



# Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy

## 2019-2021

DOCUMENT CONTROL					
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## 1. Purpose of the Document

The purpose of the Middlesbrough Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2021 is to outline the high level strategic intentions of the Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP) which brings together key partners to provide strategic leadership and drive improvements in relation to tackling and preventing domestic abuse in Middlesbrough. The strategy was revised following recognition within the Middlesbrough domestic abuse needs assessment (Completed Sept 2017) of the need on a both strategic and operational level for consistency across all statutory and voluntary services in relation to domestic abuse service delivery and the need for improved multi agency communication and collaboration. No single agency has statutory responsibility for preventing domestic abuse and this strategy will set out what Middlesbrough council, working in partnership with partners will set out to achieve in the next three years.

Domestic abuse is a challenging issue for local partnerships it can destroy lives and devastate families and is a huge burden on public resource. There is a growing depth of understanding regarding the pervasive and far reaching effects that domestic abuse has on victims, families and communities. Our commitment, driven within this strategy is to develop a strong and appropriate response to domestic abuse by understanding what domestic abuse is, the context in which it takes place in and the impacts on victims, perpetrators and children.

## 2. Context

Nationally 1.03 million domestic abuse related incidents were recorded by the police in the year ending March 2016. Following investigations the police concluded that a domestic abuse related criminal offence was committed in approximately 4 in every 10 (41%) of these incidents (421,185). Of the 1.03 million 609,935 (59%) incidents were not subsequently recorded as a crime and remained as an incident. Domestic abuse related crimes recorded by police accounted for approximately 1 in 10 of all crimes. Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime and it is estimated that only 21% of offences are reported to the police.

Nationally year ending March 2016 100,000 of adult domestic abuse victims were considered high and imminent risk of being murdered or seriously injured. On average high-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.3 years before getting help and 85% of those had sought help from professionals at least five times before they got effective help to stop abuse.

Very serious forms of domestic abuse are not uncommon in United Kingdom, domestic homicide accounts for 35% of all homicides in England and Wales, where on average two women are killed every week by their partner or ex-partner. A further 10 women a week are estimated to kill themselves following repeated abuse.

Domestic abuse between parents is the most frequently reported form of trauma for children. In 2015 51% of all hospital victims had children in their household. It is estimated 130,000 children live in homes where there is high-risk domestic abuse. 62% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others. It is estimated every year over 950,000 children and young people will witness domestic abuse.

Cleveland is second highest, by force area, of all forces in England in relation to rate of domestic abuse related incidents and offences recorded by police per 1000 of population (ONS March 2016). It is third highest in relation to the number of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by police per 1000 of population.

Domestic Abuse is a significant issue in Middlesbrough. There were 4921 recorded Domestic Abuse incidents in Middlesbrough between April 2016 and March 2017 2204 were converted

to a domestic abuse criminal offence which equates to 44.8% of all incidents. 78.7 % of all police recorded Domestic Abuse Crimes involved a female victim. 21.9% of those victims (356 people) reported experiencing two or more Domestic abuse crimes. The majority (63.2%) of Domestic Abuse crimes, with an identifiable victim, were committed by a current or former partner. In 2016/2017 2.6 % (58) of all recorded Domestic Abuse crimes the victim was a child.

Between April 2016 and March 2017 232 cases were referred to MARAC in Middlesbrough 27.6 % of those were repeat cases. MARAC referrals are more prevalent in Middlesbrough, making up 35% of total referrals across all four local authority areas. Between 2016 and 2018, four domestic homicides have been initiated in Middlesbrough.

Middlesbrough has some of the most deprived areas in England; almost half of its lower super output areas (LSOA) are among the 10% most deprived LSOA nationally. It has a density of risk factors making the prevalence of abuse more likely, including high-levels of unemployment, homelessness, low educational attainment, and high levels of teenage pregnancy and substance misuse. Cultural acceptance, and with it stigmatisation, marginalisation and exclusion, is recognised to be a barrier for effective prevention, reducing likelihood of offending and reoffending, and of victims engaging effectively with support. As a result of this there are, communities and groups of people in Middlesbrough who are more at risk and disproportionately affected. Recorded crimes are highest in more deprived areas. North Ormesby has the highest rate of DA crimes per 1000 population of any ward in Middlesbrough (45.39 per 1000 pop, 135 Crimes). Central and Newport were also identified as areas of concern.

### **3. Vision**

Domestic abuse remains a priority for Middlesbrough. Increasing opportunities for prevention and reducing the overall rate of domestic abuse is paramount if we are to make any progress on our priorities of achieving equality in the borough, reducing homelessness, reducing the number of children looked after, reducing repeat referrals to social care where domestic abuse is a feature, improving peoples' physical and mental health well-being and reducing the levels of offending in the borough.

The strategic vision is to embed domestic abuse prevention across Middlesbrough and keep more women, girls, children and men safe in the town. It aims to improve systems. Victims and their children will be central to the process, increasing prevention by challenging behaviours and attitudes and intervening at the earliest opportunity and focused on preventing domestic abuse escalating to critical levels. Where adults and children are at risk or are experiencing domestic abuse, ensuring appropriate support will be made available to them, across the continuum of need to enable them to deal with their situation, including providing them with a safe and secure environment in which to live. This will include risk and identification of need for the whole family and the development of robust partnerships between agencies to ensure both victims and perpetrators are empowered and enabled to engage with services to break the cycle of abuse.

#### **For our residents and communities:**

- People in Middlesbrough have access to safe, effective and timely support and interventions to reduce the risk to them and their children to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse.
- People know where to get help if they are living in a situation where they are affected by domestic abuse.

- People have more confidence to disclose, whether they are a victim, child or the perpetrator of domestic abuse.
- People have access to appropriate services which meet their aspirations and abilities, empower and give them choice and enable them live the best lives they can.
- People who have experienced abuse can access specialist provision and are supported to secure safety, freedom and independence.

### **For our services:**

- Services have a seamless support and information sharing pathways from early intervention through to safeguarding for victims and their children who are at a risk of domestic abuse.
- Services promote ways of working which promotes disclosure and maintains a position of solidarity with a victims.
- Services facilitate interventions at earliest opportunity providing support to victims and families before crisis point is reached.
- The system is improved so victims are never turned away, passed between services or fall between gaps in provision.
- Services are innovative to ensure we have sufficient resource to meet demand whilst offering continued protection and support to victims.
- Services will be led by the needs of a victim and their family, focus on strengths as well as problems and be curious about a vulnerable victims understanding of their difficulties.
- Services meet the needs of victims from within and outside of area, recognising that many victims need to move from Middlesbrough to be safe.
- Services are high quality, offer excellent value for money and are focussed on achieving the best possible outcomes for victims and their children.
- Services responses should build on strengths and nurture survivors' internal and external resources, embedding trauma informed approach throughout every aspect of a victim's journey.
- Services work in partnership and are committed to becoming part of innovation and developments in relation to improving systems for individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse.
- Services adhere to and have a clear procedure for recording and sharing of information and will contribute to policy and service development.
- Services have an attitude of respect, positive regard and genuineness towards victims.
- Services promote participation of victims, children and young people at all levels of their work, displaying a commitment to evidence based practice that encourages their voices to be heard, promotes peer support and ensures inclusion in the planning, undertaking and reviewing of work.
- Services ensure through the 'eyes of a child' practice approach and signs and safety framework is embedded across the partnership.

### 3 Aims

The aims of the domestic abuse strategy is to intervene, prevent and break the cycle of domestic abuse in Middlesbrough reducing the occurrence of domestic abuse and repeat victimisation.

- Embed a zero acceptance attitude towards domestic abuse. Consistently raise awareness and promote the message that 'Domestic Abuse is Everybody's Business' and everyone can play a role in this.
- Embed learning and recommendations from Domestic Homicide reviews
- Reduce the occurrence of domestic abuse and repeat incident rate and by doing so the subsequent impact on victims and their children.
- Ensure anyone experiencing any form of domestic abuse is offered appropriate support and assistance as early in their experience as possible
- Break the cycle of domestic abuse within families
- Victims are protected and supported, and agencies get it right first time, maximising engagement and ensuring safe space for action.
- Develop consistent core offer of service provision. Creating a seamless single point of access, offering coordinated victim centred approach with co-located specialists which enables a fast and effective response.
- Agencies support each other's operational objectives and have clarity in relation to roles and responsibilities, with the development and promotion of multi-agency policy and procedures, so Middlesbrough offers a community coordinated response to domestic abuse.
- Children in homes where domestic abuse is present are safeguarded and supported
- Have a planned and sustainable approach to dealing with perpetrators so they are routinely challenged and deterred from domestic abuse

### 4 Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Values

The Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership has identified 6 core values which are deemed integral to ensuring the strategic partnership is successful in its aims;

- Passionate – Individuals affected by domestic abuse and their voices are central to all of our work.
- Open to change and challenge – maintain an open dialogue, listen and communicate respectfully and effectively.
- Collaborative – agree and work towards shared objectives with clear action plan in place for victims and families.
- Unified – maintain a position of solidarity with victims. Foster and share mutual trust
- Aspirational – improve systems for vulnerable victims and their families
- Integrity – be open and transparent
- Focused – develop performance measures to drive improvements

## 5 Themes



The Domestic Abuse Partnership has developed four key strategic themes, which the partnership will focus in order to achieve the strategic vision. This has helped determine our strategic objectives

## 6. Strategic Objectives

The strategy will be delivered through a detailed delivery plan which will be reviewed annually. The delivery plan which incorporates the strategic objectives and partnership actions will be overseen by the Middlesbrough Council Domestic Abuse lead with the management and governance provided by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership with oversight by the strategic governance boards. The following are the agreed strategic objectives, which will link with identified data sets and agreed performance measures and will be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership on a quarterly basis.

Promote Awareness
<p><b>Objective 1</b> Key partners are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors of domestic abuse.</p>
<p><b>Objective 2</b> Increased awareness across all sections of communities in Middlesbrough that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is unacceptable.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p>
<p><b>Objective 4</b> Promote Domestic Abuse Safe Place Champions to help embed positive changes within organisations and workplace.</p>

## Protect and Support

### Objective 5

Improve systems so we ensure that victims are assessed and offered wrap around services on the basis of their individual need for safety and support.

### Objective 6

Ensure victims have access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, support services from incident to recovery.

### Objective 7

Developing a coordinated problem solving case management approach to the care of vulnerable service users, who engage in risky behaviours.

### Objective 8

Increased victim confidence and access to justice.

### Objective 9

Implement a Whole Housing approach with housing options that covers all types of housing tenure and aims to create earlier intervention, improved tenancy sustainment and availability of long-term housing options for victims/ survivors.

## Pursue and Deter

### Objective 10

Perpetrators are able to receive appropriate interventions, at earliest opportunity and are provided with opportunities to change their behaviour which take into account victim safety.

### Objective 11

Key Partners trained to use PPIT tool identify and provide effective, timely and appropriate interventions with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

## Improve Performance

### Objective 12

Agree performance monitoring framework for providers with standardised reporting and outcome monitoring tool to ensure more meaningful trend data is routinely available to inform the strategic partnership.

### Objective 13

Ensure commissioning structure is fit for purpose; meeting identified need, collaborative contracts, with set review processes (*both demand and performance against set objectives*).



## 7. Governance and Performance

Preventing Domestic Abuse has multiple stakeholders that will provide governance of this strategy and the delivery plan through the following;

<b>Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership</b>	This statutory board will have oversight of the strategy. It is also the statutory lead for any domestic violence homicide reviews that may be required.
<b>South Tees Local Children Safeguarding Board</b>	This is the overarching strategic group for services for children and families in Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland
<b>Tees Wide Adult Safeguarding Board</b>	Responsible for the safeguarding of those individuals with care and support needs. The care act 2014 includes domestic abuse as one of the issues and circumstances than can be considered when responding to safeguarding concerns
<b>South Tees Health and Well Being Board</b>	The board commission the provision of services linked to the wider improvement of health and well-being of victims and perpetrators

## 8. How does Middlesbrough Council contribute to the Domestic Abuse response?

In Middlesbrough council, resources and funding for domestic abuse are aligned under supporting communities to work towards a 'whole system' model of delivery. Contract management and performance monitoring sits with Community Safety Partnership and is responsibility of Domestic Abuse Operational Coordinator. Middlesbrough Local Authority plays a significant role in providing domestic abuse services and in ensuring that a range of provision is in place for victims and their families.

Middlesbrough commission a range of services that have unique ability to address domestic abuse and work effectively with victims and children experiencing domestic abuse. Three voluntary providers are awarded contracts to deliver a range of provision and are committed to maintaining excellent standards. The services are Middlesbrough based, embedded in local communities with broad understanding of domestic abuse and economic, cultural and social issues and have front line knowledge, experience and understanding provided by trained advocates and support workers.

**Domestic Abuse Operational Lead** The role has responsibility for coordinating the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP), implementing operational plans, overseeing commissioned services, coordinating DA related activity across service areas and developing initiatives in Middlesbrough. This has led to improved partnerships with statutory and voluntary services who are integral to the prevention of domestic abuse.

**Domestic Abuse Senior Practitioner** The role is based at Front Door of Children Services and form part of a MASH screening panel, which involves a multi- agency team of professionals who will scrutinise and make decisions regarding what support is offered to families. All referrals involving children affected by Domestic Abuse will be directed via this



front door and the role will be responsible for applying professional judgment and expertise to inform the panel and help them make decisions.

### **Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

Middlesbrough Council has provided funding alongside MARAC partners for an independent MARAC Coordinator to support the development and delivery of the Cleveland MARAC in line with the guiding principles for an effective MARAC, as defined by safe lives and outlined in the Cleveland MARAC Standard Operating Guide. Middlesbrough staff in both Adult and Children Services play an active role in participating in the MARAC assessment process and Community Safety Partnership ensures provides representation at the strategic steering group.

### **Middlesbrough Refuge and Outreach Provision**

Purpose built 14 unit refuge with self-contained flats. Provides safe house for women over 18 years and their children who need to flee domestic abuse. 24 hour support line and support workers/ children workers. Links to wider national refuge network so therefore accommodates victims from across region. Women victims only. This includes outreach service which provides a small team of support workers who offer support to victims who are leaving refuge or who require support in the community. This service supports both male and female victims.

### **Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA)**

Independent advocacy support to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex partners or family members to secure their safety and safety of their children.

### **Domestic Abuse Children and Young People Service**

Children living with Domestic Abuse aged between 3-18 years are offered therapeutic interventions, provided on a one to one or age specific group work activity. This also includes Prevention work in schools delivering Healthy relationships programmes in both secondary and primary schools.

### **Domestic Abuse Counselling Service**

Therapeutic Trauma informed counselling for female victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

### **Sanctuary Scheme**

Multi agency victim centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing 'sanctuary' in their home and offering provision of support to the household

### **BME Service**

Provides support, advocacy to BME victims of Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, and honour based Violence. It provides emergency help for victims from BME communities who need help to obtain a safe place to live, understand welfare and benefits entitlements, immigration advice, gain police protection and public safety and gain court ordered protection and offers peer support and guidance

### **Domestic Abuse Navigator Scheme**

Ministry of Housing, communities and local government released Domestic Abuse Fund to support domestic abuse survivors. Since 2016 Middlesbrough Local Authority has worked in partnership with five other local authorities to this fund developing and delivering tailored support for victims of domestic abuse to increase access to safe accommodation. Navigator scheme is cross boundary domestic abuse intervention initiative, focussing on those who need intensive support and those who because of their needs can sometimes be excluded from existing services, particularly refuges. Main elements of this funding have provided

Middlesbrough with opportunity to increase capacity of the Domestic Abuse Navigator Network, develop emergency 'safe space' provision, build portfolio of dispersal units for victims of Domestic Abuse, sustain the Personalisation Fund, roll out trauma-informed practice and principles across the partnership and contribute to sustaining BAME refuge in Stockton.

## **9. What will success look like?**

- Domestic abuse is identified at earliest opportunity
- Domestic abuse and understanding healthy relationships is an integral part of education in schools, colleges and universities
- A domestic abuse preventative model is adopted across the partnership
- Increase in the number of people engaging with services beyond the initial referral
- Reduction in repeat incidents and overall domestic abuse incidents & offences
- More successful Domestic Abuse prosecutions
- Reduction in repeat victimisation to prevent further abuse for victims and families
- Victims increase resilience and more able to cope with trauma.
- All services take responsibility and understands the role they play in relation to improving responses in relation to domestic abuse, and have a common understanding of risk and deliver improved outcomes for both victims, children and perpetrators
- Better informed professionals and accessible information about domestic abuse across all services

## **10. What are the DASP Priorities in the next two years?**

The Domestic abuse Needs Assessment completed in 2017 increased understanding of issues relating to Domestic Abuse in Middlesbrough and was based on analysis of the data, a review of working and commissioning arrangements and consultation with stakeholders, commissioners, specialist services and service users. The report, helped inform the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership and through a series of development days conducted between 2018/ 2019 the partnerships has developed this strategy and high level priorities. The DASP Development Strategic Objective Action Plan, which underpins this strategy provides an appraisal of what further work needs to be undertaken and identifies the key issues relevant to developing future commissioning priorities. Both the strategy and strategic objective action plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership meetings.