

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE	18 th November 2024
REPORT OF	Associate Director of Public Health
SUBJECT	Domestic Abuse Strategy Update
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The update provided in this report contributes to the key aims of the Health and Wellbeing Board of improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities within the local population.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide a brief update on progress relating to the domestic abuse strategy and the public health approach to this agenda going forwards.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to note the contents of this report and offer any observations or recommendations for consideration by the Director of Public Health, the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board or other relevant Board or committee.

Domestic abuse is a key public health issue and cross-cutting in nature. The Health and Wellbeing Board may wish to consider overlaps and strategic links with other relevant boards and committees around this agenda.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse may be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional, but is not limited to these types of abuse.

1.2 Domestic abuse is a key public health issue given its scale and impact upon population health. Prevalence estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for 2022-23 suggest around 4.4% of people aged 16 years and over (2.1 million) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. That equates to 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men affected. To give a sense of scale in NEL, applying the national prevalence rate of 5.4% for the 16–59-year-old population to NEL, an estimated 4,500 individuals in that age range may have experienced domestic abuse in that year.

1.3 In terms of reported domestic abuse incidents to the police, these have increased from 5,967 to 6,425 in 2023/24 in NEL, up by 7.7% in the last year. Domestic abuse crimes have also increased from 2,756 to 3,528 in the same period, a rise of 28%.

1.4 Caution is needed in interpreting this data due to under-reporting. According to CSEW data for the year ending March 2023, only 18.9% of women who had experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months reported the abuse to the police. However, part of the rise in reported incidents may indicate greater willingness to disclose and report.

1.5 Domestic abuse impacts on life expectancy, health life expectancy and health inequalities. The impact on victims can be devastating spanning various health, economic and social harms, including injury and early preventable death. Domestic abuse is recognised within the literature as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). ACEs are highly stressful, and potentially traumatic events that increase risks for optimising child development and a range of poor health outcomes into adulthood.

1.6 A range of statutory requirements are in place that provide a framework for progressing our strategic and service response to domestic abuse. These include:

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- Introduced a statutory definition of DA and Children as victims of domestic abuse – seen, heard or experienced the effect of abuse
- Introducing a new DAPN, DAPO, putting the guidance for the DVDS on a statutory footing
- Placing a new duty on tier one local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse, in refuges and other safe accommodation
- New statutory framework and guidance providing clarity over governance and accountability. Duties on local authorities to:
 - Establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (which it must consult as it performs the specified functions)
 - Assess the need for accommodation based domestic abuse support
 - Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support based on the needs assessment
 - Give effect to the strategy through commissioning/decommissioning
 - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and report back annually to DLUHC
 - Meet the needs of diverse groups of victims

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 - CSPs to carry out Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) not a statutory requirement, but are expected good practice

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

- Serious Violence Duty placed on LA and partners to develop and implement a strategy based on public health approach to serious violence

Forthcoming JTAI – Children and Domestic Abuse

**JTAI – Joint Thematic Area Inspection*

1.7 Domestic abuse forms a cross-cutting statutory requirement and is therefore cited and has interfaces with other statutory requirements pertaining to, for example, safeguarding, housing, criminal justice, re-offending, community safety and inequalities.

1.8 The NEL Domestic Abuse Partnership Board was established in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and holds responsibility for compliance with the relevant duties within the Act. This includes developing and driving forward NEL's domestic abuse strategy informed by a robust needs assessment. The current strategy is structured around three key priority areas of prevent; protect and provide; pursue. Progress against these is as follows:

Prevent

- Delivery of existing Target Hardening provision has continued whilst plans are progressing to move towards a Sanctuary Scheme comprising relevant installation and an offer of specialist domestic abuse support
- Continued roll-out of the youth-led 'Healthy Relationships' campaign (developed via Together for Childhood) and wider delivery of 'It's Not Love' play/live performance and associated resources.

Protect & Provide

- Extension of the previous 12-month pilot programme to support Children and Young People up to the age of 18 (25 if they have additional needs) experiencing domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships until the end of 2024/25.
- Training for relevant partnership agencies on the Safe & Together Model, based on the ethos of keeping the child(ren) together with the non-abusive parent and re-focusing on the impact of perpetrators behaviour. Children's Services are piloting roll-out of the model during 2024/25.
- Various new domestic abuse support provision, secured through a commissioning exercise, with effect from 1st September 2024:
 - Support for victims of DA within Refuge accommodation
 - Provision of community (non-Refuge) accommodation-based Support for Victims of domestic abuse
 - Provision of Community / Outreach Support for Victims of domestic abuse
 - Provision of a Single Point of Coordination (SPoC) for all domestic abuse referrals in NEL
 - Delivery of a Sanctuary Scheme Coordination, overseeing all elements of the scheme's delivery in NEL.
- Target Hardening provision for domestic abuse victims needing installation of security measures at their home.
- The need for support for children as victims of domestic abuse has also been identified. Unfortunately, there was no successful tender for this provision through the aforementioned commissioning exercise. There is some support for children and young people through Family Help Service but of itself this is not sufficient to address the level of need. We are currently reviewing options for this provision having regard to different levels of need and ages, existing provision, evidence of what works, and budget.

Pursue

- MARAC is our multi-agency risk assessment conference for high-risk cases of domestic abuse. It consists of a panel of various representatives that look to mitigate risk for the victim and increase their safety, leading to development and implementation of a co-ordinated action plan. The total number of cases heard at MARAC in 23/24 was 1034. This is a 36% increase on cases for 22/23. Over half of those cases (555) are repeats. The DA Partnership Board commissioned Safe Lives to conduct a review of MARAC and its findings are now available to us. These concur with the findings of the consultant undertaking the wider strategic review of our Domestic Abuse arrangements. This is high priority for improvement action.
- Existing provision for low-risk perpetrators and their families is available via Family Help if they are open to the service. Capacity, however, is very limited. Probation also offers some provision for perpetrators.
- Public Health has now identified a budget for delivery of a defined domestic abuse non-convicted perpetrator programme (DAPP) aimed at changing perpetrator behaviour and stopping further abuse and violence. We are currently scoping options for that provision that aligns with the [Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#). It should be noted the evidence base for effectiveness of perpetrator programmes is weak but compounded by various methodological challenges – see Annex 1 of the Standards above. However, there is opportunity to part of and benefit from a new Humberside OPCC working group, including academic partners, which will be working to identify the most effective interventions aimed at reducing the numbers of perpetrators of domestic abuse.

1.9 The current Domestic Abuse Strategy expires in March 2025. A full review of the domestic abuse Needs Assessment commenced in July 2024 and a draft will be presented to the next meeting of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board in early 2024. This in turn will inform a new Domestic Abuse strategy.

1.10 From April 2024 the domestic abuse agenda moved from the Children's Services directorate to the Public Health Directorate within North East Lincolnshire Council. This facilitates a public health approach to domestic abuse, with a greater focus on prevention of domestic abuse at a population level in the longer term. It also offers opportunity to maximise engagement with the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC's) Public Health Approach to Domestic Abuse (PHADA) Group and its work.

1.11 An external consultant has been commissioned to undertake a 6-month comprehensive root and branch review of the domestic abuse arrangements. This is an opportunity to reset our partnership arrangements and embed a public health approach to domestic abuse going forward. The scope of the review has been extensive spanning, for example, consideration of statutory duties and future inspection regime; public health approach including intelligence and strategy; training;

and communications. Various partners have contributed to the review through interviews. Findings from the review and recommendations will be available and considered in late 2024 and will inform a subsequent improvement plan.

2 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Not applicable.

3 REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

4 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

6 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no known climate change or environmental implications arising from the matters in this report.

7 MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9 CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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