

24 June 2019

Domestic Abuse – Progress Report



Safe Durham Partnership

Report of Jeanne Trotter, OPCVC Criminal Justice Programme Lead - Chair of DASVEG

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the DASVEG plan on a page and other related activity.

Background

2. The objectives outlined within the DASVEG Plan on a Page were developed following a multi-agency planning session which took place in December 2016. The plan was reviewed at a multi-agency stakeholder event in March 2019 where it was agreed that the headline objectives continue to be relevant. Subsequently, while the overarching objectives of the Plan on a Page will be retained, related actions will be updated to reflect progress and next steps. Stakeholder feedback also highlighted the need to include Sexual Violence.
3. The vision of the County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group is: that all agencies work together to seek to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse in County Durham and continue to provide and further develop a co-ordinated community response that provides high quality preventative, support and protection services and effectively deals with perpetrators. Our vision for sexual violence is that it will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be brought to account for their actions. Victims of sexual violence will be supported, treated with dignity and respect and made to feel safe within their community whilst seeing their offenders brought to justice.
4. The 3 objectives are listed below:
 - Objective 1 – reduction in repeat victims and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse
 - Objective 2 – Domestic abuse is prevented through early intervention
 - Objective 3 – More invisible victims are identified and offered support
 - A fourth objective relating to Sexual Violence is to be added following the DASVEG meeting in May 2019
5. Ensuring the voices of those affected by Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, including victims, perpetrators, children, families and communities, are embedded in planning and delivery mechanisms is key priority along with collaboration between agencies and the assessment and evaluation of interventions.

Appendix 2

Objective 1 – reduce repeat victims and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse

6. A recent report (February 2019) published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) highlights the need for further investigation and analysis of the reasons behind repeat victimisation. The introduction of Multi-agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATAC) is intended to supplement the work of MASH and MARAC in relation to identifying and taking a pro-active approach to serial perpetration of domestic abuse.
7. A suite of perpetrator interventions are now in place delivered by Harbour, Barnardos and CRC. Harbour act as the single point of contact for assessment and onward referral to the appropriate programme. While these interventions are currently subject to a cocktail of funding (Home Office, Police Transformation Fund, etc.) work is being undertaken to evaluate and establish future resource requirements.
8. The Checkpoint Quality Assurance Group continues to meet to monitor standards in respect of risk and needs assessment. The evaluation of the victim element undertaken by Durham University has now been completed. The evaluation finds that: '*Checkpoint holds the potential to offer a unique and innovative opportunity to intervene in a positive way for a range of criminal offences including family and partner violence related offences. At the moment, however, we are unable to recommend that partner violence cases continue as part of the Checkpoint programme in its current form. This is because of concerns around referral and risk assessment processes, the limited influence of victim/survivor voices in the process, difficulties collecting trackable data, apparent gaps and definitional issues around whether a case has 'failed' and the consequences of this (particularly what happens to offenders who do not attend an intervention). We do remain optimistic about the potential of Checkpoint. There were multiple points of implementation failure evident in the early to mid-points of our evaluation, some of which have been resolved. There are now fewer points of implementation failure, those that exist do so around particular pinch points, but these remain too significant to overlook.*'
9. Many of the issues raised in the evaluation report have now been addressed and an action plan put in place to respond to outstanding actions.

Objective 2 – Domestic Abuse is prevented through early intervention

10. DASVEG recognise that educating children and young people on the importance of respectful and healthy relationships is important in order to prevent future offending or victimisation.
11. Education Durham's Relationship and Sex Education Commission has supported 66% of secondary education settings in County Durham and this support has now been expanded to include primary schools. Operation Encompass continues and will be expanded in line with JTAC recommendations. I Am Me, Being ME and the SELFIE projects are all continuing.

Objective 3 – More invisible victims are identified and offered support

12. The Partnership has supported the piloting of IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) in health care settings; all community pharmacy staff are accessing an e-learning package and GP training has been delivered and their links into MARAC strengthened. The Partnership has also supported the “No less of a Man” Campaign raising the profile of male victims of Domestic Abuse.

JTAI

13. Reporting arrangements between DASVEG and the Durham Safeguarding Partnership have been strengthened in line with JTAI recommendations and partners are currently working to deliver on the actions assigned to them as part of the JTAI Action Plan.
14. Operation Encompass has been extended to include standard risk DA cases and the DA Specialist Service contract now includes increased resource to manage notifications. Operating guidance is being updated to reflect inclusion of standard incidents/school holiday periods and the Police recording system is being updated in order to support the management of the increased volume. All schools are being invited to briefing events during May 2019. The new approach will be launched in June 2019 with all Primary Schools and September 2019 with all secondary schools.
15. MARAC processes have been reviewed and it has been agreed to trial an alternative approach that involves high risk domestic abuse cases being discussed by partners within the MASH with only complex cases progressing to twice weekly MARAC meetings. It has been agreed that the frequency of meetings can be altered during the pilot, to try different models. It has also been suggested that the partners within the MASH take part in the meetings, with telephone conferencing being utilised for those not represented.
16. National Probation Service (NPS) and Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) have developed a range of briefings that raise awareness of their role within multi-agency partnerships and in relation to Domestic Abuse pathways in particular. These briefings will be delivered to staff within the MASH and shared across all partner agencies for dissemination. Work is also being undertaken to raise awareness of MARAC criteria and agency responsibility to refer to MARAC in relation to potential high risk domestic cases

Commissioning

17. Discussions relating to opportunities for joint commissioning across DCC and Darlington Borough Council have been postponed to enable Darlington colleagues to continue their service review. Subsequently, DCC and the OPCVC have been involved in a joint commissioning process resulting in the contract for the specialist Domestic Abuse service being awarded once again to Harbour from April 2019.

Appendix 2

Terms of Reference and Membership

18. The Chair of DASVEG has now been passed to Jeanne Trotter from the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner and Gill O'Neill, Deputy Director of Public Health, Durham County Council is Vice Chair.
19. Terms of reference and membership are being reviewed after discussion at the Stakeholder Event held in March 2019 and revisions will be agreed at the May meeting. The proposed governance structure will reflect stronger links with Safeguarding Partnerships.

Recommendation

20. The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note contents of the report and comment accordingly.

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