Kath Scanlon September 23rd, 2025

Value for Money in Domestic Abuse Services: Insights from Rapid Evidence Assessment

As part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's evaluation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, a team from LSE (Bert Provan, Kath Scanlon, Jessica Rowan, and Adriana Gaganis) conducted a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) on how to evaluate the value for money of support provided in safe accommodation.

The research identifies robust evidence for quantifying both the harms caused by domestic abuse and the benefits of intervention services. Using UK and international studies, the assessment shows there are established methods for putting monetary values on outcomes, from immediate healthcare costs to longer-term impacts on employment and wellbeing. While monetising traumatic experiences raises ethical considerations, the review demonstrates that such assessments can be done in ways that recognise lived experiences while also establishing the costs and benefits of support efforts. It also examined challenges in valuing harder-to-measure benefits, such as improved well-being, stability, and recognition of human rights.

The review stressed the importance of starting with a clear theory of change that maps inputs, aims, and outcomes. It highlighted growing evidence on the effectiveness of specialist and "by and for" services, the role of healthcare providers in identifying survivors in need, and innovative ways of measuring outcomes. Case studies of real-world assessments, including work by Refuge and Southall Black Sisters, showed how data can be turned into robust financial appraisals to support funding and policy decisions. The REA forms part of the wider Domestic Abuse Duty evaluation, which considers how local authorities in England are meeting their new responsibilities under the Act.

The full report is available here

About the author

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Kath Scanlon is Distinguished Policy Fellow at LSE London. She has a wide range of research interests including comparative housing policy, comparative mortgage finance, and migration. Her research is grounded in economics but also draws on techniques and perspectives from other disciplines including geography and sociology.

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