

## Cabinet

22 September 2011

### Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services in County Durham 2011-14



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### Report of Corporate Management Team Report of Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director, Adults Wellbeing and Health Report of Lucy Hovvels, Portfolio holder for Safer & Healthier Communities.

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present Cabinet with a final draft of the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services 2011-14.

#### Background

2. The Safe Durham Partnership recognised that the development and delivery of Specialist Domestic Abuse Services across the county particularly in respect of adults and Children's outreach services was necessary especially in the context of a unitary Council. A Scrutiny report in 2007 had highlighted the problems associated with domestic abuse in the County.
3. A single approach to these services has been developed by the Domestic Abuse Forum Executive Group (DAFEG) and this has been accepted by the Safe Durham Partnership Board.
4. The Safe Durham Partnership Board agreed that a commissioning approach should be adopted and Durham County Council and NHS County Durham agreed to combine budgets and commit recurrent funding to commission specialist domestic abuse services.
5. The Safe Durham Partnership Board approved this approach in January 2011 and at the DAFEG meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011 the consultation framework was agreed. The draft strategy was then circulated for a three month period of consultation.
6. A consultation pro forma and questionnaire was circulated electronically to stakeholders, practitioners and other interested parties. It was placed on the County Durham Partnership website for public access (see Appendix 3 for full details). The strategy was also considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
7. Following the three month consultation period the strategy was updated and the final draft agreed by the Safe Durham Partnership Board at their meeting on

24<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

### **Purpose of the Strategy**

8. The purpose of the strategy (which is attached at Appendix 4) is to bring together information from a range of sources, including service users, and service providers in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. It considers access to current service provision and the performance of those services related to outcomes. This will assist in identifying gaps in service demands and the potential cost of the services required in meeting that demand.
9. The strategy provides framework to support the commissioning of high quality services which respond to the broad spectrum of needs for those experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse.
10. Furthermore it establishes how and what the Safe Durham Partnership will commission in respect of specialist services based on identified needs linked to the key priorities identified within the SDP Plan. The strategy will support the vision of the Partnership that *“every child, adult and place in County Durham will be, and will feel safe.”*
11. The main changes that the strategy will facilitate are provided in the Executive Summary provided at Appendix 2 of this report.
12. Durham County Council and NHS County Durham have identified the funding that will be available to support the commissioning of services from 2012. It is envisaged that Supporting People will continue to fund the accommodation based refuge services but at a reduced level; Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) will continue to be funded by partner agencies from core funding. Given the combined funding from the Council and NHS County Durham is limited and based on the assessment of need it has been agreed by the Council and NHS County Durham and the Safe Durham Partnership that the priorities for change attached to this commissioning strategy are:
  - Specialist outreach services for adults and children.
  - Awareness raising and specialist preventative work based around a zero tolerance approach.
  - Remain safe scheme.
  - Voluntary domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.

### **Recommendations and reasons**

13. Cabinet is recommended to:
  - a) Agree the strategy which will enable the commissioning process to commence.

### **Background Papers**

- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services July 2011
- County Durham Domestic Violence Strategy 2008-11
- County Durham and Darlington Draft Sexual Violence Strategy 2011-14

- “A Hidden Truth..?” A Scrutiny Report About Domestic Abuse in County Durham, 2007

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance**

DCC and NHS County Durham and NHS Darlington have agreed to combine budgets to support the strategy.

### **Staffing**

Implementing the strategy would require the staff currently employed in the DCC Domestic Abuse Outreach Service to be TUPE'd over to the new provider. H.R advice would be sought once the strategy was formally agreed by Cabinet.

### **Risk**

If the strategy is not implemented victims of domestic abuse and their children could be put at risk through a lack of service provision.

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

An impact assessment has been completed. The strategy would positively impact on all victims and children who experience and witness domestic abuse and would contribute to increasing their safety. The Strategy would also ensure that a service was available to all men across the county which is currently not the case.

### **Accommodation**

Once implemented the issue of accommodation would be addressed by the providers.

### **Crime and Disorder**

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

### **Human Rights**

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

### **Consultation**

A three month period of consultation was carried out from February to May 2011 with partners, key stakeholders, service users and members of the general public.

### **Procurement**

Advice on procurement will be sought at the implementation stage of the strategy.

### **Disability Issues**

No adverse implications.

### **Legal Implications**

Under the Equality Act, in carrying out its functions, the Council must have regard to the following:

- a) Promotion of equality and opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- b) Elimination of discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- c) Elimination of harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- d) Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- e) Encouragement of participation by disabled people in public life.

f) The taking of steps to meet disabled peoples' needs even if this requires favourable treatment.

Under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended imposes a duty on local authorities and the police to "without prejudice to any other obligation imposed upon it - exercise its function with due regard to the need to do all it reasonably can do to prevent crime and disorder, substance use, anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the environment and reducing re-offending in its area.

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**Appendix 2: Executive Summary of the Joint Commissioning Strategy  
for Domestic Abuse Services 2011-14**

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**See attached.**

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### **Appendix 3: Consulted Groups**

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- Elected Members
- Members of the Domestic Abuse Forum Executive Group
- Chairs of Safe Durham Partnership Thematic Groups
- Safer Neighbourhood Units
- Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Groups
- Anti Social Behaviour teams
- Members of the Domestic Abuse Core Group
- Regional LGBT Development Officer
- Victim Support
- Area Action Partnership's
- Independent Advisory Group's
- Town and Parish Councils
- Service Providers
- Service Users
- Safe Durham Partnership Board
- Safe Durham Partnership Planning and Performance Group
- The consultation pro forma was placed on the County Durham Partnership website to enable wider public consultation
- A language panel was included on the consultation and an option was given for face to face consultation on the Strategy if required. However this option was not requested by any of the consulted groups