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*This Prize is dedicated to the late Professor Brian Williams, co-editor of the British Journal of Community Justice from 2002-2007. Brian introduced a commitment in the Journal to publishing the papers of new academic writers and in particular students studying in the broad area of community and criminal justice. The Journal proudly announced the launch of the Brian Williams Memorial Prize in 2009. Each year the Prize is awarded to a previously unpublished undergraduate or postgraduate student studying in an academic area relevant to the British Journal of Community Justice.*

## AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACTS THAT EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAN HAVE ON A CHILD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION: VIEW OF EDUCATIONAL STAFF

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### **Abstract**

The issue of domestic violence is becoming increasingly prevalent in contemporary society and is no longer a hidden phenomenon kept behind closed doors and out of the public eye (Harne & Radford, 2008). Children living in violent homes are beginning to be seen as recognised 'victims' and there has been an increase in research literature regarding how the lives of these children are affected as a consequence of experiencing domestic violence (Cunningham & Baker, 2004). This article aims to investigate the types of behaviours primary school educational staff observed in children (4-11 years) known or suspected to experience domestic violence at home. The current research adopted a survey-based method in the form of a self-completion, postal questionnaire and utilised a non-probability convenience sample of 25 educational staff from three different schools. Children experiencing domestic violence were often found to be irritable, frustrated and angry, displaying both internal and external aggression - although inward acts of aggression were observed to be significantly more prevalent. The children were often recognised 'underachievers' and rarely reached their full academic potential. Four key themes emerged from the qualitative section of the questionnaires; children living in violent homes often have a poor self-image, the importance of early identification and improved staff training, the need for opportunities for children to disclose sensitive information to staff and the importance of information sharing. The findings from this study provide a basis for further, more extensive research into which behaviours may be evident in children experiencing domestic violence and therefore help educational staff identify these children earlier and provide their families with support and guidance.

### **Keywords**

Domestic violence; abuse; education; Affected Children.