their children who have had no alternative but to flee their family home to be safe. These transitions have often been rapid, crisis led and unplanned, meaning that the family has experienced significant trauma in relocating. In most cases, support networks and relationships have been damaged, personal possessions and belongings have been left behind and there is significant upheaval and disruption to school, work and routines (McNaughton & Sanders, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008).

The over-reliance and focus on refuge provision has resulted in a body of evidence which highlights that while refuge does provide a safe space with support for survivors there are a range of difficulties that survivors experience in this setting (Kelly & Dubois, 2008; Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2013). This broadly includes challenges accessing refuge, inaccessible or exclusionary provision, issues with shared living and difficulties moving on (Levison & Harwin, 2000; Netto et al, 2004; Davis, 2005; Pawson et al, 2007, Sharp, 2008; Tually et al, 2008; Abrahams, 2010; Olsen, 2013; Women's Aid, 2014). A prominent solution to this is to provide a range of tools, measures and support that enable the survivor and children to remain in the home. This approach is often referred to as Sanctuary schemes or target hardening and includes physical safety measures such as alarms on windows and doors, cameras, personal alarms and fireboxes on letterboxes. In its most comprehensive and effective state Sanctuary schemes include the physical safety measures, legal measures and specialist support all being provided in a coordinated and consistent manner. The aim of these schemes is to keep survivors safe, however, research and evaluations of these schemes suggest that for a range of reasons this is not being realised (Netto et al, 2009; Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Jones et al, 2010; Spinney, 2011). One of the main factors and key contributors to these challenges is the lack of coordination and partnership working between the agencies and services included in the delivery of the scheme. This results in gaps in the safety net and highlights that a single intervention in isolation is unable to meet the needs of the survivors and their families.

A coordinated community response has long been recognised as the most effective approach in keeping survivors safe (Harne & Radford, 2008; Spinney, 2011; Kelly et al, 2014; Henderson, 2018; Henderson & Irving- Clarke, 2020). This work has included the development of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) in which professionals and practitioners from a range of relevant sectors share information and develop safety plans for high- risk victims. However, there is a strong body of evidence that shows there are often challenges to partnership working and that there can be a lack of representation and engagement from some services, resulting in an inconsistent and often inadequate response (Abrahams, 2010; Harne & Radford, 2008; Spinney, 2011; Hester, 2011; Kelly et al, 2014; Henderson, 2018; Henderson & Irving- Clarke, 2020). Research by Hester (2011) found that survivors of domestic abuse often interact with a variety of agencies that she conceptualised as existing on three planets. These planets include the domestic abuse planet, child protection planet and child contact planet. Hester argues that each planet is occupied by agencies that speak a different language, have different agendas, and often conflicting processes and practice. All of which result in survivors experiencing a disjointed and inconsistent service response. This explains why providing a coordinated response is challenging and also highlights the issue of silo working and reinforces the need for a holistic approach to domestic abuse. The involvement and engagement of housing in this coordinated response is inconsistent and often limited to predominantly refuge providers and in some cases social housing providers. Housing providers have traditionally viewed and understood domestic abuse from the lens of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). This has often resulted in punitive, inadequate and inappropriate responses to survivors. There is a growing shift towards a more informed, pro-active and holistic response from the housing sector towards domestic abuse and includes work to improve training, policies and practice (Henderson, 2018; Henderson & Irving- Clarke, 2020; DAHA, 2020).

From the perspective of homelessness, refuge is defined as a form of emergency accommodation; people living in this provision are deemed to be homeless (Welsh Government, 2014; Fitzpatrick et al, 2019). Therefore, the practice of keeping a survivor and their children housed and at home is considered as an effective approach to homelessness prevention. This is also in the context of continuing reductions and short-term arrangements in funding for refuge provision, which has led to increased difficulties for victims when trying to access refuge. In the year ending March 2019 an estimated 67% of referrals of women to refuge services in England and 32% in Wales were declined, with around one-fifth due to a lack of space or capacity to support the client (ONS, 2020). This reduction in refuge spaces, along with evidence suggesting inadequacies and inconsistencies in keeping survivors safe at

home, is concerning and suggests that the reality of what homelessness prevention looks like for survivors needs to be further explored.

In the most fundamental sense, in order to prevent homelessness a home would need to be provided. Academics have long discussed and conceptualised the meaning of home and this has led to home being understood as more than a physical space and being a space that is shaped by events, relationships and interactions that take place in and around the environment. Existing research argues that home is a concept that is constructed around physical and material factors such as tenancy or occupancy rights, physical quality and condition, access to basic amenities and a space that ensures physical safety. It also includes other factors such as feelings of safety, freedom and control and memories (Oakley, 1976; Gurney, 1996; Clapham, 2005; Piat et al, 2018; Robinson, 2006; Woodhall- Melnik, 2016; McKee et al, 2019). Researchers have gone further and argued that the events that take place within a home can undermine the experience and presence of 'home' as a feeling and that the loss of home can be understood as a form of grief (Leith, 2006; Parsell & Parsell, 2012; Tsemberis et al, 2012; Dunn, 2013; Woodhall-Melnik, 2016; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). Furthermore, it has been argued and conceptualised that the provision of home is key in enabling people to feel grounded, secure and safe enough to feel healthy and well and be able to plan, prepare and progress their futures (Saunders, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Robinson, 2006; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). Therefore, including psychosocial factors such as feelings of safety, memories of trauma and the dynamics of relationships need to be considered when thinking of what homelessness and homelessness prevention may look like at different times for survivors of domestic abuse.

1.2 Research Aim and objectives

This study aims to explore the relationship between housing, homelessness, and homelessness prevention in the context of domestic abuse in Wales. The study will focus specifically on Wales as in both the areas of homelessness prevention and domestic abuse Wales has been recognised as internationally leading the way. Furthermore, with a recent alignment between Welsh and UK homelessness legislation the findings may be applicable beyond Wales. More specifically, the research seeks to:

- Explore the housing pathways of survivors of domestic abuse.

Drawing upon Clapham's (2005) housing pathways framework, the research seeks to unearth the heterogeneity of survivor experiences in relation to tenure, house moves, and household composition over time. This will include exploring the structural and individual

factors which combine to shape the pathways taken and understand why there is variation between pathways.

- Examine survivor interactions with services and the role of housing in a more co-ordinated response

Building on Hester's (2011) conceptualisation of three planet responses to DA, the study will examine the role of housing and its potential as a fourth planet in a more co-ordinated and holistic response to DA survivors. This will be achieved through examining survivor's interactions with services in the context of homelessness prevention.

- Investigate the concept and meaning of home in the context of domestic abuse.

Contribute to a strong body of research that highlights how home is informed by a range of both physical and psychological factors and events that take place within a home and how these can undermine the experience of 'home'. (Leith, 2006; Parsell & Parsell, 2012; Tsemberis et al, 2012; Dunn, 2013; Woodhall-Melnik, 2016; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). To investigate this experience from the lens of domestic abuse.

1.3 Thesis structure

Following this introductory chapter, the literature review conceptualises domestic abuse, exploring the impacts of abuse and problematizing the responses. The review then probes the concept of home and analyses the relationship between homelessness and domestic abuse. Finally, homelessness prevention is discussed, with a particular focus on two preventative responses to domestic abuse.

The research methodology discusses theoretical perspectives, data collection methods, ethics and researcher positionality. This is followed by a reflection of the ethical dilemmas experienced when navigating the field and discussion of how this impacted the research.

The research findings are then explored through three thematic chapters; each relates to one of the objectives of this study. The first, discusses the housing pathways of survivors of domestic abuse in Wales. The second, investigates the interactions of survivors with services and agencies and applies a prevention lens to these. The third, discusses the meaning of home in the context of domestic abuse, aiming to understand the experience of home at different times and the underpinning aspects that create a sense of home.

**Domestic Abuse and Homelessness: Concepts,
Impacts and Responses**

2.1 Introduction

It is estimated that two women each week in the UK are murdered by a current or ex- partner (Home Office, 1999; Department of Health, 2005, ONS, 2019). A less common statistic is the correlation between domestic abuse and suicide, which shows that many victims feel as though they are unable to cope with the abuse or escape it and subsequently feel that suicide is their only option (Shipway, 2004). Each year approximately 500 women who have been a victim of domestic abuse in the previous six-month period commit suicide (Walby 2004 cited in Puckett, 2014). Domestic abuse is costly; to the public purse, society and in the human cost of lives lost and damaged.

This chapter will begin by discussing the definition and conceptualisation of domestic abuse across different disciplines and perspectives, including the field of geography. It will then move on to explore who is affected by domestic abuse, investigating variances in the type of abuse experienced depending on various characteristics. The chapter will then focus on the impact of domestic abuse- this will analyse the chronology of impacts including during the relationship, immediately post the relationship and longer term. Finally, the chapter will discuss and analyse responses to abuse including policy, legal and practice- based interventions and innovations.

2.2 Terminology

There has been much debate and development of terminology within the field of domestic abuse studies. One mechanism, which supported the issue moving from the private sphere and becoming a social issue or public problem was the criminalisation of domestic abuse. The term and image of the 'victim' sat well within a legal frame and also allowed for the impact and nature of the issue to be constructed in such a way that highlighted its relevance and importance to policy makers, support providers and the wider public (Dunn, 2005). This image of a victim, however, began to be critiqued by scholars and professionals working in women's specialist services. It has been argued that the term 'victim' suggests passivity and a lack of autonomy or self-agency (Fulu et al, 2000). A shift away from 'victim' typifications towards the construct of 'survivors' argues that viewing people who had experienced domestic abuse as 'survivors' presents a more accurate and powerful reflection of domestic abuse and the strength, resilience and will that it took for women to survive and move past it (Kelly, 1988). Furthermore, it has been argued that reconstructing victims as survivors will lead to the empowerment of women who have experienced abuse, recognise the choices and agency of survivors and in itself allow survivors to reconstruct their identities both after abuse and when they choose to remain in the relationship (Peled et al, 2000). Lampert (1996) suggests that even perceived passivity from women who stay in the relationship can be reframed as a survival tactic and an active choice or strategy, again arguing the element of agency that

women have even in the most restricted of senses (Lampert, 1996). In contrast to this shift within the academic field, there has been a lack of response by policy makers and legislators who remain to frame the issue as a social problem and those who experience it as victims. Dunn (2005) suggests that service providers in the field allocate resources and assess eligibility depending on the person who has experienced abuse conforming to the victim typification. She goes on to suggest that survivor typification may discourage rather than promote assistance due to the implied self-sufficiency and strength (Dunn, 2005). Eyer (2002) proposes that the terms victim and survivor should be viewed from a temporal perspective and in context, based on the experiences of both being vastly different due to the presence and power of the perpetrator. Eyer suggests that where a perpetrator still has control over the woman and is continuing the abuse or the woman feels some level of responsibility for the abuse then she remains a victim, whether she is in the relationship or not. However, once a victim has become empowered and able to move on from the abuse and begin to rebuild their life, they are then a survivor (Eyer, 2002). Other academics have begun to use the term 'people who have experienced domestic abuse' rather than victim or survivor (Donovan & Hester, 2010; Fulu et al, 2000). It has been suggested that this is due to a lack of robust evidence from people who have experienced abuse as to which term is most acceptable rather than from a theoretical standpoint (Harvey et al, 2014). This chapter will use both the terms victim and survivor interchangeably, ultimately as Dunn (2005) states neither term captures the wide and diverse range of people's experiences as both reduce what can often be a complex and dynamic situation. The experience of abuse does not in any way dominate an individual's identity and should not be perceived as a reflection of their agency or lack of. There is sufficient evidence to show that victims do move on and out of the abusive relationship and manage to rebuild their lives, possibly reconstructing themselves as survivors instead of victims. However, to totally negate the victim typification may risk diminishing the range of challenges and obstacles both behind and before them. Furthermore, referring to all people who experience domestic abuse as survivors fails to acknowledge and highlight the fact that two women a week in the UK are murdered at the hands of a perpetrator, clearly not all people who experience domestic abuse actually survive (Home Office, 1999; Department of Health, 2005; ONS, 2019).

2.3 Defining and conceptualising Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is conceptualised in slightly different ways across various fields of study. For example, in broad terms within the field of social work it is often considered as a dysfunction within the family or as family violence (Kimmel, 2002) whilst psychologists view it from a neurological or pathological perspective (Holtzworth- Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Dutton, 2000;

2002; 2005; Gondolf, 2002) and legal scholars view it as both a criminal and family law issue (Harne & Radford, 2008). It has been argued that these perspectives neglect to address or acknowledge the underlying influence of patriarchy and the androcentricity of society and therefore, fail to accurately reflect the experiences of victims or explain the causes of domestic abuse.

Feminist theories, in the context of domestic abuse, have focussed on the accounts and experiences of abused women. These experiences are then placed within wider mechanisms and structures such as patriarchy and gender inequality all of which contribute to a power imbalance which favours men. Feminism explains the violence perpetrated by male perpetrators towards a female victim as a way in which this power is acquired, reinforced, and maintained (Hamberger & Hastings, 1993; Cunningham et al, 1998; Healey et al, 1998; Mauricio & Gormley, 2001). This approach and perspective are supported by studies which have shown that gender-based violence is more prevalent within cultures where women have predetermined submissive roles and men hold positions of power (Heise, 1998; WHO, 2002).

Socio-political theories suggest that changes and progression towards more equal rights for women and an increase in their independence, particularly in situations of unemployment and deprivation, has led to the erosion of men's power, control and masculinity. All of which has subsequently caused an identity crisis for men and domestic abuse is placed within this context as a reaction to these stresses (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002).

There is a strong body of literature which argues that feminism and socio-political theories fail to adequately explain why most men are not violent and why violence may also be a feature within lesbian relationships. It also proposed that both theories fail to pay due attention to individual factors and differences (Mullender, 1996; Heise, 1998; Healey et al, 1998, Mauricio & Gormley, 2001). Conversely, it has been suggested that feminism has been successful in introducing and developing a discourse and perspective of domestic abuse that has brought it out of the personal and private, into the public and social sphere, whilst still allowing for individual, structural and cultural factors to be considered. It is a perspective that can be embedded in any discipline and offers an opportunity to reconceptualise issues from an alternative standpoint (Bograd, 1988; Barnish, 2004; Harne & Radford, 2008).

It has been suggested that the issue of domestic abuse has been somewhat neglected and not adequately explored from a geographical perspective (Pain, 2014). Discussions within the field have centred on the term 'domestic abuse' and efforts have been made to reconceptualise it as a form of terrorism, thus highlighting the full extent of its damage (Johnson, 1995, 2008; Hammer, 2002; 2003; Pain, 2014). Pain (2014) argues that to redefine

domestic abuse as a form of terrorism places the issue in an ever more increasing area of public and academic interest. Whilst international terrorism has been the focus of a significant body of literature, the same cannot be said for domestic abuse. In the years since the terror attacks on the world trade centre, international terrorism became a key area of interest and analysis, meanwhile approximately less than a dozen geographical studies focussed upon domestic abuse in that period (Pain, 2014). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the emerging names and definitions of the issue such as inter- personal violence, spousal abuse and conjugal violence fail to highlight and accurately reflect the severity and extent of the issue. This has resulted in the emergence of terms such as family terrorism, patriarchal terrorism, and everyday terrorism in literature (Hooks, 2000; Hammer, 2002; Pain, 2014).

Feminists have long campaigned and fought to raise awareness of domestic abuse and have managed to secure its place upon the policy agendas of many western countries (Harne & Radford, 2008). However, the lack of focus on the issue from scholars in the field of geography suggest that it is still regarded as a private and intimate issue that lacks the sensationalism to appeal to the public, resulting in the lack of academic attention from those situated in the field of geography. It has been argued that the similarities between international terrorism and warfare and domestic abuse align them and provide an opportunity to raise the profile of domestic abuse (Pain, 2014).

Control and coercion are main features of domestic abuse and underpin the behaviours and actions that take place. One of the most common used models of explanation is the Duluth Wheel of Power and Control; it illustrates the dynamics of abuse and types of behaviours and actions involved and was developed by collecting and exploring the personal accounts of perpetrators of domestic abuse (Duluth, 2007). It reveals that domestic abuse is characterised by a perpetrator who will control and restrict victims through a range of psychological, emotional and financial methods. Physical acts and violence may be used, and often, control is obtained and ensured by the consistent presence of fear. The frequent and repeated nature of incidents over long periods of time is typical of abuse and extends beyond 'one off' episodes of violence or conflict within relationships (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008). This behaviour has significant lasting impacts upon numerous aspects of the lives of victims and their children (Abrahams, 2010; Hester et al, 2006).

The UK Government has, over time, recognised the complexity of domestic abuse. This has resulted in changing and evolving definitions, that began with a narrow, age restricted, and limited understanding of abuse (Sanders-McDonagh & Neville, 2017). The UK Government currently define it as "any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate

partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.” This definition demonstrates the growing belief that abuse extends beyond physical violence and includes a wide range of harmful behaviours. There has also been further development to include other forms of gendered violence such as female genital mutilation and the definition further expands to recognise the role of control and coercion in this phenomenon (Home office, 2016).

2.4 Who is impacted by Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse does not discriminate; it cuts across race, religion, class and culture and occurs on an international basis. It is estimated that in the UK alone 2.1m people suffer some form of domestic abuse (ONS, 2019). There is a strong body of evidence which shows that women are disproportionately affected and victimised by domestic abuse, most often at the hands of male perpetrators (Walby, 2004; 2013). There is evidence that shows that men are also impacted. However, it is argued that the pattern and type of abuse varies depending on gender (Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Miller & Meloy, 2006) whilst the underpinnings, behaviours and actions of domestic abuse are similar, there is some variation depending on other characteristics such as sexuality, race, religion, disability and gender (Harne & Radford, 2008). These characteristics may impact the way in which the abuse is carried out and experienced, often any ‘difference’ or characteristic that may increase that individual’s vulnerability will be exploited and used to control and coerce the victim, thus resulting in heterogenous experiences amongst victims. One example of this variance is space, which research suggests is the setting and space in which abuse takes place, that may also lead to slight variations in its pattern and type, for example, those living in a rural setting may be physically more isolated and experience higher levels of surveillance than those in urban places (Springer, 2011; Sandberg, 2013). This highlights how the experiences of victims will vary from person to person depending on a wide range of characteristics and factors.

As previously mentioned, there is a disparity in the level of risk of experiencing domestic abuse between men and women. Research shows that 1 in 9 women have experienced severe force from a partner since the age of 16, compared to 1 in 20 men. Women are also found to be at greater risk of sexual assault and stalking (Robinson & Rowlands, 2006). Statistics show that one in three women between the ages of 16- 59 will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime (ONS, 2019). In 2004, Dobash and Dobash explored the gender symmetry of domestic violence and found that there were significant differences in both the way violence was perpetrated and experienced by men and women. Women were less likely to use controlling and coercive tactics to abuse their partner and physical attacks were less frequent, intense and severe than those perpetrated by men. Furthermore, men reported lower levels of

emotional and physical harm or injury than women who were abused by men (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). This is reflected in statistical evidence, which reveals that more than half of female homicide victims were murdered by a partner or ex-partner, whilst only five percent of male homicide victims were murdered by their partner or ex-partner (Coleman, 2011). Importantly, there is significant variation in the way in which men and women perceive their violent and abusive behaviour; women tend to over-estimate the harm they have caused and over-report the frequency of violence perpetrated towards their partners. In comparison, men tend to minimise and under-estimate their own actions, particularly, in relation to non-physical abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). Numerous studies have also highlighted how men are more likely to blame the female victim for violence they perpetrate, failing to understand or acknowledge the impact of their actions (Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Cavanagh et al, 2001; Heckart & Gondolf, 2000). International research has suggested that there are a range of factors underpinning men's violence towards women and that the relationship between cultural attitudes, structural factors and personal experience may influence the construction of violence and somewhat normalise abuse against women and girls (Peacock & Barker, 2014).

Furthermore, a study of men's understanding of domestic abuse highlighted a strong resistance to the concept of men being wholly responsible for domestic abuse, rather, a repeated effort to draw attention to female perpetrators and redefine non-physical abusive behaviour as arguments or a falling out (Stanley et al, 2013). Nevertheless, it has been argued that women are more likely to use psychological abuse than physical, with growing evidence of women perpetrating domestic abuse against men (McHugh et al, 2013; Stanley et al, 2013). The lasting impacts, causes and costs of this are regarded as understudied and neglected due to a focus on female victims (McHugh et al, 2013). In support of this finding, research by Donovan and colleagues (2006) amongst lesbians, found that they were at increased risk of psychological abuse over physical. This may suggest that women are more likely to use psychological and emotional methods such as manipulation, verbal insults, and threats as a form of abuse.

Despite a lack of extensive focus, research suggests that domestic abuse is as prevalent in the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) communities as in heterosexual couples with 1 in 4 people experiencing abuse from a partner or ex-partner (Henderson, 2003). This was reflected in an evaluation of a support service for male victims of domestic abuse which found that thirty percent of service users were in same sex relationships or were bi-sexual (Robinson & Rowlands, 2006; Nolan, 2011). Robinson and Rowlands (2006) suggest that gay people may be at increased risk of being abused due to their sexuality and that the pattern and dynamic of this abuse may relate directly to their sexuality or gender identity. Their gender identity and sexuality may be used by an intimate partner, ex-partner or family member to

exert control over them including threats to 'expose' them to family or friends (Robinson & Rowlands, 2006). Moreover, Donovan (2006) proposed that gay men are more likely to experience physical and sexual assaults rather than emotional or psychological abuse which also increase the likelihood of physical injury. Crucially, individuals who come from backgrounds and cultures that are particularly less tolerant of homosexuality and gender identity issues may be more at risk of domestic abuse (Harvey et al, 2014).

Ethnicity, race, religion and culture all have an impact on the way in which abuse is perpetrated, experienced and help is sought. Certain acts and crimes are significantly more prevalent and associated with certain groups. This is not dismissing the fact that domestic abuse is a universal issue but rather, is acknowledging that there are varying dynamics and patterns to it. Research into women and girls within traveller and gypsy communities has found an increased risk of domestic abuse with sixty one percent of married English gypsy women and eighty one percent of married Irish traveller women having experienced domestic abuse (Cemlyn et al, 2009). The types of abuse perpetrated may also vary and some may be very specific to certain groups and cultures. There are higher levels of forced marriage and so called 'honour' based violence amongst Middle Eastern and South Asian women (Siddiqui, 2013). Likewise, research involving Asian men suggested that although domestic abuse was not wholly acceptable within their community, women seeking support or reporting abuse was even more of a transgression (Stanley et al, 2013). This is reflective of other studies and evidence that suggests there are more barriers and problems for women from black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) communities to report abuse and seek help (Voice 4 Change England & NAVCA, 2012). Some attempts to explain this focus upon the imbalance of power between men and women, with women having less power and resources than men; and Caucasian and BAMER people, with people from BAMER groups also having less power, resources, and capital than white people. It has also been suggested that there is more stigma from the community and the added fear of racism and xenophobia from society for women from these groups when seeking help (Postbus, 2015). The result of this can prevent a woman from leaving an abusive relationship and being at increased risk of harm, injury or death. Furthermore, they may struggle to address any long- term impacts of domestic abuse due to a lack of accessible culturally specific or appropriate support services (Voice 4 Change England & NAVCA, 2012).

2.5 Trauma, damage and cost: Impacts of Domestic Abuse

From a geographical perspective, domestic abuse has both a temporal and spatial dimension. It has been argued by Pain (2014) that space needs to be reconceptualised to include and recognise the body as a space. Therefore, the trauma and harm caused to the individual is

embodied and follows the person as they move through different spaces and stages of life, meaning that the trauma is linked to the individual and not just associated with specific settings. The impact and memory of the trauma has an effect on an individual's perspective, decision making and behaviour long after the incident itself, adding a temporal dimension to the issue (Pain, 2014).

Considering abuse in this way, this section will discuss the immediate impact of abuse and its long-term effects. It has been noted that women who have experienced domestic abuse may take decades to rebuild their lives and fully recover (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015). The same may be true for male victims of abuse however, due to a lack of research in this area it is difficult to ascertain. From studies exploring the long-term impacts and stages of recovery, it appears that the impacts are mainly in three categories: physical and psychological health, economic, and social (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015).

Physical and Psychological health

Physical injury and harm are the most commonly assumed and associated impacts of domestic abuse. Research shows that women who have experienced domestic violence are twice as likely to use general medical services and between three to eight times more likely to use mental health services (WNC, 2010). Research analysing the health consequences of domestic abuse show that there is a link between exposure to violence and adverse health outcomes, more specifically, the levels of stress and trauma experienced prompt negative neural and immune responses. These responses are linked to chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders and hypertension (Black & Breiding, 2008; Black, 2011; Howard, 2010; Miller, 1998). A recent longitudinal study of women who had experienced domestic abuse highlighted that three quarters of the participants were concerned about their overall health, and more than half had a health condition at the beginning of the study. There were some improvements reported over time, however, there was a general decline in health, despite the participants having left the relationship, which demonstrated the long-term consequences of abuse, violence, and stress (Kelly et al, 2015).

The presence of controlling behaviour has already been discussed; however, research has shown that this can directly impact upon women's physical and reproductive health during and after abuse. Perpetrators will often restrict the victim from accessing medical services and care and may limit the woman's ability to control her sexual and reproductive decision making. This behaviour may also extend to controlling and disrupting the self-administration of medication (WHO, 2013). This issue reflects a further finding of Kelly et al (2006); very few women involved in the study reported that they had been able to manage their health when in the

abusive relationship. This may explain why many of the health impacts are present over a prolonged period even after leaving the abusive relationship. However, it has been proposed that healthcare is one of many areas that survivors focus on as they move on with their lives and begin to re-establish some control and autonomy over their physical and mental wellbeing and rebuild their ability to seek help and assistance (Kelly, 1988; Abrahams, 2010).

The issue of health and wellbeing is a multifaceted area in relation to domestic abuse; injuries extend beyond the physical harm caused by violence and evolve and develop into other less obvious wounds. Many women use alcohol and substances as a coping mechanism which often becomes problematic, causing damage to health and wellbeing (Campbell, 2002; Ellsberg et al, 2008; Kelly et al, 2015).

This complex interplay between psychological and physiological problems, resulting from domestic abuse, makes it difficult to discuss either type of issue in isolation. Although, there is obvious harm and injury sustained from assaults immediately, there are also other health complications that arise from the manifestation of the psychological harm caused by perpetrators, which consequently compounds the psychological issues such as depression and anxiety (WHO, 2013). A review of literature by Dillon et al (2013) shows overwhelming evidence which links domestic abuse with a range of psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, PTSD, and sleep disorders. There is also evidence which suggests that prolonged exposure to stress results in structural changes to the brain, which affect cognitive functioning, which may lead to a range of psychological issues (Miller, 1998; Green et al, 2004; Shipway, 2004; Howard, 2010). These psychological problems have been shown to have a negative long- term impact upon individuals' ability to manage everyday tasks such as budgeting, parenting and self- care (McNulty et al, 2009; Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015). All of these conditions can exist long after a victim has left an abusive relationship highlighting the sustained damage caused by violence and abuse.

Economic impacts of Domestic Abuse

It has been estimated that domestic abuse costs the UK £66 billion a year (Oliver et al, 2019), this includes costs to services such as health, criminal justice service, civil legal services, social services, and housing. There are further economic costs incurred from victims' loss of earnings, due to time absent from work as a result from injury. A further cost, and arguably the most significant, are the human and emotional costs to the individual and their families (Walby, 2009; Oliver et al, 2019).

Abuse cuts across and impacts upon every aspect of an individual's life and the severity of the impacts vary between each person. However, research suggests that economic stability for

victims is significantly affected both during and post abuse. Financial abuse is a common form of abuse and includes a wide variety of behaviours which restrict and control the victim's financial independence and security (Kelly et al, 2015; Sharpe- Jeffs, 2015). There is evidence which shows that perpetrators use economic exploitative behaviours, economic control, and employment sabotage, although this is an area which needs further exploration (Postmus et al, 2011). Studies have found that survivors often experience financial abuse during the relationship and after (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015; Sharpe- Jeffs, 2015). Many women experience financial abuse and control even after the relationship has ended; this is carried out by perpetrators refusing to pay maintenance or reach financial agreements or failing to pay on a regular basis. They also often leave the victim with debts and outstanding financial commitments, which puts additional stress upon their ability to rebuild their lives and be self-sufficient. Furthermore, many women fleeing abuse are forced to leave their possessions and belongings and begin their journey with little or nothing (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015).

There is a strong body of evidence which highlights the disparity between men's incomes and women's incomes and earnings. There are multiple explanations and contributing factors to this. One example of this would be parenthood, which is a particular factor that research conducted by Blau (2012) found with often the majority of childcare being carried out by the mother. This resulted in her having to postpone or abandon her career, and negatively affected her earning potential and employability in the future. This disparity is an example of gender inequalities and patriarchy.

Austerity measures and welfare reform have added to the barriers and difficulties confronting victims when attempting to rebuild their lives post- abuse (Howard & Skipp, 2015; Kelly et al, 2015; Sharpe- Jeffs, 2015; Women's Aid, 2018). These austerity measures have impacted survivors in numerous ways. Areas of particular concern are the benefit cap, two child tax credit limits, under 35 shared accommodation rate and the under-occupation deduction from housing benefit. These issues create barriers for women experiencing abuse, fleeing abuse, trying to access refuge and in securing permanent accommodation (Women's Aid, 2018). There has also generally been a reduction in the level of refuge provision across England and Wales since 2010. It is estimated that around 67% of refuge applications in England and 32% of refuge applications in Wales are declined. Around 20% of those declined applications are due to lack of space or capacity to support the survivor (ONS, 2020). The lack of emergency accommodation is another hurdle for victims to face when attempting to leave an abusive and dangerous situation and may result in women being at further risk of injury, harm or even being killed due to limited resources and support enabling them to access safe and secure housing (Women's Aid, 2014).

Impacts on social networks and relationships

Social capital has been defined as the advantages that people gain from their involvement and interaction with extra-familial networks (Bourdieu, 1985; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; 1995; 1998; Larance, 2001). This concept has been further explored and expanded with the importance of the relationships within the networks being defined as trustful and cooperative (Bordieu, 1985; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). Larance (2004) suggests that social capital and the networks that provide it can be an essential factor in allowing victims of domestic abuse to cope with the abuse, make the decision to leave and rebuild their lives.

Tan et al (1995) proposed that the experience of domestic abuse has a negative impact upon individual's social capital, with victim's social contacts decreasing as violence increases an impact which occurs and is felt during abuse and continues to be felt long-term in the aftermath of abuse. Moreover, Parker (2015) suggests that people who experience domestic abuse often face multiple barriers, both personal and structural to disclosing abuse, seeking support, and establishing networks. It has been shown that feelings of shame and guilt are a significant deterrent and obstacle for victims when admitting and disclosing that they have been or are being abused. In a survey carried out with women, a third said that they would not want anyone to know if they were a victim of domestic abuse, this may limit the opportunities for victims to seek support and help from formal and informal networks (Refuge, 2014). Further studies have found that there are multiple barriers and factor that result in women hesitating to disclose abuse to formal and informal networks including shame, fear of consequences, child custody issues and a lack of space for disclosure (Boethius & Akerstrom, 2020; Heron & Maarten, 2021).

The negative impacts of abuse upon the victim's relationships and support networks, can be somewhat explained by an integral element of domestic abuse, which is the isolation of victims from their families and friends (Parker, 2015). Isolation is a key element of domestic abuse and perpetrators frequently control and manage what contact a victim has with family, friends and the wider community and extends to restricting their access to support and help, even medical care. This compounds the feelings of loneliness and dependence for the victim and becomes a barrier to them accessing or seeking support to escape the abuse whilst also undermining their levels of social capital (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Shipway, 2004; Parker, 2015).

The negative impacts of abuse also extend to the children of victims. The perpetrator and the impact of their behaviour can undermine the parenting skills of the mother and damage the relationship between parent and child. This is likely to have lasting impacts, and these negative

experiences and the damage inflicted on this mother- child relationship may continue well after the abusive relationship with the perpetrator has ended. Children who witness domestic abuse are more likely to have emotional and behavioural difficulties including anxiety, depression and aggression. They are also at increased risk of experiencing mental health issues as adults (Humphreys, 2006; Meltzer et al, 2009). Of 100,000 children that run away from home each year in the UK, 80% cite violence, abuse and/or conflict in the home as the cause, highlighting the damaging effect abuse and violence has upon the whole household (Children's Society, 1999). It may take a survivor years to rebuild and mend the relationships damaged during the abuse.

A recent study with survivors of domestic abuse suggests that many women struggle with their family's lack of understanding of the trauma caused and experienced (Abrahams, 2010). Findings from Anderson et al (2012) conducted with survivors, found that the family members of the victims often failed to intervene and respond to the abuse for a number of reasons including not being aware of the situation, not knowing how to help, or being reluctant to interfere. The results from this study also suggest that on some occasions the abuse was largely condoned by the victim's family members, due to a perception by them that the victim should remain in the relationship and that they had chosen that partner and subsequently the abuse. In some cases, close family, friends and other third parties will become a bystander and witness warning signs, indicators and incidents of abuse (Taylor et al, 2016; Rothman et al, 2018). Research in this area suggests that where abuse is committed in front of bystanders the level of risk, violence and injury is usually high to both victim and bystander (Taylor et al, 2016). Quite often however, families and friends fail to recognise the significance of behaviours and therefore intervene and support the victim (Parker, 2015; Taylor et al, 2016; Gainsbury et al, 2020). Gainsbury et al (2020) argue that bystander programmes, which aim to involve third parties to take an active role in preventing and responding to domestic abuse, should be extended beyond their prevalence on US campuses to be applied more generally as a primary prevention tool. These programmes seek to shift gendered attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that enable abuse to take place (Banyard et al, 2009). In doing so they would shift the understanding, awareness and response of people towards family and friends that are experiencing domestic abuse. As Parker (2015) argues; where support is lacking the barriers to leaving or seeking help become increasingly difficult to overcome. Evidence shows that these relationships are an essential factor in victims successfully rebuilding their lives after abuse. These networks are a key factor in women's decisions to leave an abuser, coping with the challenges in the aftermath and in their ongoing recovery and in rebuilding their lives (Young Larance & Lane Porter, 2004; Anderson et al, 2012, Klein, 2014; Parker, 2015).

Despite the literature suggesting women are often reluctant to seek help and support during the abusive relationship, Moe (2007) found that victims often actively sought help and advice on numerous occasions throughout the abuse and after. Obtaining shelter, staying safe, obtaining legal protection, maintaining custody, raising their children and building a support system of family and friends requires immense effort and persistence from survivors who displayed more resilience than expected (Moe, 2007). Resilience has been conceptualised in different ways by various academics with some defining it as an intricate relationship between personal characteristics, family environment and social networks and interactions which promote positive well-being (Fraser, 1997; Masten, 2001). Alternatively, Humphreys (2003) defined resilience as a positive characteristic of the individual's personality which heightens their ability to adapt. This resilience is argued as being essential for victims to navigate the numerous obstacles that they face when aiming to cope with abuse and rebuild their lives after experiencing domestic abuse. Sender and Caldwell (2002) suggest that transitioning from being a victim and in the abusive relationship to becoming a survivor and rebuilding their independence requires immense levels of strength and energy, which can be conceptualised as resilience. Anderson et al (2012) argues that women's ability to seek support and assistance from both informal and formal networks also requires resilience and is vital to ensure recovery.

The ability to establish and maintain formal networks is often an integral tool for people who have experienced domestic abuse, so that they can address some of the damage and trauma that has been caused by the perpetrator (Anderson et al, 2012). However, research has shown that often if victims have a negative experience when contacting support services, it may dissuade them from engaging with support and other services at that time and in the future (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015). Furthermore, the methods some victims use to cope with abuse may result in further complications when accessing services, for example, those with substance misuse issues may find themselves excluded from services and struggling to maintain engagement with support (Swan, 2000; Women's Aid, 2014). This highlights the complexities the providers of services face when attempting to meet the needs of survivors and the difficulties victims may face when attempting to access and engage with these formal networks, suggesting that a wide range of flexible responses may be required to enable victims to recover.

2.6 Responses to Domestic Abuse: From policy to practice

Recently, domestic abuse has become more prominent on Government agendas. Over the previous 40 years there have been significant efforts made to tackle domestic abuse and its effects through policy, legislation and practice innovations and interventions. This has led to

changed attitudes towards the issue and placed it as an area of priority for governments across the world (Harne & Radford, 2008). The four countries within the UK each have their own powers to address domestic abuse, however, as this issue crosses into other areas that are not yet devolved there are still some limitations to the reach of these powers (Matczack, 2011). However, broadly across the UK, each of the governments have recognised the complexity of domestic abuse and its impacts which have resulted in an emphasis upon multi agency and partnership working (Harne & Radford, 2008). In Wales, numerous innovations have been developed and implemented; this includes the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, a six- year strategy to tackle domestic abuse (Welsh Government, 2010) and Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) (Robinson, 2004; Robinson & Tregidga, 2005) all of which have resulted in Wales being recognised internationally as leading the way in this area (Robinson et al, 2012). Innovations in practice have involved improving multi- agency approaches to better meet the needs of victims and includes therapies and strategies to improve self- confidence and empower victims (Harne & Radford, 2008; Abrahams, 2010). There have also been important efforts to improve the awareness and understanding of abuse and its impacts. This has been supported by strategies to promote healthy relationships by specialist services (Women's Aid, 2014).

Much of this progress has been achieved through the perseverance of the feminist movement, which has long fought and campaigned to ensure that domestic abuse and violence against women was kept in the public consciousness and public awareness and understanding of the issue increased over time (Harne & Radford, 2008). However, there is still debate as to how much cultural attitudes and perceptions of abuse have improved, and some recent political shifts suggest there may be barriers to the continued progression in this area. For example, there has been much focus upon some of the discourse surrounding the 2016 US election, particularly the prevalence of misogynistic and sexist language and ideas. Furthermore, Russia has recently decriminalised domestic abuse and redefined it as a civil issue signifying an erosion or regression of equality (Walker, 2017).

As policies have developed, the range of legal and practical responses and tools available to tackle the issue have increased. The multi- agency approach towards domestic abuse has developed and the coordinated community response (CCR) has been established, developed, and transferred across international forums. The model views domestic abuse responses as operating on both a micro and macro level and that multiple players are operating on numerous levels and across different spheres. The model recognises that domestic abuse is responded to by the victim, perpetrator and children. Consequently, responses radiate onto a wider spectrum such as, family members, friends and the wider community, that include statutory

and third sector agencies traversing the fields of criminal justice, health, housing and specialist services (Pence & McMahon, 1997; Klevens et al, 2008; Post et al, 2010; Hester, 2011).

There has been significant effort made by the feminist movement to improve the responses from the police, courts and social services. Traditionally, domestic abuse was viewed by the police and the legal system as a private matter which did not require any intervention (Hague & Malos, 2005). These attitudes have been repeatedly explored, challenged and addressed through research, policy and best practice guidance over a number of years (Harne & Radford, 2008). There is still some concern and debate as to the efficacy of the police's response to domestic abuse; research suggests that there are good levels of awareness of abuse including non-violent situations and officers are utilising the range of tools to address it (Robinson et al, 2015).

One of the main mechanisms to support this agenda are the MARAC's (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), which originated from Cardiff, Wales and were piloted over a two-year period. The conferences were initially developed to discuss cases of domestic abuse in a professional group setting with a range of statutory, third sector and specialist agencies present. The aim was to share information about victims and perpetrators to improve safeguarding practices and develop adequate safety and action plans. The conferences are held on a fortnightly basis and have evolved to include an ever-growing number of partners. The success of MARAC has translated and become an internationally recognised method of best practice (Robinson, 2004; Robinson & Tregidga, 2005; Harne & Radford, 2008). The number of cases discussed at MARACs across England and Wales have increased over the past two years to almost 100,000 per year (ONS, 2019).

The wide range of agencies present at the conferences is reflective of the complexity around domestic abuse and the huge impact it has across victims' lives. As discussed, victims are likely to suffer in a number of ways due to domestic abuse including their health (physical and mental), financial security, employment, and education, parenting and relationships and ability to seek and engage with support. Due to the diverse and wide range of impacts responses vary and often are adapted to individual situations, there is no 'one size fits all' approach to domestic abuse. Much has been achieved in developing methods to prevent abuse, tackle it, and support survivors to rebuild their lives.

However, there is concern and some evidence to suggest that victims are still slipping through the net and experiencing poor responses from the criminal justice system, social services, and housing providers; all of which is likely to worsen with continuing funding cuts to each of these areas (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015; Bimpson et al, 2021). Hester (2011) draws upon

Bourdieu's (1989) theory of habitus to conceptualise the responses to domestic abuse which she suggests occurs on three separate 'planets', a domestic violence planet, a child protection planet and a child contact planet. Each planet has a different set of agencies operating on it, on different levels and often each agency has different ways of working, thinking, and responding to domestic abuse; each agency essentially operates within its own 'habitus' (Hester, 2011).

The impacts which are present at the time of abuse can extend long after the relationship has ended, meaning that tackling these issues is an ongoing constant process which requires resilience and strength (Anderson et al, 2013). However, considering the tensions between each of the planets there are significant challenges facing people who have experienced abuse in accessing and engaging with the range of services and also challenges facing the providers of these services in ensuring they are providing a holistic and coordinated response (Hester, 2011).

One of the key concerns for victims throughout the relationship, when fleeing and after is housing. As a result, there is growing pressure on housing providers to engage with the multi-agency process and play an active role as a main agency in tackling domestic abuse (Henderson, 2018).

2.7 Homelessness and housing instability in the context of Domestic Abuse

One of the key impacts of domestic abuse is housing instability and homelessness. Olsen and colleagues (2013) proposed that domestic abuse is a significant cause of homelessness amongst women. Domestic abuse, housing instability and homelessness are inextricably linked. Bimpson et al (2021) argue that current policy and practice responses to women experiencing violence and homelessness are failing to adequately meet their needs and that there is an urgent need to fill the evidence gap around effective interventions. This is concerning considering there are a wide range of impacts resulting from homelessness and housing instability which include emotional, mental, and material harm (Ponic et al, 2011; Woodhall Melnik, 2016). Morgaine (2009) argues that access to safe, secure, and affordable housing is a basic human right which is often violated when women leave abusive partners.

The complexities and challenges of domestic abuse interact and influence survivor's experiences and pathways through housing to produce a challenging and intricate picture of the relationship between domestic abuse and housing (Ponic et al, 2011; Woodhall Melnik, 2016; Bimpson et al, 2021).

This section will explore the nexus between domestic abuse, housing, and homelessness. It will begin by exploring the concept of home and the experience of those who may be

'homeless at home'. In this context, victims of domestic abuse may be housed, however the presence of violence and fear can undermine the safety and security of that accommodation, negating the suitability of that place to provide a home, resulting in feelings of homelessness. This section will then go on to investigate the relationship between domestic abuse and homelessness, discussing some of the definitions and typologies of homelessness, and explore how domestic abuse shapes the experience of homelessness.

Conceptualising home

The importance and significance of home is demonstrated and expressed by the widespread use of popular aphorisms such as 'home is where the heart is', 'there is no place like home' and 'home sweet home' (Gurney, 1996; Clapham, 2005). Dovey (1985) distinguished the difference between a house and home by defining a house as a structure and feature of the environment, whereas a home is a much deeper emotional relationship between people and their dwellings. Home has also been described as one of the core institutions of British society and a constant feature of our lives as it is where we grow up, raise our own families and establish our own routines (Saunders, 1990). It has been stated that family and home are inextricably linked, and both combine to create and provide an image of a 'normal' lifestyle (Oakley, 1976; Clapham, 2005; Blunt & Dowley, 2006; Piat et al, 2018; Robinson, 2006; McKee et al, 2019). This has been supported by the findings from a number of studies with women experiencing homelessness in the UK. Family life and home were regarded by the women involved to be connected and a stable home viewed as an opportunity for normality (Reeve et al, 2006; Bimpson et al, 2020). Home has been conceptualised through the notion of ontological security to understand the ways in which people establish and maintain stability and security in increasingly insecure and uncontrollable time. It has been argued that home is a place of consistency, a setting of the daily routines of family life; a place that provides privacy and which gives a sense of control that is missing in other places and environments and a secure setting around which identities are established and maintained (Saunders, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Robinson, 2006; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019; Bimpson et al, 2020).

Home is a multi-dimensional concept that consists of material, physical and psychosocial factors. Research suggests that there are numerous aspects and contributing factors which work together to create a sense of home, these include stability, affordability, sense of community and safety (Woodhall-Melnik et al, 2016; McCarthy, 2019; Hoolachan, 2020). For victims of domestic abuse, fear and trauma is a constant feature during and post abuse (Abrahams, 2010). There is a body of literature which maintains that the meanings and attachment that people develop towards a place is integrally influenced and connected to the

people, actions and events that take place within that space. This would suggest that for victims of domestic abuse the violence and abuse that they experience would have a negative impact upon their experience of 'home'; a proposition that has been supported by research studying the ways in which gender impacts the experience and perception of home (e.g.

Tomos & Dittmar, 1995; Tutty et al, 2013; Gurney, 2020). It has been argued that men and women have significantly different experiences of home and provide contrasting descriptions on the meaning of home (Gurney, 1996). This suggestion was vehemently contested by Saunders (1990) who argued that there was no evidence which showed that home could be viewed as a form of oppression by women. However, evidence suggests that men perceive home as a place of sanctuary and relaxation, which differs to women's perceptions of home that are more likely to relate home to housekeeping and chores. Suggesting that home can be the space in which traditional gender roles and bias are formed, demonstrated and reinforced (Gurney, 1996; Clapham, 2005, Sayer 2016; Thebaud et al, 2019). Clapham (2005) argues that the meaning of home can vary between groups and individuals and can include positive as well as negative connotations, some may view it as a place of comfort whilst others attribute financial responsibilities to it and as a result feel less positive.

Gurney (1996) has found that life events such as marriage, bereavement and childbirth were defining moments in how people viewed and constructed their feelings and perception of home. With each event and the accompanying emotional responses, people reassessed and reconstructed the meaning and importance of 'home'. Home can also be the setting for violence, abuse and trauma all of which are likely to result in the renegotiating of the meaning of 'home' (Clapham, 2005). It is possible that just as 'a house becomes a home' through the actions and events of family life, negative and distressing events can reduce a home to a house. One of the key aspects of home is feeling safe and secure; when a home fails to provide security and safety the definition of home may become more difficult to articulate. This suggests the meaning of home can change, adapt and transform depending on an individual's situation and experiences (Tomos & Dittmar, 1995; Carroll et al, 2009). For people experiencing domestic abuse, the presence of violence, fear and oppression may lead to them perceiving their house as a prison rather than a home (Abrahams, 2010). Reflecting on Giddens's theory of ontological security, a key element that contributes to ontological security is the ability to control your environment (Giddens, 1991). The dynamics of domestic abuse, particularly the central elements of control and coercion, are likely to undermine a victim's ability to control their environment, have any independence or autonomy over their finances, physical safety, and daily routine (Woodhall- Melnik et al, 2016).

Studies have suggested that stable housing and a home is fundamental to improving an individual's well-being, relationships and development of self. It is recognised as providing an opportunity for an individual to integrate and become part of a community, build social relationships, build a sense of identity, and plan and envision their future (Leith, 2006; Parsell & Parsell, 2012; Tsemberis et al, 2012; Dunn, 2013; Woodhall-Melnik, 2016; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). Brickell (2012) argues that women living without ontological security are in a sense homeless; this may be despite the fact they are physically and materially housed. Therefore, housing and home can be a complex concept for those experiencing domestic abuse; some may be unable to separate their feelings towards their house from the trauma and memories of events that took place within the setting, leaving them in a sense homeless at home. For these women leaving that house may be a liberating and positive move which increases their ontological security due to their gained independence and control (Brickell, 2012; Woodhall- Melnik, 2016; Gurney, 2020). Others may find that leaving home and the consequent experience of housing instability is traumatic and detrimental to their ontological security. Research by Manzo (2014) into forced housing relocations found that even where people have negative views of their home, social and emotional attachments can result in them feeling disrupted and distressed by the relocation and loss of their home. The reality is that far too often the only way for a person to escape the abuse and flee from the situation is to leave their home and possessions in order to gain personal safety resulting in them becoming physically homeless.

Domestic Abuse and homelessness: A hidden group?

For many victims and their children, escaping violence and abuse often results with them having to leave their home and belongings. Domestic abuse is one of the main causes of homelessness and housing instability for women and their children internationally (Spinney & Blandy, 2011; Tutty et al, 2013; O'Campo et al, 2014; Bimpson et al, 2021). Nunan (1995) conceptualises the links between homelessness and domestic abuse as symptomatic of a structural issue that is underpinned by the patriarchal nature of society, with the result that women are forced to become homeless due to an inability to remove violent men from the home.

Homelessness affects many people, and like domestic abuse, cuts across race, religion, sex and other characteristics. It has been argued that people fleeing domestic abuse are often an invisible group within the homeless population, going unnoticed by those outside of homelessness and domestic abuse services (Tually et al, 2008). It has also been argued that the full picture of the issue is not accurately reflected in government statistics (AVA, 2011). This could be largely due to the fact that when fleeing abuse many women are placed into

temporary or emergency accommodation such as refuge provision (Ponic et al, 2011), or could also be as a result of the many people experiencing abuse who either remain in housing that is unsuitable and unsafe, find temporary solutions such as 'sofa surfing', or despite presenting as homeless are not accepted by the local authority and therefore not recorded (AVA, 2011).

Busch- Geertsema et al (2016) defined three broad categories of homelessness including people without accommodation, people living in temporary and crisis accommodation and people living in severely inadequate or insecure accommodation. The first category of homelessness refers to those that are literally roofless. This includes those that have no conventional accommodation and are living on the streets or are in improvised dwellings. In the UK this would equate to our 'street homeless' and 'rough sleepers' (Busch- Geertsema et al, 2016). Research suggests that many people fleeing domestic abuse will avoid this stage of homelessness due to refuge provision, however, findings from a study of single homeless people in the UK found that homeless women had significant levels of experiencing domestic abuse and violence (Mackie & Thomas, 2014). A further study by St Mungo's showed that almost half of their female service users had experienced domestic abuse. Of this group a third felt that the abuse had been a contributing factor to them becoming homeless (St Mungo's, 2014). This suggests that access to refuge provision, emergency accommodation and other homelessness services may vary between survivors of abuse and may be influenced by other factors such as the presence of children and support needs. It also highlights that when domestic abuse is one of multiple factors causing homelessness, rather than the sole cause, the pathway and response becomes less predictable and may result in street homelessness, an issue that has also been supported by the findings of other studies (Abrahams, 2010; Fitzpatrick et al, 2013; Kelly et al, 2014; Woodhall Melnik, 2015).

The second category of homelessness includes people accommodated in emergency provision such as refuge or temporary shelter (this thesis will explore refuge provision in the UK further on). It can also extend to people staying in shelters, where they have to negotiate on a daily basis for their place (Busch- Geertsema et al, 2016). This is assumed to be the most common pathway for those escaping abuse and can result in significant housing instability for the individual and their children (Levison and Kenny, 2002). It has been highlighted that once a household is placed in temporary accommodation, they have not only lost their previous home and quite often their possessions, but they also face significant barriers to being rehoused and becoming resettled (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2014).

In the UK the length of time spent in temporary accommodation and refuge provision can extend up to as much as two years; most often prolonged stays in temporary accommodation are not planned or intended but are symptomatic of a lack of rehousing options facing

households within this group (Tually et al, 2008; Abrahams, 2010; Ava, 2011; Parsell, 2012; Kelly et al, 2014).

The third category of homelessness refers to people living in severely inadequate or insecure accommodation, encompassing people living in overcrowded conditions, 'sofa surfing' and those living under the threat of violence. This category is also particularly relevant to people experiencing domestic abuse as they are clearly living with the threat of violence and that threat can exist even after the relationship itself has ended (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2014). This category reflects proposals that homelessness should include people living in housing that is severely inadequate because they cannot access adequate housing that meets minimal standards; it also incorporates notions of material deprivation and poverty to encompass a wider range of criteria (Springer, 2000; Lansley & Mack, 2015; Busch-Geertsema et al, 2016). Busch-Geertsema et al (2016) have simplified and refined the ETHOS domains to three main domains of home: security, physical and social (Edgar & Meert, 2006). A home will fail to be adequate if it is significantly lower than the criteria within one or more domain (Busch-Geertsema et al, 2016).

The domains each pertain to different aspects of housing which together are integral to providing appropriate and suitable homes. The security domain includes legal security, likelihood of eviction, exclusive occupancy, and affordability. It measures the extent that a household can stay at a property for reasonable lengths of time and make the property a home (Hulse et al, 2011; Busch-Geertsema et al, 2016). The physical domain relates to the quality and size of the property requiring that it is structurally sound and suitable and that it is not overcrowded. The social domain focusses upon the opportunity for social relations to take place within the home, that the home is safe and allows for privacy (ibid).

The relationship between homelessness and domestic abuse is incredibly complex with the dynamics and pattern of abuse influencing the type and frequency of housing instability and homelessness experienced. As identified, there is not a clear and linear pathway into homelessness, or access to services for households experiencing domestic abuse and a body of literature shows the difficulties around the issue (Tually et al, 2008; Weeks & Oberin, 2004; Johnson et al, 2008). It is common for those experiencing abuse to have multiple episodes of homelessness after fleeing the perpetrator multiple times before they leave indefinitely. This is often linked to the intensity and frequency of violent events and levels of abuse which result in the victim reaching crisis point. It is at this point that their fear for themselves and children demands that they seek safety and support outside of the home (Johnson et al, 2008; Tually et al, 2008). The reasons for returning to the abusive partner are wide ranging and multifaceted; reasons can vary between individuals and include both structural and personal

factors (Tually et al, 2008; Ponio et al, 2011). Access to move on accommodation has been identified as a significant enabler for women to rebuild their lives after abuse; research has shown that barriers to housing often result in women feeling forced to return to an abusive partner despite the risk to their safety and well-being (Champion et al, 2009; Shinn, 1998). This is reflected in both US and Canadian studies which found that around thirty one percent of women in emergency and temporary accommodation intended to return to their violent expartner directly because of a lack of housing options (Taylor- Butts, 2007; Melbin et al, 2003).

A similar picture is emerging in the UK, where a residual and highly demanded social housing sector and poor quality, insecure, private rented sector offer limited options and inadequate solutions to households fleeing abuse, resulting in long periods in emergency accommodation and frequent moves between temporary provision for this group (Abrahams, 2010; AVA, 2011; Kelly et al, 2014).

Cycling in between homelessness and abuse, although somewhat typical, is highly traumatic and destabilising for households (Tually et al, 2008). A further complicating factor is that many victims of domestic abuse experience and demonstrate signs of distress leading to the emergence of issues such as physical and mental health conditions and substance misuse issues, which often emerge as a coping mechanism and can sometimes be instigated and initiated by a perpetrator as a method to exert control (Campbell, 2002; Ellsberg et al, 2008; Kelly et al, 2014). These issues and support needs are likely to result in additional challenges and barriers for individuals when trying to access support and other services which are vital to them escaping the abuse. These responses and issues may also make maintaining engagement with service providers challenging, thus placing another barrier to accessing support that is essential to their ability and opportunity in gaining secure and settled housing and rebuilding their lives (Hague & Mullender, 2006; Abrahams, 2010).

2.8 Homelessness prevention: progress and problems

Recently, there has been a paradigm shift in the way in which homelessness is considered. Traditionally, it has been responded to in a reactive and crisis- driven manner, whereas more recently there have been calls for policy and practice to incorporate a more preventative approach (Mackie, 2015). It has long been argued that homelessness should not be accepted as a normal event and that homelessness can and should be prevented, particularly in developed and prosperous countries (Shinn et al, 2001). As part of this move towards preventative approaches, responses to domestic abuse have followed a similar pattern and begun to incorporate early intervention and prevention focussed initiatives (Netto et al, 2009).

This chapter will explore this paradigm shift in both fields and explore the benefits and challenges of interventions within this agenda. It will begin by discussing the emergence of homelessness prevention and the drivers of this shift. The second part will conceptualise and problematize homelessness prevention and the way in which it has been implemented. A discussion of homelessness prevention in the context of the Welsh legislation will be included in part three.

Finally, the relationship and emergence of homelessness prevention in the context of domestic abuse will be explored. This final section will include a discussion about refuge provision; beginning with the origins and development of refuges in the UK and going on to problematize the use of refuge by exploring the benefits and some of the challenges experienced by people living in refuge. The focus will then shift to more recent preventative models such as sanctuary schemes.

Traditionally, responses to homelessness focussed upon the physical loss of home and were generally reactive rather than pre-emptive. However, in more recent times there has been a distinct shift towards a more preventative response and approach which is evident in international policies (Mackie, 2015). There are a number of potential causes which have led to this move. From exploring the literature in this area, Mackie (2015) identified three key drivers which have prompted this shift in agenda. He suggests that the shift towards more preventative measures is driven by cost savings, societal and political embarrassment, and individual benefits. The first factor is the cost effectiveness of homelessness prevention; traditional responses to homelessness such as emergency and temporary accommodation are expensive and particularly so when people spend a prolonged period of time in such settings. In comparison, homelessness prevention models result in significant cost savings (Busch-Geertsema & Fitzpatrick, 2008; Jones & Pleace, 2010; Culhane et al, 2011). Savings are made by reducing the amount of time people spend in homelessness accommodation or preventing homelessness altogether by supporting people to retain their current housing. A further saving is incurred through tackling some of the wider socio-economic costs of homelessness. A strong body of literature evidences the costly and damaging effects of homelessness upon society. With links to increases in poor mental and physical health and wellbeing and increases in crime and policing, the responses to these and a wide range of other issues is costly to the public purse. Therefore, any action that prevents homelessness from occurring is likely to be financially viable (Crane et al, 2006; Culhane, 2008).

The second factor driving the shift towards a preventative approach is the embarrassment felt by societies and governments of developed countries in allowing large numbers of people in temporary and emergency accommodation, an embarrassment that is more acutely felt when

families with children are a significant proportion of the homeless population (BuschGeertsema & Fitzpatrick, 2008).

The way in which the prevention measures have been introduced and implemented by various governments have tended to be fragmented, with the shift having to fit in with existing systems and practices that may not complement each other. As such this has limited the effectiveness of the prevention turn, largely due to an inability to fully enact and realise the principles of the whole concept (Mackie, 2015).

Conceptualising and problematizing homelessness prevention

This shift in agenda has prompted discussion around the conceptualisation of homelessness prevention (Shinn et al, 2001; Pawson & Davidson, 2008; Culhane et al, 2011; Montgomery et al, 2013; Fitzpatrick et al, 2019). Most recently, Fitzpatrick et al (2019, 2021) developed an intuitive typology that distinguishes prevention efforts primarily in relation to their timing. They identify five stages of prevention and they argue that this typology can be used as an heuristic tool against which to compare homelessness prevention policy internationally. The five categories are universal, upstream crisis, emergency, and repeat. Universal applies to interventions that are accessible or impactful upon the general population and that prevent and reduce homelessness. Upstream refers to early intervention work that specifically focusses on groups with a higher risk of homelessness, such as young people and transitions that increase the vulnerability to homelessness such as leaving prison or care. Crisis, focusses on activities to prevent homelessness within a foreseeable time frame and where it is likely to occur. Emergency is the support and response to those at immediate risk of homelessness and particularly focuses upon people at immediate risk of sleeping rough. Repeat is the interventions that take place to prevent repeat homelessness such as tenancy support. This temporal typology will provide a useful framework in this study to explore the timing of service interventions.

As previously mentioned, the implementation of homelessness prevention has been piecemeal on an international level, furthermore there are some criticisms of the approach. Parsell & Marston (2012) argue that preventative measures place a disproportionate amount of focus and responsibility on people and individual causes of homelessness rather than adequately addressing structural factors. It is a well-established fact within the field that both structural and personal factors cause and influence homelessness; there have long been calls to redress the balance and ensure that a more equal and holistic approach is taken when researching, developing policy and practising within the housing and homelessness sector (Clapham, 2005). More specifically, Mackie (2015) argues that a balanced approach is

essential within the field of homelessness prevention, one that includes both structural and individual causes and factors. A second criticism of the approach is that although prevention initiatives are in essence supposed to be universally available, there is evidence which suggests that in a UK context, accessibility to interventions are still somewhat dependent upon people having 'priority' status or being legally owed a duty by Local Authorities (Pawson, 2007; Busch-Geertsema & Fitzpatrick, 2008). It could be argued that this is largely due to the inconsistent and somewhat fractional way the agenda has been introduced, and gradually implemented alongside existing and contradictory policies and practices.

Homelessness prevention in a Welsh context

In 2014 the Housing (Wales) Act was introduced, making Wales the first country to reorient legislation towards prevention and to make preventions services universally available. At the centre of the Welsh approach is a ground-breaking legal duty on local authorities to help prevent and relieve homelessness. The Act resulted in local authorities being given a range of new duties to enable a comprehensive preventative approach to be implemented. Some arguably regressive measures were also included, such as the ability to legally discharge their duty of resolving homelessness by securing a six-month tenancy in appropriate accommodation within the private rented sector. However, these were in conjunction with more progressive measures, such as the requirement for local authorities to offer assistance to anyone that may be homeless or at risk of homelessness, regardless of any 'priority' status or legal duty the Authority would have owed them under the old system (Mackie, 2015; Mackie et al, 2017).

One of the key methods that supports the aims of the new Welsh agenda is the Housing Support Grant, previously known as Supporting People. This initiative provides a range of support for vulnerable people pre, during, and post episodes of homelessness and housing instability. The overarching aim is to ensure that people can live independently, prevent them from becoming homeless, and equip them to maintain their tenancies. This agenda has seen consistent and strong support by Welsh Government, who have demonstrated their commitment to the policy by continued funding and protection of the funding. This is largely in contrast to the other UK nations. Despite the support however, concerns that more funding is needed have been raised. There are concerns that in the new preventative agenda the demand for Supporting People funded projects is likely to increase beyond levels of resources (Stirling, 2015).

A recent evaluation highlighted that there are still inconsistencies in how the measures are being implemented across the 22 Local Authorities in Wales and also concerns have been

raised regarding the extent and appropriateness of prevention work that is taking place at the early stages of homelessness. A further concern has been the lack of universal accessibility to support and assistance by particular groups, particularly prison leavers and single men (Mackie, 2015; Mackie et al, 2017; Ahmed et al, 2018; Madoc-Jones et al, 2018). To date, there has been no examination of how the pioneering Welsh prevention approach has impacted upon victims of domestic abuse and whether there have been any unintended consequences.

Homelessness prevention in the context of Domestic Abuse

Spinney and Blandy (2011) conceptualised successful homelessness prevention in the context of domestic abuse as consisting of a coordinated response from housing, specialist support services and legal measures and agencies. This section will explore the housing element of this concept by focussing on the two most prominent and prevalent housing responses and interventions available to victims of domestic abuse, which are: refuge provision and sanctuary schemes. It is important to recognise that these interventions are situated within crisis and emergency prevention. This is due to the fact that because of the presence of violence and the subsequent impact on the victim's experience of home they have essentially already become homeless, either due to having to leave their home or because their home is not safe. Upstream prevention work would be focussed upon ending and preventing domestic abuse and homelessness from occurring in the first instance.

As discussed, housing and more specifically access to safe and secure housing, is a key factor in the decision to leave for those experiencing abuse. Refuge provision has become synonymous with the issue of domestic abuse and there is often an assumption that it is this type of accommodation that individuals will access when fleeing their violent and abusive partner. Refuge provision emerged largely as a result of the women's movement of the 1960s and 70s which was prompted by the high levels of inequality and discrimination faced by women on a daily basis, including a lack of protection by the laws, police and courts from violent men (Rhodes & McNeill, 1985). A number of groups, centres and individuals began to work together to provide protection, safety and support to women and their children that had experienced domestic abuse. It has been suggested that this progress was an overwhelming achievement particularly in the face of a perceived lack of support from the government who continued to fail to address the issue of violence against women (Malos, 2000). This informal and 'grassroots' approach eventually led to the establishment of the Women's Aid refuge movement (Hanmer, 2003). It was only forty-five years ago that the first six refuges were operating, today there are nearly 200 in the UK. According to Dobash & Dobash (1992: 1) the movement is 'one of the most important social movements of our time'.

Refuges were designed to provide emergency and temporary accommodation for households escaping abuse without discrimination. However, the full range of support that became incorporated and integral to refuge extended to include counselling, education, training, and life skills. Arguably, one of the most important aspects of refuge was the opportunity to share experiences with what often became a community (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

In 2019-20 Women's Aid estimated that refuge services in England supported 10,592 women and 12,710 children and community-based services supported 103,969 women and 124,762 children (Women's Aid, 2020). Research has shown that the majority of women who have experience of living within refuge have valued the provision of a secure and safe setting, and even home, which enables them to meet other women who have experienced similar situations. Research has found that the refuge environment provided occupants with the opportunity to access support from others, which enabled them to overcome some of the shattering impacts of domestic abuse, facilitating them to build and maintain new relationships (Kelly & Dubois, 2008). Similarly, Abrahams' (2010) longitudinal study of women living in refuge found that a significant number of them felt that the refuge provided them with a safe place in which they could begin to address the trauma and harm caused by abuse and plan for their future.

In this context, refuge provides what has been defined by Kelly et al (2013) as 'space for action'. This is a time or space that survivors of abuse are able to regain some of their autonomy and independence and think about what they want, need, and aim to do. It is time away from a perpetrator and the associated violence, abuse and fear which can cripple rational, logical, and cohesive reflection and planning. There are other methods that could be introduced at an earlier stage and may prevent a move into refuge, as well as providing space for action such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the custody of the perpetrator. Evidence shows that these are not used consistently and where those options are unable to be obtained refuge is able to provide that space and time (Kelly et al, 2014).

Many women find the time spent in refuge is an opportunity to address personal, emotional, and complex issues which results in improved well-being and mental health. It is suggested that it also allows them to face the structural challenges and barriers such as income maximisation, housing applications and legal processes with intensive support meaning that they feel much better prepared to move on into the community (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2014).

In some cases, particularly where there are high levels of risk to the victim's safety, refuge can be the only safe accommodation available. In these cases, the move to refuge can be

perceived negatively by the individual fleeing abuse; this is partly due to a lack of choice that the individual feels that they have. This may extend further amongst those staying in refuge, beyond the point of fleeing abuse by those who feel that there are inadequate or appropriate housing solutions available for them to move on from refuge (Tually et al, 2008; Abrahams, 2010; Olsen, 2013). Abrahams (2010) found that those who were forced to stay for prolonged periods in refuge due to a lack of housing came to view the refuge as a barrier rather than a facilitator to their recovery. This was similar to findings from Abraham's (2007) earlier study, which suggested that women staying in refuge for long periods were at risk of becoming 'institutionalised' and dependent upon the support provided. This resulted in them failing to build or maintain independent living skills, which were essential to them being able to move on and rebuild their lives and meant that they remained in a vulnerable state and at further risk of victimisation. Similarly, McNaughton and Sanders (2007) argue that barriers to housing which prevent transitions out of abusive situations reinforces marginalisation and isolation and delays the process of healing and recovery (McNaughton & Sanders, 2007).

Recent research shows that economic pressures and austerity have led to decreased levels of spending in public services. Refuges and women's services have been particularly affected, with a study showing that on a typical day in England 155 women and 103 children were turned away from refuges due to a lack of space (Women's Aid, 2013b). Women sometimes face a range of barriers when attempting to access refuge provision. One of the largest issues is the level of disruption and upheaval for the women and their children when leaving their home and going into refuge. This is further complicated by the shortage of refuge provision which can result with them being turned away or unable to secure accommodation in their preferred location, resulting in them either returning to an unsafe home or having to leave their local and social networks including schools, doctors and family (Levison & Harwin, 2000; Netto et al, 2004; Davis, 2005; Pawson et al, 2007, Sharp, 2008; Women's Aid, 2014). Women from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) groups may also struggle to access and maintain a stay in mainstream refuges due to racism and prejudice from other residents, resulting in them returning to the violent relationship (Netto et al, 2004; 2006). Entering refuge may also be particularly difficult for those with physical disabilities as the lack of accessibility and potentially leaving a home with adaptations can compound their vulnerability and limit their independence (Davis, 2005). A further group that may face barriers when attempting to access refuge are those with multiple support needs, particularly mental health, and/or substance misuse issues. Women with older male children may also be refused access to refuge provision, in both this and the previous group this is largely likely due to minimising and managing risk to other residents (Davis, 2005). In light of these challenges new and emerging other initiatives have become increasingly popular and prevalent in policy and practice.

In conjunction with the emerging homelessness prevention agenda that has taken place on an international scale, domestic abuse initiatives have also begun to focus more upon preventing homelessness due to domestic abuse. Efforts aiming to enable those experiencing abuse to remain safely within their homes have become more prominent and have resulted in the popularisation of sanctuary schemes (Jones et al, 2010). The first sanctuary scheme was established in 2002 as a partnership initiative between a Crime Reduction Unit and a Local Authority housing department (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010). The scheme has been described as a victim centred initiative that allows households experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their homes where it is safe, the perpetrator is not there and where it is their choice to stay (Jones et al, 2010).

Sanctuary schemes consist of a number of measures that increase the security of a property and its residents, measures include reinforced external doors and windows, stronger and more robust locks on both windows and doors, personal and property alarms, sensor lights and in some cases a 'panic room' (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010). An examination of the existing literature by Spinney (2011) found that the best outcomes for those fleeing domestic abuse were achieved through a coordinated response which included housing, legal assistance, and support. This reflects the fundamental aim of sanctuary schemes, which when demonstrating best practice will not just consist of the safety measures but will include legal measures and support for other needs (Netto et al, 2009; Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Jones et al, 2010).

An evaluation of the scheme by Jones et al (2010) found that there were a range of reasons providers gave as to why the scheme had been established in their area. The drivers included both a need to respond to significant levels of domestic abuse more effectively and a need to establish cost effective, preventative initiatives in an environment with substantial housing pressures. These responses reflect concerns raised in an earlier study that the cost effectiveness of sanctuary schemes may be prioritised over the actual safety of women experiencing domestic abuse; furthermore, that the increased funding for sanctuary schemes has resulted in a decrease in funding for refuge provision which subsequently is becoming scarcer and more difficult to access (Netto et al, 2009). This is particularly worrying as evidence shows that although there is clearly a need for sanctuary schemes, they may not be an appropriate option for everyone experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse.

One of the key issues with sanctuary schemes is that they cannot fully address the safety needs of households outside of the property and in the wider community. Research shows those experiencing domestic abuse are subjected to threats, violence, and intimidation outside of the home often even extending into the workplace and school grounds (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2014). The security measures implemented within the home do little to reassure

women that they are safe from the perpetrator in the outside environment, this is particularly evident when there is a lack of enforceable legal measures in place such as exclusion orders and injunctions which restrict the perpetrator from coming within a certain distance of the victim (Netto et al, 2009; Spinney et al, 2011). There is also evidence suggesting that the sanctuary scheme may fail to adequately protect those in BAMER groups who may need to not only escape from the perpetrator but the wider community and other extended family members (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010). This, coupled with the challenges faced by people from this community in accessing refuge, highlights the complex and difficult decisions they have to make, in what is often a desperate situation.

A further criticism is that many schemes fail to fully incorporate all the principles of the initiative, including legal assistance and support. There is often a lack of legal responses integrated within the whole scheme, moreover Sharp (2008) argues that often there are numerous difficulties gaining the various legal orders due to complex and intimidating legal processes. Furthermore, even when the orders are obtained, they are often not properly or appropriately enforced. This reflects the findings of Jones et al (2010) study in which sanctuary scheme providers and recipients both reported incidents of the perpetrator attempting to force entry, and a smaller number in which the sanctuary was breached. Quilgars & Pleace (2010) suggest that there is a lack of reliable data regarding breaches so the number could be higher than reported in Jones et al's (2010) study. This study also found that there was considerable concern amongst different agencies involved in the schemes, that there were significant numbers of people living in a sanctuary scheme with unmet support needs. This is largely due to a lack of referrals and follow up contact, post sanctuary installation. There are also large inconsistencies in the way in which schemes are coordinated, implemented, and delivered across the UK (Jones et al, 2010). As previously discussed, people who have experienced domestic abuse may present with a range of issues and needs, varying in the level of severity and impact upon their daily lives. Some may have few support needs and only require minimal assistance and support, whilst others may have an extensive range of issues which needs much more intensive support and a more specialist response (Netto et al, 2009; Jones et al, 2010; Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2014).

The third criticism of the scheme focusses upon the delivery of the scheme and the way in which information is provided to people fleeing domestic abuse. There is no evidence of any recipients being coerced into accessing the sanctuary scheme however, there is concern that people experiencing domestic abuse may accept the sanctuary scheme because of a fear of losing their permanent accommodation rather than because it is the safest option for them at that time (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010). This is supported by the recent study conducted through

Solace Women's Aid which suggests that women's safety is being compromised due to the lack of affordable and secure housing options, particularly for those with an existing social housing tenancy (Kelly et al, 2014). The alternative options to sanctuary schemes include refuge or emergency accommodation, legal remedies such as injunctions and the intervention and cooperation of a landlord to transfer the joint tenancy to the name of the victim. These options require high levels of cooperation, guidance, and assistance from various agencies to achieve. The latter option of removing a perpetrator from a tenancy is rarely accomplished due to a small number of Local Authorities exercising their right to do so (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010).

There are further concerns that as many households fleeing domestic abuse often leave after a severe incident and in emergency situations, they are effectively already homeless when they present to the Local Authority, limiting the opportunity to implement crisis prevention initiatives. This is further compounded by the length of time taken to install sanctuary which can vary and take between a week and two months (Jones et al, 2010; Quilgars & Pleace, 2010). A contributing issue to this challenge is that due to the cost-effective nature of sanctuary schemes there is concern that Local Authorities may persuade people fleeing abuse that this is their best option and fail to properly inform them of their other alternative options (Curtis & Benjamin, 2006). This may result in women and their children returning to high risk and unsafe environments, placing them in further danger (CLG, 2006).

In a wider context, there is much debate regarding the level of expectancy placed upon people to solve their own housing issues. Johanssen & Hvinden (2005) argue that the reforms to welfare, housing and homelessness policy and practice have changed the dynamic between state and citizens. They argue that there is less of a duty on the state to meet the needs of citizens, rather individuals should be responsible for their own welfare and play a more leading role in managing risks to themselves and resolving their problems with the aim that people will become less dependent on the state and welfare (Johanssen & Hvinden, 2005). There is evidence which suggests that these paradigm shifts which require active citizenship and increased individual responsibility may deepen the exclusion and marginalisation of certain groups, including on the basis of gender (Johanssen & Hvinden, 2005; Newman, 2005). As previously discussed, people who have experienced domestic abuse are likely to have other support needs and, due to the nature of the abuse, struggle to make decisions and choices in a rational and timely manner (Abrahams, 2010). Therefore, the expectation for them to play an 'active role' in solving their housing problems, particularly in the face of a limited and poor range of options, may be counter-productive and compound the challenge they are facing and lead to them being placed at further risk of abuse and harm.

Scholars in the field of domestic abuse and housing have long noted the need for policy responses and practices to be informed by other macro level factors such as the economic, political, and social systems that reinforce gendered constructions of homelessness which fail to address the experience of homeless women (Watson & Austerberry, 1986; Watson, 1999). In order for women's homelessness to be adequately addressed, it is vital to begin to tackle other underlying structural issues such as differential positions in both the labour and housing market, (Munro & Smith, 1989; Watson, 1999). This is reflected in calls for homelessness prevention in relation to domestic abuse to adequately involve holding perpetrators accountable in order to redress the power imbalance rather than just responding to the issues they have caused (Malos & Hague, 1997). It is clearly difficult to identify what response should be accessible and when to whom as the experiences of households can vary immensely. The literature has identified a need to provide a balanced approach to both supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account and to ensure that equal consideration is given to both individual and structural factors and tailor responses to those.

2.9 Chapter Conclusion

Domestic abuse is defined by a wide range of behaviours and is underpinned by control and coercion (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008). It cuts across personal characteristics and can impact upon anyone, however, the dynamics and features can vary and differ between individuals and groups depending on their characteristics (Henderson, 2003; Robinson & Rowlands, 2006; Harne & Radford, 2008; Cemlyn et al, 2009). The impacts of abuse are extensive and can affect survivors long after the relationship has ended, harming victim's physical and mental health and wellbeing (Ellsberg et al, 2008; Black, 2011; Kelly et al, 2015), financial stability and resources (Walby, 2009; Postmus et al, 2011) and to their social networks and relationships (Larance, 2004; Parker, 2015). Survivors must be resilient to rebuild their lives and social capital plays a vital role in this process (Anderson et al, 2012).

One of the main impacts is on victims' housing situations and the destabilising effect fear and abuse has upon their housing stability. There is evidence which shows how fear and trauma can change the way home is experienced and compromise the ontological security of victims (Giddens, 1991; Gurney, 1996; Clapham, 2005). Homelessness has been redefined to capture a wider spectrum of homelessness focussing not only upon those that are 'roofless' but encompassing those that are living in insecure or inadequate housing (Busch-Geertsema et al, 2016). Research suggests that there are strong links between homelessness and domestic abuse with victims often having to leave their homes and become homeless to escape the

abuse or the abuse resulting in their homes being unsafe and failing to meet the criteria of adequacy (Spinney & Blandy, 2011; Tutty et al, 2013; O'Campo et al, 2014).

In conjunction with a paradigm shift towards homelessness prevention, particularly in the context of Welsh legislation, there has been a shift towards more preventative approaches within the field of domestic abuse, moving upstream from emergency to crisis response. This has involved a move away from traditional responses such as refuge provision to an emergence of sanctuary schemes. There is evidence of the benefits associated with each model; benefits of refuge include a space for action (Kelly et al, 2013), the opportunity to build relationships and networks (Kelly & Dubois, 2008) and access to specialist support (Abrahams, 2010). The benefits associated with sanctuary schemes centre largely on the household retaining their home and the measures increasing their security and safety (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Jones et al, 2010).

Both interventions also have issues ranging from limited access to refuge (Women's Aid, 2014), inadequate and inappropriate provision for certain groups (Netto et al, 2004; 2006; Davis, 2005) and a lack of move on options (McNaughton & Sanders, 2007). Issues with sanctuary schemes include continuing fear and trauma which is attached to the property (Jones, 2010); inadequate legal protection so that victims are still at risk outside of the house (Netto et al, 2009; Spinney et al, 2011), a failure to recognise that some victim's need protection from the wider community as well as the perpetrator (Quilgars & Pleace, 2010). Recent work in England has highlighted how the focus on such a restricted number of housing solutions fails to reflect the diversity and dynamic of the housing market and the experiences of survivors. They argue that when discussing and responding to the housing needs of survivors a whole housing approach should be adopted. This should extend beyond the traditional focus on refuge and social housing to incorporate the private rented sector and homeownership (DAHA, 2020).

The review of the literature has highlighted the challenges faced by survivors when trying to navigate the process of leaving an abusive relationship, having to choose which option, from a limited range, is best for them while coping with the impacts of domestic abuse. With the new changes to Welsh housing legislation there is the potential that there may be unintended consequences for people who have experienced domestic abuse. As the preventative agenda is a relatively new approach in the field of domestic abuse and particularly in a Welsh context there is scope for further research to fully explore the experiences of victims/survivors who are being assisted under the new system, identifying pathways and better understanding both the structural and personal factors which shape decision making and outcomes.

Methodology Part One: Planning the field

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Methodology is to discuss both the intent and to reflect on the experience of conducting the study. The Methodology will be presented in two distinct chapters. The first chapter (Chapter 3) introduces the intended research approach. It will restate the aims and objectives of the research; followed by a section positioning the research within critical realist and feminist approaches. The chapter will then go on to describe the methodological approach that was intended to be followed and an explanation as to how this sought to meet the aims of the study. This will then progress on to a discussion of the various data collection methods and tools that were originally planned to be utilised, the intended and achieved sample are then briefly discussed.

The second methodological chapter (Chapter 4), navigating the field, provides a reflection on experiences of implementing the intended methodology. It focuses upon the ethical dilemmas that emerged and how these were addressed and then explores the issue of researcher reflexivity in the field.

3.2 Aims and Objectives

Given a lack of knowledge of how the new homelessness prevention agenda in Wales could impact those experiencing domestic abuse, the study aims to explore the nexus between homelessness prevention and domestic abuse. More specifically, the research seeks to:

- Explore the housing pathways of survivors of domestic abuse.

Drawing upon Clapham's (2005) housing pathways framework, the research seeks to unearth the heterogeneity of survivor experiences in relation to tenure, house moves, and household composition over time. This will include exploring the structural and individual factors which combine to shape the pathways taken and understand why there is variation between pathways.

- Examine survivor interactions with services and the role of housing in a more co-ordinated response

Building on Hester's (2011) conceptualisation of three planet responses to DA, the study will examine the role of housing and its potential as a fourth planet in a more co-ordinated and holistic response to DA survivors. This will be achieved through examining survivor's interactions with services in the context of homelessness prevention.

- Investigate the concept and meaning of home in the context of domestic abuse.

Contribute to a strong body of research that highlights how home is informed by a range of both physical and psychological factors and events that take place within a home and how these can undermine the experience of 'home'. (Leith, 2006; Parsell & Parsell, 2012; Tsemberis et al, 2012; Dunn, 2013; Woodhall-Melnik, 2016; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). To investigate this experience from the lens of domestic abuse.

3.3 Positioning the research

This research is situated within the fields of domestic abuse (DA) and housing studies. Moreover, the study is informed by wider scholarship from the fields of geography, criminology, law, psychology, social policy, health and social work.

Research within the field of domestic abuse has been informed by various theoretical underpinnings and perspectives with the most prominent being feminist theory. Feminist theory relates domestic abuse to patriarchy and the gender inequality that contributes to women being disproportionately vulnerable to victimisation due to the androcentric nature of societal structures such as Law which promote and enable men's power over women (Ylo & Bograd, 1988). Multi-disciplinary research on domestic abuse provides an example of how research topics situated across numerous fields can be explored and informed from a single or combined theoretical perspective such as feminist theory (Meth, 2003; Meth, 2004; Barron, 2005; Pain, 2014; Bowstead, 2017a; 2017b).

There is a body of literature based within the field of geography that focusses on the phenomena of domestic abuse and the impact it has on survivor's experiences of place, migration, and interaction with services. Much of this literature is influenced by feminism and is an example of how research topics, situated across numerous fields, can be explored and informed from a single or combined theoretical perspective (Meth, 2003; Meth, 2004; Barron, 2005; Pain, 2014; Bowstead, 2017a; 2017b).

Housing studies is wide ranging and varied, it encompasses a range of topics such as economic studies of the housing market, homelessness policy, migration, communities and identities and the meaning of home all of which vary in the theoretical perspective they are viewed from. Traditionally homelessness has been explained as being caused by either individual behaviours and choices or structural factors. Structural factors which contribute, or cause homelessness include social and economic structures, whilst individual explanations of homelessness focus upon a person's characteristics and behaviour (Neale, 1997; Fitzpatrick, 2005). Critical realism has emerged as a prominent perspective and has been extensively used by academics within the fields of housing and urban research (Pawson, 2004; Allen, 2000; Fitzpatrick, 2002; Lawson, 2006; McNaughton Nicholls, 2009). Critical realism is

situated on the spectrum between objectivity and subjectivity (May, 2011). It claims to allow researchers to explore a phenomenon from a less reductionist perspective than those aligned with positivism (Bhaskar, 1997; 1987; 1998). The perspective acknowledges that there may be multiple causes and contributing factors which underpin particular issues. These underlying structures coupled with mechanisms or actions then lead to the issue. There may be multiple structures and mechanisms which are contributing factors to any event. Critical realism considers structures that influence and impact on the world and acknowledges the need to understand and interrogate these to address the inequalities and injustices they may generate (Bryman, 2008).

This perspective considers the structures and mechanisms by which events are generated, but also focusses upon the influence and impact that individual behaviour and response to and within this framework also affects the event (Walliman, 2006). In essence, critical realism considers the multidimensional relationship between individual agency and societal structures which allows for wider more contextual understanding of complex issues and events (Sayer, 2000). The development of critical realism in the field led to the emergence of a 'new orthodoxy' which aimed to provide a more nuanced and enlightened position which allowed researchers to consider not only both the structural and individual factors but to also consider the interaction between them (Pleace, 2000; Fitzpatrick, 2005).

The study of domestic abuse from a geographical perspective has however been conducted from various lenses and with focus on specific aspects. There have been efforts made by numerous academics in the field to explore and understand the way in which violence is experienced by different people in different spaces and places (Fluri & Piedalua, 2017; Pain, 2001; Sweet, 2016). Bowstead (2015) placed her study of the migration of people experiencing domestic abuse firmly within the field of geography by utilising Geographical Information System to map and analyse her data. By doing this she attempted to meet the call from Hanson (1992) to combine the aspects of feminist research with that of geographical. An example of another piece of work that aimed to incorporate feminism into the field was Fitzpatrick's (2005) discussion which adopted some principles of feminist theories and combined them with Gidden's (1984) structuration theory to identify mechanisms that cause homelessness. This example is not in isolation, there is a growing body of work located in the field of geography that combines epistemological perspectives to develop and adapt an approach that merges critical realism and feminism (Satsangi, 2013; Parr, 2013).

In her research, Parr (2013) attempted to integrate methodologies from critical realism and feminism. She argued that the feminist methods which give voice to those being researched can be successfully balanced with the knowledge and understanding of the researcher. The

inclusion of critical realism led her to resituate her participants' experiences within other sociological theories and concepts. As Letherby (2003) states, the importance of being able to maintain a position that considers both the individual reality with that of the wider context and factors. Parr asserts that moving beyond the focus on accurate representation to the wider reality will allow researchers to make valid and authoritative claims which can have implication and influence social policy.

This study adopted a similar approach with feminist research principles being integrated with a critical realist perspective. The aim was to hear the voices of participants' and their experiences and situate them within a wider context, considering both individual and structural factors and the interplay between these. As previously discussed, domestic abuse is cross cutting and experienced by a diverse and wide-ranging group of people. Conducting the study from a critical realist perspective with feminist principles embedded, allowed the researcher to deal with the intersectionality of the sample in an appropriate and thoughtful manner. It also allowed consideration to be given to issues such as patriarchy, racism, and poverty and how these interact with other factors to shape people's experiences and outcomes. The study aimed to explore the interaction between structural and individual factors through Clapham's (2002) housing pathways framework.

3.4 Housing Pathways

The literature exploring domestic abuse, housing and homelessness often argues that victims may have little or no choice in their housing situation during and post abuse. However, Abrahams (2010) longitudinal study with victims of domestic abuse showed that although there are many structural factors which act as barriers to victims, they are still making choices within these constraints. These choices included location, tenure, size and even decoration; all of which played an integral role in their houses becoming and feeling like home and enabling them to settle and rebuild their lives after abuse.

This dynamic interaction between structural and individual factors is often difficult to manage, however Clapham's (2002) pathways framework offers an approach that considers both structural factors and constraints and choices and individual actions within those constraints. It looks backwards to housing histories and forwards to housing careers and aspirations. It also captures and explores structure and agency. More specifically for this study, it enables researchers to trace interactions with services and examine differences in people's experiences; this has been a key contribution of pathways studies.

The approach has successfully been used with a number of vulnerable groups such as young people (Clapham et al, 2014), single homeless people (Mackie & Thomas, 2014), young

people with disabilities (Mackie, 2012) and those who have experienced multiple exclusion homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al, 2013). Each of these studies were able to examine structural issues whilst providing a platform to hear the voices of participants and exploring their personal histories, experiences and ambitions. There has, however, been criticism of the approach and its value. In his paper Mackie (2012) debates the various criticisms of social constructionism which subsequently can undermine the efficacy of the framework itself.

The first argument is in relation to the framework having been informed by social constructionism and the view that it is subsequently unable to inform policy and practice due to subjectivity and potential bias included in individual accounts. In response, Clapham (2012) and Mackie (2012) argue that it is possible to recognise common themes from personal accounts and therefore make some generalisations which can play a valuable role in informing both policy and practice. A second issue is that the perspective appears to concentrate more upon individual factors than structural and institutional issues (Jacobs & Manzi, 2000; Mackie, 2012). Attempting to establish an equal approach to both individual and structural factors Clapham (2002) embedded Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration within the framework ensuring that fair attention is given to institutional issues and structural constraints.

Considering all of the relevant literature including the challenges and benefits of the approach, it is clear that this method could provide valuable insight into the nexus between domestic abuse, housing, and homelessness in light of the reportedly progressive prevention paradigm shift in Wales.

The methods by which information is obtained will be key to ensuring that data is robust, reliable and of high quality. The tools used needed significant consideration to ensure that they met these aims, whilst also accounting for the sensitive nature of the topics covered. The tools used included life history calendars; adapted slightly to focus on housing journeys and interactions with formal and informal networks. This resulted in the creation of housing maps that describe the housing pathways of participants. The second method used was semi-structured interviews and focus groups. This enabled a more in-depth discussion about the housing transitions and explored the various factors that influence the pathways taken. The third and final method was creative methods to investigate the meaning of home over time.

3.5 Life History Calendar

Survivor's self-reported accounts of their experiences of domestic abuse are usually the most feasible method for gathering qualitative data about their experiences (Yoshihama & Bybee, 2011). There are however two key methodological challenges associated with this approach, one of which relates to memory retrieval and accuracy. As the length of time being reported

on increases, the less accurate the data becomes (Rubin & Wenzel, 1996; Thompson et al, 1996; Wagenaar, 1986). As this study aims to adopt a housing pathways approach, including the investigation of housing histories, it is imperative that this challenge is addressed to ensure robust and reliable data is obtained.

The second key issue relates to the type of Information that is being obtained, which obviously includes highly sensitive and emotive topics. This depends upon participants being able and willing to recall and report traumatic events and periods in their lives. Existing literature suggests that desirability bias, the act of answering in a way that will please the researcher, is increasingly evident during face-to face interviews and particularly when exploring sensitive topics (Kreuter et al, 2008; Tourangeau & Smith, 1996). A robust body of research exists which suggests that when exploring sensitive topics, a self-administered data collection mode may provide the participant with a higher level of privacy and therefore produce more genuine and reliable data (London & Williams, 1990; Schroder et al, 2003; Morselli et al, 2016).

An ideal data collection method that would meet the aims of the study, would be a longitudinal study which incorporated a range of data collection methods over a significant period of time. However, there are practical and ethical dilemmas associated with this approach. In a very practical sense, longitudinal studies require resources and time that are not available for this piece of work. Furthermore, there are some serious ethical issues that emerge when conducting ongoing research relating to domestic abuse. If the participant is experiencing domestic abuse during the data collection period and the researcher fails to intervene, this could threaten the participant's safety and well-being. Moreover, even if the researcher did intervene an intervention will not only skew the results of the data but typically the level of risk to the survivor increases significantly post-intervention (Yoshihama & Bybee, 2011) Considering all of these challenges, the literature highlights a potential solution in the form of life history calendars.

The Life History Calendar (LHC) has typically been used to allow for large scale quantitative analysis of multiple strands of study which are integrated within the life-course paradigm (Axinn et al, 1999). However, more recently there have been developments and adaptations to the LHC method which enables it to be applied to obtain qualitative data (Yoshihama et al, 2002; 2005; 2007; Yoshihama & Bybee, 2011; Hayes, 2018). The LHC begins with participants plotting down key events and gradually adding to and expanding the number of events. The researcher can then use these events to probe, prompt and explore the context and environment. Events can be recorded chronologically or by order of significance but either way will provide a temporal view of the participant's life history (Hayes, 2018).

The LHC has been developed to include participant attitudes, aspirations, decisions, and actions in the context of different life events by adopting a semi-structured approach. This has led to a more nuanced and detailed retrospective account (Nelson, 2010). Furthermore, Freedman et al, (1988) argued that the tool was the most effective method for improving and enhancing retrospective recall. This addresses the first challenge facing this study, of inaccurate and unreliable data due to retrospective recall. The second challenge, relating to the disclosure of sensitive information, can also be addressed by the LHC. The LHC can improve the relationship between researcher and participant by allowing participants to share and discuss specific events at their own pace. This does not remove the issue completely but will improve the experience for participants (Belli et al, 2001; Schuman and Jordan, 1990; Yoshihama et al, 2002; Leech, 2002). Yoshihama et al (2002) described the process as a topdown retrieval which allows the respondent to recall an annual event such as a birthday or anniversary and use that information to support the recall and temporal placement of other events such as a house move or abusive episode. The tool can be completed by the participant alone or in collaboration with the researcher; this provides an opportunity for the participant to have an element of control over the process and manage their own emotions and address the researcher/participant power imbalance (Nelson, 2010; Hayes, 2018).

There are some clear benefits of using the LHC as a tool in the context of a housing pathways approach. A key advantage is that it can be adapted to include open-ended questions which allow researchers to rigorously explore individual factors and behaviours and wider structural factors and place them in the context of life transitions (Harris & Parisi, 2007). Laub & Sampson (2003) describe the advantages of using the LHC as data collection tool in terms that clearly align it with the aims of the housing pathways approach. They describe its ability to capture human agency, continuity and change and heterogeneity and patterns.

In conclusion, there are numerous benefits of using the LHC such as establishing temporal order, enhancing retrospective recall, and improving the researcher participant relationship (Hayes, 2018). Furthermore, its compatibility with the housing pathways approach, and feminist approaches which prioritise participant agency, suggests that it would be the most effective way to collect data for the purposes of this study and to meet the aims. It will be particularly useful to help in identifying the heterogeneity of the housing pathways and in understanding the interactions with formal and informal networks. This will however need to be enhanced by the use of semi-structured interviews which are based around the events captured via the LHC.

3.6 Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative data allows researchers to obtain a greater awareness and understanding of an individual's experiences, views and feelings. It is a prominent form of data that is used in social research and particularly in the field of domestic abuse and housing studies. It enables a deep understanding of a range of issues and experiences (Smith, 2008). It allows the researcher to not only reveal what is happening or has previously happened, but to also investigate and debate the reasons why (Lune, Pumar & Koppel, 2010).

The qualitative data collection began with participants being asked to complete a Life History Calendar. This covered the relevant period of time from when the participant first experienced domestic abuse or began to live independently, whichever occurred first. It then went on to record life events, domestic abuse, and housing pathways. Once these were completed, pertinent themes and issues were identified, and an interview conducted to explore and understand these in greater depth.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants as they provide structure and ensures the main themes are addressed, whilst allowing participants the freedom to disclose and explain aspects that the researcher may not have anticipated or considered (Seidman, 2006). They provide a sequence for the researcher to follow but can also be flexible to changes and adapt to emerging issues and events that the participants feel are relevant or important to them (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015 p.150).

The interviews allowed the researcher to probe further and develop a deeper understanding of the structural barriers and enablers, individual choices and actions and wider environmental factors that have resulted in the outcomes. This ensured that adequate data was obtained to meet the aims of the study and reflected the methodological stance.

Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the data. This was conducted according to Braun & Clarke's guidelines (2006). Thematic analysis is not grounded upon any specific theory or epistemology and subsequently enables data to be analysed outside of any preconceived ideas or expectations. It allows the researcher to identify themes and give a comprehensive and deep description of the interview data, which is incredibly valuable particularly when the research area is somewhat under studied and the research addresses issues that have previously been ignored or overlooked (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews were also utilised to explore the meaning and concept of home with participants and thus meeting the third objective of the study.

3.7 Creative Methods

Creative research methods encompass a wide range of activities which gather various modes of data outside of traditional approaches. It can result in poetry, artwork, photography and sculpture. Creative methods are aligned with participatory research, in which participants have the freedom to create and express their experiences in a manner other than via traditional interviewing methods (Aldridge, 2015).

Participatory research creates a space in which participants' lived experiences and insights are demonstrated via their engagement as a creator and co-producer of knowledge. It is an approach which places a high value on the individual and provides an opportunity to coproduce data with the person at the centre of the process, rather than from the margins. Participatory research is not synonymous with creative methods, but these methods do lend themselves to this approach and is consistent with a feminist approach, this study will aim to synthesize the two (O' Neill, 2010).

Aldridge (2015) highlights the paradigm shift from funders, practitioners, and policy makers to an expectation that patients and the public are involved in research. This means that researchers are expected to engage and co-produce data with their participants and particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

Bird (2018) argues that arts-based methods successfully capture data of women's experiences of domestic abuse and in particular illuminate the transitional stories more effectively compared to other traditional methods. He suggests that aspects such as relationships, agency and physical space become more visible as participants are able to develop and refine those ideas as the method provides both space and time to do so.

Beyond using creative arts as a data collection method, there is evidence to suggest that there is some therapeutic benefit to those who have experienced abuse and trauma. Traditionally, excluded, and marginalised groups have been co-producers of knowledge through photography for a number of years (Ewald, 1985; Hubbard, 1994; Leavitt et al, 1998). Frohmann (2005) argues that participant generated images and photography addresses the power imbalance between researcher and participant by providing the participant the opportunity to document what is important to them.

For this study, images and artwork were used to explore participant's' concepts and understandings about the meaning of home. This method provided an opportunity for the researcher to ask difficult, somewhat abstract, questions about the meaning of home and in turn provided participants an opportunity to respond in a way in which they have control and

ownership of the process. Participants sometimes feel more comfortable responding to these questions in a more depersonalised and detached manner which is possible through this method. The approach reflected Frohmann's (2005) combination of participant-generated images and photo elicitation. It incorporated participant-generated creative data in the form of drawings, poems, pictures which were used to scaffold questions exploring the meaning of home.

In summary, the data were collected via a series of workshops that include the use of Housing Maps that incorporate the principles of the Life History Calendar, focus groups and in-depth discussions of journeys and experiences, and creative methods to explore the meaning of home. The data collection was heavily informed by feminist participatory methods (discussed in detail in the section 'navigating the field').

The workshops comprised of three distinct parts: 1) exploring housing pathways using the housing maps, 2) focus group discussions investigating interactions with services and systems and 3) exploring the meaning of home using creative methods as a way to scaffold a conversation. The first part was explained and a prototype of a housing map (created by the researcher) was used to provide a guide to participants. A topic guide was developed for the focus groups but was not used as the conversation flowed naturally and the areas of focus were covered organically. The third part of the workshop was approached with either the request to create what home has meant in the past, present and future or create something to show a time when you felt homeless and a time when you felt at home. The discussions in the second part and third part (focus group) were recorded. The creative methods in the third part were used as a way to scaffold a discussion rather than to analyse the creations themselves. The whole workshop allowed for participants to control the ways in which they engaged and shared their stories. The ways in which they took part varied between groups and this will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Housing pathways are typically captured through one to one in-depth interviews that allow for participants to go into great depth and length about their housing journeys and transitions. This study deviated from that approach to gathering housing pathways in a group setting. This was an intentional change based on feedback from the pilot, which is discussed in detail in Navigating the Field. There were concerns that this approach may not yield data that was rich or detailed enough to draw any conclusions from, however, the group setting worked in numerous ways and generated good quality data and insights. The group setting provided both peer support and regulation for participants. The group members were supportive, encouraging and kind when someone was discussing something particularly sensitive or difficult and in many cases the discussion resulted in prompts and probes that led to further

experiences being shared or included. The group also self-regulated and people were naturally prevented from going to in-depth into an event or incident as they had to consider other people's feelings and time. This meant that there were natural boundaries and parameters to the type of stories shared, which resulted in data that was highly relevant and focussed on housing pathways specifically rather than the intricacies of the abuse.

There are no topic guides or examples of data generated to share as the topic guides were not necessary as the discussions occurred naturally. The data generated via the housing maps was so specific to participants and their families, children, homes and lives that to include examples would potentially mean that people are identifiable and be unethical. This was also the reason why each quote in this thesis was assigned a completely random name, some of the quotes, and particularly where multiple quotes from a participant are used, may risk participants being identifiable. These ethical considerations will be discussed in more detail next.

3.8 Ethical considerations

This research adheres to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) framework on research ethics. Informed consent will be sought, participants will be provided with an information sheet which outlines the aims of the research, what is required by them, the amount of time and type of information that will be obtained, and their rights as participants. The researcher will provide participants the option of reading the information sheet themselves or having it read out by the researcher. This is to address any literacy issues in a manner which will not cause embarrassment or discomfort to the participant. Where necessary verbal recorded consent will be obtained, but written consent will be sought from all participants. In accordance with the Helsinki declaration (1964) consent will be obtained without coercion or pressure ensuring.

The confidentiality and anonymity of participants within the research is of key concern for a number of reasons, including possible risk from perpetrators and potential consequences from service providers. As this research is exploring particularly sensitive and personal topics the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality will be key components in building up trust between researcher and participant and providing a safe environment and atmosphere in which people will be able to share their experiences, opinions, and feelings. There will however be caveats to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants and prior to research beginning it will be clearly explained that if the participant discloses information which causes concern, mainly if they are at risk or pose risk to others, I have a duty to act. In the first instance this will involve me talking through the issue with the individual about what can be done and possibly

signposting or referring to sources of support. In cases where this happens, I will refer immediately back to my supervisor.

Another key area of consideration to ensure the quality and integrity of the research is to ensure that participation is completely voluntary. This will involve consistent written and verbal statements which highlights participants are not obliged to take part in the research, that participation will not have any impact on their outcomes with other agencies (both negative or positive) and that they have the right to withdraw at any point of the research process.

As this piece of research explores such sensitive topics with a potentially incredibly vulnerable group it is of utmost importance that they are protected from harm due to the research itself. As such, the intention is that no research will take place with anyone who is currently experiencing domestic abuse and at risk of violence. Participants will be able to discontinue and withdraw from the study at any point, or refuse to answer any particular questions or topic areas without being required to explain why. As the topics covered are sensitive and likely to elicit an emotional response from participants, part of the information sheet will list local services that people can access if needed, during or after the study. If during the research a participant does become upset or distressed, then the option to continue or end the interview will be given to the participant, and support provided from the researcher and where appropriate and possible other professionals such as refuge support workers. In order to minimise the discomfort or potential distress of discussing traumatic events, the interviews will be participant led, meaning they are able to discuss these situations at a pace and to a level of detail that they are comfortable with. This was a key consideration in the development of the methodology and particularly the research tools resulting in the use of the life history calendar.

A further key consideration in research ethics is the integrity of the researcher. I have no conflicting interests to the topic however, I work as a policy and research officer for a housing and homelessness third sector organisation. As an organisation they do not work specifically with people around domestic abuse but do work with clients who are victims of domestic abuse. The roles of PhD researcher and policy and research officer are clearly defined and the boundaries between the two will remain, therefore there is no conflict between the two roles or impact or influence on the integrity or quality of the research. However, this important issue of researcher positionality will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Researcher positionality

The aim of this study, to better understand the housing and homelessness experiences of victims of domestic abuse, has been influenced by the researcher's experiences in a

practitioner, policy, and personal capacity. In various settings and situations, I have had the chance to see the utter devastation caused by abuse and violence to victims and their children. This means that I am unable to be truly objective to the stories and feelings of participants as they will undoubtedly provoke an emotional and human response. However, as much as I may empathise with participants, I am able to maintain clear professional boundaries and have a wide range of experiences which demonstrate this ability and prepare me for the research. As a researcher there are clear questions and aims that I hope to address with this piece of work and therefore the way in which it is obtained, analysed, and reported will be done reflexively so as not to be influenced or undermined by my own personal opinions or feelings.

There are some characteristics which may influence the level of engagement and relationship between the researcher and participant. I am a white, Welsh female of a certain age. I am of a working-class background and am a single parent. All of these characteristics are somewhat visible and identifiable. Therefore, it is likely that a number of participants will share certain characteristics with me, and this may allow trust and rapport to build up more rapidly. However, there are also likely to be participants who do not share characteristics with me and for whom rapport takes longer to establish. In both a personal and professional capacity, I have experience of engaging and living with a diverse range of people and as such am able to build relationships and trust regardless of an individual's background or characteristics. However, this positionality travels with me into my research and needs to be recognised and accounted for.

Aldridge (2015) argues that discussions around participatory research often miss details and descriptions of the emotional labour, trust building work and energy spent by researchers. Participatory research and arguably any research with vulnerable or marginalised people depends upon the researcher's ability to understand and empathise with participants; this is only possible if they are able to build a trusting relationship. Aldridge is not alone in her argument and discussion of the challenges in conducting research; others have noted how intellectually and emotionally difficult it can be and particularly for those researching topics such as domestic abuse (Hubbard et al, 2001; Jackson et al, 2013; Breckenridge, 2016).

Researcher bias is a commonly reported feature of research; however, Warr (2004) argues that what is less common is the awareness and consideration of the personal impact on researchers from conducting emotionally challenging research. Breckenridge (2016) draws on evidence to describe a process of researcher reflexivity and introspection which mitigates researcher vulnerability and facilitates identification and resolution of ethical issues. Tanka poetry and other forms of poetry have been used by researchers to support reflexivity (Mannay, 2013; Breckenridge, 2016) and as part of this study I will write a reflective journal to

hopefully provide some insight into the ethical and emotional dilemmas that are faced during the process of the research and the methods, tools and skills utilised to navigate these. This journal will evolve and is presented thematically in the next chapter 'Navigating the Field'. That chapter will explore the ethical dilemmas, researcher vulnerability, and the complexity and messiness of the reality of conducting research. These issues are almost always present in any research study but all the more so when studying personal experiences and exploring such a sensitive topic.

3.9 Sampling: developing a realistic sampling strategy

The research aimed to engage with 15 people who had experienced domestic abuse since the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The sample originally aimed to include people who had experienced a range of housing solutions such as refuge provision, target hardening and those that had 'self-solved' without intervention. Recruitment was originally planned to be via specialist service providers, Registered Social Landlords, target hardening schemes and an element of snowball sampling. However, due to ethical issues it was decided to involve people recruited via specialist service providers only. This meant that support was in place and available, ensuring that the process was sensitive and appropriately resourced to manage any distress or deal with any issues that may arise due to the research.

The study aimed to not be gender specific as, although women are disproportionately affected, there is a growing awareness of male victims and particularly in relation to homelessness applications. However, accessing male survivors proved difficult due to limited specialist support providers and issues with gatekeepers, therefore only one male was included in the sample.

The initial small sample size of 15 could be critiqued as being too small however, previous studies in this field, where the potential pool of research participants is small and recruitment can be challenging, have recruited a similar number of participants. For example, Abrahams (2010) conducted longitudinal research with twelve participants and the data obtained was rich and detailed and provided an informative picture of the experiences of her participants.

A further argument supporting smaller samples relate to both ethical and practical issues. As previously discussed, there is a great deal of work that needs to take place to build relationships with participants, and these relationships are essential to ensuring accurate and detailed data is gathered in an ethical and sensitive manner. Considering the restraints on both time and resources within a PhD study, it is unlikely that this could be guaranteed with a significantly larger sample.

3.10 The achieved sample

In total there were five separate workshops, four took place over two days (half a day each) and one was conducted in a single day. There were also three separate individual interviews conducted with people who, for various reasons, were unable to attend a workshop.

The achieved sample of 38 people significantly exceeded the original target of 15. The larger sample size was due mainly to accessing existing support groups that were often quite large. The concern is that the larger number of people in these groups might have undermined the ability to build the rapport and trust that Abrahams described and achieved in her longitudinal study with 12 people. However, the methods employed in the workshops enabled an in-depth exploration of people's journeys, stories, and views. The key challenges and experiences in this process are recounted in the navigating the field chapter.

The final sample of 38 people included 37 women and one man. All participants were between the ages of 20-60 years old, there were approximately five BAME women, and a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds.

- 9 women were accessed via a sexual abuse survivor's group
- 2 women via a homelessness project for women with complex needs
- 5 women via a survivor's peer led support group
- 21 women via various support groups facilitated by specialist providers
- 1 man via a specialist provider

The time periods from which the domestic abuse was experienced, and relationship ended also varied, from some who had ended the relationship seven years ago, to a few who were still in an abusive relationship. However, what was starkly evident was that for most, even years after leaving, the abuse was still subtly present. This contradicted the original intended approach, which focussed only on those who were no longer in an abusive relationship. However, due to issues with recruitment and specifically the specialist providers' miscommunication of the criteria for participation, many people in the workshops fell outside of these criteria. It was felt that due to the support available from support services, and the participant's own desire to be involved, exclusion would cause more harm than engaging with them. This dilemma is discussed in more detail in the following chapter: Navigating the field.

Housing situations also varied drastically and included homeowners, private renters, social housing tenants, people in temporary accommodation and people in refuge. The aim to include and capture a diverse range of people and pathways was achieved and people had experienced intense crisis focussed interventions such as refuge, target hardening, staying put and self-solving. The larger sample provides sufficient size and potential heterogeneity to

capture different pathways and service interactions, allowing for meaningful reflections on experiences in Wales. It is also one of the largest samples in studies of this kind and therefore, provides an opportunity to fill an important empirical gap in DA and homelessness research in the UK.

Methodology Part Two: Navigating the field

4.1 Introduction

Drawing upon the fieldwork diary, this second part of the methodology critically reflects upon the experiences of 'doing' research and the challenges overcome during fieldwork. This study focuses on a sensitive issue and involves people that have experienced significant trauma and may still be facing the challenges and impacts of that trauma. There is a great deal of literature discussing research with 'vulnerable groups', but reflections and detailed conversations about the reality of the research process and researcher's experiences in the field are rarely discussed in-depth. Von Blenzen & Van Blerk (2017) argue that research with vulnerable people is more challenging and contested compared to research with peers, largely due to the more complex and numerous stakeholders involved with the process, including gatekeepers. The ongoing challenges, opportunities and unexpected dilemmas that present when conducting research with groups of people that are potentially vulnerable requires a flexibility and fluidity in the research methods and processes which are not always fully explored or reflected in the method sections of existing literature. This chapter, and the decision to structure the thesis methodology in this way, responds directly to calls for more critical engagement in the research process and ethics (Von Blenzen & Van Blerk, 2017). There is much to be learnt from these experiences and by critically reflecting and engaging, this section adds to scholarship on the authentic reality of conducting research.

This critical reflection focusses on three key experiences in the field; the first is the challenges faced in obtaining truly informed consent; the second is the pivotal role of gatekeepers in the research process-particularly the potentially problematic role of gatekeepers and their impact on an iterative sampling strategy. The third area of discussion is the data collection methods used in this study and how they evolved and adapted to each individual.

4.2 The challenges of ensuring truly informed consent

Due to the sensitive nature of the thesis, a great deal of thought and planning was given to the recruitment and sampling strategy. One of the initial key criteria was that participants should be permanently housed; it was felt that for those still experiencing homelessness and housing instability and who had very recently fled abuse, elements of this study could potentially trigger feelings of distress and at a time where those experiences are still very 'raw'. This approach was more instinctual rather than led by existing literature. This instinct is informed by my experiences of conducting research with people experiencing and having experienced trauma and challenges over a ten-year period. Therefore, the criteria shared with Gatekeepers explained that I was unable to involve people who were currently homeless or experiencing housing instability and/or were still in an abusive relationship. As with all research, it was made

explicitly clear that involvement was voluntary and that there was no obligation or expectation for people to take part.

I accessed my first group of participants via a specialist women's domestic abuse organisation and provided them with clear criteria about the people I hoped to engage in the research. I was invited to attend an existing 'support group' over two weeks to conduct the focus group and was advised that participants had been informed about the research aims, and there would be around five participants. On the day of the focus group, nine participants arrived accompanied by two support workers. I re-explained the purpose of the research, that participation was voluntary, and obtained informed consent from each of the participants. The participants began to create their housing journeys and I was facilitating and assisting them where necessary. One participant became upset and left the room for a short while; they came back into the group but quickly became upset again. At this point I went outside to speak with her. She explained that she was finding the task upsetting as 'it is so hard to think about home when I'm not in one' (Diana, lived experience Interviewee, February 2020). She told me that she was currently staying in a refuge; I explained that I had stipulated to the organisation that participants should not be in refuge, but she said she had not been made aware of that. I reiterated that her participation with the study was completely optional and that there was no obligation to do so. She then disclosed that there were several participants staying in refuge and that they all had to be at the group as it was a Social Services ordered programme and that the women there were either at risk of losing custody of their children or had already lost custody and were working to get them back.

Informed consent is core to the research process and one of the key factors that supports ethical research. Ensuring that participants are fully aware and understand their involvement with research is also a requirement of research funders and institutions (Heath et al, 2007). The importance placed upon informed consent and its centrality to ethical research has emerged from Nuremberg Code (1947). Within this code the key mechanism to protect people taking part in research from harm, risk and exploitation is informed consent. However, it has been argued that the bureaucracy involved with the act of informed consent has led to a more medicalised process in which informed consent has become a homogeneous and formal procedure that does not necessarily reflect or respond to the sometimes complex environments that researchers are navigating (Smythe & Murray, 2000; Miller & Boulton, 2007).

Participatory, narrative, and feminist researchers have argued that traditional and procedure led approaches to gaining informed consent are inadequate and ineffectual in the real world of research. They argue that the traditional forms of informed consent fail to reflect the

negotiation, evolution and adaptations that are inherent to conducting qualitative research (Jossellson, 1996; Holloway & Jefferson, 2000; Mauthner et al, 2002; Heath et al, 2007). In this research I received informed consent but through the process of doing research it became clear participants were not effectively informed and they also fell outside of intended inclusion criteria. In response, I went on to deepen the process of informed consent and to challenge my initial assumptions about an appropriate sample.

I apologised to Diana for the mix up and invited her back into the room in order to seek to address the issues around informed consent. I paused the entire group and explained that the study was in no way mandatory and that we could stop it with no consequence at all to their attendance and engagement with the Social Services programme. At this point I expected participants to withdraw from the study, however they all said that they wanted to stay and participate. Wishing to ensure a deeper level of consent, we discussed why they wished to continue and one of the key reasons was that housing was a significant concern to them and therefore the study was important, and they wanted to make things better for other people in similar situations to theirs. We continued the session, but I made a particular effort to be aware of who was in refuge and treat this with sensitivity in some of the questioning. This included focussing on future housing plans and exploring the drivers of their decision making around where they wanted to live, when they wanted to move and probe as to why.

The potentially problematic role of gatekeepers in recruitment and the process of informed consent also emerged in a second focus group. This group was organised via a different specialist gatekeeper and involved five survivors. Again, it was made very clear to the gatekeeper that this was voluntary and the same criterion regarding refuge was strongly impressed. During the focus group there was a member of staff that I understood to be acting in a supportive role in the session. However, during lunch this member of staff left, and the participants explained that they were not a support worker, and it was felt they were there to monitor and report back the discussion and behaviour of participants. It was also disclosed that the group had been told they all had to attend as if there were less than five people it would not take place.

Despite the issues being addressed and not hindering or preventing the research, this again raises significant issues with the process and concept of informed consent. Based on the first experience much more emphasis was placed on ensuring the gatekeeper was informed so it is difficult to understand why again it was unsuccessful in providing participants an understanding of the study, the voluntary nature, and the level of their involvement. Equally as concerning was the feeling that they were being observed and reported on by the gatekeeper.

This raises issues again about the role and impact that gatekeepers have upon the research process which will be discussed in more detail further on.

Both situations raise concerns about how informed, prepared and supported the participants were. I felt that I managed the situation in the best possible manner but was incredibly concerned that participants would feel disempowered due to the initial lack of choice they had over their attendance. However, it was reassuring to know that they all chose to continue with the research for similar reasons: having their stories heard, feeling that the study was valuable, and wanting to have an impact and make a change for others. These experiences echo the discussion and debate around informed consent as an ongoing process during research, particularly in feminist studies. The efforts to move away from a static, formal, and standardised approach are required to ensure that participants are making decisions based on accurate and timely information about the study, the level of their engagement, and outcomes of their participation. In the experience gained from this study the importance of ensuring that gatekeepers are also informed is key to avoid misinformation and ethically challenging situations. Given my own experience with two gatekeepers it would be surprising if other researchers have not faced similar challenges in ensuring informed consent and voluntary participation, yet rarely do research papers reflect so openly and critically on these challenges. It is important to give these challenges greater prominence.

A key lesson for me from this experience was the challenge to my assumptions and concerns that for people still experiencing a housing crisis this would be too traumatic and difficult. The insights and knowledge shared by people in those situations and the benefits to both of us suggest that caution needs to be taken when deciding sampling strategies. Concerns for the wellbeing of participants, although well-intentioned, may actually work to exclude and silence the voices of an already marginalised group of people. It has been suggested that the aim to 'protect from harm' prevents people from engaging in research, and thus limits the impact of people with lived experience are able to have on academic and socio-political decisions made about their experiences (Kramer-Roy, 2015; Von Benzan & Van Blerk, 2017). Following the first two focus groups, inclusion criteria were extended to include people currently living in refuge.

4.3 The potentially problematic role of gatekeepers in shaping recruitment and sampling strategies

A further focus group conducted over two sessions provides an example of where a gatekeeper again played a key role in determining the nature of the research sample. Learning from recruitment issues identified in previous focus groups, I had numerous conversations with

various staff members within the organisation and sent the information sheet which explains the study in more detail. They suggested I involve an existing group they had which met regularly and consisted of survivors. I attended the first session and described the study to group members, at which point several of them said that they did not feel they had relevant experience because they had never been homeless.

Throughout the research gatekeepers played a vital role in my access to and recruitment of participants. A great deal of time was spent making contact, chasing, and arranging the multimethod workshops. However, the role of the gatekeeper extended far beyond simply granting or refusing access. This is an experience that recently has gained some attention from scholars across disciplines who have called for a shift in the conceptualisation of the role of gatekeepers in research (Campbell et al, 2006; Clarke, 2011; Kramer-Roy, 2015; Von Benzan & Van Blerk, 2017). However, there appears to be a lack of discussion in the literature of the role of gatekeepers in shaping recruitment and sampling strategies. Therefore, once again the research process had to be flexible and adapt to this problem.

My initial internal response to this challenge was one of frustration and disappointment. It typically took several months to arrange and undertake each focus group. However, I explained to the focus group participants that a component of the study was looking at home in the wider sense and so their views would still be relevant. Having provided further explanation of the study, I reiterated that involvement was voluntary and if they did not want to take part with any or all parts of the research then they did not have to. Once we began the housing journeys phase I noticed that many of the women were discussing in groups their childhood homes and over the next five minutes it became obvious that the group was not a domestic abuse survivor's group but a sexual abuse survivor's group. I considered at this point offering to terminate the workshop but then the women started to discuss with me their experiences, the majority of which involved abusive relationships.

We explored the relationship between housing and abuse; this strongly reflected and resonated with findings and themes from previous groups and interviews. A significant number of women when talking about abusive relationships initially did not recognise that it was abusive because they were not necessarily violent, however, as time went on, they started to recognise and identify the abusive behaviours and name the relationships and partners for what they were, abuse and perpetrators. The same realisation of homelessness also took place over the course of the session, where through conversations with each other they began to reframe homelessness as something other than rooflessness. This led to a few of the women who had initially said I have never been homeless, recognising and naming periods of homelessness including sofa surfing and living in unsafe and insecure situations. At the end

of the first session, I asked the group if they still wanted to be involved and they were incredibly keen and said that it was great to have an opportunity to think about and talk about their housing experiences in relation to the abuse they had experienced. During the second session a week later several of the women were keen to tell me they had been thinking about the last session and had new experiences they wanted to share. The session was rich with stories and experiences and provided valuable data.

Despite the barriers, confusion, and impact upon the sampling strategy, the study progressed well and the unplanned addition of a group including women that had experienced sexual abuse provided an additional dynamic to the study and enhanced the quality of the data and experiences represented. There is literature that suggests a reconceptualization of the role of the gatekeeper within the research process may prevent issues, like those within this experience, from arising. Traditionally, the gatekeeper is perceived as agencies or people that control access to a research population (De Laine, 2000). Although this is true, and these bodies do have that power, they also have power, influence and investment throughout much more of the research process. Arguments have been made that there is a divergence and misalignment in the way in which gatekeepers are viewed and included in literature and in the way they are included in action (Campbell et al, 2006; Clarke, 2011).

Crowhurst and Kennedy-Macfoy (2013) 'trouble' the understandings of gatekeepers in social research. They suggest that gatekeepers should be re-situated and embedded within the whole research process and are considered beyond that of a methodological sense and included in the theoretical considerations of research. Furthermore, Seale (2004) argued that gatekeepers are deserving of much more attention and should not be regarded as just a resource for researchers to gain access. Eldridge (2013) challenges researchers to consider the dynamism of gatekeeping and the various ways in which it can impact the research process. They argue it is necessary that researchers think of gatekeeping in changing and rhizomatic terms to be able to capture the true influence that it has.

These arguments reflect the influence gatekeepers had within this research; their involvement went far beyond an issue of access but impacted on the sample, structure of the workshops, and participant's understanding of the study and their involvement. This study aimed to ensure that participants felt in control and had power of the process and their involvement, and this power was sometimes eroded or initially absent due to the actions of gatekeepers. Equally, at other times the gatekeeper's actions enabled and supported participants to take power and control over the process. This concept of power (im)balances between researcher, gatekeeper and participants is informed by respect, trust, and alignment of values between all actors. These elements change, respond and develop during the research process to many other

factors and situations and therefore, framing the process as relational and evolving situates gatekeepers alongside the others and within the process rather than on the periphery (Edwards, 2013).

On reflection, both experiences and the relevant literature suggest that gatekeepers and informed consent are facets of the research process that need to be embedded and revisited consistently and frequently throughout the 'doing' of research. Neither can be treated as a static one-dimensional part as in reality both are key to ensuring effective and reliable data is obtained in the most ethical way possible. Reimagining and realising informed consent as an ongoing evolving conversation reflects the reality of research in action, reduces the bureaucracy, whilst improving ethical practice and protecting participants. Likewise, embedding gatekeepers in every stage of the research process rather than as an access point to participants may enhance the design and approach of the study resulting in a more nuanced, comprehensive sample that yields rich in-depth insightful data.

4.4 Data collection: An evolving method in the face of trauma

The research design and data collection process for this study was constantly evolving and adapting in a manner that was more of an ebb and flow than a static, systematic, and linear process. In comparison to other studies I have conducted, this felt much more of an 'experience' of research rather than a case of simply 'doing' research. The initial plan for this study was centred around the ethical issues that are inherent when working with vulnerable people. This led to the research adopting a feminist participatory approach that was combined with a mix of data collection methods. Each method was chosen and developed for its ability to capture a person's story in a dynamic way ensuring that the study and the approach was inclusive.

Feminist participatory methodologies enhance understandings of an issue, reconstructing a narrative and creating space for change for marginalized and vulnerable groups via a collaborative process in which researchers and participants work together to develop, conduct, and interpret the research process, data, and outcomes (Pain, 2004; Kesby et al, 2005; Kindon et al, 2010; Cahill, 2010; Caretta & Riano, 2016). The approach and practices inherent with feminist participatory methods aim to disrupt and address the power imbalance that exist within a research relationship between researchers and participants (Maynard & Purvis, 1994; Rose, 1997; Caretta & Riano, 2016). It does this by equalising and levelling research methods as an experience, where knowledge is co-produced by both researchers and participants. This approach lends itself to feminist researchers that recognise and understand the position of power held by controlling the question asked, how they are asked, the data collection method,

interpretation of data and the dissemination of findings (McLafferty, 1995; Staheli & Lawson, 1995). In the field of geography both participation and dialogue have a well-defined and established presence (Kitchin & Hubbard, 1999; Chilvers, 2009; De Leeuw et al, 2012; WynneJones et al, 2015). Through a reciprocal and co-produced process, the sharing and building of knowledge can lead to a more equal relationship between those involved and empower participants (Phillips et al, 2013).

Considering the sensitivity and potentially distressing nature of the topics being focussed on, I originally planned to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview would be informed by a life history calendar which would be completed and used to scaffold an in-depth conversational interview. This echoes the importance that dialogue, and participation have in the field of geography and as part of feminist participatory methodologies the interview would be informed and led by participants in order for them to retain control over the telling of their story. I felt that enabling participants to take control over how information was shared addressed an important ethical concern. Handing over control and power over what is shared, and how it is shared, ensured the experience was not disempowering, intimidating, or felt intrusive. Rather than research being 'done to' participants it was 'done with' participants. Reflecting on the dynamics of abuse and particularly the erosion of control (The Duluth Model, 2013) the loss of control that may occur during the research process in addition to the retelling and reliving of the abuse may result in the re-traumatisation of people. With this in the forefront of the development of the methods, it was decided to cautiously pilot the data collection approach and reflect with the participant on how the experience affected them.

A friend had agreed to be a participant in the study and offered to take part in a pilot interview. I explained about the life history calendar and offered the choice for them to complete it with me or independently. They wanted to complete it independently as they felt they could take more time to think about their journey and their data would be more accurate. I explained the purpose of the research and the focus on housing journeys in the context of domestic abuse, I advised them to not focus on the dynamics and specific events of the abuse but on the relationship with housing. After a few days, the participant contacted me to say that they had found their diary from the time they were in an abusive relationship and were using that to ensure accuracy of dates. However, over the period of two weeks they contacted me more frequently and conversations began to focus on specific incidents and elements of the abuse. I felt that by reflecting and reading their diary and writings from that period they had relived the experience and been re-traumatised. I immediately advised them to stop creating the life history calendar and not to read their diary as it was potentially detrimental to their wellbeing. As this was a close friend, I was able to support them with the feelings this had brought up

and encouraged them to seek support and counselling. We ceased their participation with the research, and they were able to access counselling quickly. Their emotional and mental health rapidly improved. They subsequently indicated that they wanted to be involved with the research as they wanted to share their journey and felt that the new revised method, which focussed more specifically on housing alone and was facilitated by me, allowed them to do that in a more sensitive and safer way.

Sharing this experience and the challenges that emerged is rare – as researchers we rarely wish to open ourselves to such scrutiny over our apparent methodological challenges. However, it has been argued that the research community can learn significantly from what has not worked well and that there are inevitably going to be challenges and complexity to participatory projects, but that should not mean that we shy away from difficult conversations and reflections due to feelings of vulnerability (Reid, 2000; Reid et al, 2011; Caretta & Riano, 2016). This incident made me reflect on the method and change it to ensure that people were less likely to be re-traumatised or triggered by the process. I decided that the best way forward would be to a) conduct focus groups with members of existing domestic abuse support groups and b) conduct individual face to face interviews only with participants who actively approached me about the research or those that are accessed via specialist support services. The reason for these changes was to ensure that participants are linked in with relevant and appropriate support, including peer support, whilst also allowing me to manage the focus of the data they share. It was completely unnecessary for my participant in the pilot to reflect on the actual dynamics and incidents as part of the abuse. By supporting participants and facilitating the discussion I could ensure that the focus remains on housing, rather than the traumatic incidents and events associated with the actual abuse. Conducting the sessions in a group setting also assisted in bringing the peer support element into the process. Furthermore, as they were existing groups the relationships, trust and familiarity were present, making the experience less intimidating and more of a shared and supportive process.

As previously discussed my method developed into workshops that comprised of three stages; participants creating visual housing maps, followed by a focus group or interview about the enablers, barriers and factors that shaped their housing transitions, interactions with services and rounded up with an exploration of the meaning of home and homelessness taking an arts-based approach. The use of multi method workshops is not new or novel, there are several studies in which people are encouraged and supported to share their experiences via different modes. Riano (2012) developed an innovative approach to exploring social exclusion and integration experienced by highly skilled migrant women in Switzerland. The word Minga in Quecha means 'building together'; the 'Minga' methodology was a series of biographic

workshops in which women tell, analyse, and reflect upon their histories of migration together. Riano asserts that this methodology resulted in inclusionary spaces in which new knowledge was generated and examined in a collaborative process.

The use of arts and visual modes of data collection are also well established and there are a few studies that reflected my experience and the feminist participatory methodology. Bird (2017) adopted an art therapy and arts-based research approach that aimed to understand women's experiences of domestic abuse. He found that this approach also led to an inclusionary space where stories were shared in ways that differed to those of text-based methods. The benefits of an arts-based approach for participants include having an inclusive space to explore and process their experiences and the opportunity for creative and artistic expression (Haymore, 2012; Bird, 2017). Clover (2011) also adopted an arts-based participatory method with women who were homeless or 'street involved' to explore and share their lives. Benefits emerged that support the findings of others; however, a further benefit was the recognition that women got through sharing their experiences and displaying their artwork with a wider audience building an artistic identity.

The variance in methods proved to be key in ensuring the process was inclusive. Throughout the process there were times and instances in which participants would be reluctant to complete one of the stages and would rather talk than map or map than talk. This flexibility potentially posed difficulties in the consistency of the data for the purpose of analysis however, I felt that it was more important that participants felt comfortable and in control of their involvement. Despite the differences in the types of data there are still clear common themes across people's experiences. Throughout the process participants frequently said that they were enjoying mapping, listing, discussing, and drawing their stories. The benefits and value of this approach described by other researchers also emerged within this study.

4.5 Chapter Conclusion

The experience of conducting this research resulted in several key challenges. As researchers it is important to be transparent about these, to reflect on them and learn from them. One of the key findings that emerged through this study was that informed consent is a process rather than a static task. There needs to be a constant re-visiting, clarifying and checking that participants are continuing to understand and be comfortable with the research process. Another factor to emerge was the significance of gatekeepers. Rather than considered in terms of only access to participants they need to be theorise and planned for as much more integral to research. Adaptability of methods, particularly in relation to trauma was another key factor. The ability for the data collection methods to be fluid and flexible resulted in a much more

inclusive and equal experience that was ethical and not harmful. This then led to in depth, rich data that although was diverse and varied told of experiences with similar factors, features, and themes. This is supported and echoed in the existing literature within studies that have taken similar approaches and embedded the same values. Furthermore, participants frequently commented on the process and reported feeling empowered by sharing their experience and also from hearing of others with similar stories. The support between participants and the ways in which they encouraged each other to share was only possible due to the approach being informed by a feminist participatory methodology. The inclusion and prominence of participants and before and during the research process meant that changes, adjustments, and adaptations were made but rather than detract from the research it enhanced and enriched it. The piloting phase and reflection that took place as part of it highlighted the need for deep consideration to be given to the methods used when conducting research with people who have experienced trauma, but it also reinforces the need for a space for vulnerability and honesty about what has not worked in order to learn and act in an ethical way. Researchers in the field have long discussed the issue of researcher vulnerability, and the way in which researcher's feelings and emotions have been neglected and ignored (Anderson & Smith, 2001; Von Benson & Van Blerk, 2017). At times during this study, I experienced emotions of worry and apprehension, anger and empathy along with joy and hope. This is a complete contradiction to the myth of objectivity and the ability for me to be reflexive and reflective has allowed these feelings to enhance the relational way in which I and my participants experienced this study and the data collection process. As Punch (2012) suggests, fears and worries, guilt and apprehension are commonly experienced by researchers and when analysed and understood can be an incredibly useful experience of the research process.

Housing Pathways

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the housing pathways of people experiencing domestic abuse. It first briefly revisits existing literature on housing pathways and domestic abuse and describes how this study identified four pathways through homelessness and domestic abuse. The majority of the chapter then draws upon empirical data to discuss the four pathways. Throughout the chapter the words and works of the participants will be embedded to ensure that their voices, experiences and insights are forefront in the discussion.

The process of identifying housing pathways

One of the aims of this study is to explore the housing pathways of people experiencing domestic abuse, including the identification and discussion of the heterogeneity of experiences in relation to tenure, timing of moves, household composition and other factors. As previously discussed, the housing transitions, journeys and options taken by people experiencing domestic abuse have been explored and attempts have been made to better understand housing outcomes for people in these situations; these works exist in both academic, policy focussed and 'grey' literature (see Levison and Kenny, 2002; Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Abrahams, 2010). Some of these works have identified potential options and routes open to people fleeing domestic abuse such as staying with friends or family, accessing emergency accommodation, or staying at home. Each of these add to the understanding of some of the immediate options available but do not necessarily provide insight in to how effective, secure or appropriate they are in the longer term or where they lead people to over time. Abraham's work, which was longitudinal, did provide this insight into the longer-term housing experiences and outcomes. However, this study included a relatively small number of participants (12) all of whom had accessed emergency refuge provision (Abrahams, 2010). This makes it difficult to generalise from this work and also does not provide any understand of the housing journeys and experiences of people who take alternative routes to refuge or emergency accommodation. Furthermore, in each of these studies, although housing transitions were examined it is unclear whether the housing pathways framework and approach was applied and whether there was an investigation of both the structural and individual factors and the interplay between these.

As previously discussed, Clapham's housing pathways framework and approach allow the researcher to consider both structural factors and constraints that influence and inform housing transitions and go further to include a focus on choices and individual actions within those constraints. This also extends to exploring pathways over time, integrating housing histories, current situations, and careers (Clapham, 2002). The principles and foundations of

this approach are particularly helpful in addressing some of the gaps in the existing literature, namely what factors shape or limit the choices that people make and what happens to people's experiences of housing over time. For this reason, the housing pathways framework was applied to this study, however the data collection methods were very much situated within the field of feminist participatory methods. As such, the analysis and identification of the pathways differs somewhat to existing studies that utilise the housing pathways approach.

Typically, a researcher will have an idea based on existing literature and evidence as to what pathways may exist and analyse the data collected based on that framework, however for this study there were no expectations or assumed pathways in place. Instead, a more grounded and inductive approach was taken. Priority was given to the participant's voices in this study, and the experiences and stories shared were the sole influence on the researcher's understanding and identification of housing pathways. This grounded approach diverges from the typically a-priori analysis method of housing pathways and led to the identification of four distinct pathways.

The four pathways differ to those identified in other studies, mainly as they do not necessarily relate or apply specifically to a type of tenure, household composition, or interaction with a specific system or intervention. The pathways in this study are much more nuanced and heterogenous; they did not necessarily include a particular transition, tenure or action, instead safety, security and long-term stability distinguished between experiences. Four pathways were identified and these are discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

Three key factors shaped, influenced, and informed which pathway was taken and how that was experienced by the participants. These factors were Risk, Resources and Relationships-the three Rs; each factor is distinctive and multifaceted and applies to different areas, issues, and characteristics of people's lives. Risk includes the threat to physical safety. This can include the level of risk associated with the abuse and in particular the perpetrator's behaviours and actions, or the level of physical harm posed by the dynamics and severity of abuse. It also includes the presence or absence of legal remedies and their effectiveness, ineffectiveness, and enforcement. Resources relates to the assets available to an individual that provide more options and choice and improve the quality of outcomes. This can include financial resources, employment, and other assets such as owning multiple homes. However, the resources go beyond purely financial and include knowledge, understanding and confidence in navigating, interacting and enforcing rights within various systems such as the housing, homelessness, financial and legal systems. Relationships as a factor is more complex and includes both formal and informal networks. Formal networks relate to engagement with services and agencies such as the police, landlords, social services, health professionals and specialist

organisations and advocates. Informal networks include family, friends, colleagues at work, faith community, neighbours, and the wider community. This factor goes beyond the presence of relationships with these networks, to the quality of the relationship and the experience of these interactions whether negative or positive.

Individually, each of these factors did not emerge as being particularly predictive or influential in the housing pathway taken, however, when combined and interacting with each other they do clearly inform and work to shape the routes available and thus taken by participants. In general, the lower risk, the higher the level of resources and the stronger the relationships, the better the housing pathway. These factors are integral to the pathway and the way in which each pathway is experienced by individuals. The following section will go on to discuss each pathway and examine the role risk, resources and relationships play in shaping these. It is important to note that, unlike almost all other pathways studies, the pathways have not been labelled – this avoids the potentially stigmatising impacts of creating unnecessary labels for already marginalised groups.

5.2 Pathway One

This pathway is partly defined by the level of safety and includes five people who moved safely or were able to stay put in their homes safely. This is one of the only pathways where there appears to be a correlation between tenure and journey; four of the six homeowners in the sample followed this pathway. Safety, in the context of this pathway, is multi-dimensional and represents both physical and personal safety but also includes housing stability and security. Of the people in this Pathway Three 'stayed put' safely and two moved safely.

Safety was defined by the fact that the level of physical risk or harm had decreased and was being managed and that the survivor felt there was a reasonable level of housing security and stability following their housing transition out of abuse. This was not necessarily due to the fact that the homes were owned, but more that people had a legal right to occupy the home and for at least six months, the home was affordable and finances associated with the home were not placing financial strain upon the person but also were favourable in comparison to other tenures or options and the home was located in a place where the person felt connected and did not report issues with travel or access to services and amenities. In essence, housing stability meant that there were no factors present to indicate or imply that the participant was likely to experience instability or insecurity and potentially face homelessness in the transition post-abuse and at the time of interview, which in some cases was a significant number of years later.

Gwen is a 45-year-old woman living in South Wales in her home that she owns with a mortgage. She was married to Stephen for 20 years and they have a son Rhys who is 16 years old. Gwen grew up in the southeast of England and describes her childhood as wonderful and privileged. She went to a prestigious university where she obtained her degree and master's in history. Gwen met Stephen when she was 25 and they quickly got married and later had Rhys. Gwen set up her own business in the creative industry and began to build a customer base. They often had to move for Stephen's job but were primarily based in the south of England meaning Gwen could visit family. She remembers Stephen being controlling and possessive relatively early on in their relationship and particularly disruptive of Gwen's career. Later in their marriage Stephen obtained work which brought him to South Wales and the family relocated here. Gwen felt incredibly isolated and her business had declined as Stephen placed full caring responsibilities on to Gwen. Over time the abuse intensified and particularly so the further away they moved from Gwen's family. Gwen decided to end the marriage 15 years later after Stephen became increasingly abusive to Rhys and after he physically assaulted Rhys leaving him with a bruise to the face. Rhys' school noticed the bruise and he disclosed that his dad had hit him prompting the school to contact social services and ask Gwen in for a meeting. Gwen felt that the school were very judgemental, viewed her as being from a lower class and lacking in education and placed blame on her for Stephen's actions, all of which added to the stigma of being a victim of domestic abuse. The police became involved, and Stephen was charged and asked to leave the property. Gwen was able to obtain an injunction meaning that Stephen is not allowed to enter the property and has to pick Rhys up across the road from the house, which he has abided by and has meant that Gwen and Rhys have been able to stay put. Gwen feels that the legal remedies have been effective because Stephen's job would be impacted by a conviction, and he is mindful of his reputation with their neighbours and friends. Gwen and Stephen have been divorced for a number of years and she is currently in the process of buying him out of the house and decorating to make it feel like her home. She has begun to build and repair relationships with family and friends and is growing her business again. Her interactions with the police and social services have been good but the school, bank and family courts have left her frustrated at times and she had to source support from a specialist domestic abuse organisation independently.

Gwen's story demonstrates some of the common themes and ways in which risk, resources and relationships interact to define a person's pathway. A key feature of Pathway One is the decreasing level of risk and increase in levels of safety over time. The risks faced by survivors following this pathway were lower than those experienced by survivors in all other pathways.

The management of risk was most often, as in Gwen's experience, due to an effective legal remedy such as an injunction or conviction with custodial sentence. However, these remedies are also sometimes evident and present in other stories but appear to be less effective, typically due to a lack of enforcement or lack of regard by the perpetrator. Stephen's behaviour and rationale to obey and abide by the injunction are not unique, some survivors felt that perpetrators would 'play the game' with the legal system. The consequences of breaching and being convicted acted as a strong deterrent to some perpetrators who had roles and positions in work and the community that would be adversely affected.

He controlled me by manipulating people around me, he's utterly charming and makes me look as if I was the difficult one (Faye)

Stephen's behaviours and the dynamics of the abuse that Gwen experienced, reflect existing literature and particularly the Duluth Power and Control model (2007). It is well evidenced that the level of risk to a victim increases significantly at the end of a relationship and as such legal remedies that are enforced, convictions and custodial sentences can be important in ensuring the safety of survivors, however evidence also suggests that there are often challenges and barriers to ensuring these mechanisms are effective (Abrahams, 2010; Hester, 2011; Kelly et al, 2015). The interaction between homeownership and concern for reputation, employment and police involvement by perpetrators within this pathway and their adherence to legal remedies, suggests there may be a link between socio-economic status and effectiveness of legal remedies. However, this is not the only factor that contributes to safety. Housing stability and security within the pathway were also strongly influenced by the level of resources that participants had and the subsequent options available to them. Only one person in the pathway moved from homeownership into private rented accommodation but saw this as a temporary situation and felt that they would soon be in the position to move back into homeownership; they also viewed the move as a positive financial move.

I went through 'positive financial steps' I call them, and into something cheaper (Carys)

A significant influential aspect was financial resources; three of the five survivors following Pathway One owned businesses and the other two participants were employed and had secure jobs. This enabled them to secure a mortgage, buy out a perpetrator and gave them an element of choice over where they lived. Two of the participants had second homes so were able to move out of the marital home and into their second home either as a temporary or permanent solution. However, this is not to suggest that the survivors did not experience any negative financial impacts from the abuse, in fact all the women in this pathway had been left with debts and in some cases arrears as a result of financial abuse. These impacts had lasted many years and were still placing the survivors under some degree of financial strain,

a finding that reflects existing literature on the significant impacts of financial abuse during and post abusive relationships (Sharp, 2008; Sharp-Jeffs, 2015). Some women even found that their incomes limited their choices, as other options such as refuge would have been unaffordable.

Then you're paying a ridiculous amount of money to live in an area that is safe as well because it was in an exclusion zone that the perpetrator couldn't enter its just dead money. You can imagine how much that would be paying off a mortgage, I was more than capable of paying a mortgage but I don't think that for at least another year or so I would even be considered for a mortgage. At which point I'll be priced out of the market anyway and I'll be getting too old. So, you're in a catch 22 (Taylor)

Another example of resources, was the survivor's ability and skills to be able to budget, develop their businesses to increase their income and navigate and negotiate financial systems such as banks and money advice services. All of these meant that survivors were able to mitigate and manage the impacts. Some of the issues were felt to add to the abuse and still provide the perpetrator an element of control over survivors; in Gwen's case this is evident in the situation where years after the end of the relationship she is still actively trying to negotiate and broker an agreement to buy her ex-husband's share of her and her son's home. In most cases ongoing contact with the perpetrator had a negative impact on survivor's wellbeing and feelings of safety. It was often described as a different type of abuse but abuse all the same. These post-separation resource issues suggest that even in the context of Pathway One there continue to be issues and dangers that exist years later.

Leaving and the post separation bit almost scarier, living with it you can predict his behaviour and adjust your behaviour to manage the situation to a certain extent. But post separation they ramp up all the abuse and you're not sure what's coming next (Seren)

Many of the women had to compromise in some way due to the financial impacts of abuse, for example, some had downsized and moved to 'less desirable' areas. Others had to adapt and adjust their lives and spending habits to suit their now limited budgets.

So, I can't go back to my second home which is in negative equity because all the money has gone to him so I can't even sell it. So, it's being rented out and I'm now stuck in that trap, and I have my own little, tiny little house. Which is in an area I would have never lived in never (Imani)

This obviously placed pressure on the women, yet many felt they had more control over their money than previously and had more autonomy over their lives in general. For many participants in other pathways this was viewed as a responsibility that survivors felt ill-equipped for and overwhelmed by. The people in Pathway One tended to view this as a positive outcome of the relationship ending and tended not to report the same levels of fear, stress and confusion around this compared to participants in other pathways.

Support networks were key features of survivor's experiences in this pathway; all reported having generally good relationships with both formal and informal sources of support. There were many like Gwen, whose informal networks and personal relationships with friends and family had suffered over the duration of the abuse but compared to survivors in some other pathways these tended to be repaired relatively quickly and there were also strong positive relationships with others also present. These relationships included friends, family and neighbours but also extended to places of worship and work colleagues. Many of the survivors in this pathway were generally from a higher socio-economic background than those in other pathways and tended to have grown up in similar situations. This reflects the evidence and theories around social capital which suggest that these networks provide opportunity to build resources and access support (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Shipway, 2004; Larance, 2004). However, there was also a reluctance to be publicly seen as a victim of domestic abuse and a potential correlation between social class and stigma. This reflects existing evidence that explores the barriers women face when trying to access support and help, one of which is the fear and stigma attached to seeking help and disclosing abuse (Refuge, 2014; Parker, 2015).

The shame of it was a big thing and when you are of a particular standing in society through what you do which I am. The night he was arrested social services attended; the police were there, everyone was there, you are in this shit, my dirty laundry is out there (Imani)

I would have had to move somewhere where I didn't know anybody and leave everything. My mother would have been horrified she would say things like well nobody lives in (Town). There was a status issue (Gwen)

Relationships and interactions with formal networks also tended to be viewed more positively than those experienced by some in other pathways. It is unclear as to why this is, but there is some evidence that women in this pathway were more concerned with the impacts of being viewed and known as a victim of domestic abuse compared to other participants. There was more discussion around reputations and the stigma of domestic abuse from these participants and more reluctance for a heavy presence from support agencies and services and therefore more cooperation and confidence in dealing with them.

So social services said we need to move you to a safe house I said don't you dare, I'm not standing for that and the whole thing of hanging on to what you have worked for nothing to do with him it was me and my livelihood because I wouldn't go there was an eyebrow raised by social services that I don't care. Well, I do care but this is my life, and I can't let go of it. Eventually I was able to re-mortgage a second property I owned and put it into the new house while I was waiting to sell the family home (Jazmine)

Perpetrators in this pathway also appeared to have more financial means and also be concerned about the stigma of being regarded as a perpetrator by formal services. In many cases the key concern from women is around the impact these interactions may have on their

business or job, as more women in this pathway were economically active compared to others. Therefore, the stigma and the impact on their business may be of more concern than to people in other pathways. In addition to this, perpetrators in this pathway tend to present as someone capable of gaining custody of children which may explain why women were less likely to want to engage with services and more likely to cooperate with them. The women in these pathways appeared to be able to demonstrate that these services were not needed long-term and therefore, their interactions were brief and regarded more positively than people in other pathways who had more prolonged and complex interactions.

But the income from my business was a big factor in me moving on. I would never have considered refuge it wouldn't have even been an option for me because I would have instantly lost my job and everything. To me that was the biggest fear and that I would have lost my children, because he is a man of financial means he would have taken my children off me if I had gone into refuge (Taylor)

Pathway One summary

In summary, it is clear within this pathway that multiple factors work together to create a pathway that is safer in the immediate and longer-term for survivors of domestic abuse. This in no way should suggest or lead to assumptions that the experiences of women within this pathway are all positive, as there are still a significant number of barriers and challenges faced. Many of the participants in this pathway may feel that their experience has not been one of safety or ease but considering the level of risk, the resources they have at their disposal and the quality of their relationships in comparison to participants in other pathways, this route did exhibit levels of safety and security that others did not. For some, the fear of the perpetrator has not gone away, the feelings of threat, control and coercion via child contact or through joint mortgages still exists. Many were still struggling with debts and loss of earnings that had accrued via financial abuse and were compromising their standard of living as a result. Relationships, both personal and professional, had been affected by the actions of the perpetrator and immense work was going in to repairing and maintain those. Confidence and trust in services that exist to help and support survivors was low and the fear of not being believed, of having children removed and the impact of the stigma attached to victimization prevented women from seeking help and support that they may have needed. However, survivors did view these services more positively than those in other pathways. This is largely due to their ability to minimise or avoid engagement and having more confidence to communicate and assert themselves when they did. To typify this pathway as an easy or unproblematic route would be inaccurate and unjust. As the chapter goes on to discuss the other pathways it will highlight the immense challenges faced by all of the participants and the heterogeneity of and within the pathways.

5.3 Pathway Two

There were six participants who followed this pathway and, as in Pathway One, it included people who had moved and some who had remained in their property. This pathway is typified by levels of risk and harm which either remain the same as the period before the relationship ended, or in many cases levels of risk and harm escalate. There are also higher levels of housing insecurity and instability within this pathway, with many experiencing worries around length of tenancy, affordability, quality of housing and safety within the house; in this sense risks relate to both the abuse and housing stability. Legal remedies intended to address the abuse are often perceived to be ineffective or not in place and many of the participants also felt that injunctions and convictions were undermined or disregarded by family courts, often leading to decisions by those bodies that resulted in participant safety decreasing. This was compounded by many of the participants in this pathway having less robust formal and informal networks and sources of support to draw help from. There was evidence of complex relationships with family, friends, neighbours and the wider community. Furthermore, interactions with formal networks were not particularly positive and in particular, experiences with social services in relation to their children, visitation and custody were regarded negatively.

Megan and Dylan are in their mid-twenties and have a young daughter together. They had been together from their teens and at a young age were able to buy a house together with a joint mortgage in the village they are from and across the road from Dylan's parents and grandparents. Looking back, Megan now recognises the relationship had always been very controlling but after she had her daughter the abuse began to worsen and became physical. Megan decided to end the relationship and leave the home. She went to her local council's housing department and told them about the abuse and that she was scared to go back. The council advised her to contact the police to get Dylan removed from the property and then negotiate with the bank for the mortgage to be put into her name. Megan explained to the council that this was not possible due to Dylan's family living in such close proximity and that she was fearful of Dylan knowing where she was. The council then told her that her only option was to go home, miss a mortgage payment so that she was in arrears and then re-present to the council with a letter from her bank showing she was in arrears and at risk of losing her home.

Megan had to return home and follow the council's advice. Once she had received a letter from the bank, she went back to the council who put her name on the housing register. She was not offered any accommodation and told to wait until something came up. She spent the next 9 weeks, with her daughter, sofa surfing between various family member's homes.

Eventually a flat became available and she was given a tenancy. The flat was a five-minute walk from Dylan's house, was on the third floor of a block with no lift, in extremely poor condition and in a deprived area with high levels of anti-social behaviour. Megan accepted the flat as she felt she had no alternative. Once in the flat she started to experience harassment and stalking from Dylan. A neighbour in the block of flats was giving Dylan access to the building and monitoring and reporting to him on Megan's movements. Megan began to become scared to leave the flat as every time she did, Dylan would be waiting outside, or he would have his friends and family harass her. As a result of this she had to leave her job in retail. Megan reported this to the police, but they were unable to act as there was no evidence and no one would provide a witness statement.

Eventually the abuse was at such a high level that Megan contacted housing to ask them if she could move again. They told her that her only option would be to exchange with somebody else, however due to the location and state of the flat this was highly unlikely. They did refer her to a specialist women's organisation who began to offer support. They took Megan to a neighbouring local authority who conducted a homelessness assessment and accepted Megan as being in priority need of housing. After a few weeks she was offered a council house in the neighbouring borough and accepted the tenancy. The local authority fitted door and window alarms, CCTV and a panic alarm to ensure that Megan felt safe. She has been living in the house for over a year and feels safe as Dylan does not know where she is.

However, she has been to the family courts nine times to negotiate child contact and custody between her and Dylan for their daughter. The courts up until now have agreed to withhold Megan's new address from Dylan for safety purposes. Dylan is now demanding to know which school, doctor and dentist their daughter is registered with, and the courts are considering giving him this information. Megan is terrified that this may enable Dylan to resume his stalking and harassment and place her and her daughter at risk and result in her having to move again. Megan feels that she may be forced to move to keep her whereabouts hidden from Dylan, his family and friends and is scared that she will be forced into a pattern of regular house moves until her daughter is an adult.

Megan's experience encapsulates many of the common experiences faced by women in this pathway and in particular how the complex interplay between risk, resources and relationships shape and inform housing pathways. A common feature of this pathway was that each survivor felt the level of risk they faced from both abuse and in relation to housing stability, increased significantly upon leaving or seeking help. This supports existing evidence and knowledge of the dynamics and patterns of abuse and the way in which most perpetrators respond to a perceived loss of control (Walby, 2018). Dylan's behaviours such as stalking, threats and

harassment are also common tactics that perpetrators use to continue to terrorise the survivor and demonstrate the ways in which the abuse is continued post-relationship (Duluth, 2002). The participants in this pathway all reported a wide range of behaviours and actions by their perpetrators during and post-separation that reflect the existing evidence base and all reported an increase in attempts to control and threats of violence.

Research by Stark (2009) shows that in cases where control and violence is present, even at low levels, the potential risk of homicide after leaving increases significantly. Furthermore, the presence of DA, coercive control or stalking was found in over 90% of cases of femicide (Monckton Smith et al 2017). This suggests that the women in this pathway at the point of fleeing or ending the relationship were all facing significant risk and danger. Considering then the absence or failings of legal remedies and protections, these situations literally then become life or death. Earlier in the study there was discussion around the variance of tactics used based on geographical factors such as rurality. There is evidence that perpetrators may adapt their tactics based on the wider environment to include tactics that are more effective at controlling, threatening, and terrorising the person experiencing them (Springer, 2011). An example of this is the higher rate of surveillance in rural areas to isolate and stalk a woman and this was Megan's experience of being monitored, watched and reported on by neighbours, friends, family and the wider community who were all complicit in the abuse. However, in contrast to this being perceived as a rural issue it was evident in many participant's experiences, but most prevalently in cases where the household and primarily the perpetrator were well known and rooted within the community.

When he clocked on the police were getting these reports and they were starting to consider it stalking he started getting his family involved and they would let him use the uncle's car so I couldn't identify him properly (Megan)

The level of risk and the dynamics and impact of abuse were all inextricably linked to the level of resources and relationships the victim had available to them, which then informed and influenced the choices made regarding housing. For example, the control over finances often meant that women in this pathway did not have the funds available to secure alternative accommodation independently without seeking financial support from family or friends. However, the relationships and sources of this support with family and friends had been severely limited and restricted due to the damage caused during the abusive relationship. Perpetrators will often isolate survivors from their families and friends in order to build dependency of the survivor on the perpetrator and to increase the levels of control the perpetrator will have over the survivor. The tactics used to isolate survivors from their families will often lead to conflict and tension between the survivor and their support networks (Dobash

& Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008). This was evident among the participants in this pathway and meant that their relationships with their family and friends were either fragile, complex or non-existent.

I've started to repair things with my family, but friendship wise no because people don't understand and don't want to understand (Leah)

Furthermore, as in Megan's experience the relationships with the perpetrator's family were also a complicating and complicated factor. Megan depended on them for childcare and had a close physical and emotional bond with them during her relationship with Dylan. However, after leaving the relationship, Dylan's family became actively complicit in the abuse committed by Dylan through their reporting on Megan, harassment and threats to her and by stopping the provision of childcare for their grandchild, all of which resulted in Megan being unable to continue to work thus reducing the resources she had available to her.

At the beginning the grandparents were looking after my daughter for me to go to work. When we split up then and I called it off completely they refused to have her at all (Megan)

This was common across the pathway and all the women reported struggling to repair and maintain old relationships, the loss of some relationships and the challenges faced in building new ones. Again, this was completely integral to the experience as a whole and influenced and influencing of the type and level of abuse and resources the women had.

The resources as previously explained extend beyond financial and include skills, knowledge and confidence to navigate situations and systems that women encountered. Very few participants in this pathway understood what their rights are in relation to housing, thus leaving them in a position where they assumed the information and advice given by services was correct or that they would not be entitled to assistance, so did not seek help with housing based on that. There were instances where participants were living in homes, still experiencing abuse and harassment from the perpetrator and so having to sleep at family member's homes for their safety.

I have alarms, housing gave me a camera that doesn't even work and alarms. I'm back and forth to my mum's in the night and I'm going back to the house in the day. My ex is still harassing me and doing things to the back of the house (Morgan)

We were both on the tenancy, so I had legal aid to help get him out because he wouldn't leave. I didn't know where I stood or anything, my daughter was with me, and we were sharing a room in my neighbour's house. We were there about a month and then I found out he had gone into the housing association and relinquished the tenancy so someone contacted me and said that I had to go in and see if I could get a sole tenancy, which is what I done (Hayley)

In Wales, if a person is at risk of violence or harm they are technically regarded as homeless, as home is an unsuitable place for them to be (Welsh Government, 2014). The survivors in this pathway, and indeed across the study, were largely unaware of this definition of homelessness and therefore were unable to enforce their right to assistance to secure a home. Hence, Megan returned to the marital home as advised by the council, despite the fear and presence of abuse and violence. Moreover, each of the women in this pathway were engaging with multiple statutory, third sector and specialist services, few of which demonstrated an understanding of the women's rights in relation to housing. These interactions with and between various services will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.

Many of the women in this pathway had been unable to access refuge accommodation; for some this was a decision they actively made as they did not want to lose all of their belongings. For others, it was because the refuge space offered was too far away and would have proven difficult to maintain children's school. For Megan, her interaction with a specialist organisation was pivotal to her securing a better housing solution, however, for most in the pathway it had little effect on their housing situations and there was evidence of the legislation being interpreted and applied incorrectly but no evidence of advocacy or legal challenge around this.

My partner put a pillow over my face and a screwdriver to my neck, I called the police, and I was told by the housing association that because both our names are on the tenancy that my only choice was to go to a women's refuge, but I couldn't leave my dogs, they're my babies, and because we have a home I am not entitled to social housing (Mary)

Many of the women on this pathway had their home 'target hardened', this included alarms on windows and doors, secure locks, CCTV and panic alarms. However, other than Megan the women widely reported that the measures were ineffective. In most cases the measures had either been breached by the perpetrator, were faulty, or when working were ineffective for other reasons. The breaches and failure of the alarms to be effective were most common in places where the neighbours and community knew the perpetrator and were reluctant to intervene or become involved in the situation. This type of behaviour from communities in ignoring, not reporting, or not intervening can be conceptualised as passive complicity. This form of complicity in abuse means that incidents can only be reported to police and help sought by the woman or her children, which is difficult in the occurrence of a violent and frightening event. In some cases, the equipment was faulty meaning that footage of incidents was not captured, or the alarms would activate at passing traffic, knocks at the door and other daily occurrences to the extent that they were deactivated by the women themselves.

I have alarms now, but I live near a main road and my windows shake, and the alarms go off with the slightest bit of movement. Neighbours don't take any notice. I've turned them off as there is no point in them (Nia)

Although Megan's experience of target hardening was positive and increased feelings of safety, due to her perpetrator not knowing of her location, it had been untested. There has been much scrutiny of sanctuary schemes (see Netto et al, 2009; Nicholls & Pleace, 2010; Burnett, 2016) and it is concerning that the issues found in this study are also present in others, particularly considering that the presence of such measures may imply or lead professionals to assume a level of safety that is not accurate. This potentially places the women at further risk of harm and subject to less of a response to fears and threats. The women living in these homes with this equipment also reported that their safety was compromised in spaces other than the home, for example at the school gates, in the local shop and at other locations where the perpetrator may be able to stalk, harass or physically assault them. Target hardening cannot extend to provide safety to women outside of the home other than the use of a personal alarm, however even that alarm relies on the cooperation of the community and wider public to intervene or report which the findings from this study suggests is inconsistent and unreliable.

The other week I saw him at Tescos he was in the car, and I could see him looking through the mirror and I didn't take any notice but when I went home there are 2 routes you can take so I took the longer way because that way you pass lots of alleys which you can look down the streets and see if someone is following you and I ran then. I have to be on alert because he did threaten to kill me and how nasty he was and once that's been said you never know (Hayley)

Pathway Two summary

In summary, the women on this pathway face a complex and difficult journey with high risk, limited resources and relationships that are strained. Unlike Pathway One, there is greater diversity within the cohort, with variance across tenure and socio-economic status. The defining feature of this pathway is the significant and prolonged risk post-abusive relationship. There is also an increase in housing instability and precarity. Interactions with and support from housing services tend to be ineffective and there is evidence that survivors are unaware of their housing rights, so are unable to challenge poor or inaccurate advice. Even in cases where there does appear to be a better response from housing services, this usually is through the intervention of a specialist agency or results in target hardening measures that are unreliable and dangerously ineffective. The abuse perpetrated by not only the ex-partner but witnessed, supported and covered up by family, friends, neighbours and the community, placed survivors and their children in a terrifyingly precarious position, more so than in some of the other pathways. Where relationships do exist with formal networks, they are usually more complicated and vary between positive and negative outcomes. It appears there is a lack of coordination of responses from the key agencies such as housing, police, and social services to manage risk which is leading to survivors experiencing high levels of potential harm and housing instability. In addition, personal relationships within informal networks also seem

to be complex. Survivors often mentioned reparations that needed to be made as a result of conflict during the abuse and often instigated by the perpetrator as a tactic to isolate. In many cases due to the community complicity in the ongoing abuse, friendships and wider relationships had to end for the survivor's own safety. The loss of these support networks, combined with the level of risk and the inconsistent approach from formal networks, all impact negatively upon the women's capacity to build, maintain, and increase their resources. Having to leave employment, accruing arrears or debts and the cost of legal fees all restrict the options women have open to them. The women all remain housed and technically avoid homelessness or having to access refuge but at what cost? The challenges that emerged all leave the women in situations of instability and insecurity and in a position where their housing status could change in an instant.

5.4 Pathway Three

This pathway is typified by incredibly high levels of risk, and all survivors access refuge or other forms of statutorily provided emergency accommodation. It appears there are no other accommodation options that would provide the means of keeping the survivor and children safe from the perpetrator. Nine of the 31 women followed this pathway. Resources vary amongst survivors in this pathway but generally they are low or have been disrupted due to the abuse. Relationships with informal networks within this pathway tended to be somewhat polarised; some have incredibly strong relationships and refuge is a choice to protect wider family in addition to the survivor. In contrast, some survivors in this pathway had few and fragile relationships as a result of sustained abuse. Relationships with formal networks tend to be stronger and more positive. There has typically been involvement of numerous agencies for a period of time and the presence of specialist services appears to be key in coordinating a response and advocating for the survivor. Accounts of women following this pathway differ to other pathways because some of the participants still living in refuge placed a greater focus on future housing aspirations. This is understandable, as they are still in temporary accommodation and generally earlier in their housing journeys and their journeys away from abuse.

Kelly had been in refuge for six months when we met in the first round of focus groups and was at another focus group towards the end of the data collection period eight months later. Her insight and experiences of domestic abuse and coming into refuge along with her hopes for her future home illustrate the reality of this pathway. Kelly had been in a relationship with Ryan since childhood and they had four children together and had tragically lost a baby that was stillborn. Ryan had always been abusive and controlling and had isolated Kelly from friends and family. They lived in a council house; he was well known in the area they lived and

had many friends and his family close to him. There were high levels of physical violence along with control, coercion, emotional and psychological abuse. Kelly began to use alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism. Due to the severe nature of the abuse and concerns around Kelly's addiction, numerous agencies were involved with the family. Eventually, and largely due to the escalating aggression towards the children, Kelly decided to end the relationship and with support from the police and housing services had the property target hardened and injunctions put in place. However, these did little to keep Kelly and the children safe as Ryan frequently breached the injunction and physically breached the security measures at the home. He also had friends and family members harass Kelly and cause damage to the property. Kelly was dependent on neighbours to call the police when the alarms were activated but none did as they were afraid of Ryan. He stalked her and assaulted her in a public place and was not deterred by Kelly's personal alarm. The situation escalated to a point where Ryan made serious threats to kill both Kelly and the children and the police felt the only way to keep the family safe was for them to go into refuge. They had to leave all their possessions and went into refuge with nothing other than the pyjamas they were wearing.

Within two weeks of Kelly moving, the council cleared the property of Kelly's possessions, boarded it up and removed her from the tenancy. Kelly's possessions were never returned and included keepsakes such as her babies' blankets, birth and death certificates and treasured photos. Things that Kelly says she will never be able to replace. After a few weeks in refuge the children were placed into the care of a family member by social services, this was felt to be best for them and Kelly and would provide her space for action to address her trauma, mental health and addiction.

At first, Kelly found refuge daunting, and the expectation of her to make decisions overwhelming. She had been so controlled that she had never been able to decide what food to buy, cook or eat, she had never managed money or paid a bill. Kelly has found her time at refuge incredibly healing and the first time she ever truly felt safe. She particularly feels safe as it is a woman only environment and she is given notice if any males are expected to enter the property. The refuge staff and social workers have supported Kelly to maintain and manage contact with her children. She is due to move from an intensively supported project to a more independent one and then into her own home. She is incredibly nervous about this, as there are many aspects to managing a home that she has never experienced, and she feels she still does not cope well under pressure. She is looking forward to being able to decorate and make a home and is hopeful that with ongoing support she will be able to demonstrate that she can live independently and regain custody of her children.

In all the cases of survivors who were in refuge or had been in refuge, the levels of violence and risk were generally highest. There also appears to be a correlation with the length of time the abuse has occurred, with women in refuge reporting a greater number of years of abuse. Essentially, the survivors in this pathway had experienced high levels of violence and abuse for longer periods of time compared to those in other pathways. Tactics used were similar to those seen in other experiences across the sample, but the violence did appear to be higher and more frequent. The women came from a range of tenures and there was no pattern to suggest this influenced the route taken. What differs in these situations was the number of interventions and engagements with formal networks that had taken place prior to refuge. Most had numerous agencies involved, most commonly the police and social services. Many of the women had been into refuge or temporary accommodation previously but not more than two occasions in total. Research shows that women will often go through a cycle of leaving and returning several times before leaving for the final time and this was reflected in the participants on this pathway who had tried previously to leave but for a myriad of reasons had returned (Walker, 1979; Dutton & Golant, 1997; Scott Allen Johnson, 2006).

In most cases there were legal remedies in place, such as injunctions, however as in other pathways, with the exception to some degree of Pathway One, the legal remedies had failed to be effective. This was due to issues such as a lack of regard by the perpetrator, a lack of enforcement of legal orders and remedies, and a lack of evidence to support a conviction. Faulty camera equipment, and reluctance from witnesses to give statements, were the key reasons cited for this lack of evidence.

Alarms don't stop him from coming in. They are not connected to the police either me or a neighbour has to call them when it goes off. No one phoned the police to say he had smashed through the front door and the alarm was going off and I couldn't get to my phone. Because he is well known people won't report him. Neighbours are scared and wouldn't say or do anything (Kelly)

The level of resources of participants and the extent of relationships amongst this group was more varied than in other pathways. The common key defining factor for this group was mainly the level of risk and need for refuge. However, there were still common themes and recurring issues experienced by the survivors within this pathway that are symptomatic and typical across cases of abuse. For example, some of the participants had been isolated from family and friends, many felt that the perpetrator's family, friends and community were complicit in the abuse and the opportunities to seek help had been restricted by the perpetrator.

I don't really have any family support. I speak with my mum but just keep her at armslength, I have had to cut most of my friends off because I just don't know who I can trust because my friends are his friends. The only support network I had was his family I have cut everybody off so I can't ask anyone for help. (Natasha)

A key difference within this pathway was that there were situations where the decision to go into refuge, as opposed to staying with family, was made out of fear that the perpetrator would target family that supported or accommodated the survivor. This eroded another form of practical support and an alternative housing solution. The available options for housing were already limited due to the high level of risk, coupled with lower levels of resources. Staying put or leaving temporarily and returning to the home without the perpetrator were generally not seen as possible or wanted by survivors. This was due to three main reasons; the perpetrator knew where the victim was living; the family, friends and wider community were still there and potentially complicit in the abuse; and the trauma attached to the property and need for a 'fresh start'.

I rang the police, and they were great on the phone, I told them about the abuse... They sent a lady from the DA team in the police came around to sit with me and support me, she was asking me questions and I just told her I needed to get out. She offered me refuge and I would have taken anything. I couldn't have gone to my mums because he would have followed me, and I didn't want to bring it to my mum's door (Carly)

Access to refuge was not seamless for many of the women, with some having to wait for a space, others being sent far from the area they live, causing disruption to schooling and work, and some being unable to stay with older children. These issues, in the context of high-risk domestic abuse cases, make the decision to flee home and the abuse even more difficult. The women that had previous experiences of refuge understandably felt better prepared for it but there were some negative previous experiences that also posed challenges. Whilst in refuge all the women recognised that it had kept them safe, provided specialist support and helped and enabled them to meet women in similar situations, with similar experiences and begin to build new networks.

I've got 4 children all together and my 2 older children couldn't come so I had to leave them behind to go into refuge. They were 18 and 19 but they were still in a vulnerable position, and we were all in a horrible situation, to leave them behind even though they knew I was in a dangerous situation, to leave them behind my daughter felt as though I had abandoned her when she needed help just as much as I did. My son was 18 and he couldn't come either being a male as well so I could only take the 2 younger children with me which was hard. So, I refused to go into refuge several times before I went in for that reason. I stayed longer in the situation I was in, a lot longer than I would have stayed, because I tried leaving and going to my mums, but it never used to work because he would always come after me, it never worked (Laura)

Then she said one of the options was a place in refuge, problem is I had a new job that I had started maybe 6 weeks before I left, he'd let me get a job because we had no other income. So, I had to resign from that job and then apply for benefits so I couldn't go straight into refuge because I couldn't afford to because it is really expensive. So, I had to apply for Housing Benefit, it took about a month for that to be in process, and the refuge provider to be happy that if I took a place, it would be paid for (Thalia)

All survivors in this pathway recognised that refuge provided a chance to decompress, process what had happened to them, and begin to plan their next actions. This process has been conceptualised by Kelly et al (2015) as space for action. This space for action is defined by women being able to gain some time away from the perpetrator, reflect on their experience and begin to develop a new perspective, skills and confidence that will enable them to move forward (Kelly et al, 2015). The relationships with peers were also highlighted as a positive aspect by some of the women, although it was also noted that many of the women were displaying signs of distress and trauma that were then resulting in vicarious trauma for those around them. This reflects Abraham's (2010) work which was longitudinal and found that relationships within refuge could be both positive and negative depending on the composition of the projects and the level of support available. A further clear theme to emerge was that of refuge being a place where healing can take place and support is available to enable women to begin their recovery (Abrahams, 2010).

And like I said before, the support is amazing. I was too scared to even sleep in my old house and now I'm much better it is all the support. It is safety really and support, it comes back to that. Because you haven't really got it when you're in your own house. So, I've gone from not feeling safe at all to feeling totally safe. (Sian)

However, women that had been in refuge for more than six months reported wanting to move on and out and begin building a home with their children. This was common amongst the women and some common barriers to moving on independently were raised. There were numerous examples of storage problems and the inability to retain furniture and possessions due to the unaffordability of storage solutions along with the money to be able to pay for the removal and delivery of furniture. This left survivors little choice but to abandon their belongings and 'start from scratch'.

The issue I have got is I want my stuff, but the difficulty is I can't afford storage... It is 20 years of memories and my personal things that I want, and I have no way to get it all. It is hard (Natasha)

Many of the survivors, and in some cases the perpetrator, had accrued rent arrears on their last tenancies due to financial abuse. It was commonly reported by the participants that they were expected to pay towards these arrears before they would be able to access financial support from the local authority to move on or even in many cases before they would be able to join the register for social housing.

I'm in refuge and my partners still in my flat, it's a joint tenancy and he hasn't been paying the rent so I'm liable for his arrears even though I'm not living there. I'm literally not allowed back into the property because of my safety and my children's. He has got £1000 of arrears on the flat now, the council said I'm responsible for all of it if he doesn't pay. My social worker stuck up for me, but the council weren't listening or budging (Seren)

He wasn't on the tenancy, but he still didn't work and again I got myself into arrears because I was paying for his car, his everything, absolutely everything. So, I'm now just over £900 in arrears... so my support worker told me that I have to pay it before I can go on the list. I have to be seen to be paying off the arrears and I'm trying to pay as much as I can each week, but it is difficult (Natasha)

This created issues for the women as they were pressured to pay the arrears, even though in most cases they had lost all possessions so were continuing to attempt to rebuild their material lives. It was also leading to delays in some women moving on, meaning that they were feeling trapped and stuck in refuge, this resulted in them developing an attitude and perspective of desperation and stating that they would take anything to get out of refuge. In some cases, there were women who were in employment and in refuge and they shared that they had to pay a significant portion towards their rent in refuge, again leading to financial pressure and adding pressure to move into independent accommodation rapidly, with limited consideration as to the long-term appropriateness of that accommodation.

When I came out of refuge, I didn't know what to do, I rushed coming out because I was trying to get my family back together and maybe if I'd stayed in there longer, I would have had more of an idea of what was going on. (Laura)

This is a worrying trend as the desire and driver to move on quickly can lead survivors into accommodation and situations that are not sustainable and begin a cycle of housing instability and insecurity. Despite these barriers, the housing maps suggest that survivors moving on from refuge are more likely to be able to access social housing than those in other pathways. For most participants social housing is the preferred tenure as it offers greater security than the private rented sector; it is also more affordable and the support from the landlord to manage tenancies and assist with issues was regarded as a benefit.

Pathway Three summary

Participants following this pathway experience some of the highest levels of abuse and violence and have limited options that will ensure their safety. Their resources have been either eroded or are limited due to financial abuse, affordability issues around refuge and the impact that moving into refuge has upon their employment. Relationships are also complex within this pathway. Informal networks varied greatly with some having close and strong relationships with family, while others had tense or fragile ones, often as a result of the abuse. Formal networks and interactions were common and comprehensive for survivors in this group and were regarded as mainly being positive or helpful. Moving into a refuge also caused challenges, with spaces scarce and locations sometimes a significant distance from home. Issues with access for older children and particularly males and the potential for women to lose their possessions both presented barriers to survivors. Once in refuge the findings suggest there are both negative factors such as lack of privacy, sharing with people with

complex needs and affordability and positive factors such as safety, support, and friendships. Looking forward is also complicated, as for some they are desperate to move on at the cost of moving into insecure housing. For others, routes to social renting are restricted due to arrears accrued from financial abuse. However, this pathway appears to be more likely to lead to a social housing tenancy, which is often perceived as most desirable after homeownership. Finally, interviewing some people whilst they are in refuge means there is insufficient data on the longer-term experiences of these women. Therefore, it is possible that some participants in this pathway are earlier on in a journey through a series of transient housing situations and are therefore moving towards Pathway Four (discussed next).

5.5 Pathway Four

Pathway Four is possibly the most complex and least linear in comparison to other pathways. It is typified by factors that are not as prevalent in the experiences of participants in the three alternative pathways. People following this pathway have generally had numerous experiences of homelessness and housing instability, multiple, repeat, or persistent perpetrators and abusive relationships, and a higher prevalence of childhood domestic abuse and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The level of risk varied and appeared to peak and trough but was usually extended and extensive over the women's life courses and in a pattern that limited the space for action, healing, and recovery. Resources for this group were low, with many describing significant financial impacts caused by the ongoing and frequent abuse. Knowledge of rights and ability to navigate various systems tended to be either high and learnt from experience, or low with a higher dependency on support services. Relationships with formal networks for this group appeared to be polarised, with some reporting engagement with multiple services and others reporting minimal involvement. Personal or informal networks were even less robust with women reporting high levels of isolation, loneliness, and lack of support from family.

Maria first witnessed domestic abuse at home between her mum and dad; the abuse was violent in nature and Maria was also subject to abuse. Growing up, her mum developed significant mental health and alcohol issues, she feels this was a result of her dad's behaviour. Maria was often looked after by a neighbour who would check on her regularly, cook her meals and make sure she was ok, and her mum was supported by an aunt. Dad eventually left, the relationship ended, and he was absent from Maria's life. Maria and her mum had social services involvement due to worries about Maria's wellbeing and safety. The police, GP and school were all aware of what was happening at home and involved with the family. When Maria was 16 her mum was admitted into a psychiatric unit and Maria began a relationship with her first partner. She was able to get a social tenancy for a flat but not long after Maria's

mum passed away. Maria had her son with her partner at the age of 18, the relationship was abusive and controlling and Maria quickly became isolated and lonely. She ended the relationship with him and soon after met her second partner who quickly moved into her home and also began to be abusive. Social services became involved due to concerns for Maria's son. The abuse escalated to a point where she felt she had no choice but to enter a women's hostel for her and her child's safety. The perpetrator frequently breached injunctions and was dogged in his abuse of Maria. She found the time at the hostel difficult and scary due to the support needs and behaviours of other residents and this was added to by her son being taken into the care of social services, however she did feel safe there and knew that the perpetrator could not get to her. Maria eventually moved on from the hostel and into a new home; she was happy there and began to feel settled until her ex-partner located her and began to resume the harassment and threats. This forced Maria to access specialist refuge provision; she was there for a few weeks, but the perpetrator found her again and she had to move to another refuge in a different area. During this time her son has been adopted and Maria is struggling to cope with this. She found refuge scary and intimidating at first but now feels safe, happy and settled there; she sometimes does feel upset at hearing the stories of other women and finds it particularly hard to be around women with their children but feels that it is the safest place for her. She is unsure of where she will live in the future and is currently struggling with her own mental health. She feels that the emotional support at the refuge is really helping her to start to feel better but knows that she cannot stay there for a long time which causes her to feel anxious.

Due to the complexity, unpredictability, and heterogeneity of experiences of women in this pathway it is impossible to provide a case study that reflects the experiences across the pathway, but Maria's experience does provide some insight into the chaos, trauma and disruption faced by the women. Many of the women in the study disclosed childhood abuse and ACEs, however this appeared to be more prevalent among the participants in Pathway Four. There were examples of domestic abuse being witnessed as children, verbally abusive parents, childhood sexual abuse, parents with mental health issues and addictions. There were several women who had been taken into care as children and more women whose children had been or were at risk of being taken into care compared to other pathways.

But my three kids now are in prison, they've all got problems and it's because of him and what he did to me. Growing up seeing their mum get battered and the violence. (Katy)

I did experience abuse when I was a kid, my dad used to batter my mum, so I think that made me think it was normal. (Shannon)

In Wales there has recently been a significant academic and policy shift towards better understanding ACEs and trauma. This work highlights that children who experience numerous

traumatic events in childhood are more likely to develop serious health issues and health harming coping mechanisms and habits. There are links with offending, addiction and homelessness (Bellis et al, 2015; Ashton et al, 2016; Grey & Woodfine, 2019; Ford et al, 2019). This reflects the experiences of the women within this pathway and suggests that childhood trauma may have some influence over future relationships and vulnerability to abuse. There were numerous experiences of abuse in adulthood, and it appears that these experiences began early on in their first relationships. Many of the women in this group were experiencing significant difficulties with their mental health and some were recovering from addictions that they feel developed as a coping response to the abuse, fear and trauma.

I had social services and the police involved they weren't any good, but I'm glad I came here because I'm straight now, I'm on a script and have been for 5 months. I've been here a year, but the first few months was with him and was erratic. Now I've stayed away from him I am clean; my addictions are to cope with the abuse. More could have been done to stop the abuse, the police could have got me injunction orders and just done stuff. I was reporting but nothing happened. (Shannon)

Considering the early presence of abuse, it is not surprising that many of the women reported leaving home at a young age and experiencing homelessness or housing instability relatively early in their lives. This was often an experience of hostel accommodation, sofa surfing or precarious shared housing; there were many more moves for each survivor compared to women in other pathways. Some of the women had moved so frequently they were unable to provide even a rough estimate of how many transitions they had made. One woman estimated she had moved 75 times in her lifetime, including numerous moves between children's homes and foster placements as a child. This woman made a bullet point list of all the places she had lived and afterwards asked:

Am I allowed to take a photo of it, as this is the first time I have seen all what has happened to me written down and in order like that? (Josie)

Research suggests that the earlier a person experiences homelessness the more likely they are to experience repeat episodes of homelessness (Mackie & Thomas, 2014). Furthermore, research from Scotland found that domestic abuse is correlated with repeat homelessness and that often the primary reason for making repeat homelessness applications was due to moving from home into accommodation that was inadequate for their needs and that women would move repeatedly to avoid having to return to a perpetrator (Shelter Scotland, 2002; Scottish Government, 2010; Fitzpatrick et al, 2003). This supports the experiences shared by the women in this pathway who attribute their frequent moves to having to escape abuse or due to being tracked by a persistent perpetrator.

It was my home, He used to move us from property to property he claimed the benefits in my name and then wouldn't pay the rent so we would have to move again and again. (Alisha)

Then he was beating me and beating me, I had two children by him, and I spent 8 years trying to leave him but every time he would follow me, find me and bring me back and drag me back again and again and that went on for 8 years. (Katy)

As a result of the issues experienced and witnessed in childhood, many of the women reported not having a strong support network from family and friends, and relationships were fractured and fragile. In some cases, there was still a strong relationship but the behaviours and health of these sources of support were often detrimental to people's recovery. This, coupled with the level and frequency of abuse, meant there were more agencies involved with some of the women, either due to her and her children coming to the attention of services for safeguarding reasons or from the women seeking help. However, the responses and interventions had not always been effective, and involvement appeared to be sporadic and shallow rather than intense and sustained. There were more negative perceptions of services from the women in the pathway and particularly of the criminal justice system.

Really if someone is experiencing DA and that person goes to the police and social, they should do something. Out of the three, only one was charged and that was because he tried to run me and my kids over in the car. I was told I couldn't go in refuge because of my addictions or there wasn't enough space but then I was just left...I have lost my kids because of this. (Shannon)

Experiences with housing services were also poor, with many feeling that not enough had been done to ensure their safety or enable them to remain home. As in other pathways, and indeed across the sample, issues with child contact and family courts dominated the women's lives and, in many cases, women felt there was a disconnect between the criminal and family legal systems. However, some of the women in this pathway appeared to have a better awareness and understanding of these systems, likely due to their frequent and long-term interactions with them compared to others in the sample. However, this had not led to easier navigation of these systems and rather attempts to circumnavigate them and independently find solutions and manage the risks themselves.

An injunction isn't worth the piece of paper it's written on, he'll openly say on social media to this day, I will find you and I will kill you. As soon as the police speak with him, he steps up the violence. I have moved about 20 minutes from the school, it is isolated, and it is a risk because if anything happened it would take the police a good 20 minutes to get there. But I had to move there because it's so remote that if someone was following me, I could detect it and just go somewhere else. (Jade)

In other cases, this led to women feeling that there were no alternatives or options for them and thus remaining trapped in the abusive relationship. The women that were able to leave typically followed patterns of multiple moves in private rented accommodation, entry into

refuge or hostel accommodation and episodes of rooflessness or sofa surfing. There was a correlation between these events and the presence of another perpetrator. The findings suggest that the housing instability, limited resources, and isolation experienced by women provide an opportunity for predatory perpetrators to groom and exploit the women, sending them once again into a cycle of abuse. This is typical of perpetrator behaviour and supports the argument that some perpetrators target and groom women who are vulnerable to exploitation (Duluth, 2002; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008).

I was in a relationship with a man who used to be a neighbour and knew of my previous relationship so he came into my life as a saviour almost... a lot of it was same situation, started off as wonderful put up with his shit for years and then it came to a head when I lost both my parents, my daughter had nearly died and I had a nervous breakdown which he pushed me to go through several serious sexual assaults. I then ended up in hospital, during that time I disclosed what was going on and they said it was domestic violence. They tried to help me leave but he had started saying things about keeping the children, so I made the decision to go back because I was concerned about losing my kids. (Vicky)

The financial cost of these transitions and journeys appears to be significant with women reporting costs incurred from bonds, rent in advance, repairing damage to property, debts and arrears from financial abuse and impact to earnings. Many of the women reported that they were unable to work because they had no stability and were fearful of the perpetrator locating and following them at their place of work. Many of the women in the sample reported owning their own businesses as a tactic to prevent the perpetrator being able to interfere and disrupt their income. This was reflected within this group, but the women were generally far less likely to be in employment or economically active compared to those in other pathways.

I met him I was self-employed and because he was so demanding I couldn't put my time into running my business, so he persuaded me to work in the same workplace as him which meant I was constantly monitored by him. (Shannon)

Because I was so afraid that if I had a job where I was in and out of the same work place every day, he is a stalker through and through, he will follow and work out my patterns and plan when he is going to do something. So, I felt I would put myself at greater risk. So that's why I wanted to get back to being self-employed, but he left me with so much debt I nearly had to declare myself bankrupt. (Tara)

Pathway Four summary

Women following this pathway have experienced domestic abuse and trauma for a significant period of time and often beginning in childhood. They were more likely to leave home earlier and experience both abusive relationships and housing instability at an earlier point in their lives compared to women following other pathways. They were less likely to have significant resources and the impact of abuse had diminished any little they did have. Their relationships with friends and family were also often strained or weak and their interactions with services falling into one of two extreme cases; either they had significant involvement with services or

had resorted to avoiding services and circumnavigating the system to manage their own safety and well-being. Interactions with the homelessness system, criminal justice system, and care system were common. As with the other pathways, legal remedies were not regarded as being effective and women were more likely to have had numerous perpetrators or an experience with a high-risk persistent one. This resulted in the women being in a cycle of constant upheaval and disruption to their homes, jobs, and networks.

5.6 Cross-cutting issues of concern

In addition to the intended goal of characterising the heterogeneity of women's pathways through domestic abuse and homelessness, three cross-cutting themes emerged and warrant particular reflection: complicit communities, the legacy of abuse, and the lack of coordinated responses from agencies. The role of community in influencing the dynamics of abuse and level of safety, emerged as a more prevalent factor than expected. There has been research into the role of community from the lens of anti-social behaviour in the field of housing and in the field of domestic abuse from a cultural lens (Siddiqui, 2013; Stanley et al, 2013; Voice 4 Change England & NAVCA, 2012; Postmus, 2015). However, the findings of this study suggest that the scale of community complicity in the perpetration of domestic abuse is much wider and more complicated. This finding supports an existing body of work that has focussed on the various impacts and influence that informal networks can have upon people experiencing abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Shipway, 2004; Abrahams, 2010; Anderson et al 2012; Parker, 2015). Each of these studies has been firmly rooted within the field of domestic abuse and not necessarily focussed on, or considerate of how these networks impact the housing situations of victims. Likewise, Irving-Clark and Henderson (2020) argue that housing scholars have failed to build an academic body of research exploring domestic abuse from a housing studies perspective. Henderson (2019) notes how housing policy and practice have often focussed on anti-social behaviour and that domestic abuse has been somewhat inconsistently included as an issue within that area. Parker (2015) argued that informal networks are the eco-system that abuse exists in. This study found that the physical and social communities of survivors played a prominent role in the way in which abuse was carried out, experienced and help sought. These communities could knowingly or unknowingly enable or facilitate the abuse. I refer to this as 'complicit communities'. There appear to be two types of complicity; the first being passive complicity that includes inactions such as not reporting incidents, not providing witness statements, and failing to intervene. The reasons for this are likely to stem from fear and reluctance to become involved with a highly volatile situation that may place them in a vulnerable position or at personal risk. The people in this group and their inaction are possibly best understood through the research around 'bystanders'. This body of

research has explored the role of bystanders who witness instances of domestic abuse and sexual violence and found that there are multiple factors working to influence what action or inaction they take (Banyard et al, 2009; Taylor et al, 2016; Rothman et al, 2018; Gainsbury et al, 2020). The second type of complicit community is to be actively complicit in the abuse. This would include actions such as monitoring and reporting the movements of victims to the perpetrator, harassing the victim on the perpetrator's behalf, or indeed any action that enables, promotes, or facilitates the perpetrator's actions. These behaviours and actions go further than that of a bystander, however the cause or conditions which allow it are rooted in the same culture and societal understanding of abuse. Therefore, both passive and complicit communities may be addressed and reshaped into pro-actively preventing and tackling domestic abuse through bystander programmes. These programmes are complex and aim to shift the understanding and perceptions of gendered abuse and challenge the social and cultural norms that enable violence against women (Banyard et al, 2009). Neighbours et al (2010) found that perpetrators misconstrue the abuse perpetrated by others and perceive it to be more socially acceptable compared to non-perpetrators. Both types of roles complicit communities play may stem from the way in which domestic abuse is understood and perceived by the members of these communities and the findings suggest there is a need for work to be carried out to shift the cultural norms around interpersonal violence and abuse. This finding and issue also raises questions for services, including housing; it suggests that when looking at cases and assessing the level of risk in these situations, careful consideration should be given to the role of the informal networks and the wider community and how that interacts with safety measures and plans. It may be that reframing these informal networks as communities will enhance the perception of relevance to housing professionals and therefore be considered more carefully.

The second theme that has been widely discussed across the four pathways is the 'legacy' of domestic abuse. Evidence shows that the impacts of abuse last far longer than the relationship (Dobash & Dobash, 1979;1998; Hester et al, 2006; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008; Abrahams, 2010) but it was sobering to hear from women who had ended relationships ten years ago, that they were still paying the price emotionally, physically and financially of the abuse they had experienced. This highlights the length of time it takes to truly recover from these situations, and this is something that may not be reflected in the way that services operate. In Wales, the recent transformation of what was the Supporting People Grant to Housing Support Grant has seen guidance recommend that where necessary services should not be time restricted and be long enough to ensure that people are stable enough that they will not re-present or experience homelessness in the near future (Welsh Government, 2021). This is a progressive and positive aim, however there is limited evidence to suggest that these

policy aims are having the intended impact in practice. A recent study by Price et al (2020) found that stakeholders are continuing to struggle with short-term and inadequate funding from local commissioners. This may then result in time restricted, low intensity and well-intended but ineffective support available for survivors over the length of time they need it. Many of the women reported poor mental health and feelings of fear and distrust that never leave. A wide range of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) were reported but there appeared to be little involvement with mental health services or therapies. The main source of support was from specialist organisations, although, many of the women felt that this was not a viable long-term solution for a range of reasons including time limited contracts, the trauma of hearing other women's stories in group sessions and the stigma of attending support groups. This finding supports recent Welsh research that found survivors wanted immediate access to counselling and recovery programmes, this was inclusive of counselling and therapy for both survivor and their children (Price et al, 2020). The lasting impact of financial abuse was also stark, with all the women reporting the effects lasting years after the abuse. This was common across women from all tenures and backgrounds, even homeowners in employment and business owners were still paying debts left by the perpetrator. The lack of understanding and response from financial institutions around financial abuse was evident and devastating for women who had to use every tool available to them just to be able to retain their family home. In cases where they were unable, they worried that they would never be able to re-enter the housing market again and would be stuck in a cycle of paying unaffordable rent. This finding supports the work of Sharpe-Jeffs (2017; 2018; 2021) who has consistently highlighted the extent of financial abuse and the impact that this has on survivors over time. The lack of awareness, understanding and poor response from financial institutions is a focus of much of this research and she has gone on to establish an organisation aiming to educate and improve responses to financial abuse. The amount of money that women reported spending on legal costs to negotiate child contact and custody was astounding and one of the biggest financial stressors women were facing. This was compounded by the third common theme across the pathways of a lack of a coordinated response from services.

The third cross-cutting theme across the pathways is discussed in detail in the next chapter. Throughout the pathways there were examples of where an individual intervention had worked well or an individual agency had been effective and supportive, however what was repeatedly described was a lack of coordination of response from the multiple agencies that had a role to play and at times completely disconnected or even conflicting agendas. There was felt to be a lack of understanding by each agency of the others' roles, responsibilities, and powers, resulting in sporadic and fragmented interactions and interventions.

5.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provides the first attempt to categorise and typify the heterogeneous housing pathways of women facing domestic abuse and homelessness. Crucially, these pathways emerge from the experiences of women and their children. This approach to the application of Clapham's housing pathways framework differs from traditional and existing works with other sub-populations. It has enabled a new understanding and conceptualisation of the routes that women take through abuse. Rather than routes being defined by tenure, demographic, or household composition, they were defined and influenced by a far more complex interaction of factors that emerged as particularly influential in the narratives of survivors. Shaping the four pathways are the three Rs: the level of *risk* to safety and risk of homelessness, the *resources* women had access to, and the quality of *relationships* with informal and formal networks, all of which interacted and combined to shape the options open to survivors and the choices they made.

Pathway One is typified by the women having a secure housing option available to them that provided a legal right to occupy, was affordable and particularly so compared to other tenures; this sometimes required a move or was achievable within the women's current accommodation. There were a high proportion of homeowners in this pathway. The risk posed by domestic abuse tended to stabilise or decrease with legal remedies being effective when in place. Levels of resources were higher, and the women were likely to be in employment. Relationships with informal networks were more likely to be in place or quickly repaired in this pathway compared to others and relationships with formal networks also tended to be more positive than those experienced by other participants.

Pathway Two was defined by the level of risk either remaining high or increasing regardless of housing situation and housing situations that in most cases were insecure. Interventions such as legal remedies and target hardening were ineffective or not in place. Resources were lower and issues with affordability and debts were causing significant challenges. Relationships were more complex and unstable and experiences with formal networks were more likely to be negative. There is the possibility that, similarly to those within Pathway Three, some of the women on this pathway are earlier on in their journeys and will eventually follow Pathway Four.

Pathway Three differs to the other pathways, as this is more dependent on and predicted by the level of risk posed by perpetrators. There are usually no other choices outside of refuge that would guarantee the women's safety to the same level. Resources are low or have been disrupted also adding another barrier to sourcing alternative accommodation independently.

Legal remedies have been ineffective and there are a higher number of services involved and more positive experiences with formal networks particularly specialist organisations. The route out of refuge tends to be into social housing, which is the preferred tenure for women except for home ownership. Experiences of refuge tended to be positive but challenges with moving on, such as exclusion from the social housing register, sometimes forced some women to move on quickly and often into housing that was not appropriate or sustainable. This raises the possibility that some of these women may at some point experience further housing instability or episodes of homelessness and transition to Pathway Four.

Pathway Four was much less linear or clear than the other pathways and was instead typified by factors less noticeable in the other pathways, including childhood abuse and ACEs, early experiences of domestic abuse and housing instability, multiple moves and episodes of homelessness, and numerous or persistent perpetrators. This, coupled with low resources and fragile relationships with informal networks, severely restricted the options available to women. Experiences of formal networks tended to be polarised with either a heavy presence or a notable absence. Many women described negative interactions leading them to feel as though they were unable to rely on these agencies to protect them and thus had developed tactics to circumnavigate the system.

These Pathways show the complex interaction between structural and individual factors that shape survivor's housing journeys. As discussed the three most influential factors were the three Rs, however, these were also shaped by structural and individual factors. For example the financial aspect of resources was generally dependant on survivors having employment, access to welfare or assets. However, an individual factor shaping financial resources is survivor's financial literacy and confidence. Those with little experience, skills or confidence in managing money and finances reported fewer opportunities to access resources that would enable them to leave independently. The pathways framework allowed for the heterogeneity of experiences, which were messy and complex, to be captured, analysed and understood in a way in which provides clarity. The relationship and impact of structural and individual factors is complex and the experiences and pathways are not easily disaggregated using this approach. However, what did emerge is that the structural factors often resulted in constraining survivor's choices but that survivors did still make choices even from what was often a limited and inadequate range of options.

In addition to the four pathways identified three cross-cutting themes emerged. The first of these was complicit communities and centres around the actions and inaction of the neighbours, friends, family and wider community of the survivor and perpetrator. This complicity could be passive and include ignoring, minimising or excusing abuse. There were

also numerous examples of active complicity in which the abuse was supported, encouraged and enabled by the community. This could be through surveillance, harassment and aiding the perpetrator. The second theme to emerge was the legacy and lasting impact of domestic abuse. It was sobering to meet women who ten years after the relationship were still experiencing psychological, financial and housing instability due to the abuse. These experiences are not necessarily reflected in the way in which services are commissioned, potentially creating a gap in support over time for some survivors. The final cross-cutting theme to emerge was the challenging interactions with some services and difficulties navigating different systems. This will be explored in-depth in the next chapter.

**Service interactions: Three planets from the lens
of homelessness prevention**

6.1 Introduction

One of the objectives of this study was to explore survivor interactions with services and the role of housing in a more co-ordinated response. The objective was also to examine the role of housing and its potential as a fourth planet in a more co-ordinated and holistic response to DA survivors. This will be achieved through examining survivor's interactions with services in the context of homelessness prevention.

Throughout the workshops and particularly during the process of creating housing maps and the following focus group sessions, there was much discussion of agencies and bodies that had a role to play at different stages of the participant's' journeys. These discussions needed little prompting and occurred organically. However, in anticipation of these discussions taking place, a heuristic tool to inform and analyse the discussions was identified in Hester's (2011) three planets model. This model provided a robust and relevant foundation on which to frame the findings.

Hester suggests that the services and agencies that interact with women experiencing domestic abuse can be conceptualised as existing on three separate planets. These planets are a domestic violence planet, the child protection planet, and the child contact planet. The domestic violence planet is occupied by a range of organisations including those who provide refuge and advocacy and focus specifically on the safety of the survivor, it also includes the criminal justice agencies that manage and respond to perpetrators. In contrast, the child protection planet is focussed completely on the welfare of the child and agencies involved are concerned primarily with safeguarding the children of survivors of domestic abuse. The final planet, the child contact planet, focusses on the arrangements of the family, including residential and visitation rights of both parents.

The planets were conceptualised as an effective way to discuss and understand the systemic failures and issues that are encountered by survivors when interacting with the various agencies, processes, and policies. Hester suggests that each planet's focus on a different aspect of the family and its members, coupled with differences in approaches, priorities and agendas, leads to a disconnected and dysfunctional experience by survivors. This was the experiences of survivors involved with this study and many of the same issues identified in Hester's work in 2011 were still evident today. The three planets model provided a useful heuristic tool, but the findings of this study suggest the three planets model could be developed in three main ways.

First, the existing planets are most relevant to survivors with children, as those who do not have children are not going to need to interact with a child protection or child contact planet.

Therefore, single survivor's experiences of the planets are reduced to interaction with only the domestic abuse planet. This may mask some of the complexity and challenges that they face. Reeve (2019) highlighted the barriers and hidden nature of the housing experiences of single women without their children. She demonstrated the gaps in English homelessness policy that fail to consider or respond to their needs as parents. In light of this finding this thesis will aim to bring a consistent focus on the experiences of survivors with children, single survivors and survivors without their children who participated in this study. Where experiences differ based on these characteristics that will be explored.

The second development to the three planets model is in response to the data from the housing maps which has highlighted two missing planets. The first proposed addition, in keeping with this study, would be a housing planet that incorporates the numerous housing services and providers that survivors interact with when experiencing or recovering from abuse. The other additional planet is a health planet; the majority of survivors in this study had at some point interacted with a health service or professional. This was true across all pathways and many of these interactions would be at pivotal times in relation to abuse.

As findings show in the housing pathways chapter, domestic abuse occurs across tenure, housing situations and socio-economic groups. The participants in this study were living in a range of sectors including social housing, private rented accommodation, owned homes, and emergency accommodation. Their experiences of housing were diverse and as such the need to view experiences from a whole housing approach is necessary. This approach has been developed by DAHA into a model that incorporates the whole housing system across tenures, rather than focus specifically upon emergency and social housing, which has traditionally been the case (DAHA, 2020).

The findings within this study also show the lasting impact that domestic abuse has upon survivors and in particular their long-term stability and security in relation to housing. Many existing studies focus on a snapshot in time, but the reflective nature of this study and the data collection methods led to a more comprehensive exploration of survivor's housing journeys over time. Based on the findings of this study the data shows that domestic abuse not only occurs across tenure, sectors, and demographics but there is an ongoing and lasting experience for most survivors that impacts their experience of home and interactions with various services over the life course. Therefore, the third extension of Hester's three planets model is to apply both a whole housing and whole life approach that extends beyond a snapshot in time at point of crisis.

This chapter was originally going to be structured around a discussion of interactions with each 'planet' in turn, however this would fail to capture the messiness of interactions, and missed opportunities for coordination, across planets/services. Instead, this chapter is structured around a prevention framework advanced by Fitzpatrick et al (2021). This framework comprises of a five-category typology that distinguishes between different timings of homelessness prevention efforts, from very early universal population-wide interventions such as a poverty reduction, to more immediate crisis and emergency interventions. In this chapter, the discussion will be structured according to three of the categories in the Fitzpatrick et al (2021) typology; crisis, emergency and repeat prevention. These time points are most relevant to the journeys shared by survivors in this study. Crisis prevention is defined as action that takes place to prevent homelessness within a foreseeable period and in the UK context this is usually 56 days (i.e., the notice required for eviction). In the context of domestic abuse, this is the period when abuse is taking place but an exit into homelessness is not imminent. Emergency prevention is focused on the responses to immediate threats of homelessness; in the context of domestic abuse this is the point at which people flee or need urgent help, potentially to enter a refuge. Recovery prevention is the work that takes place to prevent repeat homelessness, which is likely to include support from services to help women resettle and recover from abuse, with the goal of preventing repeat homelessness and repeat episodes of abuse.

Each section of this chapter will focus on one of the three stages of prevention. The discussion will evidence the need for the introduction of a separate housing planet which would include all housing solutions that survivors may experience. The discussions will reflect on the findings and analyse these from both a whole life, whole housing and three planet approach (with the inclusion of a health planet where relevant). This will provide an understanding of how survivors experience housing solutions and other services across the planets, over time, and at each specific point in prevention. It will highlight the gaps or barriers to prevention and the enablers and successes in prevention work at each stage.

6.2 Crisis Prevention

Fitzpatrick et al (2019) defined crisis prevention as the actions that take place when a household is threatened with homelessness and aligned it with homelessness legislation that focusses on preventing homelessness for those threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days. This definition may need to be adapted and reinterpreted to reflect the reality and experience of survivors of domestic abuse.

In the context of domestic abuse, many of the participants in this study described the threat from domestic abuse and the subsequent possibility that they would have to flee their home

being present for much longer than a 56-day window. Many described a constant fear and insecurity being present in their lives and homes from perpetrators. For some this happened for years, others months, and for some, and particularly those in Pathway Four, this threat occurred on multiple occasions with a number of perpetrators. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness where homelessness is imminent (i.e., within 56 days). However, a local authority can work to prevent homelessness before the 56-day period. The reality for survivors of domestic abuse is that there is a sustained period of living in crisis and risk of homelessness.

The findings of this study suggest that crisis prevention work may be required, not only for people still residing with the perpetrator but for survivors who have ended the relationship and are still being harassed through the direct and indirect actions of the perpetrator, their family, or the wider community. Some participants shared experiences of housing instability caused by the threat of abuse years after a relationship had ended. During this period in which abuse is present, the threat of homelessness also exists. This research has found that during this time there were numerous interactions with agencies across the three planets.

Focusing specifically upon interactions with housing services, the participants shared experiences that highlight gaps in the system which work to influence and limit the choices and decisions open to survivors. Many of the people in this study sought help from housing services and experienced differing outcomes. For some they were unable or unwilling to seek help and disclose abuse during this time, despite the threat of homelessness looming. Many survivors were unaware of where to access support and what type of help and support would be available if they did. This was particularly evident within the group that owned their own homes. As they were homeowners and in employment many inaccurately believed that they would not be entitled to help or support with their housing situation from their local authority. Some had experiences of being refused assistance because they were a homeowner, which suggests that the concerns from those assuming they would be ineligible, are not completely unfounded.

I wouldn't have been eligible for any help or assistance from the council because I have always worked. (Kate)

I went to the council and said I needed to move out. I told them that I wasn't safe, and I couldn't go back. They basically said that because I had a mortgage, I wouldn't qualify for anything, I had a legal right they wanted me to get the police involved to kick him out and then get the locks changed. That wasn't possible though it would have been hell and put me at even more risk. (Kelly)

The legislation in Wales states that if a person is threatened with homelessness within 56 days, they are entitled to assistance from the local authority housing department to prevent

homelessness from occurring. Furthermore, if a person is at risk of harm or violence then it is deemed that it is unreasonable for them to remain home (Welsh Government, 2014). This means that for the survivors seeking help, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or home ownership status they would have had a legal right to assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless. This is particularly pertinent, when for many of these survivors their housing was at risk due to financial abuse and arrears, or other debts having been accrued by the perpetrator. For some it resulted in them having to sell their property and move into private rented accommodation, placing them in unaffordable and insecure accommodation and causing significant damage to their financial situations and impeding them from re-entering the housing market.

The only other option they gave me was to stop paying the mortgage and then take them the letter to say that I'm failing on payment and only then they could house me. (Kelly)

Not all the survivors in the home-owner category had to move out of the sector and many were able to maintain their existing property or obtain a new mortgage. However, this often came at a cost and either resulted in their home having to be sold and proceeds shared with the perpetrator or in some cases the perpetrator continued to remain on the mortgage and extensive legal costs were accrued in order to protect the right of the survivor and their children to remain in their home. Either scenario meant that there was extensive contact with lenders and mortgage providers trying to negotiate and rearrange their existing agreements. It was strongly felt by survivors in this group that the financial institutions and services occupying this sector generally showed a lack of awareness or understanding of domestic abuse and especially financial abuse. This reflects the evidence from a significant body of research that highlights the prevalence of economic abuse experienced by women and the difficulties they face in trying to access help and support and rebuild their finances afterwards (Sharp-Jeffs, 2015; Howard & Skipp, 2015; Hestia, 2019; Refuge, 2020).

I didn't really have any other options it was damage limitation, looking back in hindsight I could have stayed in our house for quite a while and done a deal with the mortgage company to pay reduced rate for a period of time, the debt would have increased, I probably could have bought a few more years there but to be worse off than I am now. (May)

Despite local authorities having a duty to provide emergency prevention, the failure to provide a safe and suitable housing option pushed some women back into the family home. This placed them at risk of domestic abuse and left them stuck in a crisis situation where they were likely to become homeless at any point. This will be discussed in the next section of the chapter, as this most commonly occurred when emergency prevention should have taken place.

For survivors in tenures outside of homeownership there was a range of action and inaction from housing services, largely based on the perceived level of legal right to occupy held by the survivors. Some survivors were living in properties they had no legal right to occupy as they were not named on the tenancy. This left them in a situation where they had to either rapidly source alternative accommodation or remain at risk in the property. For those resistant or unable to access refuge or other emergency accommodation this crisis phase lasted for a considerable amount of time and some actions were taken by the local authority. This included assisting with searches for private accommodation, negotiating the transfer of tenancy from perpetrator to survivor, admittance onto the local social housing register and in some cases offers of temporary or emergency accommodation. There was no evidence that a consistent level of assistance or options were offered to survivors across areas at this point of their journeys.

We were both on the tenancy, so I had legal aid to help get him out because he wouldn't leave. I didn't know where I stood or anything, my daughter was with me, and we were sharing a room in my neighbour's house. We were there about a month and then I found out he had gone into the housing association and relinquished the tenancy so someone contacted me and said that I had to go in and see if I could get a sole tenancy, which is what I done. (Jenny)

Furthermore, all of the actions depended on a disclosure of domestic abuse from the survivor. In many cases the survivors were reluctant to disclose and very few if any had experienced any prompting or questioning from the local authority about domestic abuse. In nearly all cases there were common issues that housing providers would have been aware of and may have signalled for the occurrence of domestic abuse, but these were missed. The interaction between housing professionals and tenants regarding these issues may have provided an opportunity for survivors to have disclosed domestic abuse and sought help but they were again missed.

Researcher: Were the council aware that there was domestic abuse taking place? Had you told them, or did they ask?

Hayley: No, I did explain little bits, but they didn't push it or take it any further.

Most commonly, survivors were in arrears with their housing payments and other household bills such as utilities. Previous research found that tenants experiencing domestic abuse were four times more likely than those not experiencing domestic abuse to have significant arrears and have had a complaint of anti-social behaviour made against them (Jackson, 2014). Antisocial behaviour was another issue which would have provided housing professionals an insight into the risk and reality survivors were living with. However, survivors described the responses by housing providers to these issues as being punitive, procedural and another source of stress and fear.

Housing Options should be more considerate and give people a chance, I was blacklisted because of my kids causing trouble there, but it wasn't always my kids, kids will be kids won't they. But I always used to have the eviction letter and always was the one they told to get out. This was when they were young obviously. This was while the abuse was happening, I asked social services for help, and they wouldn't help me. Those kids were getting into trouble, but they had seen a lot of stuff and there was trauma, but I was then getting punished for their bad behaviour. I was evicted twice, with the kids by the council and then they blacklisted me. I never got any help. I got some legal help to have a longer stay but only for a month. (Iris)

Some survivors did have tenancy rights but in the face of a high-risk perpetrator and lack of enforcement by housing, the police and the courts, they were unable to remain home.

I was living in council rented and had target hardening. I had a joint tenancy. I had to leave the house and go to court to have an injunction and child protection order. The judge said he had 7 days to remove himself. Then another month to sort himself out. He refused to leave until the council gave him a new house. He breached the tenancy agreement by changing the locks on me, I wanted to go and get some of the kids' stuff, the police wouldn't assist me so I went with a friend I knew he wasn't there but when I got there my key wouldn't work because he'd changed the locks. The council did nothing. (Shannon)

For many survivors, during this period their housing options are limited, they are unaware of their rights, and in some cases have few rights and few resources to access and navigate alternatives. This places housing professionals in a key position where they may be required to identify and prompt disclosures of abuse, provide clear and accurate information, and work to identify and build a suite of offers that provide survivors a choice over their housing journey. However, what overwhelmingly emerged is that a purely housing response would be an ineffective solution for most survivors. The actions of agencies across the other planets need to work in collaboration to ensure the safety of them and their children.

For most survivors, during the crisis phase, interactions with the domestic abuse planet were with the police and usually after a specific incident. There was a mixed response to the interaction with police at this stage but was generally more likely to be perceived as negative. Many women described the lack of enforcement activity by police as prolonging the length of time they experienced abuse and often emboldening the perpetrator. Many had called the police directly and responses varied greatly. For some, police action was swift and decisive with perpetrators being arrested, removed and protections put in place rapidly to provide security. For others, fear of the involvement of agencies from another planet, namely the child protection planet, led to them feeling unable to disclose, provide statements and support police action. It is important to note that not all had interactions with the police, and many had very brief involvement. This was particularly true for survivors without children. Research shows that there are numerous barriers to survivors coming forward and seeking help from the police and this reflects the experiences shared within this study. Importantly, research comparing

police officer's perceptions of risk in the UK and US showed that the willingness of survivors to cooperate with the police and assist with prosecution very much dictated how well they could manage the risk and safeguard the victim and their children (Robinson et al, 2016). This may explain why when faced with a survivor that is minimising, denying or hiding abuse there is a perceived lack of outcome.

I didn't tell them about the abuse, I was always smiling, being brave. (Sarah)

For some survivors there appeared to be better outcomes when they were actively pursuing for charges to be pressed. In these cases, it appears that interactions with police were much more positive and impactful. This was also the case when specialist domestic abuse officers were involved.

In the end I just thought I can't take anymore so I went to the police and there was a police officer there who said to me that this was abuse and they worked with me then to put a case together for coercive and controlling behaviour. (Carys)

However, there were a number of survivors who needed assistance because abuse persisted even after the relationship had ended and they were no longer living together. This harassment and abuse was described as being overt and visible, and in some cases there were legal measures such as injunctions and exclusion orders in place, but the police failed to enforce or courts failed to punish.

So, we moved same happened again, smashed windows, nails in my tyres, can you prove its him? No? I've got no money to live, I've moved three times and at the last address he smashed my door in, and I had this on camera because I had managed to buy a camera by then. But literally no police help. (Taylor)

He doesn't really want his children, he'll have a new relationship, which always turns violent and as soon as it ends, he will start on me again. I said in a court room you are not having my kids you will have to kill me, and he said that can be arranged in a court in front of all these witnesses and nothing was said. (Jade)

At one point there was a PIN in place I tried to get something more but there was no evidence. When the police would come out, he would leave before they arrived, and they didn't take witness statements from anyone in the block. (Nia)

Further engagement with the domestic abuse planet was limited, with few survivors reporting involvement with advocacy or specialist services. This was different for those that were in crisis after recovery, with many having been referred to specialist domestic abuse services as part of emergency and repeat prevention work. These interactions were largely regarded as positive, and many survivors credited these agencies for helping with their safety and the relationships they had made with peers as invaluable.

I like coming here (DA organisation office) I feel more at home here than at home. I think surrounding yourself with people that just get it is massive. (Ffion)

I've just started shadowing and doing a work placement here (DA organisation), so I'm hoping to work in the field of domestic abuse. That's the only good thing that has come out of all of it, I have taken a different career path from what I was originally in. (Leah)

Crisis prevention work conducted by these agencies at this point included referring to independent housing advice, supporting applications for financial assistance and accompanying and supporting survivors through the child protection, child contact and criminal justice processes.

I didn't know what benefits I need or was entitled to; without this organisation I wouldn't have come as far as I have now. In the very beginning I incurred so much debt just because I didn't know what to do... if I hadn't kept coming here and they hadn't allocated me a one to one support, which was a god send, if I hadn't have kept coming here and I don't think a lot of women feel like they can keep coming here, you're feeling that awful and that low that it is easy to shut yourself away and I think if I hadn't kept coming here I wouldn't be where I am now. (Seren)

I've actually got to go to court in the next few weeks, I don't think I would be able to go through with it if it wasn't for the support I get here. My support worker is amazing, and it just makes me feel a bit more able to cope. (Natasha)

The next planet, the child protection planet is mainly occupied by social services, and this was a source of stress for the survivors with children. They described the pressure placed on them by social services as being unhelpful and failing to hold the perpetrator accountable for the harm caused to the children. It was widely felt there was too much focus on the survivor/mother and the responsibility placed on her at a time when she is equally at risk of harm. It was reported that the lack of control over what happens to the family is very much due to the actions of social services and their attempts to give binary choices.

So social services said we need to move you to a safe house. I said don't you dare; I'm not standing for that and the whole thing of hanging on to what you have worked for nothing to do with him it was me and my livelihood because I wouldn't go there was an eyebrow raised by social services that I don't care. Well, I do care but this is my life, and I can't let go of it. (Imani)

They contacted social services who said if I went home that night my son would be taken into care. There was the nearest refuge was in (town about 40 minutes away), I was thinking how is he going to go to school. I ended up going to stay with my brother for a while on the sofa while my ex thought it would blow over. (Gwen)

Both of the above examples highlight the disruption they were expected to endure in order to keep their children safe. Imani was able to stand her ground and resist being forced into refuge, but Gwen was forced into homelessness with her son, while the perpetrator remained in the family home. This suggests there is a lack of communication between social services and housing providers and potentially a lack of tools available to social workers to manage the perpetrator.

For most survivors, as with other agencies, there was more of a presence from social services at the point of emergency prevention. This may be again result from non-disclosure and abuse being missed or hidden. Many of the participants reported being fearful of social services and the potential for them to lose custody of their children being a key concern and worry. This would somewhat explain why many survivors do not seek help at an earlier stage. Furthermore, the dynamics of abuse mean that many perpetrators control what contact and interaction their victims have with services. Evidence shows that often where services are involved, many perpetrators will present as a victim or manipulate professionals to minimise, deny or explain away the abuse, or in some cases deflect and blame the victim (Duluth, 2007; Stanley et al, 2010; Abrahams, 2010).

He worked his way back in and it was still happening, even with social services being involved it was still going on. They weren't picking up on it because I wasn't disclosing and he was amazing and perfect around them, he knew exactly what to say and how to behave around them he did all the courses. He did a perpetrator course and that didn't work it just gave him the tools to be able to do it even more. That did give him the tools to be able to do things without it being noticed, he learnt a lot from that course. (Carys)

In addition to this, many survivors described being threatened with children's social services by perpetrators as a tool to further control, coerce and harass them.

I lost my kids see with my first husband because I stayed with him too long. I eventually had a breakdown, and he would only let me take two of my kids out at a time and he was always watching me, and I couldn't get my kids away from him and in the end, I had a breakdown I left and because of my mental health they gave them to him. Even though he was abusive to the kids they were too scared to speak up. (Mary)

Within that four-month timeframe where he knew I was leaving he had said to me if you leave, I am going to use your mental health to make sure you don't see the kids. Within the day of me leaving he reported me to the police and to social services. So, I had 2 years of absolute hell with him then in the courts. (Ellen)

I wasn't even given the opportunity to disclose to social services because all meetings were together, and because he kept on saying if anybody else knows the kids will be taken into care. This is why it has taken me so long to get me where I am now because I was scared, I would lose my kids because that is what he kept on saying. (Natalie)

Throughout the crisis period many survivors recorded regular contact with health professionals in a range of roles. Some had health conditions that were being managed by their general practitioner. Many of the survivors were pregnant and had babies during this time, resulting in interactions with midwives and health visitors. Those with children also had to engage with health professionals for their children. The data suggests that health services was one of the most consistently accessed sectors universally across the sample. Despite this, there was no evidence of disclosures being made or help accessed via interactions with these professionals. There is a strong body of evidence highlighting barriers for identification and disclosure of domestic abuse to health professionals. These barriers include lack of awareness

and understanding, reluctance to discuss abuse and lack of understanding to identify, assess and respond to domestic abuse (Lazenbatt and Thompson-Cree,2009; Beynon et al, 2012; Taylor et al, 2013). Most survivors regarded their interactions with health as positive, but this was not reported as having any significant impact on their experience of abuse.

In summary, there is generally a lower level of engagement with services across the planets during the crisis prevention phase when compared to other time points (emergency and recovery prevention are discussed later in this chapter). In the lead up to a disclosure, as the risk and intensity of abuse is escalating, victims begin to think and plan to leave and/ or end the relationship. This crisis period is when survivors start to reach out or come to the attention of some services, and particularly housing services, to explore their options. This planning and exploration does not inherently mean that a disclosure will be made. However, many of the participants felt that this would have been the point when, if prompted, they would have disclosed. Some had shared information, but it had gone unexplored and been missed. For prevention to be more effective, professionals at this stage must pro-actively identify and consider both housing instability and domestic abuse when families come to their attention or ask for assistance.

The key findings are that at crisis stage services are undoubtedly working in silos within and between their planets and no single planet is equipped to effectively respond. Moreover, at this earlier opportunity for intervention, albeit still crisis, efforts to prevent homelessness are largely ineffective and this is despite the shift in homelessness legislation towards more upstream prevention.

6.3 Emergency Prevention

In the context of domestic abuse, emergency prevention comes at a point when a survivor has no option other than to leave their home because of domestic abuse. This is often in response to either acute risk to their or their children's safety, or after an incident or assault. For many this action is a last resort and in the absence of other suitable alternatives. As the housing pathways chapter has highlighted, the homes survivors flee are across tenures and this experience cuts across other characteristics. This emergency can come during, at the end of, or following an abusive relationship. Research shows that risk escalates when a woman ends a relationship or leaves the home; the lack of control over the victim results in an increase in the level of aggression and intensity of tactics to reassert control or punish her (Stark, 2009; Dobash and Dobash, 2015; Monckton-Smith, 2019).

The data from the housing maps created in this study suggest that it is during this time that survivors have the most contact and involvement with agencies across the health sector,

domestic abuse and child protection planets and with housing services. This is likely explained by the identification or disclosure of abuse to one agency and the subsequent referrals placed by them as part of their safeguarding approach. Most survivors in this study described this point in time as being unplanned and somewhat desperate.

He threatened to throw acid over me. He doesn't listen to injunctions, I literally lost everything. We didn't have any time I felt that I had no choice. The police didn't give me an option, they stayed with me until I had a space in refuge. (Nia)

He literally battered me all around the flat. My daughter was there and had seen it all... So I took her to work with me and made the decision that I was leaving him, my daughter said she didn't know if it was the right thing, but she wanted to go. The end of my shift came, and we wandered around (local area) for a few hours in the rain and cold, I didn't know what to do where to go. I couldn't go to friends because they would be the first place he would look, and they were his friends. I then went and spoke to somebody in (local) police station at half past two in the morning. That's when I said I really need help and they were helpful. (Seren)

When I was fleeing it was while he worked away and while I was trying to flee, he came back early because he had inkling something was going on, so he started driving back. I literally had a half an hour window that I missed him by. He was ringing constantly. My phone was going nonstop in the car and (child)...said please don't answer the phone, I'm scared of what Daddy will say and do. I was answering the phone and trying to pretend I was at home first of all, but he was shouting and screaming because he knew. (Lauren)

The role of housing services at this time is pivotal and there were several ways in which these were accessed. Some approached their housing options directly, while others were referred or assisted to by other agencies such as the police or specialist services. Some left the property and spent time sofa surfing and homeless before they presented to the local authority. The outcomes for survivors in this study was varied. As already mentioned, the options tended to be limited. As such, many were offered refuge, hostel, and emergency accommodation. There were a significant number of survivors who at this critical point failed to receive housing assistance. This section will go on to explore these experiences and responses.

For those who had a more positive outcome, this tended to be an offer of refuge which provided the safety they and their children so desperately needed. Many of the women in this category reported having a positive interaction with their housing options officer and in some cases, staff were even skilled and perceptive enough to sensitively probe and elicit a disclosure, thus triggering a wave of safeguarding and prevention activity.

When I went to the council it immediately went from housing to domestic abuse because they picked up on it straight away from a few questions they asked. Because I would never have gone to them about domestic abuse because as far as I was concerned that would mean having my son taken off me. They then put in support (Faye).

Because they are co-located housing just called them in and they started asking questions right there and then. That was amazing because if they had said we want you to go to this place to talk about this, I never would have (Louise).

I rang (specialist organisation), and they put me onto the homeless department. They told me to go straight to the emergency accommodation. I met them there and gave them my details etc. and then they put forward what they could do for me (Ryan).

These experiences show that some interactions with homelessness departments have been positive, however, there is a clear trend based upon two factors. The first being that outcomes and experiences were far more positive in one particular area, this was largely attributed to the co-location of a domestic abuse specialist service with the homelessness team. The second trend being better experiences for those who accessed or presented to homelessness departments via or with a specialist domestic abuse service.

Another area in which there was evidence of emergency prevention work was for those in mainly social housing who had tenancy rights and were offered target hardening. The offer and provision of security measures were enough at the time for survivors to feel safe enough to stay home and avoid going through the homelessness route. As explored in the pathways chapter, and to be explored in the repeat section of this chapter, for most this feeling of security was short-lived and ineffective where legal remedies were not also in place and enforced. This, however, will be discussed in more depth in the next section.

Experiences of accessing homelessness services were not positive for many of the survivors in this study. Many were refused assistance because of a misunderstanding of the legislation. For example, assistance was refused because victims had either a tenancy or property, because of a lack of local connection, or because of an immigration status. In these instances, there was a distinct lack of alternative options, advice or even signposting to other sources of support.

So literally when all this happened, they broke in twice and changed all of the locks so I went to the council and explained and said I can't stay there. I was told there was nothing they could do because I was under his name so they couldn't re-house me (Sasha). They kicked me out and I ended up on the streets and the council wouldn't do anything because I have got no connection to the area. I had only been there for 6 months. So, I had that battle with the council because I had no connection to Wales, they wouldn't house me, so desperate measures I moved back in thinking everything was going to be ok (Tracey).

It did turn very physical and that's when I drew the line...I went to the council and said I urgently needed to move out...The only option they gave me was to stop paying the mortgage and then take them the letter to say that I'm failing on payment and only then they could house me. So, I went to them, had to go back not pay the mortgage, and go back again then. After that I went onto the housing register, I was at the bottom and no priority at all. I sofa surfed then for about 9 weeks with my mum and brother (Tia).

These experiences and the misinterpretation and misapplication of the housing legislation in Wales has been found in other recent studies (Jackson, 2018; Ahmed et al, 2018; Madoc Jones et al, 2018). This resulted in some women in this study having to sleep rough, sofa surf, or return to their home with the perpetrator and continue to be living at risk and experiencing abuse. There was also a difference in outcomes for some single survivors and those without their children. These survivors were more likely to be offered alternative emergency or temporary accommodation outside of refuge provision. This was typically hostel provision, which many reported having negative experiences of and/or being reluctant to access. These alternative forms of accommodation were experienced and perceived as being chaotic, scary and intimidating environments.

This failure to implement emergency prevention led to survivors experiencing longer periods of housing instability and precarity. The data also suggests that these survivors were more likely to be in Pathways Two and Four. The lack of assistance and poor outcomes also led to negative perceptions of the local authority and a reluctance to approach for further help. This led many of the women in this group to circumnavigate the system and in many cases disengage with services.

Interactions with the domestic abuse planet were most likely at point of emergency compared to other stages. The experiences of specialist services were reported as being positive and key to keeping them and their children safe. The support and help offered while in refuge was widely felt to have been essential in many of the survivors coping with the trauma and stress of the abuse and following disruption to their lives. The assistance with both complex and simple tasks was reported by survivors as essential. Many described this as being a time where they began to realise the severity and extent of the abuse and process what had happened to them. The space and support offered through refuge meant that the women accessing it described feeling safe for the first time.

I'm a bit scared of men and there's not really men that go there and if they are going to have men in to do work or anything the staff explain, and they let you know they are coming in. They will stay with you and make sure you're comfortable. And like I said before the support is amazing. I was too scared to even sleep in my old house and now I'm much better it is all the support (Donna).

But when I went into the refuge and even since I have left, I have never felt so safe because nobody can get you, nobody knows where you are nobody can find you. They can't come after you (Ashley).

I have been 40 days sober and a year off drugs. I'm having counselling, refuge has literally saved my life. There is no doubt about it I wouldn't be here without it. I feel so much better (Tanya).

The data suggests that there was a lower level of interaction with specialist organisations for those who did not enter refuge and as previously mentioned, particularly those that had a poor outcome when trying to access support and advice. This was particularly true for single survivors without children. For some of these survivors, their interactions began further on in the repeat stage, whilst for others a referral was made at the point of a repeat crisis or at a later stage but when the abuse had restarted. The ability for specialist organisations to have a positive impact on survivor safety and particularly those that had remained in their homes, depended on the legal remedies in place to protect the survivor and the enforcement of these by the police when they were breached. There were experiences shared that suggest that opportunities at this stage for police to charge perpetrators were missed.

I've moved three times and at the last address he smashed my door in, and I had this on camera because I had managed to buy a camera by then. But literally no police help (Chloe).

The police were telling me (perpetrator) wasn't going to get away with stuff, but they was. There were even times where I was being made out to be a liar and it felt that nobody believed me and then when I showed them proof it was fine. They keep telling me it was the biggest and bravest thing you've ever done. But it wasn't it was the stupidest thing I ever did I should have just got out walked away and never looked back, that would have been the best way (Lucy).

I had a mark...and they had asked what happened and my daughter told them it was done by him... because they had disclosed, they had to (arrest perpetrator) ... In the end the police didn't charge him, but they did go to the flat and remove him from the flat, but they didn't charge him (Holly).

There were examples of positive interactions with the police, and they were most often the agency that was called at this point. Some women described the police working hard to try to secure them safe accommodation, support them to return safely home and to hold the perpetrator accountable. There were, however, issues from some of the agencies that prevented the police from being able to fully achieve this. A key issue was difficulty accessing refuge; some survivors were offered refuge provision that was too far away, would not accept older children, or in some cases there was such a lack of provision that they were expected to wait. Issues around tenancy and occupation rights also seemed to provide a challenge to the police and in some cases led to the survivor being told they could not return home despite a legal right to do so. Issues around child protection also led to some conflicting agendas and priorities between the police and social services, with social services pressuring the victim to leave whilst offering no alternative accommodation, and the police being unable to pursue pressing charges because of a lack of cooperation from either the survivor or other witnesses. This is all occurring at a time where evidence shows the risk to the victim and their children is particularly high. This finding resonates with the evidence around experiences of police officers found in other studies (Robinson et al, 2016; Hester, 2011; Abrahams, 2010). These

experiences and examples demonstrate how the misalignment between the planets can undermine the work and actions of each other and ultimately the ability to safeguard the survivor.

Experiences with the child protection planet tended to peak at this point, according to the housing maps data. This is understandable as women are generally fleeing their accommodation, are at greater risk, and so their children's wellbeing and safety is likely to become a priority for statutory services. This point in time is interesting from a child protection lens; in fleeing, the survivor has demonstrated they are able to protect their child from the perpetrator and also highlights how serious the abuse and level of risk is. In many cases this action by survivors was prompted and influenced by the fears of children being placed into care by social services, however this was the point when many of the perpetrators carried out their threats and made claims against the survivor. These claims commonly focus on neglect, mental illness, substance use and physical abuse to convince social services that the victims were unfit to parent. This led to some of the survivor's losing custody of their children or being placed in a position where they had to demonstrate their ability to parent at a time when their lives were most chaotic. The possibility that their children could be removed or given to the perpetrator was a key concern and issue for many of the women at this point and during recovery.

It took so long because he is really manipulative, and he has parental rights. He was putting things in my son's head to make my son want to stay at home...He is a master manipulator; he has managed to manipulate social services and everything (Kelly).

He smacked (child)...and they had a whole handprint of red and sore and lumpy. I just thought all of his behaviour with the drinking, verbal, bullying I had enough...I spoke to my friend, and she told me to ring the police because if social services hear that he has hit (child) and I haven't reported it I could lose them (Emma).

Rachel: I went to the solicitor the other day about the tenancy and child access. I assumed you go to a solicitor, and they put something in place, and he can't take her but that isn't the case it isn't legally binding.

Naomi: You need to ring social services and tell them you want supervised visits in a contact centre, and they will arrange it. I had to do it because my ex took my boy once for a week and wouldn't give him back. I was having a heart attack.

There were a smaller number of survivors that for a range of reasons had to flee without their children or stepchildren. For some, their time at emergency accommodation was then spent trying to regain custody of their children, make sure their children were safe, and/or deal with the trauma of being unable to continue to see them. For those with stepchildren they reported having to literally step away. One was blocked from having custody of theirs by the perpetrator and the children were subsequently placed into care. Another described the loss they felt at having to walk away from their stepchild and the fear for the child's wellbeing but not being

taken seriously by social services because they were not the biological parent. Others explained situations where they were unable to bring their children with them because of rules around refuge, because the perpetrator or family refused access, or because the children were taken into care. These pressures led many survivors to either refuse offers of refuge accommodation and then be perceived not to be cooperating, to exit refuge provision early into insecure housing, or to disengage and self-solve.

My son was at his nan's, and they refused to give him back...The dad and my son have been living with the nan in her one-bedroom flat, my daughter went there for a week and when she came back, she said she didn't want to go back because of what they were saying about me (Claire).

I have two stepchildren that he put in care rather than leave with me. It was really hard, and I understand now why the judge did what they did, he was the father, so he had parental responsibility, so the judge gave him the choice you either leave them with her or put them in care and he chose care (Leila).

There were examples of positive interactions and outcomes between survivors and children's social services and several women had been able to work with them to demonstrate they were capable of parenting. There were some survivors in this study whose children had been taken in to care and although traumatic they understood the reasons why and felt that it was the best choice for their child. It was in these cases that there was a higher reporting of cooperation between social services and the survivor to protect the child from the perpetrator. This engagement was described in much more positive terms and social services were perceived to be more of a source of advocacy and support than by other survivors and at other points in time.

This is why it has taken me so long to get me where I am now because I was scared, I would lose my kids because that is what he kept on saying. I have now spoken to social services and they're not getting involved because I have left and I'm staying away, I'm making steps (Poppy).

A woman from women's aid came to the house and there were two policemen that came around and said they would make the house safe. My social worker was there, and he had rung my landlord and my landlord said whether it was legal or not he was putting the house into my name immediately (Jane).

Social services got involved and put a section 49 in place which meant he couldn't have any contact with her whatsoever. I was getting text messages, emails, so I had to block everything (Lily).

Interactions with the child contact planet were not particularly prevalent at this point but the threat and worry of future child contact arrangements was reported as being quite common for survivors. At a time when many had fled with barely any possessions and had limited resources, they also had to start planning and considering how to pay future legal fees.

As with the crisis stage, interactions with health were consistent and a wide range of health services were accessed. For some women the incident that had prompted them fleeing had led to injuries that they needed emergency care for, while others had to access support for their mental health and some accessed health services for help with an addiction they had developed as a coping mechanism. These interactions were viewed either neutrally or positively, but there is little evidence to show any relationship between these having an impact on the prevention of domestic abuse nor homelessness. There was, however, a recognition that these interactions were the first steps towards healing and recovery from the impacts of domestic abuse.

I've been referred for bereavement counselling now, I've never been offered that before because I didn't like the word counselling, I thought I was the wrong person for it but I'm actually not. That was when I was heavily drinking. But I'm happy now I'm fine as anything... The environment, the detox, and the counselling together mean that this is my time now, I've had enough of it all (Isobel).

In summary, emergency prevention occurs at the most desperate and dangerous time for survivors and their children. These emergencies may be triggered by a serious incident, may be opportunistic and the only time a survivor has the chance to access help, or be the loss of home due to abuse. The housing maps suggest that this is the time of most intensive engagement with services and the time where interactions are happening with the highest number of agencies across the planets. This is largely due to the referral processes between agencies that take place to safeguard survivors and their children. Similar to the crisis stage, there is a high level of inconsistency across sectors and from agencies. Some survivors had positive outcomes with housing services; these included being able to access refuge and having their property target hardened. Others were refused assistance due to wrongful interpretation and implementation of the housing legislation, lack of suitable provision or lack of recognition of the level of risk and timely response. Interactions with police were equally as varied with some reporting receiving support and help to stay safe, while others shared examples of a lack of enforcement and misunderstanding of tenancy issues. There were further inconsistent experiences with children's social services, with some experiencing pressure and fear through their interactions and others finding them a source of advocacy and support.

The experiences of survivors with each planet and the individual agencies on the planet reinforce the findings of Hester's study (2011). That study highlighted that the planets do not necessarily communicate effectively with each other or always work well together. The findings from this research suggest that there are even conflicts and gaps between agencies occupying

the same planet. The data suggests that the success of the agencies in keeping survivors safe and addressing the domestic abuse are interdependent. Examples of this include the need for the police to be able to access safe housing for the survivor, while housing providers often need the police and legal remedies to keep survivors safe at home and in the community to avoid them having to access emergency accommodation. Similarly, social services place pressure on the survivor to end the relationship or leave the home to ensure the safety of the child, but the police know that this is when the risk is most acute and therefore, they need engagement and cooperation from housing services to be able to provide safe accommodation. There was no service that had universally negative outcomes, but there was in most cases a failure of the various agencies to work collaboratively and cohesively and this was where there were negative outcomes.

6.4 Repeat Prevention

This stage is defined by Fitzpatrick et al (2019) as the prevention of repeat homelessness. In the context of domestic abuse and based on the findings from this study, this work can only take place when the level of risk has dramatically decreased or stopped. As previously discussed, where there is a continued presence of abuse and harassment there is an inherent risk of homelessness occurring. This means that for survivors in these situations the work that would take place by agencies to safeguard would be classed as either crisis prevention, or emergency prevention when the risk is most acute, and the survivor has had to flee from their home.

The opportunity for repeat prevention work would begin after a survivor has been resettled following a stay in refuge or other emergency provision, after target hardening and legal remedies had been implemented to enable the survivor to remain in their home safely, or at any point where the perpetrator appears to no longer pose a risk and there is a good level of housing security. There were some survivors in this study who were still living in emergency accommodation. For some of these survivors this was a repeated experience of refuge, and they were able to reflect on interactions with agencies during the repeat prevention phase in the past. There was also a cohort of survivors who were able to reflect on repeat prevention after a fairly recent experience of domestic abuse and homelessness. For others, they were unable to share experiences of repeat prevention because they had not begun the resettlement process.

This reflective process is particularly useful in understanding the effectiveness of prevention work and safeguarding measures years after an emergency. These are experiences that are often overlooked or missing from the literature and discussions around domestic abuse. There

is a tendency for the focus to be around the immediate aftermath of abuse, post-relationship. What has emerged and will be discussed in this section is the fact that many survivors, years after ending an abusive relationship are still experiencing the impacts from that and in many cases still experiencing abuse, control and coercion. This abuse goes largely unnoticed or unaddressed by agencies and there seems to be a misunderstanding of the level of risk that survivors feel still exists to their safety.

This section will discuss how repeat prevention work enabled survivors to rebuild their lives after abuse, and what type of actions and measures they found effective in this process. It will also discuss the gaps and barriers to recovery that survivors experienced and where there was an absence of repeat prevention in their journeys. This discussion will be structured chronologically and begin mainly at resettlement and then continue to reflect on experiences with the planets over time.

There was a mixed experience for those who entered refuge, as for some the repeat stage of prevention work occurred as they were preparing to move on, while for others it began while they were a few months into their stay in refuge and far before they were preparing to move into permanent accommodation. The first group that experienced repeat prevention at the point of moving on, commonly reported actions such as help with applications for social or privately rented housing, support with income maximisation and budgeting and help to access furniture for their new homes. Many reported receiving tenancy-support post-refuge and felt that this was helpful. For the second group, who experienced repeat prevention in refuge, this tended to include much more intensive support that focussed on building self-esteem, living skills, and addressing issues such as substance use or challenges with mental health.

Without (specialist organisation) I don't know where me and the kids would be and that's the truth. They saved our lives. It was so bad I think we'd be dead he would have killed me and them to get to me. I mean I know going in to refuge we've lost everything, and we are grieving but the support they give is amazing, the people that they arrange for you to see like a counsellor and all the support groups I don't think they get praise enough actually for all the work they do (Shelley).

It makes me feel lucky that I went into refuge and had that many services open to me because I had a support worker to do all that for me, I personally didn't have direct contact with the council. The support worker helped me with everything. Now I have my flat with a housing association I know my tenancy is secure the landlord won't just suddenly decide to sell, my rent is really affordable it's a small flat very efficient. So, it has helped create that stability for me that has then enabled me to get my business running again, because how do you work when your home isn't secure how do you do that? (Emma)

There were also aspects of refuge that survivors felt helped to prepare them for independent living. Many of them described how they had been controlled to such a degree that they felt

ill-equipped to make decisions and carry out simple tasks like shopping or paying bills. The opportunity to do some of these things with the support from staff at the refuge was felt to be incredibly important in building up skills and confidence to be able to continue this in the future and by themselves.

I'll never forget the first time the staff took me shopping and I said what do I buy? The support worker said, "well just shopping", but I didn't know what to buy. Simple things but I didn't even know what I liked because I had only had what he got so it's nice being able to go and buy clothes (Emily).

I have never had to pay bills and stuff it's all been done for me. I never had control over doing it. I'm quite looking forward to taking control and seeing how I do manage it, because even paying my service charge each month, I feel proud, because it's something I've done (Tara).

Contrary to these experiences, some survivors described feeling scared and ill-prepared to leave refuge. Some described feeling dependent on the support that was available and sharing concerns that a reduction in the level of support would make them unable to cope with living independently. This was more evident for the women that had spent a significant amount of time in refuge and those who experienced highest levels of need and severity of abuse. This reflects existing evidence that highlights the risks associated with prolonged stays in refuge and barriers to re-accessing permanent housing (Abrahams, 2007; McNaughton and Sanders, 2007; Abrahams, 2010).

I will definitely miss refuge, when I have to leave it is going to be the biggest step, I've ever had to do in my life I think, but I know I have to do it and I do feel sort of ready, but I don't do change and any change I can't adapt so it's going to take me a while to not have 24-hour support (Seren)

Some of the survivors exiting refuge felt that there was a lack of adequate support, and many struggled with having to navigate services once they had left. Notably, many of those who struggled had rushed to exit refuge. This rush was often influenced by either poor conditions or experiences of refuge, pressure to leave to demonstrate an ability to parent to social services and/or family courts, or because they had been unable to access refuge with their children and needed to leave to be with them.

They got involved five years ago when I first left, I went into refuge. I was in there three weeks, and I refused to give up my house and I refused to leave the area and was adamant that no one was going to make leave that I was going back. I went home after three weeks and within three months he was back in the house. Social services put the kids on the at-risk register (May).

I rushed coming out because I was trying to get my family back together and maybe if I'd stayed in there longer, I would have had more of an idea of what was going on. I did have an ISVA allocated to me in refuge, but I didn't hear hide nor hair of her when I came out of refuge (Taylor).

They moved me and the 2 kids...in the refuge and it was hard because I didn't know anyone, I didn't like it, so I came back. After (refuge) I found my own housing, rented, I found it myself and didn't have any help, money, or assistance. They told me they couldn't help me with the bond or anything and I didn't have any support set up (Paige).

This rush often led to survivors exiting into unsuitable accommodation. The reasons for accommodation being unsuitable included unaffordable, insecure, unsuitable for needs or in some cases back to the family home where they were not safe from the perpetrator or community. In these cases, the experiences of survivors suggests that in rushing out they have somehow slipped through the net and the support that was evident for others failed to materialise for this group. However, in most cases there was an overwhelming recurrence or continuation of abuse regardless of support being in place.

Social services have warned him and by the police to stay away, he synced his phone to mine and was tracking where I was, my messages everything. Social services don't care they're the worst... The council were no help they refused to help me, so did the police. Even though I was unsafe, and he and others were watching the property (Nia).

Yeah, I had social services and a red alert with the police, so if anything, they would come out immediately. On paper I was fine, but in reality, it was hell (Imani).

The thing is these are small communities they know where I've gone, they know where my family live... the policemen said don't worry if you need us, we'll be straight here we've got markers on your name don't worry. The day I rang them about (perpetrator) going past all day, I phoned them, 2 hours they didn't do nothing, rang back again nothing and then eventually when I played right up, they came out later on (Morgan).

A lack of support was not just evident for those who had to rush out of refuge but also for a small number who went through a full move-on process but still had issues with their housing transition. This included going into unfurnished homes. Having no possessions including white goods, not having utilities set up, and moving in without benefits being in place resulted in them accruing arrears at the very beginning of their tenancy.

I do think the girls should have a lot more support when leaving refuge, because I know a few girls that have left have told me that you get a 10-week period where (specialist organisation) will come and visit once a week and that doesn't happen. Everyone that has left that I know has said that it doesn't happen. So, I've been there so long that I'm going to live on my own and probably have no support and it's a big step. The refuge is fine, but I do think the girls should be given so much more support when they've left because that is when you're at your lowest when you feel alone, that's when they may be tempted to get back with their ex or just get with anyone else to keep them company. So, I think it's important to make that girl feel as though they aren't alone because that is when they will go back (Jayne).

The experience of survivors who stayed in their home highlighted similar issues about the lack of long-term repeat prevention work. Many had their homes target hardened and some legal remedies in place, but these almost universally failed. As discussed in the pathways chapter, there were a range of problems with target hardening equipment; these ranged from faulty

equipment, failures of locks and doors, and complicit communities that refused to report security breaches. This placed the survivors in an incredibly vulnerable position. This led to a deterioration in their housing situations, and as such the help they needed because of a lack of effective recovery prevention shifted to a point where they again needed crisis or emergency prevention. However, the lack of enforcement activity by the police was again identified as a significant factor in making home an unsafe place.

He kept tracking me down. The Police said we'll have him now and you'll be safe but, in a bit, he'd be back at my window. They'd lock him up for a minute and then just drop him up the road from my house (Louise).

I had the neighbour spying on me, making him aware of who was at my house, where I was going. Because it is quite a small village anyway people knew... So, they were keeping him up to date on when I was leaving and when I was coming back... At one point there was a PIN in place I tried to get something more but there was no evidence. When the police would come out, he would leave before they arrived, and they didn't take witness statements from anyone in the block (Hannah).

He knows where I live. The last time we were in court he was told to stop intimidating me by driving up and down my street four times a day beeping. So now he still drives up and down my street repeatedly, but he doesn't beep. If I'm walking to get the bus, he will be parked in the layby down the road, but the police have said that he is operating just below the line to do anything. I don't feel safe where I live, it's just gone from the frying pan into the fire, yes, I'm not with him but I might as well be because I'm still as fearful (Phoebe).

There was reported to be little response from housing services at this point. In most cases survivors were placed on the housing register for a move, but not given priority as they were not regarded as homeless or at risk because their property was target hardened. In some cases, they were offered refuge provision, however there generally appeared to be a misunderstanding or ignorance of the level of risk and harm survivors were facing.

I put myself on the transfer list... and then went to the council who offered me a place, but it was across the way from where I am and there is a lot of not nice people, drugs and ASB over there. With my son being autistic as well there isn't enough of a support network compared to where I am now, so I got taken off the list and had to reapply a year later... they don't look at the list often, I've been on home swap, but no one wants a maisonette. I think being in the house is bad for my daughter because she has memories as well and she has seen a lot in there and she started hitting out and punching as well (Tracey).

I reported it to the housing too because it was a secure building, so you had to buzz in and out. But my neighbour kept on leaving the back door open for him to get in... The only way I could get out of the flat was to do an exchange and they allowed me to exchange early, but no one wanted a 3rd floor flat. They put me back on the register, but I was all the way down the bottom, so it didn't really help (Claire).

Where I went didn't matter as long as it was realistic, but every time I bid on a property, I was nowhere near getting there I was ranked in the hundreds (Fiona).

Several factors were particularly influential in shaping how safe survivors felt. In cases where the perpetrator's behaviour was viewed as having been addressed and managed, survivors were more likely to report feeling safe. This management of perpetrators included them being in prison, where there was no physical violence and where the perpetrator had ceased to physically harass. This did not mean all abuse had stopped but there was less risk of physical harm, and the legal remedies were more likely to be adhered to. Another factor was linked with the presence of children; survivors without children tended to report being able to sever ties more effectively with the perpetrator as they had no reason to interact with them directly or indirectly. The third factor related to the perpetrator knowing the location of the survivor. This was much more likely in cases where there were children or financial ties such as joint mortgages. Understanding why and how survivors felt safe supports the identification of effective safeguarding and preventative measures and methods. Feeling safe was reported in a small number of cases across the sample and was largely dictated by both the level of contact with the perpetrator and the dynamics of their behaviour. In the absence of the perpetrator's behaviour being managed, one of the most influential factors impacting feelings of safety was the perpetrator not knowing where the survivor lived.

I didn't move my partner moved out... I do feel safe in the house and there is an agreement in place about child contact... It was straightforward because it was just my tenancy. He wasn't violent, just very controlling (Stacey).

I would have felt safe staying in my home, everyone knows me in the area. Refuge wasn't an option. I own my own home and am happy there and he is in prison (Tasha).

I feel somewhat secure where I am, my thing is him knowing and being able to locate where I am now. He is a perpetrator, and he won't change that behaviour will just start back up again...I do feel safe and I'm happy to walk around whereas in the flat I wouldn't, I couldn't really go out, every time I went to the shop him, or a family member, would turn up (Leila).

I think I have probably built a better life than I had before but there is still that worry, next week I will have been in my flat for 5 years and I'm thinking is that too long is he going to find me because I have always felt that he is a long-term risk to me not a short-term one. I feel there is going to be a trigger or something where he is going to come and find me (Natalie).

One of the key threats to survivors being able to withhold their address from a perpetrator is the process and occurrence of child contact. It is during this period of resettlement and recovery that interactions with the child contact planet peaked. This was almost universally regarded by survivors to be one of the most challenging and stressful processes they had faced. As Hester (2011) found, the family courts tend to take a neutral stance on family issues and focus solely on arrangements for access to the child. All survivors who had attended family court reported feeling as though the domestic abuse and actions of the perpetrator were not considered significant by the court. This placed survivors in a position where they were having

to physically share a space with their perpetrator, communicate directly with them, discuss the abuse in a relatively public setting and then not being viewed as a victim or offered any real protection. Recent research exploring survivor's experiences of family courts reflected many of the findings and experiences shared in this study (Birchall and Choudry, 2018). Examples were shared where the process of going through family courts made it easier for perpetrators to locate survivors.

But I had to move out of the exclusion zone as well so it means the perpetrator can park outside the house when he drops the kids off and picks them up at holiday crossover...the children come through the back door so my front door is never opened, and he can't see in (Sarah).

This house is council I like it they were really good and put a new door in, alarms on the windows. They safeguarded me that way. He doesn't know where exactly I am, but he knows the county because of the court papers for contact...He does have contact, it started with supervised but has built up. His overnight has happened we do a handover place, and my mum does that, so I don't have any contact. He knows what county I'm in now, he's now pushing to know what surgery and school my daughter is in to locate me. I think the information will be shared because he has parental rights and responsibility, but I have to put it to a judge and hopefully they will say no to disclosing that information. Because if he has that information, it is quite easy to locate where I am. He could track my car and do the same as previously like sending people to the area to find me and track me (Keira).

There were cases where interactions with courts had led to perpetrators being able to find survivors homes, know which schools' children were attending, and have access to medical records. This meant that they were able to predict where survivors were living and where they could be found. Furthermore, the arrangements that were agreed upon in these courts often resulted in the perpetrator having access to their child and thus maintaining an element of control over the survivor. Survivors shared examples of how the perpetrator would utilise this contact to carry out harassment, bullying and other forms of abuse.

I moved them (the children's school) and that went against me, you uprooted them, they had all their friends, and it went against me. What can I say to it? They have witnessed domestic violence in the most hideous way is that not more damaging than moving schools once. And I have been told that if I move them again, uproot them again then I will lose them, and he will have them. So even though I have moved address he knows their school and that's how I've been followed to the next 3 or 4 addresses. By the time I've paid £35k for family court on top of my rent on top of everything else I couldn't afford to do anything else (Louise).

These arrangements and the actions of the courts directly undermined the safety of a significant number of survivors. The ability of perpetrators to locate survivors and still have an almost direct link to them was felt to be the biggest weakness in survivor recovery. There were cases where the work that had taken place at the crisis, emergency and repeat prevention stages was at risk of being undone and reversed because of the threat posed by a

perpetrator's ability to exploit and utilise child contact to continue the control and abuse of survivors. Furthermore, there was evidence that the function of the courts failed to consider the impact of abuse on survivors and set unrealistic targets or expectations on them, particularly mothers. There were examples of survivors being judged by the courts for their financial difficulties, debts and lack of possessions; all of which were significantly impacted by the financial abuse they had endured. There was a feeling that the same scrutiny was not applied to the perpetrator, and they were not held accountable. This pressure led survivors to attempt to improve their living situations in ways that were detrimental and unsustainable. In the worst cases these may lead to future and repeat episodes of homelessness.

So, I was just stuck paying for a house that I wasn't even in... So, I got a job and went back to work as soon as I could...I managed to get a sofa about 6 months later, I was fighting the courts who were saying that if I couldn't afford to buy a sofa then I couldn't afford to keep my kids and they would be given back to him. I literally had to get debt to buy anything essential (Tanya).

I had a fridge full of lovely fresh food for their dinners, they had beds I didn't even have a bed but because my house was so sparse...he has a lovely house, well, yes, he's a drug dealer...and him being a convicted perpetrator (Rachel).

I would never have considered refuge it wouldn't have even been an option for me because I would have instantly lost my job and everything. To me that was the biggest fear and that I would have lost my children, because he is a man of financial means he would have taken my children off me if I had gone into refuge (Maria).

Family court at one point wouldn't give me my kids because I didn't have accommodation, but I didn't have accommodation because I had fled abuse (Karen).

There was evidence in some cases, that the thinking of the courts conflicted with the child protection planet by failing to recognise the achievements of mothers in rebuilding their lives and threatening to grant custody and access rights to violent perpetrators. In a number of cases where decisions had been made, contact had to be stopped at a further date because harm had been caused to the child. Allegations by perpetrators of survivors 'turning the child against them' were commonly used to discredit and shift focus on to the mother. An interesting finding of this study is that several women reported being victim of parental alienation themselves. A number of the women had children that had chosen to stay with the father/perpetrator. This was seen as a result of the perpetrators action in undermining, controlling, and manipulating the victim's ability to parent during the relationship. In these cases, there was felt that the same level of scrutiny had not been applied to the arrangements by social services or the family courts.

It feels like a never-ending entrapment feeling that you have to be secretive. When he used to see the kids before the courts stopped him. He used to buy the kids products that would have trackers in them, and track where we were. So, if we went away or

moved, he always knew where we were. I didn't know anything about it. If I met him in McDonalds to handover the kids, because it was never at my address, if I went to get the kids a meal, he would have stuck a tracker on my car while I was gone, it was constant. (Leanne)

I have got a 2-year-old and 4-year-old and my ex-husband kidnaps them and I have had the most horrific time then because I thought he was going to go back to (home country) with them and I will never see my children again or he will kill them. (Lisa)

He would take them and not give them back and no one can do a thing about it. So, I had to get a court order stating when the children had to be with me and when they had to be with him. But it's just a piece of paper, the paper is supposed to be a safety mechanism but is he in his right mind going to listen? He always pushes to show that he can, the court have just allocated him 50/50 care, even with the DA because on paper he can show he can do it. (Faye)

They don't do anything my daughter came home with a clear hand-print bruise on the top of her arm and I rang social services and sent them a photo and they haven't even come and checked my children because she won't say he did it. (Sian)

Birchall and Choudry (2018) found that survivors going through family courts faced a lack of understanding and awareness of domestic abuse, gender discrimination, and gaps in safeguarding. These were felt to undermine the human rights of the women and their children who were subject to decisions made by the court that placed them at risk. The experiences of survivors in this study mirror this fully and these challenges correlate directly with their home and community becoming an increasingly dangerous place to be.

This section has demonstrated the numerous barriers that survivors face when trying to rebuild their lives and the lack of recovery prevention across the planets. As with the other prevention stages, there were some successes by individual agencies and within some planets. However, there was again a lack of coordination and cooperation between the various services and agencies that left survivors at risk and undermined the prevention successes that had been achieved prior to this. Experiences of move on from refuge were varied and there was an inconsistent approach to the level of support available when women returned to live independently. The same inconsistencies in support were seen for those who remained in their homes. The combination of a lack of support, lack of enforcement of legal remedies and ongoing child contact issues resulted in survivors and their children being once again at risk, revictimised, and traumatised. This prevented them from truly recovering. Few of the women felt that they had fully and truly recovered, even up to ten years after leaving their perpetrator. Many were still experiencing some form of control and coercion, and most were still dealing with the impacts of the abuse. This occurred with prolonged experiences of housing precarity and crisis and the evidence suggests that housing services are inconsistently and inadequately responding to these issues in many instances.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explored the experiences of survivors through a homelessness prevention lens, using the prevention framework developed by Fitzpatrick et al (2019). It considered a whole housing approach, as developed by DAHA (2020) and whole life approach, reflecting the long term nature of domestic abuse and its impacts. What emerged is a continuing clear lack of coordination and cooperation between agencies across Hester's (2011) three planets. These failures led to many survivors being in a prolonged period of crisis and in a cycle between crisis, emergency, and repeat. This reflects the findings from Hester's study and also highlights continuing gaps around the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, police responses to domestic abuse, and the failures of the family courts to protect survivors and their children. This also supports the findings of recent work examining domestic abuse interventions in Wales which found that there was inconsistency and fragmentation of interventions, funding and governance (Price et al, 2020). The actions of the child contact planet, in particular, placed survivors at long-term risk. The failure of the domestic abuse planet to enforce legal remedies left survivors in precarious situations, which they were then penalised for by the child protection and child contact planets. With these pressures was an increasing likelihood that assistance from services, and particularly housing and homelessness prevention services, would be needed in the future. The issues with the family courts are well evidenced and research has found that there are barriers, practices and procedures that cause and risk very real harm to survivors and their children. This research, as with the findings from this study, shows that experiences of family courts are distressing and retraumatises survivors and their children (Birchall & Choudry, 2018; Barnett, 2020). Furthermore, it has been argued that the failure of the courts to robustly consider domestic abuse and the harm perpetrators pose to children and victims has contributed to them witnessing and experiencing abuse. There is a strong body of evidence which shows the level of abuse witnessed and experienced by children from the perpetrators often escalates postseparation where contact is continued (Sturge and Glaser, 2000; Mullender, 2004; Saunders, 2004; Radford and Hester, 2006; Holt et al, 2008; Harne, 2011; Stanley, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012; Holt, 2015; Morrison, 2015; Women's Aid, 2016; Callaghan et al, 2018; Barnett, 2020). Within this study, the fears of the survivors for their children and themselves cannot be underestimated. This fear was pervasive and impacted upon their ability to recover and rebuild their lives after abuse and meant that the perpetrator still had a mechanism to continue controlling and coercing. Between 2005 and 2015 nineteen children were murdered by a parent that was a perpetrator (Women's Aid, 2016). This demonstrates the very real risk and danger posed by perpetrators to children. Recent joint work and recommendations from the domestic abuse commissioner and victim's commissioner (2021), are aiming to address the structural issues faced in the courts and

improve outcomes for survivors and their children. Many of the experiences in this study resonate strongly with existing research across the domestic abuse field. However, applying a housing lens to these stories identifies a clear correlation between the dysfunction of the planets and housing instability. Furthermore, considering this from a homelessness prevention perspective highlights how ineffective the role of housing may be in preventing homelessness without the cooperation and engagement with and from the other planets. In light of England's proposed Domestic Abuse Bill and the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) which follows the shift to prevention seen in the Housing (Wales) Act (2014) and the requirement for multiagency working as a means to preventing abuse in the VAWDASV Act in Wales (2015), there are some lessons to be shared about the exact nature and definition of prevention work in the context of domestic abuse. Homelessness prevention cannot be achieved for survivors of domestic abuse unless there is a clear understanding of the dynamics of abuse, a range of suitable and adequate housing solutions available, and a coordinated multi-agency response. Furthermore, homelessness prevention for survivors of domestic abuse may extend well beyond the resettlement phase and can indeed be necessary years later. What emerged strongly in this research was the pervasive effect domestic abuse had on housing stability; if a survivor is housed but feels unsafe then that cannot be a home and they cannot truly recover while still being victimised. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Meaning of Home in the Context of Domestic Abuse

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the third objective of the research; it explores experiences of home in the context of domestic abuse and investigates how this changes over time and what affects this experience for survivors. This question is pivotal to the study, as if we are considering homelessness prevention in the context of domestic abuse we need to understand what a home for survivors of DA looks like. The only way to truly prevent homelessness is to provide someone with a home, understanding what creates a sense of home is therefore essential.

The methodology chapter discussed the multi-modal approach to data collection for this study. In addition to the housing maps, semi-structured interviews and focus groups there was a third stage that included creative methods. The session centred around what home and homelessness meant to the participants during and post abuse. The resulting data included tables, posters, and drawings. Some of the participants felt more comfortable talking about the topic rather than using a creative method, resulting in a body of qualitative data. In these sessions, participants were asked; 'what did home mean to you in the past, what does it mean now and what does it mean in the future'? Home in the future was added, as some participants were still living in refuge and it enabled a conversation and understanding of their hopes and wants from housing and home in the future, as well as reflecting the housing pathways approach which includes forward facing housing aspirations. Furthermore, across the group it led to the workshop ending with a positive and hopeful discussion on healing and recovery which felt an ethical and sensitive way to end what were often days of intense discussions around abuse, trauma, and loss.

The main response to this question by survivors in the first group was the creation of tables with three columns: past, present, future. These columns were then filled with words that described either what was happening in the home or how the home was experienced at that time. In the following groups one of the tables from the first was shown as an example to prompt the survivors, however this appeared to almost restrict the data to copies of that format leading to the majority of survivors in those groups creating tables. Subsequently, in the last few sessions there was no example shared and survivors were encouraged to create in whatever way they felt comfortable to do so. This led to a more diverse set of results. Most survivors drew pictures, whilst others used a mixture of both pictures and words. Following this initial question, two further questions were asked; 'can you describe a time when you felt homeless' and 'can you describe a time where you felt at home?'. These questions continue the whole life approach pursued throughout the study, including experiences before, during and after abuse. These questions prompted an immensely insightful conversation about the

factors that create a sense of home and the experience of homelessness in the face of a lack of these factors.

Three distinct themes emerged from the data: choice and control; community, family, and networks; and safety and security. Interestingly, these themes directly reflect the tactics and mechanisms perpetrators use to commit abuse; this was an unanticipated finding and furthers our understanding of the nexus between abuse and home. This chapter will discuss the influence of each of the themes on sense of home and how these relate to experiences of domestic abuse. Throughout the chapter, examples of artwork produced by survivors will be shared.

7.2 Choice and Control

One of the key factors that impacted on feelings of home(lessness) for the participants in this study was the ability to have choice of where they lived. This choice extended beyond the type of building to include choice over tenure, location, and the cost of where they resided. The power to make a choice varied over time and was restricted or enabled by numerous external and individual factors. Research has found that choice is a major component in people's recovery from mental illness, it empowers people to make changes to their lives and through doing so provides a feeling of power and control over their lives (O'Connell et al, 2006; Martins et al, 2016; Greenwood and Manning, 2017; Piat et al, 2018). The majority of survivors reported there being a lack of choice over where they lived during the abusive relationship and as discovered in the housing pathways chapter, this was a key aspect in many cases. That chapter found that in a significant number of pathways the abuse escalated after a move of home that was dictated by the perpetrator. In these transitions the level of choice that survivors were able to make was severely limited. Establishing and exerting control over a victim is at the centre of domestic abuse. Perpetrators will use a variety of tactics to maintain their power over the victim and will use threats, coercion, and intimidation to terrorise them. In this context and environment, choices are either completely taken away by perpetrators or restricted to such a degree that they are experienced as an ultimatum rather than an active choice (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008).

I'd been living in Manchester and my ex got a job away in London and made me move...there with him. So, we were living a very long way from anyone that I knew so I was very isolated, and he just went for me, and I couldn't admit to anybody that I had made this terrible mistake and moved all the way to London, and this is what was happening. At that time, I just tried to keep it together and go along (Carys).

I met my second partner and because the house was so bad, and I couldn't see a way out I gave the kids to my mum and then I moved to (town) with him. He had a shared house with other people (Lisa).

In most cases the perpetrator coerced the survivor to agree to a move that would enable a 'fresh start' or make things better within the relationship. However, in most of these cases the move to a new property often led to a reduction in the level of security for the survivor. An example of this is a move from a social tenancy held by the survivor to a private rented tenancy in the perpetrator's name alone, or for the survivor to relinquish their tenancy and move in with the perpetrator. This placed the survivor in a vulnerable position and many of the survivors describe the fact that their name was not on the tenancy or that they had no legal right to occupy and this made them feel the house was not their home. This lack of security will be discussed further on in the chapter; however, it is a strikingly common feature in many of the survivors' experiences and most commonly occurred because the survivor was restricted from making a choice, either by the direct actions and control of the perpetrator or by a lack of alternatives due to a struggling UK housing system.

That was when I felt most homeless if I'm honest with you actually living there with (perpetrator) in a house that wasn't mine. All the stuff was mine, but the house wasn't, and it didn't feel like mine at all. (Ashley)

I've always felt homeless because the house hasn't felt like mine, even though I'm the one that buys everything for it, cleans it, pay the bills it still doesn't feel like it's mine because it is all controlled by him, everything was controlled by him, so it has never felt like home. (Nadia)

The lack of choice over location was another factor that undermined the feelings of home for the survivors. The perpetrators often chose to move to areas that were far from the survivor's family and support networks or to insist that the survivor moved to an area where the perpetrator had established roots and connections. This made it increasingly difficult for survivors to seek support and help for the abuse and again placed them in a situation where they felt a sense of heightened precarity around their situation. In contrast, location was a key factor that survivors had to consider post abuse. The ability to have a choice of location in some cases improved levels of safety and was an effective method to prevent being located or harassed. For those who faced limited choices of location, this linked directly to lower perceptions of safety and was more likely to be reported as a key factor in survivors feeling at risk and therefore still homeless.

I didn't feel rooted where I was because I was in his area which wasn't where I was from. All his family and friends were there, everyone knew him. (Tori)

Affordability of housing was another key factor that survivors reported having little choice over during abuse. In these experiences the responsibility to generate and manage the household's finances was placed solely on the survivor by the perpetrator who refused to contribute or cooperate and would disrupt the income and budgeting creating a constant sense of uncertainty and instability. Many survivors described instances where the perpetrator would

select unaffordable housing and placed the household under financial strain, which then resulted in survivors being coerced to either accrue debts via loans and finance or arrears.

This led to the survivors describing feelings of being under pressure and experiencing constant worry about the security and stability of their home. Perpetrators often used this financial pressure to justify limiting the social activities and interactions that survivors had, claiming that they could not afford to go out for coffee with friends, to buy clothes and make up or go on family day trips. This may have been the case and these households may genuinely have not had the disposable income to afford to do these things. However, this was because of a choice made by the perpetrator without the input from the survivor, but a choice where the impact was felt most strongly by the survivor.

It was a massive house, cold and uncomfortable, I told him before we moved in that it was too expensive but he was insistent and so we got it, it wasn't my choice of home. He put a small amount of his salary towards bills, but I ended up paying for everything. He would pick up loads of stuff, but I would have to pay for it. He put anything he wanted into the trolley, and I had to pay for it. (Joyce)

This control over finances often extended to a micro level and included everyday spending or financial decisions. Many survivors described how they were prevented from making any decisions about the household spending and were not ever given any responsibility of or access to money. In contrast to this experience, the responsibility and control over finances post-abuse was another tangible activity that provided a sense of power and control and was described by survivors as meaning they could dictate the level of comfort in their home, their standard of living and the luxuries or treats that they were able to enjoy which all created a sense of home. The presence of financial abuse and its links with home have recently been explored in depth and the stories shared by survivors in this study reflected much of what has been uncovered through these works. The links with housing go beyond arrears, bankruptcy and eviction to more embodied experiences such as feelings of homelessness while housed (Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015; Sharpe-Jeffs, 2015).

I've never had control over my housing, he paid all the bills, he controlled all the money, if I needed pads even, I had to ask for the money and sometimes he wouldn't even give me that. I've never had to deal with it so it would be nice to be able to do what I want and decorate it, paint it pink everywhere if I wanted to, which I don't but make decisions and choose what I want in there. I never used to have a say in anything so it will be nice. (Alicia)

In some cases, however, the impact of financial abuse was still so keenly felt that this choice and control over finances was felt to be a burden and a particular source of stress for some. This resulted in feelings of insecurity which then undermined the feeling of home that they were able to experience. As discussed in the housing pathways chapter, resources were one of three significant influential factors that determined the trajectory and pathway survivors

experience. The impact of financial abuse was common across the sample and as discussed years later was still impacting on the experience of home (lessness) for some survivors.

The children will complain that it is not the standard of living that they are used to because they are very entitled, but I've explained that we live this way and the house is perfectly fine, we're only there to sleep, you go to school I go to work... the saving I've made on my rent means that I am virtually debt free except for the negative equity on the house which means I am still financially tied to him. (Debbie)

The inability to have a choice over where to live did not just occur during abuse, it was also reported by survivors that lack of choice was a factor affecting the experience of home at the point of fleeing or ending the relationship and at repeat stage. At the point of fleeing or ending the relationship, housing was a key concern and as shown in the pathways chapter there were often limited options for survivors to choose from. In most cases there was a choice to stay put and remain at risk, or leave everything, access refuge and become homeless. However, what emerged strongly for those who left their home and entered refuge was that despite refuge not necessarily being a choice, it felt more like home than their residence with the perpetrator.

I feel like the refuge has been home, I've been here for 14 months so for me it's going to be very difficult to move on. When I transition now from the 24-hour support I will struggle because I'm used to the support, and I've never lived on my own either. (Mae)

The ability to choose to leave, the choice to seek help and the choice in accessing refuge, however limited, all contributed to the survivor feeling as though they had power over their situation that was lacking previously. Whilst in refuge the small choices that were made by survivors every day also added to the feelings of power and was a significant factor in creating feelings and a sense of home while staying in refuge. Piat et al (2018) also found that choice over daily routines, tasks and schedules was key in people feeling at home and able to recover from traumatic experiences. In contrast, for those who remained at the house they had shared with the perpetrator the feeling of home was less evident and this was influenced by many factors. Overwhelmingly in the sample, the people that initially stayed put at the home soon began to face challenges such as ongoing harassment and intimidation, which undermined those feelings of home.

I feel homeless now because of all the problems that I have had there and all the problems I have still got. I'm living in the house but all the trouble I have had inside and outside the house...the person who done it isn't there anymore, but he still bothers me. Like last night I was getting messages all night from random men. So even though he's not there he's still causing arguments and stress and stuff. (Hayley)

The lack of alternative accommodation and housing options then restricted the choices open to the survivors who wanted to move. This led to feelings of being trapped and imprisoned in an unsafe situation. The lack of suitable housing options to choose from also became a

challenge and undermined the sense of home for the survivors that experienced prolonged stays in refuge. As discussed in the previous two chapters there are numerous challenges to securing permanent and suitable housing for women when moving on from refuge. However, for those that did secure permanent, safe housing where choice and the other two themes were present there were clearly feelings of home.

I feel at home now with the kids, I haven't got safety measures or anything because it wasn't a violent relationship it was just very controlling. I'm doing it up and putting my own stamp on it and that's definitely helping it to feel like home. (Helen)

Control over environment was a significant contributing factor to building a sense of home. The simple tasks and actions that take place numerous times a day and are often seen as tedious or insignificant to most, held particular value and meaning for the survivors. Things such as housework, cooking and play with children were opportunities for the survivors to build a sense of normality and routine that had been absent previously. It also allowed for survivors to establish their own rules and structure to their environments that challenged or opposed those that had been set by the perpetrator. Many of the survivors reported mess, clutter and general untidiness as being positive aspects of their house and home, actions such as encouraging messy play, leaving dishes unwashed and leaving toys out were widely discussed and felt to be important in making the environment feel homely and relaxing. Others described the ability to keep their homes clean as a positive, but in either case the positive was seen as the opposite to what had been expected and enforced by the perpetrator.

Now when you come into my house it's only me and my daughter, so you come in and it's clean it's not always tidy because she is like a little tornado going through there sometimes. But it's not filthy, you could come in and all my dishes are clean, my floors are clean, my clothes are clean. (Alex)

These actions could be framed as ways in which survivors actively rebel and reverse some of the restrictions and controls imposed on them by perpetrators and begin to build and support their sense of agency and power. This finding supports existing debates around home as a therapeutic place in which autonomy, sense of self and healing can take place (Kearns et al, 2003; Evans et al, 2003; Padgett, 2007; Piat et al, 2018; Robinson, 2006).

7.3 Community, Family and Networks

Isolation and alienation are tactics that a perpetrator will use as part of abuse. This occurs on multiple levels and across different spheres. Survivors in this study described being isolated and prevented from engaging with or seeking support from formal networks, being alienated or persecuted by their community, having their relationships with family and friends and in many cases their children damaged and undermined. The lack of support and social isolation was a significant aspect that survivors felt informed their experience and view of home

(lessness). This supports existing evidence that highlights the importance of relationships and human interactions when discussing homelessness. These factors are drivers and barriers that impact housing histories, pathways, and careers (Leith, 2006; Parsell & Parsell, 2012; Tsemberis et al, 2012; Dunn, 2013; Woodhall-Melnik, 2016). This study found that relationships across the spectrum were critical in the decision-making process that survivors took when choosing to flee or end the relationship (see the housing pathways chapter), reflecting the findings in other studies (Young Larance & Lane Porter, 2004; Anderson et al, 2012, Klein, 2014). This engagement and connection with formal and informal networks was viewed as vital and very much contributing to a sense of home, both inside the property and in the wider community.

For all participants with children, family and particularly the relationship with their children, were included in their conceptualisation of home. The responses suggest that the idea and experience of home is so interconnected with children and those living in the home that they are synonymous. This reflects findings and evidence from previous studies which conceptualise home as a place that cannot be understood in isolation from the people who live in them (Seamon, 2014; Woodhall-Melnik et al, 2016).

When describing what home meant in the past, many survivors detailed the impact of abuse on their children and included phrases such as 'scared children', 'angry child', and 'kids in fear'. This shows how domestic abuse, although primarily aimed at the victim, also seriously impacts the well-being and safety of children. In most cases, children experienced abuse through witnessing, hearing or directly being exposed to the violence and abuse. These experiences were universally linked with feelings of homelessness. The inability for the children to relax, the victim to be allowed to parent, and the responsibility of the victim to protect their child from the perpetrator, all created a sense of danger and fear that required abnormal levels of vigilance, foresight and alertness that would not typically be found inside most homes. The weight of responsibility to keep their children safe in the face of constant threat resulted in survivors describing how a lack of time to relax, parent and enjoy their children made them feel as though they were failing as a parent and damaged their perceptions of themselves and their ability to create a home environment for their children to grow up in. Research shows the effects of abuse on the psychological well-being and functioning of survivors which then impacts on their ability to manage tasks such as parenting (McNulty et al, 2009; Abrahams, 2010; Kelly et al, 2015).

My priority and focus were always my children and where my children were in relation to what could happen in that house at any time. We lived in a big house so I would constantly put my children in positions in my house where they wouldn't be near me as much as possible and they were safer, because I was the target. (Anna)

For survivors, when deciding whether to flee or stay put their children were priority. For those who accessed refuge, the opportunity to spend time with their children, play and begin to heal from the trauma all supported the relationship being viewed and regarded as healthier and more positive than during abuse. This closeness was widely felt to be one of the main reasons why refuge felt like home. There is a robust body of literature that explores the meaning and importance of home and a common theme across this literature is the inextricable links between home, the people living within it and the activities and events that take place there (Dovey, 1985; Saunders, 1990; Gurney, 1996; Clapham, 2005; Robinson, 2006).

*Even now being in here in refuge in a tiny room, because everything in it is mine and I have both my children in there with me it feels more like home than the house ever did.
(Chantelle)*

In contrast to this experience, but supporting the correlation between home and children, is the experience of those who were unable to enter refuge with their children. For this group refuge was less likely to be perceived as home and more closely related to feelings of homelessness. Furthermore, when discussing their future housing and what they envision home being, the women without their children included regaining custody of their children. This aspiration was intricately linked with their hopes and dreams for their futures and was one of the most influential factors in them feeling as though they would eventually find home.

*I hit such a rock bottom, in this tiny little house. I thought whatever it takes now I am going to make this a home for me and my daughter. But nothing will ever feel like home until my son is with me again, I wouldn't give a shit if we lived in a tent in a field to be honest with you. Home is my kids and nothing else, I've had everything, and it doesn't mean shit. It's all immaterial really, you get sentimental to your bits and your baby boxes and china and all those things but they're nothing compared to having the kids.
(Veronica)*

Not every survivor entered refuge, many stayed put or found alternative accommodation. In these cases, their children were still regarded as a priority and the ability for their children to stay put and maintain their friendships and schooling was felt to be a positive outcome and driver in the decision to remain. However, as discussed in previous chapters, in most cases the abuse and harassment continued. This ongoing and persistent experience of abuse eroded and disrupted the sense of home that survivors had been trying to establish and hoped would manifest with the removal of the perpetrator.

For other survivors, when thinking about their future home they listed happy children, playing with children, and making new memories as a family as their ideals. This shows the presence of children, the ability to choose how to parent and spend time with them and having control over the environment all combine to create a sense of normal family life which is central to the

survivors' concepts of home. Relationships with wider family members and friends were also regarded as important to survivors, when thinking of home.

When I'm with my mam and dad and little boy, when I'm with my family, it makes a difference. (Joy)

Many had been so isolated from friends and family during the abuse that words such as loneliness, isolation and cut off were included in their description of home in the past. This was juxtaposed to the home of their present and future in which having friends over, spending time with family, and sense of community were written. The loss of community, friends and neighbours through loss or end of a tenancy was highlighted as a common issue in a study about young, low-income private renters in the UK and was felt to undermine their sense of ontological security (McKee et al, 2019). In the context of domestic abuse, the same sense of powerlessness to be able to establish or maintain these relationships was reported and occurred directly because of the tactics used by perpetrators. Furthermore, in many cases due to the perpetrator choosing where to live, many of the survivors were living in areas where the perpetrator's family and friends were based. As discussed in the housing pathways chapter, these members of the family and wider community played a critical role in the way in which abuse was perpetrated and in many cases the actions or lack of action enabled and facilitated it.

All his family were living in the same area and his friends, people are scared of him, he is well known. He had men smash my windows. (Paige)

Relationships with family members of the perpetrator were particularly relevant and impactful to the sense of home that survivors experienced. During the abuse these members were often witnesses to it and failed to intervene and stop it. In some cases, they were instigators or actively complicit in the abuse. There were examples where survivors felt these family members had more control and freedom within the home than they themselves did. This enhanced the feelings of powerlessness and fear that completely undermined the experience of home.

But you question it, you think why am I feeling resentment towards his mother she's just here to help me but you know deep down she's not. It wasn't help it was control. It was an extension of control when they weren't there, they got the mother in to control. (Maxine)

I always see it as a dolls house, a little dolls house and I am the doll. I lived in it, but I didn't do any decorating, I didn't buy any furniture, I didn't make any decisions it was all them it was what they wanted me to do. I had no control. I worked out in the end that I paid more towards the mortgage than he did, but it wasn't mine. Financially it was but I had no control. I wasn't allowed to walk in and out when I wanted to, I wasn't allowed to move furniture around or decorate how I wanted to. It always had to be his way, his family's way. If I changed anything he would put it straight back. (Tracey)

Just as the lack of support and close relationships reinforced feelings of homelessness, the presence and emergence of them facilitated the feelings of home. Many survivors felt that interactions with services, neighbours and new friends were vital in their recovery. A particularly valued source of support and strength was the relationships forged with peers through involvement in specialist domestic abuse services. These friendships were seen as key to recovery and many survivors described the feeling of community through these interactions. This was particularly critical for those starting to recover from the impacts of abuse but who had weak relationships with family and for those that felt unable to maintain or establish friendships because of the abuse.

I had a group of friends a group of mums...but I have worked out now that they weren't friends, they were his little spies. My school friends I don't bother with because I am scared of people feeding him information. I have had to sever all of those relationships. The only friendship I have got is probably about two friends that I have known from where I used to work, and we have kept in contact. But other than that, I don't trust people. I like this group but that's it. (Marie)

For some survivors, the relationships they were able to maintain during abuse became invaluable at the point of fleeing or ending the relationship and in many journeys it was these people that provided alternative accommodation, in the form of a sofa or spare room, that survivors were able to use until a more permanent solution had been found. However, in these cases, these short-term offers were not described as providing a sense of home. Yet, the kindness and help provided through these relationships was described as being particularly appreciated and had special meaning for many of the survivors. Examples were shared of family and friends helping financially to secure accommodation, logistically through the provision of lifts and help moving furniture, and through efforts to replace what the survivors had lost. In some cases, this help was a physical and material representation of these relationships in the homes that survivors were establishing, making them even more significant in the conceptualisation of home.

My friends and all credit to them many people quickly started to look around and say do you have this and that and it took a few weeks, but the furniture started to come in...but then also with the other things in the flat it has been filled with the kindness and generosity of other people and what people have given me. (Sasha)

What is important to note from this discussion is that relationships and feeling part of a community are key to providing a sense of home, however on their own and particularly with the ongoing presence of abuse, these relationships and sense of place and belonging failed to provide feelings of home. This is because for all survivors the most important and significant factor that contributed to feelings of home was the feelings of safety and security.

7.4 Safety and Security

Safety and security were inextricably linked with the meaning of home among domestic abuse survivors. The survivors in this study described many actions and behaviours that harmed them both physically and psychologically; these were obviously prominent during the abuse and within the house they resided in with the perpetrator. These were quickly discussed and listed by survivors when describing feelings of homelessness and particularly homes in the past (during abuse).

I felt homeless because it was every day it was so scary; me and the kids were just terrified every time the door even knocked. (Nia)

When I was in my house it was the biggest thing, not feeling safe meant that I couldn't relax or anything, I couldn't sleep. (Taylor)

As discussed throughout this thesis, in the majority of experiences, abuse, harassment and intimidation was still present in survivor's lives even after ending the relationship and fleeing home, in some cases up to ten years after. The extent of this abuse varied from coercive control via child contact arrangements, harassment and stalking, to physical abuse of survivors and damage to their property. The failures and gaps in the system mean that for many this is likely to be an ongoing experience and therefore is likely to impact their ability and opportunity to establish a long-term safe and secure home for them and their children. This prolonged period of abuse and violence has been found in other research and as in the experiences of survivors in this study has undermined and restricted their ability to recover and heal from the abuse (Abrahams, 2010) and this crucially undermines their sense of home.

For those that were able to access refuge, the level of safety provided was often the key aspect that made them feel at home and not homeless, even for those who described feelings of homelessness during refuge, they still reported feeling safe and secure in the accommodation. This highlights that feeling safe and secure in itself is not enough to provide an experience of home, however it is an essential aspect when present along with the other two factors and themes found from the data. Considering the dynamics of abuse and the harm caused, this feeling of safety is critical for survivors and for many was often the first time they had space for action to begin to make sense of their situation, process their past and begin to plan for the future. So, although not always providing a sense of home, these stays in refuge were often the first step towards ontological security for survivors.

I feel at home there (refuge) because they really keep you safe, that's the main thing is that I feel safe in there. (Leah)

The element of safety was also a key feature of the homes that survivors saw and hoped for their future. In all cases being safe and secure was fundamental to the experience of home.

This safety extended beyond the physical home and into the wider community which was widely discussed as freedom. The concept of freedom for survivors meant freedom to have choice and control along with being able to live freely without having to feel scared for their personal safety. The benefits of feeling safe included being able to relax, sleep well and not have to worry. Survivors listed being able to have fun, be happy and be able to make new memories as the things that would be part of their home. This alludes to the absolutely devastating impact that abuse has on survivors who shared how all of these feelings and experiences that are generally taken for granted are completely missing in the lives of victims of domestic abuse. The extent of homelessness in the UK when including the psychosocial aspects of home in its definition is likely to be much wider and prevalent than figures would suggest.

Security was another key factor that was often discussed in tandem with safety and contributed directly to the sense of home (lessness). As briefly mentioned in the choice and control section of this chapter, many survivors experienced unstable and insecure housing during the abuse. This was in the form of a lack of legal right to occupy, with tenancies or mortgages mainly being held by the perpetrator. This created a sense of unease and insecurity for the survivors that was compounded by the lack of choice, control and safety that was inherent with abuse. Survivors frequently reported the house not being theirs, that they felt as though they were visiting and that they could never settle or relax. This lack of security was still a challenge for many survivors after leaving the abuser and was predominantly linked to experiences within the private rented sector. The lack of security and the instability of their housing situations made many survivors feel as though they still could not fully settle, or in a number of cases had settled only to have to move again. This generally prevented survivors from creating a long-term sense of home.

Again, lack of stability the first rented house the landlord wanted it back because I caused so many problems with regards to conditions and it was actually environmental health that put a hazard warning on the house because of excessive cold and damp, the landlord wasn't going to do anything, so he said he was moving back in basically like a retaliatory eviction. So, then I had to find another private rented somewhere, move my business, make sure the children are happy which is how I got stung with a £1200 rent because I had to find a private landlord outside of an agency who kind of knew who I was and my reputation and my businesses and where on the outside everything looked fine just so they wouldn't credit check me. (Ffion)

These challenges around instability in the private rented accommodation were included in the discussion around future and ideals of home. Most survivors who were not homeowners aspired to obtain social housing. This was due to the increased levels of security that social tenancies provide compared to the private rented sector. This security and ability to stay put for long periods of time were seen as pivotal in the provision and experience of home.

Survivors often chose to stay in refuge and wait until a social tenancy was available or in other cases stay put and at risk to avoid losing their social tenancy. This demonstrates the importance and value placed on having a right to occupy a house for extended periods of time without the risk of a landlord issuing an eviction notice. This finding correlates with the experiences of low-income young people living in the private rented sector who reported feeling that the insecurity and precarity they faced challenged their ability to put down roots and make home (McKee et al, 2019).

I wouldn't want to move into private rented because it's not stable. They can ask you to leave every time. The tenancy was in his name so they couldn't target harden, I had to leave. (Jennie)

I wouldn't have rented because my business acumen struck in and I thought if I have to pay money it is not going to be dead money which renting is. I will do whatever I have to do, tick whatever box and manipulate whatever mortgage scheme I have to get myself a tiny little house somewhere. I thought if I have to put money somewhere it has to be mine. (Jasmine)

With an increasingly limited social housing supply and barriers to accessing homeownership, there has been a growing dependence on the private rented sector to play an active role as a housing solution for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness (McKee et al, 2019). This has been reflected in the homelessness legislation in Wales that enables local authorities to discharge their accommodation duties into a six-month private rented tenancy (Welsh Government, 2014). There is a wealth of literature about the precarity of the private rented sector in the UK, yet there has been some policy change to improve the quality and practice within the sector. In Wales this has included landlord registration and licensing (Welsh Government, 2014) and more recently there has been an extension of the notice period a landlord is required to give in Wales to six months and not within the first six months, resulting in what is effectively a minimum of a 12-month tenancy. This was with the aim of providing an increased level of security and giving tenants more time to plan and prepare for a move.

What is important to note however, in the context of domestic abuse, is that security is very much a subjective construct and what was regarded by some as being secure, such as a joint tenancy or mortgage, was experienced by others as burdensome and an unwanted tie to the perpetrator. As discussed in the housing pathways chapter, those with joint mortgages and tenancies often faced the difficulty of trying to extract themselves from those agreements or were left to meet the terms which included paying rent, accruing arrears, or having to buy out the perpetrator. These challenges resulted in survivors feeling trapped during and post abuse and for some severely restricted the options available to them. Furthermore, this sense of being trapped and tied to the perpetrator undermined the sense of home and rather than be a

place of enjoyment and comfort, there was resentment at the hold and power over the survivor it gave the perpetrator.

I am now in the situation 6 years on where I have to buy him out and he is making it difficult. So, although I got to stay in the house it's not without its threats and on my head be it. (Liz)

Considering both safety and security, women's experiences in this study suggest that both concepts are subjective and the levels of both are not determined by any particular set of factors or characteristics. Instead, the perception of risk and danger are best assessed by the survivor, who has survived in most cases by being able to predict their behaviour and gauge the level of danger they present. They are able to understand their safety in ways that professionals may not, they also are able to consider and include the level of threat from family and friends of the perpetrator and within the wider community. This understanding of safety and security is critical as these factors underpin the entire concept and experience of home. In all cases of feeling at home, survivors and their children were safe and had a level of housing security that had been missing during abuse.

7.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has found that home is constructed by survivors through material and physical factors, but also psychosocial dynamics play an incredibly significant role. Three main factors emerged: choice and control; community, family and networks; and safety and security. Choice and control included choice over location, tenure, and affordability of home. The ability to choose and control the environment through the décor, furnishings, and maintenance of the space along with the activities and events that occurred within it were all key aspects of contributing to a sense of home. These findings reflect existing evidence focussing on a wide range of groups and their experiences of home (Robinson, 2006; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). This suggests that the elements of control and choice are somewhat universal factors in the construction of home as a positive and desirable space. It also found that where these factors were missing or restricted that the house felt as though it was not theirs or they had little control over their place within the household.

The second theme of community, family, and networks described the significance of positive, healthy relationships with a range of actors both closely related and from the wider community. For survivors with children the sense of home was intricately linked to their presence and happiness within the setting. There was much discussion about the ways in which perpetrators had damaged and fractured these relationships and where their own family, friends and networks played both passive and active roles in the abuse. These actions and experiences had resulted in survivors feeling isolated, lonely, and controlled, which again led to feelings of

homelessness and alienation. Central to the concept of home was safety and security. This included personal safety, both in the home and in the wider community, security of tenure, and stability of their housing situations. The survivors widely shared their perceptions and experiences of the private rented sector being particularly precarious and unstable. They described safety and stability as being key to their hopes and ideals of their home in the future. What did emerge strongly was that both concepts are subjective and for some, being included on a tenancy may be experienced as a form of security, whilst for others it results in them being trapped and therefore in a precarious position. This finding supports arguments by Madden and Marcuse (2016) who propose that insecurity and precarity are interconnected. They suggest that precarity in one area of life is likely to be set in a wider experience of precarity and insecurity that is influenced by both external and internal forces. This demonstrates the need to consider these factors and the wider concept of home in more detailed and nuanced ways. Another key finding is that where safety is not ensured, then feelings of homelessness are experienced. Threat to personal safety was one of the main eroding factors to the sense of home.

What is striking about these findings are the correlations with the experiences of other groups. Research exploring both home and recovery with people with mental illness, young homeless people and low-income young renters, finds that the factors that contribute to a sense of home for these groups reflect the factors that survivors in this study reported. Choice, control, social connections, and security were common across the literature (Robinson, 2006; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). In each of these groups there were some common experiences; each had experienced either some form of trauma, limited options and resources, and some had come from a regulated and restrictive environment. This suggests that the concept of home is shaped by the experiences, histories, and pasts of people and that these affect how home is constructed in the future.

For many survivors in this study home was described as a place to heal, recover, and repair the damage inflicted through abuse. This supports the conceptualisation of home as a therapeutic space and also explains the level of distress and loss that was shared by the survivors. This part of the data and the analysis was the most emotionally challenging as it uncovered and probed at the extent of the loss suffered by survivors through the abuse. Many described feelings of frustration, hurt and sadness that they felt when thinking about home, both in the past, present, and future. For some, the memories and scars from their past were particularly painful. For others, the discussion around future home was difficult as for many it highlighted how far away from that reality they were and the challenges that they were likely to face in getting there. There was a distinct sense of loss and grief that was shared by

survivors. This grief was not only for the actual loss of their house, possessions, and connections but for the idea of home and family that they had held before the abuse. Many of the survivors spoke about how they had never thought they would be in their situations or have had experience what they did. Domestic abuse had disrupted, and in some cases, destroyed the aspirations they had for their lives, families and relationships, all of which were synonymous and inextricably linked to the concept of home. Robinson (2006) found a similar experience and sense of grief with young people who were homeless in Sydney. They too described how trauma and family conflict shaped their housing journeys and experience of home. They also described how the impacts of this trauma and the resultant grief for loss of home and family informed their housing trajectories. This finding suggests that when considering what home means to people, previous experiences have to be included, with trauma, loss and grief being understood and accounted for. This is particularly key for survivors of domestic abuse as for this group home has to be a place to heal and recover from what is particularly significant trauma.

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

Domestic abuse fundamentally impacts the way in which victims and their children experience home. Furthermore, housing is a key concern for survivors when deciding to leave or end an abusive relationship. Typically, there have been three dominant housing outcomes for survivors. The first of these is sanctuary schemes where the survivor stays put and there is a coordinated response with security and legal measures put in place and advocacy and support from specialist domestic abuse services. The second is refuge provision where a survivor and their children leave their home to access safe and secure accommodation provided by specialist domestic abuse services. The third outcome is more complex and often neglected within both housing and domestic abuse literature and that is the experience for those that 'self-solve' and who do not access support or receive assistance via traditional and statutory housing and homelessness services (Abrahams, 2010; Reeve et al, 2006; 2019; Irving-Clarke & Henderson, 2020; DAHA, 2020).

Recent work and campaigns in the UK have led to the development of a model which includes a much wider variety of housing solutions for survivors of domestic abuse (Irving-Clarke & Henderson, 2020; DAHA, 2020). There is also a push for policies within both the fields of housing and domestic abuse to apply a 'whole housing approach' to the issue, incorporating and reflecting the wide range of housing models and markets that exist in the UK. The argument has been made that traditionally there has been a limited focus and over-reliance on solutions such as refuge and social housing. There has been little attempt to include alternatives to these solutions such as the private rented sector and homeownership (DAHA, 2020). However, in Wales this over-reliance on and prominence of both refuge and social housing may have shifted as a result of Welsh housing legislation introduced in 2014. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced both new powers and duties for local authorities. A particularly important new power was the ability for local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty through the provision of a six-month tenancy in the private rented sector. The most significant new duty was the duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent homelessness for households at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days. These new duties and powers may have changed and shaped the housing pathways of survivors in Wales.

This study sought to explore the relationship between domestic abuse, housing, homelessness prevention and the meaning of home in Wales. This study began in 2016, two years after the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and one year after the implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Both pieces of legislation were regarded as innovative and progressive in

both a domestic and international context, both placed emphasis on prevention, early intervention and multi-agency working. This innovative and prevention-focused policy context provides the context for the thesis. This study sought to understand how people experiencing domestic abuse and in particular how effective the homelessness prevention agenda in Wales is in the context of domestic abuse. This study had three objectives that work together to meet this aim.

The three objectives of this study were to:

- Explore the housing pathways of survivors of domestic abuse.
- Examine survivor interactions with services and the role of housing in a more co-ordinated response.
- Investigate the concept and meaning of home in the context of domestic abuse.

These conclusions will respond to the three objectives and identify the primary contributions of the research. The conclusions also consider the emerging policy contributions of the research, and potential future lines of investigation are discussed. Before the key conceptual and empirical contributions of the research are discussed, the conclusions begin with a brief reflection on the research approach and methodology.

Critical realism, feminism and the realities of ethical research with women facing domestic abuse

The research was conducted from a critical realist perspective, using feminist participatory methods. There is a growing body of geographical research that combines critical realism and feminism (Satsangi, 2013; Parr, 2013). Parr's (2013) work has been particularly influential; she attempted to integrate methodologies from both critical realism and feminism. Feminist methods gave voice to those being researched and were successfully balanced with the knowledge and understanding of the researcher. The inclusion of critical realism led her to resituate her participants' experiences within other sociological theories and concepts. As Letherby (2003) argues it is important to maintain a position that considers both the individual reality with that of the wider context and factors. Parr asserts that moving beyond the focus on accurate representation to the wider reality will allow researchers to make valid and authoritative claims which can have implication and influence social policy.

This study adopted a similar approach, with feminist research principles being integrated with a critical realist perspective and combined to understand the housing pathways of survivors. The literature exploring domestic abuse, housing and homelessness often argues that victims may have little or no choice in their housing situation during and post abuse. However,

Abrahams' (2010) longitudinal study with victims of domestic abuse showed that although there are many structural factors which act as barriers to victims, they are still making choices within these constraints. These choices were integral to their experience of home (lessness) and enabled them to settle and rebuild their lives after abuse.

Clapham's (2002) pathways framework offers an approach that considers both structural factors and constraints, and choices and individual actions within those constraints. It explores housing histories and careers and aspirations and enables researchers to trace interactions with services and examine differences in people's experiences (Mackie, 2012; Clapham et al, 2014). The approach has successfully been used with a number of vulnerable groups such as young people (Clapham et al, 2014), single homeless people (Mackie & Thomas, 2014), young people with disabilities (Mackie, 2012) and those who have experienced multiple exclusion homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al, 2013). Each of these studies were able to examine structural issues whilst providing a platform to hear the voices of participants and exploring their personal histories, experiences, and ambitions. The purpose of this study was to hear the voices of participants and their experiences and situate them within a wider context considering both individual and structural factors and the interplay between these. The combination of perspectives, methods and tools all worked to create the conditions and environment for this purpose to be met. Data was collected via workshops which combined three distinct methods and tools.

The first phase of the workshop involved participants creating housing maps that detailed their housing histories. These maps emerged as an adaptation to life history calendars and focussed specifically on housing and networks rather than the whole life and wider facets. The Life History Calendar (LHC) has traditionally been used for large scale quantitative analysis of multiple strands of study which are integrated within the life-course paradigm (Axinn et al, 1999). However, more recently there have been developments and adaptations to the LHC method to obtain qualitative data (Yoshihama et al, 2002; 2005; 2007; Yoshihama & Bybee, 2011; Hayes, 2018).

The LHC begins with participants plotting down key events and gradually adding to and expanding the number of events. The researcher can then use these events to probe, prompt and explore the context and environment. Events can be recorded chronologically or by order of significance but either way will provide a temporal view of the participant's life history (Hayes, 2018). The LHC has been developed to include participant attitudes, aspirations, decisions, and actions in the context of different life events by adopting a semi-structured approach. This has led to a more nuanced and detailed retrospective account (Nelson, 2010).

For this study the same principles and approach were applied but with specific focus on both the housing situation and networks.

The second phase was a semi-structured interview or focus group exploring their housing transitions and drivers or barriers to these. Semi-structured interviews are a common method that provide structure and ensure main themes are addressed, whilst allowing for participants the freedom to disclose and explain aspects that the researcher may not have anticipated or considered (Seidman, 2006). They provide a sequence for the researcher to follow but can also be flexible to changes and adapt to emerging issues and events that the participants feel are relevant or important to them (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015 p.150). The interviews allowed me to probe and develop a deeper understanding of the structural barriers and enablers, individual choices and actions and wider environmental factors that have resulted in survivor's experiences and housing outcomes.

The third phase took a creative approach to exploring the meaning of home and involved the participants creating some form of artwork to represent what home(lessness) meant to them during various stages in their lives. These images then prompted discussions of home amongst the participants and semi-structured interviews were scaffolded around the art produced. Creative research methods encompass a wide range of activities to gather data outside of traditional approaches. It can include poetry, artwork, photography and sculpture. Creative methods are aligned with participatory research in which participants have the freedom to create and express their experiences in a manner other than via traditional interviewing methods (Aldridge, 2015). Bird (2018) argues that arts-based methods successfully capture women's experiences of domestic abuse and illuminate the transitional stories more effectively compared to other traditional methods. He suggests that aspects such as relationships, agency and physical space become more visible as participants develop and refine those ideas as the method provides both space and time to do so.

Beyond using creative arts as a data collection method there is evidence to suggest that there is some therapeutic benefit to those who have experienced abuse and trauma. Traditionally, excluded, and marginalised groups have been co-producers of knowledge through photography for years (Ewald, 1985; Hubbard, 1994; Leavitt et al, 1998). Frohmann (2005) argues that participant generated images and photography addresses the power imbalance between researcher and participant by providing the participant the opportunity to document what is important to them. The principle of allowing survivors to control what they share and how they share it is key to this research and particularly to the exploration of the concept of home.

The experience of conducting this research resulted in several key challenges. As researchers it is important to be transparent about these, to reflect on them and learn from them. One of the key findings that emerged through this study was that informed consent is a process rather than a static task. There needs to be a constant re-visiting, clarifying and checking that participants are continuing to understand and be comfortable with the research process. Another factor to emerge was the significance of gatekeepers. Rather than considered in terms of only access to participants they need to be theorise and planned for as much more integral to research. Adaptability of methods, particularly in relation to trauma was another key factor. In reflection, the ability for the data collection methods to be fluid and flexible resulted in a much more inclusive and equal experience that was ethical and not harmful. This then led to in- depth, rich data that although was diverse and varied told of experiences with similar factors, features, and themes. There were five workshops and three individual interviews conducted with a total of thirty-eight people. Thirty-seven of the participants were women, and one man was included. The ages of participants ranged between 20-60 years old. There were five women who were black or from an ethnic minority and there was a mix of socio-economic backgrounds. The survivors involved had experience of a wide range of housing situations including homeownership, private renters, social housing tenants, temporary accommodation, and refuge. Experiences of domestic abuse and time since it occurred also varied from those who had ended the abusive relationship seven years ago to those who were still in abusive relationships. One of the key findings and issues that emerged from this research was that for most participants, even years after leaving, the abuse was still present in some form.

8.2 The four housing pathways of people experiencing domestic abuse

The second key contribution of the thesis is to our understanding of the complex and heterogenous housing pathways of people experiencing domestic abuse. The housing journeys of people experiencing domestic abuse have been explored and attempts have been made to better understand housing outcomes for people in these situations; these works exist in both academic, policy focussed and 'grey' literature (see Levison and Kenny, 2002; Quilgars & Pleace, 2010; Abrahams, 2010). Some of these works have identified potential routes open to people fleeing domestic abuse such as staying with friends or family, accessing emergency accommodation, or staying at home. Each of these add to the understanding of some of the immediate options available but do not necessarily provide insight in to how effective, secure or appropriate they are in the longer term.

Furthermore, in each of these studies although housing transitions were examined it is unclear whether the housing pathways framework and approach was applied and whether there was

an investigation of both the structural and individual factors and the interplay between these over time.

The first contribution of this research is a methodological contribution to the Pathways approach. The approach taken within this thesis included data collected using feminist participatory and creative methods that centred around the experiences of survivors. Housing Pathways was used, however, this study deviated from the traditional one-to-one approach and was conducted in a group setting. A further adaption of the method was in the way the data was then analysed, again deviating from the traditional apriori approach and instead taking an inductive approach. This allowed for the identification of three significant factors which influence and shape the way in which survivors experience housing pathways. Previous research has explored housing pathways but usually from a restricted lens, such as focussing upon tenure and demographic characteristics (Clapham et al, 2014; Mackie, 2015). Likewise, the housing journeys of survivors of domestic abuse have been somewhat explored but again usually limited to those who have interacted with specialist services, for a restricted period of time or at crisis point (Abrahams, 2011; Bowsted, 2015; 2017). Both of these approaches resulted in a gap in knowledge about the drivers, enablers and barriers, both structural and individual, that informed and shaped the routes and pathways taken. There is also a gap in knowledge of how domestic abuse impacts housing pathways over time. Something which this research has gone some way in exploring.

The second contribution to knowledge from this study was the identification of the housing pathways of survivors of domestic abuse. Four distinct housing pathways emerged from the survivor's experiences. Their stories described the lived reality of these pathways for them and their children. This feminist participatory approach to the housing pathways and using an inductive approach is relatively different from traditional and existing works. It has enabled a new understanding and conceptualisation of the routes that women take during and after abuse. There were few correlations or predictors linked with tenure, socio-economic status, or other demographic factor. What did emerge was three factors that interacted to influence the pathways taken; the level of *risk* to their safety and risk of homelessness, the *resources* women had access to, and the quality of *relationships* with informal and formal networks all combined to shape the options open to them and the choices they made. These were conceptualised as the three R's: risk, resources and relationships.

The third contribution of this study is the reconceptualisation of domestic abuse to include complicit communities. The role of community in influencing the dynamic of abuse and level of safety emerged as a more prevalent factor than expected. There has been research into the role of community from the lens of anti-social behaviour in the field of housing and around

networks and cultural factors in the field of domestic abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Shipway, 2004; Abrahams, 2010; Anderson et al 2012; Voice 4 Change England & NAVCA, 2012; Siddiqui, 2013; Stanley et al, 2013; Postmus, 2015 Parker, 2015). However, the findings of this study suggest the scale of community complicity in the perpetration of domestic abuse is much wider. There appear to be two types of complicity; the first being passive complicity that includes actions such as not reporting incidents, not providing witness statements, and failing to intervene. The reasons for this are likely to stem from fear and reluctance to become involved with a highly volatile situation that may place them in a vulnerable position or at personal risk. The second type of complicit community is to be actively complicit in the abuse. This would include actions such as monitoring and reporting the movements of victims to the perpetrator, harassing the victim on the perpetrator's behalf, or indeed any action that enables, promotes, or facilitates the perpetrators actions. Both of these types of abuse may stem from the way in which domestic abuse is understood and perceived by communities and there may be a need for more work to be carried out to shift the cultural norms around interpersonal violence and abuse. Both passive and complicit communities may be addressed and reshaped into pro-actively preventing and tackling domestic abuse through bystander programmes. These programmes are complex and aim to shift the understanding and perceptions of gendered abuse and challenge the social and cultural norms that enable violence against women (Banyard et al, 2009). This finding raises questions for services, including housing; it suggests that when looking at cases and assessing the level of risk in these situations, careful consideration should be given to the role of the wider community and how that interacts with safety measures and plans. It may be that reframing these informal networks as communities will enhance the perception of relevance to housing professionals and therefore be considered more carefully.

The second theme widely discussed across the four pathways is the 'legacy' of domestic abuse. Evidence shows that the impacts of abuse last far longer than the relationship (Dobash & Dobash, 1979;1998; Hester et al, 2006; Stark, 2007; Harne & Radford, 2008; Abrahams, 2010), but it was sobering to hear that women who had ended relationships ten years ago were still paying the price emotionally, physically and financially from the abuse they had experienced. This highlights the length of time it takes to truly recover from these situations and is something that may not be reflected in the way that services operate. In Wales the Housing Support Grant has guidance which recommends that where necessary services should not be time restricted to ensure that people are stable enough that they will not represent or experience homelessness in the future (Welsh Government, 2021). This is a progressive and positive aim, however there is limited evidence to suggest that these policy aims are having the intended impact in practice. A recent study by Price et al (2020) found

that service providers are continuing to struggle with short-term and inadequate funding from local commissioners. This may then result in time restricted, low intensity and well-intended but ineffective support available for survivors over the length of time they need it. Many of the women reported poor mental health and feelings of fear and distrust that never leave. A wide range of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) were reported but there appeared to be little involvement with mental health services or therapies. The main source of support was from specialist organisations although many of the women felt that this was not a viable long-term solution for a range of reasons including time limited contracts, the trauma of hearing other women's stories in group sessions and the stigma of attending support groups.

The lasting impact of financial abuse was also stark, with all the women reporting the effects lasting years after the abuse. This was common across women from all tenures and backgrounds, even homeowners in employment and business owners were still paying debts left by the perpetrator. The lack of understanding and response from financial institutions around financial abuse was evident and devastating for women who had to use every tool available to them just to be able to retain their family home. In cases where they were unable, they worried that they would never be able to re-enter the housing market again and would be stuck in a cycle of paying unaffordable rent. This finding supports the work of Sharpe-Jeffs (2017; 2018; 2021) who has consistently highlighted the extent of financial abuse and the impact that this has on survivors over time. The lack of awareness, understanding and poor response from financial institutions is a focus of much of this research and she has gone on to establish an organisation aiming to educate and improve responses to financial abuse. The amount of money that women reported spending on legal costs to negotiate child contact and custody was astounding and one of the biggest financial stressors women were facing. This was compounded by the third common theme across the pathways of a lack of a coordinated response from services. Throughout the pathways there were examples where an individual intervention had worked well or an individual agency had been effective and supportive, however what was repeatedly described was a lack of coordination of response from the multiple agencies that had a role to play and at time completely disconnected or even conflicting agendas. There was felt to be a lack of understanding by each agency of the other's role, responsibilities, and powers, resulting in sporadic and fragmented interactions and interventions. The study explored this issue in more depth as part of the second objective.

8.3 Service interactions: Beyond the three planets

The Fourth contribution of this study is the reinforcement of Hester's findings and to expand upon the concept of the planets to incorporate two more planets, a housing planet and a health

planet and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of survivor's interactions with systems and services over time. The second objective of this study was to investigate the interactions survivors had with services and agencies. The thesis explored these interactions through a homelessness prevention lens. This was achieved by using a temporal prevention typology advanced by Fitzpatrick et al (2021) and focussing specifically on three stages of prevention: crisis, emergency, and repeat. The thesis examined service interactions at each of the three stages. It considered a whole housing and whole life approach and investigated interactions across Hester's (2011) three planets: domestic abuse planet, child protection planet and child contact planet. The third key contribution of this study is both conceptual and empirical. Conceptually, the research advances Hester's (2011) model, uncovering two additional planets; housing and health.

Empirically, the application of Hester's (2011) three planets model at three different prevention stages provides rich new insights into the interactions between survivors and services over time. At crisis stage we saw that the opportunity for prevention work tends to occur in the lead up to a disclosure, as the risk and intensity of abuse is escalating and when victims begin to think and plan to leave and/or end the relationship. This is a time when survivors start to reach out or come to the attention of some services and particularly housing services to explore their options. This planning and exploration do not inherently mean that in seeking advice they will disclose. However, many of the participants felt that this would have been the point if prompted they would have disclosed, and some had shared some information, but it had gone unexplored.

The data from this study and particularly from the housing maps created by participants suggest that there is a lower level of involvement from formal networks and less engagement with services across the planets at crisis prevention compared to emergency and repeat prevention periods. This may mean that professionals are required to pro-actively identify and consider both housing instability and domestic abuse when families come to their attention or ask for assistance.

What emerged from the research is a clear lack of coordination and cooperation between agencies across the planets. These failures led to many survivors being in a prolonged period of crisis and in a cycle between crisis, emergency, and recovery. This reflects the findings from Hester's study and also highlights continuing research highlighting gaps around the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act (Ahmed et al, 2018), police responses to domestic abuse (Robinson et al, 2015; 2016), and the failures of the family courts to protect survivors and their children (Birchall et al, 2018). The actions of the child contact planet in particular placed survivors at risk, while the failure of the domestic abuse planet to enforce legal

remedies left survivors in precarious situations, which they were then penalised for by the child protection and child contact planets. With these pressures was an increasing likelihood that assistance from services, and particularly housing and homelessness prevention services, would be needed in the future. Many of the experiences in this study resonate strongly with existing research. Studies have found that the experience of family court is distressing and retraumatises survivors and their children (Birchall & Choudry, 2018; Barnett, 2020). Furthermore, it has been argued that the failure of the courts to robustly consider domestic abuse and the harm perpetrators pose to children and victims has contributed to them witnessing and experiencing abuse. There is a strong body of evidence which shows the level of abuse witnessed and experienced by children from the perpetrators often escalates postseparation where contact is continued (Sturge and Glaser, 2000; Mullender, 2004; Saunders, 2004; Radford and Hester, 2006; Holt et al, 2008; Harne, 2011; Stanley, 2011; Thiara and Gill, 2012; Holt, 2015; Morrison, 2015; Women's Aid, 2016; Callaghan et al, 2018; Barnett, 2020). The fears of the survivors, within this study, for their children and themselves cannot be underestimated. This fear was pervasive and impacted upon their ability to recover and rebuild their lives after abuse and meant that the perpetrator still had a mechanism to continue controlling and coercing. Between 2005 and 2015 nineteen children were murdered by a parent that was a perpetrator (Women's Aid, 2016).

It has been argued that housing scholars have failed to build a body of literature around domestic abuse from a housing studies lens (Irveing-Clarke & Henderson, 2020) and the findings from this study would support that and highlight the value to be added to existing knowledge, policy and practice by doing so. Applying a housing lens to these stories identifies a clear correlation between the dysfunction of the planets and housing instability. Furthermore, considering this from a homelessness prevention perspective highlights how ineffective the role of housing may be in preventing homelessness without the cooperation and engagement with and from the other planets. In light of England's proposed Domestic Abuse Bill and the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) which follows the shift to prevention seen in the Housing (Wales) Act (2014), and the requirement for multi-agency working in the VAWDASV Act in Wales (2015), there are some lessons to be shared about the exact nature and definition of prevention work in the context of domestic abuse. Homelessness prevention cannot be achieved for survivors of domestic abuse unless there is a clear understanding of the dynamics of abuse, a range of suitable and adequate housing solutions available, and a coordinated multi-agency response. Furthermore, homelessness prevention for survivors of domestic abuse may extend well beyond the resettlement phase and can indeed be necessary years later. What emerged strongly in this research was the pervasive effect domestic abuse had on

housing stability, if a survivor is housed but feels unsafe then that cannot be a home and they cannot truly recover while still being victimised.

The experiences of survivors demonstrate the need for a whole housing approach to be included and a whole life approach from services to survivors. These advancements reflect the wide range of housing solutions that survivors experience and access and recognises that the impact and presence of abuse lasts well beyond the end of a relationship. These findings reflect the shift in discourse around housing providers role in tackling domestic abuse and calls for them to be more proactive (Henderson, 2018; Henderson & Irving- Clarke, 2020). However, this research is unique in the sample size and in- depth quality of the data. This has focussed solely on the voices and experiences of survivors and is an important source of evidence for the need to have a more prominent and consistent involvement from housing in the coordinated community response

8.4 The meaning of home in the context of domestic abuse

The fifth contribution of this study is to the conceptualisation of 'home' in the context of domestic abuse. The third and final objective of this research was to explore the meaning of home for survivors of domestic abuse. Three factors emerged as particularly important in the meaning of home amongst women who experienced domestic abuse. The factors are material and physical but also psychosocial and include: choice and control; community, family and networks; and safety and security. Significantly, these factors directly reflect and relate to the tactics and mechanisms perpetrators use to commit abuse. This new conceptualisation of home amongst women experiencing domestic abuse is the fourth key contribution of the thesis. It prompts a reframing of homelessness prevention in the context of domestic abuse. Existing homelessness prevention policy must shift to place the individual at the centre and place equal focus on psychosocial constructions of home, rather than centring on the material and physical aspects of housing. If we are to truly prevent homelessness, then a more nuanced and critical understanding and definition of home needs to be applied.

What is striking about these findings are the correlations with the experiences of other groups. Research exploring both home and recovery with people with mental illness, young homeless people and low-income young renters finds that the factors that contribute to home for these groups reflect the factors that survivors in this study reported. Choice, control, social connections, and security were common across the literature (Robinson, 2006; Piat et al, 2018; McKee et al, 2019). In each of these groups there were some common experiences; each had experienced either some form of trauma, limited options, and resources, and some had come from a regulated and restrictive environment. This suggests that the concept of

home is shaped by the experiences, histories, and pasts of people and that these affect how home is constructed in the future.

For many survivors in this study home was described as a place to heal, recover, and repair the damage inflicted through abuse. This supports the conceptualisation of home as a therapeutic space and also explains the level of distress and loss that was shared by the survivors. This part of the data and the analysis was the most emotionally challenging as it uncovered and probed at the extent of the loss suffered by survivors through the abuse. Many described feelings of frustration hurt and sadness that they felt when thinking about home, both in the past, present, and future. For some the memories and scars from their past were particularly painful. For others, the discussion around future home was difficult as for many it highlighted how far away from that reality they were and the challenges that they were likely to face in getting there. There was a distinct sense of loss and grief that was shared by survivors. This grief was not only for the actual loss of their house, possessions, and connections but for the idea of home and family that they had held before the abuse. Many of the survivors spoke about how they had never thought they would be in their situations or have had experience what they did. Domestic abuse had disrupted, and in some cases, destroyed the aspirations they had for their lives, families, and relationships all of which were synonymous and inextricably linked to the concept of home. Robinson (2006) found a similar experience and sense of grief with young people who were homeless in Sydney. They too described how trauma and family conflict shaped their housing journeys and experience of home. They also described how the impacts of this trauma and the resultant grief for loss of home and family informed their housing trajectories. This finding suggests that when considering what home means to people previous experiences have to be included with trauma, loss and grief being understood and accounted for. This is particularly key for survivors of domestic abuse as for this group home has to be a place to heal and recover from what is particularly significant trauma.

8.5 Implications for homelessness prevention in Wales

This thesis sought to explore the housing and homelessness experiences of survivors in Wales. What the findings suggest is that there is an implementation gap between the intentions of the relevant legislation and the experiences of survivors navigating the system. One of the intentions of the prevention agenda was to take a person-centred approach to homelessness prevention and to encourage innovation in finding housing solutions to prevent and relieve homelessness. However, what this research has found is that there are numerous pathways survivors experience that are shaped and influenced by three key factors: risk, resources, and relationships. There is a lack of coordination and cohesion between key agencies across

planets and sectors that is undermining or neglecting the prevention agenda. Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of understanding of home and the psychosocial factors that create a sense of stability and ontological security for survivors. Homelessness prevention in the context of domestic abuse may look very different compared to other groups as for survivors the abuse has already occurred and thus, they have already experienced trauma. However, if homelessness prevention policy and practice in Wales can consider the heterogeneity of pathways for survivors, ensure an alignment of the planets and place focus on understanding the experience of home in the context of domestic abuse then it is likely that solutions and actions are more successful at preventing homelessness. This prevention of homelessness would be through the provision of an experience of being at home that extends beyond the material and physical aspects of home but ensures that home meets all the needs of the survivor and their children to become a place of safety and healing.

8.6 Areas for further research

Within the sample of this study there were a number of women from an ethnic minority, a woman with a disability (one woman disclosed, there may have been others who did not share this information) and one man. This study took a critical realist perspective to enable consideration of underlying structures such as patriarchy and racism in the experiences of survivors. The data collection method was also designed to allow for in-depth discussion and sharing of personal experiences. However, the participants that were from an ethnic minority did not discuss racism or the impact their ethnicity may or may not have had upon their experience, journey, and interactions. This may be because the topic was not specifically referred to. It may also be because I am a white researcher and the people within the groups were mainly white. Therefore, it may not have felt like a safe space for people to share those experiences. Similarly, the topic of disability was not specifically probed and only one woman disclosed a physical disability. They did share difficulties they had experienced in their interactions due to this, but as they were the only person who did it is impossible to generalise based upon their experience and there were also ethical concerns around anonymity meaning this aspect of their experience was not focussed on. During the recruitment process a significant amount of effort was made to engage with male survivors of abuse however but this was unsuccessful and only one male was included in the sample. Again, due to him being the only male any generalisations would be impossible. What was interesting was that if I had heard his story and was unaware of his gender, I would not have detected any significant differences that suggested it was a male experience of abuse. However, each of these group's experiences are likely to be shaped by their race, ethnicity, disability and gender and as such further research exploring their specific experiences of housing, home and homelessness that

tests the findings of this study would be incredibly valuable to ensure that responses and actions are sensitive and inclusive of their experiences.

8.7 Final reflection

This study set out to better understand the experiences of survivors of DA. If we are trying to understand the relationship between DA, housing and homelessness and identify opportunities for prevention then we need to keep the voice and experience of survivors at the core. This study has explored experiences over time and if we want to understand these relationships, we have to look over time rather than at a static point as people's lives and interactions are not static. The pathways approach ensures the capture of changes in housing situation and investigates both structural factors and individual actions, looking backwards, at the present and forwards in time. It also helps us understand the influencing factors and actors on these situations. The Three Planets model helps us look at the role that structures, systems and services play in these journeys. Ultimately, the goal of the homelessness prevention agenda is that everyone is a safe suitable home, if we're trying to realise this goal then we absolutely need to understand what a good home looks like in different contexts and to different people. This means we need to reconceptualise home as more than a house and embed a psychosocial understanding of home in our housing policy and practice.

Finally, this piece of work could not have been achieved without the courage, resilience and kindness of the people that shared their stories. I was immensely touched by the honesty and openness that the women brought to the experience. The level of support for each other and the aim of sharing their stories to improve things for other women in similar situations was incredible to see and be part of. I hope that I have done justice to their experiences and stories and that their wishes for this work to have an impact on the way survivors are understood and responded to are realised.

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