



Maze Project

# **The MAZE Project in Calderdale: An Evaluation.**

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# Executive Summary

## Evaluating the MAZE project

### *1.1: Background*

- The Maze Project based at WomenCentre in Calderdale is a specialist project that works with women who are affected by domestic violence and their partners and children. It aims to provide practical and emotional support and assist clients to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives. It was established in response to an identified need to support women affected by domestic abuse who were wishing to remain with their partner.
- The Maze Project is made up of a small team of specialist workers; this includes a male worker who undertakes direct individual work with men. A model of working has been developed which guides their practice; key elements include undertaking assertive outreach, doing paired work and intensive case work when necessary. Through offering services to both women and their male partners the MAZE team has developed an innovative and unique approach which builds upon existing service provision for women, children and domestic violence perpetrators.

### *1.2: The Study*

- The study was undertaken by a researcher from the Centre for Applied Childhood Studies at the University of Huddersfield, and took place May-September 2010. It aimed to examine if and how MAZE has been able to meet the project aims, and to explore the views of service users and outside partner agencies on the perceived benefits of the MAZE project for clients within the Calderdale area.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent has the MAZE project enabled women who are affected by domestic violence, their partners and children, to engage, navigate and commit to working in partnership with outside agencies appropriate for their individual needs?
2. What are the barriers faced by the MAZE project in engaging and working successfully with women who are affected by domestic violence, their partners and children, and what lessons can be learnt for future service development?
3. How and to what extent has the MAZE project achieved benefits for women who are affected by domestic violence in relation to the project outcomes of reducing repeat victimization, improving housing situation and safety, increasing support for children and BME women, and enabling women to access drug and alcohol and mental health services?
4. What, if any, benefits do women service users consider they have gained from accessing the Maze Project?
5. What are the perspectives of the MAZE team, the wider Domestic abuse team and WomenCentre on the benefits of the Project for women?
6. How, and to what extent, has the MAZE project contributed to partnership working in respect of women's safety, the safeguarding and protection of children, and risk assessment through work with men?
7. What are the perspectives of clients, project staff and partner agencies on the process and outcomes of this partnership work and what are the barriers to success?
8. How have developments in the structure and team of the MAZE project impacted upon service delivery and what lessons can be learnt for future service development?

- The study used an evaluative methodology using qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. It involved the following:

a): Analysis of service data for selected sample of cases referred to the MAZE project. The sample of cases was purposively selected to illustrate a range of work and includes referral and client service pathway data for 29 women and 11 male partners. Routinely available service data for the project was also utilized.

b): Semi-structured interviews with 7 service users (5 women and 2 male partners) to explore their views of MAZE, benefits of engaging, barriers or difficulties they faced in accessing and working with the MAZE project, and views about future service development.

c): Semi-structured interviews with professionals from partner agencies (n=6) such as police, children's social care, specialist and voluntary sector workers to examine their views of MAZE, its contribution to partnership working, benefits of the project for clients, barriers or difficulties in service delivery, client engagement or partnership working and future service development.

d): Semi-structured interviews with MAZE project staff to examine the processes of project work, perceived benefits and challenges, and the organisational context for service delivery.

- The research was approved by the University of Huddersfield School of Health and Human Sciences Research Ethics Panel (SREP). Copies of information sheets, consent forms and interview schedules for all stages of the research are available from the researcher and are included within the final report.

## **Key Findings**

### *2.1: Achieving MAZE Project Aims.*

- The evaluation found the MAZE project provides an effective and valuable service. For those women who engage with the project, MAZE is highly successful in working with them to provide practical and emotional support and to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives.

- One of the unique aspects of the MAZE project is in cases where the woman has agreed to access support but also wishes to remain in her relationship, it is able to offer services to male partners. The evaluation found challenges in achieving this work due to the reluctance of many men to engage or work with the project. However in cases where men did successfully engage and work with MAZE, whilst this was a lengthy and intensive process, the evaluation found evidence of behaviour change and associated improved outcomes for women and children as the risk of further harm from domestic violence was substantially reduced. In these cases the Maze Project was also successful in providing practical support for male partners.

### *2.2: Client engagement with outside agencies*

- The MAZE project has been largely successful in engaging women clients to work with the service offered. Many women who have engaged with the project are working with a wider range of agencies following MAZE involvement. Evidence from the interviews with service users identified the role MAZE played in enabling them to access other agencies very helpful; this included providing information, acting as advocate and providing practical and emotional support to facilitate access such as transport and accompanying clients to appointments. There was also evidence of MAZE success in increasing the engagement of both men and children with other outside agencies.

### *2.3: Barriers to engaging and working with clients*

- The study found very few barriers faced by MAZE in engaging and working successfully with women who are affected by domestic violence. Their work appeared to be facilitated by good relationships with other agency staff, a general appropriateness of referrals to the project and adequate resources to undertake their work. Where barriers existed to successful engagement with clients this largely reflected the situation and perceptions of women referred to MAZE who remained reluctant to engage or work with the project. This was evident in a small number of cases reviewed for this study.

- There are particular challenges in engaging and working with men and the evaluation found that MAZE were less successful in this respect. Again this largely reflects the nature of the problem that is being addressed and the particular situation of men; very few male partners were unwilling to work with an outside agency, acknowledge responsibility for the abusive behaviour or take any steps to address this. Failure to engage men with the MAZE project is not necessarily indicative of a lack of success for the project as a whole as in many cases it empowers women to access support and gain a better understanding of the domestic abuse behaviour and the willingness of the male partner to take steps to address this.
- MAZE is often involved with families as part of child protection work and this is a challenging context for engaging with families. Whilst the valuable contribution of MAZE to multi-agency child protection work was noted, the voluntary nature of the service for clients was important.

#### *2.4: Achieving Project Outcomes*

- The intended outcomes for the MAZE project are clearly stated and identify the following as of key importance; reducing repeat victimization, improving housing situation and safety, increasing support for children and BME women, and enabling women to access drug, alcohol and mental health services. The study found the MAZE project is contributing to achieving these outcomes although there were some challenges due to data quality and availability in fully demonstrating some of these.

#### *2.5: Benefits of the MAZE project for clients*

- For those women who engaged with the MAZE project the benefits of the service were highly evident. This included feeling safer and more supported. There were also benefits for children and male partners who engaged with the service.

## *2.6: Partnership Working*

- The study found considerable evidence that the MAZE team worked collaboratively and in partnership with other agencies. Their contribution to inter-agency working was positively commented upon and valued by both professionals from outside agencies and service users who participated in this study.
- In relation to promoting the safety of women and children their contribution in relation to both the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) process and Child Protection processes was positively evaluated. This contribution included regular attendance at meetings, good quality information sharing, a skilled approach and expertise which ensured decision making and planning was focused upon domestic violence behaviour and associated risks. There was also evidence that the MAZE team were able to engage in honest discussions about risks and behaviours whilst also maintaining good working relationships with clients.

## *2.7: MAZE Service: Organisational Context and Service Development*

- The MAZE project was established in 2007 with a funding stream concerned with achieving an outcomes based approach to tackling social exclusion. The funding, although time limited, provided the team with adequate resources to establish their work and the parameters for this project. Whilst the MAZE project was established as a response to a particular identified need – that is to work with women affected by domestic violence who wished to remain with their partners and where agreed to offer a service to male partners – the service it provides is somewhat unique, not only to Calderdale but also nationally.
- The MAZE team worked together to develop a model of working. Other important features identified in the study include the employment of suitably experienced and skilled workers, who appeared to have a high degree of commitment to the project. Discussion with team members and observation suggests the MAZE project team

although small in number is fairly stable, well managed and displays good communication.

### **Recommendations for future service development.**

**1): It is recommended that funding is secured to enable the MAZE project to continue offering a service to women experiencing domestic abuse, and their families. This would enable the project to continue providing a much needed service to women affected by domestic abuse and their families.**

**2): It is recommended the MAZE project continues to provide an intensive flexible and specialist service to women experiencing domestic abuse, and their families.**

**3): It is recommended the MAZE project continues to employ a male worker so that when women wish to remain with their partner, a service can be offered to male partners who are perpetrators of domestic violence**

**4): It is recommended the MAZE project continues to be based in and managed by Calderdale WomenCentre.**

**5): It is recommended the MAZE project considers further developing a training function in order to contribute to and further improve the understandings and skills of other agencies and professionals in Calderdale whose work brings them into contact with domestic violence.**

## **Section 1: Evaluating the MAZE Project**

### **Background**

The Maze Project based at WomenCentre in Calderdale is a specialist project that works with women who are affected by domestic violence and their partners and children. It aims to provide practical and emotional support and assist clients to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives. The Maze Project was established in 2007 as a national pilot set up under the Adults Facing Chronic Exclusion stream of funding announced in the 'Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion'<sup>1</sup>.

The MAZE project was established in response to an identified need to support women affected by domestic abuse who were wishing to remain with their partner. To achieve this required intensive provision for male perpetrators together with a flexible and responsive service able to support families over the sustained period of time necessary to bring about changes that would enable women and children to be safe. The stated aims and objectives of the MAZE project are outlined below:

#### **Aims:**

- The Maze Project works with women to provide practical and emotional support. It assists women to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives. The Maze Project supports women

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<sup>1</sup>This funding (£566,000 over a three year period) is part of an inter-governmental initiative led by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The pilots were selected under three categories: system change, system navigation and transition points. The Maze Project was selected under the system navigation category – offering practical help to people to access several social services at any one time.

in their engagement with agencies encouraging working in partnership. In cases where the woman has agreed to access support but also wishes to remain in her relationship, the Maze Project may be able to work with her partner. In appropriate cases we can provide him with practical support and also engage in work to reduce the risk of further harm.

**Objectives:**

- The Maze Project works with women who are affected by Domestic Violence and their partners and children who are not gaining the full benefit from services that could make a difference to their lives.
- The Maze Project identifies specific services, agencies and local resources and matches them to individual needs. It enables individuals to engage, navigate and commit to working in partnership.

The Maze Project, is based at the WomenCentre in Halifax, and comprises a small team of specialist workers and a manager<sup>2</sup>; this includes a male worker who undertakes direct individual work with men. Since their inception the MAZE project has developed a model of working (see Appendix 1) which guides their practice. Key elements of this include undertaking assertive outreach, doing paired work and intensive case work when necessary. Through offering services to both women and their male partners the MAZE team has developed an innovative and unique approach which builds upon existing service provision for women, children and domestic violence perpetrators.

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<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the project MAZE employed 2 WholeTime Equivalent (WTE) female workers and 1 WTE male worker. When this evaluation was taking place due to funding constraints 1.5WTE female workers and 0.6WTE male workers were being employed by MAZE.

## **The Study**

This evaluative study<sup>3</sup> has been commissioned by the WomenCentre in Calderdale who manage the project. It's purpose is to examine if and how MAZE has been able to meet the project aims, and to explore the views of service users and outside partner agencies on the perceived benefits of the MAZE project for clients. The research questions are:

1. To what extent has the MAZE project enabled women who are affected by domestic violence, their partners and children, to engage, navigate and commit to working in partnership with outside agencies appropriate for their individual needs?
2. What are the barriers faced by the MAZE project in engaging and working successfully with women who are affected by domestic violence, their partners and children, and what lessons can be learnt for future service development?
3. How and to what extent has the MAZE project achieved benefits for women who are affected by domestic violence in relation to the project outcomes of reducing repeat victimization, improving housing situation and safety, increasing support for children and BME women, and enabling women to access drug and alcohol and mental health services?
4. What, if any, benefits do women service users consider they have gained from accessing the Maze Project?
5. What are the perspectives of the MAZE team, the wider Domestic abuse team and WomenCentre on the benefits of the Project for women?

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<sup>3</sup> The MAZE project, along with 11 other pilots, is being evaluated nationally by the Matrix Knowledge Group.

6. How, and to what extent, has the MAZE project contributed to partnership working in respect of women's safety, the safeguarding and protection of children, and risk assessment through work with men?
7. What are the perspectives of clients, project staff and partner agencies on the process and outcomes of this partnership work and what are the barriers to success?
8. How have developments in the structure and team of the MAZE project impacted upon service delivery and what lessons can be learnt for future service development?

The study was undertaken in May-September 2010 by a researcher from the Centre for Applied Childhood Studies at the University of Huddersfield. It used an evaluative methodology (Patton 1990; Robson 2002) using both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. These are detailed below (see Appendix 2 which maps research questions to data collection methods).

#### *1): Case and Service Data*

Data was collected for a purposively selected sample of cases (29 women and 11 male partners) referred to the MAZE project. This was undertaken by MAZE project staff who completed a structured data collection tool for each case (see Appendix 3). This focused upon referrals to the project and client service pathways (ie length of involvement, visits, referrals to other agencies etc). In addition routinely available service data for the project was also utilized.

#### *2): Interviews with Service Users*

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with service users to examine their perspectives of the MAZE project. The sample included 5 women service users and 2 male partners who had engaged with the MAZE project. The selection and

contacting of service users was undertaken in collaboration with MAZE project staff. Throughout this process women and children's safety was a key consideration and informed the sampling strategy. The interviews were conducted at the project premises, a nearby venue, and one interview with a male service user was conducted by telephone. Data from these interviews was audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed by the researcher; where consent was not given for audio-recording, notes were taken during the interview by the researcher. The interviews focused upon service user views of the MAZE project, including exploring any perceived benefits of engaging with the project for women and their families. The interviews also explored service user views about any barriers or difficulties they faced in accessing and working with the MAZE project, and views about future service development. Data analysis was undertaken using a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke 2006). (See Appendices 4 & 5 for information sheet and interview schedule; see Appendix 6 for the consent form used for all stages of the evaluation).

### *3): Interviews with Professionals*

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with professionals from other agencies within Calderdale in order to examine the service delivered by the MAZE project, its contribution to partnership working, and the perceived benefits of the MAZE project for women and their families. Views were also sought about any barriers and difficulties in service delivery, client engagement or partnership working for the MAZE project, as well as views about future service development. The sample (n=6) for this stage of the research was drawn from local partner agencies and developed in collaboration with MAZE project staff. All those who participated had experience of the services offered by the MAZE project and included police, children's social care, specialist and voluntary sector workers. Participants were invited to take part in a semi-structured face-to face interview, and 4 were held at project premises; these were audio-recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. One interview was conducted by telephone and

another conducted at an alternative venue; for both these notes were taken during the interview by the researcher. Data analysis was undertaken using a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke 2006). (See Appendix 7 for information sheet and Appendix 8 for the interview schedule).

#### *4): Interviews with MAZE project team.*

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with MAZE project staff in order to examine the processes of project work with clients, the perceived benefits and challenges, and the organisational context for service delivery. These interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Data analysis was undertaken using a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke 2006). (See Appendix 9 for information sheet and Appendix 10 for the interview schedule).

### **Ethics**

This study received ethical approval from the University of Huddersfield School of Health and Human Sciences Research Ethics Panel (SREP). It was undertaken according to established ethical principles which include for example clearly explaining to all participants the purpose of the research, establishing informed consent and ensuring anonymity for all respondents. Moreover, given the nature of MAZE project work with women and families who are socially excluded and experiencing domestic abuse particular attention was paid throughout to issues of safety, confidentiality and sensitivity.

### **Limitations of the Study.**

This is a small study undertaken in a relatively short time frame and at a particular point in the development of the MAZE project. It was undertaken by an experienced researcher with a good understanding of issues facing women affected by domestic abuse and with experience of conducting research in practice based contexts. Whilst undertaken with rigour there are some limitations to this study

which largely reflect the challenges of evaluating service delivery for clients facing sensitive and difficult issues such as domestic violence. Of key importance throughout was ensuring women and children's safety; this informed the sampling strategy as selection and contacting of service users to participate in the study was undertaken by MAZE project staff who also facilitated client access to attend the interviews through provision of transport etc. For similar reasons the selection of cases for the intensive sample was selected by the MAZE project team who completed a fully anonymised audit tool for each case. These measures ensured that the researcher had no access to any identifying details about the service users who participated in the study.

Another limitation of the study is the absence of perspectives from service users who have not engaged with the project. This is a challenge arising from the service context which is specifically focused upon socially excluded clients who are hard to engage where domestic violence is a feature. For these reasons service users who had not engaged with the project were not approached to participate in this study although it is acknowledged that a longer time frame for research engagement may have opened opportunities for accessing the views of some reluctant clients.

## **Section 2: Findings.**

This section report provides an overview of the key findings of this study. It includes interview data from service users and staff from outside partner agencies about the work undertaken by the MAZE project. It also draws upon quantitative and qualitative data from the intensive sample of cases and routinely collected service monitoring data from the MAZE project. Throughout all the interview data is presented in italics and fully anonymised. The report concludes with a summary discussion and recommendations for future project development and funding (see section 3).

## **A Valuable and Unique Service.**

All the service users who participated in this study had engaged with the MAZE project and expressed a very positive view, using terms such as ‘brilliant’, ‘fantastic’ and ‘very helpful’ to describe the service.

*They are really supportive. Good, brilliant. Everything about them is good (woman service user).*

*Really good. They helped me a lot. I had a partner at the time and we did counselling, 1-1 counselling and counselling with both of us together. It was really helpful (woman service user).*

*It was just good all the way through. - I haven't got a bad word to say about them to be honest. I don't know what I would have done without them to be honest, at that time of my life (woman service user)*

In describing their involvement and why it was perceived as helpful most reflected on how their situation had improved as a result of involvement with MAZE.

*I'd have still been in that hellhole if it hadn't been for MAZE (woman service user).*

*I'd still be stuck at where I were at that point of my life and I've moved on. My kids are doing so much better at school because I'm better in myself (woman service user).*

*I felt we were going to be stuck in a rut – my mum thought I would be dead in a year (woman service user).*

They also commented upon how their personal situation had improved since becoming involved with the MAZE project,

*I feel a lot safer, definitely .... more confident (woman service user).*

*Feel safer, feel better since MAZE got involved (woman service user)*

Women service users also commented upon the benefits to their children identifying that they too were '*happier and more confident*'. Two men participated in this study and they also recognised the benefits to them and their families of working with MAZE.

*Good service. .... They helped me with the relationship. Without them – I would probably be in jail – and not still in the relationship. Without MAZE I would have closed in on myself and carried on as I was (male service user).*

The value of offering a service that works with women and their partners was recognised by professionals from other agencies who took part in this study.

*And certainly finding out what they were doing in the first place, finding out that they were working with victims and perpetrators in the family home. Well that was something that had not done before for safety reasons and so on. Yes it seemed like a big step forward to access those families who wouldn't er come in for services (professional).*

*Before MAZE there was no provision to work with families where there was domestic abuse. The only option was to move the perpetrator from the home. But now, in those cases where parents are wanting to stay together are able to offer a service which has a clear agenda focused upon the safety of the woman and her children (professional).*

*If it is a couple who do want to stay together, there is nowhere else for them to go and we send them to MAZE. And we have never had one rejected - which is really, really good (professional).*

*They work with the most vulnerable socially excluded families – and they do this well (professional).*

Professionals who took part in the study were very positive about the benefits of the MAZE project for clients. These included empowering women about domestic abuse and the impact it has upon them and their children, providing information, practical and emotional support and providing opportunities for those women who wish to remain with a male partner to see if and how he addresses his abusive behaviour.

*I don't think I've heard any woman who has ever got involved with them. ... I've never had anyone who has anything but benefited from it, and recognised the benefit from it and have taken that stuff away. I'm not saying that has always been without challenge, because that is a very difficult process to get out of the patterns of abuse that women are often in. But they do start and recognise it and do see where things can improve (professional).*

They also identified benefits for their own service

*We have less calls. Due to MAZE we have less calls. Because we are a safeguarding unit and we are victim focused rather than suspect focused within the police, the calls we used to get from certain victims have lessened, due to the fact that they don't now need the police (professional).*

Through offering a service to women and their partners the MAZE project is both unique and innovative. It provides a service that is highly valued by the service users and professionals from outside agencies who took part in this study. One of the strengths of the project lies in the team's ability to engage and work with clients who are difficult to reach; this is discussed in the following section.

## **Engaging with Clients**

One of the aims of the MAZE project is to work with clients who are socially excluded and to help them navigate, access and engage with services. The evaluation found evidence that the MAZE project is very effective at engaging and working with clients. The reasons for their success in engaging clients include the assertive outreach and a flexible and responsive mode of service delivery.

*They do assertive outreach and can go to the home and to appointments with them. .... they are able to fit in with them. It's better than women having to go to an appointment. They do things like texting them, which is really useful. That really works for people – it can be safe and quick. Because of the nature of living with abuse, you need services that fit in with that to meet needs (professional).*

*We have been involved for about 3 years, from when they first started. They worked around us – if we needed home visits they would come out to us. Or they would meet us somewhere suitable – like a local cafe (woman service user).*

*Everything was arranged around us. Appointments were always easy. They would come to the house or meet at a local place. They went out of their way to help (male service user).*

Service users who took part in the study explained how the service engaged with them, identifying it's accessibility as a key feature.

*They seem to care more, they listen to you more. And they are always there if you need to phone them, at any time. There used to be a lady called (name) who worked for MAZE, and I phone her up on the spur of the moment and she would always have time to talk to me. .... you didn't have to make an appointment to talk to her about how you was feeling. She was always there (woman service user).*

*(They've) been there when you want them (woman service user).*

*Accessible – I am able to contact them whenever I need to (woman service user).*

*Able to ring them whenever we want any help. Always able to get in touch with them (male service user).*

The benefits of having an accessible service was also commented upon by professionals from outside agencies who could see the benefits for clients – and for their own service- of MAZE involvement with families.

*It might be the fact that it is continual support. .... we have got 2 or 3 couples who are always at MARAC - they are with MAZE and they are rolling MARAC.... But they do become less and less as repeats. Is that on the back of working with MAZE or is that they have got the ability to pick up the phone and talk to somebody. But it's getting less and less, particularly for 2 couples. .... But the fact that they can pick up the phone and they know they are going to get heard is a massive strength for Calderdale (professional).*

In offering a service that is flexible, responsive and accessible, the involvement of MAZE with clients can also be quite intensive. This was considered by service users to be a positive aspect; many appreciated the time MAZE workers spent with them.

*Met weekly – came to our house and met children. Knew us well – and our pets. They were the closest to us – they knew us better than other professionals (woman service user)*

*Very friendly – regular contact. She stays about an hour - talking is very helpful (woman service user)*

The intensive nature of service provision is illustrated in Figure 1 which indicates the number of contacts and length of involvement with the MAZE project for 23

women<sup>4</sup>. As can be seen some clients received a high number of contacts from MAZE, with many having involvement of longer than 12 months.

**Figure 1: Number of contacts and length of involvement with the MAZE project for selected sample of 23 cases.**

Case code	Joint visits/work with couple	Contact with woman	Contact with male partner	Length of engagement in months
1	2	9	5	6 + (ongoing).
2		11		6
3	8	11		12 + (ongoing).
5	1	2		3
6		7		5
7		26		7 + (ongoing).
8		23		12 + (ongoing).
9	1	34		15
10	5	37	26	18
11		7		5
12	9	11	13	11
13	9	19	9	11
14		2		Less than 1
15		2		2
17		9	2	5
18		8		3
19		4		5
20		10		5
21	2	5	5	8
22		4		3
23	1		2	3
24	2	5	4	7
25		5		4

As one professional commented the intensive involvement enables MAZE workers to spend more time with clients and get to know them better than is the case for other professionals.

*I think there are cases where workers from the MAZE project have been able to get in to families, make a connection, spend more TIME with them than*

<sup>4</sup> This data is from the analysis of the selected sample of cases reviewed in the evaluation. In total the cases for 29 women (and 11 male partners) were reviewed; of these 23 women engaged with the MAZE project and their involvement with the project is illustrated in Figure 1.

*social workers have had available and get a feel for, an understanding of what's happening in the family that's actually going to allow for some shift (professional).*

Service users all expressed a positive view about how the MAZE project worked with them. In particular they valued not being judged because they were in an abusive relationship.

*Doesn't judge me (woman service user).*

*A lot easier to work with than other services. MAZE – don't judge you. Other agencies judge you (male service user).*

*In social service meetings I felt judged. MAZE – didn't look down on me or my partner. They didn't judge him (woman service user).*

They also stated they trusted the MAZE project – and that this made them more willing and comfortable to engage with the service.

*I trust – and can talk openly to her. With social services, if you tell them something they keep it on record. Anything you tell MAZE is confidential unless it involves risks to your children. ....I don't trust other professionals but I trust MAZE (woman service user).*

Another factor identified as important was the ability of the MAZE project to work with clients on their own agenda and not just focus upon domestic violence. As this woman commented

*(I can) talk about other stuff on my mind – not just domestic violence. ....(They) talk to you about all sorts of things, not just your problems (woman service user).*

One woman commented on the continuity offered by the MAZE project

*You seem to get the same person to talk to, there's no lack of communication. It's always the same people who deal with the same clients if you like. They are easy to talk to (woman service user).*

Whilst it was generally felt that the service was offered to clients at the right time, this was difficult to establish with certainty. A couple of women service users tentatively suggested they may have benefited at an earlier stage.

*MAZE became involved about the right time. Probably could have been sooner. About 1 year earlier in previous pregnancy - if MAZE had been involved might have avoided him going to prison (woman service user).*

All the service users who participated in the evaluation had an extremely positive view of the project. None of them said they found any aspects of the MAZE project unhelpful to themselves or their family or identified any barriers or difficulties in accessing or working with the MAZE project

Whilst the MAZE project is highly successful in engaging and working with many hard-to-reach clients, they are not able to engage with all those referred to them. Routinely collected service data for the project suggests an overall engagement rate of 55%. The figures for engagement with the project were however much higher in the intensive sample of cases with 23 out of 29 women referred to MAZE engaging with the project. For the 6 women clients who did not engage there was evidence that MAZE made considerable effort and attempts to contact and work with the woman. As one professional explained,

*Sometimes referrals haven't been taken up –because women said yes but then didn't engage. MAZE do try for quite a long period of time – much*

*longer than other services would. They do things like joint visits, outreach – they try lots of different ways to get women involved (professional).*

The evaluation found evidence that the MAZE project is very effective at engaging and working with clients and amongst the reasons for this is the flexible and responsive approach of the team. The above discussion has focused largely upon engaging women service users, the engagement of male clients is discussed in the next section.

## **Engaging and working with men.**

A unique feature of the MAZE project is that it employs a male worker with experience of working with perpetrators of domestic abuse to undertake direct work with men. This was considered to be a major benefit of the project and was positively viewed by professionals who participated in this study.

*MAZE works effectively with men, challenging the man and the choices he makes (professional).*

*But they are open and honest with the clients as well, particularly (male worker) - he is very forthright. .... He may be intimidated inside but you never see it, never. He is very professional, very knowledgeable, very good at what he does (professional).*

Two men participated in this evaluation and they had both engaged with MAZE and worked with the male worker. They both expressed a positive view of this.

*I was referred to MAZE through social services. At first (at point of referral) was a bit wary – because I don't speak to people or open up to people. But (male worker) put me at ease straight away. Some of it were difficult – like how I was feeling. It was easy enough – it never felt hard or that I wanted to give up. .... I never had anyone to talk to before. I was very comfortable talking to (male worker) (male service user).*

*I was shy, not able to communicate. I was nervous talking to people you know. (Male worker) – made me feel comfortable. Also had a laugh with him. – he would do that to make me feel comfortable. I was able to talk about a lot of things (male service user).*

However not surprisingly there were difficulties in engaging men to work with the project. Of the intensive sample of cases reviewed for this evaluation MAZE

attempted to work with the male partner in 12 cases; review of these cases indicated they were unable to engage with the male partner in 2 cases whilst there was limited engagement in a further 2 cases. The reasons for limited or non-engagement include '*...did not acknowledge his abusive behaviour*', '*...he took no responsibility, blaming her for problems in their relationship. Denies being abusive*', '*...he chose to disengage rather than take responsibility for his abusive behaviour and neglect of the children. No change in his attitude, doubtful if any change in his behaviour*', '*...he insisted that all abusive behaviour was in the past. Blames alcohol/drugs. Not willing to undertake any work*'.

Some of the challenges of engaging and working with men about their domestic violence behaviour were raised in interviews with professionals from outside agencies.

*I think with some of the men it's harder because I suppose the walls are higher and stronger and er that ability to try and deflect responsibility. .... They find ways of backing out. .... The way it gets relayed to me when I speak to them is. They see it in terms of a personality thing. But I think when it is unpicked .... it is I just don't want you talking about what I do, and I don't think I'm doing anything wrong and someone else is to blame. And all the same excuses are there. But it's easier to say is it about personality (professional).*

The difficulties in engaging with some male partners does not necessarily indicate a shortcoming in the service provision offered by MAZE. Indeed for those cases where male partner's reject the offer of help, it allows women to make safer and informed decisions for themselves about their relationship. In many cases it provides women with opportunities to better understand the domestic violence and their partner's behaviour thus increasing their safety and that of their children. This is discussed by the following professionals from outside agencies who describe

how MAZE involvement improves women's safety because they see their male partner is not going to change.

*I've referred to MAZE on several occasions. And the men will say, the women will say the girls will say - yes he wants to change. And it worked brilliantly with one particular client, lots of issues, lots of agency involvement. And the MAZE project was one of them. Domestic violence, there was child protection issues with the child as well. And he did come, we did introduce him and he did say he would engage but he didn't. And we tried to introduce him again and we tried to do some work and he wouldn't. And eventually the woman accepted that there was not going to be any changes. And she is now moved on, and she is in a, she recognises it is not about looking after him, it is about looking after her. And again if they see that service is there and they are not choosing to pick it up, I think it is a, it's a clear indication that then that is his choice (professional).*

*Men would say they would engage and then wouldn't. But having this option available meant that women were able to engage with their support worker. These were usually cases where domestic violence was out in the open. Women would want to engage because their partner could get help. But usually the men didn't get involved. But the outcome was that women can see what is happening because he doesn't get help or get involved (professional).*

There are particular challenges in engaging and working with men and these have been outlined in the above discussion. One of these is the reluctance of many men to acknowledge or take responsibility for the abusive behaviour that is taking place. Focusing upon this is however a key element of the work undertaken by the MAZE team and is addressed further in the following section.

## **Focus upon domestic violence**

As a specialist domestic violence service one of the strengths of the MAZE project team is their consistent and clear focus upon domestic violence behaviour, where responsibility for it lies and what can be done to reduce risk. Throughout this work a key guiding principle is the safety of women and children.

Neither of the male service users who participated in the study discussed in the interview how the project had helped them change their behaviour or how they addressed the domestic violence issues. This may not be surprising given both the difficulties of facing this issue and the relatively short research contact. It was however more apparent within women's accounts where the domestic violence focus of MAZE work was particularly valued.

*(Name of worker) opened my eyes to what was going on. It makes you realise you are not alone. .... Made you realise it is not me, not my fault. That there are loads of other women in this situation. .... They help you see what has happened. Help you get your confidence (woman service user).*

*(Worker) can see signs more than I can when domestic violence increases – she pre-empted (woman service user).*

*I would stick up for him and make excuses and let him get away with it. But MAZE challenged that (woman service user).*

It was also recognised by professionals from outside agencies

*.... with the MAZE project it's not an excuse. .... And that is exactly it - when they are in these relationships and they are just doing their behaviour it's just acceptable, and nobody challenges. It's acceptable to the women and the children and definitely to the men. And when you come in and say well could you do it differently, and ... there is a sensitive way and the MAZE project do work with that. It is not acceptable (professional)*

The MAZE team are clear about where responsibilities lie and what can be done to reduce risk; focusing on the adults, the negative impact of the domestic abuse and what changes need to take place. This was evident in the contribution made by MAZE to child protection work where they maintained a focus upon the domestic abuse behaviour, the risks for children and women, and the changes that need to take place to reduce risks and enhance safety. For children subject to child protection plans this is a crucial stage for reducing risks and enhancing their safety

*In conferences sometimes what people struggle to do is to be clear about what the risks are, where responsibility lies and what needs to change. .... And what workers in the MAZE project are very good at doing is remaining sort of - keeping that engagement with parents, keeping that relationship with them, and being very clear about what the risks are. And how risky certain things are. And where responsibility for behaviours lie. And I mean a concrete example of that would be the amount of times people will try to say, to look at alcohol as a reason. Whereas workers in MAZE will be very clear that it is not a reason, it is effectively an excuse, it is used so they can blame something rather than themselves and take responsibility for it. And that's something that comes up quite often and I think that's once the victims get a grasp of that, once other professionals get a grasp of that. There is something quite easy about - oh we can look at your alcohol, we can do this- but actually we need to look at behaviour (professional).*

As discussed in the above section a key strength of the work undertaken by the MAZE team is the focus upon domestic violence behaviour that is taking place. Maintaining a clear focus upon this and the associated risks is central to the success of the project and a key contributing factor to improving outcomes for women and children. These are discussed in the following section.

## **Improved outcomes for women and children: safety and support.**

### **Safety**

The evaluation found that involvement with the MAZE project was associated with improved outcomes for many women and children. Importantly there was evidence that many women and children were safer as a result of MAZE involvement.

*I feel a lot safer, definitely .... more confident (woman service user).*

*Feel safer, feel better since MAZE got involved (woman service user)*

MAZE service data found that 87% of women reported feeling safer after intervention than before. From the intensive sample of 23 cases reviewed for this study, the safety and wellbeing of 10 women was enhanced because they decided to leave the abusive relationship. This is illustrated in the following case examples:

### ***Improved safety due to leaving abusive relationship.***

#### *Case 21*

Woman now safer – chose to end relationship. Now settled, secure housing. Without his controlling behaviour she has become more confident, increased wellbeing. Coping better without partner on scene. Child safer without his presence.

*MAZE involved for 8 months*

***Improved safety due to leaving abusive relationship.***

*Case 7*

This woman left her partner after beginning work with MAZE- has legal orders in place and is far safer. Has been rehoused and is very happy in new accommodation. Has fled before but reconciled. Says if had as much support previously may have stayed away. Children much safer than previously due to dad not being in home and not having contact.

*Maze involved for 7 months and ongoing*

***Improved safety due to leaving abusive relationship.***

*Case 3*

This woman is much safer as her partner has now left and she is living independently and happily. Has been rehoused and is currently decorating, homemaking and allowing herself to enjoy it and decision make. Feels very supported by all agencies and says 'feels better than she has in years'. Children much safer – no contact at present from dad and protected by child protection plans. Children are happier in all areas of life.

*MAZE involved for 12 months and ongoing*

In 2 cases within the sample reviewed for this evaluation, women were safer because MAZE had worked successfully with the male perpetrator who had addressed his abusive behaviour. This is described in the following case examples:

***Improved safety due to successful work with male partner.***

*Case 10*

No reported incident of domestic violence over last 12 months with woman reporting an improved relationship and no abusive behaviour. She would appear to be much safer. Very different. She says 'does not need to hide behind make-up'. Engages, attends meetings. Speaks assertively and confidently. Happier, more secure, relaxed, assertive, smiles. Support from MAZE to move near own mother has increased safety. Professionals assess level of risk has reduced. Children (2) considered to be very low risk of harm. He is more relaxed, aware, wanting to continue to make positive changes.

*MAZE involved for 18 months, including 26 contacts with male partner and 5 joint visits, as well as working with woman*

***Improved safety due to successful work with male partner.***

*Case 12*

Couple with 2 children. His behaviour has improved evidenced by a 12 month period with no police call-outs. Woman is safer and has better understanding of abuse and support available. Appears more likely to report any future incident. States happier, appears content. Children are safer.

*MAZE involved for 11 months, including 13 contacts with male partner and 9 joint visits, as well as working with woman*

For 9 women in the intensive sample of cases their safety had been enhanced because of MAZE involvement; this involved support and help with accessing legal orders and housing measures which contribute to increasing safety. This is illustrated in the following case examples:

***Improved safety due to enhanced support and safety measures.***

*Case 1*

She does not feel as frightened as she did before and feels she can talk more openly about how she is feeling. She now feels able to communicate more effectively without fear of reprisal from her partner . Agency involvement means more monitoring of children so are safer than before. The children have a range of support available to them.

*MAZE involved for 6 months and ongoing*

***Improved safety due to enhanced support and safety measures.***

*Case13*

Less willing to accept abusive behaviour from partner. Will exclude from the family home increasing safety. More assertive and confident. Overall support, and particularly the holiday arranged by MAZE, led to a more confident, assertive client engaging better with her children.

*MAZE involved for 11 months*

***Improved safety due to enhanced support and safety measures.***

*Case 8*

This is constantly ongoing, awaiting orders to be served which consist of non-molestation, prohibited steps order and residency order. Young child (6 months) remains on Child Protection Plan.

*MAZE involved for 12 months and ongoing*

***Improved safety due to enhanced support and safety measures.***

*Case 18*

Supported to obtain non-molestation order to make her safer. Attending drop-ins, attending Family centre – engaging, suggesting improved well-being. Children safer away from abusive father.

*MAZE involved for 3 months*

Interviews with women service users also highlighted how involvement with MAZE had contributed to improving their safety.

*If I think of an answer to a problem – she will think of something safer always get a very practical answer to my problems (woman service user).*

*Helped me in getting an injunction – she sorted it all out in one day. It was done really quickly – she stayed with me all day (woman service user).*

The safety focus of MAZE work was also recognised by professionals from outside agencies

*The way they work is all safety focused. Even if a woman is assaulted, because she has been empowered to tell someone about, indirectly this effects the long term safety of women and children (professional).*

The evaluation was unable to identify any specific data relating to repeat victimization. However all the women who participated in the interviews spoke of feeling safer as a result of MAZE involvement. These women had fully engaged with the project however. Data from 8 telephone evaluations undertaken with women accessing services during 2009-2010 by the MAZE project found that 87% of these women reported feeling safer after intervention than before.

## **Support**

There was also clear evidence that the MAZE project provided emotional and practical support for women service users. There were many examples of emotional support in the women's interview data; this included building self-esteem and confidence and having someone to talk to.

*Said 'you're doing well looking great' – my boyfriend should be saying that (woman service user).*

*MAZE worker – helps me work things through (woman service user).*

*There is someone there for you. .... They are not keeping an eye on you like a social worker would (woman service user).*

Examples of practical support included help with accessing benefits, information and access to services, being accompanied to court and solicitors, arranging a holiday, and advocacy in relation to health and other appointments.

*They go places with you – (name of worker) takes me shopping. She'll go to court and solicitors with me. She will talk when I don't feel confident enough to (woman service user).*

*They sorted a holiday for me to (name of place) – I went there me and the kids. I went there, it was fantastic. .... I needed time on my own with kids. .... just what I needed. It were fantastic (woman service user).*

*They also helped us with other things – like forms we had to fill in – for job seekers allowance. I'm dyslexic and weren't good at school with reading and stuff, so they helped me (male service user).*

*It helped me at that time, yeah. They've got lots of information there, and put me in touch with everybody and. They know where to look (woman service user).*

*I went into hospital to have a baby and able to contact her then. I was on my own. But the worker rang the hospital and found out what was happening and why and explained it to me (woman service user).*

The support offered by MAZE was also recognised by other professionals.

*The support that MAZE offers women goes beyond domestic violence issues. Women may not want to speak about the domestic violence at a particular point because something else is happening. It helps them see they can get something out of the service (professional).*

**Housing-related support.**

One of the intended outcomes of the MAZE project is to address any domestic violence related housing issues facing women in order to improve safety and wellbeing. Depending upon a woman’s individual situation this may involve being rehoused or becoming homeless (and living for example in temporary refuge accommodation) in order to improve safety. Routinely collected service data suggest the following:

**Figure 2: Housing Outcomes for Women**

	To March 2009	April 2009-March 2010
Number of cases engaged with service	65	30
Percentage of engaged women satisfactorily housed at end	69%	53%
Percentage of engaged women homeless at end for safety	6%	26%
Percentage of engaged women with no change in situation - POSITIVE	19%	5%
Percentage of engaged women with no change in situation - NEGATIVE	19%	16%

Analysis of the 23 cases of women in the intensive sample reviewed for the evaluation found 8 clients were satisfactorily rehoused during their involvement

with MAZE and 2 women were living in safe but temporary refuge accommodation. 6 women within this intensive sample did not have any housing problems. Of the remaining 7 cases, 2 women were receiving ongoing support from MAZE to improve their housing situation (eg through referral to housing projects, support to complete housing application forms, accompanied to housing offices etc). For a further 2 women there was no change in their housing circumstances; as one note recorded *'Still remains the same, at this current time, living in one-bed maisonette, needing a 2 bedroom property'*. For the other 3 women, one was being supported by other agencies (due to her age), one was addressing debt problems before housing situation could be addressed, and the other had limited engagement with MAZE.

**Increasing Support from other Agencies.**

For the 23 women in the intensive sample who engaged with the MAZE project a total of 112 referrals were made to other agencies and overall all but 2 women were in contact with additional agencies at the end of their involvement; for 8 women their engagement with other agencies had increased by 5 or more.

The project outcomes aimed to increase the referrals of women to drug and alcohol and mental health services. Routinely collected service data suggest the following:

**Figure 3: Referrals to drug/alcohol and mental health services at case closure.**

	No. of cases engaged with service	No. of cases closed during this period	No. (and %) of women referred to drug and alcohol services*	No. (and %) of women referred to mental health services*
To 31/3/09	65	26	3 (12%)	5 (17%)
1/4/09 - 31/3/10	30	28	6 (21%)	9 (32%)

\*At case closure

Analysis of the 23 cases of women in the intensive sample reviewed for the evaluation found 4 women were referred to drug/alcohol services and 2 to mental health services.

The project outcomes aimed to increase the support available for women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and this has been achieved. Routinely collected service data suggest the project has provided support to 11 women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. This represents 11% of the number of cases referred to the project (95 in total up to 31/3/10) providing evidence that the MAZE project has effectively reached a disproportionately high section of the BME population within Calderdale (which is 7% of the total population). Amongst the reasons for this achievement is the employment of an Asian worker, and the use of interpreting services.

The evaluation also found that the location of the MAZE project within WomenCentre was considered advantageous by both women service users and professionals from outside agencies. A key benefit of this was the availability of the additional services provided by WomenCentre, such as Children's Domestic Violence workers, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and the wider services of the WomenCentre 'one stop shop' as well as the opportunities offered by having centrally based women only premises.

*WomenCentre is friendly and central (woman service user).*

*Useful that it is based here. There are all sorts of women here in the waiting room. There is no stigma coming here. No men. Nobody knows why you are here (woman service user).*

*Yeah a lot easier. At least you know your bloke can't come in (woman service user).*

*Have accessed freedom project and will use nursery (woman service user).*

*I think it's a, it can make the women feel safer, knowing they can come here because of the creche, and they are in a predominantly female environment (professional).*

*It's useful being based in the WomenCentre because it is central, there is access to other services .... and it is a safe space for women to come to (professional).*

The evaluation found that the MAZE project is largely successful in providing increased and targeted support for women clients, both through direct service provision and through facilitating referrals to other appropriate and specialist agencies. In achieving this the location of MAZE in centrally based WomenCentre premises which also offers a wide range of other services was valuable. The next section reviews evidence for improved outcomes for children.

### **Improving the Safety and Support of Children**

Many women service users commented upon the benefits to their children identifying that they were '*happier*' and '*more confident*'. As one professional commented

*The children are going to see, they can see people coming in and they can see the changes as well. Because it's going to continue (professional).*

There was evidence of increased support for children as a result of MAZE involvement. Routinely collected service data for April 2009-March 2010, indicate that 71% of children were receiving support following MAZE involvement, and 40% of children were receiving increased support at the end of MAZE involvement.

The involvement of the MAZE team in child protection work was considered by some professionals who took part in the study to directly contribute to improved

outcomes for children. It was suggested this was due to the quality of work that was taking place in relation to developing and implementing the child protection plan.

*It goes back to being very clear about identifying where the risks are, and they are very good at that. And so the plan can be developed out of that. And I think what, where they are involved close in with families, they are also able to highlight at an early stage if things are getting worse, if risks are increasing, if he is back in the home, whatever that may be. and they er pass information on about whatever is happening effectively (professional).*

*At Child Protection Case conferences MAZE seemed to get a good balance because they were advocating for the woman but also being very honest about the situation and not glossing over the risks. These meetings are hard for women because often the blame is put on women. MAZE were very good at advocating for women and putting blame on the perpetrator (professional).*

For many clients their involvement with MAZE commenced at the same time and as direct result of children's social care becoming involved due to concerns about the safeguarding of children.

*MAZE got involved when social services got involved – this was the right time for me (woman service user).*

There were some tensions associated with this with some professionals suggesting that although MAZE is a voluntary service it may be a difficult context for clients to agree to working with them.

*Sometimes it is used as a bit of a bargaining tool by care services. Involvement with MAZE becomes part of the Child Protection Plan. This may not be the best time to work with someone and may have been more useful to have got involved earlier (professional).*

*.... services say well we want you to work with the MAZE project. If it's put in that context they won't engage properly. They'll do it with resentment, not because it's going to benefit them. It's almost like, I've got to do it and I don't really want to do it but I'm going to have to. I think in some respects it makes it harder if it's done that way, rather than a voluntary and sensitive way of doing it (professional).*

*.... I think there may be a difference in, where I think their involvement may be useful and where parents might. There may be a gap there in terms of actually agreeing to access the service in terms of it being - even if it is part of the child protection plan we are still looking at it as a voluntary basis in terms of actually doing the work (professional).*

It was also suggested that their heavy involvement with child protection cases may place additional burdens on the team, particularly in relation to the time needed for attending meetings, core groups etc.

*how do they find the time for direct work? (professional).*

### **Outcomes for other cases: a mixed picture.**

The MAZE team work with vulnerable and socially excluded clients where domestic violence is a feature. Not surprisingly there are challenges with this and they are unable to demonstrate improved outcomes for some of these clients. Of the intensive sample of 23 cases included within the evaluation for 3 women engagement with MAZE did not lead to an improvement in their own safety although the safety of their children was addressed through the involvement of children's social care and were no longer living in the family home. For other cases reviewed there was no improvement in women's safety or support because she disengaged from MAZE or the service discontinued due to circumstantial changes.

## **Working with other agencies.**

The evaluation found clear evidence that the MAZE project worked successfully and effectively with outside agencies. Those interviewed for this study had very positive views of working with the MAZE project; none identified any difficulties in working with the project and all commented positively on their skills and commitment to partnership working. This crossed a number of issues and included ease of referral process, accessibility, information sharing and attendance at meetings.

*I haven't faced any difficulties, absolutely not (professional).*

*Only ever had positive experiences with MAZE – never had any problems.*

*Sometimes with services you can feel you are coming from a totally different perspective but I never felt that with MAZE at all. They never give you extra work to do. MAZE work with you (professional).*

*Easy to work with – because they are accessible. – they are often out but will respond to messages quickly, not take days to get back to me. They are very good at sharing information. .... and good at engaging with services (professional).*

*But yeah .... I meet with lots of people, lots of agencies and I er have not had any negative views about MAZE I've not had. I'm thinking of feedback from other agencies. I've not had anything that comes to mind that makes me think there is a problem (professional).*

There were also positive comments about the contribution of the MAZE project to multi-agency working. This included for example their attendance and input at the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

*They attend every meeting. Funny enough I've just looked at my attendance and there isn't a meeting that they have missed. So there is always information from the MAZE project, if they hold it (professional).*

The ability and skills of the MAZE project team in remaining focused upon the domestic violence behaviour and risks also had benefits for the wider professional community within Calderdale through enhancing their knowledge base and understandings of domestic violence.

*MAZE also empowers professionals about the effects of domestic abuse.*

*They may not do this consciously. But I have seen this happening in lots of cases. They have challenged me – about my terminology and viewpoint about domestic abuse. I've learnt a lot from them and would like to see this extended to other professionals (professional).*

*.... I value their contribution within conferences as well as the er specific work they do. .... I have a sort of confidence in their, in how that information is going to get shared and how things are going to get drawn out (professional).*

The wider and specialist knowledge of the MAZE team regarding other services and resources was also commented upon.

*Whenever any of us within the unit .... have rung MAZE. It may be the fact that they may not be suitable for MAZE. But they then may be able to signpost us somewhere. They've always got an answer. They've never, they never turn around and say to us – 'no there is not a lot we can with that one and no I don't know of anywhere'. They know the role and they know the services that are available for people at the time. They have always got an answer for us (professional).*

## **The Future.**

The evaluation was undertaken at a time when the MAZE project was facing an uncertain future due to funding issues. All the participants in this study considered the specialist service provided by MAZE should continue in the future.

*More funding. They should carry on. I don't know what I would have done without them. I was so glad they were there for me (woman service user).*

*Keep going as it is. Nothing needed to improve service (woman service user).*

*So good. They should stay as they are. I would recommend it to anyone (woman service user).*

*MAZE should stay open – stay as they are (male partner).*

*Just keep doing what they are doing. It is small steps that are really going to make the difference, not just to the people they are working with but to the next generation as well .... I mean I think it needs to continue without a shadow of a doubt. It's not going to happen in a short time (professional).*

Whilst many commented upon the small size of the team suggesting the service could expand, overall participants were very happy with the current service.

*It would be nice if there was maybe a couple more workers, so that everyone can benefit from it. And there is less pressure on those workers (professional).*

Suggestions for future development included developing closer links with other specialist services such as Refuges and the probation service to ensure that clients receive a timely and effective service. Some professionals from outside agencies suggested the MAZE team could develop their training function and considered this would be valuable for improving inter-agency responses and knowledge about domestic violence across Calderdale

*I think the knowledge base and the skills they have - to give that out to wider agencies would be really useful (professional).*

*Education function if they had time – because they have got a greater knowledge of domestic violence – to empower/inform/train professionals across Calderdale (professional).*

There was much concern amongst professionals from outside agencies who participated in this study about the gap in service provision that would appear if the MAZE project did not receive future funding.

*I'm just not sure what would possibly fill that gap. And I don't think there is a - social workers aren't going to have the time, the space to do that sort of level of work, and to make those connections. I think they may want to, they may hope that is the case, but the reality is that they just don't (professional).*

*It would be a crime if we lost MAZE this year, it really, really would. .... They are invaluable to Calderdale .... there is nothing else like them in the UK. .... But if we lost MAZE, MARAC would struggle .... and it would have a lot of consequences (professional).*

*Without MAZE I would struggle (professional).*

## **Section 3: Summary Discussion and Recommendations**

This section provides a summary of the key findings which are discussed in relation to the MAZE project aims, outcomes and research questions. It concludes with recommendations for future development and funding.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine if and how MAZE has been able to meet the project aims, and to explore the views of service users and outside partner agencies on the perceived benefits of the MAZE project for clients within the Calderdale area. The evaluation study was guided by 8 research questions (see section 1) which relate to the following subtitles. The discussion commences however with an overview of how the MAZE project achieves its stated aims.

#### **Achieving MAZE Project Aims.**

The evaluation has found that the MAZE project provides an effective and valuable service that largely meets its stated aims (see section 1). For those women who engage with the project, MAZE is highly successful in working with them to provide practical and emotional support. There is also evidence that MAZE assists women to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives. This was highlighted within the women's accounts, but also evidenced by the increase in range and number of services working with clients in the intensive sample of cases following MAZE involvement. The project is also successful in supporting women to engage with other agencies encouraging working in partnership; this was evidenced in the interviews with clients and professionals

from outside agencies. One of the unique aspects of the MAZE project is in cases where the woman has agreed to access support but also wishes to remain in her relationship, it is able to offer services to male partners. The evaluation found challenges in achieving this work due to the reluctance of many men to engage or work with the project. However in cases where men did successfully engage and work with MAZE, whilst this was a lengthy and intensive process, the evaluation found evidence of behaviour change and associated improved outcomes for women and children as the risk of further harm from domestic violence was substantially reduced. In these cases the Maze Project was also successful in providing practical support for male partners.

#### **Client engagement with outside agencies (Research Question 1).**

The MAZE project has been largely successful in engaging women clients to work with the service offered. There is also evidence that many women who have engaged with the project are working with a wider range of agencies following MAZE involvement. Evidence from the interviews with service users identified the role MAZE played in enabling them to access other agencies very helpful; this included providing information, acting as advocate and providing practical and emotional support to facilitate access such as transport and accompanying clients to appointments. There was also evidence of MAZE success in increasing the engagement of both men and children with other outside agencies.

#### **Barriers to engaging and working with clients (Research Question 2).**

The evaluation identified very few barriers faced by MAZE in engaging and working successfully with women who are affected by domestic violence. Their work appeared to be facilitated by good relationships with other agency staff, a general appropriateness of referrals to the project and adequate resources to undertake

their work. Where barriers existed to successful engagement with clients this largely reflected the situation and perceptions of women referred to MAZE who remained reluctant to engage or work with the project. This was evident in a small number of cases reviewed for this study.

There are particular challenges in engaging and working with men and the evaluation found that MAZE were less successful in this respect. Again this largely reflects the nature of the problem that is being addressed and the particular situation of men; very often as this evaluation has demonstrated male partners were unwilling to work with an outside agency, acknowledge responsibility for the abusive behaviour or take any steps to address this. However as discussed earlier a failure to engage men with the MAZE project is not necessarily indicative of a lack of success for the project as a whole as in many cases it empowers women to access support and gain a better understanding of the domestic abuse behaviour and the willingness of the male partner to take steps to address this.

The evaluation found that MAZE often became involved with families as part of child protection work and this often provided a challenging context to engage with families. However whilst the valuable contribution of MAZE to multi-agency child protection work was noted, it remained a voluntary service for clients.

### **Achieving Project Outcomes (Research Question 3).**

The intended outcomes for the MAZE project are clearly stated and identify the following as of key importance; reducing repeat victimization, improving housing situation and safety, increasing support for children and BME women, and enabling women to access drug and alcohol and mental health services. There is evidence that the MAZE project is contributing to achieving many of these outcomes although there were some challenges due to data quality and availability in relation

to fully demonstrating some of these outcomes in this evaluation. For example there is limited data available to demonstrate a reduction in repeat victimization although qualitative evidence from the evaluation indicated that women who had engaged with the service felt safer. There was also qualitative evidence that the police were receiving less calls from women who had engaged with the project although it was not possible for this to be confirmed quantitatively.

The evaluation found evidence that MAZE worked effectively with women to address housing related issues although what this actually involved varied depending upon individual women's circumstances. Indeed for some women becoming homeless as a result of MAZE involvement (because they had escaped domestic violence and were in temporary refuge accommodation) is a positive and safety enhancing measure. For others there was evidence they were supported to be rehoused and/or engage with appropriate housing/tenancy services. Data relating to agency referrals indicates that a small number of women were referred to drug, alcohol and/or mental health services although again the benefits, appropriateness and outcomes of this depend upon individual women's circumstances. Because of small numbers involved there was limited data about this and no specific evidence about this arose during the interviews with women service users or professionals from outside agencies. There was also evidence that the support available to children had increased by the end of MAZE involvement with families. The project also demonstrated increased support to BME women

**The benefits of the MAZE project for clients (Research Questions 4 & 5).**

For those women who engaged with the MAZE project the benefits of the service were highly evident. This included enhanced support and safety. There was evidence that benefits were accrued due to the assertive outreach approach and flexibility of service provision adopted by the MAZE team as this appeared to keep

women engaged and involved with the service, despite changes and difficulties in their personal circumstances.

**Partnership Working (Research Question 6 & 7).**

The evaluation found considerable evidence that the MAZE team worked collaboratively and in partnership with other agencies. Their contribution to inter-agency working was positively commented upon and valued by both professionals from outside agencies and service users who participated in this study.

In relation to promoting the safety of women and children their contribution in relation to both the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) process and Child Protection processes was positively evaluated. This contribution included regular attendance at meetings, good quality information sharing, a skilled approach and expertise which ensured decision making and planning was focused upon domestic violence behaviour and associated risks. There was also evidence that the MAZE team were able to engage in honest discussions about risks and behaviours whilst also maintaining good working relationships with clients.

**MAZE Service: Organisational Context and Service Development (Research Question ).**

The MAZE project was established in 2007 with a funding stream concerned with achieving an outcomes based approach to tackling social exclusion. The funding, although time limited, provided the team with adequate resources to establish their work and the parameters for this project. Whilst the MAZE project was established as a response to a particular identified need – that is to work with women affected by domestic violence who wished to remain with their partners and where agreed to offer a service to male partners – the service it provides is

somewhat unique, not only to Calderdale but also nationally<sup>5</sup>. The presence of a male worker within the MAZE team has enabled direct work to be offered to domestic violence perpetrators in those situations where clients have been hard to engage and where women wish to continue in their relationship. Undertaking this in a safe and effective manner whilst continuing to engage clients required the team to establish a clear and consistent approach; this has been developed into a model of working (see Appendix 1). Central to this is a close working between team members to ensure that women and children's safety is central to and informs their work with clients, both women and their male partners.

Other important features identified in the evaluation included the employment of suitably experienced and skilled workers, who appeared to have a high degree of commitment to the project. Discussion with team members and observation suggests the MAZE project team although small in number is fairly stable, well managed and displays good communication within the team.

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<sup>5</sup> The established model of service provision for domestic violence perpetrators within the UK are group-based programmes, many of which are court mandated. Such programmes ideally run alongside service provision for women to ensure their safety and support (see Respect 2010 for overview).

## **Recommendations for future service development.**

The professionals and service users who participated in this project offered a wholly positive view of the service. Throughout the evaluation it was difficult to identify any criticism of the MAZE project and the service it provided. Whilst this may reflect the views of the participants, particularly the service users who had on the whole engaged successfully with MAZE, it suggests the MAZE project is providing a highly valued service. The following recommendations arise from this evaluation:

- **It is recommended that funding is secured to enable the MAZE project to continue offering a service to women experiencing domestic abuse, and their families. This would enable the project to continue providing a much needed service to women affected by domestic abuse and their families.**
- **It is recommended that the MAZE project continues to provide an intensive flexible and specialist service to women experiencing domestic abuse, and their families.**
- **It is recommended that the MAZE project continues to employ a male worker so that when women wish to remain with their partner, a service can be offered to male partners who are perpetrators of domestic violence**
- **It is recommended that the MAZE project continues to be based in and managed by Calderdale WomenCentre.**
- **It is recommended that the MAZE project considers further developing a training function in order to contribute to and further improve the**

**understandings and skills of other agencies and professionals in Calderdale  
whose work brings them into contact with domestic violence.**

## References

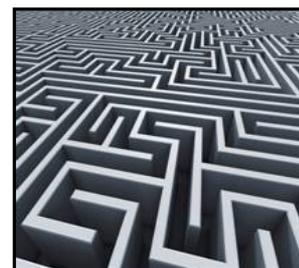
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## **Appendix 1: Maze Project Model of Working and Good Practice Guidelines**



Maze Project

### **THE MAZE PROJECT – MODEL OF WORKING AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

Maze has an accessible referral process; it encourages maximum information sharing at point of referral with the referring agency which allows for thorough discussion within the team around appropriateness of referral, risk assessment (including risks to women and to staff) and presenting issues. Once the team have taken on the referral a decision will be made as to the safest way of making initial contact with the service user(s).

An initial joint appointment will be made to see a couple together unless the information gathered suggests that working with the male would be too risky for the woman at this stage. If it is felt that the risk to the woman is high in terms of joint working then staff would contact her separately to discuss the relationship and check out with her what she wants/ what she would feel safe with initially.

If staff are unable to make initial contact with the woman over the phone assessment will take place as to possible risks of cold calling at the home address.

If making initial contact is difficult and more information is needed to assess risk, staff may decide to arrange an initial three-way appointment with woman/ couple through referring agency worker.

### **Appointments**

First joint appointment workers will:

- introduce the Maze Project
- name the abuse
- gain written consent
- ask the couple what they feel they want from working with Maze
- demonstrate pro-social modelling
- observe the couple's modelling behaviour

- arrange individual appointments (and explain why)

The Maze Project is committed to a pro-active, accommodating and persistent approach to engagement using a variety of approaches. However continued non-engagement should be used by referring agencies to inform their assessment particularly in relation to safeguarding.

**First individual appointment:**

- workers will explore individual issues/feelings
- complete MATRIX forms
- undertake an assessment in order to develop an action plan with the service user

Individual sessions will continue as agreed with workers sharing information after each session. Action plans will be reviewed at the end of a 3 month period, with the service user. Regular feedback sessions provide a formalised “de-briefing” between workers highlighting particular areas of concern and raises awareness of potential risk to woman. If it is decided to move from individual to couple work at this point then a review of the initial risk assessment would be carried out (based on evidence collected and assessment). Following this workers will decide whether to proceed with couple work, to wait and continue individual work or to end working with the male and continue only working with the woman.

**Individual Work With Women**

**Adopting a Woman Centred Approach:**

- working with women’s agenda – even if they minimise the impact of domestic abuse –ensuring that workers maintain a focus on the abuse
- taking a holistic approach, encompassing the physical & emotional environment
- undertaking advocacy work on behalf of women as required
- enabling women to gain an insight and understanding of domestic abuse, regardless of their starting point
- prioritising the safety of women and children
- use a range of methods to explore domestic abuse
- determine the venue of appointments through negotiation with women taking account of risk

**Building Trust:**

- negotiate with agencies on behalf of, and with, women
- undertake the practical tasks

- doing what is agreed / delivering on agreed actions
- being persistent when the work becomes challenging

**Being Consistent:**

- safety (of woman and children) is paramount
- demonstrate reliability by avoiding changing/cancelling appointments
- team members have shared overview of cases and take collective responsibility

**The Maze Project Does Not:**

- offer individual/couple counselling
- direct the relationship.
- collude around the domestic violence
- provide a woman with information given by her partner, without his consent, unless related to the risk he poses to her or the children

**Individual Work With Men**

**Creating a Safe Environment:**

- enabling men to disclose their abusive behaviour by naming and acknowledging the violence

**Identifying the Abuse:**

- locating responsibility with the man - even if he does not disclose and/or acknowledge his abusive behaviour

**Building Trust:**

- negotiate with agencies on behalf of, and with, men
- undertake the practical tasks
- doing what has been agreed/ delivering on agreed actions
- being persistent when the work becomes challenging

**Encouraging Insight:**

- enabling men through appropriate challenge to recognise and make links between their feelings, thoughts and actions, regardless of their starting point

### **Maintaining Focus on Domestic Abuse:**

- prioritising safety of women and children
- maintaining a woman centred approach

### **Workers Always Determine Venue For Appointments**

#### **The Maze Project Does Not:**

- offer individual/couple counselling
- collude – will not accept a man shifting responsibility for his abusive behaviour towards his partner
- undertake anger management because this does not address domestic abuse and minimises responsibility for abusive behaviour
- work with men unless their partner is actively engaging and is in agreement with his involvement
- continue working with a man if the relationship has ended
- provide a man with information given by his partner without her consent

### **Working With a Couple**

- A full assessment of risk is undertaken before any joint work can begin; throughout the process the focus is on domestic abuse and the continuing safety of women and children.
- Work with a heterosexual couple is always co-gendered.
- Recognition of the unequal power balance in an abusive relationship with the aim of redressing that inequality towards the woman.
- Workers aim to present an equal relationship by pro-social modelling whereby the female worker takes the lead (has more power) and makes decisions with the male worker supporting this approach.
- Female worker is the woman's advocate during the session.
- Maze workers are not neutral about his abusive behaviour and do not mediate.
- Discussions are informal around achieving agreement about the work required to enable positive changes in their relationship.
- Safety planning around joint sessions is an ongoing process and is reviewed and adjusted as necessary.
- Work is always at the woman's pace whilst not being disrespectful/dismissive of the man's opinion.
- Work should never leave women feeling less empowered than at the outset; women should feel able to participate fully and safely in all joint work.

- Workers use professional judgement to end sessions if concerned about a woman's emotional well-being and/or her safety.

### **Positive Measures**

- Women leave the abusive relationship through a process of informed decision making and ultimately of her own choice.
- Women feel safer.
- Men take responsibility for their abuse and work to change their behaviour.
- Risk of harm to children is reduced.
- Couple able to develop a more equal, positive and respectful relationship.
- Increasing women's ability to seek help if there are further incidents of abusive behaviour
- Improved emotional wellbeing for men/ women.
- Increased positive approach to health, employment, education and leisure time.
- Women/couple receiving appropriate agency support and engaging with them.

## Appendix 2: Mapping Research Questions to Data Collection

	Research Questions	Data Collection
1	To what extent has the MAZE project enabled women who are affected by domestic violence, their partners and children, to engage, navigate and commit to working in partnership with outside agencies appropriate for their individual needs?	Interviews with service users Project reports and available service data Interviews with MAZE project staff, wider Domestic abuse team/WomenCentre staff and partner agencies
2	What are the barriers faced by the MAZE project in engaging and working successfully with women who are affected by domestic violence, their partners and children, and what lessons can be learnt for future service development?	Interviews with service users Project reports and available service data Interviews with MAZE project staff, wider Domestic abuse team/WomenCentre staff and partner agencies
3	How and to what extent has the MAZE project achieved benefits for women who are affected by domestic violence in relation to the project outcomes of reducing repeat victimization, improving housing situation and safety, increasing support for children and BME women, and enabling women to access drug and alcohol and mental health services?	Project reports and available service data Interviews with women service users Interviews with MAZE project staff, wider Domestic abuse team/WomenCentre staff and partner agencies Case analysis
4	What, if any, benefits do women service users consider they have gained from accessing the Maze Project?	Interviews with women service users
5	What are the perspectives of the MAZE team, the wider Domestic abuse team and WomenCentre on the benefits of the Project for women?	Interviews with MAZE project staff, wider Domestic abuse team and WomenCentre staff.
6	How, and to what extent, has the MAZE project contributed to partnership working in respect of women's safety, the safeguarding and protection of children, and risk assessment through work with men?	Case analysis Project reports and available service data Interviews with MAZE project staff, wider Domestic abuse team/WomenCentre staff and partner agencies
7	What are the perspectives of clients, project staff and partner agencies on the process and outcomes of this partnership work and what are the barriers to success?	Interviews with service users Interviews with MAZE project staff, wider Domestic abuse team/WomenCentre staff and partner agencies
8	How have developments in the structure and team of the MAZE project impacted upon service delivery and what lessons can be learnt for future service development?	Interviews with MAZE project staff and manager Interviews with service users Project reports and available service data Interviews with wider Domestic abuse team/WomenCentre staff and partner agencies

### Appendix 3: Data Collection Tool for Intensive Case Sample

#### EVALUATION OF THE MAZE PROJECT

Case: .....

Date client referred to MAZE project: .....

Which agency referred client to the MAZE project? .....

Ethnic origin of client:

	Please tick if known
White	
Mixed	
Asian or Asian British	
Black or Black British	
Chinese or other ethnic group	

Does this client have children? Yes/No

Ages of children:

	Please tick for each child
Under 12 months	
1-4years	
5-11years	
11-16 years	
16 years +	

Wider agency involvement with client at time of referral to MAZE project:

	Please tick if known
Housing	
Probation	
Police	
Health – universal services eg GP, HV	
Health – secondary services – eg Hospital	
Drug/alcohol services	
Mental health services	
Social Services	
Family Support	
Voluntary sector	
IDVAS/MARAC	
DV outreach	
Refuge services	
Other	

Did client engage with MAZE project? Yes/No

If yes, please state length of engagement:

If no, please add any comments

MAZE Project involvement/contact with client:

	Number
Joint visits/work with couple	
Contact with woman	
Contact with male partner	

Referrals to other agencies by MAZE project:

	Please tick if known
Housing	
Probation	
Police	
Health – universal services eg GP, HV	
Health – secondary services – eg Hospital/	
Drug/alcohol services	
Mental health services	
Social Services	
Family Support	
Voluntary sector	
IDVAS/MARAC	
DV outreach	
Refuge services	

Is there any evidence that outcomes for this client have improved following involvement with the MAZE project?

Women's safety:

Housing situation:

Women's sense of support and overall wellbeing:

Safety/protection of child(ren):

Support for child(ren):

## **Appendix 4: Information sheet - service users.**

### ***Evaluation of the MAZE Project : Information Sheet (service users)***

The Maze Project based at WomenCentre in Calderdale is a specialist project that works with women who are affected by domestic violence and their partners and children. It aims to provide practical and emotional support and assist clients to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives.

The purpose of this small study is to examine if and how the MAZE project has been able to meet these aims and to explore any benefits or shortcomings of this project. The study is being undertaken by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield and is taking place between May-July 2010.

You are being invited to take part in this research study. You do not have to be involved so before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is taking place and what will be involved. Please take whatever time you need to read this information sheet, discuss it with others or ask us any questions.

#### **Why have I been chosen?**

As part of the study we are seeking the views of women, and partners if appropriate, who have received services from the MAZE project. We understand that you have had contact with the MAZE project during the last 2 years and we are interested in your views of this project. We would like to invite you to participate in a short interview.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, we will ask you to sign a consent form. You can withdraw at any time and can refuse to answer any questions. Whatever your decision, it will not be reported back to the MAZE project or other professionals and will not affect the service(s) you receive from them.

#### **What happens if I take part?**

We would like to interview you about your views of the MAZE project. The interview will take place at a time and place convenient to you. The interview will be conducted by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield. You will be asked for your opinions on:

- the service delivered by the MAZE project
- if you have found the MAZE project helpful to you and your family
- if you have faced any difficulties in accessing and working with the MAZE project
- how you think the MAZE project should develop in the future.

#### **Are there any disadvantages to taking part?**

We do not think that you will consider that there are any disadvantages to being involved, apart from taking up your time. We understand that sometimes these matters can be upsetting to talk about. We will reimburse any out of pocket expenses.

**Are there any benefits?**

There are no obvious benefits for you and we will not be able to offer any individual advice. Your views will form part of an important review of the MAZE project and will contribute to the further development of this project.

**Will my views be kept confidential?**

Your views will be kept entirely confidential. The data will be stored in secure cabinets at the University and no personal information will be stored. Your descriptions and views will not be reported to any professionals involved with you or your family, unless we are made aware of new and significant harm to children. If this should occur we will have to inform the appropriate authorities.

We would like to record the interview with your agreement and may wish to quote you directly in the final report and any publication coming out of the research. However this will be done in such a way that your anonymity will be safeguarded by changing names or characteristics. The recordings will be stored securely at the University of Huddersfield for a 5 year period following which they will be destroyed.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

A report will be prepared detailing the findings of this study for Calderdale WomenCentre. Given the importance of projects like the MAZE, the study will also disseminate findings to key stakeholders such as the local authority and other interested parties.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is commissioned by Calderdale WomenCentre. It is being carried out by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The research has been reviewed by the University of Huddersfield School of Health and Human Sciences Research Ethics Panel (SREP).

**Contact for further information**

For further information please contact the researcher for this project:

**Dr Sue Peckover**

**Centre for Applied Childhood Studies**

**University of Huddersfield**

**Queensgate**

**Huddersfield HD1 3DH**

**01484 473131**

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If you have any complaints about the research, please contact:

**Angela Everson, Joint Chief Executive, WomenCentre**

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**Company No: 6084795, Charity No: 1118366**

## **Appendix 5: Interview schedule –service users.**

### ***Evaluation of the MAZE Project: Interview Topic Guide (service users)***

Thank for agreeing to be interviewed.

Remind about anonymity.

Do not have to answer any question they would rather not.

- What do you think of the service delivered by the MAZE project?
- Have you found the MAZE project helpful to you and your family?
- If so, can you explain further?
- Have you found any aspects of the MAZE project unhelpful to you and your family?
- If so, can you explain further?
- Have you have faced any difficulties in accessing or working with the MAZE project?
- How do you think the MAZE project should develop in the future?

Thank again and tell that copies of final report will be available by September.



## **Appendix 7: Information sheet - professionals.**

### **Evaluation of the MAZE Project : Information Sheet (Professionals)**

The Maze Project based at WomenCentre in Calderdale is a specialist project that works with women who are affected by domestic violence and their partners and children. It aims to provide practical and emotional support and assist clients to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives.

The purpose of this small study is to examine if and how the MAZE project has been able to meet these aims and to explore any benefits or shortcomings of this project. The study is being undertaken by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield and is taking place between May-July 2010.

You are being invited to take part in this research study. You do not have to be involved so before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is taking place and what will be involved. Please take whatever time you need to read this information sheet, discuss it with others or ask us any questions.

#### **Why have you been chosen?**

As part of the study we are seeking the views of professionals and staff working in agencies across Calderdale about the MAZE project. We understand that you have had contact with the MAZE project in a professional capacity during the last 2 years and would like to invite you to participate in a short interview.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, you do not have to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, we will ask you to sign a consent form. You can withdraw at any time and can refuse to answer any questions.

#### **What will happen next?**

If you indicate that you are willing to take part, we will arrange with you a suitable time for an interview. This will take place in the next few weeks and will be either face to face with the researcher or conducted as a telephone interview.

#### **What do I have to do?**

The interview will be conducted by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield. You will be asked for your opinions on:

- the service delivered by the MAZE project, its contribution to partnership working, and the perceived benefits for clients
- any barriers and difficulties in service delivery, client engagement or partnership working
- future service development of the MAZE project

#### **Will my views be kept confidential?**

Your views of the MAZE project will be kept confidential in both storage and during analysis. The data will be stored in secure cabinets at the University and any personal identifiers will be kept separately from the transcripts. Your descriptions and views will not be reported to your employers or other professionals.

We would like to record the interview with your agreement and may wish to quote you directly in any publication coming out of the research. However this will be done in such a way that your anonymity will be safeguarded by changing names or characteristics. The recordings will be stored securely at the University of Huddersfield for a 5 year period following which they will be destroyed.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

A report will be prepared detailing the findings of this study for Calderdale WomenCentre. Given the importance of projects like the MAZE, the study will also disseminate findings to key stakeholders such as the local authority and other interested parties.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is commissioned by Calderdale WomenCentre. It is being carried out by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The conduct and appropriateness of the research has been reviewed by the University of Huddersfield School of Health and Human Sciences Research Ethics Panel (SREP).

**Contact for further information**

For further information please contact the researcher for this project:

**Dr Sue Peckover**  
**Centre for Applied Childhood Studies**  
**University of Huddersfield**  
**Queensgate**  
**Huddersfield HD1 3DH**  
**01484 473131**  
[s.peckover@hud.ac.uk](mailto:s.peckover@hud.ac.uk)

If you have any complaints about the research, please contact:

**Angela Everson, Joint Chief Executive, WomenCentre**  
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**Company No: 6084795, Charity No: 1118366**

May 2010

## **Appendix 8: Interview schedule –professionals.**

### **Evaluation of the MAZE Project : Interview Topic Guide (professionals)**

Thank for agreeing to be interviewed.

Remind about anonymity.

Do not have to answer any question they would rather not.

- What do you think of the service delivered by the MAZE project?
- Do you think the MAZE project has benefits for clients?
- If so, can you explain further?
- Do you think the MAZE project helps support women affected by domestic violence and their children?
- Do you think the MAZE project helps increase the safety of women affected by domestic violence and their children?
- Do you think the MAZE project works effectively with men?
- Are you aware of any barriers or difficulties arising in relation to the work done by the MAZE project?
- This may be for example in relation to any of the following:
  - service delivery,
  - client engagement
  - partnership working?
  
- If so, can you explain further?
- Have you have faced any difficulties in accessing or working with the MAZE project?
- How do you think the MAZE project should develop in the future?

Thank again and tell that copies of final report will be available by September.

## **Appendix 9: Information sheet – project staff.**

### **Evaluation of the MAZE Project : Information Sheet (Project Staff)**

The Maze Project based at WomenCentre in Calderdale is a specialist project that works with women who are affected by domestic violence and their partners and children. It aims to provide practical and emotional support and assist clients to access services and local resources that could make a positive difference to their lives.

The purpose of this small study is to examine if and how the MAZE project has been able to meet these aims and to explore any benefits or shortcomings of this project. The study is being undertaken by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield and is taking place between May-July 2010.

You are being invited to take part in this research study. You do not have to be involved so before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is taking place and what will be involved. Please take whatever time you need to read this information sheet, discuss it with others or ask us any questions.

#### **Why have you been chosen?**

As part of the study we are seeking the views of MAZE project staff about the services delivered by the project for women who are affected by domestic abuse, their partners and children. We would like to invite you to participate in an interview.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, you do not have to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, we will ask you to sign a consent form. You can withdraw at any time and can refuse to answer any questions.

#### **What will happen next?**

If you indicate that you are willing to take part, we will arrange with you a suitable time for an interview. This will take place in the next few weeks at the project premises.

#### **What do I have to do?**

The interview will be conducted by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield. You will be asked for your opinions on:

- the service delivered by the MAZE project, its contribution to partnership working, and the perceived benefits for clients
- any barriers and difficulties in service delivery, client engagement or partnership working
- future service development of the MAZE project

#### **Will my views be kept confidential?**

Your views of the MAZE project will be kept confidential in both storage and during analysis. The data will be stored in secure cabinets at the University and any personal identifiers will be kept separately from the transcripts. Your descriptions and views will not be reported to your employers or other professionals.

We would like to record the interview with your agreement and may wish to quote you directly in any publication coming out of the research. However this will be done in such a way that your anonymity will be safeguarded by changing names or characteristics. The recordings will be stored securely at the University of Huddersfield for a 5 year period following which they will be destroyed.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

A report will be prepared detailing the findings of this study for Calderdale WomenCentre. Given the importance of projects like the MAZE, the study will also disseminate findings to key stakeholders such as the local authority and other interested parties.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is commissioned by Calderdale WomenCentre. It is being carried out by a researcher from the University of Huddersfield.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The conduct and appropriateness of the research has been reviewed by the University of Huddersfield School of Health and Human Sciences Research Ethics Panel (SREP).

**Contact for further information**

For further information please contact the researcher for this project:

**Dr Sue Peckover**  
**Centre for Applied Childhood Studies**  
**University of Huddersfield**  
**Queensgate**  
**Huddersfield HD1 3DH**  
**01484 473131**  
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If you have any complaints about the research, please contact:

**Angela Everson, Joint Chief Executive, WomenCentre**  
**Tel: 01422 386500 or Email: [angela.everson@womencentre.org.uk](mailto:angela.everson@womencentre.org.uk)**  
**WomenCentre Ltd. Registered Office: 23 Silver Street, Halifax, HX1 1JN**  
**Company No: 6084795, Charity No: 1118366**

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## **Appendix 10: Interview schedule –project staff.**

### **Evaluation of the MAZE Project: Interview Topic Guide (project workers)**

Thank for agreeing to be interviewed.

Remind about anonymity.

Do not have to answer any question they would rather not.

- We are interested in your opinions of the services offered by the MAZE project. Can you start by first describing in your own words what the MAZE project offers to clients and how this differs from more mainstream service provision?
- What benefits do you think the MAZE project offers to women?
- Thinking about a case, can you describe the processes of work undertaken with clients who are referred to the MAZE project?
- Thinking about a case, can you describe how you think the MAZE project works in partnership with clients and other agencies?
- Thinking about a case, can you describe how you think the MAZE project addresses women's safety and support needs?
- Do you think the MAZE project works effectively with men?
- What do you consider are the challenges that the MAZE project faces in relation to working with clients and other agencies?
- How do you think the MAZE project should develop in the future?

Thank again and tell that copies of final report will be available by September.

