

## Report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director Public Health and Communities, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 26 March 2024

### Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview and update on progress made regarding domestic abuse service provision which is managed by the Healthier Communities Team within the Public Health and Communities Directorate at Barnsley Council.
- 1.2 It should be read in conjunction with the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27, which outlines the strategy adopted by the Council and its partners to tackle and prevent domestic abuse in Barnsley.
- 1.3 Item 4b (attached) outlines the performance against key indicators for the end of quarter three (2023/24).

#### 2.0 Background

##### The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- 2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created the first legal definition of domestic abuse which emphasises that domestic abuse is not just physical violence. The Act outlines domestic abuse as behaviour of one person towards another when they are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:
  - Physical or sexual abuse
  - Violent or threatening behaviour
  - Controlling or coercive behaviour
  - Economic abuse (any behaviour which has a substantial negative effect on the victim's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services)
  - Psychological, emotional or other abuse
- 2.2 The Act also recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear, or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.
- 2.3 The Act requires local authorities to:
  - Provide accommodation-based support to victims of Domestic Abuse
  - Give victims of Domestic Abuse priority need for homelessness assistance and grant secure lifetime tenancies when granting new secure tenancies to social tenants who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy
  - Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
  - Assess the need for accommodation-based Domestic Abuse support in their area for all victims and their children, including those who come from outside the area
  - Develop, publish, and give effect to a Domestic Abuse strategy
  - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
  - Report back to central government

## Needs Assessment 2021

2.4 In 2021, Imogen Blood Associates were commissioned to complete an independent strategic needs assessment of domestic abuse services provided in Barnsley. This involved stakeholder interviews, analysis of a range of service data and case studies, an online survey, and practice sharing discussions. The findings suggest domestic abuse in Barnsley has become more complex than the 'traditional' scenario of female victims and male perpetrators. Services are seeing more mutual partner conflict, female perpetrators/male victims, older/adult children abusing partners or grandparents, and abuse in same sex relationships. The needs assessment also highlighted some key gaps which have been addressed in our Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027. These were:

- A lack of available safe and suitable housing for victims/survivors of domestic abuse
- A gap in housing support for victims who do not fit the 'traditional' description of a victim of Domestic Abuse. For example, male victims or victims with complex needs
- A need for housing officers to be made further aware of how target hardening measures can be access by victims living in a range of tenures
- A lack of specialist support for children and young people in relation to domestic abuse
- A need for more skilled work with perpetrators of domestic abuse
- A need for more holistic support in relation to housing options to reduce the risk of repeat incidents
- A need for specialist help for younger perpetrators of domestic abuse and voluntary access to healthy relationships courses. As well as mandated programmes for those convicted of offences

## Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027

2.5 The Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27 was launched in 2022 in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It is a live public document to enable it to be regularly updated. The strategy outlines four priorities for the development of domestic abuse services in Barnsley. These are:

1. Providing victims and survivors with the right support: -
  - Increase the capacity for providing safe housing to victims of domestic abuse
  - Ensure the development of services is driven by the needs of survivors
  - Develop an increased offer of community support, including an increased offer of support to children and families
  - Introduce the Safe and Together™ Model in Barnsley
2. Preventing domestic abuse: -
  - Continue to develop a strong communications plan to raise awareness and signpost to services
  - Develop a curriculum for school safeguarding leads, creating a 'Wellness' Hub of Excellence for delivering education around healthy relationships
3. Providing strong multi-agency support: -
  - Ensure the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) works for all agencies and delivers the best outcome for victims
  - Maintain and develop positive relationships between agencies who are exposed to victims of domestic abuse

- Continue the success of the Domestic Abuse Partnership
  - Identify options for pooling resources amongst agencies to deliver the best services for victims and survivors
  - Develop the expectations of agencies and professionals working together in the future to keep Domestic Abuse on everybody's agenda and improve the outcomes for victims and their children
4. Holding perpetrators to account and supporting them to change their behaviour: -
- Continue to support and develop the existing perpetrator programme to support perpetrators to change behaviour
  - Support South Yorkshire Police in developing and implementing the Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) process

### **3.0 Current Position**

3.1 So far, the domestic abuse strategy and learning from the needs assessment have been implemented in the following ways:-

#### **Priority 1 - Providing victims and survivors with the right support**

##### Integrated Domestic and Sexual Abuse Service - Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS)

3.2 IDAS have provided Barnsley's integrated domestic and sexual abuse service since 2017. Following a recommissioning process in 2022, IDAS were successful in securing a contract for a further five years covering 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2028, with the option to extend this contract for an additional two years. In response to the needs assessment learning, the new service specification placed an emphasis on the whole family approach including supporting children. IDAS are based in a community hub in Goldthorpe, developed by Ministry of Justice (MoJ) grant money. Services delivered by IDAS include:

- Independent domestic violence advisors/advocates (IDVAs). They offer advice and support, crisis intervention, safety planning, advocacy, and practical and emotional support
- Therapeutic groups and signposting to counselling services
- Recovery and safety planning and care
- Target hardening (making people's homes more secure)
- Community support
- Recovery check-ups
- Management of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process
- Training
- Telephone helpline and live chat
- Comprehensive web resources
- Delivery in schools and colleges such as Helping Hands groups in primary schools and healthy relationship workshops at high schools

3.3 We also currently fund four specialist IDVA posts; two for children and young people, those in the LGBTQ+ community and those from ethnic minority communities. This assists the service to adjust provision for individuals who would prefer to be supported by specialist IDVAs.

3.4 An IDAS IDVA also is going to be redeployed to the children's integrated front door team to provide specialist advice and support for cases where domestic abuse is present.

### Accommodation-Based Support

- 3.5 We have responded to the gaps identified in the needs assessment relating to safe and suitable accommodation, accommodation support, and working with colleagues in housing support. We have worked closely with partners to develop our provision. We have also formed a Safe Accommodation Task and Finish Group bringing key partners working within this remit together to agree and shape developments.
- 3.6 Barnsley's refuge is a women's only refuge which is bought in from The Riverside Group and managed by IDAS. The refuge consists of eight self-contained units and is available for Barnsley residents, as well as domestic abuse victims and survivors from other local council areas. Clients in refuge are now given priority band one through the homelessness pathway, in order to help move on from refuge.
- 3.7 Target Housing, a Registered Social Landlord, has recently been commissioned to purchase four properties across the borough on behalf of the Council. These will vary in size and will be used for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Target will provide intensive housing support for residents such as support with maintenance. IDAS will provide domestic abuse support through a specialist worker.
- 3.8 There are four separate units of safe housing for female offenders with experience of domestic abuse. These are managed in partnership with IDAS, Humankind, and our Housing Options Team.
- 3.9 Our Housing Options Team provide temporary and emergency housing for victims and survivors who present as homeless due to domestic abuse. They work closely with Berneslai Homes to identify suitable properties for victims and survivors.
- 3.10 The housing placement coordinator will be co-located between IDAS and Housing Options. They will support clients to access settled, appropriate accommodation. This will include liaising with private landlords, housing associations and the council. The placement coordinator will agree a resettlement programme with the client to ensure ongoing support.
- 3.11 Where applicable, they will work with clients to develop a debt repayment plan and link them to the Help Out Barnsley furniture scheme assisting with furniture storage so that families are able to move as soon as they are offered a property and will help with property and furniture refurbishment where this is required (as outlined in 3.13 below).

### Survivors Voice Support Service - GROW

- 3.12 GROW have recently been commissioned to provide a peer led post-crisis support service for women and their children who have previously been subjected to domestic abuse. The service will support and empower survivors and their families to live safely and take back control of their lives. Delivery will include:
- A key worker for each client/family
  - Coproduced support/resettlement plans which are holistic and bespoke to individuals' needs
  - 1:1 support
  - Weekly group support and activities
  - Courses and learning programmes covering topics such as health and wellbeing, building and maintaining healthy relationships and budgeting

## Help Out Barnsley

- 3.13 A new partnership and service with Barnsley Hospice is currently being developed. This is known as Help Out Barnsley. A unit located next to the Barnsley Hospice retail hub on the Fall Bank Industrial Estate in Dodworth has been secured with a three-year contract. The Barnsley Hospice retail hub is a place where they receive donations of clothes, electrical, furniture etc. They also sell some of the goods in their shop which is located in the same unit. The unit which has been secured also includes racking, office space and a kitchen. A full-time member of staff will be employed by the hospice to work on this project. The project will provide storage for the possessions of victims fleeing domestic abuse whilst longer term housing solutions are found. The scheme will also provide resettlement packs for those fleeing domestic abuse and those who are homeless.

## **Priority 2 - Preventing domestic abuse**

### Communications

- 3.14 Alongside the Council's marketing and communications team, a range of marketing and communications materials have been designed to raise awareness. Within the last year, work has been done to commission for the backs and street liners of buses to feature IDAS communications. IDAS mirror stickers have also been designed which were distributed to a range of businesses and institutions in the area. These stickers featured all the relevant contact information and a QR code that would take an individual straight to the IDAS website.
- 3.15 The annual domestic abuse conference took place in February 2024, where a wide variety of professionals attended to hear about what the council are doing to help tackle domestic abuse in the area. Alongside the bigger marketing and communications projects, there have also been regular articles in Let's Talk, the council's internal online article, commissioned services are a permanent fixture on the council's corporate televisions, and there have been features in Spotlight, the council's corporate magazine.

### Detached Youth Work – The Youth Association

- 3.16 The Youth Association has recently been commissioned to provide a detached youth work programme across Barnsley, focused on violence against women and girls, and drug education. The programme provides wrap-around support for young people at street level, bringing informal education and issue-based workshops to young people in their own social settings. For example, workshops cover topics such as understanding toxic/healthy relationships, gender health inequalities and substance misuse. The desired outcomes of this are:
- Young men develop their understanding of masculinity, reducing misogyny, aggression, and similar behaviours
  - Young women improve understanding of social injustice, women's health and develop confidence to critically discuss it
  - Young people improve understanding of drugs, county lines and child criminal exploitation

## **Priority 3 - Providing strong multi-agency support**

### Domestic Abuse Partnership

- 3.17 In response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Domestic Abuse Partnership was established. The Domestic Abuse Partnership sits underneath the Safer Barnsley Partnership Board. The partnership meets quarterly to discuss and shape developments in relation to domestic abuse service provision in Barnsley.

3.18 The Domestic Abuse Partnership membership consists of representatives meeting the requirements set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Act notes that the local domestic abuse partnership board must include representatives to represent:

- The relevant council
- The interests of councils for areas within its area (not relevant for Barnsley)
- The interests of victims of domestic abuse
- The interests of children of domestic abuse victims
- The interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in its area
- The interests of persons who provide, or have functions relating to, health care services in its area
- The interests of persons with functions relating to policing or criminal justice in its area

3.19 The Domestic Abuse Partnership (DAP) includes representatives from:

- Barnsley Council Healthier Communities, Safer Communities, Housing Options, Adult Social Care, Education, Children's Services, Integrated Front Door, Public Health and Youth Justice
- South Yorkshire Police
- Domestic Abuse Service Provider - Independent Domestic Abuse Services
- Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Yorkshire and the Humber Probation Service
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- South-West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust
- Barnsley NHS Foundation Trust
- Berneslai Homes
- Perpetrator programme service provider - Cranstoun
- Substance Misuse Service, Low Level Mental Health Service and Multiple Needs Service 25+ - Humankind
- Multiple Needs Service 16-24 - Centrepoint
- South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Northern College
- Survivor's Voice Service – GROW

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

3.20 A MARAC is a two weekly local partnership meeting to discuss how to help high risk domestic abuse victims who are vulnerable to serious harm or murder. As the work and visibility around domestic abuse has increased, so have referrals to MARAC as agencies are better equipped to recognise the signs of abuse, assess risk and make subsequent referrals.

3.21 As the number of cases heard at MARAC is on the increase, subsequent meetings have increased. A review was undertaken in early 2023 to investigate the possible solutions to a growing list and improving the operating model. A report was submitted to the DAP outlining recommendations. Further recommendations included the review of the MADA (multi agency domestic abuse) meeting.

3.22 The agreed recommendations of that review and subsequent workshop are:

- That MADAs would be exclusively for all children and family domestic abuse victims
- To administer the structure and liaise closely with partners
- To remove these clients from the MARAC list
- To support IDAS to continue to administer to the MARAC for adult only clients where no other child or young person is involved
- To monitor the progress and outcome of the changes

#### **Priority 4 - Holding perpetrators to account and supporting them to change their behaviour**

##### Working With Perpetrators – Cranstoun Inspire to Change Programme

3.23 Alongside Doncaster, Sheffield, and Rotherham Councils, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Barnsley has commissioned Cranstoun to provide the Inspire to Change perpetrator programme. The programme is voluntary and works with perpetrators aged 16 and above, to tackle and challenge perpetrator behaviours through group and one to one work. The programme works with perpetrators to:

- Encourage taking responsibility for their behaviour through challenging denial and minimisation
- Improve understanding of what constitutes as domestic abuse
- Increase understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on partners and children
- Explore what it means to be a man/woman
- Increase accountability

3.24 Inspire to Change also provides a victim/survivor support service which is offered to current and ex partners of those attending the programme. This provision consists of an overview of the interventions being offered to the perpetrator along with regular updates on their engagement with the programme and emotional support for the victim/survivor.

3.25 This has been commissioned for three years (September 2021 – September 2024) with an option to extend. We are currently working on extending this up to March 2025. This will continue to work towards reducing the gap of skilled work with perpetrators as highlighted in the needs assessment 2021.

##### The Level Up programme

3.26 As noted previously, in 2021 the needs assessment highlighted a need for specialist help for younger perpetrators of domestic abuse and voluntary access to healthy relationships courses. Cranstoun also provide The Level Up programme, which is a voluntary intervention for children and young people (11-15 years old) who exhibit abusive and challenging behaviours to either their family or intimate partners. The programme is delivered through group and one to one work over twelve weeks. Through using trauma-informed psychoeducational interventions the programme helps to address the use of abusive behaviours in children and young people by:

- Teaching them how to display suitable behaviour within relationships
- Emphasising the severe consequences of conflict, aggression and anger on the lives of others
- Using a compassionate approach to help them understand how their actions affect those around them
- Helping them to develop vital skills such as interpersonal communication and conflict resolution
- Encouraging them to take ownership of their behaviour

- 3.27 Victims and families of the young people are provided with emotional and wellbeing support as well as updates on attendance and engagement for a minimum period of three months post completion of the programme by the young person.
- 3.28 Cranstoun were previously providing this and funding has been made available to commission Cranstoun, alongside Doncaster, Sheffield, Rotherham Councils and the OPCC, to provide the Level Up programme from 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024.

## **Performance**

- 3.29 A number of indicators are used to assess the performance of services in reducing domestic abuse across the borough. The challenge with the indicators is that when numbers are seen to be increasing this does not necessarily mean that performance is poor. Part of the strategy is to raise the profile of reporting, and this can result in numbers of reported incidents increasing. However, only when we campaign to stop domestic abuse can we expect victims to report it and subsequently receive the support they need.
- 3.30 The following services report on a number of key indicators each quarter.
1. IDAS – domestic abuse support service
  2. Cranstoun – perpetrator support service
  3. Barnsley Sexual Violence and Rape Crisis Service
  4. South Yorkshire Police
- 3.31 Progress is reported into the Safer Barnsley Partnership Board by exception. Key headlines end of quarter three 2023-24:
- Number of repeat cases into MARAC within the recommended range. It should be noted that the MARAC process has recently been reviewed with the aim of improving it
  - Referrals into service are predominantly made by the police. It should be noted that a programme of training for social care will be undertaken in 2024-25 which should increase referrals for support (see 4.1 below)
  - Whilst the number of perpetrators successfully completing the programme is low, price per head of preventing abuse in future is invaluable. The Government figures put the cost of domestic abuse at £66 billion a year. The largest proportion is the physical and emotional harm caused to victims (£47bn), while also costing the Exchequer £19bn in loss of economic output and spending to deal with the consequences of domestic abuse across the NHS, the criminal justice system and services for victims/survivors
- 3.32 Item 4b (attached) outlines the performance against key indicators for quarter 3 (2023-24), as well as targets and direction of travel.

## **4.0 Future Plans & Challenges**

### The Safe and Together™ Model

- 4.1 Work is currently underway with colleagues in Children's Social Care to introduce the Safe and Together™ Model in Barnsley. The Safe & Together™ model offers practical solutions and meaningful tools to support assessment and intervention with families where domestic abuse is a factor. The model can be practically applied across all systems touching on domestic violence and child well-being. Where it is safe to do so, children are kept with survivors of domestic abuse without adopting a failure to protect approach. This reduces victim-blaming and creates a common language and framework to negotiate a way forward. Adopting this model at a targeted early help level, will mean a reduction of children referred to and involved with social care due to issues of domestic abuse and improved outcomes from interventions. This in turn will lead to



less children in care due to parental domestic abuse resulting in cost savings on foster and residential placements. The upskilling of staff will also support the development of a skilled and confident workforce.

### Challenges

4.2 Additional funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has been welcomed. Over a period of four years, just over 2.3 million has been received, as shown in the table below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£Total</b>
2021-22	586,210	586,210
2022-23	587,832	1,1174,042
2023-24	599,591	1,773,633
2024-25	610,903	<b>2,384,536</b>

4.3 This money has helped us meet the priorities set out in our strategy and detailed in this report. However, there has been no indication as to whether we will receive additional funding from March 2025. If no additional funding is available, we would have to stop services such as the specialist IDVA's, target hardening and accommodation support.

### **5.0 Invited Witnesses**

5.1 The following witnesses have been invited to answer questions from the committee:-

Anna Hartley, Executive Director, Public Health & Communities, Barnsley Council  
 Jayne Hellowell, Head of Commissioning, Healthier Communities, Barnsley Council  
 Phil Hollingsworth, Service Director, Communities, Barnsley Council  
 Alice Barker-Milner, Policy Officer, Healthier Communities, Barnsley Council  
 Amy Hoyle, Contracts & Relationships Officer, Healthier Communities, Barnsley Council  
 Michelle Kaye, Group Leader, Safer Communities, Barnsley Council  
 Wendy Cain, Cabinet Spokesperson, Public Health & Communities  
 Sarah Hill, Chief Executive, Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS)  
 Detective Inspector Helen Hughes, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)  
 Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Nat Humphries, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)

### **6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation**

6.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-

- How confident are you that the strategy and services are effective in addressing the gaps as identified in the needs assessment? How do you know?
- What does quality look like and how do you know if this is being achieved?
- Are there any particular risks associated with the strategy, or any areas that are not progressing as well as you would like? What needs to be done to address these?
- How do you assess the impact of commissioned services and are they offering value for money?

- Why was the Safe and Together Model chosen to improve outcomes for families – what evidence was the decision based on?
- How do you know that the Domestic Abuse Partnership is successful?
- How did you decide where to deliver the detached youth work? What evidence was this based on?
- How confident are you that the MARAC is effective and making timely decisions to reduce risk? What more could be done?
- Do all partners have the time and resources to commit and to be professionally curious and are there any gaps or opportunities that need to be explored?
- What more needs to be done to ensure that ‘lived experience’ shapes service delivery?
- Can you give a recent example of a change that has been made following learning from a MARAC review, a Domestic Homicide Review, or a ‘near miss’, and how do you know that learning has been effectively embedded into practice?
- What more needs to be done to ensure that services are fully inclusive, particularly for those who find it harder to seek help and support, or who have protected characteristics under the Equalities Act?
- At a previous session of the Committee, members heard that there was no suitable accommodation to keep women together with their teenage sons when fleeing the family home. Has this issue now been resolved?
- How are services promoted to those people who are difficult to reach, including older people who may be digitally excluded?
- If funding is withdrawn in 2025, what could be done differently, and how will you ensure that a particular section of the community is not disproportionately affected?
- What can elected members do to support the work being done to tackle domestic abuse?

## 7.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27: –

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/our-strategies/domestic-abuse-strategy/>

Home Office Easy Read version of the Statutory Framework for Domestic Abuse:-

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6107ad0d8fa8f50433efa90f/domestic-abuse-easy-read-final.pdf>

Home Office Policy Paper – Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse and Their Children Within Safe Accommodation Factsheet:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/local-authority-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-and-their-children-within-safe-accommodation-factsheet>

Independent Domestic Abuse Services:-

<https://idas.org.uk/>

Safe & Together Model: -  
<https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/>.

The Youth Association:-  
<https://youth-association.org/current-projects-2/barnsley-detached/>

Cranstoun Inspire to Change Project:-  
<https://cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/domestic-abuse/inspire-to-change/>

Home Office Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Protection Orders Guidance & Definition:-  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010#:~:text=4.5%20Domestic%20Violence%20Protection%20Order,those%20available%20to%20the%20AO.>

## 8.0 Glossary

DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DVPN	Domestic Violence Protection Notice
DVPO	Domestic Violence Protection Order
IDAS	Independent Domestic Abuse Services
IDVAs	Independent Domestic Violence Advisors/Advocates
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MATAC	Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

## 9.0 Officer Contact

Jane Murphy/Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officers  
18 March 2024