



# PUMP COURT CHAMBERS

## Alternatives to respect accredited dapps

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*Southampton Children Law Seminar - 23 September 2026*

- I. Introduction/background
- II. Common issues
- III. Relevant authorities
- IV. Alternatives to Respect accredited DAPPs
- V. Practical tips
- VI. Conclusions
- VII. Q&A (time permitting)



# I. Introduction

- PD12J, paragraph 37(e): *“the capacity of the parents to appreciate the effect of past domestic abuse and the potential for future domestic abuse.”* The importance of insight is echoed in Cafcass’ policy documents.
- Paragraph 34: *“...the court may make an Activity Direction under section 11A and 11B Children Act 1989. Any intervention directed pursuant to this provision should be one commissioned and approved by Cafcass.”*
- Cafcass ceased commissioning or offering DAPPs in July 2022.
- Cafcass adopted a policy of recommending Respect accredited courses to fill the lacuna.
- There has since emerged a “DAPP gap” in many cases involving serious domestic abuse.



## II. Common Issues

- **12-month delay to enrol onto an accredited DAPP**
- Eligibility
- Geographical constraints
- Affordability
- Practicality



# III. Relevant Authorities

## ***M -v- F [2024] EWFC 234 (B)***

- Case involving serious findings against F and a wholesale lack of acceptance/insight.
- The court opened the door to F completing a non-accredited DAPP (para 30):

*“If he is unable to source a RESPECT accredited DAPP but completes a course that he believes is equivalent, he will need to produce independent evidence from the course provider to confirm that the elements of the course are equivalent to the RESPECT accredited course modules and that the course was of a minimum length of 26 weeks or six months.”*

- F would need to provide *“...independent documentary evidence to show that he has completed a course that is of an equivalent length and content, and he must also submit written reports from the mid-way and end points of the course.”*  
(Para 38)



### III. Relevant Authorities (cont.)

#### ***H -v- R* [2026] EWFC 235 (B)**

- F worked with a social worker trained but not accredited by Respect.
- F completed modules equivalent to the Respect programme for 12 months during the course of proceedings.
- The court at final hearing ordered a stepped progression of contact following F's completion of the non-accredited course and an increase in his insight/empathy.
- A lack of accreditation is not critical – the effectiveness of the course is key.
- It is a matter for the court's discretion as to the weight to attach to the programme.



## IV. Alternatives to Respect Accredited DAPPs

The Respect Standard, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2022 ([https://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/respect/file\\_asset/file/1458/Respect Standard 4th edition 2022.pdf](https://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/respect/file_asset/file/1458/Respect_Standard_4th_edition_2022.pdf))

### Key points to note:

- *“Interventions should hold perpetrators to account, whilst treating them with respect, and offering opportunities to choose to change.”*
- *“The right intervention should be offered to the right people at the right time.”*
- 12-month moratorium *not* considered necessary by the courts.
- *H -v- R* also undermines the need for internal staff interviews/review.



## IV. Alternatives to Respect Accredited DAPPs (cont.)

- The A Project – currently warning on their website that they cannot accept referrals within 12 months of proceedings ending.
- ISW – “*privately instructed practitioner*” (*H -v- R*, para 25). The costs incurred will be a factor to consider.
- Facing Up To Conflict – possibly more relevant to less serious cases.
- Often in conjunction with mental health and/or substance rehabilitation.



## V. Practical Tips

- Identify alternatives at an early stage once findings/admissions made.
- Seek an indication from the court as to an alternative to a Respect accredited DAPP.
- Try to agree a viable alternative with the other side, even if acting for the victim – it may be better than the outcome at final hearing.
- Explore with Cafcass their views on DAPP alternatives.
- Stay on top of the emerging case law: neither *M -v- F* or *H -v- R* have been given substantial judicial consideration; both were dealt with in the family court.



## VI. Conclusions

- There is now clear precedence of the court accepting successful completion of a non-accredited DAPP as justifying a stepped progression of contact.
- The accreditation is not key – the court can consider the effectiveness of the course.
- A non-accredited DAPP may nevertheless involve a 12-month wait to enrol, or incur significant costs.
- Cases are fact-sensitive and not all alternatives may be acceptable to the court.
- This is an emerging area of law and may be subject to change.





Alex McHugh  
Call: 2019

Alex has a well-established private children practice and has significant experience at every stage of proceedings.

Alex's cases involve complex issues such as allegations of serious domestic abuse and child sexual abuse, parental alienation, Part 25 applications for global psychological assessments, severe mental health issues, drug abuse, internal relocation and international relocation to Hague and non-Hague jurisdictions, religious identity, education, healthcare, s.91(14) orders, no contact orders, and exceptional circumstances.

*"Exceptionally well prepared, highly personable and quickly gets to the heart of the issues. Clients consistently warm to Alex and his strategic thinking goes well beyond his year of call."*

*"Alex is brilliant. He quickly understands a case and knows the strategy from the outset. He is always available, goes above and beyond for the client and he is a pleasure to deal with."*

*"From the outset, Alex demonstrated a thorough understanding of our client's needs, priorities, and overall position which was encapsulated beautifully in his note. Alex was responsive following the hearing including taking the time to ensure the order was meticulously drafted."*

# Q & A



## PUMP COURT CHAMBERS

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