

Challenges in Legal Enforcement: The Application of Alternative Dispute Resolution in Domestic Violence and Abuse Cases in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

This study examines the impact and effectiveness of out-of-court resolutions in cases of domestic violence and abuse in the UK, as well as their implications for justice and victim protection. The research methodology incorporates a comprehensive literature review, diverse data sources, and rigorous data collection and analysis techniques. It involves the use of Freedom of Information requests, expert interviews, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses to explore how out-of-court resolutions are applied in cases of domestic violence. The findings provide an in-depth analysis of domestic violence in the UK, detailing the various forms of harmful behaviours and the challenges they present to law enforcement. For instance, physical violence and emotional abuse are often interconnected, significantly undermining victims' self-esteem and leaving profound emotional scars. By incorporating concepts such as restorative justice and community healing, this research underscores the intricate nature of addressing domestic violence cases and the necessity of a nuanced approach. While alternative resolutions offer potential pathways to healing, criticisms highlight the need to carefully evaluate the gender and power dynamics underlying such violence, ensuring these factors are central to any proposed solution.

Keywords

Domestic Violence Cases; Law Enforcement; Out-of-Court Settlements; Violence Cases

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1. INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement in cases of domestic violence and abuse in the UK encounters significant challenges, particularly with the use of out-of-court settlements (Harwood, 2019). Domestic violence is a pervasive and complex issue in the UK, affecting thousands of individuals annually. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), approximately 2.3 million adults in England experienced domestic violence in 2018, with women constituting most victims. While domestic violence can affect anyone regardless of gender, age, or socio-economic background, women are more frequently subjected to severe forms of violence. Although intended to expedite solutions and alleviate the justice system's



burden, this approach often fails to account for the intricate power dynamics and complexities underpinning domestic violence cases (Lloyd & Borrill, 2020). The use of restorative justice or community resolution may expose victims to additional risks, as they may feel coerced into participating in processes that inadequately address or acknowledge the lasting impact of their trauma (Burns & Sinko, 2023; Umbreit, 2023). Such alternatives may also undermine societal acknowledgement of the gravity of domestic violence by replacing formal legal processes with measures that do not guarantee adequate protection or justice for victims. Consequently, it is imperative to critically assess and improve this approach to ensure that safeguarding victims and delivering justice remain central to addressing domestic violence and abuse.

Recent research on domestic violence has brought several key figures and theoretical concepts into focus. One of the primary contributors, Edwards, emphasized the significance of studying domestic violence as a pressing social issue requiring in-depth attention in 1989 (Edwards et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). Edwards's work helped highlight the necessity of addressing domestic violence as a serious societal problem (Mantler et al., 2020). Similarly, Dobash and Dobash's research in 1992 became a cornerstone of feminist criminology, particularly in understanding the dynamics of domestic violence (Hammond, 2018). Their contributions shed light on the importance of exposing gender inequality within the context of violence, paving the way for a deeper examination of its root causes (The Hague, 2021).

Beyond these figures, theoretical concepts also occupy a central role in this research. Criminological feminism, as a theoretical framework that foregrounds gender inequality in the context of crime, provides a critical foundation for understanding the root causes of domestic violence (Gelsthorpe, 2020; Walklate et al., 2020). By placing gender at the centre of analysis, criminological feminism offers a nuanced understanding of how power dynamics and social structures contribute to and sustain violence. Additionally, the concept of restorative justice emerges as a compelling alternative for addressing conflict in cases of domestic violence (Brookes, 2019; Redman, 2019; N. Westmarland et al., 2018). With its emphasis on healing relationships and addressing the social, psychological, and emotional impacts of crime, restorative justice presents a more humane approach to tackling domestic violence cases.

Several studies have explored the impact of austerity measures on legal processes. For instance, Harwood (2019) highlights the detrimental effects of these measures, particularly on access to legal aid in child arrangement disputes involving domestic violence. He emphasizes the poor quality of information available to courts and the government's inadequate response following the implementation of LASPO. Similarly, Mutendi (2021) reveals the widespread use of out-of-court resolutions in domestic violence cases in the UK, noting their controversial nature and calling for further

empirical investigation and policy development. McPhee et al. (2022), in their analysis of 400 domestic violence incidents reported in England, examine how factors such as victim gender, vulnerability, and incident type influence the progression of these cases through the criminal justice system.

This paper introduces an innovative approach to addressing domestic violence in the UK: the use of out-of-court settlements as an alternative for conflict resolution. These settlements offer a more adaptable and personalized method of managing disputes while alleviating the burden on an often-overstrained justice system. By enabling negotiation between the involved parties, this approach can improve communication, promote reconciliation, and expedite case resolution. However, despite these potential advantages, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding victim protection, equitable justice, and the consistent enforcement of domestic violence laws. Addressing these issues is critical to enhancing the efficacy of law enforcement in such cases.

The gap in this work lies in the limited exploration of out-of-court resolutions in law enforcement for cases of domestic violence and abuse in the UK, despite significant prior research highlighting their use. To address this gap, several aspects warrant further investigation. These include a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of various out-of-court settlement approaches, an evaluation of their impact on victims of domestic violence, and a deeper understanding of the factors influencing law enforcement decisions to adopt these approaches. Additionally, research should focus on victims' perspectives and experiences within the context of such resolutions. By addressing these areas, future studies can provide more comprehensive insights and establish a stronger foundation for developing more effective policies and practices for handling domestic violence cases. The objective of this research is to assess the impact and effectiveness of out-of-court resolutions in addressing domestic violence and abuse in the UK, with particular attention to their implications for justice and victim protection.

2. METHOD

The research methods employed to investigate the use of out-of-court resolutions in cases of domestic violence and abuse in the UK are grounded in a comprehensive literature review. This review utilizes a variety of data sources and applies appropriate data collection and analysis techniques (Oztemel & Gursev, 2020; Snyder, 2019; Thomas et al., 2020). Conducting a literature review is an essential first step in understanding the research problem. In this case, the review involves analysing various academic articles, scientific journals, research reports, and other sources of information relevant to the topic. It also includes examining theories related to domestic violence, out-of-court settlements, and the challenges faced by law enforcement in this context.

The data sources used in the research include official documents, research reports, empirical studies, government policies, law enforcement guidelines, and statistical data on domestic violence in

the UK. This diverse dataset allows researchers to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. Data collection techniques include submitting Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to obtain information from UK law enforcement agencies about the use of out-of-court resolutions in handling domestic violence cases. Additionally, interviews with experts, law enforcement officials, and other stakeholders may be conducted to gain deeper insights.

The research applies both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. Data from various sources are analysed systematically to identify patterns, trends, and challenges in using out-of-court resolutions for domestic violence cases. This approach enables researchers to present their findings in a comprehensive and informative manner. However, this study is limited by its reliance solely on a literature review, which may restrict the scope of empirical validation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Exploring New Approaches to Policing: Restorative Justice and Community Resolution

In recent research on domestic violence, several key figures and theoretical concepts have gained prominence. Edwards, an academic, has been a significant contributor; in 1989, he underscored the importance of studying domestic violence (Banyard et al., 2020; Chatha & Ahmad, 2020). Similarly, the work of Dobash and Dobash (1992) remains a foundational reference in criminological feminism, particularly in understanding the dynamics of domestic violence (Pandey, 2021).

Hester, in her 2006 study, specifically examined the role of the police in addressing domestic violence cases, offering in-depth insights into the challenges faced by law enforcement (Bates & Hester, 2020; Hester & Lilley, 2018). Another notable contribution is the 2014 research by Obligado and Jeffries, which advanced understanding of this issue (Fuentes, 2020). Westmarland has also provided valuable insights, particularly through his 2015 research, which expanded the theoretical and practical understanding of domestic violence (McGlynn & Westmarland, 2019; Westmarland & Conway, 2020).

In addition to these key figures, several theoretical frameworks have become central to research on domestic violence. Criminological feminism, which highlights gender inequality in the context of crime, provides a critical foundation for exploring the root causes of domestic violence. Additionally, restorative justice has emerged as a compelling alternative for resolving conflicts in this context, emphasizing the healing of relationships and addressing the social, psychological, and emotional impacts of crime.

The idea of punishment outside of court is important in discussing efforts to resolve cases of domestic violence. This concept involves alternatives to traditional criminal justice processes, such as warnings or community resolutions, which aim to resolve conflicts or disputes without involving formal courts. To face the challenge of crime, police in various countries are starting to shift from

conventional approaches that focus on law enforcement and punishing offenders, towards strategies that are more holistic and recovery-oriented. (Martinelli et al., 2022; Wood, 2020). Two key concepts that are receiving increasing attention are restorative justice and community resolution.

Restorative justice offers a different approach to dealing with conflict and crime. Rather than simply punishing the perpetrator, restorative justice emphasises restoring relationships, repairing losses, and involving all parties involved in the resolution process. (Marshall, 2020; Van Ness et al., 2022). The degree to which restorative justice is implemented can vary, from instant expulsion or street resolution for minor conflicts to restorative justice conferences for more complex cases. In the police context, this approach can provide a more humane and effective alternative to the formal criminal justice process, especially for cases of domestic violence.

On the other hand, community resolution offers a conflict resolution solution that involves agreement between the parties without going through the criminal justice process (Fronius et al., 2019; Lanni, 2021). This approach is generally used for minor offences, especially for first-time offenders (Win, 2020). Community resolutions provide scope for police to respond proportionately to low-level crimes without the need to take formal punitive action. This allows cases to be handled more quickly and efficiently while still paying attention to the needs of victims and the community.

These two concepts, restorative justice and community resolution, mark a paradigm shift in police practice, from a focus solely on legal action to a more recovery- and prevention-oriented approach. While the challenges and complexities in their implementation cannot be ignored, the development and application of these two concepts offer great opportunities to strengthen justice, build better relationships in society, and reduce levels of domestic violence and other social conflicts.

In recent years, the debate regarding the effectiveness and suitability of restorative justice and community resolution in dealing with cases of domestic violence has heated up. During these discussions, some central figures and institutions have made important contributions in shaping related views and policies, one of which is Theresa May, who in her capacity as previous Home Minister and then as Prime Minister, has stated this openly. objections to the application of restorative justice in the context of intimate partner violence.

The concept of restorative justice, which seeks to repair the harm felt by victims and provide opportunities for perpetrators to make amends, has received strong criticism in the context of domestic violence. The primary reason for this resistance lies in the understanding that domestic violence, particularly that perpetrated by an intimate partner, presents complexities and power dynamics that cannot be fully addressed through restorative or community approaches.

Several bodies and organisations have expressed this view through various statements and guidance. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), the Association of Senior Police

Officers (ACPO), the Royal Constabulary Inspectorate (HMIC), and the College of Policing have all expressed concerns regarding the use of restorative justice in domestic abuse cases. For example, in 2011, the ACPO explicitly expressed its disapproval of restorative justice in this context, although it acknowledged the potential benefits of a client-centred approach if requested by the victim. However, guidelines published in subsequent years reaffirmed the exclusion of domestic violence from community resolution and restorative justice, underscoring the unacceptable risks associated with the application of domestic violence in such situations.

In 2014, HMIC issued a report emphasising that police should avoid using restorative justice in cases of domestic violence involving intimate partners, citing significant risks to victims. This position was reinforced by the College of Policing's 2015 guidance and Theresa May's 2016 statement, which highlighted the dangers faced by victims subjected to controlling or coercive behaviour. (Shannon & Shannon, 2022). These statements and policies reflect a broader public policy trend to discourage restorative justice and community resolution in cases of domestic violence, particularly those involving close partners. This approach acknowledges the unique complexity and sensitivity of such cases, which often require strategies distinct from typical criminal proceedings. Protecting victims and addressing the power imbalances inherent in domestic violence have become key priorities, prompting policymakers to reevaluate the suitability of restorative justice in this context.

An investigation into the use of out-of-court decisions by police in domestic violence cases in the UK reveals a complex and varied landscape. The study highlights challenges in recording and analysing data while focusing on the characteristics and frequency of these practices rather than solely their effectiveness. By providing an empirical foundation, this research aims to inform further studies and policy development in this critical area.

Against the backdrop of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and the Freedom of Information Act 2002 for Scotland, this research aims to examine the extent to which restorative justice and community resolution practices are implemented by the police in addressing domestic violence (KC, 2023; Kingston et al., 2018; Worthy, 2021). Ethical approval obtained from the Durham University Faculty of Applied Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee enhances the validity of the methodology employed (Gibbons, 2019; Marett, 2018).

Using a Freedom of Information request, two rounds of questions were sent to all police forces, focusing on restorative justice practices and community resolution. The data collected reveal a range of approaches to responding to domestic violence incidents, including restorative justice and community resolution, with some forces using these terms interchangeably.

A key challenge identified in the research is the inconsistency among police forces in recording and interpreting data. This issue is further compounded by the varied terminology used to describe

responses to domestic violence, making direct comparisons and cohesive analysis difficult. The research conducted by Bow and Westmarland (2016) provides additional context, highlighting the challenges of using FOI methods in sensitive topics. Their study on the rape of elderly individuals underscores the critical need for clear definitions and consistent understanding of terms, a lesson highly relevant to this investigation.

3.2. Cases of Domestic Violence and Abuse in the UK

Domestic violence and abuse cases in the UK encompass a wide range of harmful behaviours, including physical violence, emotional abuse, and psychological manipulation (Callaghan et al., 2018). Physical violence is one of the most visible forms of abuse, involving physical attacks that result in injuries to a partner or family member (Bishop & Bettinson, 2018). However, psychological violence is equally pervasive, involving behaviours aimed at controlling or intimidating a partner or family member. This can include threats, manipulation, or social exclusion, all of which have detrimental effects on the victim's psychological well-being.

Sexual violence remains a critical issue in domestic violence cases in the UK. It includes acts such as forced sexual intercourse or other non-consensual sexual activities, which harm victims both physically and emotionally. Similarly, verbal harassment, involving hurtful, insulting, or threatening language, often causes significant emotional distress (Towl & Walker, 2019). Beyond these more overt forms of violence, there are subtler but equally harmful forms of abuse. For instance, financial control occurs when one partner restricts the other's access to financial resources, leading to economic dependence and injustice. Social isolation, another overlooked form of abuse, involves isolating the victim from family and friends, leaving them feeling trapped and marginalized.

Perpetrators may also use threats or intimidation to exert control over their victims. Acts of vandalism, such as property damage, are another form of intimidation. In some cases, minor physical attacks escalate into more serious violence that results in severe injuries (Duron et al., 2021). In the UK, domestic violence and abuse represent a broad spectrum of harmful behaviours, from overt physical acts to subtle psychological manipulation (Donovan & Barnes, 2020; Harman et al., 2018). These acts often occur behind closed doors, affecting not only partners but also children, parents, and other relatives. The consequences include restricted freedom, emotional devastation, and the destruction of the victim's sense of security.

Generalised abuse—whether emotional, verbal, or psychological—plays a critical role in the dynamics of domestic violence. It often erodes victims' self-confidence and leaves lasting emotional scars (Raghavan et al., 2019). The constant threat of death exacerbates victims' fear, forcing them to live in a state of perpetual uncertainty about their safety.

Acts of control, such as theft and intimidation, highlight the manipulative nature of domestic violence, where perpetrators seek to dominate every aspect of the victim's life. Physical violence, which can range from minor assaults to severe abuse, frequently leads to injuries and, in extreme cases, becomes life-threatening (Us, 2021). Additionally, destructive behaviours like arson and other criminal acts that endanger lives represent some of the most severe forms of domestic violence.

Beyond physical crimes, domestic violence includes offences such as robbery and other violations that impact not only individuals but also the broader community, adding to the complexity of this social issue. It is important to note that victims are not limited to heterosexual relationships; same-sex couples also experience domestic violence. However, the patterns and statistics in these cases may differ and are often less thoroughly documented.

One of the biggest challenges in addressing domestic violence is the response to such crimes. Cases where the perpetrator is a woman and the victim is a man, or those involving same-sex relationships, often do not receive a response that reflects the severity of the offence. In some instances, police employ restorative approaches, such as officer-led mediation or informal resolution methods, which may fail to address the specific complexities of domestic violence. Furthermore, the use of out-of-court settlements by police in many domestic violence cases suggests an effort to find community-based solutions as alternatives to traditional court processes.

While this approach can be effective in certain situations, there are concerns that it may underestimate the serious and long-term impacts on victims. In the UK, domestic violence and abuse is a complex issue that demands a thoughtful, multi-faceted response. This response should include legal support, rehabilitation, victim protection, efforts to change perpetrator behaviour, and increased social awareness of the devastating consequences of domestic violence.

3.3. Law Enforcement Barriers to the Use of Out-of-Court Resolutions in Domestic Violence and Abuse Cases in the UK

In addressing domestic violence in the UK, it is crucial to highlight its various forms—physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal—offering insights into the complexity and profound impact of this issue on individuals and society. Scholars such as Edwards, Dobash and Dobash, and Hester have made significant contributions to understanding and responding to domestic violence, emphasising the importance of gender-sensitive approaches and restorative justice.

Restorative justice and community resolution represent promising alternatives for handling domestic violence cases, focusing on healing and reconciliation. However, applying these approaches in cases of intimate partner violence remains controversial, with significant challenges and debates

regarding their suitability. Figures such as Theresa May, along with organizations like the IPCC and ACPO, have raised concerns about the risks of restorative approaches in such sensitive and potentially harmful situations.

Research conducted under the Freedom of Information Act reveals significant variations in how UK police forces implement restorative justice and community settlement. This inconsistency underscores the need for systematic data collection and critical evaluation to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of these approaches in addressing domestic violence. By presenting field data, theoretical perspectives, and current police practices, this article encourages readers to reflect on the challenges of addressing domestic violence and the potential of restorative justice and community resolution. While these approaches offer valuable insights into recovery and prevention, substantial work is needed to ensure their safe and effective implementation while prioritizing the needs and safety of victims.

Domestic violence is a complex and multifaceted social issue rooted in unequal power dynamics within intimate relationships. Beyond visible acts of physical violence, it encompasses psychological, emotional, and economic forms of harm that are often hidden but equally damaging. These covert forms include financial control leading to economic dependency, social isolation that severs victims from support networks, and threats or intimidation that undermine personal freedom and security. Moreover, acts of destruction and physical assault inflict both physical and psychological harm on victims, leaving lasting scars.

Recent research in this area highlights the significant contributions of various figures and theories. Academic work by Edwards, Dobash and Dobash, and Hester has expanded our understanding of domestic violence, emphasizing the value of feminist criminological perspectives in exposing the gender inequalities underlying many cases.

Restorative justice and community resolution approaches have emerged as key focal points, offering conflict resolution alternatives that prioritize healing over punishment. For instance, restorative justice emphasizes restoring relationships and addressing losses by involving all parties affected by the crime in the resolution process. This represents a shift from traditional punitive criminal justice models and demonstrates the potential to provide more holistic and meaningful solutions for domestic violence victims. However, its application in cases of domestic violence often sparks debate, particularly concerning victim safety and well-being.

Community resolution approaches, by contrast, stress the importance of community-based solutions for addressing conflict and crime. These methods aim to reintegrate perpetrators into society while addressing victims' needs. Nevertheless, such approaches face significant challenges in domestic violence cases, where power imbalances and control dynamics can hinder fair and effective outcomes.

Research-based on Freedom of Information Requests has shed light on the extent to which UK police forces employ restorative justice and community resolution practices in domestic violence cases. This research also highlights major challenges in data recording and analysis, including inconsistencies in defining and implementing these practices across policing jurisdictions. In the context of policy and practice, the use of restorative justice in intimate partner violence cases has faced criticism from various individuals and organisations, including Theresa May. Concerns centre on the risks victims face, particularly in scenarios where intimate partner violence and coercive control exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

This ongoing debate underscores the complexity of addressing domestic violence, which demands a sensitive and adaptable approach that prioritizes victims' specific needs and safety. While restorative justice and community resolution approaches hold promise for fostering humane and restorative outcomes, their implementation in domestic violence cases requires careful evaluation, supported by rigorous research and evidence-based practices.

In dealing with the phenomenon of domestic violence in the UK, there is a surprising combination of field data and theory that attempts to explain and overcome the problem. Field data illustrates a spectrum of harmful behaviour in domestic contexts, ranging from physical abuse to psychological manipulation, limiting freedom and destroying victims' sense of security. Emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse, as well as death threats and other acts of control, reflect complex dynamics that often erode victims' self-confidence.

Recent research in this area underscores the contributions of figures such as Edwards, Dobash and Dobash, and Hester, who have provided significant insights into the dynamics of domestic violence. Theories like criminological feminism and restorative justice are gaining prominence, offering valuable frameworks for understanding and addressing domestic violence more effectively.

However, the application of concepts such as restorative justice and community resolution to cases of domestic violence remains contentious. Notable figures such as Theresa May and organizations like the IPCC and ACPO have expressed reservations about using this approach in the context of intimate partner violence, emphasizing the complexities and power dynamics that cannot be fully addressed through such methods. Public policy trends generally avoid using restorative justice and community resolution in these cases, reflecting a recognition of the need to protect victims and address unequal power dynamics.

An investigation into the use of out-of-court decisions by police in domestic violence cases in the UK reveals a complex landscape, marked by varying approaches and challenges in data recording and analysis. Research conducted under the Freedom of Information Act has exposed inconsistencies in the application of restorative justice and community resolution, revealing significant challenges in current

practices.

This research, which integrates field data with police theory and practice, provides valuable insights into the understanding and management of domestic violence. Despite the considerable challenges, it emphasizes the importance of a holistic and recovery-oriented approach to this complex issue and highlights the need to develop more inclusive and effective strategies to address domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a complex and demanding issue, presenting a major challenge for law enforcement in the UK. Field data highlights various difficulties in dealing with these cases, including appropriate responses to crimes, the use of restorative approaches, and recognition of the complexity of gender and power issues.

To understand the dynamics of domestic violence, emerging theories and concepts provide important guidance for researchers and practitioners. Figures such as Edwards, Dobash, Hester, and Westmarland have provided important insights into understanding the roots of the problems and challenges faced in handling domestic violence cases.

Field data shows that the police often use restorative approaches, such as mediation and community resolution, in handling cases of domestic violence. However, there are concerns that this approach may not fully take into account the seriousness and long-term impact of the violence. Guidance from various bodies, such as the IPCC, ACPO, HMIC and the College of Policing, shows disapproval of the use of restorative approaches in the context of domestic violence.

In addition, there is a recognition of the complexity of gender and power issues in cases of domestic violence. A feminist criminological approach highlights the importance of understanding these dynamics, including the awareness that domestic violence does not only occur in heterosexual couples. Another challenge is the difficulty in providing appropriate responses to crime, especially when cases involve perpetrators and victims who do not fit conventional stereotypes. The complexity of dealing with domestic violence also includes the variety of victims and perpetrators, as well as the types of crimes involved.

In the face of these challenges, the debate regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of restorative approaches and community resolution is heating up. Theresa May, along with various agencies and organisations, has raised concerns about the use of this approach in cases of domestic violence. This signals recognition of the unique complexity and sensitivity of this type of violence, which requires a more careful approach and may differ from typical criminal cases.

In this way, field data and theoretical concepts complement each other in providing a more comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by law enforcement regarding domestic violence in the UK. Although there have been efforts to use alternative approaches, such as restorative justice and

community resolution, recognition of the complexities and challenges associated with these approaches suggests that further steps and adjustments in law enforcement policies and practices may be necessary to address these issues more effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

Domestic violence and abuse in the UK are a complex issue encompassing various forms of harmful behaviour, including physical violence, psychological abuse, sexual violence, and financial control. Physical violence and emotional abuse are often intertwined, eroding victims' self-confidence and leaving deep emotional scars. While controlling financial access and social isolation may be less visible, they are equally destructive forms of violence. Perpetrators use threats, intimidation, and property destruction as tools to control their victims. Domestic violence not only restricts the victim's freedom but also destroys their sense of security.

Cases involving female perpetrators or those in same-sex relationships do not always receive a response that reflects the severity of the crime, underscoring the need for more thoughtful and diverse approaches to domestic violence. Addressing domestic violence effectively requires strong legal support, rehabilitation for offenders, and comprehensive protection and recovery services for victims. Alternative approaches, such as restorative justice, should be carefully considered to ensure they do not downplay the seriousness of the crime or its impact on the victim.

Therefore, tackling domestic violence in the UK requires a multifaceted solution, including education, social support, and robust legal intervention. Given the complexity and sensitivity of domestic violence cases, adjustments to law enforcement policies and practices may be needed to ensure adequate protection for victims. The ongoing debate regarding the safety and appropriateness of restorative approaches and community resolutions highlights the need for a careful, evidence-based approach. Theresa May and various agencies have emphasised the importance of victim protection in the context of domestic violence. In conclusion, addressing these complex challenges requires a collaborative effort that integrates field data, theoretical insights, and law enforcement practices to create effective and sustainable solutions.

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