
DARLINGTON DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2011 REFRESH

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Bill Dixon, Leader

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of People

Purpose of Report

1. To present Darlington’s refreshed Domestic Abuse Strategy 2011 (see **Appendix**).

Summary

2. No single agency can tackle domestic abuse by working in isolation. This strategy was developed by Darlington Community Safety Partnership in 2011. It has been updated to highlight the widened definition of domestic abuse adopted by the Government and the local achievements that have taken place since the original strategy was written. The strategy includes the national and local policy contexts for this work and provides an analysis of relevant data. There is a description of the current services that are available. This is followed by an examination of the provision, prevention and protection aspects of the work.
3. Four principles are embedded across the strategy:-
 - (a) Prevent abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it;
 - (b) Provide adequate support where abuse does occur;
 - (c) Work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families;
 - (d) Take action to reduce the risk to people who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.
4. A refreshed action plan is presented, which reflects achievements to date and ongoing and emerging trends and issues.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the domestic abuse strategy.

Reasons

6. The recommendation is supported by the following reason: a strategy with multi-agency support is necessary to guide service provision, commissioning and development activity in respect of tackling domestic abuse in the future.

Murray Rose
Director of People

Background Papers

Reference materials are described in full in the bibliographical reference at the back of the strategy document.

Covering report author: Judith Morton, 346773

Strategy authors: Rachel Green, Strategic Coordinator for Domestic Abuse, Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence, Durham Constabulary, 0191 375 2124 and Simon Bishop 388688

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| S17 Crime and Disorder | The strategy refresh has been developed through a multi-agency partnership, including crime and disorder partners. The report is focused on tackling domestic abuse and considers the needs of victims, perpetrators, witnesses and children who are affected. |
| Health and Well Being | The strategy is not directly concerned with the health and wellbeing of those affected by domestic abuse. |
| Carbon Impact | There is no direct impact arising from this report. |
| Diversity | The refreshed strategy is particularly concerned with supporting women as they constitute the overwhelming majority of victims reporting abuse. The needs of LGBT communities and BME groups (including Gypsies and Travellers) and women aged 40 plus are also examined. |
| Wards Affected | All wards in Darlington are affected by this issue. Police analysis suggests higher incidence in Pierremont and Bank Top areas of the town... |
| Groups Affected | The strategy is particularly concerned with supporting women as they constitute the overwhelming majority of victims who report abuse. The needs of LGBT communities and BME groups (including Gypsies and Travellers) and women aged 40 plus are also examined. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | The report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework. |
| Key Decision | Yes – the strategy would lead to multi-agency activity across the whole borough. |
| Urgent Decision | No. |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | Positive Impact on One Darlington. The Domestic Abuse Strategy will have a positive impact on domestic abuse victims, perpetrators, witnesses and affected children. |
| Efficiency | The strategy should aid decision-making in order to facilitate the best use of resources. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Community Safety Partnership does not accept domestic abuse. This strategy focuses on preventing it and embedding cultural change within all agencies, organisations and the wider community.
8. This strategy has been written on behalf of the Darlington Community Safety Partnership through the Vulnerability Strategic Group; it has clear links with existing strategies including those relating to Sexual Violence, Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse.
9. This strategy has been developed around the national guidance for domestic abuse with the three guiding principles of:-
 - (a) Prevention
 - (b) Protection
 - (c) Provision
10. There are four principles behind the work that needs to be done:-
 - (a) Prevent abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it;
 - (b) Provide adequate support where abuse does occur;
 - (c) Work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families;
 - (d) Take action to reduce the risk to people who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.
11. The strategy presents a focus and challenge to the Darlington Community Safety Partnership by ensuring that adequate and appropriate services are provided. It reflects both local and national priorities and shows how in Darlington agencies will work together to tackle the issue within the wider context of violence against women and girls. There is a discussion of the current services, support and good practice that already exists within Darlington and considers what role these have within the future aspirations of the Partnership and the community.
12. The strategy specifically highlights all education settings and the role that they play in embedding values and beliefs within our children from a young age around healthy, happy relationships and around the unacceptability of abuse in all its forms.
13. The strategy advocates that all agencies and organisations are equipped to recognise the early signs of abuse and know how to ensure preventative and protective services can be put in place to support victims.
14. Darlington Community Safety Partnership has an ambition to use different types of programmes creatively for victims, children and perpetrators of abuse. The Community Safety Partnership will monitor the outcomes achieved in order to

review the effectiveness of this strategy and the services being delivered.

15. The cross-cutting nature of domestic abuse means that it affects all ages, socio-economic groups, and disability, genders, sexual orientation and ethnicity. As this strategy is targeted to address the needs of vulnerable people, partner organisations feel that it will bring positive equalities impacts to people across a range of these protected characteristics. More formal equalities impact assessment work will be developed as the action plan is refined.
16. There is evidence to suggest that domestic abuse can be a factor among families with high demand for services. This strategy acknowledges this evidence, and will challenge cooperating agencies and organisations to work differently with these families to produce more positive outcomes.
17. The action plan recognises that change in this area is incremental, and through strategic management and multi-agency cooperation, cultural change is possible to make progress towards ensuring families will be safe, happy and free from abuse. It proposes action in a number of key areas:
 - (a) Achieve greater involvement of Early Intervention and Prevention Teams in providing services to victims;
 - (b) Identify unmet need and identify gaps in current service provision;
 - (c) Increase awareness of domestic abuse across services, organisations and the general public;
 - (d) Implement the Perpetrator Programme and explore future options;
 - (e) Identify data gaps with regard to repeat victims and perpetrators and adopt common measures;
 - (f) Continue with the successful implementation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
 - (g) Behaviour and Attendance Partnership will develop their agenda with regard to domestic abuse;
 - (h) Ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and educates children and young people about relationships and domestic abuse;
 - (i) Ensure that there is comprehensive literature relating to pathways and services;
 - (j) Agree a common set of risk factors to identify high impact families at risk of domestic abuse;
 - (k) Explore the feasibility of improving our understanding of young people's experiences of domestic abuse by using the Social Norms Survey;