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Research Grants Peer Review

ESRC Reference: ES/T008849/1

Document Status: With Council

SDAI open call

Applicant Details

Applicant	Dr Timothy L Mullett	Organisation	University of Warwick
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Title of Research Project

The behavioural economics of domestic abuse

Review Information

Response Due Date	27/08/2019	Reviewer Reference:	185645305
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Research Council Contact Details

ESRC Administration Contact:	Email:	Telephone:
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Application Assessment

Please select a grade to indicate your assessment according to the following criteria. Detailed comments in support of these grades should be provided in the free text overall assessment section. Refer to Help for further guidance.

Likely importance of research to potential users

Outstanding	Excellent	✓ Good	Satisfactory	Fair / Some Weaknesses	Poor	Unable to Assess
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Timeliness of the outcomes for potential users

Outstanding	Excellent	✓ Good	Satisfactory	Fair / Some Weaknesses	Poor	Unable to Assess
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Effectiveness of plans for involving potential users and disseminating results to them

Outstanding	Excellent	✓ Good	Satisfactory	Fair / Some Weaknesses	Poor	Unable to Assess
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Scientific Merit

If you wish to assess the scientific merit of the proposal please select a grade. Refer to the Help for further guidance.

Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Fair / Some Weaknesses	Poor	✓ Unable to Assess
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Overall Assessment

Feedback for Applicant

Please provide detailed comments in support of the grades you have given and on any other aspects of the proposal that you consider relevant. These comments will be passed on, unattributed, to the applicant(s) and also with notification of the outcome of the application, to other external reviewers if applicable. For further guidance please select Help.

This comes at an interesting time with the future of the new domestic abuse bill currently uncertain. It will be important to be able to clearly articulate the real prevalence of domestic abuse.

I am sure the researchers are well aware of the problems in fully relying on the CSEW to provide a true picture of domestic abuse, especially with regards to their being no information about context and impact. Figures also vary widely between the self-completion and the face to face interviews that go to making up the overall figures. The CSEW does not adequately capture coercive control, which is linked more closely to potential homicide than physical violence. I would encourage the researchers to ensure they are able to fully capture this - given that police forces are still struggling to identify this, despite recent law changes and training, this could be a helpful exercise to undertake with WMP. It should also be noted that WMP are currently going through a process of ending their previous strategic alliance with Warwickshire police and this may have an impact on statistics going forward.

I was concerned to see the language of children 'witnessing' abuse in the proposal. It is vital that children are seen as direct victims, and not passive witnesses and would expect to see this amended if the project receives funding. I also hope that the impacts of DA on children and young people will be fully included, as cuts to services for these age groups are having a huge impact on safety and wellbeing. Making links to children's experience of DA and future criminal behaviour is a very worrying inclusion. The majority of children do not go on to engage in criminal behaviour and this could add fuel to the fire with regards to labeling children and not addressing their underlying trauma symptoms. It would be crucial to include a counter balance showing what helps to create positive protective factors and address the need for trauma informed approaches and early intervention.

With that in mind, i was also concerned to see discussion around the links between issues such as gambling, sporting events, alcohol and benefits changes being linked to a possible increase in DA. This kind of potential stereotyping can be incredibly problematic and should be done sensitively, especially with regards to substance use by the victims (which we would see usually as a coping strategy).

I recommend that the researchers include experts by experience (survivors of abuse) into the research. When presenting findings to DA charities, it is important to also present them to the people who have actually experienced it in order to ensure the findings are reflective of their experiences. This must include an understanding that DA is a gendered issue.

So, overall this is an interesting bid but I do have serious concerns about some of the language and assumptions made in the bid.

Overall Grade

Please indicate your overall assessment of the proposal

High	✓ Worthy	Reject
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