



# Northumberland

## County Council

### COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2018

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Domestic Violence and Abuse in Northumberland

**Report of** Executive Director of Children's Services

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Wayne Daley Deputy Leader

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#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview on the current partnership work programme to co-ordinate service provision to tackle the issues and harms caused by domestic violence and abuse in Northumberland.

#### **Recommendations**

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the 'supporting communities to feel safer' priority in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

#### **Key issues**

1. Services to support children and young people who have witnessed domestic violence and abuse.
2. Research into domestic violence and abuse in the rural communities.
3. Prevalence data in relation to domestic abuse in Northumberland.

#### **Background**

From April 2013 the Northumberland Domestic Violence and Abuse and Sexual Violence Business Coordination group has adopted the following Home Office updated definition of domestic abuse:

"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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

In December 2016 the Government launched the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) National Statement of Expectations (NSE), setting out what local areas need to put in place to ensure their response to VAWG issues is as collaborative, robust and effective as it can be so that all victims and survivors can get the help they need. It is expected that local strategies and services:

1. Put the victim at the centre of service delivery;
2. Have a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims safe;
3. Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG;
4. Are locally-led and safeguard individuals at every point;
5. Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG

The National VAWG strategy states clear outcomes to be achieved by 2020; a reduction in the prevalence of all forms of VAWG, matched by increases in reporting, police referrals, prosecution and convictions for what can still be hidden crimes.

The Government has recently announced plans for a Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill. The key elements of the Bill will be to create a clear definition of the crime in law, consolidate prevention and protection measures, ensure sentences reflect the harm that domestic abuse has up on children, and establish a new commissioner who will represent victims and survivors and drive forward progress.

### **Northumberland Context**

The Northumberland Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Coordinator has been in post for almost a year to support the work of the Northumberland Domestic Violence and Abuse and Sexual Violence Business Group. Membership of the group has been reviewed, with attendance from all of the statutory and voluntary agencies agreed.

Since then there has been accelerated progression with regards to the identity and development of services and pathways to support victims and children affected by DA.

The business group will report on progress to the Safer Northumberland Partnership, Northumberland Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Adults Board.

Key areas of work include:

- Domestic abuse and sexual violence awareness raising and training
- The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Champions Network
- The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Specialist Services
- Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff
- Operation Encompass
- Domestic Abuse and Housing
- Domestic Abuse Health Advocates
- Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA)

A domestic abuse and sexual violence needs assessment has been undertaken to inform the development of a strategy and action plan. The four key priorities are prevention, provision, partnership working and justice outcomes.

## **Northumberland Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Needs Assessment 2018**

### **National Data**

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime; a comprehensive understanding of its prevalence remains a challenge. However the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2017 highlighted:

- The police recorded 511,319<sup>3</sup> offences that were domestic abuse-related in the year ending June 2017. This was an 18% increase on the 431,768 offences recorded the previous year, but the increase is partly due to improvements in crime recording by the police.
- England and Wales had a rate of 8 domestic abuse-related offences per 1000 population in 2017.
- Overall, 27.1% of women and 13.2% of men had experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16. These figures were equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.2 million male victims between the ages of 16 and 59.
- 8.2% of women and 4.0% of men were estimated to have experienced any domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.3 million female and 600,000 male victims. <sup>4</sup> (CSEW2015)
- Female victims were more likely than male victims to be killed by someone they knew. Over two-thirds (77%) of female victims knew the main suspect, compared with 53% of male victims. In almost half of these cases, female victims were killed by a current or ex-partner (44% of all female victims, compared to 6% of males) while male victims were most likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance (32%, compared to 12% of females).

### **Northumbria Police Data**

In 2016/17 there were 5,041 reported domestic abuse incidents in Northumberland, on average 420 domestic abuse incidents a month,

- 79% of the incidents were where the perpetrator was a partner/ ex-partner
- In 2,197 of these incidents there were children involved (43.6%)
- Of the 5041 incidents there were 3,197 individual victims; of which:
  - 77% were female
  - 23% were male
  - 93 were from BME communities
  - 67 were aged 16 or 17 years old
  - 10% were aged over 55

Using the data for the first quarter of 2017/18 (1,322 incidents) to consider how Northumberland compares with the other Northumbria Police force area:

- Northumberland accounted for 16% of the Northumbria Police area's DA incidents (3rd highest after Newcastle and Sunderland) in 2017/18 Q1
- 44% of Northumberland's incidents involve children - in line with the force average
- Northumberland had the highest proportion of victims who were aged 16 or 17, and the lowest proportion of repeat victims (of any age)
- 45% of incidents were classed as crimes in Northumberland, with 27% of crimes involving alcohol (both in line with the force average)

The needs assessment relies predominantly on data from Northumbria Police, which provides an overview of the problem, but under reporting is part of the issue when considering domestic abuse, with the problem of under-reporting thought to be higher in rural areas.

A key priority for the Northumberland Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Business group in 2018/19 will be to identify partner data that is available and can be shared. The group will begin to collect and analyse this data to help inform a refresh of the needs assessment 2019/20.

### **Service Provision in Northumberland**

Following a review of the domestic abuse service provision across the county in 2017, the council have developed a new service model. In line with other local authorities, the council has brought together individual service provision to develop a hub that delivers an integrated service for both female and male victims over the age of 16.

The new service includes a single point of access for all referrals 24 hours a day 7 days a week, safe refuge accommodation, dispersed accommodation, resettlement into the community and outreach support, as well as Independent Domestic Violence Advisors to support people identified as high risk.

The new service, delivered by Places for People Living + will work in partnership with the council, Northumbria Police, voluntary and community organisations and other statutory organisations to deliver a whole system response to domestic abuse in Northumberland. The service aims to improve the outcomes for victims of domestic violence and abuse enabling them to feel safe and secure, promoting resilience and supporting them to recover from the impacts of violence, including meeting their caring responsibilities if they have children, and lead fulfilling independent lives.

Other Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services in Northumberland:

- Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS) have funding from a range of sources including the Northumbria PCC, they accept self referrals for standard and medium risk across the county but are focussing on addressing the need in the rural communities.
- Cygnus have funding from range of charitable sources and the Northumbria PCC to offer counselling, psychotherapy and practical and emotional support to women, men and young people aged 14 years and over in Northumberland who are or have been victims of domestic and/or sexual violence.

- Grace (Northumberland Rape Crisis) are funded by NCC and the MoJ to offer practical and emotional support and counselling to women and girls aged 13 years and over, who have experienced sexual violence.
- Barnardos are funded by the Northumbria PCC to deliver a 26 week perpetrators programme in Northumberland, and by NCC to deliver a pilot 12 week perpetrator programme in the South East.
- Victims First Northumbria (VFN) are funded by the Northumbria PCC to support victims of crime, including domestic abuse.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	No direct Policy implications
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Commissioned services are monitored and evaluated. The contract value for delivery of the Domestic Abuse Support Service is £217,500.
<b>Legal</b>	No direct Legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	The Integrated Domestic Abuse Support Service was commissioned 1st March 2018.
<b>Human Resources</b>	The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Coordinator was appointed November 2017.
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Impact Assessment will have been completed as part of the procurement process.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	None
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	The response to domestic violence and abuse has a significant impact on the councils duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its response to tackling crime, disorder and anti social behaviour.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	None
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	All

### **Background papers:**

Northumberland Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Needs Assessment 2018

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	initials
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
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