

# PhD Opportunity

"Please take us seriously!": examining the help and support needs of male victims of domestic abuse

## Supervisory team

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## Director of Studies:

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**Research Group:** [Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing Research Group](#)

## The PhD Opportunity

This study stems from a previous evaluation in 2022 of a domestic violence helpline facilitated by West Mercia Women's Aid, which raised further research questions in understanding what services work more effectively for male victims while also highlighting the barriers to accessing support.

The 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (ONS, 2020) reported that 526,000 men between the ages of 16 to 74 have been victims of stalking in the year ending March 2020, in comparison to 977,000 women. Further, the CSEW (ONS, 2020) describes how gay and bisexual men were twice as likely to experience domestic abuse in comparison to heterosexual men.

There is currently a gap in the research on large scale quantitative studies in the UK (and internationally) on the demographics, needs and service access and outcomes of male victims of DVA, the same gap relates to qualitative research. Men from marginalised groups are underrepresented within the literature, and themes such as the impact of domestic abuse (Bates, 2019; Hines & Douglas, 2010); barriers to accessing help (Hine et al. 2021; HM Government, 2022); the impact on men as fathers (Hogan, 2016) and social perceptions of men (Bates & Douglas, 2020; Connell, 2005; McCarrick, 2016) are recognised as concerns which need further focus in research.

## References

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Hines, D.A. & Douglas, E.M. (2010) A closer look at men who sustain intimate terrorism by women. *Partner Abuse*, 1, 286-313.

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McCarrick, J., Davis-McCabe, C. & Hirst-Winthrop, S. (2016) Men's experiences of the criminal justice system following female perpetrated intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 11, 203-213

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ONS (2020) *Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020*. Available at:

[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2020](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2020)

## Application Process

To begin the application process please go to

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/psychology-mphilphd> and click on 'How to Apply' in the top menu. This PhD could be carried out on a part time or full time basis so please select the relevant application link. On the application form, please make it clear that you are applying for one of our advertised projects so we can direct it straight to the relevant people.

## The Interview

All successful applicants will be offered an interview with the proposed Supervisory Team. You will be contacted by a member of the Research School Team to find a suitable date. Interviews can be conducted in person or over Microsoft Teams.

## Funding your PhD

For information about Doctoral Loans please visit: <https://www.worc.ac.uk/study/fees-and-finance/doctoral-loans.aspx>

During your PhD you can access the Research Student Support Scheme to support dissemination costs associated with your research, up to £500 a year.

## Research at the University of Worcester

Research is central to the University's mission to make a difference in everything that we do. We are committed to delivering excellent research which extends the boundaries of human knowledge but which also improves people's lives by enabling better health outcomes, improving food security, developing environmentally sustainable solutions for crop production and socially sustainable solutions to our ageing population, enhancing public knowledge and understanding of the past and present.

The University hence focuses its research around five high-level challenges facing society, locally, nationally and globally:

- [Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Sustainable Futures](#)
- [Digital Innovation](#)
- [Culture, Identity and Social Exclusion](#)
- [Professional Education](#)

The success of our research is reflected in our continuous improvement in external research assessment processes. In the most recent Research Excellence Framework, REF 2021, the University saw a near 50% increase in the scale of its research and 12% increase in quality, building on its performance in REF 2014 when it was the UK's most improved university in terms of Research Power, a combination of scale and quality.

## Research Degrees at Worcester

Our research students are central to our overall mission for research. They are working at the cutting edge of their disciplines and driving forward the quality of our research whilst enriching our research culture. We are looking to increase our research student numbers as a strategic imperative.

Our commitment to our students is reflected in the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2023 in which we ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> for overall research student satisfaction nationally. Key to our success in this area is the Research School, a focal point for all our research students.

It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team

- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars

## Research Group

### Interpersonal Relationships & Wellbeing Research Group

The Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing Research Group draws together internationally renowned academics from across Psychology, Business and Criminology, with partners in Industry, third sector organisations and local government. Research activity is organised around four themes: Wellbeing for Life; Customer Interactions; People and Work; and Trauma and Violence Prevention.

We study interpersonal relationships, wellbeing and their inter-connectivity from an inter-disciplinary perspective, to generate applied, solution-focussed research. Our research explores how individual, social and environmental factors influence relationships and wellbeing within different contexts, such as in workplaces, schools and online spaces. We are interested in understanding how interpersonal relationships contribute to mental health (construed as both trauma/mental ill-health, and as wellbeing) and how they shape individual and team behaviour in consumer and organizational settings. In doing so, we explore both the 'dark' and 'light' side of relationships and human behaviour more broadly.

### Widening Participation:

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and/or a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.

**For further information** or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Dr Claire McLoone-Richards (Director of Studies) via email at [c.richards@worc.ac.uk](mailto:c.richards@worc.ac.uk)