

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



2nd November 2023

**Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
Executive Group Annual Report**

Ordinary Decision

Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSOSC) with an overview of the work carried out by County Durham and Darlington's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) during 2022 - 2023.
- 2 This report will focus on the domestic abuse (DA) element of DASVEG. A future update report will be shared with members of the SSOSC that provides an overview of the targeted sexual violence work that is currently under development.

Executive summary

- 3 It is estimated that 2.4million people are affected by DA each year. DA continues to have a significant impact on County Durham communities and support services.
- 4 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed a statutory duty on Durham County Council (DCC) and its partnerships, with DASVEG providing oversight to this work as the identified Domestic Abuse Local Partnership.
- 5 In relation to safe accommodation, New Burdens Funding (NBF) has been utilised to ensure that DCC meets its statutory requirements and supports the delivery of a range of measures as set out in paragraph 14 and 15.
- 6 Following on from the publication of the County Durham and Darlington Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 24, DASVEG were required to

develop a broader whole system plan based upon the national Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan 2022.

- 7 **Appendix 2**, for OSC consideration, provides the detail of a draft plan that covers the following priority areas:
- Prioritising prevention
 - Supporting victims
 - Tackling those who cause harm.
- 8 Despite most DA going unreported, referrals into Harbour Support Services (HSS), provider of the Countywide Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, continue to increase each year as set out in Table 1.
- 9 As set out in paragraph 18 to 24, HSS have reported outcome data that highlights a good level of service user satisfaction on self-reported health and wellbeing measures.
- 10 Victim/survivor voice should be central to all DA systems, to support with this, additional NBF has been allocated to continue the DA Victim Voice Champion that sits within the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for a minimum of a further two financial years.

Recommendation(s)

- 11 Members of SSOSC are recommended to:
- a) Note the content of this report including the Draft Domestic Abuse Plan 2023 - 2025;

Background

- 12 It is estimated that around 2.4 million people are affected by DA each year in England and Wales, this equates to around 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men.
- 13 The impact of DA continues to affect all communities and support services across County Durham.
- 14 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed statutory responsibilities on local authorities and their partnerships in relation to DA, specifically safe accommodation. In addition, the Act brought with it the first DA definition in law, which made children and young people victims in their own right.

Safe accommodation

- 15 In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, DASVEG are the nominated Local Domestic Abuse Partnership. They provide the oversight and monitoring of the County Durham system ensuring that the statutory duties associated with Safe Accommodation, as set out in County Durham and Darlington's Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 24 are met.
- 16 Current safe accommodation provision within County Durham includes the following:
 - 4 women's refuges
 - A range of dispersed properties (suitable for male victims)
 - Domestic Abuse Navigator Service (floating housing support for those with complex needs)
 - Remain Safe (target hardening) Scheme
- 17 In addition, Durham County Council (DCC) have received a further New Burden's Fund (NBF) settlement of £1.17m during financial year 2022/2023, linked to the delivery of the safe accommodation duty. The NBF has been utilised to ensure that successful pilot schemes and support service enhancements have been able to continue for a further 12 months.

Draft Whole System DASVEG Plan 2022 - 2025

- 18 As identified as a priority previously, members of DASVEG have developed a Draft County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abuse Plan 2023 – 2025 for your consideration (**Appendix 2**).

- 19 The plan and its identified priorities will be supported by three key workstreams as follows:
- Prioritising prevention;
 - Supporting victims;
 - Tackling those who cause harm.
- 20 Work is underway to identify the most appropriate lead for each workstream. Once established each group will develop a workplan and associated performance metrics, these will be reported on a regular basis.

Countywide Specialist Outreach Service Overview

- 21 Whilst it is acknowledged that most DA goes largely unreported, demand on Harbour Support Service continues to increase each year.

Table 1: Referrals into Harbour Support Service 2020 - 2023

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total number of referrals from all sources	6608	7116	7584
Total people referred	5350	5851	6282

- 22 The service continues to achieve positive outcomes for the people it supports. Outcomes relating to adult victims are as follows:
- 82% report improved safety;
 - 80% report improvement in their mental health and wellbeing;
 - 67% report improvement in their parent/child relationship.
- 23 Between April 2022 and March 2023, 991 children and young people accessed the Children and Young People’s Support Service. Children and young people accessing the service report the following outcomes:
- 99% of service users report having a better understanding of safety and feeling safer;
 - 98% of service users report an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing;
 - 98% of service users report better family relationships.

24 The Preventions (perpetrators) Service received 409 referrals. Of these the following have been achieved:

- 36% attended a prevention intervention;
- 30% attended Respect accredited programme;
- 13% completed Respect accredited programme;
- 87% of victims associated with those engaged in the preventions service report feeling safer.

25 It should be noted that the current Countywide Specialist Outreach Service contract expires on 31 March 2024. A comprehensive procurement exercise is underway, and a new service specification will be in place on 1 April 2024.

Victim Survivor Voice

26 Victim/survivor voice should be central to all service design and improvement work.

27 In order to ensure that the County Durham system approaches victim/survivor voice in a meaningful and respectful way NBF has been allocated to continue the DA Victim Champion role that sits with the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for a minimum of a further 2 financial years.

Conclusion

28 As the development work continues to progress, regular updates will be shared with members of the SSOSC for their consideration.

Other useful documents

- [County Durham and Darlington Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2024](#)
- [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan 2022](#)

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed a legal on local authorities in relation to Safe Accommodation and other systemwide functions including the creation of a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership. DASVEG is County Durham's delegated Local Domestic Abuse Partnership and is responsible for the oversight of the duties of the DA Act.

Finance

New Burden's Funding has been allocated to Durham County Council to support the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Consultation

N/A

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ensures that those with protected characteristics are considered appropriately.

Climate Change

n/a

Human Rights

n/a

Crime and Disorder

n/a

Staffing

n/a

Accommodation

n/a






Risk

n/a

Procurement

n/a

Appendix 2: Draft DASVEG Plan 2023/25

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> DRAFT <div style="text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abuse Plan 2023/25</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.9em;">Our Shared Vision: A Stronger System which drives down domestic abuse and domestic homicide cases, while ensuring that victims and survivors get the support they need</p> </div> </div>				
DASVEG Priorities These priorities will be developed on the principles of using best evidence, practice and victim voice at its core				
Prioritising Prevention	Supporting victims	Tackling those who cause harm		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define what we mean by prevention and early intervention for young people and vulnerable adults. Review and where possible influence the delivery of Relationship, Sex and Health (RSHE) education in educational settings Ensure that children and young people are recognised as victims in their own right and are supported by suitable interventions across the system Focus on early identification and developing trusted professional ethos Delivering a range of relevant social marketing campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the priorities set out in County Durham and Darlington's Safe Accommodation are achieved Continuing to support and develop local MARAC arrangements including embedding the use of the DARA and enhancing the DASH Embed the learning from local and national Domestic Homicide Reviews Identifying and effectively supporting hidden/vulnerable groups Understanding and supporting health system interventions Victim voice representation at all levels of the system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a system that supports a graded response to challenging those who cause harm, from early intervention and awareness raising to behaviour change programmes Support, develop and embed Police led interventions including MATAAC and Caution Plus Increase awareness and promote the use of the DVDS (Claire's Law) Ensure a focus there is a systemwide focus on the risks associated with, and the impact of stalking and harassment 		
Our Enablers				
				
<p>Working in a victim centered approach meaning all agencies acting in ways that support what the victim needs and where possible promote choice.</p>	<p>Sharing skills and knowledge of effective governance and effective oversight, holding organisations to account for their delivery and engagement with the strategy and service users.</p> <p>Ensuring quality and performance through effective governance and scrutiny processes.</p>	<p>Strong collaboration and communication to understand the landscape, increase effectiveness, reduce duplication and maximise co-commissioning opportunities.</p> <p>Being prepared to challenge and disrupt existing structures to address gaps, taking opportunity to change the system</p>	<p>Communicating and engaging effectively with service users and across agencies and wider stakeholders.</p> <p>Ensuring the priorities are imbedded in exiting structures with strong feedback loops.</p>	<p>Improve and introduce services through evidence of what works. Value the Victim Survivor Voice and promote co-production.</p> <p>Using data and intelligence to guide future strategies, policy development and commissioning.</p>
Our Impact				

