

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee

25 February 2014



Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan 2012-15

Report of Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director for Children and Adults Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee with a progress report on the implementation of the Safe Durham Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan 2012-15.

Background

- 2 The Domestic Abuse Forum Executive Group (DAFEG) is a thematic group that is governed by the Safe Durham Partnership Board. The strategy was developed through this multi-agency thematic group and actions in support of the strategic outcomes are monitored through this group.
- 3 This is the fourth Domestic Abuse Strategy that has been implemented at a countywide level. It builds on the progress in addressing the issue by partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors across the County.
- 4 The Safe Durham Partnership Board approved the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2012-15 in September 2012. A copy of the strategy is available online at: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=7355>

Overview of the Domestic Abuse Strategy

- 5 The purpose of the strategy is to provide a framework to ensure the active contribution of partner agencies to the enhancement, strengthening and development of services to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse within County Durham and support the large number of adults and children whose safety and well being are affected in our communities
- 6 The strategy has been developed around the national framework for domestic abuse with the three guiding principles of :
 - a. **Prevention:** Prevent abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it

- b. **Protection:** Take action to reduce the risk to people who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice
- c. **Provision:** Provide adequate support where abuse does occur and work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families

7 For each of the priority areas we have set the following objectives:

Prevention

- 8 Work within educational institutions to promote healthy relationships and respect and to ensure that a clear message is provided and reinforced which sets out which attitudes and behaviours are acceptable and which are not.
- 9 Challenge the attitudes of adults where domestic abuse is deemed acceptable, i.e. through the delivery of a perpetrator programme.
- 10 Increase awareness of domestic abuse across services, organisations and the general public.
- 11 Work with the Sexual Violence Implementation Group and the Alcohol Harm Reduction Group of the Safe Durham Partnership to raise awareness and tackle the cross cutting issue of Domestic Abuse.
- 12 Work with service users to obtain feedback that can be used to direct service development.
- 13 Provide training to all relevant staff across the responsible authorities of the partnership in order to recognise and identify signs and indicators of abuse; know how to deal with disclosure and understand what constitutes significant concern.

Protection

- 14 Continue to promote awareness of management arrangements that are in place and encourage appropriate referrals from all agencies including Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Potentially Dangerous Person Protocol (PDP) and the Seriously Vulnerable Individual Protocol (SVI).
- 15 Look at establishing confidential third party reporting with links to MARAC.
- 16 In order to prevent domestic abuse from continuing, stop abuse going unnoticed, proactively engage with victims and children at every opportunity, put in place safety measures and interventions to reduce and manage risk.
- 17 Proactively flag and highlight domestic abuse perpetrators, this is relevant when the perpetrator of one abusive relationship leaves that relationship and enters into another.
- 18 Look at data development with regard to repeat victims and perpetrators and adopt common measures.

Provision

- 19 Commission a countywide specialist Domestic Abuse Outreach Service.
- 20 Achieve greater involvement of the Early Intervention and Prevention Team in providing services to victims.
- 21 Ensure comprehensive literature relating to pathways for Domestic Abuse referrals and services are available.
- 22 Provide a scheme which allows victims of domestic abuse to avoid homelessness by target hardening their property.
- 23 Work within the Think Family Programme which incorporates Stronger Families.
- 24 Provide the opportunity, where appropriate, for victims and perpetrators to access restorative approaches as a means of resolving conflict and repairing harm.
- 25 Provide management of repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse based on an integrated offender management model.

Key Actions and Progress

Prevention

- 26 The Domestic Abuse Strategy is available within Schools across County Durham to allow education professionals to be sighted on the work of the Partnership and areas where they can contribute.
- 27 Violence in relationships has been included in the Sex and Relationships Educational (SRE) Framework.
- 28 A voluntary perpetrator programme is currently in place, delivered by Wear Valley Women's Aid.
- 29 15 individuals have completed the mandatory Perpetrator Programme in North Durham and 21 in South Durham and Darlington; with a completion rate of 83%.
- 30 Marketing campaigns to raise awareness of domestic abuse to the general public have been conducted on an annual basis. The latest targeted campaign "Does this sound familiar?" is aimed at women aged over 40 and highlights how domestic abuse isn't just about specific individual incidents but also about the repeat nature of incidents and how they can escalate (<http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=9215>). A new campaign "Love is Many things Campaign" was launched on 13th February 2014, focussing on domestic abuse in LGBT relationships.

- 31 The Police and Crime Commissioner is working with the DAFEG to align actions contained within the regional Violence against Women and Girls Strategy.
- 32 Direct Services staff delivering the target hardening service for victims of domestic abuse (Remain Safe) within Neighbourhood Service have undertaken Adult Safeguarding training which includes Domestic Abuse.
- 33 A County Durham and Darlington Joint Sexual and Domestic Abuse Training Strategy is currently in development and will be completed in September 2014.

Protection

- 34 The performance of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are currently being reviewed. This will identify gaps in the service and highlight referral pathways that are both effective and ineffective.
- 35 Durham Constabulary are taking forward the development of Third Party Reporting in County Durham with links to MARAC.

Provision

- 36 A countywide specialist Domestic Abuse Outreach Service has now been commissioned and the new service has been in place since September 2013, delivered by Harbour.
- 37 Pathways to domestic abuse and related services have been implemented within the Vulnerable Women's Accommodation project.
- 38 A Service Directory is in development for services available in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence in order to raise awareness and increase accessibility of services to all agencies.
- 39 As part of the commissioning of service, £30,000 has been committed by Durham County Council to the Remain Safe Service which provides target hardening for victims of domestic abuse.
- 40 A local procedure and toolkit for conducting Domestic Homicide Reviews has been agreed by the Safe Durham Partnership. A number of Domestic Homicide Reviews have been undertaken and the DAFEG is leading on implementing actions to continually develop service delivery across agencies in line with lessons learned from Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Recommendations and reasons

- 41 Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:
Note the progress made in relation to the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2012-15.

Background papers

None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Funding has been provided by Durham County Council to support the objectives within the Domestic Violence Strategy.

Staffing

No adverse implications.

Risk

No adverse implications.

Equality and Diversity/ Public Sector Equality Duty

An impact assessment has been completed. The strategy has a positive impact on all victims and children who experience and witness domestic abuse and contributes to increasing their safety. The Strategy also ensures that a service is available to all men across the county.

Accommodation

No adverse implications.

Crime and disorder

Implementing the strategy contributes to the Crime and Disorder agenda, by improving the safety of victims of domestic abuse.

Human rights

Implementing the strategy contributes to promoting the Human Rights of victims and children affected by domestic abuse.

Consultation

Consultation was carried out with partners, key stakeholders, service users and members of the general public in development of the Strategy.

Procurement

No adverse implications.

Disability Issues

No direct adverse implications.

Legal Implications

No adverse implications.