

The Safe Durham Partnership

*Altogether safer*

**County Durham  
Domestic Abuse & Sexual  
Violence Strategy  
2015-2018**

Altogether  
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**Contents Page:**

Glossary of Terms .....	4
<b>Forward</b> .....	7
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	8
<b>1. Introduction Domestic Abuse</b> .....	9
<b>2. Achievements</b> .....	11
<b>3. Equality and Diversity</b> .....	13
<b>4. Safeguarding</b> .....	13
<b>5. Vision and Purpose</b> .....	13
<b>6. National and Local Context</b> .....	13
National .....	13
Local .....	15
<b>7. Needs Analysis</b> .....	17
Demographics .....	18
Ethnicity .....	18
Age .....	18
Disability .....	19
<b>8. Local Domestic Abuse Profile</b> .....	19
<b>9. Priority Groups</b> .....	25
Women .....	25
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT) .....	26
Black, Minority, Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) .....	26
Gypsy & Travellers .....	27
Children & Young People .....	27
Parents and Carers .....	29
Those with Disabilities .....	29
<b>10. Current Services for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence within County Durham</b> .....	29
Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) & Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) .....	29
Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC) .....	30
Outreach Services .....	30
Womens Refuges .....	31
Women's Empowerment Programmes .....	31
Remain Safe Scheme .....	31
Mandated Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme .....	312
Voluntary Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme .....	32
Domestic Homicide Reviews .....	32
Meadows Sexual Assault Referral Centre .....	32

	Other Services.....	32
<b>11.</b>	<b>Aims and Objectives of the Strategy .....</b>	<b>33</b>
	Prevention.....	33
	Provision.....	34
	Protection.....	34
	Pursue .....	34
<b>12.</b>	<b>Governance and Performance Management Framework.....</b>	<b>34</b>

## Glossary of Terms

A&E	Accident and Emergency Department
BMER	Black, Minority, Ethnic and Refugees
CAS	Children and Adults Services Directorate of Durham County Council
Coercive behaviour	An act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.
Controlling behaviour	A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
CPP	If the ICPC finds that a child is at significant risk of harm then a Child Protection Plan is put in place to ensure that the child will be safeguarded from harm in the future
DASVEG	Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Executive Group The thematic group of the Safe Durham Partnership focusing on Domestic Abuse issues
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review A review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by (a) a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or (b) a member of the same household as himself, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation Procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons
FM	Forced Marriage A marriage in which one or both of the parties is married without his or her consent or against his or her will
HBV	So called 'Honour Based Violence' Violence toward a member of a family or social group by other members, due to the belief of the perpetrators that the victim has brought dishonour upon the family or community
ICPC	An Initial Child Protection Conference must be convened when it is believed that a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. It brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), supporters/advocates and those professionals most involved with the child and family

IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocates support victims of domestic abuse through the criminal justice process
JHWS	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy A strategy to set out how the health and wellbeing needs of the local population will be addressed over the coming years
JCSDA	Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse Services Provides a strategic framework to support the commissioning of services to respond to the needs of those experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment The JSNA describes a process that identifies current and future local health and wellbeing needs in light of existing services and informs future service planning taking into account evidence of effectiveness. This document informs the JHWS.
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements Arrangements for responsible authorities tasked with the management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference A coordinated community response to high risk domestic abuse cases
NHS	National Health Service
NSPCC	National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PDP	Potentially Dangerous Persons A PDP is a person who has not been convicted of, or cautioned for any offence placing them into one of the three MAPPA categories, but whose behaviour gives reasonable grounds for believing that there is present a likelihood of them committing an offence or offences that will cause serious harm
SDP	Safe Durham Partnership The Community Safety Partnership of County Durham
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court A specialist court put in place to deal with Domestic Violence cases
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SVI	Seriously Vulnerable Individual Vulnerable adults who are currently not open cases and who do not want, or are deemed not to require

	an assessment of need, but who are at risk of serious or significant harm, often because of their behaviour or lifestyle choices
Trans	Transgender. An umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth, including but not limited to transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynous people, genderqueers, and gender non-conforming people.
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

## Foreword

Welcome to the Safe Durham Partnership County Durham Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy 2015-18.

Our vision for domestic abuse is that all agencies work together to seek to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse in County Durham and continue to provide and further develop a co-ordinated community response that provides high quality preventative, support and protection services and effectively deals with perpetrators.

Our vision for sexual violence is that sexual violence will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be brought to account for their actions. Victims of sexual violence will be supported, treated with dignity and respect and made to feel safe within their community whilst seeing their offenders brought to justice.

For the first time both agendas have been brought together in a single strategy. The purpose of our 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 both issues within County Durham and support the large number of adults and children whose safety and well being are affected in our communities. It ensures that the response to domestic abuse, rape, sexual violence and sexual exploitation is proportionate to the significant and damaging effect it has on the lives of individuals and communities within County Durham.

It presents a focus and challenge to us by ensuring that adequate and appropriate services are provided in an ever changing and uncertain financial landscape.

The strategy draws on and recognises the current services, support and good practice that already exists within County Durham and considers what role these have within the future aspirations of the Partnership and the community.

Change in this area is incremental, and through strategic management and multi-agency cooperation, cultural change is possible to make every adult, child and place in County Durham being, and feeling, safe.



Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director Children & Adults Services, Durham County Council



## **Executive Summary**

This strategy has been written on behalf of the Safe Durham Partnership through the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group; it has clear links with existing strategies including those relating to Alcohol Harm Reduction, Drug and Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Suicide.

The strategy presents a focus and challenge to the Safe Durham Partnership by ensuring that adequate and appropriate services are provided. It reflects the outcomes from the government's stance on domestic abuse and how the government intends to tackle the issue within the wider context of violence against women and girls. The strategy also draws on and recognises current services, support and good practice that exists within County Durham and considers what role these have within the future aspirations of the Partnership and the community.

Domestic abuse and sexual violence are hidden crimes that are significantly unreported. This violence and abuse has a major and long-lasting impact on victims, witnesses, children and young people, whole families and the wider community. It violates the basic human rights of men, women and children to be treated with respect and dignity, to have control over their bodies and property and to be able to live their lives free from fear.

The majority of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence are women and girls but men and boys can also be victims.

Both domestic abuse and sexual violence are gender based crimes in that there is more potential for women and girls to be victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence by virtue of their gender.

It is important to recognise that although domestic abuse and sexual violence often merit similar, if not identical, preventative and responsive approaches, they are not the same.

The Safe Durham Partnership does not accept domestic abuse or sexual violence; this strategy focuses on prevention and embedding cultural change within all agencies, organisations and the community.

## Vision

Our vision for domestic abuse is that all agencies work together to seek to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse in County Durham and continue to provide and further develop a co-ordinated community response that provides high quality preventative, support and protection services and effectively deals with perpetrators.

Our vision for sexual violence is that it will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be brought to account for their actions. Victims of sexual violence will be supported, treated with dignity and respect and made to feel safe within their community whilst seeing their offenders brought to justice.

## Objectives

The objectives within the strategy are:

1. Prevention – To prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence and reduce the associated harm.
2. Provision – To ensure that all victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence have the access to the right help and support throughout the criminal justice process and that services are available to address their needs.
3. Protection – To improve the criminal justice response to tackling domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation.
4. Pursue – To pursue perpetrators of domestic abuse through the criminal justice system and ensure that they face up to the implications of their actions.

## Key Performance Indicators

To measure our overall performance towards meeting these objectives we have set 23 key performance indicators. These are included at section 12.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is a serious crime, the impact of which cuts across all social, geographical and cultural groups. It is a crime largely perpetrated in private, with few witnesses and as a consequence is under reported and under recorded. In County Durham the Partnership has adopted the definition suggested by Government following the national consultation which took place during 2012. This being:

*“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:*

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional”*

- 1.2 This definition also includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), and is clear that victims are not confined to any one gender or ethnic group.
- 1.3 The Safe Durham Partnership recognises that domestic abuse can be experienced by anyone irrespective of sexuality or gender. This can be in straight (heterosexual), same sex (lesbian or gay) and bisexual relationships equally. Both men and women including those within trans communities can and do experience domestic abuse.
- 1.4 Although issues affecting those aged under 18 are a child safeguarding issue the Safe Durham Partnership will support the County Durham Children and Families Board and the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board in tackling these.
- 1.5 Violence within families takes many forms, and it is important to be mindful of the differences between types of violence. Kelly & Johnson, 2008 outlined that violence can generally be defined as being within four categories. These are:
- coercive controlling violence
  - violent resistance
  - situational couple violence, and
  - separation instigated violence
- 1.6 Because individual families and relationships are dynamic and unique, care is required when any system of classification is applied. However recognising the differences can lead to a range of potential benefits including better designed and articulated research, more appropriate policy formation, development of improved targeted services for those that use violence as well as for those that experience it.
- 1.7 There is no formally adopted definition in place within the UK however, the World Health Organisation (WHO) use the following to define sexual violence:
- “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work.*
- 1.8 This definition includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object; sexual exploitation, prostitution or trafficking.
- 1.9 Although issues affecting those aged under 18 are a child safeguarding issue the Safe Durham Partnership will support the County Durham Children and Families Board and the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board in tackling these.
- 1.10 This strategy outlines our overall aspirations to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and sexual violence in County Durham. Our strategic priorities are;

- Priority 1 : Prevention
- Priority 2 : Provision
- Priority 3 : Protection
- Priority 4 : Pursue

## 2. **Achievements**

2.1 A number of achievements have been met during the previous strategy period. These include:

- A single specialist domestic abuse service is now in place across County Durham. The service is delivered by Harbour Support Services and provides outreach support to adult victims and their children.
- A County Durham & Darlington wide brand for tackling domestic abuse has been developed and launched. The Sorrys Not Enough brand was launched December 2014.
- A service aimed at ensuring victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence get the support and advice they need has been commissioned. HALO is also working with agencies across County Durham to raise awareness of the issue and provide training.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board training has been expanded to incorporate honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- A workplace policy template has been developed and has been rolled out across local businesses of County Durham. A PCSO is in place within Durham Constabulary to support this process and training packs are being provided along with classroom based training for the organisation that sign up to the scheme.
- A Domestic Abuse team has been developed within Durham Constabulary to improve the police response to medium and standard level incidents. Funding was secured via the Innovations fund and is in place for 2 years.
- A level 1 e-learning package has been developed which aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse across organisations of the Safe Durham Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The training identifies signs and symptoms of abuse and how to refer onwards to support services.
- A pilot for an integrated model for delivering domestic abuse services has been commissioned by Public Health. The model will test various interventions for perpetrators, victims, children and young people. The pilot will be evaluated by Durham University and will inform future commissioning priorities.
- A County Durham Procedure for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews has been developed and agreed by partners.
- A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub is now in place within County Durham. The MASH is a central point for the screening, gathering, sharing and analysing of information about children. The MASH also includes a specialist domestic abuse worker.
- Remain Safe has continued to be funded through the Housing Solutions team with a contribution from Public Health. The scheme allows victims of domestic abuse and their children to remain in their homes by target hardening the property.

- A local procedure for implementing Clare's Law has been developed and is now in place. Clare's law aims to prevent men and women from becoming victims of domestic violence and abuse by providing a formal method of making enquiries about an individual who they are in a relationship with or who is in a relationship with someone they know, and there is a concern that the individual may be abusive towards their partner.
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders/Notices are now being used across County Durham to protect victims of domestic abuse. With DVPOs, a perpetrator can be banned with immediate effect from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim time to consider their options and get the support they need.
- Body worn cameras are now used by all police officers attending incidents. 43% of our body worn video footage is Domestic Incident related. The use of body worn cameras has shown to greatly improve the evidence for prosecutions.
- Durham Constabulary has improved procedures which now ensure that any children within the household are spoken to in relation to the incident.
- A Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Training Strategy has been produced and agreed which identifies need and gaps in provision in terms of training across the Safe Durham Partnership. Implementation of the plan is taking place within the LSCB training group.
- A County Durham procedure for the conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews has been developed and adopted by the Safe Durham Partnership.
- MARAC has seen an increase in referrals following a programme of multi-agency training being delivered across the County.

## **Sexual Violence**

- Operation Seabrook continues with the team hearing from 1,148 former inmates who were either physically or sexually abused at the detention centre in Medomsley. A number of files have been submitted to the CPS for a charging decision and the investigation continues. The operation has enabled 288 victims to access counselling services via 'The Meadows', the Partnerships Sexual Assault Referral Centre.
- Changing Lives have been commissioned to provide peer based research into sex work in County Durham and Darlington.
- A Child Sexual Exploitation worker continues to work in Durham Constabulary.
- Multiagency Child Sexual Exploitation audit highlighted good practice where agencies have worked together to reduce the risk of CSE and improved outcomes for young people. Suspected CSE offenders have been identified, disrupted or arrested.
- A training package has been adopted by Durham Constabulary around identifying potential victims of child abuse. 'Intervene to Protect a Child' training has been in place since March 2015 and has already seen good results.
- A Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2014- 2017 has been developed and agreed. The vision of the strategy is for children and young people in County Durham to be free from the risks and harm of sexual exploitation.

- A Rape Scrutiny Panel is now in place. The panel scrutinise case files which have failed to be taken forward for a prosecution or where a prosecution has failed, to see what lessons can be learned.
- A system is now in place at the SARC which enables victims of sexual violence to present to the SARC to give their evidence via a video link to the Court.

### 3. **Equality and Diversity**

- 3.1 This strategy has a number of implications for equality and diversity in line with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to age; ethnicity; religion or belief; disability; sexual orientation; and gender (including transgender, pregnancy and maternity). Issues are integrated within the strategy an example being the emphasis on services for women, who are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse.

### 4. **Safeguarding**

- 4.1 The Safe Durham Partnership recognises that every person within our community has the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse. Safeguarding adults and children is a shared responsibility and a high priority for all agencies in County Durham. All services must ensure they follow the safeguarding procedures for adults and children and are subject to monitoring and reviewing processes, which includes an assessment of their safeguarding processes.

### 5. **Vision and Purpose**

- 5.1 This strategy is intended to be an over-arching strategy for County Durham and covers the period 2015-2018. It has been prepared in consultation with partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors. Its purpose is to provide a framework to ensure the active contribution of partner agencies to the enhancement, strengthening and development of services to reduce domestic abuse and sexual violence and support the large number of adults and children whose safety and well being are affected in our communities.
- 5.2 Our strategic vision for domestic abuse is that all agencies to work together to seek to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse in County Durham and continue to provide and further develop a co-ordinated community response that provides high quality preventative, support and protection services and effectively deals with perpetrators.
- 5.3 Our strategic vision for sexual violence is that sexual violence will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be brought to account for their actions. Victims of sexual violence will be supported, treated with dignity and respect and made to feel safe within their community whilst seeing their offenders brought to justice.

### 6. **National and Local Context**

#### National

- 6.1 The Government strategy, "*Call to end violence against women and girls*" (VAWG) continues as part of their ongoing commitment to tackle all aspects of abuse in its widest context. The priority of VAWG includes tackling both domestic abuse and

sexual violence. Ending VAWG continues to be a top priority for UK Government which has made a number of commitments both national and internationally. Although the priority for government is VAWG they acknowledge the importance of preventing and responding to the sexual and gender-based violence suffered by women, men, boys and girls.

- 6.2 The National Group on Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable People was formed by the Government in 2013 to examine lessons learned from recent inquiries, and to shape the Government's response to all forms of sexual violence against children and vulnerable people. The progress report and action plan published in March 2015 sets out progress so far and next steps in the Government's response to sexual violence against children and vulnerable people.
- 6.3 Some of the recent policies the Home Office has implemented include; the introduction of a new definition of domestic violence and abuse, publishing guidance for reviewing domestic homicides, and the rolling out of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (commonly known as Clare's law) throughout England and Wales in March 2014.
- 6.4 In February 2014, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) published the findings from its review of the police's response to domestic violence. HMIC concluded that the current police response to domestic abuse is failing victims and made a number of recommendations. The Government launched a consultation Strengthening the law on domestic – a consultation in August 2014. As a result, the Government have added clauses to the Serious Crime Bill [HL] 2014-15 to make coercive control a specific criminal offence. There are a number of legal remedies for victims of domestic violence and abuse, including occupation orders, non-molestation orders, restraining orders and, now, DVPOs.
- 6.5 New laws have also been introduced on forced marriage and modern slavery. There have been amendments to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), revenge and rape pornography and grooming legislation and further changes are planned on criminalizing sexualized messaging. A FGM (female genital mutilation) prevention programme has been launched by the Department of Health and NHS England at the Girl Summit 2014. The programme focuses on prevention and care and aims to improve the response to FGM from health services. Mandatory reporting to the police for FGM carried out on under 18's come into effect on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and Home Office procedural information has been released. Revised multi-agency practice guidelines are expected at the end of 2015.
- 6.6 SafeLives Getting it right first time was published February 2015 and highlights a change in the approach from a response to high-risk victims to a response for all victims and children, and that we have to find every family where there is domestic abuse much more quickly to lessen the impact on the victim and children.
- 6.7 The CPS VAWG Crime Report for 2014-2015 highlights that the CPS reached the highest volume ever of all VAWG police referrals, charged defendants, prosecutions and convictions. Work with the police has successfully reversed the fall in volumes identified by the CPS over the previous few years. 2014/15 saw the highest volume ever for domestic violence, rape, sexual offences and child abuse convictions. The

report highlights the impact of social media on VAWG victims, the protection of more victims through restraining orders used in stalking and domestic abuse, the introduction of European Protection Orders, Sexual Harm Prevention Orders, new offences for forced marriage, protection orders for FGM and prevention orders for human trafficking.

- 6.8 The Department of Health, protecting people promoting health, outlines a public health approach to violence prevention for England. This document outlines the extent and impact of violence nationally, covering violence in the general population as well as specific violence types that can impact dramatically on different sectors of society: child maltreatment, youth violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and elder abuse.
- 6.9 NICE Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organizations they work with can respond effectively was published in February 2014. This guidance aims to help identify, prevent and reduce domestic violence and abuse. The guidance outlines that working in a multi-agency partnership is the most effective way to approach the issue at both an operational and strategic level. Associated quality standards are due for publication early 2016.
- 6.10 Paladin is a national advocacy service for victims of stalking and they highlight that stalking is one of the most frequently experienced forms of abuse which can escalate to rape and murder. Stalking is a pattern of repeat and persistent unwanted behaviour that is intrusive and engenders fear. It is when one person becomes fixated or obsessed with another and the attention is unwanted. Threats may not be made but victims may feel scared. Even if there is no threat this is still stalking and it is a crime. Stalking often takes place towards an ex-intimate partners but it can also occur in other circumstances and even where the victim does not know the perpetrator.
- 6.11 Data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows up to 700, 000 women are stalked each year (2009-12) although the British Crime Survey (2006) estimated 5 million people experience stalking each year but there are no official statistics on the percentage cyberstalked.
- 6.12 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men will experience staking in their adult life (Homicides, Firearm offences and intimate violence 2009/10; Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Home Office Statistical Bulletin 01/11).
- 6.13 The Office for National Statistics (2013) stated it was 1 in 6 women and 1 in 12 men. Paladin believe this to be grossly underestimated.

#### Local

- 6.14 The County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2030 is the overarching Strategy for the County Durham Partnership, it identifies clear priorities relating to domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2014 highlights both domestic abuse and sexual violence as an issue within County Durham. The Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2014-17 and the Joint Health



and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2015-18 have identified protecting vulnerable people from harm as a priority which encompasses both of these issues.

- 6.15 In September 2013, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to conduct an inspection of Home Office funded forces. The report found that the communities of County Durham and Darlington can have confidence that the police provide a good service to victims of domestic abuse and help keep them safe. Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the force and staff demonstrated a high level of commitment and awareness. They exercised appropriate discretion and worked well with partners. HMIC found that there is a strong focus on victim care and safety at each stage in the process. There are many positive examples of good practice that the constabulary has developed, and there are sound and robust processes in place to help keep victims safe. However, the report outlines a number of areas where the constabulary could further strengthen its response. These include reviewing practices and procedures, improved training which includes reference to stalking, harassment and so-called honour based violence, recording of information, reviewing of safety planning arrangements.
- 6.16 The County Durham draft Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2015-2018 clearly identifies the links between alcohol and domestic abuse. The strategy highlights that although excessive alcohol consumption does not cause or is an excuse for domestic violence, it might escalate the risk, as is the case with all violent crime. In County Durham 38.6% of domestic abuse incidents were recorded as alcohol related, alcohol was also cited as a factor in 86% of local Domestic Homicide Reviews. In a regional consultation on the impact of alcohol on frontline policing (Balance, April 2013) 91.6% (271) of Durham police who responded said that alcohol has a large impact upon domestic abuse. Research into alcohol and sexual violence (Finney, 2004) indicates a strong association between alcohol use and sexual violence. Many perpetrators have been drinking when they attack their victim or have alcohol abuse problems. Alcohol related sexual violence is more likely to occur between people who do not know each other well, and more likely to occur in bars and at parties than at either persons homes. There is often both offender drinking and victim drinking in incidents of sexual violence. The presence of alcohol has implications for the severity of the attack.
- 6.17 There is much evidence that exists of the links between domestic abuse and sexual violence. When rape and sexual violence occurs within the confines of an intimate relationship, it is, quite apart from a physical and sexual violation, a betrayal of trust. This type of sexual assault is so destructive because betrays the fundamental basis of their relationship, leaving victims questioning every understanding they have not only of their partner and their relationship, but of themselves, leaving them feeling betrayed and humiliated.
- 6.18 The Police & Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan 2015-2017 identifies a clear objective for the PCC to support victims, this includes key areas of focus including commission effective, appropriate and efficient Services for Victims, Deliver the regional Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, Reduce the incidence and impact of domestic abuse in all its forms, Reduce the impact of hate crime.

- 6.19 The Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families in County Durham was published in 2014 by the Think Family Partnership with input from various partner agencies across County Durham. It outlines a commitment from partners to build on what they know works and to strengthen joint working and consistency across partners to ensure they work together to identify needs and provide support to children, young people and their families at the earliest possible stage, improving outcomes and reducing costs.
- 6.20 Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board has the lead in tackling child sexual exploitation. Their strategy, published in 2014, outlines the vision and priorities of the Board. The vision of the strategy is for Children and Young People in County Durham to be free from the risks and harms of sexual exploitation. The priorities underpinning the work on CSE for 2014 – 2017 have been formulated under the following strategic aims; prevent – making it more difficult to exploit children; protect – identifying and safeguarding children who are at risk; pursue – the offenders, disrupt and where possible prosecute their activity.
- 6.21 The County Durham Public Mental Health Strategy 2013-2017 identifies the importance of social support being protective against suicide especially for women experiencing domestic abuse. Good relationships with parents and supporting school environments also mitigate against suicide risk in adolescents who have been sexually abused.
- 6.22 Examples of other linked local strategies and procedures include:
- County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017;
  - County Durham Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2015–2017;
  - County Durham Drug Strategy 2014-2017 ;
  - County Durham and Darlington Dual Needs Strategy 2015-2018;
  - County Durham Children, Young People and Families Plan 2015-2017;
  - Safe Durham Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2011-2014;
  - County Durham Mental Health Strategy 2014-2017;
  - Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2014-17;
  - Safe Durham Partnership ‘honour’ based violence and forced marriage policy
  - County Durham Inter-Agency Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
  - County Durham Procedure for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews
  - Safe Durham Partnership Multi Agency Training Strategy

## 7. **Needs Analysis**

### Demographics

- 7.1 The Office of National Statistics in 2014 estimated that the 15+ age group of County Durham was 434,900 of which 48.7% were male (211,741) and 51.3% were female (223,206). The ONS Survey estimates that approximately 1.6% of the population have identified themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people.
- 7.2 Given that research indicates 30% (1 in 4) women and (16.3%) 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime (figures derived from 20012/13 British

Crime Survey) based on the population figures, this means potentially 66,100 female and 34,400 males including approximately 1,600 LGBT people 16 years and above will experience domestic violence in County Durham.

- 7.3 The “ready reckoner” produced by the Home Office to estimate numbers and costs of violence against women and girls’ estimates that in County Durham, based on the population size and the regional prevalence rate from the British Crime Survey, 17,285 women and girls aged 16-59 have been victims of domestic abuse in the last year; 7,223 have been victims of sexual assault and 20,553 have been victims of stalking.

### Ethnicity

- 7.4 The ethnic make-up of the County Durham population (ONS Mid-2011 experimental estimates) is shown in the table below:

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage of Population</i>
White	503,302	98.1%
Gypsy/Traveller	467	0.1%
Mixed	3,094	0.6%
Asian/ Asian British	3,258	0.6%
Black/ Black British	701	0.1%
Chinese	1,598	0.3%
Other Ethnic Group	822	0.2%

- 7.5 Language and communication skills can present barriers to individuals’ confidence and ability to disclose abuse. Cultural issues are extremely important and need to be understood, especially if we want to encourage all communities to be able to disclose any type of abuse that they may be suffering.
- 7.6 Ethnicity for the purposes of this strategy needs to be recognised as barriers can exist or can be created between communities and agencies through a lack of understanding of what communities need.

### Age

- 7.7 The age of the population within County Durham has been taken from the ONS Mid-2014 population estimates and is shown in the table below:

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Population</i>
0-4 years	28,800
5-14 years	54,000
15-24 years	68,800
25-44 years	120,900
45-65 years	143,700
65 and above	101,500

7.8 The Safe Durham Partnership recognise that domestic abuse can and does occur across all adolescent and adult age ranges and impacts on children and young people.

Disability

7.9 The number of people with a registered disability or health issue has been provided by Durham County Council and is accurate to the end of March 2011.

People registered as:	Number
Have a physical disability	29,506
Having a learning disability	2,032
Deaf/hard of hearing	3,006
Blind/partially sighted	3,913
Having a car badge	35,815
Total registered disabled	74,272

7.10 Disability can be a factor which increases the victim’s vulnerability to abuse.

**8. Local Domestic Abuse Profile**

8.1 There are a number of datasets available which highlight the current pattern within County Durham around domestic abuse related issues. These are provided below.

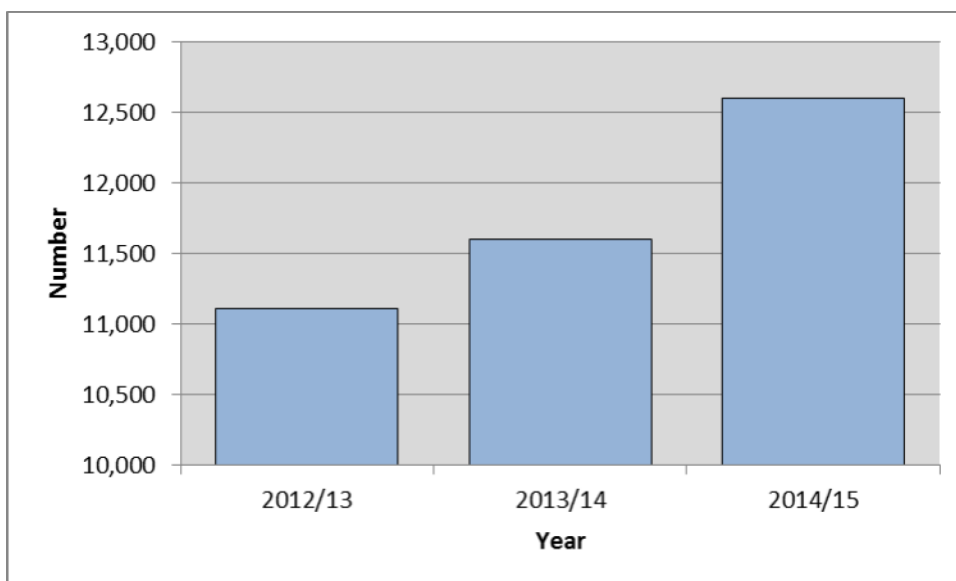


Chart 1 – Number of domestic incidents recorded by the Police 2012/13-2014/15 (Durham Constabulary 2015)

8.2 Chart 1 highlights that within County Durham the number of reported domestic incidents has increased by 13.4% since 2012/13 which may indicate:

- Increased confidence in reporting to the police
- Increased incidents of domestic abuse
- Increased early recognition of the signs of abuse
- Increased awareness of all aspects of abuse

- 8.3 The evidence for assigning the increase in incidents to confidence in reporting is strong. It is reasonable to assume that significant efforts at improving confidence to report domestic abuse have had a positive impact.
- 8.4 The commissioning of services (e.g. Harbour, Halo), awareness raising (e.g. sorry's not enough'), awareness raising of professionals (e.g. multiagency training strategy, workplace policy template, e-learning...) and improved practices (e.g. whole family approach, improved first response) coincide with increases in reporting of domestic abuse which is widely accepted as being significantly under reported.
- 8.5 While an increase in reporting is welcomed there may be implications in terms of demand on current levels of service. Referrals into specialist domestic abuse services have also increased year on year highlighting the need for sufficient services to meet this increasing demand.
- 8.6 Domestic abuse is classified by the Police into three categories: **standard** - current evidence does not indicate likelihood of causing serious harm; **medium** - there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The offender has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change in circumstances, for example, failure to take medication, loss of accommodation, relationship breakdown, drug or alcohol misuse; and **high** - there are identifiable indicators of risk of serious harm. The potential event could happen at any time and the impact would be serious.
- 8.7 Risk Levels from April 2014 – March 2015 for County Durham are highlighted in the table below.

<b>Risk Levels</b>	<b>% of incidents</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Standard	57.3	5684
Medium	39.1	3876
High (referral to MARAC)	3.6	361

- 8.8 Regardless of the level of risk all victims would require some form of support or intervention. In the past standard risk cases have not received targeted resource. Durham Constabulary have been successful in receiving funding from the Police Innovations Fund to develop a domestic abuse team to work on those high volume cases that are assessed to be either standard or medium risk. The team will develop interventions suitable to address the issues and quality assure those cases deemed as medium risk.
- 8.9 Repeat victims to MARAC have increased since 2012/13, this is due to ongoing work to improve the identification of repeat incidents through agencies flagging and tagging files and the delivery of improved training. National data shows average repeats to MARAC at 24% and SafeLives have recommended that we continue to progress work that ensure these repeats are identified and re-referred into MARAC.

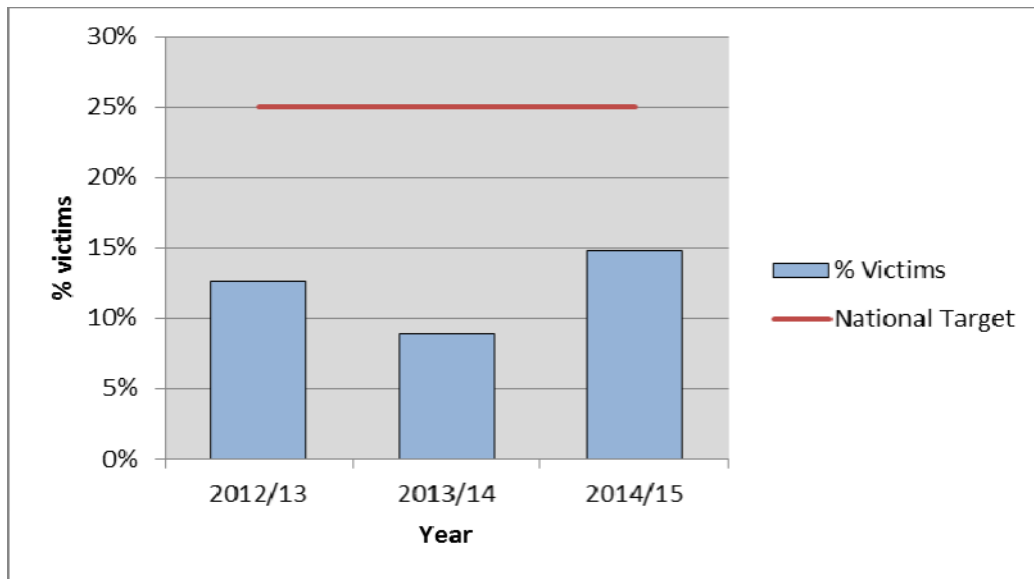


Chart 2 - % of Domestic Abuse victims who are repeats victims compared with National target (County Durham MARAC, 2015)

- 8.10 The majority of referrals into MARAC continue to originate from the Police. SafeLives have recommended that any potential barriers to agencies identifying and referring high risk cases to MARAC are reviewed in order to increase the range, volume and also ratio of partner agency/police referrals to approximately 40%/60%. Work is underway to progress this through targeted training by the MARAC Coordinator.

MARAC Data	Number	%	Referring Agencies	Number
No. of Cases	472	-	Police	307
No. of repeats	80	17	Health	8
BME	33	7	Probation	7
LGBT	0	0	Mental health	6
Registered Disabled	24	5	DCC Childrens Services	5
Male	24	5	Housing	5
Female	448	95	IDVAs	2
Children involved	506	-		

- 8.11 National research indicates that minority groups are as vulnerable and sometimes more vulnerable to domestic abuse as predominant groups. Given this research and the data above, when comparing these figures with countywide population breakdowns, it is evident that LGBT and registered disabled groups are under-represented on MARAC. These figures identify that under-reporting is more prevalent within these groups and referrals to MARAC are not being received.
- 8.12 A Rape Profile carried out by Durham Constabulary in 2012 showed that within County Durham 25% of all recorded rapes are related to domestic abuse. The most violent rapes were found to involve partners or ex-partners of the victim.

8.13 Seven domestic homicide reviews have been conducted since the introduction of statutory guidance in April 2011. Analysis carried out through the review process show that alcohol and mental health feature in all but one of the reviews; a lack of professional curiosity often featured within agencies working with individuals; non attendance of onward referrals/appointments was often a feature; women aged 40+ are often the victim of domestic homicide reviews; there is a lot of work that has taken place or is underway, concentrated around statutory agencies; and in all cases the review panel found that the homicides could not have been prevented.

8.14 Four Women’s Refuges are available within County Durham. Usage for 2011/12 is identified below.

Refuge Age Group 2011 – 2012	Numbers*
16-24 years	43
25-38 years	49
39-45 years	18
46-49 years	18
60-64 years	2

\*Please note that service usage is not statistically representative of domestic abuse incidents in County Durham

8.15 Harbour Support Services are part of the SafeLives Insights project and provide information in relation to clients accessing outreach support. Information is based on 12 months data from April 2014 – March 2015. During this period 465 intake forms were submitted to the outreach service with 433 of these being suitable for analysis. Headline facts from the report are identified below:

- 14% of adults referred had previously accessed the service during the last 12 months, i.e. were repeats.
- The primary referral route to the service was from the Police (27%) followed by self referrals (26%)
- 96% of referrals were from females.
- 74% of households had children present with an average of 1.9 children per household.
- 31% had children and young peoples service involvement.
- 77% of clients identified the primary perpetrator as an ex-partner and 85% stated they were not living together at the time of intake to the service.
- 36% had stated a mental health problem in the past 12 months, of which almost half had accessed a specialist service in relation to this.
- 18% had planned/attempted suicide and 19% had self harmed.
- 7% have a disability.

8.16 Information in relation to perpetrators is reported by victims and the data report shows the following:

- 34% misused drugs and 39% misused alcohol in the past 12 months.
- 31% experienced mental health issues in the past 12 months.

Of the 344 exit forms submitted to the project, 309 were suitable for analysis and they showed the following key points:

- 72% of caseworkers perceived a moderate/significant reduction in risk.
- 79% of clients reported feeling somewhat or much safer.
- 76% of clients reported that their quality of life was much/a little improved.
- 88% were confident or very confident to access support.

8.17 SafeLives also provide a data on intake into the womens refuges within the County that Harbour currently manage. 17 intake forms were submitted during this time period and headline facts are identified below:

- 94% of clients had attempted to leave the perpetrators in the 12 months prior to intake.
- 65% identified a mental health problem in the last 12 months and 45% of these had accessed specialist services.
- 24% identified that they had mental health issues and substance misuse.
- 41% had planned/attempted suicide and 35% had self harmed.
- 41% of clients had attended A & E as a result of abuse or accompanied a child injured in the abuse.
- In terms of client reported information on the perpetrator of violence, 47% reported drugs misuse, 29% reported alcohol misuse and 41% reported mental health issues in the last 12 months.
- 35% of perpetrators were reported to have a previous criminal record in relation to domestic abuse.

8.18 Of the 13 exit forms submitted to the project, 12 were suitable for analysis and they showed the following key points:

- 67% of caseworkers perceived a moderate/significant reduction in risk.
- 80% of clients reported feeling somewhat or much safer.
- 70% of clients reported that their quality of life was much/a little improved.
- 90% were confident or very confident to access support.

8.19 During 2014/15, 358 victims have presented to Housing Solutions as homeless due to fleeing domestic abuse. 155 of these were referred to the Remain Safe project and their homes were target hardened in order to avoid homelessness. 34 of the presentations were accepted as homeless due to domestic abuse. This equates to 18.3% of all acceptances of homelessness within County Durham being due to domestic abuse. The number of acceptances of homeless due to domestic abuse has reduced since 2013/14 by 27.3% since 2011/12.

8.20 Data obtained from DCC Children and Adults Service (CAS) Children Care shows the percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences resulting in a Child Protection Plan due to one of the key Parental Risk Factors being domestic abuse. **In 2013/14 this was at 53.0% falling to 35.0% in 2014/15.** In 2015/16 the percentage increased to 57.8%."



## **Local Sexual Violence Profile**

- 8.21 In County Durham between April 2014 and March 2015 there were 280 rapes and 516 other instances of sexual violence recorded by the Police which would suggest significant under reporting. Indeed it is estimated that nationally around 90% of rapes are not disclosed by the victim. It is therefore difficult to assess with any accuracy the level of sexual violence that takes place within the County and also potentially raises concerns about a lack of confidence in reporting to the police.
- 8.22 Of the 796 rapes and sexual offences reported to the police during this period, 66% of victims were female and 33% were male.
- 8.23 A rape profile published by Durham Constabulary in 2011 identified the following key points:
- Victims were more likely to be attacked by somebody they knew and more than likely within familiar surroundings;
  - In 66% of reported cases, the rape or act of sexual violence was historic.
  - Where 'acute' rapes were reported they were more likely to be reported on weekends between 2100 and 0700 the following morning. Alcohol was believed to be a contributory factor in the majority of these cases.
- 8.24 Of the 796 incidents recorded during 2014/15, 580 cases involved a victim under the age of 16 years. Breaking this down further, 177 were under the age of 13 and their relationship with the offender was most commonly that of a family member or an acquaintance.
- 8.25 Within the profile conducted in 2011, partners reported growing concerns about the increased use of social networking sites by young people which increased the risk of sexual exploitation. A worrying culture and changing of attitudes towards sex has developed amongst children and young people, which resulted in the increased sexualisation of young people and therefore an increased vulnerability to sexual harm. This continues to be an issue particularly around the issue of sharing sexualised images of themselves.
- 8.26 Concerns were also highlighted around the vulnerability of young people going missing from home and their vulnerability to sexual exploitation. This vulnerability is magnified for those young people who go missing from the Looked After system.
- 8.27 Sample testing of incidents recorded by the police would suggest that victims of sexual violence have often been considered vulnerable in other areas. Common factors which were evident were domestic abuse, or child abuse as a young person. In almost half of all reported rape cases, the offender was reported as a partner or family member. It is likely that other forms of abuse were also present within these relationships – indeed in more than a third of cases involving sexual assault within an intimate relationship, domestic abuse was also a feature of the relationship. The majority of rapes that had been reported within intimate relationships, were reported historically, i.e. more than 12 months after the rape took place.
- 8.28 Reports of stranger rape were rare, but when reported, were more likely to be reported as acute rape. Of the stranger rapes identified, they occurred most frequently within open spaces. In a proportion of cases, there were rapes that were

reported to the police but that did not result in a crime being recorded. There are a number of factors why this may be the case. In some instances, the victim became uncooperative with the criminal justice process, but on some occasions complaints were shown to have been fabricated. There is a potential that where victims have refused to co-operate with the criminal justice process, that this could be due to a lack of confidence in the criminal justice process, once the crime had been reported, causing the victim to retract their complaint. 8% of reported rapes involved male victims. This is in line with national trends, however it is believed to highlight a significant under reporting in cases of male rape and therefore the true picture could not be established.

- 8.29 The number of sexual offences reported to the Police has increased from 306 during 2012/13 to 803 during 2014/15 and referrals into the Sexual Assault Referral Centre have increased from 252 to 576 during the same period. As for rape and other sex offences, that rise is largely due to the greater confidence of victims to come forward rather than an increase in the crime itself, following recent national media coverage of the issue. The majority of these incidents are in relation to historic offences.

## 9. **Priority Groups**

### Women

- 9.1 Nearly 1 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse each year (*2009/10 British Crime Survey*). Two women are killed each week by their partner or ex-partner (*Womens Aid (March 2011)*). 54 per cent of women victims of serious sexual assault were assaulted by their partner or ex-partner (*Stern, (2010)*). Women experience an average of 35 incidents of domestic violence before reporting an incident to the police (*Yearnshaw 1997*). 19 per cent of women have experienced stalking since the age of 16 (*Smith (Ed.), Coleman, Eder and Hall (January 2011)*).
- 9.2 Research indicates that one in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic abuse. This suggests a level of parity; however, what these figures conceal is the fact that the 47% of males experienced a single incident, with an average of seven incidents per victim, compared with 28% of female victims experiencing a single incident, with an average of 20 incidents per victim (Walby and Allen 2004). Women victims of male perpetrators are more likely to be repeatedly abused or murdered.
- 9.3 Domestic abuse is experienced by women of all ages however older women are often overlooked. The government define older women as those over the age of 50. There is very little recent research on this issue however, nationally there have been a number of high profile domestic homicides involving female victims that fall within this age group.
- 9.4 Local domestic homicide data within the local profile above also supports the need for interventions for women within the 40+ age group.
- 9.5 The majority of victims in County Durham who report to the Police and who are involved with other agencies including MARAC are females, in line with national trends.

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT)

- 9.6 Nationally, there is limited research into the issue of domestic abuse in LGBT communities. However research that has been carried out has identified the following:
- One national survey into prevalence among lesbians and gay men reported that 29% of men and 22% of women had experienced domestic abuse. Of these, 24% and 19% had experienced some recurrent abuse (Henderson, 2005)
  - A more recent national survey completed by gay men and lesbians, 38% of respondents reported they had experienced domestic abuse at some time in a same-sex relationship (Donovan, et al 2006)
  - An evaluation of a men's domestic abuse project in South Wales reported that 31.2% of gay men referred were assessed as being at high or very high risk, with 27% of gay men experiencing repeat victimisation (Robinson and Rowlands, 2006)
  - Nationally, knowledge of the experience of trans communities is limited, although one study found that one in ten transgender people had experienced domestic abuse, while another found that 50% of participants had been raped or assaulted by an intimate partner (Fish, 2006)
- 9.7 Nationally there is a general lack of recognition that domestic abuse can occur within LGBT relationships. Stonewall, the lesbian, gay and bisexual charity, highlight that this lack of visibility makes it difficult for people to report incidents of domestic abuse or feel protected by structures that exist to protect people.

## Black, Minority, Ethnic and Refugee (BMER)

- 9.8 The population within County Durham from BMER groups is low however it needs to be recognised that language and communication skills can create barriers to individuals' confidence and ability to disclose abuse. Cultural beliefs or concerns such as pressure to stay from family members, bringing shame on the family, or abuse being viewed as accepted behaviour are extremely important and need to be understood, especially if we want to encourage all communities to be able to disclose any type of abuse that may be suffering. Other issues relevant to the Domestic Abuse agenda include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage (FM) and so called 'honour' based violence (HBV).
- 9.9 FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The Home Office estimates that over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 are at high risk of FGM in the UK each year and that 66,000 women in the UK are living with the consequences, although its true extent is unknown due to the hidden nature of the crime. The majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk however adult females can also be at risk.

- 9.10 Although County Durham does not have a large resident population from the practising countries e.g. Somalia, Guinea, Djibouti, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Sudan, etc, all areas, responsible authorities and professionals should be aware of and actively prevent and tackle FGM. However, home office guidance identifies that dispersed migrant populations in overwhelmingly white areas are more likely to support FGM because they are isolated as there are no support networks to tell them otherwise.
- 9.11 Forced marriage and so called ‘honour’ based violence can be disproportionately prevalent within Asian communities.
- 9.12 There have been a low number of cases of FM and HBV reported within Durham Constabulary. Due to the small number and in order to avoid disclosure of sensitive information we are unable to report the exact numbers. However, the ability of services to deal with this issue needs to be incorporated within specialist services.

### Gypsy & Travellers

- 9.13 Gypsies and Travellers are one of the largest ethnic minority groups in County Durham. However the population of this group changes on a seasonal basis as many travel through and temporarily stay in the county during the year. The nature of their lifestyle can mean that access to education for children and access to health for all age groups are particular issues of concern.
- 9.14 A briefing paper published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in October 2010, highlights that:
- Although no reliable statistics are available regarding prevalence of domestic abuse in Gypsy and Traveller communities, a 2007 study in Wrexham found that 61% of English Gypsy Woman and 81% of married Irish women interviewed had experienced direct domestic abuse.
  - Domestic abuse is accepted as normal for many women and although many incidents of domestic abuse are perpetrated by husbands and intimate partners, other family members may also be perpetrators.
- 9.15 National research identifies that forced marriage and honor based violence also features within this community as well as BME communities.

### Children & Young People

- 9.16 County Durham Children’s Trust Children and Young Peoples Plan 2009-12 has a clear role to play in addressing the negative impact of domestic abuse has on children and young people. The importance of this issue is reflected in the Business Plan of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and the Board being represented at the Safe Durham Partnership Domestic Abuse Forum Executive Group.
- 9.17 Domestic abuse impacts on all five Every Child Matters Outcomes: staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being.

- 9.18 The Munro Review, 2011 highlights that an association between parental problems, such as domestic abuse, and abuse and neglect of children in well-established and makes it clear that adult services are vital in recognising the possible impact that such problems may be having on children. Similarly, children and young people rely on the police being sufficiently aware of the link between domestic abuse and the harm done to them when witnessing or being caught up in violence.
- 9.19 Children as witnesses, victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse are more likely to continue this pattern of behaviour into adulthood. Early intervention can improve the long term effects of abuse, and can make long-term improvements both socially and financially across all statutory agencies.
- “The majority of children witness the violence that is occurring, and in 90% of cases they are in the same or next room” (Hughes, 1992).*
- 9.20 Research carried out by the NSPCC identified that, nationally 750,000 children witness domestic violence each year.
- 9.21 In terms of abuse within teenage relationships the NSPCC identified that one in four teenage girls have been hit by a boyfriend (with one in nine reporting severe physical violence) and 18 per cent of boys reported some form of physical partner violence (NSPCC, 2009).
- 9.22 Changes have been made within legislation due to the increased awareness of the impact of abuse on children. Children living in households where domestic violence is happening are now identified as "at risk" under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. From 31 January 2005, Section 120 of this act extended the legal definition of harming children to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill treatment of others. This would include witnessing domestic abuse.
- 9.23 The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process heard 293 cases between April 2011 – March 2012, which included 370 children. As MARAC concentrates on our most at-risk victims, this highlights the level of risk that children are living with and potentially being subjected to within County Durham.
- 9.24 The embedding of sex and relationship education in schools with a strong emphasis on healthy appropriate friendships and relationships is paramount in tackling inappropriate attitudes and values around domestic abuse for both adults and children.
- 9.25 As well as educating children and young people on sex and relationships, schools are in a prime position to identify the early signs of children as witnesses/victims of domestic abuse, and to take supportive action for the child through the Common Assessment Framework.
- 9.26 Significant changes are taking place within Childrens Social Care following the successful bid to the Innovations Fund which may have a positive impact upon the levels and severity of domestic abuse in families within County Durham. It is important to ensure that strong links exist between the Innovations project and the

wider work within Childrens Services and the Safe Durham Partnership to ensure a joined up approach exists to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence.

### Parents and Carers

- 9.27 Anecdotally, we do know that child-on-adult abuse between parent/carers and their children exists in County Durham, with likely negative outcomes such as poor school attendance as a result.
- 9.28 This definition of domestic abuse adopted by the Safe Durham Partnership has recently been updated in line with the findings of the recent Government consultation. The definition now includes those aged 16 years or over and includes abuse between family members and those in intimate relationships.
- 9.29 In comparison to studies of domestic violence between intimate partners and of parental abuse of children, less attention has been paid to adolescent violence towards parents. Research has found that there is little tangible evidence surrounding this in much the same way that other forms of family violence have been hidden in the past (Browne & Hamilton, 1998; Downey, 1997; Sheehan 1997).

### Those with Disabilities

- 9.30 MARAC data recorded 9 victims as registered disabled between 1st April 2011 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 which equates to 3.1% of cases. It must be noted that this is not the total number of disabled victims recorded for the period, only those risk assessed through MARAC, and not all disabled people are registered as disabled. Local information relating to those with disabilities as victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse is limited. However it is recognised nationally that under-reporting is an issue in this within this group.
- 9.31 Disability can be a factor that increases a victims vulnerability when they are in an abusive relationship. The victim can be reliant on their abusive partner to help, support and assist them and abusive partners can use this vulnerability and need for support as another way of controlling them.
- 9.32 Disability is one of the risk factors within the risk assessment used to make a referral into MARAC.

## **10. Current Services for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence within County Durham**

- 10.1 Good practice can be seen both locally and nationally and the Safe Durham Partnership will always look to support programmes and services which are demonstrating an impact on tackling the issue of domestic abuse.
- 10.2 Although not comprehensive, examples of local good practice have been highlighted by professionals but more importantly by victims who have used the services or accessed the programmes within County Durham.

### Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) & Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA)

- 10.3 MARAC provides a consistent approach to risk assessment which identifies those victims who are at most risk of serious harm. Once a victim has been assessed at this level of risk a multi agency meeting is held and agencies will work together to find a way of reducing that risk using available interventions.
- 10.4 The IDVA Role is a component part of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) and exists to provide specialist support and advice to victims of domestic abuse-related crimes whilst they are involved in the criminal justice system. The IDVA also contributes to the MARAC process.
- 10.5 The IDVA service throughout County Durham and Darlington collates direct feedback from victims about the service they received from the IDVA and also about their views on how successful the final outcome of any case heard at court was for them. This feedback is invaluable and has assisted in highlighting from the victim's point of view the importance of the IDVA role and how this role has assisted and sometimes represented the one thing that has kept the victim going throughout very difficult and high risk times.
- 10.6 There are three IDVAs in place within County Durham, working within the MARAC.
- 10.7 MARAC and IDVA are funded via contributions from Durham Constabulary, Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council & Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust. A Memorandum of Agreement is in place between these organisations which outlines the current funding arrangements for the MARAC and IDVA Service.

#### Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC)

- 10.8 When referring to a specialist DV court, this is not so much referring to a court building or jurisdiction, but to a specialised way of dealing with domestic violence cases in the magistrates' courts. The aim of the SDVCs is:
- To provide a coordinated judicial response to criminal proceedings involving domestic violence incidents.
  - To develop and coordinate the provision of victim/witness services within the criminal justice system.
  - To encourage the victims of domestic violence incidents to come forward and report cases and to remain engaged with the criminal justice system throughout the process.
  - To improve the experience of victims and witnesses.
  - To increase the confidence of the public and victims in the criminal justice system to deal justly with offences.
  - To increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice.

#### Outreach Services

- 10.9 The specialist domestic abuse outreach service within County Durham provides services within the community to adult victims and children who witness and experience domestic abuse. The service provides individual practical and emotional support to adult victims; counselling services for adults and children; group

programmes; training to other agencies; and awareness raising to partner agencies and the general public to highlight that domestic abuse is unacceptable. The service also provide a programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

- 10.10 Harbour Support Services are currently delivering this service, commissioned by Durham County Council's Public Health. The contract runs until September 2016 and the procurement process for this service will commence early 2016.

#### Womens Refuges

- 10.11 There are four womens refuges in County Durham funded through Durham County Council CAS Commissioning Team.

- Thirteen Capacity 9
- Harbour Capacity 9
- Harbour Capacity 6
- Wear Valley Womens Aid Capacity 6

#### Women's Empowerment Programmes

- 10.12 The Freedom Programme is a nationally recognised programme which is open to women who wish to learn more about the reality of domestic abuse, whether she is in or has left an abusive relationship, including women who have no plan to leave their partner. Anyone can train to be a facilitator for the Freedom Programme and these are ran at numerous venues across the County and are provided by Harbour Support Services.
- 10.13 Other empowerment programmes are available across the County through local voluntary and community groups, DCC's One Point Service have been trained to deliver the iGroup programme to women survivors.

#### Remain Safe Scheme

- 10.14 The Remain Safe Scheme is target-hardening for existing victims of domestic abuse which enables them to remain in their homes where possible when under threat of violence. Target hardening is the implementation of practical security measures such as changing locks and adding panic alarms.
- 10.15 The Remain Safe Scheme is funded by Durham County Councils Housing Solutions with a contribution made to the scheme by Public Health. Any target hardening work required is carried out in-house by Durham County Council Direct Services within specified timescales.

#### Mandated Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme

- 10.16 The mandated perpetrator programme is provided by the Probation Trust funded through the service base budget. It is a 29 session programme for men with a women's safety worker attached to the programme to support the partners of participants. Seven programmes run a year across County Durham.



## Voluntary Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme

- 10.17 Harbour Support Services provide a voluntary perpetrator programme within County Durham. The programme started taking referrals early 2015. The programme will be delivered based on the needs of the perpetrator and this new model will be evaluated by Durham University in 2016. The findings from the evaluation will be used to re-procure the service late 2016.

## Domestic Homicide Reviews

- 10.18 Multi agency statutory guidance for domestic homicide reviews came into effect on April 13th 2011. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims act (2004). Domestic Homicide Reviews are a statutory function of the Safe Durham Partnership and a review is commenced shortly after a Domestic Homicide has taken place.
- 10.19 These reviews allow professionals to establish and act upon any lessons learned from the homicide and apply these lessons to changes in the policies and working practices of relevant organisations in order to improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working.

## The Meadows Sexual Assault Referral Centre

- 10.20 The Meadows Sexual Assault Referral Centre aims to provide a sensitive and comprehensive service to residents of County Durham and Darlington who have experienced rape or sexual assault. All services are free and are available to both men and women. The SARC is joint funded by Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council and Durham Constabulary. The SARC has recently introduced a system which allows vulnerable victims of crime to provide evidence to court through video link.

## Other Services

- 10.21 Durham County Councils Children and Adults Services Safeguarding and Specialist Services work with significant numbers of children as a consequence of witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse.
- 10.22 Universal services such as Health Visitors, School Nurses, Sexual Health Services, Midwifery, ED's, etc all have a role to play in identifying and signposting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence to appropriate support.
- 10.23 Durham County Councils Housing Solutions Team are available to give full information and advise on accommodation issues including where clients are at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse. A regional bid was submitted to access DCLG funding in March 2015, this bid was successful and a service is now in place focused around a Rapid Response Team of specialist Domestic Abuse Navigators who could provide rapid access to suitable tenancies in the private and social rented sector for those at risk of homelessness or in need of refuge accommodation. The

service will be further supported by a personalisation fund enabling purchasing of essential items to set up a new home and will provide a response that enables victims to plan a move or access alternative housing within 48 hours via the rapid response team together with specialist support. The service will also provide a cohort of 9 dispersed properties around the County for families to access.

- 10.24 Aside from statutory services, the voluntary and community sector deliver a large amount of services locally, largely funded through charitable organisations and local community funding such as Area Action Partnerships. These range from support for LGBT survivors, the delivery of education packages to schools, counselling and therapeutic services for victims. The Safe Durham Partnership recognises the valuable contribution that these services make to tackling both issues of domestic abuse and sexual violence within the current difficult times of ongoing austerity measures.

## 11. **Aims and Objectives of the Strategy**

- 11.1 This strategy outlines our overall aspiration to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and sexual violence in County Durham. Our objectives for the next three years are:

- Prevention – To prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence and reduce the associated harm.
- Provision – to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence have access to the right help and support throughout the criminal justice process and that services are available to address their needs.
- Protection – to improve the criminal justice response to tackling domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation.
- Pursue – to pursue perpetrators of domestic abuse through the criminal justice system and ensure that they face up to the implications of their actions.

- 11.2 High level objectives have been agreed by the DASVEG with activity falling beneath these. The high level objectives are outlined below:

### Prevention

- 11.3 We will:

- Ensure that all children and young people have an understanding that healthy relationships are based on respect, with sexual activity between adults being consensual and reinforcing which attitudes and behaviours are acceptable and which are not.
- Raise public awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence, across services, organisations and the general public.
- Ensure early identification and coordinated intervention by front line professionals to protect victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. This includes children, young people and adults.
- Prevent abuse from happening by intervening early to prevent it and challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it.

## Provision

### 11.4 We will:

- Produce a three year multi-agency training strategy and action plan around domestic abuse and sexual abuse and exploitation, which links to the national and regional violence against women and girls strategy, findings from external and internal audits and learning following domestic homicide and serious case reviews.
- Ensure that all survivors of sexual violence have access to forensic medical provision which provides the full range of health care and after care to ensure that mental and sexual health needs are addressed.
- Develop an accurate picture of the scale and nature of all aspects of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Commissioning county wide specialist services for domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

## Protection

### 11.5 We will:

- Reduce the attrition rate and maintain the high conviction rate in cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence. 'Attrition' refers to the gap between levels of known crime and the response of the criminal justice system in terms of prosecutions, convictions and sentencing.
- Ensure that victims are provided with an enhanced level of support throughout the end to end criminal justice process.
- Ensure that all criminal justice agencies address the issues in reporting of rape and in prosecuting rape and CSE cases.
- Provide the opportunity, where appropriate, for victims and perpetrators to access restorative approaches as a means of conflict and repairing harm.

## Pursue

### 11.6 We will:

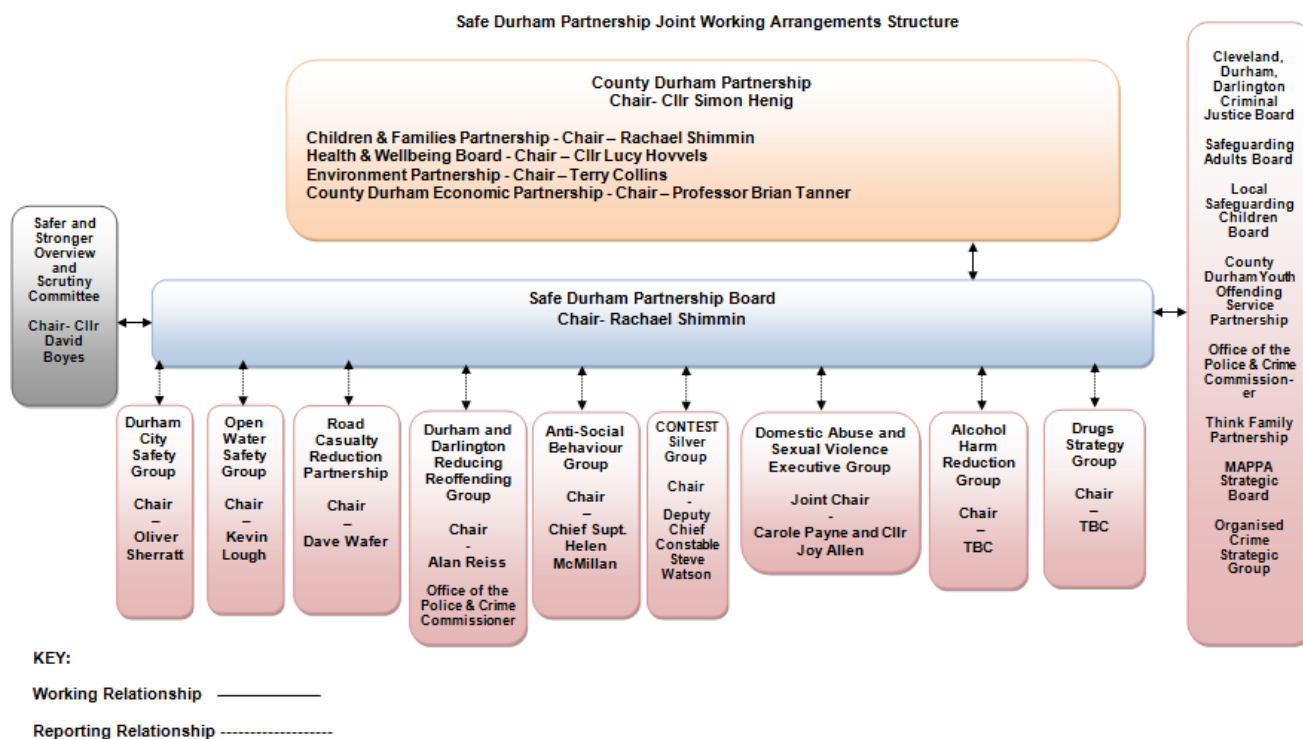
- Implement a multi faceted perpetrator programme across County Durham in order to change attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators
- Identify and pursue serial perpetrators of domestic violence by targeting via multi agency approach and problem solving
- Review the impact of Clare's law in County Durham and pro-actively advertise its existence to increase its use
- Increase awareness of DVPO/N's in order to increase the use of these valuable tools to combat perpetrators

## 12. **Governance and Performance Management Framework**

12.1 The Performance Management Framework aligns to the priorities identified by the Safe Durham Partnership. Each of the priorities is supported by a thematic group with responsibility for delivering improvements. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual

Violence Executive Group is a thematic group of the Safe Durham Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership of County Durham.

- 12.2 The DASVIG group consider a quarterly performance report which contains a range of indicators (examples below). The DASVIG maintain a detailed action plan appropriate to the issues raised from the performance report. Any key issues are escalated initially to the DASVEG and then to the Safe Durham Partnership Board if appropriate.



- 12.3 There are 25 key performance indicators that are reported into DASVEG on quarterly basis. These are:

- Number of incidents of domestic abuse reported either directly to the Police or through a third party
- Percentage of cases that are assessed as high, medium and standard risk
- Percentage of repeat incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the Police
- Number of domestic homicides
- Number of Clare’s Law applications received and processed
- Number and percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences resulting in a Child Protection Plan due to one of the Key Parental Risk factors being domestic abuse
- Number of defendants arrested and charged with a domestic abuse related offence and percentage that resulted in successful prosecution at court
- Number of all reported sexual offences
- Detection rate for serious sexual offences
- Number of referrals into SARC
- Alcohol related sexual violence
- Alcohol relation violence against the person crime with domestic abuse qualifier

- Missing from home
- Percentage of domestic abuse victims at MARAC who are repeat victims
- Utilisations of Durham County Refuges
- Number of adult referrals received into the countywide domestic abuse service
- Number of child referral received into the countywide domestic abuse service
- Number of adult referrals that went onto engage with the countywide domestic abuse service
- Number of children referrals received that went on to engage with the countywide domestic abuse service
- Percentage of adults reporting feeling safe at exit from the countywide domestic abuse service
- Percentage of adults reporting feeling safe at exit
- Percentage of children reporting feeling safe at exit from countywide domestic abuse service
- Percentage of victims of domestic abuse who were referred to the Remain Safe scheme and the status of their referral is complete
- Number of referrals received by Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA ) in County Durham
- Percentage of IDVA referrals where the IDVA provided support to the victim