

**6 January 2015**

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**Report of Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Overview and Scrutiny with an update on developments undertaken in 2014 to improve delivery of services to support victims of domestic abuse in County Durham.

**Background**

2. Throughout 2014 there has been a significant amount of work undertaken by the Safe Durham Partnership thematic group, the Domestic Abuse Executive Forum (DAFEG). This work has been led by public health working with the portfolio lead Cllr Lucy Hovvels. The work has been undertaken in partnership with other agencies that support victims of domestic abuse, in particular the Police.
3. After a governance review of the Safe Durham Partnership the work of the DAFEG has now changed to also encompass sexual violence. This change has in turn led to a governance review of the thematic group, the development of new terms of reference (TOR) and a joint action plan which will be the delivery plan for the new group which is now named the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive (DASVEG).
4. The new group was formed in November and a development day is taking place on 16 January in order to agree the TOR and refine the draft joint action plan which will sit below the Safe Durham Partnership delivery plan. Discussion about the number and roles of the groups which sit below DASVEG will also take place.
5. A number of key pieces of work have been achieved in 2014 including the development of a multi-agency domestic abuse referral pathway (DARP); the "Embedding the lessons learned through Domestic Homicide Reviews" conference; funding to support the development of a new integrated domestic abuse service; a multi-agency joint training strategy and the new brand for domestic abuse in County Durham.
6. The remainder of the report will examine each of the new initiatives in further detail.

**Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway (DARP)**

7. In early 2014 the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) requested a simple referral pathway for disclosures of domestic abuse to ensure frontline practitioners could easily make appropriate referrals.
8. Nationally this has also been supported by the inclusion of this issue within the recently published Home Office report which provides an overview of lessons learned nationally from Domestic Homicide Reviews.

9. A new domestic abuse referral pathway was developed, presented to and agreed by DAFEG at the 9 July meeting. This was escalated to the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) meeting on 29 July where it was endorsed.
10. The referral tool was launched at the “Embedding the Lesson Learned through Domestic Homicide Reviews” conference in September 2014, to ensure that dissemination to frontline staff and practitioners was undertaken. A partnership communication plan has been developed to ensure that use of the DARP is embedded into all appropriate organisations.

### **Embedding the Lesson Learned from Domestic Homicide Reviews Conference**

11. In May 2014 the SDP wanted assurance that lessons learned through the domestic homicide review process were understood at all levels in partner organisations. There was a need to focus on frontline staff and practitioners to ensure that lessons learned were embedded in practice.
12. A similar exercise had been undertaken for the first DHR the SDP investigated and this had been a valuable experience for partner organisations. A workshop approach, with engagement and practical exercises had been well received by practitioners.
13. To progress the learning a larger scale event engaging with practitioners and supervisors was planned. This incorporated lessons learned from all seven of the DHR which have taken place in Durham. The Embedding the Lessons from Domestic Homicide Reviews event took place on 23 September 2014.
14. The event focused on three main topic areas and was based around actions that had been delivered as part of the domestic homicide review action plan. This was developed to share and manage the lessons learned from each domestic homicide review. The areas covered were:
  - Information sharing and communication
  - Impact of drugs, alcohol and mental health – toxic trio
  - Training and practice improvement
15. The event included presentations, discussion and practical exercises. The event was well attended by appropriate agencies and the feedback received was positive.

### **Integrated Model for Domestic Abuse Services**

16. In September 2014 funding from the public health budget was identified to support the development of a new domestic abuse service specification. The additional budget is to investigate and evidence a new integrated model for domestic abuse services which, once the specification had been developed, be considered by partner organisations and jointly funded from December 2016.
17. In addition to the core contract already in place delivering current services to those who are victims of domestic abuse, there will be a programme of creative and innovative initiatives which will be tested. All of the work being trialled will be evaluated by Durham University.

18. Areas being covered by the evaluation are :

- An early interventions programme focusing on healthy friendships/relationships in schools in County Durham
- Ongoing court support for victims of domestic abuse to help them through the criminal justice system
- An integrated perpetrator programme to tackle behaviours of the perpetrator of domestic abuse
- Family interventions programme utilising a family approach to tackling domestic abuse in the home
- Lead professional support for multi-agency interventions (MAI) dedicated resource to lead team around the adult cases for MAI.

19. This will allow the development of an evidenced model and service specification over the next 12 - 15 months. When the specification for an integrated model is in place then a procurement exercise will begin in September 2016 subject to partnership funding.

20. The Police have led on the development of a strategic funding group whose role it is to look at how we develop a new partnership approach to funding domestic abuse and sexual violence services.

21. If successful there will be a more joined up approach to funding this very important area of work.

### **Joint Training Strategy**

22. The development of a joint training strategy is an action within the SDP domestic homicide review action plan, work has been led by the sexual violence implementation group which reports into the DASVEG.

23. The strategy presents a focus and challenge to organisations to ensure that adequate and appropriate training is provided. The strategy draws on and recognises the current training provided by multi agency and single agency, to support good practice. It also considers future aspirations to ensure all staff have the right training and can deal with domestic and sexual abuse, regardless of role.

24. The strategy recognises the complexity of domestic and sexual abuse and the issues faced by practitioners. Issues such, as how to create an environment where victims can disclose; how to deal with disclosures; how to support victims; the impact on children; and understanding and working with perpetrators. In addition the strategy recognises there needs to be training in place dealing with specific issues such as child sexual exploitation, honour based violence and stalking and harassment.

25. Effective and appropriate training will ensure the fulfilment of the three strands that underpin the work to tackle sexual violence and domestic abuse, and provide a framework for the new DASVEG action plan which are:

- Prevention - prevent abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early to prevent it
- Protection - take action to reduce the risk to people who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice
- Provision - provide adequate support where abuse does occur and work together to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families

26. Implementation of the strategy will also be discussed as part of the development day for the new DASVEG group.

### **Domestic Abuse Brand: Sorry is not enough campaign**

27. In August 2014 the Police and DCC public health began work on the development of a multi-agency brand for domestic abuse the campaign is called 'Sorry's Not Enough – there is no excuse for abuse.'

28. The campaign was launched on 4 December 2014 and includes:

- A dedicated website [www.sorrystnotenough.co.uk](http://www.sorrystnotenough.co.uk)
  - One section for the public highlighting how to get help and
  - A separate login page for professionals to access documents like training and policy materials.
- These will include some of the materials such as :
  - The domestic abuse referral pathway document (DARP) and other joint materials which have been rebranded for professionals
  - Posters targeting victims and perpetrators – which will also be used on websites and by partner agencies in their outlets
  - Promotional materials such as pens, notepads

29. The vast majority of the materials are black and white – there are two reasons for this:

- The message is a strong one and is black and white – i.e. domestic abuse is wrong and there is no excuse.
- But it also means the posters and materials are easy for anyone to print out and as they are multiagency they won't clash with other logos etc.

30. The materials show a range of images in order to ensure all potential victims – females, males, the women 40+ (our key group to target following DHR learning), LGBT and BME are included.

31. The aim of the campaign is to:

- Have one clear brand so we have one voice when sending out messages
- Highlight the fact that domestic abuse is everyone's business and we all need to work together to tackle it.
- Make it easier for professionals and employers to access materials to raise awareness within their organisations and with their clients
- Increase awareness of domestic abuse to the public so that anyone who is experiencing abuse can be encouraged to get help and the community/employers know more about domestic abuse so they can help their staff/neighbours/family/friends via internet ads, posters etc.
- Raise awareness about domestic abuse in the run up to Christmas – domestic abuse happens every day but we do see seasonal increases in reporting and this includes the Christmas period.

### **Conclusion**

32. There has been a significant amount of work undertaken in 2014, this will continue throughout 2015 – 16.

## **Recommendations and Reasons**

33. The Safer and Stronger Overview Panel is recommended to:

- (i) Note the report on progress.
- (ii) Receive a further six month update report in June 2015.

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## Appendix 1: Implications

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**Finance** - none

**Staffing** - none

**Risk** - none

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** - none

**Accommodation** - none

**Crime and Disorder** – contributes to a reduction of crime and disorder in the County by reducing incidents of domestic abuse

**Human Rights** - none

**Consultation** - none

**Procurement** – a procurement exercise would need to be undertaken in September 2016 for the new integrated domestic abuse model.

**Disability Issues** - none

**Legal Implications** – none