

By: Serine Annan-Veitch, Project & Partnership Manager
Iona Hunter-Whitehouse, Senior Project Officer for Domestic Abuse
Rachel Westlake, Senior Commissioner

To: Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) – 14 March 2024

Classification: For Information

Subject: **Domestic Abuse Update**

Summary The KCSP is asked to note the progress and activity undertaken on the domestic abuse portfolio.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to survivors and their children in safe accommodation (refuge, sanctuary, secondary or move on accommodation and specialist accommodation) Under the Act children are now classed as victims in their own right. It also introduced requirements which support data collection, strategy and partnership working.
- 1.2 Additionally, domestic abuse is a priority within the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) agreement. The action plan includes;
- supporting the development of the 2024-2029 Domestic Abuse Strategy for Kent and Medway,
 - supporting people experiencing domestic abuse access effective support which meets their needs,
 - reviewing the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services website and raising awareness,
 - supporting the work of Domestic Abuse partners to deliver bitesize open access learning resource videos, and,
 - supporting the delivery of Reducing Abusive Behaviour Training (policy deployment) to multi-agency partners.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of the activity undertaken across the county in relation to domestic abuse and in support of the Kent Community Safety Agreement Action Plan priorities.

2 Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029

- 2.1 The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029 is a partnership document overseen by the Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group. The Executive includes partners across Kent County Council, Medway Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Services, Kent Police, the National Probation Service, the NHS,

the Department of Work and Pensions, the Police and Crime Commissioner and all Kent District, Borough and City Councils.

2.2 The strategy includes both statutory requirements for tier one local authorities to support people accessing safe accommodation services, and commitments across the partnership to support people impacted by domestic abuse across Kent and Medway. It is inclusive of those who are, or have been abused, those who use abusive behaviour and children who experience abuse between their caregivers.

2.3 The joint collective aim is to: *'reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly'*.

Development

2.5 The identification of priorities and themes in the strategy has been sought from a wide range of stakeholders. Lived experience narratives have supported the development of identified themes, including learnings from interviews with adults and with children and young people.

2.6 There was a significant informal consultation as well as an 11-week formal consultation. The consultation responses have supported a number of changes made to the document, highlighting key opportunities for improvement. A 'You Said, We Did' report is being published alongside the final strategy to show the changes made as a result.

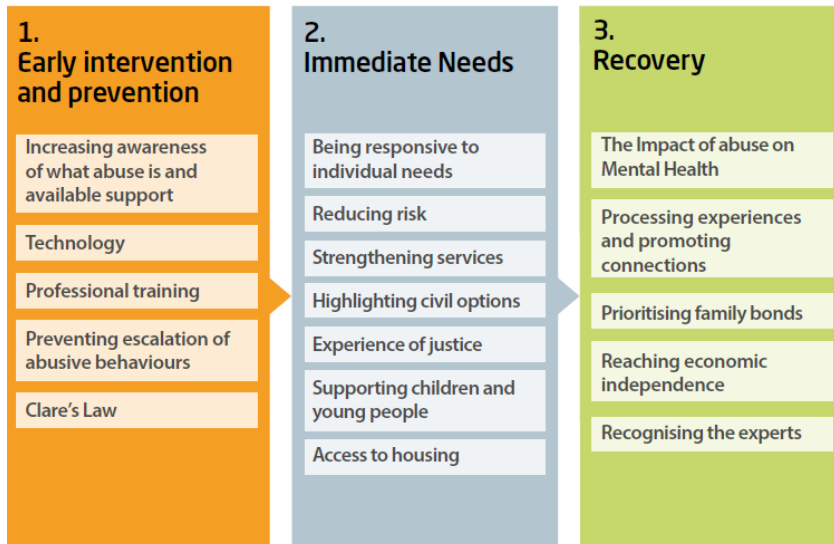
Themes and Commitments

2.7 The first theme, early intervention and prevention, aims to challenge negative societal attitudes and stigma linked to discussing abuse, increasing awareness, reducing the escalation of abusive behaviours and encouraging conversation and education.

2.8 The strategy then moves to focus on support when a person is in crisis or in immediate need, exploring the provision and support that adults, children and families need at this time.

2.9 Lastly the strategy explores recovery, and how services can be shaped and developed to respond to a longer-term journey and progression to healing, recognising that this involves broader structures which aid the re-establishment of stability.

2.10 The headings under each priority have been informed by research and from interviews on experience.



Delivery against commitments

- 2.11 The Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group will be responsible for creating a delivery plan to support the commitments within the strategy and to monitor outcomes.
- 2.12 In 2027 a review of the strategy will take place to ensure that this approach is still appropriate and that the Executive Group is achieving its ambitions. The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group will oversee a delivery plan managed by the governance structure with regular updates on progress being made to the Partnership.
- 2.13 In addition to monitoring delivery of the plan the Executive will use a number of activity indicators to monitor areas of activity within this strategy.

3 Commissioned Services

Adults support services

- 3.1 The Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) commenced in April 2017 and is in place until March 2026. It is jointly funded by KCC, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Kent Fire and Rescue and District and Boroughs and managed by KCC Commissioning on behalf of these partner agencies. The contract includes accommodation-based services, such as refuges and community-based support for those aged 16+. Through collaboration with the PCC a single point of access was added to their wider Victim Support contract.
- 3.2 A review of this contract has been completed. Performance and findings were shared at the KCSP in November 2022.
- 3.3 In line with the DA Act an assessment of need has been conducted, with fresh services developed and procured to address the findings and support the council to meet its new statutory responsibilities.

Childrens support services

3.4 The Safe Accommodation Support Service (SASS) is a new service delivering support to children and young people residing in all forms of safe accommodation. The contract was awarded to Project Salus CIC in June 2023 and service delivery commenced at the end of August 2023.

3.5 Specialist staff engage directly with the child to deliver up to 12 weeks of interventions with outcomes measured using the Goal Attainment Scaling.

3.6 Interventions are delivered through:

- one to one support sessions
- group work, including peer support groups
- counselling and play therapy
- referring onto other community/support agencies
- access to other external therapeutic activities

3.7 Between 21 August 2023 and January 2024, a total of 75 Children have been referred to SASS. As this service is so new it is too early to fully report against outcomes however these reflect those of the Early Help and Preventative Services by enabling families:

- To become more resilient
- To have better emotional health, health, and wellbeing
- To develop more robust local support systems around them

Sanctuary Scheme

3.8 To expand the Council's safe accommodation support offer beyond refuge, and address barriers in accessing refuge experienced by homeowners, those with private tenancies, male survivors and those with co-occurring conditions, Kents Sanctuary Access For Eligible Residents (SAFER) Scheme was developed and procured in 2023.

3.9 A Sanctuary Scheme is where following a property assessment, security measures have been installed, enabling survivors to remain in their own homes safely if they chose to do so and when the perpetrator does not live there.

3.10 In line with the DA Act, all survivors and their children residing in homes where SAFER has been applied are eligible for support, as delivered through KIDAS and SASS.

3.11 Following procurement Kents SAFER Scheme began accepting referrals in December 2023.

3.12 Analysis of the first two months of delivery shows that there have been 35 referrals with 33 cases completed.

3.13 100% of these have had their property assessment and installation completed in one visit. The data shows that this service is already reaching the groups that are underserved in refuge with the first client being a male survivor.

Male refuge pilot

3.14 To further improve the Councils offer of safe accommodation support to males a Male refuge pilot has been developed. This is a 3-bed refuge for male survivors and their accompanying children. It started accepting referrals in December 2023 and was full by Christmas.

4 KCSP Funding – Crime Reduction Grant 2023/24

4.1 Kent Community Safety Agreement Action Plan includes two projects allocated Crime Reduction Grant Funding (1.5 & 1.6), these are managed by the Projects and Partnerships team in collaboration with the providers.

Bite sized videos

4.2 The first, to deliver five domestic abuse bitesize learning videos, was launched on the 15th of February. These training videos are a free resource that are able to be accessed by partners and aimed at professionals working in public-facing roles.

The videos cover:

- [Signs of Abuse](#) - Understanding that coercion and control are central to domestic abuse and what this might look like
- [Safe Enquiry](#) - How to ask about domestic abuse safely and appropriately.
- [Safety Planning](#) - Making sure that you are able to take some initial steps to increase the client's safety.
- [Understanding Risk](#) - Covering the factors that increase risk (for instance fear, escalation, strangulation, point of leaving etc) and the implications for information sharing.
- [Signposting & Support](#) - Being able to signpost people to the right support with confidence.



These have been delivered and produced by Oasis Domestic Abuse Service and East Kent Domestic Abuse Forum.

Reducing Abusive Behaviour – training

4.1 The second aims to increase uptake of template policies set out by the Reducing Abusive Behaviour Subgroup. The group aims to coordinate the approaches to tackling abusive behaviour and enable greater focus on changing the behaviour of the individual causing harm through a combination of disruption, support and management of offenders.

4.2 Template policies helping organisations respond appropriately to clients and staff who may be causing harm through their behavior have been produced. Free training

opportunities to be delivered by Respect on the 26th and 28th of March aim to promote confident implementation of the policies and to raise awareness of the benefits an organisational roadmap for responding to people who are using abusive behaviours.

5 Awareness Raising & Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website

5.1 Kent Community Safety Agreement Action Plan (1.2) includes the review of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website and the aim of raising awareness.

Website

5.2 A number of factors, including lack of accessibility, out of date content and unsupported plug-ins has led to the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services website being taken down and a holding page with key information taking its place.

5.3 The website requires redevelopment and work is being undertaken to identify resources to bring together a site that could include information on domestic abuse, sexual abuse, honour-based violence, forced marriage and stalking whilst building a more intuitive, needs based and user-friendly site. A paper is due to be presented at the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Group on the 19th of March.

Awareness Raising

5.4 The #KnowSeeSpeakOut campaign, commissioned by the KIDAS partners and managed through the Projects & Partnerships team, has created an annual calendar of social media content that is freely available for organisations across Kent & Medway to utilise. This content is updated monthly and shared via the Media and Communications Subgroup and with a wider mailing list.

5.5 In March there is a range of content, including for International Women's Day (8th March) and focusing on new survivor stories highlighting 'love bombing', the links between domestic abuse and pregnancy and Clare's Law, as well as awareness of how domestic abuse affects older people.

5.6 The 2023 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse, a significant moment in the campaign calendar, used a number of methods to engage new audiences. There was a 5.6 million reach for total seen content on social media over the course of the campaign. 99 organisations shared content, it generated over 700 bookings on the 16 Days webinar series, was featured in a community magazine distributed to 56,000 homes, had posters displayed across the Stagecoach South East bus network and successfully increased press coverage. Press coverage including a BBC South East TV programme feature with a survivor interview, Heart FM breakfast news, KentLive and BBC South East news article was generated.

6 Conclusion

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He had a history of dangerous abuse.

I found out through Clare's Law. He could have talked me back into a relationship, but instead, he admitted to abusing me in court.

Laura

Help is available

Domestic Abuse Support

Kent 0808 16 89 111
Medway 0800 917 9948
www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
#KnowSeeSpeakOut

END DOMESTIC ABUSE

KIDAS NDAAS

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6.1 This report provides an update on activity across the domestic abuse portfolio. The KCSP is asked to note the progress and activity undertaken in support of the Kent Community Safety Partnership Action Plan priorities.