



**Evaluation and Cost Breakdown of  
Managing Violence and Aggression Training Courses  
Between 8 December 2009 – 13 May 2010**

This report was produced by the Praxis Care Research Department.

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Authors: Jo Wilson, Research Officer and Sonia Mawhinney, Senior Research Officer

Any queries should be addressed to either author at:

Praxis Care Research Department  
25-31 Lisburn Road  
Belfast  
BT9 7AA

Phone: 028 9023 4555

Fax: 028 9024 5535

Email: [Joannewilson@praxiscare.org.uk](mailto:Joannewilson@praxiscare.org.uk);  
[Soniamawhinney@praxiscare.org.uk](mailto:Soniamawhinney@praxiscare.org.uk)

## Key Findings

1. Overall, staff were very happy with the MVA training that they received and felt that the training courses met the aims and objectives well.
2. A concern was expressed by staff that MVA training was not closely enough linked with 'Calming and Defusing' training and that staff had not used MVA training in the workplace. However calming and defusing training is a part of MVA training and is often used in the workplace.

### Recommendation:

- Staff Development department must place a greater emphasis on the fact that calming and defusing is an MVA skill.
- Staff Development department must make it clear to trainees that physical restraint is a part of MVA skills that is to be used as a last resort only; i.e. physical restraint is not synonymous with MVA.

3. Staff indicated that they would like more of an opportunity to practice MVA skills in the workplace.

### Recommendation:

- Monthly staff meetings to be used as a venue to practice and refresh MVA training techniques
- Two day update MVA training to be made as scheme specific as possible.

4. The total expenditure of MVA training in both the North and South of Ireland during the five month period of the evaluation ranged between **£43,358.16 – £60,558.39** (the lower figure does not include staff cover at scheme level)

### Recommendation:

- Each component part of MVA training sessions (travel costs, hiring of venue, food costs, staff cover etc) should be made as cost effective as possible.

## Response from Senior Management Team

The report was agreed upon by SMT and permission was given to disseminate. SMT will follow up on the issues raised in the report with the relevant departments.

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# Evaluation and Cost Breakdown of Managing Violence and Aggression Training Courses Between 8 December 2009 – 13 May 2010



## Main Summary

This report is an evaluation of the Managing Violence and Aggression (MVA) training for staff provided by the Staff Development Department, Praxis Care. It utilises data collected via evaluation forms immediately after training (baseline) and three months after training (+3 mth). The +3 mth form was utilised to allow staff to reflect on how useful the training they undertook is in their job role.

### *Demographics:*

A total of 182 staff members were allocated a place on a MVA training session between 8 December 2009 and 6 May 2010. Whilst most staff members who booked a place at MVA training did attend the training course (N=159; 87%) there were a number (N=13; 7%) who 'did not attend' on the day(s) of training without giving any prior notice or explanation to the Staff Development department. Additionally, there were some staff members (N=3; 2%) who did not attend or complete the full training course due to health reasons and a further number of staff were either ill or cancelled their place prior to the commencement of training (N=4; 4%). Over one third of staff had to travel over 80 miles return per day of training to the training venue.

Over the five month evaluation period (8 December 2009 – 13 May 2010) there were eight two day MVA update courses and six five day MVA training courses held in one of four external training locations. Therefore two thirds of training courses provided were two day MVA update training. A total of 108 staff members took part in the two day MVA training (one of whom was unsuccessful) and 51 took part in a five day MVA training session (three of whom were unsuccessful).

The pass rate for the MVA training course was very high (N= 155; 97%) and all successful staff completed a baseline evaluation form immediately after training. Unfortunately this was not mirrored in the numbers who completed a +3 mth evaluation form, used to gain retrospective views of the course and its usefulness, since only 67% returned a form. Over one fifth of staff did not return a +3 mth evaluation form (this figure does not include those who have since left employment, were on long term sick leave or have not worked since undertaking training). This figure is disappointing since all staff and their managers were informed via numerous reminders that completion of the +3 mth form was mandatory. In the main the group responsible for not returning their +3 mth evaluation form was support workers (N=47).



### *Financial Cost of MVA Training:*

Two day MVA training courses undertaken over the five month period of the evaluation utilised either two or three trainers per day, whereas five day MVA training courses used one to three trainers per day. The total cost of Staff Development department staff (excluding travel time but including administration time) was between £369.90 - £541.26 for the two day and £455.58 - £1312.38 for the five day MVA training courses.

In addition to the Staff Development department's time the time of those who attended the courses must be accounted for. The cost of NI staff's attendance at MVA training ranged from £87.96 – £175.32 for two day training and £219.90 - £438.30 for five day training, depending on the job role of staff (ranging from support worker to manager). The cost of ROI staff's attendance at two day MVA training ranged from £157.43 - £184.71, depending on job role.

The hours staff spend training are counted as part of their contracted hours. Therefore, when staff are not available to work in the scheme the scheme has a short fall which they must cover by either using existing staff or utilising relief or agency staff. The average cost of employing a relief or agency support worker to cover a staff member in a NI scheme was £110.88 for two days and £277.20 for five days.

Since there are currently no facilities within Praxis Care to conduct the MVA training external training locations are utilised for each course. The cost of hiring these external locations ranged from £68.00 to £110.00 per day. In total £6043.90 was spent on hiring external training locations (and providing lunch) for staff to attend MVA training from 8 December 2009 to 13 May 2010; a period of five months.

Two external training locations were utilised the most often during the five month period: Brownlow Leisure Centre and Queen's University Physical Education Centre (PEC). The average cost of this was between from £304.80 - £348.80 for two day and £668.00 - £872.00 for five days.

In order to reach the training location staff frequently use their own car and all staff are encouraged to car share where possible. The average mileage for Brownlow was £348.60 for two day and £938.00 for five day MVA training, respectively whilst mileage for Queen's PEC was £231.84 for two day and £557.12 for five day MVA training. These figures were obtained by considering the *minimum* number of cars necessary to transport staff members from each scheme; it also does not consider that staff are allowed an extra allowance if more than one person travels in one car, nor does it include those who travelled from ROI. Therefore it is undoubtedly somewhat of an under estimation.

When the cost of hiring the external location and supplying lunch for staff attending training are considered Queen's PEC was found to be the most cost effective.

When all aspects described above are taken into consideration the average cost of training a support worker at Queen's PEC during the five month period evaluated was £257.85 for a two day and £626.57 for a five day MVA training session.

The total expenditure of MVA training courses in NI over the five month period of the evaluation was in the region of **£38,525.66 - £53,522.84\***. The total expenditure of MVA training courses in Republic of Ireland was in the region of **£4,832.50 - £7,035.55\***. This gives a total expenditure organisation wide of **£43,358.16 – £60,558.39\***.

\* the lower figure does not include staff cover at scheme level.



#### *How Retrospection Can Influence Ratings:*

Staff members were asked to reflect on the MVA training that they received three months after completion. As will be discussed in the following sections of this main summary the overall ratings of staff have become less focused on the 'strongly agree' or 'very good' and instead have focused on 'agree' or 'good'.

This may be because activities that have occurred between the completion of the two evaluation forms may have influenced staff members understanding of what is being asked in the evaluation form. For example, a lack of opportunity to practice the skills initially learnt may mean that staff don't remember how relevant those skills are, and so view the teaching of those skills a little less positively than before.



*General Thoughts on MVA Training:*

With retrospection staff rated the information provided at the time of the course less favourably than at baseline. However, this 'drop' in ratings was from 'very good' to 'good'; staff still rated the information provided positively.

Additionally staff at baseline were asked to make any other comments about the MVA training session; comments received were mainly positive. For example,

'it was a good refresher course; [I am] feeling much more confident with using these techniques'; and 'Excellent. Very professional and enforced importance of restraint needing to be proportionate and necessary';

The only negative comments given about the MVA training courses were that there was a lack of ventilation in some venues and staff would have liked a longer training session; this was true for those who attended two or five day MVA training.



*Course Aims:*

The MVA training course had two aims; that through training staff:

- would have gained the knowledge and skills to handle physical aggression in the workplace; and
- can practice ethically sound, safe techniques for restraining service users when other means of managing aggression have failed.

Staff at both baseline and +3 mth mainly agreed that the aims of the course had been met. However, again the ratings at baseline were a little more favourable.



*Course Objectives:*

The MVA training course had six objectives; that through training staff would:

- understand the law in relation to restraint;
- have skills in safe restraint;
- understand Agency policies and procedures with respect to Physical Intervention;
- understand how challenging behaviour can develop through poor communication;
- understand the need for good communication skills in managing challenging behaviour; and
- have skills in defusing and reducing the risk of challenging behaviour;

Again staff were more favourable in their ratings immediately after MVA training, i.e. at baseline. However, the majority of staff trained agreed that they had met the objectives of the MVA training course.



### *Other Training Needs:*

After a period of retrospection (+3 mth) more staff indicated that they had further training needs following the MVA training. For example, some staff would like to have further training on how to handle 'a situation where there is not another member of staff at hand'; some referred to this as 'one person MVA'. Others indicated that they would like to have a 'debriefing' facility after the use of MVA. Further suggestions were calls for behaviour management training and also first aid training.

It is worth note that training identified as needed after MVA training is available and dates of training sessions can be found in the training calendar. Also, staff seemed to believe that calming and defusing was something completely separate to MVA training and considered the latter to entail only restraint, an inaccurate assumption.

Whilst staff reported that the courses could not have been covered any better, staff at +3 mth expressed a concern over the amount of practice afforded them to retain their knowledge and skills in MVA since 'it's completely different in real life situation'. Practice was also deemed most important to allow confidence in the use of MVA skills and knowledge. There were reports that MVA had not been used in the three month period between training and completing a +3 mth evaluation form. For example, 'in my scheme restraints are not used'.



### *The Use of MVA:*

As touched upon in the previous section there were reports that staff had not used MVA skills since undertaking the MVA training course. A total of one third of staff members had not used training and the reasons given for this was that there had been 'no opportunity/need' to use MVA skills within their job role. However, one staff member reported not using MVA skills due to a lack of confidence and another stated that he/she could not remember their training. Additionally, staff may have used calming and defusing but did not consider it an MVA skill in answering this question.



## Recommendations

### *Maximising Attendance:*

Since MVA training is costly per person trained it would be worthwhile to put extra measures in place to increase full attendance:

1. Informing staff of how much an average MVA course costs the organisation per person may:
  - act as a deterrent to those staff who 'do not attend' on the day of training;
  - prompt managers to ensure staff attend their course, or give adequate notice of non-attendance.
2. Schemes to display a list of staff enrolled on training courses for the current month on the staff notice board. This may:
  - reduce the number of those who 'do not attend' on the day of training; and
  - if staff are no longer able to attend this might act as a reminder that the staff training department must be informed in time to allow other staff members to take their place.
3. Where possible MVA training sessions should include 18 participants (based on the recommended 6 participants per trainer). This will:
  - reduce the number of training sessions necessary;
  - reduce the costs associated with MVA training.
4. All staff should ensure that they are registered on a two day MVA update course at the appropriate time. If not carried out then staff have to complete five day training instead of two day – which has significant cost implications. This will:
  - ensure all MVA training is up to date;
  - maximise the availability of course places on five day training for new staff undertaking MVA training for the first time.



### *Maximising Completion of Second Evaluation Form:*

In order to effectively evaluate any training that is undertaken a second evaluation form that collects retrospective views is necessary. Despite the completion of this form being made a mandatory obligation in the current evaluation and repeated measures taken to contact both managers and staff not all second evaluation forms were completed. Therefore additional measures need to be put in place to reduce the time devoted to ensuring their completion at the appropriate time.

1. Forms may need to be completed at staff supervision:
  - this would ensure they are completed in an appropriate time frame and reduce the amount of time devoted to reminders.
2. Availability of forms may need to be reviewed:
  - if schemes have their own hardcopy of the form then staff can easily access it and there are no issues over whether or not the form has been received;
  - if forms are available for completion online this might maximise their return.



### *Selecting External Training Locations:*

The selection of an external training location is based on a number of factors. For example, the proximity to schemes where staff are based; the cost of room hire and food; and size and suitability of the room. Staff indicated that they would like one factor to be improved upon:

1. Ventilation to be considered an important point in room selection.
  2. Training to be arranged at a location that suits the majority of people who are registered i.e. at a convenient location that does not involve extensive travel.
- the Staff Development department may be able to effectively carry out this recommendation by forming links with the personnel department whereby personnel forwards a list of new recruits in schemes which use MVA. This would then allow for the maximum time available for arrangements to be made and the most logical steps to be taken location wise.



### *Other Training Needs:*

Some other training needs that staff raised informed the following recommendations:

1. It may prove useful to emphasize the fact that calming and defusing is part of MVA and to make the course 'Working with Challenging Behaviour' a part of induction training. Additionally working with challenging behaviour training should be undertaken before MVA training since the former does not teach the use of restraint. This should address the following issues:
  - the perception of staff that calming and defusing is not part of MVA training and practice;
  - the idea that MVA is mainly about restraining service users;
  - the requests of staff to have training in how to recognise and manage behaviour prior to implementing MVA training.
2. Provision of debriefing training to all managers and team leaders in all schemes where MVA training is mandatory. This is already available but should now be advertised more effectively to both managers and team leaders:
  - this would ensure that staff have the opportunity to discuss the MVA skills they employed and how confident/comfortable they were with using them;
  - also this would afford an opportunity for line managers to ensure that MVA skills are being applied appropriately and under the correct conditions.
3. All staff should be made aware of the training calendar and each course that is available for them to attend. Additionally, the links to MVA training may need to be made more explicit:
  - this would ensure that staff know which courses are linked to MVA;
  - this would decrease any feelings that necessary training is not provided beyond MVA.



*Refresh Skills and Gain Confidence:*

Regular opportunities to refresh skills and increase confidence may prove beneficial. This might be carried out via the following methods:

1. Monthly staff meetings as a venue to practice and refresh MVA training techniques:
  - ⦿ time devoted to practicing one or two techniques through role play or demonstration at monthly staff meetings would ensure that staff remember techniques and the scheme is consistent in knowing when to apply them.
  - ⦿ this practice of MVA techniques can be tailored to meet individual service users' needs within the particular scheme.
2. An on-demand availability of memory aids may prove beneficial:
  - ⦿ this might take the form of the provision of a MVA training DVD or other media (if available) to each scheme that staff can borrow (via signing out).
3. MVA two day update training should be made as scheme specific as possible to ensure maximum applicability is achieved.
  - ⦿ staff should be asked to indicate ahead of training which aspects are most useful for them or which behavioural issues occur most frequently at scheme level.