

# **Safer & Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**3 November 2022**



## **Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) Annual Report 2021/22**

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### **Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Adults & Health Services**

#### **Electoral divisions affected:**

Countywide

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of activity led by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Committee (DASVEG) over 2021/22.

#### **Executive summary**

- 2 Domestic abuse (DA) continues to affect communities and support services across County Durham.
- 3 DASVEG have made significant progress in ensuring that Durham County Council and its partners meet the statutory requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021; this includes the following achievements:
  - Completion of a Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment
  - Publication of the County Durham and Darlington Safe Accommodation Strategy
  - Development of the Safe Accommodation Project Board and subsequent priority workstreams
  - Allocation of New Burden's Funding (NBF); additional funding to ensure that the key elements of the DA Act 2021 are implemented
  - Review of the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Policy

- Development and implementation of a significant workforce development programme
- 4 Next steps for the DASVEG include the development of a Whole System Approach to Tackling Domestic Abuse based on the recently released national strategy and further work that addresses the needs of perpetrators.
  - 5 In addition, further development work is required to ensure that sexual violence is appropriately represented in DASVEG planning moving forward.
  - 6 Commissioned DA services across County Durham are provided by Harbour Support Services (HSS).
  - 7 Demand for support continues to increase each year; number of referrals have increased from **4996** in financial year **2019/20** to **7116** in financial year **2021/22**.
  - 8 Despite the increase in demand, **79%** of all adult victim's report feeling safer and **93%** report improved wellbeing following intervention.
  - 9 Data collated by HSS also highlights that mental health issues are the largest additional presenting need of service users in County Durham.

## **Recommendation**

- 10 Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
  - (a) Note the content of the report

## **Background**

- 11 It is estimated that over 2.4m people are affected by domestic abuse each year in England and Wales. Around 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be affected by domestic abuse (DA) each year.
- 12 Locally DA continues to affect all communities and services across County Durham and Darlington.
- 13 DASVEG continues to provide oversight of the DA system, with regular reporting to the SDP.

## **Progress to date**

### **The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

- 14 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received royal ascent on 29 April 2021 bringing in a range of new legislative measures to support victims of DA including their children.
- 15 The act brought in the first statutory definition of DA which now includes children and young people as victims in their own right and recognises emotional and economic abuse. It also places a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide residents of County Durham, and those who travel from different local authority areas, a range of safe accommodation options and broader wrap around support.
- 16 In line with the act, DASVEG was adopted as the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership (LDAP) and a revised Terms of Reference (TOR) (**Appendix 2**) was introduced to ensure that the group met the requirements of the act.
- 17 DASVEG became responsible for ensuring that all requirements of LDAP's were met, this included the completion of the following core components:
  - Completion of a multi-agency Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment
  - Consultation on Draft Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021/24
  - Publication of final Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021/24

### **Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022- 24**

- 18 The DA Act 2021 made it a legal requirement of all tier one local authorities to publish a Safe Accommodation Strategy within the first 6 months of the Act receiving royal ascent.

- 19 Following a significant multi-agency needs assessment, the County Durham and Darlington Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2024 was published on 23 December 2021 (**Appendix 3**).
- 20 The strategy identified 6 key areas of development over the lifetime of the strategy and a Safe Accommodation Project Board which reports directly to DASVEG was developed to ensure robust oversight and management of activity required; Table 1 below highlights each priority and progress made to date:

**Table 1: Safe Accommodation Priority Area Overview of Progress to Date**

Priority Area	Progress overview
Survivor voice at the heart of decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DA Victim Voice champion is in post</li> <li>• Mapping exercise of support groups completed</li> <li>• Range of focus groups/interviews to gain lived experiences completed</li> </ul>
Early Identification, Intervention and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workstream established</li> <li>• Development of action plan</li> <li>• The introduction of Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation</li> </ul>
Effective support for vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of vulnerable groups based on needs assessment</li> <li>• Development of a range of ‘by and for’<sup>1</sup> services available for DA victims in County Durham</li> </ul>
Prioritising the needs of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of a pathway of support for families effected by child/adolescent violence and abuse</li> <li>• Development and implementation of the Domestic Abuse Recovering Together<sup>2</sup> (DART) programme</li> </ul>
Improve the use of data and intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced a regional DA group to develop shared outcome measures</li> <li>• Investment in DASEG reporting</li> </ul>
Improve the knowledge and skills of the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior workforce Development Officer in place</li> <li>• Extensive training calendar in place</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> ‘By and for’ services are those provided by and for the community they serve

<sup>2</sup> DART helps non abusive parents and children who have experienced DA to talk about their experiences and rebuild their relationship

Priority Area	Progress overview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Abuse Practice Standards Level 1-3 developed for the DA system</li> </ul>

## New Burdens Funding (NBF)

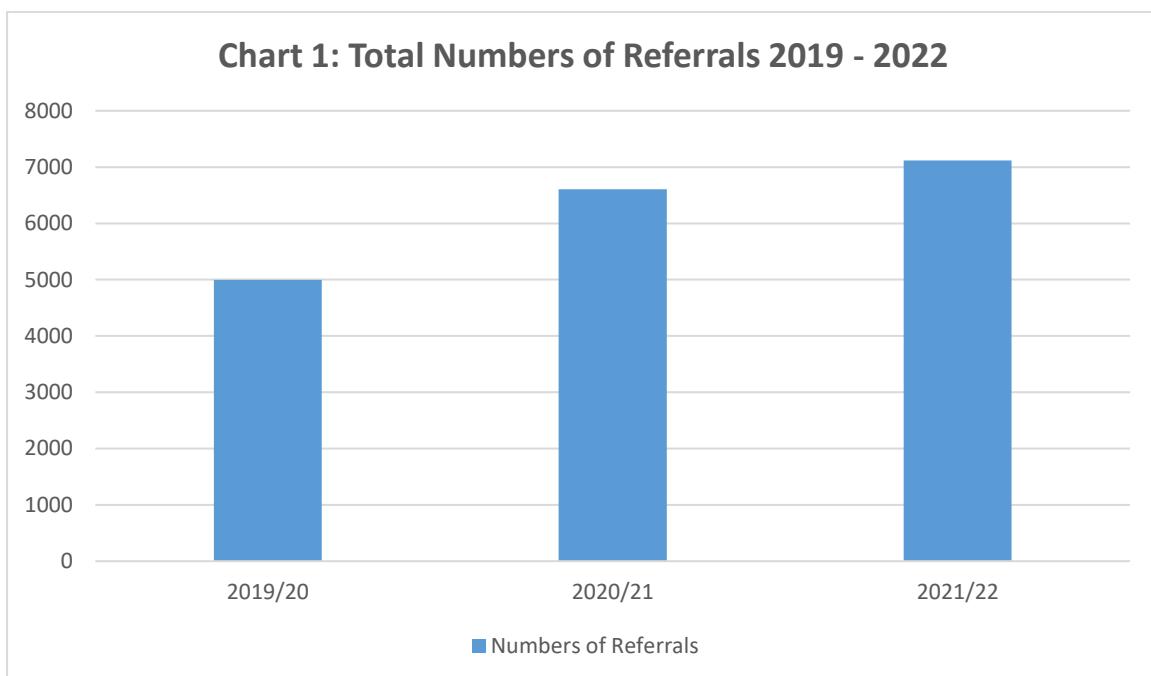
- 21 In March 2021 Durham County Council (DCC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH) and received £1.16m over financial year 2021/22 and are due to receive a further £1.17m of NBF for financial year 2022/23.
- 22 The purpose of the NBF is to ensure that the statutory requirements of the DA Act 2021 are put into place and that services are commissioned in line with the priority areas identified within the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment and subsequent strategy.
- 23 DASVEG approved the subsequent NBF Plan and a range of new programmes and pilot schemes commenced in April 2022 which will be reviewed and evaluated in advance of future NBF planning for 2023/24.

## Workforce development

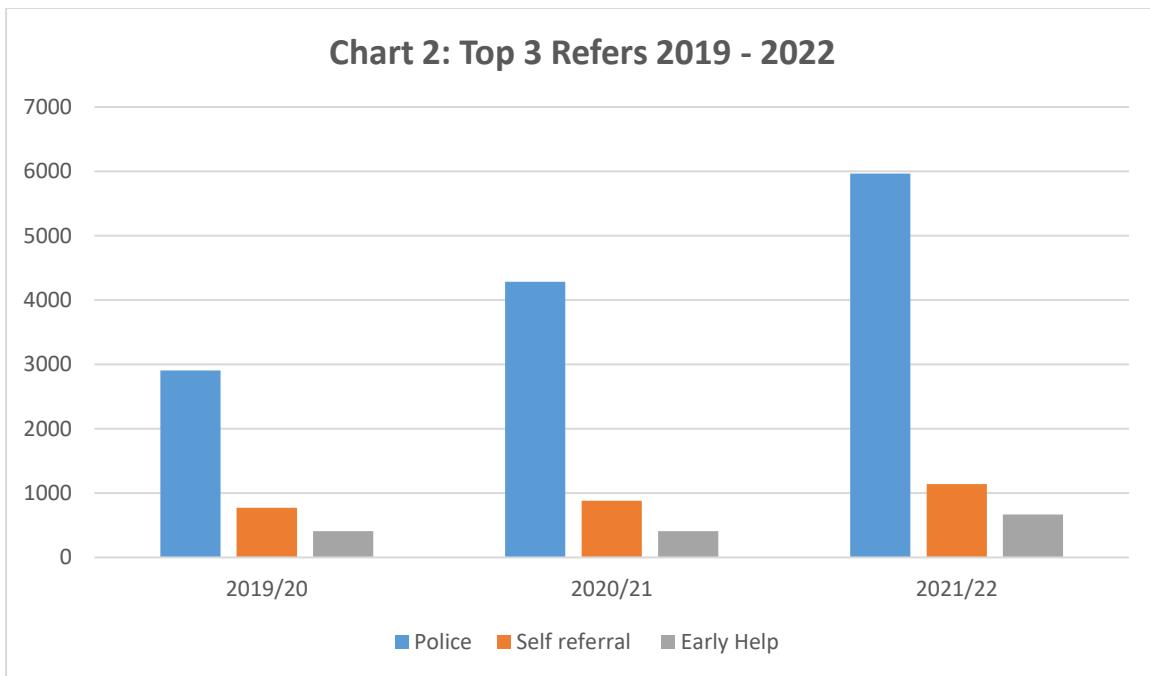
- 24 NBF has ensured the continuation of the Senior Workforce Development Officer role; the post is hosted by DCC however the extensive training programme is made available to multi-agency partners utilising the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 25 This post has been instrumental in improving the knowledge and skills of the workforce through the introduction of a comprehensive offer that has included:
- Child/Adolescent Parent Violence and Abuse: Ask and Act
  - Coercion and Control workshops
  - Impact of Coercion and Control on children
  - Domestic Abuse Practice Standards Level 1 – 3
  - Predatory Marriage
  - Domestic Abuse Act 2021 briefing sessions
  - Honour based Violence/FGM
  - Stalking and Harassment
  - The use of technology
  - Hidden victims including LGBTQ, older people and people with disabilities

## **Service provider update**

- 26 The Countywide Domestic Abuse Service is provided by Harbour Support Services (HSS). The service is commissioned to provide support over the following three elements:
- Support for victims of domestic abuse
  - Support for children and young people (CYP) affected by domestic abuse
  - Support and challenge for perpetrators of domestic abuse
- 27 Demand for services remains high, the chart below highlights the increasing trend of overall numbers of referrals between 2019 - 2022.



- 28 The highest refers into HSS remains consistent with Police significantly higher than all other agencies followed by self-referral's and the One Point Service; Chart 2 below provides the detail of the top 3 between 2019 – 2022.



- 29 Data from HSS Insights Report 2021 – 22 details additional presenting needs for adults accessing the service as follows:
- 51% report mental health issues
  - 31% report housing issues
  - 20% report parenting issues
  - 17% report financial and debt issues
- 30 The HSS insights report provides details on the following outcome measures recorded at service exit during 2021/22:
- 79% of adult victims report feeling safer
  - 93% of adult victims report improved wellbeing
  - 85% of those accessing Harbour Refuge report improved wellbeing
  - 98% of cyp report feeling safer/have a better understanding of safety
  - 100% of cyp report improved wellbeing
  - 98% of cyp report improved family relationships
- 31 It is clear from service level data that demand for support continues to increase each year. HSS continues to work with commissioners to

ensure that service delivery models continue to effectively meet the needs of residents of County Durham.

## **Next Steps**

- 32 Members of DASVEG and associated subgroups will continue to progress with the priority areas as set out within the Safe Accommodation strategy in preparation for the first annual refresh of data and intelligence.
- 33 In line with national strategies, DASVEG will look to develop a whole system approach plan for the wider DA system and further development work in order to address the needs of perpetrators of abuse.
- 34 DASVEG must also consider the more meaningful inclusion of work that addresses sexual violence and the broader violence against women and girls agenda.

## **Conclusion**

- 35 Next steps for the DASVEG is to continue to develop a Whole System Approach to Tackling Domestic Abuse based on the national strategy, conduct further work to address the needs of perpetrators and work toward the reduction of violence against women and girls agenda.

## **Other useful documents**

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Homicide Review National Guidance

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance**

All funding for the whole-system working for domestic abuse we reviewed as part of a Budget Prioritisation process in March 2020. Within this all current contract within the DA system were reviewed. This has provided all partners with an overview of the finance associated with DA and enabled gap in service provision to be identified and addressed with New Burdens Funding.

### **Staffing**

DASVEG continually review staffing needs within the system and capacity within services.

### **Risk**

The national direction of travel aligns with the role and remit for DASVEG organisations who currently fund programme areas. There are no identifiable risks at this current time.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Will continue to be a core consideration as part of DASVEG efforts to reduce health inequalities

### **Accommodation**

Addressed through the Safe Accommodation Strategy

### **Crime and Disorder**

One of the interdependency factors included the criminal justice system

### **Human Rights**

How the PH grant impacts on the population of County Durham to improve health outcomes

### **Consultation**

Completed with a range of organisations and stakeholders

### **Procurement**

Decisions on spend will in the future impact on any procurement processes

### **Disability Issues**

Equality of access at a population level considered by DASVEG

## **Legal Implications**

Not at this moment in time

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## **Appendix 2: Terms of Reference for Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards**

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### **Terms of Reference for Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards**

#### **Purpose and Role**

The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAP) is a partnership group responsible for supporting Durham County Council (DCC) and Darlington Borough Council (DBC) in meeting their duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act.

*The LDAP will be known locally as the County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Committee (DASVEG)*

DASVEG will take a whole system approach to support, advise and work in partnership with DCC and DBC to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation and wider domestic abuse services.

To improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support within safe accommodation services and the wider system

DASVEG will ensure that the system has a clear focus on perpetrators and tackling repeat perpetrators through a range of multi-agency, problem solving interventions and approaches.

DASVEG will provide the governance structure for work across the system aimed at reducing and tackling sexual violence.

#### **Frequency**

The Board will meet on a bi monthly basis; this will be reviewed every 12 months.

#### **Membership**

The Board is made up of a number of responsible bodies and agencies that by law, must be represented.

Name/Role	Deputy/Role	Team	Organisation
Jane Sunter, Strategic Manager	Helen Riddell, Advanced Practitioner	Public Health	DCC
Pauline Newby, Strategic Manager  Tricia Reed, Strategic Manager  Christine Shields Assistant Director	Owain Green Commissioning Policy and Planning Officer  Peter Sterling, Strategic Commissioning Manager	Commissioning  Commissioning	DCC  DBC
Penny Spring, Director of Public Health		Public Health	DBC
Sukhdev Donsanjh, Head of Service	Bronwyn Lilley, DA Commissioning Manager	Commissioning	DBC
TBC	TBC		PCVC
Karen Blackburn, Head of Service			The Probation Service North East
David Ashton, Detective Superintendent,		Safeguarding	Durham Constabulary
Jac Tyler, Strategic Manager		Children's Social Care	DCC
Karen Davison, Strategic Manager	Alison Underwood, Operations Manager	Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children	DCC

Name/Role	Deputy/Role	Team	Organisation
David Wall, Manager Education	Alison Young	Education	DCC
Chris Bell, Head of Early Help, YOS and Front Door	Joanne Stoddart, Head of Service, Assessment, Care planning and Looked After Care	CYPS	DBC
Calvin Kipling	Virtual School Head	Education	DBC
Paige Thomason, Head of Practice		CYPS and Adults	DBC
Caren Barnfather, Business Manager	Rachael Williamson, Service Manager	Durham and Darlington	Harbour Support Services
Carole Clarkson, Service Manager		Darlington	Family Help Refuge
Jill Thorpe		Domestic Abuse Navigator Service	Foundation
Mike Egan	Jo Hall, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator		CDDFT
Designated Nurse Safeguarding Adults	Rachael Upton Deputy Designated Nurse, Children's Safeguarding	Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children	CD CCG

Name/Role	Deputy/Role	Team	Organisation
Jen Moore  Designated Nurse, Children's Safeguarding		Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children	Tees Valley CCG
Amanda Smith, General Manager	Julie Potts, Safeguarding Lead	0 – 25 Family Health Service	HDFT
Karen Agar			TEWV
Marie Smith, Housing Solutions Manager		Housing Solutions	DCC
Janette McMain, Housing Manager Options and Lifeline	Sarah Williamson, Team Leader	Housing Options	DBC
Heidi Gibson, Business Manager		Safeguarding Adults Board	DCC
TBC		Durham Safeguarding Children's Board	DCC
Domestic Abuse Victim/Survivor Champion		Durham PCC	Durham PCC
Jeanne Trotter,  Policy, Commissioning and Accountability Lead		Durham PCC	Durham PCC
Councillor Alan Shield, Portfolio Holder for Equality, and Inclusion		Durham County Council	DCC

The Board will be chaired by Penny Spring

Vice Chair of the Board will be Jane Sunter

*Members of the Board should be of a level that are able to make decisions regarding service/system delivery, budget allocation and commissioning intentions.*

Members are responsible for ensuring they report back and feed into the Board on behalf of their represented group / body. Steps should be taken to ensure

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board will take a whole system approach to:

- Provide advice and data to support *DCC, DBC and its partners* to undertake a robust local needs assessment to identify and understand the needs of domestic abuse victims within their area (including those that present from out of area).
- Provide expert advice and data to support the development of a local strategy, agreeing the appropriate steps needed to meet the needs identified.
- Support *DCC, DBC and its partners* to effectively engage with domestic abuse victims and expert services in understanding the range and complexity of needs.
- Support DCC, DBC and its partners to support to effectively identify, engage challenge, and tackle perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Provide oversight and governance to a range of victim focused, problem solving interventions tackling complex domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Support *DCC, DBC and its partners* to make commissioning and decommissioning decisions (where appropriate). This can include when and how commissioning is undertaken to ensure the best and most appropriate services are made available for victims.
- [Members will] support in ensuring join up across other related areas such as housing, health, early years and childhood support, social services and police and crime services [not limited to]
- Advise and support in dealing with issues raised and identified from engagement through formal and informal routes.
- Escalate issues to the relevant representative / body

## **Agendas**

Members will be able to put forward suggested agenda items for consideration. The secretariat will circulate final agendas a minimum of 5 working days ahead of meetings.

DASVEG agendas will be structured to ensure that where necessary agenda items will be restricted to commissioning organisations only

Standing agenda items will include:

- The voice and lived experience of the child
- The voice and lived experience of the adult Victim/Survivor
- Accommodation based support
- Performance
- Sub group feedback (subject to change)

## **Absence**

Where members are unable to attend a meeting, they are responsible for informing the Board ahead of the meeting and, as far as possible, should ensure a representative is present on behalf of the organisation / body.

## **Reporting**

The chair / Board will report back to the *Safe Durham Partnership and Darlington Community Safety Partnership*.

*In addition, regular reports will be provided to members of the Durham Safeguarding Children's Board, the Durham Safeguarding Adults Board and the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Board.*

The Board will support DCC and DBC in reporting back to MHCLG on delivering the duty in line with statutory guidance and the standardised reporting form.

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### **Appendix 3: County Durham and Darlington Safe Accommodation Strategy**

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