

OPERATIONAL REVIEW
MONCTON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT
PILOT PROJECT

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*“**Strong leadership** is most important when it comes to making an organization function well... Almost any organization can be made to work provided there is strong leadership at the top and a commitment to teamwork throughout the organization.”*

Louise Fréchette, former Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, in an address to the national conference of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. FREDERICTON, NB, September, 2009.

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List of Acronyms

DPS	Department of Public Safety
DV	Domestic violence
DVC	Domestic violence court
ECO	Executive Council Office
FTE	Full-time equivalent
NBLASC	New Brunswick Legal Aid Services Commission
PBVS	Police-based Victim Services
VS	Victim Services

1.0 Introduction

In the fall of 2006, the Government of New Brunswick announced a three-year pilot project to test a specialized domestic violence court model, to more effectively address the issue of domestic violence. The Moncton Provincial Court was selected as the test site. The concept of this specialized court emanated from the work of the Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women.¹ Its main goal was stated as follows:

“To improve the criminal justice system’s response to victims’ needs and safety planning, while promoting offender accountability and early intervention that may help stop the cycle of violence.”²

It was acknowledged by all interested parties, from the initial planning stage, that for the model to be successful, the prosecution and court processes would need to be accelerated. Also, it was recognized at the onset that timely access to services for both victims and offenders was essential to achieve desired results.

The Women's Issues Branch of the New Brunswick Executive Council (ECO) was vested with the mandate to lead the planning and implementation of the pilot project. The ECO led a Provincial Steering Committee made up of representatives from the NB Department of Justice, the NB Department of Public Safety, and university experts in family violence research to develop the guiding “blueprint” for the Court. The plan included an evaluation component to assess outcomes and the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick was contracted for the said evaluation. The DVC model was transferred to the local key partners who were responsible for the development of procedures and guidelines to effectively implement the new court model. Following a six-month period of operational planning by officials and staff at the Moncton site, the Domestic-Violence Court (DVC) was launched in the spring of 2007.

During the first two years of the project, the number of new cases entering the DVC court system proved to be much larger than anticipated, creating extensive pressure on the financial and human resources allocated to the project. In order to respond to victims' needs and to promote offender accountability, additional human resources were required to carry out the responsibilities of the specialized court and program costs increased beyond established budgets. In light of the increased demand on the delivery system, the Steering Committee deemed it necessary to conduct an Operational Review to complement the evaluation results. On June 30, 2009, the ECO announced that such a review would be conducted over the ensuing months.

¹ Province of New Brunswick, *A Better World for Women: Moving Forward*, 2005-2010

² June 30, 2009. Letter from Norma Dubé, ADM, Women's Issues Branch, to Members of the Local Court Advisory Committee and Members of the Steering Committee

2.0 Mandate of the Operational Review

The mandate of the Operational Review is to provide a picture of the operational realities of the DVC, with a focus on:

- The established roles and responsibilities of the various partners working in the DVC and the interrelationships between these partners
- The workflow processes to carry out the various components of the specialized courts and the integration of these processes with one another
- The conformity of the current practice with the original plans
- The organizational structure, the decision making process and problem resolution mechanisms
- Lessons learned and alternate ways of doing or organizing the work, while maintaining the integrity of the model.

Inherent to the integrity of the model is the definition of domestic violence on which the model is based. That definition is as follows:

“Domestic Violence is committed when a person who is or who was involved in an intimate personal relationship, uses abusive, threatening, harassing, or violent behaviour as a mean to psychologically, physically, sexually or financially coerce, dominate and control the other... Domestic violence is also committed when an accused resorts to abusive threatening, harassing or violent behaviour towards an intimate partner’s relatives, friends or new partner as a mean to psychologically dominate and control the complainant”. (DVC Operational Procedures, page 5).

Notable caveats to this report: The reviewers were instructed by the client to provide a... *“concise report that focussed on findings”*. Furthermore, the Operational Review was not to address any financial aspect of the project, nor was it to investigate reasons for the reported growth in the caseload. In addition, as the achievement of the project’s goals and objectives in relation to outcomes will be measured by a separate activity, this Review was not and does not report on outcomes as per the defined evaluation variables for this project.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Approach

A participatory approach was adopted. It allowed for the collection of primary, qualitative data from key representatives of all partners who had been involved in the planning and/or in the current delivery of the DVC pilot project. The approach was three-pronged: 1) one-on-one interviews, 2) a large, round-table consultation, and 3) a review of major documents associated with both the planning and implementation of this project.

One-on-One Interviews: The list of interviewees is found in *Appendix 1*. To prepare for the individual interviews, a general outline of questions was developed and tailored to the specific area of expertise of the proposed respondent. The interview questions are found in *Appendix 2*, together with the message to interview participants. Interviews were conducted under the general categories of front line workers, regional management and provincial staff. The sub-categories for interviews were as follows:

- Front line workers delivering the services of the DVC, including the DVC Coordinator and Judge
- Department of Justice and Department of Public Safety provincial staff responsible for policy development and members of the DVC Steering Committee
- Regional Management staff: Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Public Safety, Health Authority B – Mental Health and Addictions
- Community Service Providers
- Legal Aid

Immediately following each interview, each researcher transcribed their notes electronically and then shared the notes and examined the information for discrepancies. Where clarity was needed, the interviewee was contacted and asked to explain further.

In total, twenty interviews were conducted.

Round-table consultation: For the purpose of this group meeting, a decision was taken early in the Operational Review process to involve only staff affiliated with the Court, i.e. the front-line workers and community service providers. This decision was based on an examination of responses from interviewees that supported the notion that a more open and frank discussion would ensue if attendance were limited to those directly involved with the delivery of this pilot project. Consequently, a letter of invitation was drafted and sent to potential participants. The letter and list of invitees are found in *Appendix 3*.

To prepare for this large group session, data from the individual interviews were subjected to a content analysis in order to uncover the key, emerging themes. These themes were then prioritized according to importance as judged by the number of times each theme was raised by different service providers. Using these themes and others for which clarity was needed, questions were developed and then placed appropriately within a standard matrix of key categories of questions to be asked of participants. These key questions related to roles and responsibilities, linkages, current and changes in practice and suggestions for improvement. Example of the matrix is found in *Appendix 4*.

Review of DVC Project Documentation: A comprehensive review of documents associated with the DVC project was undertaken throughout the course of the Operational Review. A list of those most frequently used for reference and background is found in *Appendix 5*.

3.2 Data Analysis

The collection of qualitative data from different sources and by different methods allowed researchers each individually and then together the opportunity to systematically identify key topics/issues associated with each type of service provision, i.e., police, prosecution, defence counsel, court, victim services, probation services, etc. Where data lacked clarity or where further questions surfaced during the production of the report, the specific service delivery was contacted with the aim of ensuring accuracy in interpretation. Note that no industry standards/business norms for the delivery of a specialized domestic violence court were found, i.e., no benchmarking such as caseload per staff, tested processes, etc. for comparison. Therefore, no comparisons with the operations of other similar courts can be made at this time for this report.

3.3 Anonymity

In order to protect the confidentiality of the information provided to the researchers, there are no direct quotes or references to specific interviewees, or to working group participants.

4.0 Findings

In the sections that follow, the findings will be reported for each of the immediate court partners, the key community partners and the service providers involved in the delivery of the DVC. They will follow as closely as possible the flow of service delivery, starting with the first response to the incident and progressing through the steps to the Court and, finally, to resolution and monitoring.

The key Court Partners are the following: Police, Police Based Victim Services, Public Safety Victim Services, Crown Prosecution, Legal Aid, Domestic Violence Court and Judge, Court Coordinator, and Probation Services.

The key community partners and service providers are: Health Authority B-Mental Health and Addictions, Department of Social Development-Child Protection, and Family Services Moncton, Inc.

For each partner, this Report will address the following themes, as per the mandate given the researchers for this Operational Review:

- Background information
- Established roles, responsibilities and linkages, including time standards
- Conformity of practice with the established roles, responsibilities and linkages
- Implementation challenges
- Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

The Report will also present generic issues not specific to any one partner such as governance, including structure, decision making and problem resolution.

4.1 Findings Related to Partners

4.1.1 Police-RCMP

The police are the point of entry to the DVC. The front line workers are the patrol officers who respond to calls, conduct the investigation, assess the situation using the B-Safer Assessment tool, obtain a victim statement on video (KGB), recommend a charge if appropriate and complete the file to be submitted to the Crown Prosecutor. As first responders, they also play a critical role in accessing immediate support services for the victim, or victims if children are in the home.

Background information

The delivery of police work in the Moncton DVC jurisdiction is organized as follows:

- Three RCMP Districts are involved: District 4 (Shediac/Sackville); District 11 (Salisbury-Petitcodiac); and District 12 (Codiac-Moncton Region).
- Staffing models: Districts 4 and 11 have no assigned officer for DVC.
- District 12 has a Domestic Violence Unit with two full-time assigned officers and a Victim Services Unit with one full-time worker. This structure allows for the division of the DVC workload. Patrol officers respond to the incident, conduct the investigation and access immediate victim support services through the Victim Services Unit. The Domestic Violence Unit officers review DV files and ensure they are complete prior to submitting them to the Crown Prosecutor's office.
- District 12 Victim Services Unit was in place prior to the implementation of the DVC. However the establishment of a Domestic Violence Unit and the dedication of two FTE's to this Unit are a result of the DVC project.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The role and responsibilities of the police and the linkages with other members of the DVC team are described in the following documents:

- *Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures, Annexe A, page 21*
- *Moncton Domestic Violence Court – Information Sharing Protocol for Police and Department of Public Safety Victim Services, March 2009*

Data collected from participants indicate that the established roles and responsibilities of the Police in the DVC are clearly enunciated, comprehensive and reported to be well understood by the Police and their partners. Nevertheless, police report the importance of maintaining on-going training and education in the identification and handling of DV cases.

With respect to linkages, of particular note is that which pertains to the notification of domestic violence cases to the Child Protection Branch of the Department of Social Development. The DVC Operational Procedures require that police refer to the Department of Social Development, "cases where there are children under the age of 16 years, or under the age of 19 years in situations where they have physical/mental challenges and witnessed or suffered physical/emotional abuse in a Domestic Violence situation". (page 21)

The Operational Procedures document is not specific as to the time frame to report these cases. It was indicated that they are usually reported within 24 hours. However the Department of Social Development would like to be advised by the police immediately after the incident when there are children involved in the home. Child Protection services will then do its own investigation to determine if the safety of the children is compromised. The Department has an after-hours emergency service, staffed with professionals with whom the Police can speak and who have the capacity to intervene on a 24-hour basis.

This review identified the need for the Police, the Department of Social Development and the Court Coordinator to clarify the procedure for reporting cases of domestic violence to Child Protection, and to register this change in the Operational Procedures manual.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

The Operational Review examined, in particular, the capacity of the police to meet the time standards as specified in the DVC Operational Procedures. As well, in the beginning, the proper identification of domestic violence cases was identified as an issue.

- Time Standards

The time frame for processing a charge in the DVC model is set at 15 days. The Operational Procedures specify that ‘police officers shall forward their file to the Crown prosecutor no later than seven days after an incident of domestic violence’, and that the ‘Crown Prosecutor shall, when deemed appropriate, within eight days of receipt of the file from police, complete a process involving pre-charge screening and charge approval’. (page 9)

It was reported that the seven continuous day time standard is met in Moncton and in 60-70% of the cases in the two rural police districts. Also, the police often complete their file within two to three days.

- Identification of Domestic Violence cases

All participants reported that domestic violence cases are now appropriately labelled by police as true “domestic violence”, rather than “assault” cases as formerly the practice prior to the implementation of the DVC. The expanded definition of domestic violence was a challenge at the onset of the project, but officers now report that the broader definition is understood and generally embraced. For example, the reported increase in referrals to Victim Services in Sackville, and even in Shediac where there is no DVC but where the police follow the same DVC protocol, indicates that incidents of domestic violence are being more accurately recognized.

Implementation challenges

The implementation of the DVC model has resulted in major changes in the way the RCMP conducts its work in the area of domestic violence. For example, unlike previous practice, the B-Safer assessment must now be completed in all cases, and the KGB statement must also be obtained if at all possible. Furthermore, all activities must be completed within a specific time frame to expedite the process, prevent recantation and support safety planning.

Data indicate that significant progress has been made by the police since the onset of the project in carrying out their responsibilities as per the prescribed DVC standards. For example, the B-Safer assessment, which was sometimes a challenge to administer, is now automatically completed for all cases. Similarly, the KGB statement is now done in most cases.

A number of implementation challenges are still being worked on, and these are described as follows:

- Timely reporting of Court outcome information to the victims:

It is the understanding of the researchers that inconsistencies in the reporting of court outcomes to victims have been occurring in the rural RCMP districts. As the Court Officer may have to attend several courts in the same day, they at times have been unable to notify the victim of court outcomes in a timely manner.

According to the Information Sharing Protocol, the police are tasked with the responsibility to inform victims of Court outcomes on the day of the Court. Accordingly, the Codiak RCMP has designated the Police-Based Victim Services to advise the victims of these outcomes; but, while the RCMP Districts 4 and 11 have designated the Court Police Officer, if the Officer is unable to inform the victim, the responsibility is to be transferred to the police team leader, as designated within their detachment.³

Recognizing that the victim is a voluntary client, and therefore the decision maker, the Victim Services Coordinator provides advocacy and support throughout the criminal justice process. Since immediate notification of court outcomes to the victim is critical for his/her safety, and especially in cases of bail releases, this situation has prompted the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Victim Services Coordinator, who acts as Case Manager for the victim and who is responsible to keep the victim informed, to obtain court outcome information from the Court Coordinator and routinely inform the victims themselves.

The partners have reaffirmed that the responsibility center for this task is with the Police. In light of that, RCMP representatives for Districts 4 and 11 have indicated that measures would be taken to ensure that the Police inform the victims of court outcomes in a timely and consistent manner.

- Police referral forms to Public Safety Victim Services

Inconsistencies were noted with respect to the referral forms used by the three police districts. The form used by District 4 was suggested by the DPS Victim Services representatives as the preferred model.

Districts 11 and 12 representatives and the Victim Services Coordinators indicated they would follow up on this issue with the goal of using a standardized form with all key information noted.

³ Moncton Domestic Violence Court Information Sharing Protocol for Police and Department of public Safety Victim Services, March 2009, p.3.

- Access to the Department of Justice Information System (JIS)

It was reported that District 12 has access to the JIS but that RCMP Districts 4 and 11 do not. District 12 has had access to the JIS for a number of years, hence prior to the implementation of the DVC. This serves as another example for the need to examine the electronic linkages between the DVC partners once the piloting stage is completed and especially, if the decision is taken to continue this specialized court.

- Responsibility to lay the charge

It was reported that, especially in regular courts, officers are often reluctant to lay a charge. They like “to give the woman a bit of time... because she is likely going to recant”. It was also noted that there are still instances in DVC, albeit very few, where the victim is told to...”think about it before deciding to proceed”. This practice goes against the basic principles of the DVC to expedite the process and prevent recantation.

The police representatives from the three detachments reiterated that this approach is unacceptable and asked to be alerted immediately if similar situations occur in the future.

- Training of police officers on domestic violence and on the DVC court processes

The data indicate that different schools of thought still exist within the police force with regard to what constitutes domestic violence. It was suggested that some members may not have yet totally embraced the DVC model, especially the broadened definition of DV. It was reported that newer members of the force generally recognize that domestic violence is a serious issue that must be dealt with seriously.

It is the understanding of the researchers from a number of data sources that the situation has significantly improved vis-à-vis understanding the dimensions of domestic violence; but police report that ongoing education on this topic would be beneficial at all levels of the policing organization.

Alternate ways of doing the work or organizing the work

- Dedication of police officer positions to the DVC

All partners agree that the dedication of key front-line workers to the DVC expedites the process, increases consistency in the treatment of domestic violence cases, and facilitates the linkages between all Court partners. This option has been implemented by RCMP District 12 which has dedicated two full time employees to the DVC. While rural districts 4 and 11 representatives recognize the value of this staffing model, they indicate that they do not have sufficient resources to implement it. It was however suggested by some partners that a police officer be designated on each work shift to prevent the issue of cases “falling through the cracks” because of the shift work model.

- Two paradigms of service delivery in the same jurisdiction

The Shediac RCMP serves a split jurisdiction with respect to DVC: the Shediac area and, since 2007, the Sackville area. However, only the Sackville area domestic violence cases are served by the Moncton DVC. The Shediac domestic violence cases are still handled by the regular court system in Shediac. Even though the Shediac RCMP officers follow the same DVC protocol for all

DV cases in their territory, including the Shediac cases, the different Crowns and the two court systems respond very differently. These police officers are expected to work within two different paradigms – the traditional Court approach for cases of domestic violence and the Moncton specialized DVC. This situation poses specific operational challenges for the Shediac RCMP district. For example, the training and education of new officers with the goal of adopting and embracing a new philosophy becomes a greater challenge when they are asked to work with the old model and the new model simultaneously. The turnover within the workforce also adds to the challenge. Beyond the operational issues linked to the split jurisdiction, the situation leads to inconsistencies in the way victims and offenders are treated.

The Shediac RCMP and the Crown Prosecutor have brought the issue to the attention of the DVC Coordinator and the Department of Justice. The goal is to provide more consistent services to the clientele of District 4 and to enhance the commitment of all staff to the DVC model.

4.1.2 Police-Based Victim Services (PBVS)

This service provides a 24-hour emergency crisis response to victims, including immediate services, such as crisis intervention, shelter, access to medical services, and food. The PBVS Coordinator, with the written consent of the victim, refers the case to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Victim Services. If the victim does not provide consent, the PBVS Coordinator gives the DPS Victim Services Referral Card to the victim in case she/he wants to access services at a later date. The PBVS Coordinator works in liaison with the DPS Victim Services Coordinator.

Background information

The PBVS is a special feature of the Codiak RCMP District #12 and was in existence before the DVC project was implemented. This service does not exist in RCMP districts 4 and 11. The Service is staffed by the Victim Services Coordinator (1 FTE) who is assisted by a group of trained volunteers. The volunteers are on call 24/7, and can be accessed by patrol officers at the time that domestic violence calls are answered.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The role and the responsibilities of the PBVS Coordinator are described in the *Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures*, Annexe B, page 23.

Data indicate that the role and responsibilities of the Coordinator are clearly stated and understood by all partners.

Conformity of current practice with established standards

Data indicate that the established standards are respected.

Implementation challenges

The practice of the PBVS has not changed since the implementation of the DVC. However, it was reported that the workload has increased by approximately 30-40%.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

Refer to **Section 4.1.4**, Police Referral forms to DPS Victim Services, page 7. No other suggestions were offered to alter the approach. The relationship and liaison with the DPS Victim Services coordinators is deemed effective.

4.1.3 Department of Public Safety (DPS) Victim Services (VS)

As case manager for the victim, the DPS VS Coordinator plays a key role in the DVC system. The Coordinator provides or assists the victim in accessing a full range of services including counselling, court preparation, crime compensation, victim impact statements and notification of offender releases. The VS Coordinator is responsible for completing the Aid to Safety Assessment and Planning (ASAP) tool and the Danger Assessment tool. It is also the responsibility of the VS Coordinator to work with the victim and develop a case plan, with a focus on the safety of the victim.

With regard to the court process, the VS Coordinator has the responsibility of explaining the functioning of the Court to the victim, and keeping her/him informed of court developments. The Coordinator prepares the victim to testify in court, assists with the preparation of the Victim Impact Statement and provides Court support either through DPS VS Court Support volunteers or paraprofessionals, or through direct involvement, if deemed necessary. Acceptance of these services by the victim is strictly voluntary.

The DPS VS Coordinator liaises mainly with the police, the Police Based Victim Services Coordinator in District 12, the Crown Prosecutor, the Court Coordinator, the Probation Officer, and community agencies.

Background information

When the DVC was implemented, one VS Coordinator position was assigned to the court. It soon became apparent that due to workload pressure, a second position would be required to meet the need. A second Victim Services Coordinator joined the team in February 2009, for a total of 2 full-time DPS VS Coordinator positions dedicated to the DVC, in the Moncton office. A third Victim Services Coordinator from the Shediac office serves the DVC cases from the Sackville area, with an equivalency of approximately .25 FTE.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The role and the responsibilities of the DPS Victim Services Coordinators and their linkages with other team members are described in the following documents:

- *DVC Operational Procedures – Annexe D – Victim Services*
- *Safety Planning for Victims of Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Protocol, Province of New Brunswick, January 2007*
- *Moncton Domestic Violence Court – Information Sharing Protocol for Police and Department of Public Safety Victim Services, March 2009*

It was reported that the established standards and protocols are comprehensive, generally clear and understood by the DPS VS Coordinators and their partners. One standard, however, which relates to the timing of case referrals by the police to DPS VS appears unclear.

- Clarification with respect to the timing of police referrals

The question is with respect to the time of case referral by the police to DPS VS Coordinator: Is it before a decision is made to lay a charge or is it during the investigation once a decision is made to lay a charge?

The Protocol is clear with respect to the Codiac Police where the Police-Based VS Coordinator will refer the file to DPS Victim Services when it has been determined that charges are going to be laid and the case is going to proceed to court (page 2). But, in Districts 4 and 11 (where there are no Police-Based VS Coordinators), the Protocol applies and it states that police officers should make referrals directly to the DPS Victim Services Coordinator *as soon as practicable* (page 4).

Since the time for referral is unclear, the Protocol needs clarification.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

With the current level of resources and by planning their time meticulously, VS Coordinators report that they generally can carry out their work in a comprehensive manner as per the standards. Some challenges are encountered, however, and those are described below:

- Timeframe to complete assessments

The Operational Procedures (page 31) indicate that... “upon receiving initial referrals from the police, Crown Prosecutor, or even the victim themselves, the Victim Services Coordinator will contact the victim as soon as possible”.

In practice, the DPS VS Coordinator generally meets with the victim on the same day of the referral, or as soon as possible, i.e. within twenty-four hours. At the very least, the Coordinator will contact the victim by telephone. However, when several referrals are received in a short timeframe, it becomes a challenge to meet with all victims as per the standard as they must conduct the assessments at the first meeting with the victim and that process can take up to two to three hours per victim.

- Case review

A six-week time standard for case reviews is prescribed in the *Safety Planning for Victims of Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Protocol* (page 11)...“Safety plans should be scheduled for review (re-assessment). Active cases should be reviewed if any major changes occur in the women’s life or on a 6 week cycle”.

The research showed that the six-week time standard reason for the “review” was unclear to some partners. It is the understanding of the researchers that, in line with the DVC focus on expediting the process, the Victim Services Coordinators are communicating with the victims on a regular basis. Consequently, the six-week review standard was thought by some partners to be less relevant within the DVC framework.

- Court preparation function

It is accepted by local partners that this project has required some modifications to their practice in order to meet the goals of this Court. One such issue, which requires further examination, is the role of the DPS Victim Services Coordinator in providing support to victims when the KGB video statement is reviewed by the victim prior to the trial. It was explained to the researchers that professional support is often required because the viewing of the KGB statement can be emotional and even traumatic for the victim as it recalls the violence that was associated with the incident. While the Crown Prosecutor and/or the police are tasked with reviewing the KGB with the victim, the issue remains that time constraints often prevent this from occurring and the victim sits alone to review the video. The Operational Procedures and the DPS policies do not include this task as part of the DPS Coordinator's role.

The possibility is being explored of establishing a partnership with the Université de Moncton Social Work Department, whereby selected students, meeting established criteria could volunteer to provide this Court Preparation function.

- Court support function

The Operational Procedures specify that the VS Coordinator is responsible for assisting the client in accessing a variety of services, including Court Preparation/Court Support. This service... "provides support to victims of crime when they are required to testify in court. Vulnerable victims may make request to the Crown to have a support person accompany them to court, or to be near them when they testify. Support persons can be provided by Victim Services Court Support Volunteers." (Annex D, page 33)

There appears to be some inconsistency between the Standard and the practice with respect to the role of the DPS VS Coordinators in court support. There is a concern within the DPS that accompanying the victim in court is not an efficient use of the VS Coordinator's time. Although the Standards promote the use of volunteers or paraprofessionals in providing support to the victims in the court, it is also felt that the use of volunteers for court accompaniment is not a realistic option because of the demanding nature of the task and the scarcity of volunteers wanting to play this role. A recognized community organization has tried to develop this program in the past and was unsuccessful. Paraprofessionals are now used on a regular basis to accompany victims to trials.

There is a belief in the project that the DPS VS Coordinator, because of their professional expertise, should accompany the victim to court in circumstances such as trials where the victim has to testify, to some extreme preliminary hearings, and at the time of sentencing of the accused.

Based on the findings, the Standards should be reviewed to reflect those situations whereby the VS Coordinator is able to view the KGB with the victim and to accompany the victim in court.

- Responsibility of informing victims of Court orders

The responsibility to inform the victim of court outcomes lies with the police. However, because of inconsistencies in some areas and the importance of this information for the victim safety, the VS Coordinators, who act as case manager for the victim, have made a practice to inform their client.

For further clarification of this issue, refer to previous **Section 4.1.1**, under Implementation Challenges.

Implementation challenges

- Delayed trials

The expediency of the process is integral to the success of the DVC. It is recognized that trial delays are particularly problematic for the victims. This situation impacts on the work of the VS Coordinators, especially with regard to coordination of services and time schedules with other victims.

- Timing of the receipt of the referral to DPS Victim Services from Police.

Refer to discussion presented on this topic earlier in this section.

- Access to the Justice Information System (JIS)

DPS VS Coordinators cannot directly access important information which might impact their client and consequently, are having to contact the Court Coordinator or the Probation Officer to obtain that information.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

No major suggestions were brought forward regarding alternate ways of doing the work of the VS Coordinators.

4.1.4 Crown Prosecution

The role of the Crown Prosecutor is a standardized role, i.e., it is the same in the DVC as in any other court. The difference lies in the intensity of the work in circumstances that can be highly emotional. The Crown Prosecutor is responsible for pre-charge screening and charge approval, court preparation, and disclosure to Defence. In the DVC, the Crown plays a key role in promoting the importance of the expediency of the DVC process to prevent recantation and case collapse. For example, the Crown Prosecutor will accelerate the referral to the court, emphasize to the court the need for an early court date, and ensure an early referral to victim services, all with the goal of accelerating the process.

The Crown Prosecutor liaises with the Police, the Defence, Legal Aid, DPS Victim Services, Probation Services, and the Court Coordinator.

Background information

One Crown Prosecutor is dedicated to the DVC and spends approximately 80-90% of work time on the specialized court cases.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The actions of the DVC Crown Prosecutor are governed by:

- The *Public Prosecutions Operations Manual* (Part 2)
- The *Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures*, Annex C, page 24. The document includes guidelines developed by the Attorney General Public Prosecution Services to assist Crown Prosecutors with their responsibilities when dealing with spousal/partner violence prosecutions.

Importantly, the researchers found that the Operational Procedures do not reflect the file review function of the Crown, which was reported to occupy approximately 15% of the Crown's work time.

The data indicate that the partners understand the role and responsibilities of the Crown Prosecutor.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

- Standards

The time frame for processing a charge in the DVC is fifteen days. The Operational Procedures specify that the police shall forward their file to the Crown Prosecutor's office within seven consecutive days from the date of the incident and that... "The Crown Prosecutor shall, when deemed appropriate, within eight days of receipt of the file from the police, complete a process involving pre-charge screening and charge approval. The Crown Prosecutor shall provide case disclosure information to Defence Counsel within the shortest delay possible." (9)

Data indicate that the 15-day time frame is generally met, but it remains a challenge, especially with cases coming from rural areas. At times, even if some pieces of evidence are not yet received, e.g. medical information, the Crown Prosecutor, in order to expedite the process, will proceed with processing the charge, while noting the missing elements.

Implementation challenges

- Workload pressure

One of the major challenges during implementation was for the Regional Crown office to assess the volume of work involved and to adjust to it. It had initially been estimated that approximately 25% of an FTE would be necessary. Although the resource utilization has grown to approximately 1 FTE, there is still considerable time pressure on the Crown Prosecution office. Data indicate that 1.5 FTE's appears to be the minimum resource requirement to accomplish the work of the Crown Prosecution office in the Moncton DVC, although 2 FTE's would be ideal.

- Staffing model

With regard to a preferred staffing model, on one hand there is a concern with respect to fully dedicating a Crown to domestic violence cases. According to this school of thought, this approach could be too restrictive from a practice perspective and unhealthy for the worker because of the intensity of the work. On the other hand, if the efforts are too diverted, for example in a mixed caseload or even a 50-50 caseload, there is a concern that it would be difficult for the Crown to gain the expertise and experience required. Furthermore, Crown work is totally dictated by the nature of the file and, in a varied caseload, other files may end up taking too much of the Crown's time and DVC cases would receive less priority. According to this perspective, a dedicated Crown, with appropriate relief, would appear to be the answer.

It was reported that there are efforts to fill the two vacant Crown positions in the Moncton Regional Crown Office. When successful, this will relieve the workload pressure on the Crown Prosecution office and the DVC Crown.

- Complexity of the job and expertise required

There are high expectations for Crown Prosecutors operating in a domestic violence court. Beyond the legal expertise required, the Crown Prosecutor needs to be in a position to deal with difficult situations, highly emotional issues and victims requiring considerable support. In order to have positive outcomes in the DVC, the Crown Prosecutor must want to work with these complex cases and must possess the required expertise.

- Security for the Crown Prosecutor

Personal security for the Crown Prosecutor and other visible DVC front line workers is an issue that needs to be taken seriously. The researchers became aware that there appears to be increased personal risks for DVC Crowns: intimidation, stalking, death and kidnap threats have already occurred with the Crown associated with this court. Measures have been implemented to address the situation, but it was acknowledged by partners that security remains a concern.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

The work of the Crown Prosecutor is bound by protocols and, as such, there is no leeway to perform the job in any other way.

4.1.5 Legal Aid

The New Brunswick Legal Aid Services Commission (NBLASC) provides two types of services to the Court: Duty Counsel and solicitor services through the issuing of Certificates to those who qualify. Duty Counsel allows persons accused of an offense, not represented by a lawyer, to consult with a lawyer prior to appearing before the Court to answer a charge. This service is provided by a lawyer assigned to the Court. The Certificates service allows an accused to obtain the services of a lawyer to defend him/her against a criminal charge. Only individuals who do not have the financial means to pay for legal representation qualify for this service. The process to determine financial eligibility is managed by the regional offices of the NBLASC.

Legal Aid counsels works closely with the Crown Prosecutor with respect to the disclosure of information and negotiation to find ways to resolution. Legal Aid also liaises with Probation Services to prepare background information for the Pre-sentence report.

Background information

There are three lawyers working in the Moncton Regional Office of the NBLASC. DVC has had an impact on the workload of this office as it represents an extra court requiring the service of Duty Counsel. When needed, lawyers from the Moncton Bar can be hired to act as Duty Counsel.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The standards and processes for the delivery of legal aid are determined by the NBLASC. The Legal Aid Services role, responsibilities and linkages within the DVC project are not described in the *Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures*.

The process to access the Legal Aid Duty Counsel services works as follows:

When the accused does not have legal representation, Duty Counsel can represent him/her at the first court appearance. The first contact between Duty Counsel and the accused is made immediately before the court appearance when Duty Counsel asks people who are waiting to appear if they have representation. If not, Duty Counsel offers to represent them.



The usual practice in Court is that Duty Counsel will tell the Judge that it is the accused first appearance in Court for this offense and that he or she has not had the opportunity to see the evidence against him/her. The case is then adjourned and a trial date is set.

For Solicitor services, the following steps apply:

The accused is instructed by Duty Counsel to contact the Moncton Regional Office of the NBLASC immediately and schedule an appointment to determine his/her financial eligibility.



The accused contacts the office to set an appointment to meet with the Intake Officer. Clients are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis.



The Intake procedure involves a comprehensive financial assessment process that includes the collection of financial information from the applicant. He/she must provide the requisite documentation, e.g. assets, liabilities, income and expenses such as utilities bills, household expenses, etc.



If the accused is deemed eligible, he or she can access a lawyer. The lawyer will accompany the accused through to the disposition by the Judge and his or her involvement will end at sentencing.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

The Legal Aid practice is directed by the New Brunswick Legal Aid Services Commission. Since there are no special provisions, standards and protocols relative to the DVC, no data were collected to this effect.

Implementation challenges

Implementation challenges related to Legal Aid are mostly related to the time frame to access the service. This issue impacts on the scheduling of the Court and the overall capacity of the DVC to process cases in an expedient manner.

- Adjournments of the Court

The total number of adjournments requested and granted adds to the delay of the Court process and have an impact on the DVC timeline. For example, when the Duty Counsel asks for an adjournment in order to examine the file, it means that the case has to be rescheduled in Court again, which places a time pressure on the Court.

- Caseload and resources

In fiscal year 2009-2010, the Legal Aid budget was reduced by 5% (\$360,000) and the NB Court Social Workers program in Queen's Bench was eliminated. Prior to this budgetary measure, the Court Social Workers were responsible for determining eligibility to legal aid for family law cases. This responsibility is now lodged with the Regional Legal Aid offices. The information collected indicate that the increase in domestic violence cases identified through the DVC process and the added responsibility for assessing family law cases has tripled the work for the Legal Aid Intake staff. The larger caseload, coupled with the \$360,000 budget reduction in 2009-2010 means the Moncton Regional Office is facing a significant increase in workload with less funding.

- Time frame to access a solicitor through Legal Aid

The caseload and resourcing issue had an immediate impact on the timelines to access the Moncton Regional Office, determine eligibility and access a solicitor. Based on the information collected, the total time frame between the client contact with the office to schedule an appointment and the determination of eligibility currently takes approximately four to six weeks. There is a two to four week waiting period just to obtain the appointment and see the Intake Worker. The list is established on a first come, first serve basis. There is no prioritization to process DVC cases faster. Then the assessment process takes an additional two weeks, approximately. This time frame is dependent on the collaboration of the client providing the requisite information in a timely manner, which reportedly happens only in approximately one-third of the cases. If eligibility is confirmed, then a Legal Aid lawyer is assigned to the case. If eligibility is refused, the client must seek other legal representation and that can depend on their own financial resources.

The current four to six-week time frame compares with a one-week period prior to the recent budgetary reductions.

- Long term impact of Legal Aid budget cuts on DVC

There is a concern that this situation may worsen, since the impact of the recent budget reductions and program changes are just starting to be felt. This has implications for the Court meeting the Operational Standards as well as for the accused and the victim.

Alternate ways of doing/organizing the work

It is the opinion of the researchers that where expediency of the process is of essence in the DVC model, and where such a change in the middle of the piloting phase may have an impact on the results of the project, the possibility needs to be explored with Legal Aid as to how DVC clients can move more quickly through the process for determining eligibility for legal representation.

4.1.6 The Domestic Violence Court and the Judge

All domestic violence offences coming to the Moncton Provincial Court are referred to the DVC. Since the closure of the Sackville Provincial Court, domestic violence cases from this jurisdiction are also routed to the DVC.

The DVC holds court sessions three times per week:

- Mondays at 1:30 pm, for Appearances and Bail hearings
- Thursdays at 9:30 am, for Court Monitoring, Sentencing and Bail hearings
- Thursdays at 1:30 pm, for Appearances and Bail hearings

Background information

One Judge is dedicated to the specialized court. This Judge presides over the DVC scheduled sessions and works in other courts for the rest of the week. All judges do the DVC trials. The DVC Judge is assisted by other judges for back-up.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The judicial procedures in DVC are similar to those used in all other provincial courts. The *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures* document indicates that cases are to be dealt with... “in a manner that is consistent with the provision of the Criminal Code and all other statutes”. (page 17). The document provides guidelines for the day-to-day operations of the court.

The data indicate that the role and responsibilities of the DVC Court and the Judge are clear and well understood by all partners.

Conformity of court practice with established standards and protocols

- Time Standard

The *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures* indicates that ... “In cases of trials, a court date for the trial will be provided within a time frame of 90 days.” (page 12)

The data indicate that primarily due to the unforeseen increase in caseload, the original 90 day time standard for holding the trials could not be maintained. Consequently, it was moved to approximately 180 days, six months into the project. It is reported that the timeframe can now be even longer.

Implementation challenges

- Getting the project started

Moving from the policy statement for the DVC model to implementation during the formative stage of the project was a challenge for the Moncton Court. All partners agreed that the DVC Judge was pivotal to moving this project forward. Operational procedures and standards were non-existent and needed to be developed at the local level. Furthermore, orientation and training on the philosophy and basic principles underlying the domestic violence specialized court and on the functioning of the court were necessary to ensure that all partners understood and embraced the model.

It is obvious from all the data collected that strong leadership from the presiding judge was required to get this project off the ground within the required timeframe. At the same time, the Judge herself acknowledged that it was a challenge to maintain judicial independence from the developmental activities taking place during that time.

- Caseload and resources - trial delays

Without any doubt, the major implementation challenges were caseload and resources. The project experienced an unanticipated increase in the number of referrals. While 80-90 cases were estimated prior to the implementation of the project, in the first year of implementation the system was faced with 240 new cases and in the second year, 225 new cases. The combined effect of the caseload growth, the intensity of interventions inherent to the DVC model and its expediency requirements resulted in workload pressure, turnover of staff and increased resource requirements through the entire DVC system, including the Court itself. The 90 day standard for holding the trial could not be met. It was reported that the timeline is now exceeding the 180 day standard for some cases. The capacity to meet the time standard is not a function of the judiciary and the court alone. The Crown Prosecution office and Legal Aid services are also crucial elements in the drive to expedite the court process.

- Continuity of the resource

It was reported that, at the outset of the project, there was difficulty engaging the Judiciary to work in the DVC. It is the understanding of the researchers that judges working in this environment need to be committed to the model and agree to dedicate considerable energy and time to it. The project was fortunate to have a Judge who understood from the beginning the importance of this pilot project and who was willing to devote the time and expertise to ensure that it unfolded in the most efficient and effective manner. This situation serves however, to point out the operational challenge in accessing and maintaining continuity of judiciary involvement for a specialized domestic violence court.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

A number of options emanate from the data regarding alternate ways of organizing the work of the Judge in the DVC:

- Need for more than one dedicated Judge

It was recognized by respondents that presiding judges must be agreeable to sit in the DVC and have expertise in the field of domestic violence, i.e., be cognizant of the peculiarities of domestic violence and well versed on recent research results in this domain. There is also a belief that having one judge dedicated to this court is probably the best way to ensure that these requirements are met. However, for a number of other reasons (workload, continuity, commitment of the judiciary to the DVC model, public perception of the DVC) it would be preferable to involve more than one judge. Further discussions are required to decide if the preferred option would be to have several judges dedicated to the DVC or to have all judges hearing domestic violence cases with a Court Coordinator functioning in a comprehensive and coordinating way with all judges.

- Court monitoring of the offender progress

Data indicate that one of the most compelling aspects of the DVC is the court monitoring of the offender. This function could potentially be done by a supernumerary judge to relieve the pressure on the DVC judge.

4.1.7 The Court Coordinator

The Court Coordinator position, which is unique to the DVC, plays a central and encompassing role in the delivery of this court. The Coordinator is responsible for the overall coordination of the procedures of the specialized court. As such, the Coordinator works in constant collaboration with the members of the judiciary who preside over the court. The Coordinator acts as a liaison between all DVC partners to ensure the sharing and continuous flow of relevant information, monitor the operations of the project, identify issues and problem solve and, finally, to develop a cohesive team. In a “court of specialists” the role of the Court Coordinator allows the Judge to maintain an arm’s length with the team of professionals working in the DVC, and consequently, preserves the necessary judicial independence. Linkages with government agencies, community organizations and the broader community to promote the understanding of the DVC and develop partnerships are also important functions of the Court Coordinator.

Several responsibilities are related to the experimental nature of this pilot project, for example, the development of the procedures and protocols required to implement the model and the linkages with and provision of relevant information to the project evaluator.

Background information

The Department of Justice has dedicated a full-time position to the DVC project for the role of the Court Coordinator.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The role of the Court Coordinator is not specifically described in the *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures*. A draft job description was developed early in the project and has been adjusted to more closely reflect the duties. The role of the Court Coordinator is described in *Appendix 6*.

The Court Coordinator reports to the Regional Director of the Department of Justice. The Coordinator works in continuous consultation with the members of the judiciary who preside over the DVC and acts as liaison with all partners and community agencies. All local partners agreed that this role was highly important, especially as it serves to coordinate and strengthen linkages between partners which ultimately results in a seamless process for the Court.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

Based on the information collected from the various partners involved in the delivery of the DVC, the role and responsibilities of the Court Coordinator have evolved during the planning and implementation of the project and are reported as meeting the needs of the team members and of the DVC. The team members understand the role and concur that the broad and encompassing role of the Court Coordinator is central to the effective functioning of the court.

It is the researchers' view that the Department of Justice needs to finalize the job description of the Court Coordinator, and that it should be integrated into the Operational Procedures manual. This should serve to alleviate any confusion as to the dimensions of this pivotal role in the DVC.

Implementation challenges

- Lines of communication

Given the nature of the coordination function in a multi-sector initiative such as the DVC, the lines of communication and the channelling of information are critical but may not always be clearly defined. Data indicate that the lines of communication between key partners involved in the delivery of the DVC at the local level are fluid and effective. The Court Coordinator also liaises with the Provincial Steering Committee, and at times with provincial staff of partner departments, for information reporting and issue resolution purposes. There appears to be some confusion with respect to the lines of communication between the Court Coordinator and provincial partners. This situation may be linked to the lack of clarity in the role of the Provincial Steering Committee, to be discussed later in this report.

- Problem solving and decision making mechanisms at the regional level

Most operational issues related to the day-to-day functioning of the Court were dealt with in a collaborative way by the Court Coordinator and the various partners, either on a one-on-one basis or through the Coordination Team meetings. However, issues related to broader roles and responsibilities of particular partners and program delivery posed a greater challenge for the Court Coordinator and the local team, since no formal multi-sector decision-making and problem-solving mechanisms appear to exist.

- Sharing of critical information between team members

The data indicate that it is necessary for the Court Coordinator to expediently channel critical court information to appropriate front line workers. Issues of confidentiality and line department policies have sometimes impeded this process. However, in most cases, Protocols for sharing information have been implemented to address these issues.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

There is discussion on the need for a full-time (1 FTE) court coordinator after the completion of this pilot. This is a fair question, based on the notion that the workload of the Court Coordinator was particularly heavy during the developmental stages of the DVC and may diminish once the project is stabilized. Leading the development of the operational procedures for the Court, providing initial orientation and information to the partners on the nature of the model and on the processes of the court, were time consuming activities.

However, this research has found that after two and a half years of operation, when the developmental phase is mostly completed, a full time position, staffed by a highly functioning professional is essential for the continuing collaboration of team members, for ongoing problem solving, maintaining the standards and the effective functioning of the specialized court, and importantly, for preserving the independence of the Judiciary.

4.1.8 Probation Services

The probation officer provides a range of services to the offender, the court and correctional institutions. One of the primary functions of the probation officer is the supervision of individuals sentenced to a community disposition. The probation officer prepares court ordered reports, such as the Pre-sentence report, to assist the court in making sentencing decisions, including the conditions to be followed by the accused supervised in the community setting. The probation officer assesses the offender's needs and risk to re-offend, develops a comprehensive case plan and revises the plan throughout the period of supervision.

The work involves continuous liaison with community and service provider agencies offering services to the offender, such as Family Services, Mental Health and Addictions. The Probation officer also links with the Crown Prosecutor, Victim Services, and the Court Coordinator.

Background information

One full time probation officer position was initially dedicated to the DVC. To meet the needs of the increasing caseload and reduce the workload pressure, a second position was advertised in early November 2008. The new Probation officer started employment in March 2009.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The role and responsibilities of the Probation Officer are described in the following documents:

- *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures, Annexe E*
- *Information Sharing Protocol between the Department of Public Safety – Probation services; The Department of Health – Mental Health and Addiction Services, May 2009*
- *The Domestic Violence Intervention Program standards document which provides a time standard regarding the referral of the offender by the probation officer.*

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

The Operational Procedures manual specifies the following time standards:

- The S.A.R.A. and LS-CMI assessments are to be administered within 30 days of intake and at 6 months interval, unless circumstances have changed markedly making it advisable to do so earlier. (page 36)
- The ODARA assessment is completed every 5 years, unless another spousal assault occurs before that time. (pages 36-37)

The *Domestic Violence Intervention Program* document indicates that the offender must be referred to the Domestic Violence Intervention Program offered by the Moncton Family Services by the probation officer within 1 week of admission to community supervision. (page 4)

The existence of a written standard in the *Domestic Violence Intervention Program* document specifying that the accused is to be referred to the Family Services Intake within one week of admission to community supervision appeared to surprise some participants. Data indicate that the one-week standard is generally met, but not always. It is the understanding of the researchers that the Intervention Program standards will be clarified and updated.

The Court Monitoring aspect of the DVC model entails a lot of preparation for the Probation Officer. At six-weeks, the client has to report back in Court for the first monitoring and for those released from jail, they have to report back to Court within 15 days. Approximately 14-16 cases are monitored by the Court on a weekly basis.

Data indicate that the Probation Officers can generally meet the expectations and deliver their services in a comprehensive manner as per the set standards, including their responsibilities with respect to court monitoring.

Implementation challenges

It is the understanding of the researchers that the major implementation challenges faced by the Probation Officers during implementation were related to caseload. The addition of the second Probation Officer position has made the job more manageable.

- Limited time to intervene with the offender

The Probation officer is the case manager for the offender. However the size of the caseload limits the time available for direct intervention with the offender. Interventions are mostly provided by outside agencies, such as: Addictions, Mental Health and Family Services Moncton.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the job

No suggestions were forthcoming.

4.1.9 Addiction Services and Mental Health Services

Addiction services and Mental Health services provide clinical services to DVC clients referred by the Probation Officer, including assessments and treatment. The counsellors are in regular contact with the Probation Officer to provide information on the attendance and progress of the client. Clients are expected to attend. If the client misses two sessions without first notifying the service Provider, he/she is dropped from the program and his/her Probation Officer is notified.

Background information

Early in the project, it became obvious that a large number of offenders needed addiction and mental health assessments and interventions. However, the agencies providing these services in Moncton had long waiting lists and could not respond to the DVC needs in a timely manner. Two half-time positions were subsequently created by the Department of Health within Addiction Services and Community Mental Health to provide services exclusively to the DVC.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The roles, responsibilities and linkages of Addiction Services and Community Mental Health are described in the following documents:

- *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures, Annexe G*
- *Information Sharing Protocol between the Department of Public Safety-Probation services; the Department of Health – Mental Health and Addiction Services*

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

Data collected indicate that the practice conforms to the established standards and protocols. The role, responsibilities and linkage mechanisms are clear, well understood and adhered to.

Implementation challenges

- Data collection

Addiction Services implemented a temporary measure, i.e., an electronic data collection mechanism (EXCEL spreadsheet) that served to follow the progress of the client and meet the data needs of the DVC. Addiction Services reported that this task, while valuable, is time consuming in view of the high caseload and may contribute to the need for more than 0.5 FTE.

- Rural service delivery

The research showed that providing services to clients living in rural areas has proven problematic. The issue of transportation appears to be a major reason for offenders not to attend programs. For example, Addiction Services clients residing in Moncton are provided with bus passes and those who are clients of Social development can also expect help with transportation. But, for those who live outside the Moncton area where there is no public transportation, they must find their own means of transportation to attend programs. While satellite offices are used to bring Addiction services closer to the clients, this poses a resourcing challenge as there is insufficient staff time to deliver an appropriate level of concentrated service at these sites.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

In response to the increased caseload, Addictions implemented an alternate way of delivering their service. They changed from an individual service delivery model to offering group intervention instead. The group model is now integrated in the Addictions general intervention approach. Highly favourable reports have been obtained through program evaluation by participants, some of whom volunteered to attend a maintenance program after the formal program was completed. This form of program delivery is deemed to be efficient and effective. It does, however, rely on facilitators who are trained to deliver the program in a group setting.

Community Mental Health also adapted its regular approach for DVC cases. The DVC dedicated Mental Health Worker completes both the first interview with the client and the assessment at Intake, instead of a first interview at Intake and the assessment completed at another time. This new approach expedites the process to meet the DVC needs.

4.1.10 Child Protection Services

Background Information

The DVC and the Department of Social Development jointly intervene in cases of domestic violence when there are child protection issues or where the safety of a child is a concern. The two bodies are linked to different levels of the justice system. While the DVC is a provincial court, Child Protection Services are governed by the Court of Queen's Bench (Family Services Act). Child Protection Services were not involved at the outset of the DVC project. However, their participation is now significant. It was reported that on a yearly basis, approximately fifty Child Protection cases are linked to the DVC. The purpose of sharing information between the two systems is for both partners to be cognizant of existing Court orders and intervention plans. This information flow allows for more informed decisions and the elimination of conflicting orders from the courts. It also prevents duplication of intervention programs.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The nature of the linkages between the two services is described in the *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures*, Annexe F.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

It was reported that the practice with respect to linkages and the coordination of information between the DVC and Child Protection is in line with the processes outlined in the Operational Procedures.

Implementation challenges

- Notification by the police

The Department of Social Development has reiterated the importance for the police to refer all cases where children are involved in the home immediately when the incident occurs. The Department becomes involved if children witnessed the violence or suffered abuse. Upon referral, it will proceed with its service delivery according to its protocols to determine if the safety of the child is an issue. At this time there appears to be some differences in the perception by police and by Child Protection as to the timing when these referrals are made. See **Section 4.1.1** of this report, under **Established role, responsibilities and linkages** for additional information with regard to this issue.

- Sharing of information

The Family Services Act governs the sharing of confidential information on child protection cases. But there were cases where it would be helpful to the DVC to know if a client of the DVC was also involved with the Family Court. This has resulted in the establishment of a protocol between the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Development that enables the sharing of specific information, but only on open cases of Child Protection as per legislation governing the release of information in Child Protection cases.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

The collaboration has resulted in immediate tangible benefits for the DVC. Community based intervention program spaces purchased by the Department of Social Development, and when vacant, can be used for DVC cases when the case is also an active case with the Department of Social Development, thus helping to reduce the waiting list for DVC offenders.

4.1.11 Family Services Moncton Inc.

Background information

The Department of Public Safety contracts the delivery of the DVC offender intervention programs to Family Services Moncton Inc.. The primary method of delivery is group intervention. Two different intervention programs are delivered: the low risk offenders program for a period of twelve weeks and the moderate and high risk offenders program for a period of twenty weeks.

Established role, responsibilities and linkages

The Family Services role, responsibilities and linkages are described in the *Domestic Violence Intervention Program – Moncton Pilot Project* standards document.

Conformity of current practice with established standards and protocols

Time Standard: The Family Services Standards document indicates that:

- “Intake – the Probation Officer shall refer an individual to a Domestic Violence Intervention program within one week of admission to community supervision”. (page 4)
- “The Service Provider shall notify the Probation Officer within two working days if the Offender does not contact the Service Provider to schedule an intake appointment. If no time frame was specified in the referral, the Service Provider shall advise the Probation Officer if the Offender does not, within one week of the service Provider’s receipt of the referral, contact the Service Provider to schedule an intake appointment”. (page 4)
- “Within one week of initial intake with the service Provider, the Offender will be expected to attend psycho-educational groups with open intake for 12 weeks.” (page 7)

The data indicate that timely referrals are made from DVC to Family Services and that Family Services advise the Probation Officer if the Offender does not contact the agency. However provision of service to low-risk offenders within the prescribed one-week time frame has been an issue. The high number of cases referred has resulted in the creation of a waiting list with a waiting time of five months at the time of data collection for this report.

Implementation challenges

Reported challenges refer to growing waiting lists, the availability of intervention programs in French, and transportation and attendance for offenders residing in rural areas.

- Waiting lists

It was reported that waiting lists are a concern for the service provider. The management of the list has presented operational challenges which have been addressed in part. For example, priority criteria were established to ensure clients could be admitted to the program prior to the end of the probation period.

- Availability of intervention program in French

Access to French programs was an issue prior to DVC and is still problematic as a sufficient number of individuals are required to form a group. It also raises the issue of equity in services available for both linguistic groups, especially first-language French offenders.

- Accessibility to offenders residing in rural areas

As for all other aspects of the DVC services, offenders who have no means of transportation and who reside in rural areas have greater difficulty to attend the intervention program delivered in Moncton.

Alternate ways of doing or organizing the work

No data were collected.

4.2 Generic Issues

Discussions with participating partners make it clear that a number of issues and concerns are common to most, if not all, partners involved in the delivery of the DVC project. Providing the services to clients residing in rural areas, orientation and training on a range of domestic violence issues, the lack of an information system with the capacity to support the DVC integrated processes, and the quality of work life were topics most commonly reported.

4.2.1 Service Delivery in Rural Areas

Organizing the delivery of services in rural areas poses significant operational issues for the DVC and its service providers.

- Few services available in rural areas

The availability of resources in rural areas, or lack of, limits access to services for rural residents. When service is provided on site by front line workers, the ability of service providers to respond quickly and expedite the DVC model is also impacted, e.g. first response by the police, administration of the oath for KGB by a Commissioner of oaths.

- Transportation for offenders with respect to court monitoring and accessing mandatory services

Court monitoring and services to assist the offender to address the issue of violence in his or her life are two key components of the DVC model. One of the major challenges for offenders living in rural areas is transportation to report to court on an ongoing basis and to access mandatory services. Since there are no public transportation services outside of Moncton, clients who do not have a personal means of transportation experience difficulties in getting to the required services. It was reported that transportation is a major reason clients call to say they cannot make the appointment or the group session. Currently, minimal supports exist to address the transportation issue:

4.2.2 Orientation and Training

Training was reported as an ongoing need for all team members, including key team members and service providers, new and existing staff, front line service providers and supervisors. In particular, partners who experience a high turnover of personnel, such as the Police, emphasized the need to continually re-educate and re-train. As well, professional service providers who are well trained and experts in their own intervention areas, e.g. mental health, addictions, and child protection communicated the need for special training in domestic violence. We were made aware in our deliberations that training is a great tool to get people interested in the domestic violence area and to reduce resistance where it may exist.

It is the understanding of the researchers that some training was provided to key team members during the project. For example, at the onset of the project the immediate partners participated in an on-site orientation at the Calgary specialised domestic violence court. Also, the Local Advisory Committee served as a forum to provide training on specific topics, such as the dynamics of victim recantations, and domestic violence in rural areas. However, the overwhelming caseload and workload pressures have interfered with the delivery of regular training initiatives for the DVC partners.

Several areas were identified as training needs:

- The dynamics and complexity of domestic violence – understanding of the circle of violence
- Current research and developments in the field of domestic violence
- The DVC model: understanding the philosophy underlying the DVC
- The DVC processes and operations
- Security issues and appropriate responses for specific team members, such as the crown prosecutor, the probation officer
- The use of assessment tools, especially for new workers

The Local Advisory Committee and the Coordinating Team meetings (expanded to include a broader range of partners) are seen as appropriate mechanisms for on-going training and education.

4.2.3 Information Systems

The departmental information systems have been adjusted to support some functions of the DVC. However, it was reported that significant work is still required to adequately support the integrated functions of this court and the linkages between the various partners delivering the services. The researchers appreciate that this is a major undertaking and not doable within the context of a pilot study.

4.2.4 Workload Pressure

Early in the project, the larger than anticipated caseload quickly became unmanageable for most front line workers. For some cases, e.g. Victim Services and Probation Services, the caseload grew to approximately twice the number regularly serviced by these workers. Data indicate that, despite the commitment and best intentions of the staff and local management, stress, employee turnover and instability posed an issue, both to the workers involved and to the project.

It was reported that the addition of two full-time positions for Probation Services and Victim Services early in 2009 has stabilized the situation in these two sectors. Even though the workload is still heavy, workers indicate that with careful planning and time management, they can generally meet the expectations.

However, workload pressure is still felt in a number of areas, namely, DVC judicial resources, Crown Prosecution, and Policing in rural areas. It was reported to the researchers that it is largely because of the commitment of the team that the DVC project could be implemented. However on the longer term and in new areas of implementation, it is the opinion of the researchers that attention must be given to the human resource factor to ensure the stability of the project. Resources need to match the expectations.

4.3 Work Flow Processes

The DVC work flow process is described in the *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence/ Flow of service delivery and system linkages* chart (**Appendix 7**). The process was validated by the partners at the group session with suggestions for additions and minor adjustments. These include:

- the addition of additional steps prior to the “Court Appearance”, and after “Court Appearance and a Not Guilty plea”, to represent the Legal Aid Duty Counsel and Defence functions
- the indication of the linkage between the Police and the victim, after “Court Appearance” to inform the victim of court outcomes
- the indication of the linkages between the Court Coordinator and the Queen’s Bench
- a more complete indication of the coordination and information flow related to Victim Services
- the indication of the linkages between Probation Services and Moncton Family Services

The work flow process was examined from the perspectives of the victim and of the accused. Based on the discussions, the current practice is in conformity with the Operational Procedures Chart. Partners understand the work flow process and agree with its fundamentals, ie., the various steps, from the reporting of a domestic violence incident through to the disposition of the Court, access to services and to court monitoring; the responsibility centers; and the linkages between the different parts of the DVC system; as described.

The linkages between the various partners were examined in greater detail in discussions relating to each of the eleven partners and results have been reported in **Section 4.1** of this report.

4.4 DVC Governance and Structure

The concept of governance has multiple dimensions. For the purpose of this study, the researchers were mandated to examine the following elements of the DVC governance and structure:

- Roles and responsibilities of the partners
- Organizational structure and reporting relationships
- Decision making process and problem resolution mechanisms

Note: The detailed findings related to the roles and responsibilities specific to each of the eleven partners have been reported in **Section 4.1** of this report.

4.4.1 Organizational Structure and Reporting Relationships

- The partners

The authority to implement the DVC was provided within the government's overall approval of the Province's second action plan to address the issue of violence against women, *A Better World for Women: Moving Forward 2005-2010*. Financial resources were allocated based on the approved action plan.

The Women's Issues Branch of the Executive Council was mandated by the Province of New Brunswick to lead the planning and implementation of the domestic violence specialized court model, which is one of the five key initiatives included in the second action plan.

Together with the Women's Issues Branch, a number of partners were responsible for planning and overseeing the delivery of the domestic violence specialized court. At the provincial level, the partners include the Department of Justice, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Public Safety. At the local level, a significant number of other partners have been involved in the operational planning and the actual delivery of the court, including the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Justice, the Court and the Judiciary, Legal Aid, the RCMP, the Department of Health - Addictions and Mental Health Services, the Department of Social Development - Child Protection Services, and Family Services Moncton.

The Department of Public Safety, the Department of Justice and the Office of the Attorney General are responsible for the direct delivery of services within the DVC. The human and financial resources allocated to the DVC continue to reside within each organization or line department.

- Structure and reporting relationships

DVC workers report through their respective lines of authority, i.e. through their regional management and up to their provincial departmental operations unit, as per their departmental organizational structure. They also liaise with their departmental policy and program branches for policy guidance and advice. The front line workers operate in a collaborative way and coordinate their efforts to meet the needs of the specialized court and of the clients, both offenders and victims. The local Court Coordinator exercises a pivotal role in maximizing the potential for collaboration and integration of the efforts of team members from the diverse disciplines and sectors.

- Committee structure

Organizing and managing a multi-departmental initiative is complex. The key partners recognized that their efforts needed to be coordinated and integrated in order to reach their common goal of a domestic violence specialized court. To this effect, three committees were established: the Provincial Steering Committee and two local committees, the Local Advisory Committee and the Coordinating Team.

- Provincial Steering Committee

Composition: The Provincial Steering Committee was established in 2005. The membership includes representation from the Women's Issues Branch of the Executive Council Office, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs, the Department of Social Development, the Department of Health, the Office of the Attorney General, the New Brunswick Legal Aid Services Commission, the Muriel McQueen Center for Family Violence Research, and the University of New Brunswick Sociology Department. The Women's Issues Branch chairs the Committee.

Role and responsibilities: It is the understanding of the researchers that no official government document exists, such as a Memorandum to the Executive Council or an interdepartmental Terms of Reference, to expressly define the role and responsibilities of the Provincial Steering Committee and to establish its authority for the DVC project. However, two early documents developed by the Steering Committee provide some indication as to the mandate and authority the Committee has assumed: *Implementing a 'Domestic Violence Court' in New Brunswick: A Draft Discussion Paper*, July 2006, and the *DVC Steering Committee Strategic Planning Report*, June 20/21 2006.

Implementing a 'Domestic Violence Court' in New Brunswick: A Draft Discussion Paper, July 2006, indicates that the main focus of the Steering Committee at the initial stage was to develop a model for the first specialized domestic violence Court in New Brunswick. The Committee was established to:

*"Study and research existing court models, explore possible sites in New Brunswick, engage stakeholders and seek advice from the many sources...engage in a number of additional activities to assist in the advancement of the developmental phase of this project... Moving into the implementation phase, a local steering committee will be formed to address the implementation details... The provincial steering committee will continue in its capacity to begin the work for the second court site, oversee program components of a provincial nature and support the work at the local level".*⁴

⁴ *Implementing a 'Domestic Violence Court' in New Brunswick: A Draft Discussion Paper*, July 2006, pages 11 and 12.

The *DVC Steering Committee Strategic Planning Report*, June 20/21, 2006, points to the Committee's commitment to ensure a smooth transition from the provincially developed model to the project site responsible for implementation. It reaffirms the continuing role of the Provincial Steering Committee during the implementation of the model in the first site and in the future site. The Committee's role as described in the Report is as follows:

*“To provide leadership and support for the implementation of the Domestic Violence Court at the local level and to make this happen in a team approach. The Steering Committee is committed to facilitate the transition of the Domestic Violence court initiative and support the implementation process... The Steering Committee will continue providing strategic direction in line with ‘A Better World for Women: Moving Forward’ action plan commitments. The Steering Committee will continue to have a role after the court is implemented and continue with its provincial steering committee to move the implementation of the second court site.”*⁵

The DVC conceptual model, described in *Implementing a ‘Domestic Violence Court’ in New Brunswick: A Draft Discussion Paper*, July 2006, commonly called the “Blueprint Document”, was provided to the local team in the fall of 2006 in order to develop the procedures required to implement the model. Beyond this point, the nature of the role and responsibilities of the Provincial Steering Committee became unclear as fewer meetings of the central office partners were held. Clearer terms of reference would have assisted in clarifying the role and responsibilities of the Steering Committee.

- Local Court Advisory Committee

The Local Court Advisory Committee was established in January 2007. A former committee, the Court Design Committee which had been established in 2006 to develop the operational procedures for the court prior to implementation, was merged with the new advisory committee.

Composition: The DVC Judge chairs the Local Court Advisory Committee. Membership includes representation from Codiac RCMP, Crown Prosecution, Legal Aid, Private Defence Bar, Court of Queen's Bench administrative staff, Court Services, Probation, Victim Services, Social Development (child protection), Addiction and Mental Health services, and the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Center on Family Violence, and other community organizations.

Role and responsibilities: Documentation indicates that the Local Court Advisory Committee initially focused on the development of operational procedures to implement the DVC model developed by the Provincial Steering Committee. As the project has evolved, the role of the committee has changed and discussions now focus on emerging challenges and operational changes that are required to resolve immediate issues. Members share information with respect to their specific work and involvement in the project. The Committee also serves as a forum to provide educational activities.

⁵ DVC Steering Committee Strategic Planning Report, 2006, p. 1.

- Coordinating Team

The second local committee, the Coordination Team, was established early in the project.

Composition: The Court Coordinator chairs the Coordinating Team meetings. Membership includes the Court's immediate partners: the Police, Crown Prosecutor, Defence counsel, Victim Services Coordinators and Probation Officers. The role of the Coordination Team is spelled out in the *Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project Operational Procedures*. (page 15)

Role and responsibilities: The purpose of this committee is to provide an opportunity for the immediate partners to conference on specific cases, to provide a better coordination of services for both victim and offender, identify critical information that needs to be shared with the Judge for decision making and to share their particular expertise with other team members.

4.4.2 Conformity of Practice with Established Structure and Reporting Protocols

Data indicate that the reporting relationships are clear for key front-line workers. They understand the need to report through their departmental line of authority. They also recognize that, in their day-to-day activities, the linkages and coordination with other members of the DVC team and the Court Coordinator is critical for the functioning of this court.

4.4.3 Implementation Challenges/Issues

- Local Advisory Committee and Team Coordination Committee

It is the understanding of the researchers that the role of these committees has evolved over time, in line with the developmental stages of the project and its increasing maturity. Consequently, their mandates are currently being examined with the view of refocusing their activities to meet the evolving needs of the DVC and a broader spectrum of partners. For example, some partners who are not included in the Coordinating Team meetings have expressed an interest in meeting with other team members on a regular basis to establish linkages, share expertise and best practices and to participate to orientation and educational activities.

- Provincial Steering Committee

As previously stated, it appears that once the project was implemented, the role of the Steering Committee became unclear to the local partners and some provincial partners, as well. While the Committee had been actively involved in the early planning and implementation stages of the project, it now appears to have assumed less of an active role. Without the benefit of a formal, written statement defining the role, responsibilities and authority of the Steering Committee, there is confusion in the DVC system with respect to the structure of the project and the relationship between the local partners and the Provincial Steering Committee.

The researchers recommend the following.

1. That the partners re-examine and clarify the role and responsibilities of the Provincial Steering Committee and its linkages with the local DVC project team, to the completion of the DVC pilot project and thereafter;
2. That the role and responsibilities of the Women's Issues Branch with respect to the DVC project be clarified and communicated to the partners; and,
3. That the role and responsibilities of the Provincial Steering Committee and of the Women's Issues Branch be communicated to the partners.

4.4.4 Decision-Making and Problem Resolution Mechanisms

The implementation of an innovative and complex service delivery model that evolves rapidly during the first years of implementation, such as the DVC, requires dynamic decision making processes and issue resolution mechanisms to respond in a timely manner to external events and changing conditions.

Data indicate that the DVC local team, through their collaboration and problem solving efforts can find solutions to most day-to-day operational issues. The challenge comes when major issues cannot be resolved through the regular collaborative efforts of front line team members, e.g. a critical need for additional human resources, severe budgetary constraints, disagreements regarding the role and responsibilities of front line workers. Diverging opinions were shared with respect to the decision making process and problem resolution mechanisms for the DVC:

- Since the accountability for budget and human resource management rests with each line department, the decision making and issue resolution for these matters must rest with the relevant department.
- Since the DVC is based on the coordination and the integration of the efforts of many partners, there needs to be a mechanism that will coordinate decision making and problem resolution for issues that impact the DVC. At this point, the role and the authority of the Provincial Steering Committee require clarification to this effect.
- The local team needs to know where to turn to when an issue involving more than one partner cannot be resolved at the local level.

It is recommended that the Women's Issues Branch, the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Safety, together with key local team members, define for the remaining term of the pilot project:

1. Clear decision-making processes at regional and provincial levels for decisions affecting the DVC model, its delivery and its partners; and,
2. Problem resolution mechanisms for issues that cannot be resolved satisfactorily through regular collaborative efforts of the local team and that have the potential to impact on the integrity of the model, its delivery and its partners

5.0 Conclusions

The conclusions on the findings of the Operational Review are reported in two sub-groups: the General Conclusions and the Conclusions on Operational Review Themes.

5.1 General Conclusions

The Operational Review has galvanized the partners to come together and discuss for the first time in a large group setting the functioning of the DVC model with a view to strengthening the project. Participants exhibit a passion for their project, a willingness to work together and an eagerness to share their ideas and concerns. Their positive disposition was reflected during the data collection process through open and transparent discussions and the expression of their professional commitment to effectively address the issue of domestic violence. They have voiced general comments regarding the successes to date, as well as the challenges that were overcome and those remaining. Although some of these findings may not be directly related to the specific questions addressed by the Operational Review, they were found to be relevant and informative.

A number of **accomplishments** realized during the two and a half years of implementation have been reported by the participants, including:

- The specialized DVC is off the ground and functioning well.
- The addition of key staff positions has been essential for managing the overwhelming caseload.
- A team of specialized domestic violence workers is emerging.
- Domestic violence is now identified as such, not only in the information system but also, and most importantly, in the minds of partners.
- A greater understanding of the fundamentals of a DVC court is observed, at the team level and in the community.
- Team members have acquired a broader knowledge of the work and roles of their partners.
- Police investigations are more vigorous.
- A significant improvement has occurred in the ability to identify domestic violence cases at the front door, and to register them as such in the dossiers.

A number of **challenges**, sometimes daunting in the perspective of the partners, had to be dealt with:

- At the onset of the project, the local team faced the challenge of defining, in a tight timeframe, operational procedures to implement the conceptual court model developed by the Provincial Steering Committee. Standards were established to ensure the key elements of the model were implemented effectively and to accelerate the process; the roles and responsibilities of the eleven partners were defined; and protocols developed to define the linkages between them and integrate their actions.
- A period of time was required for all to understand their roles and responsibilities and how they had to be integrated with other team members' responsibilities.

- Early in the implementation phase, the team was confronted with significant challenges e.g. the larger than anticipated caseload, the heavy workload for key partners, and the subsequent requirement for additional resources to manage the caseload growth at critical pressure points.
- After two and a half years of operation, even if the DVC is implemented and functioning well, some resourcing challenges remain, namely, the significant workload pressure at the judiciary and the Crown prosecution levels.
- On a broader level, another order of concerns remains. The team is still dealing with a connotation to DVC that is palpable, i.e. anecdotes that DVC is seen by some as a cause and suggestions that people involved are over-zealous. There is also the prevailing attitude in some areas that what goes on in your house is your own business. Police have done a good job in changing this mindset. They report that while most police officers have risen above that perspective, the attitude may still persist in some areas.
- Budgetary pressures that may yet result in the reduction or elimination of services to low risk offenders, changing a key component of the model prior to the end of the piloting stage.

The participants attributed the overall achievements of the DVC to the following factors:

- The vision of the partners involved in the policy development phase
- The strong local leadership exercised by the DVC Judge
- The solid commitment to teamwork at the front line and their eagerness to make the DVC work
- The ownership of the DVC implementation modalities by the various regional partners who participated in their development
- The flexibility of the local and provincial management to adjust to an ever increasing workload and provide the required human resources.

The participants expressed a **concern regarding the continuation of the Court**. Partners have worked hard in their respective professions to ensure that this pilot was implemented and that it could be made to work in a seamless fashion to the benefit of the victim and the offender. They are all aware of the goals and objectives of the strategy and consequently, given the amount of time and work that has been devoted as well as the modifications that have been made to how work is carried out, not unreasonably, they would welcome some reassurance that this work in implementing a DVC in Moncton will not be lost.

5.2 Conclusions on Operational Review Themes

The Operational Review requested the researchers to provide a picture of the current operational realities of the DVC, with particular emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of the various partners, the linkages between them and the workflow processes, the conformity of practice with the original plans, the governance structure of the project, and lessons learned with respect to alternative ways of doing the work, while maintaining the integrity of the project. The following summarizes the findings of the Operational Review with respect to these key questions/areas.

5.2.1 Roles, Responsibilities of Partners

It has become apparent through the review that the roles and responsibilities of the eleven partners involved in the delivery of the DVC are generally clearly stated and well understood by all. The DVC has brought significant changes in the way some partners conduct their business in the field of domestic violence. For all partners, the intensity of the work resulting from the increased caseload and the fundamental requirement to expedite the process had an impact on their capacity to implement their responsibilities as per the expectations of the model. However, since the implementation of the project, most issues with respect to the roles and responsibilities of partners to meet the needs of the DVC and its clients have been addressed and resolved. Further discussion and clarification are still required with respect to the most appropriate responsibility centers for some activities necessary to support the DVC model, such as viewing the KGB victim statement with the victim prior to the court and accompanying of the victim in court when necessary.

Since one of the major objectives of the DVC is to shorten the court referral process and bring the case to court as quickly as possible, the role and responsibilities of the partners include meeting critical timelines. To this effect, critical time standards were initially established for the first court appearance and for trial dates:

The 15 day time standard from the date of the incident to the first court appearance is generally met in the Moncton district. It was reported that it is achieved for 60-70% of the cases in rural areas, which represents a significant progress. Prior to the implementation of the DVC, the time frame for the first court appearance was from six to eight weeks. A number of factors impact the capacity to meet the 15 day time frame in rural areas, namely, the limited police resources and frequent turnover in the force, the lack of dedicated resources for DVC, and the complexities of delivering services in rural areas.

The 90 day timeframe to schedule a trial date after entering a plea was met for approximately the first six months of operation of the DVC. Because of the case volume and judicial resources available, the timeline had to be extended to 180 days. Data indicate that the current timeline exceeds the 180 days in some cases. It is the understanding of the researchers that, in order to achieve this standard, it would be necessary to involve more judicial resources and increase the resourcing at the Crown Prosecution Office and at Legal Aid.

The Standards stress the importance for the Crown to disclose the information to Defence Counsel in the shortest delay possible. Although the timing of disclosure was reported to be a challenge at the beginning of the project, the researchers understand that the issue has now been resolved.

5.2.2 Conformity of Practice with Original Plans

Overall, practice has conformed to the original strategic blueprint as provided by the Provincial Steering Committee. From this document and the original operational framework designed by the local team, the project has evolved. As new lessons are learned, small changes and refinement of existing practices is occurring in order to make things run more smoothly while at the same time, meeting the goals of the project.

5.2.3 Linkages between Partners

Since the early stages of implementation, the clarity and the effectiveness of the linkages between the partners and the desire to better integrate their actions and services with one another have been a constant concern of the DVC. To support this goal, the following initiatives were undertaken:

- Protocols have been developed and implemented to facilitate the interactions between several service providers, for examples protocols for linkages between the Police and Public Safety, between Probation Services and The Department of Health (Mental Health and Addiction Services).
- Confidentiality agreements were reached to allow partners to share information, e.g., to allow Crown Prosecutor's files to be accessed by the Probation officers and the DPS Victim Services Coordinators; Child Protection Services to share information regarding active cases; and confidentiality agreements such as the protocols between Mental Health and Addictions and the Probation officers to share results of interventions.
- Some adjustments were made to the information systems to allow for a better flow of information between the front-line workers. Significant improvements are still required in this area, although it is recognized that the resources required to achieve effective interfaces between several information systems or to develop a new integrated system for the DVC are not feasible at this time.
- Linkages and relationship issues have been addressed on an ongoing basis as the project evolved. An important part of the role of the Court Coordinator is the identification of these types of issues and mobilizing the partners and the team to resolve them. Appropriate linkages were made possible and more effective by the coordination function.

It became evident in the data collection that the partners are committed to meet the needs of the DVC and its clients and that they approach the linkage issues in a collaborative way to find effective solutions. Areas still requiring improvements were identified by participants, namely the adoption of a standardized referral form to be used by the three police detachments to refer cases to the DPS Victim Services Coordinators, the systematic reporting of the court outcomes by the police to the victims and, as stated above, information systems that support an interdepartmental and multi-disciplinary team approach.

5.3 DVC Workflow Processes

The DVC Flow of service delivery and system linkages chart, which outlines the major steps and activities involved in the DVC process and the linkages between the partners, was validated by all partners who participated at the group session. Front line workers understand these processes and linkages and the practice appears to be in conformity with the prescribed model. To make the chart even more comprehensive, additional notations were suggested, of which the representation of the Legal Aid on the chart and a clear indication of the police linkage with the victims regarding the court outcomes.

5.4 Governance Structure

The goal and challenge, in this project, was to define an effective governance structure, where a collection of government departments, each with its own internal line of authority and its own accountability framework, need to interact and integrate their efforts towards a common goal.

The organizational structure, the reporting relationships and the decision making and issue resolution mechanisms were examined. The data suggest that there is clear accountability and authority within each partner organization. However they also suggest an absence of clear accountability and authority for the global functioning and results of the multi-departmental DVC project. When issues arise that cannot be resolved at the regional level, e.g. broad policy, budgetary, and human resource issues, effective decision making and problem resolution mechanisms appear unclear or non-existent. The only existing provincial interdepartmental body that has this integrating role in the project, the Provincial Steering Committee, does not appear to have a clear and agreed upon mandate and authority. While it was the understanding of the partners that the Committee had a lead role during the planning stage, its role and authority at implementation is unclear.

5.5 Alternate Ways of Doing or Organizing the Work

There were few examples given to the researchers as to alternate ways to carry out job responsibilities. As the project has evolved, the most efficient practices appear to have been adopted so that at this time, it is difficult for service providers to think of any better ways in which to work and still meet the goals of the project.

5.6 Generic Issues

Partners identified four major issues impacting the operations and delivery of the DVC: the delivery of services in rural areas, the training of staff involved in DVC, the need to upgrade the information systems, and workload pressure.

- Service delivery in rural areas

Common to most partners in the DVC team is the challenge to deliver the DVC services in rural areas. The rural realities of distances to travel and concentration of services in the city make it difficult for clients to access the services. They also pose a challenge for service providers who need to respond quickly and expedite the process. Some of the services used extensively by the offenders, i.e. the Family Services Intervention Program, Addictions and Mental Health Services are offered almost exclusively in the city. Some agencies, like Addictions, may provide services in satellite offices but generally, there is not enough agency presence in these sites to meet the need for the timely and more intense interventions required by the DVC clients. From the perspective of the Police patrol officers who are first responders and must travel the distances, rural service delivery poses specific challenges in meeting the DVC time frames.

- Training

Training on the DVC model and the functioning of the Court was provided to key partners during the project. It was consistently reported that all members of the team need training in the area of domestic violence. For some partners, like the Police, where changing staff is a constant, ongoing training on domestic violence and the functioning of the DVC is a requisite. Training is also required at the supervisory level. A number of professional team members, such as mental health, addictions, child protection workers, although well trained and specialists in their own field, indicated they would benefit from training and education in the area of domestic violence. Areas of interest include the dynamics and complexity of domestic violence, the circle of violence, the philosophy underlying the DVC, and the functioning of the Court.

- Information Systems

In order to effectively support the integrated actions and linkages of the key partners involved in the delivery of the DVC, existing information systems need to be upgraded or a new system developed.

- Workload Pressure

The DVC experience has demonstrated that the higher than anticipated caseload resulted in significant workload, stress and high turnover of staff in some sectors. Additional resources in Mental Health and Addiction Services, Probation Services, and Victim Services were necessary to deliver an appropriate level of service, to relieve the pressure and stabilize the workforce. There are still areas experiencing workload pressure namely, the DVC judiciary, the Crown Prosecution office, and policing services in rural areas. The findings indicate that staffing resources to match the expectations of the DVC model is imperative in order to maintain a healthy workplace, continuity in staffing and stability of the DVC.

5.7 Lessons Learned: Considerations for Expanding in other Regions

The partners willingly shared with the researchers the lessons learned during the implementation of the DVC. This intelligence may be of benefit in the event that the model is implemented in other regions of the province. They are as follows:

- Effective coordination to bring the partners together, ensure linkages are seamless and working, and issues resolved is one of the critical factors of success.
- DVC is a new venture and as it evolves new angles appear. Managers and front-line workers need to keep well informed of these changes in order to be in a position to update and adapt their interventions within the model.
- The continuity of the judiciary is a challenge. The “DVC judge knows this animal, imported judges don’t”.
- Continuing education on domestic violence is a necessity, not only for the front line but at all levels of the organization, including supervisors, is an essential element.
- On-going linkages and training are required to ensure that Standards are being met and that the processes are understood.
- There is a need for a forum to allow for the continuing dialogue between key partners.
- If DVC is to remain or be expanded to other Jurisdictions, there is a need to address the Information System which must be modified to provide timely access to appropriate information to all partners.
- The safety of workers needs to be recognized and addressed.
- The DVC is a resource intensive model and should not to be implemented without the appropriate resources: *“The dedication of specific resources to the Court allowed the partners to provide the special tools that a DV Court needs. One could stick a sign DV on the door and not have a real DV court. Without the tools and the resources, it is a ‘make-believe’... With the establishment of such a court, it must be understood that it has specific requirements. It has more needs than other courts and this must be recognized”.* (Interviewee)

Establishing a specialized domestic violence court model in New Brunswick proved to be a challenging task. The vision had to be created and the implementation procedures developed to fit the New Brunswick reality. An unanticipated caseload emerged and, consequently, resources needed to be adjusted to meet the expectations of safety planning for the victims and accountability for the offenders. However, thanks to the creativity, commitment and collaboration of the partners, both at the local and provincial levels, the project has now been in function for two and a half years. The strong judiciary leadership and the commitment to teamwork have made the Domestic Violence Court operational.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. List of Interviewees

Appendix 2. Message to Interview Participants and Interview Questions

Appendix 3. Letter of Invitation to Group Work Session and List of Participants

Appendix 4. Key categories of Questions (Sample)

Appendix 5. List of DVC Project Documentation Reviewed

Appendix 6. Role of the Court Coordinator

Appendix 7. Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Flow of Service Delivery and System Linkages

List of Interviewees

ALLMAN, Anthony, Regional Director (OAG)

BOUCHER, Joanne, Court Coordinator (JUS)

BELLIVEAU, Nathalie, Victim Services Coordinator (DPS)

DAIGLE, Jean, Regional Director, Mental Health and Addictions, Health Authority B – Moncton

DUGAS, Linda, Coordinator, Domestic Violence Unit, RCMP Codiac Division

DUGAS-HORSMAN, Anne, DVC Judge (JUS)

DUKE, Jessica, Probation Officer (DPS)

EKSTRAND, Ken, Program Manager, Addictions Counselling, Health Authority B – Moncton

GAUDET, Armand, Regional Director (DPS)

GREGORY, Kathryn, Crown Prosecutor, Specialized Prosecution (OAG)

GURAVICH, Michael, Senior Program Consultant, Program Support Services (JUS)

LANDRY, Johanne, Legal Counsel, Legal Aid Services Commission

LEBLANC, Eva, Victim Services Coordinator (DPS)

LEBLANC, Nathalie, Program Manager, Adult Treatment Team, Health Authority B – Moncton

LEGER, David, Regional Director, Court Services for Moncton and Richibucto (JUS)

McKENNA, Janet, Policy Advisor, Policy and Planning (JUS)

PELLERIN, Annie, Social Worker, Addictions Counselling, South-East Regional Health Authority

ROBICHAUD, Aline-Marie, Manager, Program Delivery, Child Protection (SD)

ST-JACQUES, Annie, Crown Prosecutor (OAG)

THOMAS, Brenda, Program Support Manager for Victim Services (DPS)

Message to Interview Participants

Thank you for accepting to participate in the Operational Review of the DVC Pilot project. Two major data collection activities will be conducted during the summer to obtain information. Firstly, interviews will be conducted with selected regional directors, provincial staff and front line workers involved in the planning and the delivery of the Domestic Violence Court project. Secondly, a working group session involving a larger representation of front line workers and service providers will be held. Your participation in the interview process will enlighten the knowledge and understanding of the researchers regarding the day-to-day functioning of the DVC project and allow us to scope and focus the working group discussions appropriately.

The Operational Review will include an assessment of the current procedures as they relate to the established roles and responsibilities. It will review the work flow processes and how well these are integrated with one another. It will examine how the current practice compares with the established roles, responsibilities and processes as defined in the Operational Procedures. The Operational Review will look at the organizational structure and reporting relationships and will study how challenges are addressed.

The Women's Issues Branch has commissioned me and Carole Dilworth, from Evaluation Designs Ltd., to conduct this study. We are confident that the wealth of information you will be able to share regarding the functioning of the DVC project will assist us in reaching the objectives of the review. An overview of the interview questions and themes is attached. We are looking forward to working with you to develop a complete picture of the operational realities of this project.

Aline Saintonge
Lead Researcher
President, S&L Transactions Ltd.

Interview Questions – Field Staff

1. What is the nature of your role and your responsibilities with this project (or of your staff if you are manager of a front line staff providing services in the DVC project)?
2. What aspects of your work or interventions (or of your staff...) require an interface or coordination with other service providers in the DVC project?
3. How does practice compare with the roles, responsibilities and linkages as defined in the Operational Procedures? If there were any modifications brought to the Operational Procedures with respect to your role, can you describe these changes and explain why they were required.
4. What is the amount of time you (or your staff) devote to this project?
5. In order to carry out your responsibilities in this project, did you (or staff) require any special training/instruction/education/orientation? If yes, what was the nature of the training, when was it offered and by whom? If no, should it have been offered and in what aspects of this project would it have been beneficial?
6. With regard to this project only, what is the nature of all reporting relationships? For example, who do you report to? To whom do you give information about the project, about your activities? Who do you call when there is a problem? How is information shared with other project participants?
7. To what extent has this project impacted – positively or negatively- on the day-to-day service delivery provided by you (your staff)?
8. What successes do you see so far with how this project operates? Is there anything you would suggest that could be done differently or modified, either in your work (or that of staff) or in the work of those you interact with in this project, to make it more effective or more efficient?
9. From your perspective, should the Province decide to expand this project to other regions or implement it province-wide, what challenges would you foresee based on your experience in this pilot project?
10. What concerns, if any, do you (staff) have specific to the operation of this project in order that it meets its intended goal and objectives?
11. What would you (staff) hope to see come out of the Organization Review? That is, what are your expectations from this Review?
12. Is there anything else you would like to share with us today?

Interviews Questions – Steering Committee Members

1. Your expectations for this Operational Review. According to you, what would be the most important questions that this Review should address?
2. How did the DVC project come to life? What prompted it? What prompted the development of the Blueprint?
3. From your perspective, what were or are the major successes of the DVC project?
4. As a member of the Steering Committee, do you feel that the implementation of the project is in line with the Blueprint?
5. From your perspective, as a central office staff in a Department actively involved in this project, can you talk to us about how the Department views this DVC project, more specifically with respect to:
 - the model itself
 - the implementation of the model
 - the organizational structure of the project and the reporting relationships - for example what are the current reporting relationships and do you see this aspect differently if and when the model is expanded across the province?
6. What were the major challenges during implementation?
7. With the benefit of hindsight, if you were starting from day one, what would you do differently:
 - as a member of the Steering Committee?
 - as a member of your department?
8. From your perspective, do you see alternate ways to do the work of the DVC and still meet the objectives of the model?
9. Do you foresee any sensitive issues that we should know about before we start the interview process and the group session in Moncton? Do you have any advice for us?

Interview Questions – Regional Directors

1. How does this project work, in terms of organizational structure and reporting relationships?
2. From your point of view, as a Regional Director, what do you see as the major successes of the DVC project? What do you hear from your staff in relation to successes? What successes do you see so far with how the project operates?
3. How did the project impact your operations, either positively or negatively?
4. For you as a Regional Director, what were the major challenges during implementation? And for your staff involved in the project?
5. Could anything be done differently to streamline the process and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the project, while still meeting the intended goals and objectives?
6. If the project was starting from day one, what would be the major elements that you would like to change, either in the plans or in the implementation of the project?
7. What are your expectations for this Operational Review? According to you, what would be the most important questions that this Review should address?
8. Is there anything else you would like to mention or that you feel I should know about this project?

Letter of Invitation to Group Work Session

Subject: Invitation – August 21, 2009 Group Session – Domestic Violence Court Operational Review

On June 30, 2009, Ms Norma Dubé, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Women's Issues Branch, advised all partners of the Domestic Violence Court Pilot Project that an Operational Review of the court would be conducted. (See Attachment).

The Women's Issues Branch has commissioned my company and that of Evaluation Designs Ltd., to conduct this study. The Operational Review process has been initiated with a series of interviews conducted during June and July with selected front line workers, regional management and provincial staff actively involved in the planning and delivery of the Domestic Violence Court.

You are invited to participate in the second major data collection activity, a working group session, involving a larger representation of service providers. This session will be held on Friday, August 21, 2009, in Moncton. The session will start at 8:30 and end in the afternoon, with a working lunch included. More detailed information will be forwarded to participants for consideration prior to the meeting so that the time together will be spent efficiently.

We would appreciate if you could confirm your availability with Kafiy.Nzeyya-Weva@gnb.ca as soon as possible or by August 7.

We sincerely hope you will be able to participate. We know that the knowledge and experience you have acquired as front line service deliverers and managers associated with the Domestic Violence Court are crucial in the assessment of the functioning of this pilot project.

Should you have questions with regard to this meeting, please contact me, aline Saintonge, at the email address given below. Please note that I will be out of the office from August 1-10 so I will answer any question immediately upon my return.

We are looking forward to working with you to develop a complete picture of the operational realities of this pilot project.

Aline Saintonge, Lead Researcher
President
S&L Transactions Ltd.
astonge@nbnet.nb.ca

Carole Dilworth
President
Evaluation Designs Ltd.
evaluationdesigns@nb.aibn.com

List of Participants Group Work Session

BELLIVEAU, Nathalie, DPS Victim Services

BETTS, Shane, RCMP District 11

BLAQUIERE, Linda, DPS Victim Services

BOUCHER, Joanne, Court Coordinator

CLOUTIER, Chantal, Addiction Services

DUGAS-HORSMAN, Anne, DVC Judge

DUKE, Jessica, Probation Services

LEBLANC, Éva, DPS Victim Services

LEVESQUE, Robin, District 4 RCMP

MAZEROLLE, Monique, Child Protection,
Social Development

PHINNEY, Timothy, Codiac RCMP

ST-JACQUES, Annie, Crown Prosecutor

TILLEY, Janice, Family Services Moncton Inc.

Key Categories of Questions (Sample)

Roles, Responsibilities, Linkages - Service Area: CROWN PROSECUTOR

<p>Established role/resp./linkage</p> <p>Identify Documents where r/r are defined:</p>	<p>Are the r/r of your service as they relate to the DVC service clear to you and to all members of your organization?</p> <p>Do the r/r need fine tuning or are they comprehensive enough and understood by all?</p> <p>(If no written definition available, e.g. Legal Aid, ask rep to briefly summarize their r/r)</p>	<p>Were r/r of your particular service delivery to the DVC implemented as originally planned?</p> <p>Along the way, has there arisen a need to modify what was being done or do current practices reflect what was originally planned?</p> <p>If changes occurred, what were the reasons?</p> <p>(Issue: conformity of practice with established r/r)</p>	<p>Does everybody else associated with the DVC pilot project understand the r/r of the Crown Prosecutor?</p> <p>What if anything is not understood?</p>	<p>Are all the activities and responsibilities carried out according to the <u>Time Operational Standards</u> for this service (<i>name of service</i>)?</p> <p>Are you able to carry out most aspects of your work as per the Standards, e.g. in a comprehensive manner?</p> <p>If not to either of the above, in what circumstances can you meet and in what circumstances can you not meet the standards?</p> <p>If no time standards are identified, how are you able to expedite the services to clients or the court process?</p> <p>Or Are you able to provide the information required by other team members in a timely manner in order for them to expedite the court process?</p>	<p>Are there any aspects of your roles and responsibilities that you think could be adjusted in order to simplify your work and/or maximize the operations of your service provision to the DVC?</p>
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Issues/Questions to clarify:

1. DVC has a time standard with respect to the Crown (OP, page 9) *Crown shall when deemed appropriate, within 8 days of receipt of the file from the police, complete a process involving pre-charge screening and charge approval.* Can this Standard be met? What are the challenges/contributing factors?
2. What is the impact of the time pressures here? Does the Crown have adequate time to review the dossier in a comprehensive manner? If not, can this have an impact on the charge laid?
3. The Crown has direct contact with the victim... for court preparation. The VSC also has a role in preparing the victim for the court. Are the roles and responsibilities of each clear? Do they interface in a seamless manner?
4. Crown, and others, will likely indicate that the Crown is overburdened. This is an issue across the Province. There are a number of vacant positions. This situation makes it difficult to have a dedicated Crown for a specialized court (Annie is at .75). Are there any options here? Are there initiatives at the provincial level to address this issue?

List of DVC Project Documentation Reviewed

Coordinator's Activity Logs

Beginning July 30th, 2007.

Beginning July 30th 2008-2009.

Dugas-Horsman, Justice Anne, Moncton Provincial Court – Domestic Violence, Annual Report, April 12, 2007 to April 11, 2008, Moncton, 2008.

DVC Steering Committee Strategic Planning, 20/21, June 2006.

Province of New Brunswick. A Better World for Women: Moving Forward.

Local Court Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Moncton Domestic Violence Court Information Sharing Protocol for Police and Department of Public Safety Victim Services, March 2009.

Muriel McQueen Ferguson Centre for Family Violence Research, Interim Report Submitted to the Steering Committee for the domestic violence specialized court pilot project, March 12, 2009.

Province of New Brunswick. Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project, Operational Procedures, Moncton, December 1, 2008.

Province of New Brunswick. Implementing a “Domestic Violence Court” in New Brunswick: A Draft Discussion Paper, July, 2006.

Province of New Brunswick. Safety planning for Victims of Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Protocol, January 2007

Provincial Court-Domestic Violence Pilot Project – Moncton Region, Information Sharing Protocol Between the Department of Public Safety- Probation Services; the Department of Health – Mental Health and Addiction services

Provincial Court-Domestic Violence. Implementation Coordinators Activities/Responsibilities, final Report

Provincial Court – Domestic Violence Cases – 2007-2008

Provincial Court – Domestic Violence Cases – Manual Statistics April 14, 2008-April 10, 2009 Second Operational Year

Recidivism Synopsis – Second Operational Year

Role of the Court Coordinator

FROM A JUDICIAL PERSPECTIVE:

The Court Coordinator is the individual who provides a safeguard between the Bench and the various entities and service providers that work daily in that Court. This is an essential component, as the Court must never lose the public's perception of neutrality. The Provincial Court – Domestic Violence must be viewed as a completely fair environment for both sides to be heard and for help and justice to be offered. Only in this way will the Court be viewed with trustworthiness by both the offender and the victim. The role of Court Coordinator is key in preserving the necessary judicial independence.

FROM AN OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- 1) Administrative support – convocation of meetings of the various committees and working group;
- 2) Preparation of minutes of the various meetings which are essential in documenting our evolution;
- 3) Updating operational procedures as they are modified – continue with the drafting of the various protocols that are yet to be completed and maintain up to date all documentation relating to the pilot project;
- 4) Act as liaison between the various entities. See Annex “A”;
- 5) Assist with the monitoring – as the Provincial Court personnel is totally overwhelmed and this is something that cannot added to their already overburdened workload;
- 6) To be able to deal promptly with operational issues as soon as they are identified;
- 7) To be the contact person between meetings for all who are involved in the Court – with a special emphasis on the members of the private Bar;
- 8) EDUCATION COMPONENT – coordinate any educational program offered by one agency that could be of benefit to all with a vision of not only creating a specialized Court but a Court of specialists in domestic violence;
- 9) IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW INITIATIVES – The Development of community initiatives and partnerships that could benefit the pilot project especially at the level of the victim and offender

FROM THE Court Coordinator's perspective:

- 1) To solidify the implementation of the Court by safeguarding the operational procedures of the specialized Court project;
- 2) To work in continuous consultation with the members of the judiciary who are tasked with presiding over the Provincial Court – Domestic violence sessions;
- 3) To maintain comprehensive manual statistical data to respond to the many questions asked by various government departments and the public;

- 4) To coordinate and lead coordinating meetings with immediate key partners to assure continued sharing of information between all partners and within the boundaries of information sharing protocols of all key partners;
- 5) To continue to monitor operational processes and problem solve gaps with immediate services. At times, DV coordinator will need to consult with local managers of services, Regional Directors and senior management personnel of a government department or community agency;
- 6) To maintain a tracking system for the distribution of Court orders to victims and to provide a copy of Court orders to victims of domestic violence or Child Protection Social Workers;
- 7) To work with the evaluators of the Court project – Muriel McQueen Ferguson Centre for Family Violence Research and provide them with the needed assistance and documentation;
- 8) To maintain liaison for the sharing of information in dual files proceeding before the Court of Queen’s Bench and the Provincial Court. The Coordinator distributes the court orders emanating from the Court of Queen’s Bench to the Crown Prosecutors. This measure is to prevent conflicting orders and for the Provincial Court to be aware of child custody access and involvement from the Dept. of Social Development – Child Protection services;
- 9) To provide up-dates on the status of court files to Child Protection Social Workers who cannot attend a court session involving their case. The Court Coordinator also provides an up-date of the Court files to DPS Victim Services mainly in cases involving Peace Bonds as this information is not captured in their information system;
- 10) To provide up-dates to community partners on the pilot project and provide a continued education component on Domestic Violence through the forum of the Court Advisory committee. Meetings are held 3 to 4 times yearly. The Court Coordinator capitalizes and invites the expertise in existence in NB. The Court Coordinator also invites community partner to do presentation that involves their services or to inform of any new programs or initiatives within their government departments and community agencies;
- 11) To provide orientation to new professionals who enter the pilot project;
- 12) To provide public presentations on the pilot project to various government and non-government agencies who intervene in cases of domestic violence;
- 13) To provide reports on the activities of the pilot project to the members of the Provincial Steering committee when they convene meetings;
- 14) To participate as a member of the CAAR – (Coalition against Abusive Relationships) committee in the Moncton Region. This committee involves all services at the federal/provincial / non government agencies within the community of Moncton who intervene in the domain of domestic violence. This membership provides a strong link to all community partners.

DVC /Flow of service delivery and system linkages

APPENDIX 7

