

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL



DOMESTIC ABUSE NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2023 REFRESH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 continues to be the Act that provides further protections to individuals (both adults and children) experiencing domestic abuse (DA) of any kind as well as strengthening support across society and measures to tackle perpetrators.
- 1.2. North East Lincolnshire (NEL) has been identified as a Tier One Authority, and as such is required to effectively commission services based on a robust Needs Assessment and report back to Government annually. The assessment must be a working document that is reviewed annually. A new assessment must be completed every three years.
- 1.3. As well as being a legislative requirement, the development of an effective Needs Assessment will enable the Council to consider how we commission a DA Offer for NEL, involving key partner organisations and the voice of those effected by Domestic Abuse.

2. KEY FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. Update on the previous Needs Assessment

As this was the first Needs Assessment undertaken, unsurprisingly, there were a substantial number of key findings (32 in total) from which 15 recommendations were generated.

- 1) Four recommendations have been fully delivered.
- 2) Seven have not been completed of which:
 - Two have been carried forward to this report.
 - Four are no longer necessary.
 - One has not been completed but will be revisited after completion of the commissioning activities.
- 3) Three are partially addressed and will be ongoing until fully completed.
- 4) The final one has 5 elements, 4 of which have been completed but the last one cannot be addressed until funding for a perpetrator programme is received and this will therefore be carried forward as a standalone recommendation.

A full breakdown of all 32 key findings organised by type can be found in [Appendix 1](#) and the recommendations with outcomes in [Appendix 2](#)

2.2. Key Findings

Following completion of the DA Needs Analysis Refresh, the following Key Findings have been identified. Please note that these are the key findings and there are other findings that are important they are not considered as Key Points.

- 1) NEL is currently in the process of going out to the market for the delivery of an enhanced service offer. This should provide services that address the gaps identified in the previous Needs Assessment and should also be a source of data to fill in the remaining knowledge gaps that currently exist.
- 2) The total cost of DA in England & Wales in 2017 was estimated at over £66 billion, which equated to an average of £34,015 for each single victim of DA, however, The Home Office Paper “Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls” (July 2021) put the estimate at £74 billion and based on the number of initial high-risk referrals to MARAC, this could potentially have cost the authority and its stakeholders/partners in excess of £12million (both cashable and non-cashable) in 2022-23.
- 3) Looking at the data on the adult population of NEL (from the 2021 Census) and comparing it to 47.5% of the 5057 reported police incidents (to remove repeats), it can be seen that 1 in 53 adults living in NEL reported a domestic abuse incident to Humberside Police.
- 4) NEL is currently struggling to get viable and timely data from Humberside Police following the instigation of the NICHE reporting system for Q1 in 2022-23 which has meant that current up-to-date trends cannot be assessed either quarterly or for this refresh.
- 5) There are still gaps in data and referrals from within the health arena, although work continues to try and address this.
- 6) Current commissioning activities in relation to the new service offer have been driven by the findings from the previous Needs Assessment and the process has been structured collaboratively across the

partnership, which has mitigated any impact the lack of a dedicated DA Commissioner.

- 7) The proportion of incidents involving male victims does not align with the ratio of referrals being taken up with Women's Aid and work needs to be done to understand why.
- 8) Humberside Police designated over 68% of incidents as a crime in both 2021-22 and 2022-23, which will send a message that this kind of behaviour will no longer be tolerated.
- 9) DA continues to be one of the highest factors of referrals into Children's Services and then again following completion of assessments.
- 10) DA continues to affect every ward within the Borough to varying degrees.
- 11) There remain gaps in intelligence to enable a thorough understanding of the situation within NEL to be achieved, however substantial outcomes/ performance measures have been developed for the new contract and this data should address many of these issues and enable appropriate service planning to take place moving forward.
- 12) Abuse by ex-partners continue to be a major issue with almost half of all incidents of DA committed by this group, this underpins the need for victims, their support network and support workers to remain vigilant once a victim has left an abusive relationship as this is when victims are most at risk.
- 13) The 2021 Census has been a wealth of information, but it has also shown us that many people from minority backgrounds (nationally, regionally and within NEL) still choose not to answer certain questions (sexual orientation, ethnicity etc.). This raises concern not only that the numbers in certain cohorts are being under-reported but also that work needs to be done to improve individual willingness to supply more information about themselves.

2.3. Recommendations

- 1) The findings of this report to be shared with NELC Senior Leadership Team and NEL Tri Board.
- 2) There is currently no universal non-convicted perpetrator programme, and this is a huge gap in service provision which needs to be addressed, therefore NELC and partner agencies/stakeholders should work closely together to create a funding stream to deliver this much needed programme.
- 3) All partners should review and establish resource contributions to enable the delivery, review, and monitoring of the NEL DA offer to enable additional resources/service offers to be implemented in a timely manner.
- 4) The appointment of a dedicated DA Commissioner to champion and drive forward the DA programme within NEL was recommended in the previous assessment but was not delivered and was to be carried forward to the refresh. The role of the DA Co-ordinator is being re-

configured, and a Contract Officer post is being developed to ensure this element is covering going forward, therefore the recommendation is to ensure these changes are implemented prior to commencement of the newly commissioned services.

- 5) NEL to dedicate core funding to create a fully functioning DA team to give assurance that the domestic abuse agenda can continue and can fund much needed initiative that sit outside of grant funding parameters (such as a perpetrator programme) to be commissioned.
- 6) Demand is likely to quickly outstrip supply when the new service offer is fully up and running, therefore it is recommended that the situation is monitored closely to enable resources to be reallocated where possible when the need arises.
- 7) Due to the potential need for additional resources work must continue to identify new potential funding streams.
- 8) To continue to work with health in relation to access meaningful DA data.
- 9) To monitor the situation in relation to Humberside Police in relation to:
 - The quality of the data being received.
 - The timeliness of data being received.
 - The volume of data returns to the levels previously received before the implementation of NICHE which resulted in much needed data being currently unavailable.
 - To escalate if the situation does not improve.
- 10) To ensure that suitable reporting systems are set up for the new contracts and that the data is monitored appropriately.
- 11) Current services are reactive to DA, although it is intended to address this through the commissioning of a new service offer, this must be monitored to identify if this is happening and if it is, to what extent?
- 12) To look into ways of reaching minority groups and building trust with them so that they feel comfortable sharing their minority characteristics with NELC and its partners.
- 13) Now that there is data evidencing communication needs within NEL, steps must be taken to ensure that providers receiving contracts as a result of current commissioning activities deliver translation requirements in line with these new contracts. This should include services for individuals with vision or hearing impairments.
- 14) To monitor the outcomes from the new Childrens Service Offer currently being commissioned to identify the impact of the new offer, including any reductions in the number of DA referrals into Children's Services, and react accordingly to the findings.
- 15) To hold further discussions across the partnership in relation to substance use, alcohol use and domestic abuse to give assurance that everything that could be done, has been done.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 North East Lincolnshire Demographics

The 2021 Census estimated that the population of NEL was 156,966 which is down from an estimated 159,364 in 2021 (51% female and 49% male). 21% (33,034) of the total population were under the age of 18 and 22.9% (35,947) are under 20. The biggest age group remains 55-59 years, closely followed by 50-54 years (7.5% and 7.1% respectively), which indicates that NEL has an ageing population.

NEL is reported to be one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. 8,366 (23%) of those under 20 years old live in low-income families. There are an estimated 8,638 lone parent families in the Borough which equates to 12.4% of all households which is higher than the averages for England and Y&H which are 11.1% and 11% respectively.

The health/life expectancy for people in NEL is worse than the average for England.

In the 2021 Census 2.56% (3,264) of the population in NEL identified their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, Bisexual, or "other", with a further 6.65% (8,480) chose not to answer this question, both figures are slightly lower than those recorded for England and Y&H. The 2021 Census shows that currently 47% of NEL residents report having "No Religion" closely followed by 45% stating that they are Christian's which is a big reduction from the 60.7% previously reported, 6% chose not to answer this question leaving 2% who followed other religions, 1.2% of which are of the Muslim faith.

3.2 Domestic Abuse Facts

Research by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicates that lone parent households are more likely to suffer DA than other households. As previously identified, NEL's lone parent families count for 12.4% of the local household composition.

There is no ward in the Borough that is not impacted by DA. When the data was last available it was identified that NEL has a high level of serial offenders who are abusive towards more than one victim, this continues to be evidenced by the high number of presentations to MARAC involving ex-partners. MARAC and Police data continues to evidence an increasing number of high-risk victims.

Whilst there was a reduction in the number of reported incidents to Humberside Police, this is not consistent with other data streams and coincides with the implementation of a new recording system, therefore no definitive inferences can be drawn from this data. It is, however, positive to note the volume of victims who feel comfortable and safe to report incidents to the police.

NEL does have a wide range of partners across the borough who offer varying levels of support to victims. Partners report they are confident and able to signpost and refer victims to local specialist services to access dedicated support.

Five Domestic homicides have taken place within North East Lincolnshire since 01/04/2021.

3.3 Key DA statistics for NEL

- 3.3.1** The ONS victim characteristics for England and Wales for the year ending 31 March 2022 (which is the latest release) states that domestic abuse is most prolific in the 20-24 age range.
- 3.3.2** During 2022-23 there were 758 cases heard at MARAC in NEL, of which 147 (52%) of cases heard were repeats.
- 3.3.3** In 2022-23 there were 718 children living in a household with a MARAC victim in NEL.
- 3.3.4** In 2022-23 68% of all incidents reported to NEL Humberside Police were designated as a crime.
- 3.3.5** From Quarter 2 of 2022-23, NEL Humberside Police commenced sending data in relation to the outcome of incidents designated as a crime and it has been identified that on average 32% do not progress beyond the initial investigation as the victim declines/withdraws support even though the suspect has been identified
- 3.3.6** In 2021-22 there were an average of 645 repeat victims, 711 repeat perpetrators, 761 serial offenders across the Borough.
- 3.3.7** During 2022-23 a total of 20 referrals were made to MARAC in NEL by Mental Health Services.
- 3.3.8** The national Crime Survey identified the following relevant data:
- Police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales increased by 7.7% in the year ending March 2022 in comparison with the previous year. This was on top of an increase of 6% from 2020 to 2021. It is not possible to suggest a reason for this, there may be increased recording accuracy, the actual number of incidents may be increasing or more people are becoming empowered to come forward and report DA.
 - 1 in 5 adults aged 16 and over (10.4 million) had experienced DA before the age of 16.
 - The Crown Prosecution Service for domestic abuse-related crimes in England increased for the first time in 4 years to 72.7% but is still below the 75.9% achieved the year ending in March 2018.
 - 76.4% of all DA prosecutions successfully secured a conviction.
 - Of all crimes recorded by the Police, 17.1% were DA related
 - The Crown Prosecution Service domestic abuse related crimes in England increased for the first time in 4 years to 72.7% but is still below the 75.9% achieved in the year ending March 2018

- 76.4% of all DA prosecutions successfully secured a conviction.
- Of all crimes recorded by the Police, 17.1% were DA related.
- The National Domestic Abuse Helpline delivered 50,791 support sessions. 18,235 callers stated the type of abuse they had been subjected to, the most common were Psychological/Emotional (82.3%) followed by Controlling Behaviour (74.4%).
- 74.1% of domestic abuse victims were female.

3.3.9 ONS data on DA prevalence and victim characteristics showed that on a national level:

- Unemployed people are more likely to have experienced DA than those who were employed or economically inactive.
- There were 234,045 incidents of stalking and harassment recorded.
- Between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2022, there were 373 domestic homicides, 65.7% of principal suspects partner/ex-partners, 72.12% of victims were female and 88.7% of suspects were male. 202 (54%) were convicted of either murder or manslaughter.
- The highest proportion of victims were aged between 20 and 24.
- More victims were mixed race and of any other ethnicity.
- 26.6% were divorced/separated or had a legally dissolved partnership.
- The highest ratio of victims were long-term/temporarily sick/ill, students or unemployed. More victims were disabled than non-disabled.

3.3.10 In 2021-22 Galop undertook a national study of male same sex relationships and found that only 26% of men called the police after experiencing near lethal violence.

3.3.11 Mankind Initiative reported that nationally in 2021-22, more LGBT+ men suffered domestic abuse than heterosexual males and more divorced/separated men were victims of partner abuse than married men.

3.3.12 Between 2008 and 2023 Karma Nirvana, a national charity, received 120,000 calls and supported 2,540 victims. West Yorkshire reported the highest number of cases (358) in 2022-23. It is estimated that worldwide there are over 5,000 honour killings every year.

3.4 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

3.4.1 The number of cases discussed at MARAC in NEL fell in 2022-23 (from 803 to 758) after rising steadily between 2016/17 and 2021/22, however current indications are that the numbers are set to increase again at the end of the present year.

- 3.4.2** As with overall cases, the number of repeat presentations is following the same trend falling from 423 to 394 between 2021-22 and 2022-23, with data suggesting an increase by the end of the current year.
- 3.4.3** The number of children living in a household with a MARAC victim has been decreasing over the last two years and during 2022-23 the total was down to 718 in comparison with 877 two years earlier, however during the first 6 months of 2023-24 the figure is already at 557.
- 3.4.4** No IDVA's have received specialist training to support individuals with protected characteristics or children.
- 3.4.5** 6 MARAC cases involved victims who are members of the LGBT+ community.
- 3.4.6** Based on the number of cases heard at MARAC and SafeLives recommended levels of IDVA support, NEL should have 7.5 FTE IDVA's but currently only have 5.
- 3.4.7** There are a small number of MARAC referrals where an individual perpetrator has more than one victim during the quarter and there are also some victims who are experiencing MARAC referrals for more than one perpetrator in the same quarter.

3.5 Children and Domestic Abuse

- 3.5.1** During 2022-23, 3,743 assessments were undertaken by NEL Children's Services, of which 55.3% (2,070) had domestic abuse as a factor.
- 3.5.2** 1429 (38.18%) out of the 3,743 assessments completed in 2022-23 stated "Domestic Violence: Parent/Carer subject" as a factor in assessments which was the highest of all 43 identified
- 3.5.3** Living in a home where DA happens can have a serious impact on a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing and their behaviour, which can last into adulthood, particularly where parents exhibit two or more of the trio of vulnerabilities (DA, Mental Health, and substance use).
- 3.5.4** CSC referrals show that DA is a factor across all age groups and occurs in every Ward across the Borough.
- 3.5.5** 89 of 199 (44.7%) re-referrals to CSC identified DA as a factor.
- 3.5.6** There is a high level of victims, children and young people who have multiple and/or complex needs contributing to why they need support within the Borough.

3.6 NEL Commissioned Services

3.6.1 Early Help Interventions

- There is a small team within Early Help who hold most of the domestic abuse cases. They continue to provide a valuable resource and they have received additional training enabling

them to support families which include the perpetrator as long as they have been assessed as being of low risk.

- Amongst several initiatives, the Domestic Abuse Recovery Together Therapeutic group programme (DART) is continuing to deliver a programme for mums and young people aged 7-14 and the service will shortly be undergoing evaluation.

3.6.2 Target Hardening

- Empower Safer Homes continue to deliver target hardening to victims of domestic abuse who need additional security measures to enable them to remain safely in their own home rather than having to flee domestic abuse.
- This service does not deliver a full Sanctuary Scheme and funding is currently low, however this is due to be addressed through the new service being commissioned as part of the ongoing tendering exercise.
- In 2022-23, 605 target hardening referrals were processed which equated to 66% of all referrals which means that over 200 referrals had to be refused as the service is currently only available for victims of domestic abuse.

3.6.3 The Blue Door (MARAC)

- During 2022-23, referrals for male victims were consistently around 3% but in 2021-22 the ratio increased to 8%. The exact reason for this is currently unknown though it may be as a result of men becoming more empowered to report abuse, or more males in same sex relationships feeling comfortable to be open about this or it may simply be an escalation in domestic abuse incidents perpetrated on men.
- In 2022-23 most individuals referred for an IDVA were aged between 26 and 35 although there are referrals for victims across all age groups, even 14-17.
- 72% (544) of all referrals during 2022-23 were from the Humberside Police.
- In January 2023, a new Children and Young Person's IDVA pilot was established using additional funding received via the OPCC. This provision is co-located within Childrens Services in Early Help with a remit to support Children and Young People aged from approximately 12 up to 18 (25 where there are additional needs) who are experiencing domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. Early indications are that there will be good take-up of this service.

3.6.4 NEL Women's Aid – Refuge and Outreach Support (HRS)

- In 2022-23 a total of 3,124 referrals were taken, 2,964 of which were for women. The majority of referrals (1,625) came from the

police, and it is felt this contributed to the majority of the 1,944 that came via e-mails, WA's website, and their Facebook page.

- 104 people (individuals/families) accessed support via the refuge and 435 were taken on for outreach support giving a total of 539 victims receiving support during 2022-23. This equates to 17.25% of all referrals receiving support from WA, however, it must be noted that Humberside Police refer everyone who contacts them and gives consent for their details to be shared. While WA make every attempt to contact each one, some are unreachable, many gave consent but do not actually want any additional support and others just want advice/guidance or signposting, therefore not too much should be read into this statistic.
- During 2022-23, 53% of the victims who accessing support, 53% had returned to the service. The most common length of stay within the refuge is 1-2 months (20.5%). Refuge utilisation was at 78.9%.
- A proportion of victims have children and young people living with them and domestic abuse will have had an impact on them (either by seeing, hearing, or experiencing it). Therefore, additional support is being provided to support these children and young people, mostly via open access sessions.
- Whilst support for children is not an NELC commissioned service, it is known that during 2022-23 the service had 93 children living in the refuge.
- In 2022-22 418 referrals were made to the Freedom Course. 221 individuals attended of which 73 completed the course and 91 others completed half of the course. Feedback continues to be gathered and while it is largely positive it is unclear if the feedback is from those who completed the course or a mixture of those completing, part-completing or only attending once.
 - *"I have learnt so much about myself and especially that I matter, and I am important."*
 - *"It made me realise things I didn't even know were abuse actually are abuse."*
 - *"Red flags are everywhere since doing Freedom. They were always there; I just did not see them."*
- 38 weekly "Own My Life Course & Survivor Group sessions were held. 362 survivors attended, which equated to an average weekly attendance of 9-10. During the year 29 victims were referred for the Own my Life Course and by the end of the year 25 had completed the course. Again, the feedback was very positive.
 - *"I am really sad it has ended as it has been an amazing experience. Thank you so much."*

- *“I really needed this course to move forward. Don’t stop delivering it.”*
- *“I really loved it; it has definitely made me much more confident, and I am looking to the future now.”*
- Abuse can occur over a long period of time and whilst some individuals leave the relationship the first-time the abuse occurs, the majority of individuals made between 1 and 5 attempts to leave their abuser with 3 during 2022-23 and made over 21 attempts leave. Similarly, most victims stay with their partners for between 1 and 5 years before leaving, although in 2022-23 173 victims had been with their partners for between 11 and 20 years with a further 39 staying together for over 20 years. Finally, when asked how long the abuse had been going on for, the most popular period was 2-5 years although 86 said it was for over 11 years of which 20 said over 20 years.
- The majority of victims accessing support were either single (31%) or a family with just one child (26.3%).
- Through assessing the data on varying reasons for leaving the refuge it is clear that this type of accommodation is not the right place for all victims. However, when refuge is the only option to access specialist support in safe accommodation victims are faced with a hard decision to make when already experiencing extreme trauma. The needs of some victims cannot be supported by refuge, some struggle to cope in a refuge environment which can result in them being asked to leave or evicted. If this happens, they are left with limited options and can easily find themselves homeless or in a worse situation than when they left their home. This can lead to additional trauma in having to move again and puts pressure on the Housing. The Prevention Service to find suitable accommodation at short notice which may ultimately result in temporary accommodation being the only option.

3.7 Domestic Abuse Challenges

- 3.7.1** The journey of a domestic abuse victim across different partner agencies is still not being captured adequately and recording difficulties make it unlikely that this will change in the short to medium-term.
- 3.7.2** The support offered to victims, children and young people who have multiple complex needs varies and is inconsistent, but this should change once the new services are mobilised and good contract monitoring/management is in place.

- 3.7.3** The holistic needs of victims are not being assessed consistently across partners. Assessments are not utilising the skills and specialist knowledge of services to understand the level of need and packages of support needed. This is potentially contributing to multiple repeat presentations and referrals being made across the different services.
- 3.7.4** Perpetrators and their behaviours continue to be a significant challenge, behaviours are not changing, resulting in increased risks to victims and children. Without viable interventions there will be little encouragement for lower-level perpetrators to alter their behaviour and the potential for escalation through the risk levels is a serious concern. Unfortunately, this situation is unlikely to change until a sustainably funded and good quality non-convicted perpetrator programme is instigated across NEL.
- 3.7.5** Victims and children are often faced with homelessness if they need to flee DA and the need to do lots of things very quickly can be overwhelming. At such a traumatic time people need time, a safe space to live temporarily and specialist support for as long as they need it. Whilst some victims do receive this, it does not at appear to be the norm with outcomes focusing on short term gains. However, again, this issue should be addressed for most people when the new services are fully mobilised.
- 3.7.6** Some victims have clearly stated that they would prefer the perpetrator to move out. Whilst this not currently an offer explored consistently, the situation should begin to be addressed through the newly procured services.
- 3.7.7** For some victims, whilst DA is a factor in their lives, other needs are more prominent at the time of referral to DA services. This is leading to victims accessing the wrong service at the wrong time, or not able to access services at all because their needs are not understood. Again, this is likely to be addressed through the commissioning of new services but will remain an issue until the new contracts are in place and their impact can be assessed.
- 3.7.8** There is the continued challenge of refuge accommodation not being suitable or even accessible to some victims who need to flee domestic abuse and currently there is little in the way of an alternative. The new provision currently should address this issue however until it is up and running, has been thoroughly evaluated and professionals are upskilled in the different options available, this remains a concern.
- 3.7.9** Our current offer is not commissioned based upon evidence of need or demand and is outdated. The voice of victims, children and perpetrators has not been consistently listened to and monitoring of services has by necessity, not been sufficiently robust and does not represent a Placed based approach. Again, this should be addressed through the new contracts.

- 3.7.10** The impact made by domestic abuse services across NEL is still not fully measured or understood, which has meant that resources may not have been allocated to their best advantage.
- 3.7.11** Little has been done to capture the true voice of the victim with this task falling predominantly to providers. This in itself is problematic as victims may be more reticent to suggest improvements to a service, they are wholly dependent on to support them on their journey to a life free from domestic abuse than they would be if they could be encouraged to offer constructive criticism in a truly independent and confidential manner.
- 3.7.12** NEL has 5 IDVA's, but based on SafeLives current recommendations there should be 7.5.
- 3.7.13** Following the implementation of a new police recording/reporting system much of the data previously accessed and used is no longer being submitted and the data that is received raises data quality concerns making it unusable. This situation will continue until explanations into why the data does not add up are received and the delivery of the data we previously received and used had recommenced.

3.8 Gap Analyses

3.8.1 Intelligence

In some areas, there is minimal or no intelligence available which should be addressed as far as is possible to enable NEL to continue to understand local needs, these include:

Data	Referrals
Difficulties in determining the true levels of DA across NEL due to the unavailability of partner agency data, changes in Police's reporting practices and the unknown volume of unreported incidents. The number of victims who are LGBT+ and the number of people who choose not to divulge this information contributes to a lack of clarity on how sexual orientation may impact on their willingness to approach services for help. Honour Based Abuse. The current total lack of data in relation to Operation Encompass.	The referral rate from local primary care and other health related services. There is a disparity of police incidents involving male victims and the number of referrals going on to access DA support. The number of victims being referred to/accessing services who are from the LGBT+ community remains low, and the reason is unknown. There is insufficient insight into the links between assessment outcomes and re-referrals to Children's Social Care, creating a lack of understanding of the volume of cases closed as a result of suitable support/safeguards being implemented to meet the needs of these children.

The potential reluctance of male victims to report incidents to the police.	Understanding repeat referrals to commissioned services and the reasoning why
Talking and listening	Shaping future delivery
The specific needs of the LGBTQ+ community in NEL and their experiences of accessing DA support. The Impact and value of the work undertaken by Early Help and Universal Services. The impacts and outcomes of victims accessing and completing support programs. Male victim's experiences A wider understanding of what victims want from DA services. An understanding of survivor's experiences, what worked well and what could have gone better in their time of need.	The number of residents in NEL for whom English is not their first language or their needs for interpretation and translation support. The religious beliefs/culture of NEL residents and the extent to which support and access to accommodation needs to be adapted. Victims who have disabilities or consider themselves to have. Impact and value of the work undertaken by Early Help and Universal Services. Information is needed on the number of individuals exiting services who are living independently without the need for ongoing support. A clearer understanding of the impact/added value of direct work undertaken with children and young people is needed.

3.8.2 Provision and Demand

- The needs assessment refresh has continued to identify gaps in service provision for victims of DA across NEL.
- There is still not currently a clear offer for all residents living within NEL who are impacted by domestic abuse.
- There are insufficient Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA), and none have specialist training to work with children and people with protected characteristics.
- There is demand for support and access to suitable safe accommodation which apart from the refuge is currently unavailable.
- The support offered to victims with multiple complex needs is inconsistent as some are not suitable for refuge accommodation, therefore their options are severely limited.

- There is no specific service to meet the needs of some victims with protected characteristics. For example, there is currently no accommodation-based offer for men who need to flee domestic abuse.
 - NEL does not deliver a non-convicted perpetrator programme which leaves a huge gap in provision creating substantial unmet need.
 - Victims are not consistently receiving joint assessments to consider wider needs at the point they leave their home/partner creating delays for the authority to deliver their duties regarding homelessness and homelessness prevention.
 - The offer of access to safe accommodation does not provide enough options to be DA Act compliant, with limited options accessible at short notice.
 - B&B accommodation currently remains the only option available to prevent homelessness at short notice when there is no other accommodation available. This then leads to victims and their children spending time in a B&B, then moving to temporary housing when it becomes available before they can ultimately secure a longer-term residence. As well as being unsafe, this can cause stress and uncertainty for the individuals concerned as well as being extremely disruptive.
 - Data evidencing preventive work is not the usual approach in NEL, with the current model focusing on a reactive response.
 - There are multiple pathways to access various levels of support, which can make selecting the correct pathway confusing for both victims and professionals alike. The new Single Point of Contact being commissioned should address this, but the issue currently remains and will continue to do so until the new contracts are mobilised.
 - Some referral pathways are difficult to locate and access which could be a barrier for some victims reporting incidents.
 - There is not a “tell us once” approach to any of our current referral pathways.
- 4.1.** Domestic Abuse and its impacts continue to be a significant challenge in North East Lincolnshire. There is no area of the Borough or demographic of residents that is not affected.
- 4.2.** Progress has been made against the key findings and recommendations highlighted in the 2022 Needs Assessment although there is still much to be achieved.
- 4.3.** The Authority continues to work to deliver the [NEL Domestic Abuse Strategy](#) which was launched in 2021, however with no core funding and a total reliance on grant funding, most of the aspirations within the strategy remain currently undeliverable. Although the magnitude of DA issues across the

Authority have been clearly evidenced, the entire service (both provision and staff to administer the programme) is at extreme high risk of failure, as grant funding can be withdrawn at short notice leaving the service vulnerable.

- 4.4. Whilst the number of cases presented to MARAC is down slightly in 2022-23 (759), compared to 2021-22 (803), the number of cases remains high, and it is too soon to be able to make any assumptions in relation to trajectory.
- 4.5. The previous Needs Assessment identified both areas of good practice and a thorough gap analysis which was used to inform the commissioning activities to deliver a vastly enhanced service offer.
- 4.6. Previously, new, and existing services were not being commissioned/re-commissioned based upon an understanding of the needs of victims and children in NEL. However, current commissioning activities have been driven by the findings/gap analyses from the Safe Accommodation Duty Needs Assessment. All new contracts will have substantial performance and outcome monitoring aimed at further enhancing understanding of the true nature of DA across NEL and ensure that resources are targeted appropriately moving forward.
- 4.7. The number of initial cases heard at MARAC during 2022-23 was 364 (out of 758), using this as a baseline along with the governments estimates that the average cost of a DA incident (in 2017) was £34.015, this would equate to a potential cashable/non-cashable cost across all NEL partners of over £12 million.
- 4.8. Commissioning has now reached the tendering stage (as of November 2023) with an anticipated commencement date early in 2024 with full mobilisation by April 2024 and once completed the service offer for NEL will comprise of support within a refuge setting, support in dispersed accommodation, an enhanced outreach/floating support service and a full Sanctuary Scheme.
- 4.9. The newly commissioned services will ensure that anyone subject to domestic abuse will be able to access the support they need. Victims will have more choice and control over the type of support they want and services will be more proactive and geared up to eliminating domestic abuse at the standard and medium risk levels, thus preventing escalation to high-risk, whilst at the same time maintaining a reactive provision for individuals who need immediate and urgent assistance. Additionally, there will be more provision than is currently in place which will alleviate the tendency to stretch resources, for example IDVA's supporting high risk clients who are referred to MARAC should no longer have to manage a caseload higher than levels recommended by SafeLives.
- 4.10. There is currently no universal provision for non-convicted perpetrators, which leaves a significant gap with an unmet need across the Authority. Although it is a service many victims (particularly where the level of abuse is relatively low) say they want to see, this situation will not change even when the new contracts are in place. Early Help do deliver a limited amount of support (due to their own resource issues) to families experiencing DA where the perpetrator is identified as being of extremely low level of risk, but this in no way addresses the need for an effective perpetrator programme.

- 4.11.** Since the original Needs Assessment was completed, stronger links with partner agencies begun being forged in relation to accessing valuable data and NELC is starting to receive reports from previously untapped data streams. The Outcomes Framework which has been the basis quarterly performance reports has been reviewed and refreshed and will give a better picture of domestic abuse outcomes across NEL.
- 4.12.** Unfortunately, following the implementation of a new police recording/reporting system from 2021-22 there are issues with the data (which currently forms the bulk of the DA data received). The main points being:
- Some of the parameters have been changed meaning that new benchmarks need to be established before comparisons can be drawn.
 - Many of the data streams which were previously used regularly are no longer being sent (i.e., Operation Encompass).
 - Risk-level data now appears to have multiple entries with no understanding which is the most current level therefore it is not possible to accurately report the number of incidents by level of risk.
 - A response in relation to requests for additional data is still awaited as is a response to request asking the viability of receiving additional data.
 - Quarterly reports are not received in a timely manner as the stretched resources of the policy analysts often means that DA reports are delayed due to other reports/submissions deemed more important needing to be completed.
- 4.13.** Since the completion of the previous Needs Assessment, funding has been allocated to The Blue Door CiC to deliver a pilot programme to support Children and Young People experiencing DA within their own intimate relationships. This post has been co-located within Early Help and early indications are that there is good take-up of this service.
- 4.14.** Domestic Abuse is still one of the highest factors recorded against referrals into Childrens Services and this continues to be the case following assessments.
- 4.15.** In 2021-22 and 2022-23, 68% of incidents reported to the police were designated as a crime, evidencing that domestic abuse will no longer be tolerated.
- 4.16.** Based on the 2021 population data for NEL and the number of reported incidents to the police (excluding 47.5% for repeats), it is estimated that 1 in every 53 adults experienced some form of domestic abuse during 2021-22. If the calculation were to be based simply on the number of incidents against the estimated adult population of North East Lincolnshire in the 2021 Census, it would suggest that the equivalent of 1 in every 35 women (living in NEL) reporting a DA incident to the police in 2021-22.
- 4.17.** Ex-Partners continue to be the most common perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 4.18.** The 2021 Census evidenced that a substantial number of people nationally, regionally, and locally preferred not to respond to many of the questions

relating to protected characteristics. This could ultimately impact on the volume and diversity of services available to these particular groups.

APPENDIX 1: Key findings from the 2022 Needs Assessment

The key findings identified within the previous Needs Assessment by type rather than number were:

Type	No	Key finding
Commissioning Activities should address all these findings	4	There is currently no clear DA Offer that is well promoted, accessible to all and is well known in NEL.
	5	There continues to be a lack of intelligence in relation to the entry points and journey of individuals referred into the Authority, partner agencies and providers, but this should be addressed following completion of the commissioning process and instigation of new contracts.
	13	17% of households are designated as homeless due to DV. Where individuals access the refuge, the Homeless Prevention Team is not being consistently informed of the need for housing and there is a lack of “places of safety” for people fleeing DA, particularly in relation to male victims and people for whom the refuge is unsuitable.
	17	77% of DA victims who reported incidents are female, with 22% of victims being male, however the number of male victims being referred to access support is an average of 3% of all referrals, but there is no intelligence to explain why.
	18	A significant percentage of victims do not engage with services (33% of WA referrals)
	19	Over the last two years there have been 49 evictions from refuge, causing concern that these individuals are not receiving the specialist support they need.
	20	Whilst the numbers of individuals stated as “completing support” at the refuge is high, and it is no known what this actually means or understand the impact of this support being completed.
	24	Demand for support and services outstrips supply
	25	There is little or no offer for individuals within some of the protected characteristics including IDVA's with specialist knowledge of protected characteristics.
	26	The number of IDVA's delivering in NEL is below the level recommended by SAFELIVES
	28	There is a cohort of people who need a clear pathway to translation services along with contact information in the most

		common languages. There is currently no easy access braille or Easy Read documents.
	29	There is little intelligence on how standard and medium risk individuals access services, especially informal enquiries and where permission to progress the incident is refused.
	30	There are currently no specific performance indicators, monitoring or evaluation requirements of the commissioned services making it difficult to analyse gaps and drive forward improvements.
	32	Current contracts for commissioned service expire in March 2022.
Data not currently available	6	NEL has a higher proportion of DA identified as a factor within CSC assessments compared to the UK and statistical neighbours, with similar proportions in relation to “toxic trio” (interaction of DA in the household with parental substance use and/or mental health issues).
DQ issues	10	There has been a 7% increase in DA incidents reported by the police during 2020-21 from the previous 12 months however the true level of DA is unknown.
	21	There is a high-level of repeat and serial offenders and a lack of resources to work with perpetrators.
Information Only	11	WA reported a 20% reduction in drop-in referrals in 2020-21, but an increase in telephone referrals, whereas Blue Door reported a significant increase in referrals necessitating additional MARAC meetings every month.
	12	Of the incidences reported over the last 18 months, the numbers have increased in both high and medium risk levels and Blue Door have identified that 61% of referrals into MARAC are due to the risks that remain, or the continued abuse victims suffer from ex-partners.
Data not currently available	27	More in-depth intelligence is needed from Operation Encompass. Humberside Police are currently unable to supply this data and the data from education is not fully dependable either.
Still an issue	3	34% of the referrals to Children’s Social Care (CSC) with an assessment that identified DA factors had at least one previous referral within the last 12 months.
	31	There is no dedicated specialist team and few resources within NEL’s DA arena, which is impacting on understanding the quality and cost to deliver the current offer and how quality

		and value could be enhanced for all partners. This is still the case
	7	Initial assessment for children referred through the Front Door may not be robust enough in relation to DA. Many are selecting DA as a secondary option, which previously impacted on the exact level of DA contribution to referrals through the front door
Still the same	1	Where victims are referred to services to access support, professionals are responding swiftly to engage and progress referrals. This is still the case
	2	NEL has areas of high deprivation, unemployment, and poverty; all of which have known linkages to DA.
	8	The total cost of DA in England & Wales in 2017 was estimated at over £66 million, which equates to an average of £34,015 for each single victim of DA. This increased to a projected £74million in 2021.
	9	DA can seriously affect a child, particularly in terms of development, educational outcomes, and their mental health.
	14	59% of women referred to Women's Aid (WA) have children, with the East Marsh and South Wards having the highest reported levels of DA for households with children.
	15	The most common type of abuse for referrals to WA was emotional and mental, second was physical and third financial.
	16	The crime survey 2021 found that nationally 63% of victims reported mental or emotional problems.
	22	There are gaps in referrals from local Primary Care and other Health Services.
	23	There is little intelligence to enable an understanding of the correlations between DA and other forms of violence against women and girls.

Figure 51: Key findings from the 2022 Needs Assessment

APPENDIX 2: Recommendations from the 2022 Needs Assessment

1. The findings of this report to be shared with NELC Senior Leadership Team and NEL Tri Board. **Completed.** This needs to be an ongoing recommendation.
2. NELC and key partners to work with victims and survivors to develop a clear and accessible NEL DA offer. **Not completed but will be.** Once the new service offer is in place as providers will be required to work with the authority, stakeholders, and victims/survivors to deliver this.
3. For NELC and key partners to work together with victims and survivors to commission and deliver the NEL DA Offer, including:
 - Supported Accommodation Options.
 - Community Support Options.
 - Perpetrator's offer.
 - Specific work with children and young people.
 - Options for those with high or multiple disadvantages.

Four of the five elements will be completed. They have been included within the commissioning of enhanced service provision and will therefore be delivered through the new contracts, the outlier is the Perpetrator offer as the DA services are 100% grant funded and this important service provision is excluded from all funding currently in place, therefore this element will be carried forward to the new set of recommendations.

4. For all partners to review and establish resource contributions to enable the delivery, review, and monitoring of the commissioned NEL DA Offer. **Not Completed.** The only additional funding has come through DLUHC. Partner grant funding has remained the same or has been reduced, therefore this recommendation needs to be carried forward.
5. For NELC to identify a DA Commissioner to champion and drive forward the authorities' contributions and commitments. **Not completed.** Carried forward as it is still important.
6. MARAC to be reviewed to establish partnership contributions going forward, how the system is coordinated and if any aspects of delivery need to change. **Not completed but will be.** SafeLives have been engaged to undertake a review and the results are likely to be known for when the next refresh is due.
7. For a specific team to be established in NEL to support the project management and ongoing delivery of the NEL DA Offer (including specialist communications support, data and intelligence analysis, Co-ordination, and Relationship Management). **Partially completed.** The team is completely funded through various grants, giving rise to concerns about long term sustainability. There are currently 3 people engaged on delivering this service, but additional staff are now required.
8. For NELC to extend the current provision and funding to March 2023. **Completed** Contracts will now run until the commissioning has been completed and the new services are mobilised.

9. NELC to facilitate an exercise with all partners to map and understand entry points, the journey of individuals and barriers encountered. This should include victims and survivors being involved. **Not completed and will not be.** The new services will all route through a Single Point of Contact therefore mapping will become an ongoing activity.
10. NELC and key partners to develop place based local outcome and impact measures to address intelligence gaps and understand the impact of services delivered. **Completed.** The Outcomes Framework has been refreshed and once the new services are commissioned and delivering performance/outcomes data it will give a much clearer picture for gaps in intelligence to be explored.
11. For NELC and key partners to develop and deliver partnership working across the DA agenda in NEL. **Completed.** New boards are now in place and working effectively, representatives from all new contracts will be asked to nominate a representative to sit on these boards (as appropriate) and it will be a contractual requirement to facilitate and deliver effective partnership working.
12. For the NEL Safer Accommodation Duty Strategy to be refreshed in one year's time. **Not completed.** This activity is currently not due and does not need to be carried forward.
13. For a new DA Needs Assessment to be completed for NEL by March 2025. **Not completed.** This activity is currently not due and does not need to be carried forward.
14. NELC to lead on a cost/benefit analysis of reducing DA to identify new ways of working that could achieve great value for money, enabling more funds to be directed towards direct service delivery with a prevention focus. **Not completed.** Some work has been done, but due to current resources within the team, it is not currently achievable, and this will be looked at within the management of the new contracts therefore this will not be carried forward.
15. DA needs to become part of the everyday conversation professionals have between themselves and local communities, particularly in relation to removing barriers around stigma. Most adults in NEL need to be aware of where and how to access support for DA. **Partially completed but will be fully completed.** This will be done once the new service offer is in place as there will be more options to promote at this time and plans are already in development to deliver this.