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**To:** Policy & Resources Committee, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Subject:** Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029 Year One Update

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway:** Corporate Management Team, ICS DivMT & circulated to Adults DMT

**Future Pathway:** None.

**Summary:** This paper gives a summary of progress against the Kent and Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029 in its first year of delivery, focussing on Kent County Council and Partnership projects. This covers a broad range of areas across the domestic abuse agenda including:

**Early Intervention & Prevention:**

- Domestic Abuse Awareness Campaigns
- The Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway
- Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website
- KCC as a White Ribbon Organisation
- Professional Training
- Domestic Abuse Champions

**Immediate Needs:**

- Strengthening Services
- MARAC Hub change programme
- Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation

**Recovery:**

- The impact of abuse on mental health
- Suicide & Domestic Abuse
- Domestic Abuse Framework for Support
- Recognising the experts

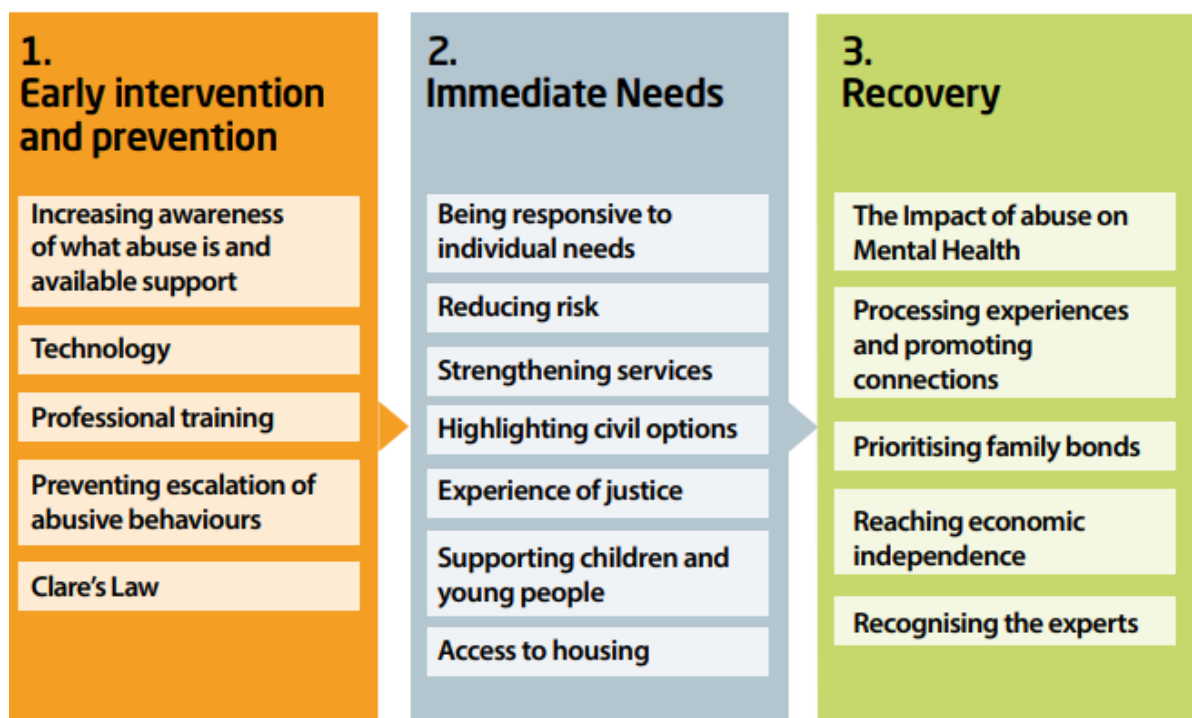
**Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee are asked to:**

1. **Note** progress made against the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy and make recommendations on future delivery plan direction
2. **Note** the development of the Domestic Abuse Champions scheme alongside the domestic abuse training review for roll out in the spring
3. **Note** reaccreditation and our status as a White Ribbon Organisation
4. **Note** risks to future delivery including uncertainty around local and national funding allocation

# 1. Background:

- 1.1. The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy is a partnership document overseen by the Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group.
- 1.2. The strategy embodies the approach of its 20 partners to *'reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly'*. It was launched in March 2024, following endorsement at Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in January 2024 where an annual report was requested.
- 1.3. 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. The strategy continues to develop a coordinated community response to improving the experiences of those impacted by abuse across each stage of their experience, making commitments against early intervention and prevention, immediate need, and recovery.

Figure 1 - Strategy Pillars & Commitments



- 1.4. A review of the Strategy will take place in 2027 to assess whether it continues to meet the needs of the partnership and should remain in place for its full 5-year span, or whether an update or new strategy is necessary.
- 1.5. The Summary Strategy and full Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029 are attached as **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.

## 2. Delivering against our Strategy

- 2.1. To support the strategy the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group (Executive Group) oversee a delivery plan managed by the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships Team and discharged via the governance structure.
- 2.2. The delivery plan was drafted in partnership with Medway Council and in coordination with each of the partners of the Executive Group. This process focussed on creating a user friendly and responsive plan, allocating actions to subgroups within the governance structure using a 'now, next, later' priority system. Quarterly updates are provided to the Executive Group.

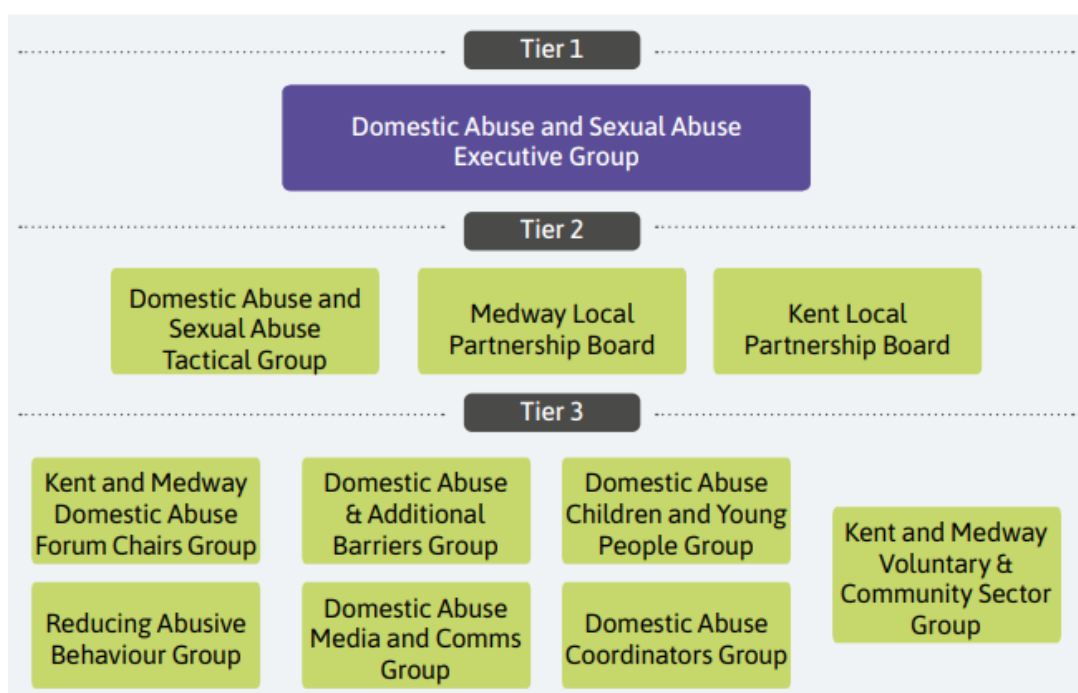


Figure 2 - Domestic Abuse Partnership Governance Structure

## 3. Early Intervention & Prevention

- 3.1. The first section is about our collective ambition to challenge negative societal attitudes and stigma linked to discussing abuse, increasing awareness, reducing the escalation of abusive behaviours, and encouraging conversation and education. There are 25 'Early Intervention and Prevention' commitments in the Strategy and 90 actions that have been identified to work towards them. The following are key projects within this area of work.

### 3.2. Increasing Awareness

#### 3.3. The Know, See, Speak Out Campaign

3.3.1. The [Know, See, Speak Out](#) multiagency campaign aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse across Kent and Medway, engaging hundreds of individuals, businesses and organisations, helping them to:

- **Know** more about domestic abuse by undertaking training
- **See** what action they can take such as sharing our [campaign resources](#)
- **Speak Out** by signposting people to services

3.3.2. This year the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team have nurtured new strategic partnerships, with the NHS and Southeastern trains, signing them up to join the campaign. These partners, and others, have been supported with access to information and training and have committed to increasing visibility of our campaign messages through the display of 6000 posters across Kent & Medway and targeted videos, including in GP surgeries.

### **3.4. Press Engagement**

3.4.1. The Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team has had great success generating press moments this year. BBC Southeast & ITV Meridian have run stories, interviewing lived experienced survivors alongside our KIDAS partner support workers. They ran the following headlines “Campaign aims to tackle domestic abuse during Euros” during the summer, and “Violence against women” following the [National Policing Statement 2024 for VAWG](#). There was also radio coverage and interest in future stories.

### **3.5. The 16 Days of Action**

3.5.1. The 16 Days of Action campaign takes place from 25<sup>th</sup> November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and White Ribbon Day and runs to the 10<sup>th</sup> December, International Human Rights Day.

3.5.2. During the campaign the partnership share [campaign resources](#) including themed social media assets to be shared by partners and networks, digital adverts, email signatures and virtual backgrounds. The campaign runs a physical poster drive with packs sent out to our strategic campaign partners for further distribution and display. The NHS will include 4000 posters distributed for display in their GPs, hospitals and healthcare settings, and Southeastern trains with display in station toilets at hot spot areas and in train toilets. All Family Hubs also have a mixture of the general and young person posters in their centers. 1,500 posters have also been shared with football clubs across Kent and Medway.

3.5.3. To increase the knowledge around domestic abuse there will also be [18 webinars](#) running throughout the 16 Days of Action. These are all provided by organisations across the Partnership, including Kent Police, domestic abuse service providers, the Serious & Organised Crime Team, the Community Safety

Partnership and Prevent. They offer insight into domestic abuse, how to support people experiencing it and how to tackle abuse at a strategic level. There have been over 1400 sign-ups to the webinars.

### **3.6. Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway**

3.6.1. The [Kent and Medway Referral Pathway](#) was published this year to provide clear information about domestic abuse, the support services available and tools to keep people safer, along with a flowchart clearly showing how to refer and access support following a disclosure. This is available on the [Domestic Abuse Support Services in Kent and Medway](#) webpage and has been publicised widely.

3.6.2. A [British Sign Language \(BSL\) video](#) which contains translated information on how to get domestic abuse support in Kent and Medway for people who are Deaf was produced alongside the referral pathway. It was produced collaboratively by Kent County Council's Sensory Services and the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships Team, Look Ahead, Oasis and Clarion.

### **3.7. Domestic Abuse Newsletter**

3.7.1. A quarterly 'Domestic Abuse Support in Kent and Medway Newsletter' was launched providing news and updates to promote consistent messaging. To date this has brought attention to the referral pathway and British Sign Language Video, available training for partners, reminded partners about new and existing services, surveys and resources, as well as celebrated partner good news stories.

### **3.8. Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website**

3.8.1. The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services website was not fit for purpose so has been taken down and traffic is now automatically re-directed to the refreshed [Kent.gov domestic abuse page](#).

3.8.2. A Domestic Abuse Website project is underway to procure a provider to redevelop a new website which will retain the pre-existing URL and replace the content and design. Supported by a task and finish group of experts from across KCC and Medway, a request for quote was developed and a provider has been appointed to create the new website.

3.8.3. The Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team is currently engaging with our domestic abuse lived experience Ambassadors, children and young people user groups, and partners across our governance structures, to co-design the content of the website. A well-functioning, easy to use and access website to support those affected by domestic abuse and those seeking to support them, will be launched in spring 2025.

### **3.9. White Ribbon Accreditation**

- 3.9.1. KCC are proud to be a [White Ribbon accredited organisation](#). White Ribbon encourages people, especially men and boys, to take action and change behaviour individually or collectively to end male violence against women and girls. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.
- 3.9.2. The White Ribbon Working Group led by the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team have been encouraging individuals and organisations to make consistent choices and actions to support this year's white ribbon theme of 'it starts with men'. This aims to drive a cultural shift in our attitude towards preventing abuse. Members of the working group have attended meetings across the organisation, community events and utilised Viva Engage and Knet to encourage open conversation about White Ribbon's mission. This has had a positive response, with more people signing up to become White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions.
- 3.9.3. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, White Ribbon Day, the White Ribbon Flag was raised over Sessions House launching the 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse campaign alongside a press release. A webinar encouraging men and boys to think about how they can help end violence towards women took place during the campaign whilst a stand in the atrium at Invicta house encouraged conversation and invited colleagues to become ambassadors and champions.
- 3.9.4. In November Corporate Management Team endorsed a further three years of White Ribbon Accreditation for Kent County Council.

## **3.10. Professional Training**

### **3.11. KCC Training Review**

- 3.11.1. To support professionals across our services to be domestic abuse informed, take opportunities to identify risk and use trauma informed approaches a training task and finish group led by the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team was established to review all e-learning available on Delta. The training group included representatives from ASCH, CYPE and Learning & Development.
- 3.11.2. As part of this review a checklist was developed to ensure that each course has relevant, up to date content and covered the training themes identified in the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy. This identified a training that should be redeveloped, for which planning is now underway.

### **3.12. Domestic Abuse Champions:**

3.12.1. The training review identified a gap in consistent, publicly offered and widely available domestic abuse training. To support the learning available to staff across the partnership and to external organisations the Domestic Abuse Projects and Partnerships Team have produced a Champions programme. This will build on the training that partners make available and supports learning through discussion to build confidence and practical skills.

3.12.2. The project takes inspiration from Medway Council's A Better Medway programme in which a free Domestic Abuse Masterclass is offered regularly for anyone in Medway to attend. This programme has succeeded in engaging a wide audience from fast food workers, care professionals and members of the public.

3.12.3. The Kent Domestic Abuse Champions Scheme has proved popular internally and externally in content consultation, with Adult Social Care teams nominating champions from across the county to take part.

3.12.4. The role of a Kent Domestic Abuse Champion and overarching objective for this training is:

- To equip participants with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to domestic abuse.
- To foster empathy and understanding for those who have or are experiencing domestic abuse.
- To provide tools to enable people to effectively and confidently support and advocate for those affected by domestic abuse.
- To break the silence surrounding abuse by being visible and encouraging dialogue, open discussion and by being supportive

3.12.5. Champions are not expected to have a case load or be seen as the expert in domestic abuse. This role is about being a point of contact, where people, if they need to can come to be listened to, be heard, and be supported by offering information on which services are available and how to access them.

3.12.6. Following completion of the half-day training sessions individuals receive a Champions pack, will be added to the newsletter mailing list and participants will be invited to networking sessions to collaborate and update knowledge.

### **3.13. Neurodivergence & Domestic Abuse Training**

3.13.1. Through the Crime Reduction Grants funded by the OPCC and administered by the Community Safety Partnership the Domestic Abuse Projects & Partnerships team have secured funding to deliver training on 'Neurodivergent Intimate Relationships and Domestic Abuse' focusing on the experiences of neurodivergent survivors. This will increase understanding of neurodivergence, how this impacts the experience of domestic abuse and improve the ability to support neurodivergent clients, particularly autistic and ADHD individuals.

## 3.14. Preventing Escalation of Abusive Behaviours

- 3.14.1. To equip professionals across multiple agencies in Kent and Medway with the skills and confidence to recognise and respond more effectively to people using abusive behaviour two template guides were produced. The first focuses on how to respond to clients using abusive behaviour, the second focuses on how organisations can respond to staff who use abusive behaviour.
- 3.14.2. Organisations can adapt these guides to prompt a culture shift within the system, to move away from a focus on victim's actions and increase confidence in holding abusive people to account. Increasing knowledge around how to respond proactively to those using harmful behaviour reduces the number of people subjected to harm.

## 4. Immediate Need

- 4.1. By immediate needs we mean the services, interventions and support that people need whilst domestic abuse is occurring and in the immediate aftermath.
- 4.2. These services and responses may help with managing risk and increasing safety, but people may also need support with practical issues such as access to housing and school places. Within this section we also look at housing and safe accommodation services with commitments to support improved responses.
- 4.3. There are 64 'Immediate Needs' commitments in the Strategy and over 200 actions that have been identified to work towards them. The following are key projects within this area of work.

### 4.4. Strengthening Services

- 4.4.1. Providing support and advice to victims of domestic abuse is a priority for KCC and other organisations across the county. Through the Kent and Medway multi-agency governance groups, the Council collaborated with partners, stakeholders, and survivors of abuse to commission a service from a pooled budget to create an integrated county wide service.
- 4.4.2. There are a number of community and safe accommodation services commissioned under the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) umbrella. In 2024 new services under this umbrella have been commissioned or embedded.

### 4.5. SASS – Safe Accommodation Support Service



- 4.5.1. Children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right, experiencing rather than witnessing abuse between their caregivers. In 2024 the [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Support Service](#), which supports children and young people currently residing in safe accommodation (refuge, dispersed specialist accommodation or a property with sanctuary scheme adaptations), was embedded and began taking partner referrals.
- 4.5.2. The SASS service supports children through (0-19 years, up to 25 with additional needs) including therapeutic support, group-based support, access to activities and social groups.
- 4.5.3. Additionally, this service supports delivery of a workforce development offer for all CYPE staff which commenced in October 2024 and aims to upskill social workers supporting families that are experiencing domestic abuse.

#### **4.6. SAFER – Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents**

- 4.6.1. The [SAFER scheme](#), a countywide offer of sanctuary for survivors of domestic abuse went live this year. It includes property assessment, security advice and measures applied to a survivor's home as well as specialist domestic abuse support for adults and children living in the home, extending the Councils safe accommodation support offer.
- 4.6.2. SAFER supports people to stay in their own homes, a preference for many people who experience abuse by conducting security assessments, providing professional security advice and fitting security upgrades. This works alongside KIDAS & SASS services to support the adults and children who experienced abuse.
- 4.6.3. The application of the SAFER Scheme will enable an estimated additional 2000 households to meet the statutory definition of safe accommodation and therefore the adults and children residing in these properties will be eligible to access specialist domestic abuse support.

#### **4.7. Male Refuge Pilot & IDVA service**

- 4.6.4. In working to expand KCC's safe accommodation offer a 3-bed male refuge opened this year. This is for men aged 18 and above who are fleeing domestic abuse and their accompanying children. Whilst residing in the refuge survivors are provided with support, advocacy, and advice. Upon moving out resettlement support and assistance is provided for a period of up to 6 months. This service collaborates with the men's IDVA service, commissioned by the OPCC.

#### **4.7. Recognise the importance of pets for those who are needing to flee**

- 4.7.1. Research shows that perpetrators use pets as part of their abuse, threats to harm them, withholding vet treatment, allowing them to escape, rehome them or using their presence to keep people from leaving is common.
- 4.7.2. The Strategy recognises the importance of pets for those who are needing to flee and committed to raising awareness of support to prevent families fleeing abuse from having to give up their pets.
- 4.7.3. A new project has made flexible funding available to KIDAS safe accommodation providers, supporting the associated costs of allowing pets into refuge, including the cost for vaccinations, worm and flea treatments and any associated damage to property. This helps to remove the barriers survivors may face in accessing safety and support and recognises the significant role pets can play in deciding whether to leave.

## 4.8. Reducing Risk

### 4.9. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference Hub

- 4.9.1. A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a safeguarding forum to discuss how to help people experiencing domestic abuse who are at high risk of murder or serious harm. The process enables agency-specific research to be shared, and actions allocated to increase the safety of adult and child victims of abuse to create a joint safety plan. A review process which included recommendations from Domestic Homicide Reviews, learning events, and a Kent Analytics assessment identified a number of weaknesses in the system. Strengthening our response to the highest risk domestic abuse cases was a key strategy commitment.
- 4.9.2. The MARAC Steering Group proposed a new MARAC Hub with increased staffing, a new case management system to facilitate information sharing and action planning, with fewer meetings. The new Hub Model is collaboratively funded by Kent County Council, Kent Police, Medway Council, the ICB, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Probation and will go live in early 2025. This change process creates a more efficient system that is proactive in safeguarding those at risk.
- 4.9.3. The change management process has been multiagency, led by the MARAC Tactical Delivery Group (KCC DA Projects & Partnerships, Medway Public Health, and Kent Police), and delivered by the steering group and subgroups and has included system procurement, training development and rewriting systems and protocols.

### 4.8 Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews

- 4.8.1 The Strategy identifies working with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Safeguarding Boards to ensure that learnings from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Children’s Safeguarding Practice reviews are supported. Alongside working with these boards to take forward actions to embed learning from reviews the CSP held two Domestic Homicide Review learning events in 2024.
- 4.8.2 The first was in June and focussed on learning from [DHR Diana](#). Presentations were given by the Independent Chair, The Probation Service, and special guest speaker, [Luke Hart](#), spoke about his family’s experience of coercive control.
- 4.8.3 The second learning event, delivered in two sessions, was held in October. This was a joint event with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board and Public Health focussing on the topic of co-occurring conditions. Safeguarding Adults Reviews including this theme were presented, along with [DHR Louise](#) and a talk by Louise’s mother providing a powerful account of her daughter’s story, the impact of her death, and what she wants agencies to learn from the tragedy.
- 4.8.4 Over 370 frontline professionals attended these 2024 events. 100% of attendees responding to the event evaluation rated the events as excellent, very good or good.

## 4.10. Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation

- 4.10.1. DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse. By becoming DAHA accredited, housing providers implement and embed an effective domestic abuse responses that keeps survivors safe and holds perpetrators to account. KCC made a grant available to all District, Borough, and City councils in Kent for two years of membership and accreditation fees to support strong and consistent housing response.
- 4.10.2. There are eight priority areas including policies and procedures, publicity and awareness raising, safety-led case management, survivor-led support, staff development and perpetrator accountability. Working collectively the domestic abuse coordinators and DAHA leads for each council are sharing resources to maximise our impact, tackle challenges together and deliver solutions. This work has resulted in increased training across housing teams, the development of champion schemes, introduction of trauma informed support pathways and increasing awareness through clear information on local authority websites.

## 5.Recovery

- 5.1. Domestic abuse and the associated trauma can have a significant impact on the people affected. There can be damaging long and short-term physical, mental, emotional, and psychological health impacts on adults and children. These repercussions remain long after the immediate safety needs have been met.
- 5.2. The Partnership want Kent & Medway to be a place where people have the opportunity to thrive, to recover from the harm, heal and build resilience.
- 5.3. There are 22 'Recovery' commitments in the strategy and 77 actions that have been identified to work towards them. The following are key projects within this area of work.

## 5.4. The impact of abuse on mental health

- 5.4.1. Between 60 and 70% of women seeking mental health support have experienced domestic abuse.<sup>1</sup> This means that promoting better understanding of domestic abuse and trauma-informed practice within mental healthcare settings is essential.

### 5.5. KMPT Learning Event

- 5.5.1. Kent and Medway Partnership Trust set up a Patient Safety Event, 'Decoding the Silent Language of Domestic Abuse' which was attended by 80 members of staff. The event included a talk from the sister of a woman who completed suicide after experiencing abuse, from the Kent Suicide Prevention team, the Domestic Abuse Projects and Partnership Team and Kent Police. Attendees reported increased confidence in recognising and responding to domestic abuse.

### 5.6. Suicide and Domestic Abuse

- 5.6.1. Kent continues to lead the national conversation highlighting the link between domestic abuse and suicide. Research led by the Suicide Prevention team in Public Health has identified that 33% (280 out of 847) suspected suicides in Kent and Medway between Jan 2018 and Sept 2024 have been impacted by domestic abuse. This includes victims, perpetrators and a group of individuals who were known to Kent Police as both victims and perpetrators.
- 5.6.2. Tim Woodhouse, KCC Public Health, has completed two research fellowships reporting on these findings in meetings and forums across the county. The Suicide Prevention team have developed a [briefing paper for frontline](#)

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<sup>1</sup> [The Road to Recovery: Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Domestic Abuse Survivors. An Inquiry into Domestic Abuse and Mental Health by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and Abuse](#)

[professionals](#) highlighting ways that they can reduce the risk of suicide amongst victims of domestic abuse. This research will also be factored into wider areas of the Domestic Abuse Strategy workplan such as the re-design of the MARAC process and the recommissioning of the KIDAS contract.

### **5.7. Domestic Abuse Joint Working Framework**

- 5.7.1. To promote service delivery models that look at the needs of a person as well as the risk posed to them Kent Public Health funded the development of a framework for joint support of clients with more than one support need. The Framework supports better integration of services to support people who present with a domestic abuse need (victim or abusive party) with an additional support need such as homelessness, drug or alcohol use or a significant mental health need.
- 5.7.2. This protocol has been co-created by multiple services following a training programme for all agencies involved. The framework uses a quadrant model to help the client explore and communicate how they would like to engage with services.

### **5.8. Recognising the experts**

- 5.8.1. The experts in domestic abuse are those people who are living or have lived through abusive experiences. The Partnership are continuing to be led by the voices of those who have experienced abuse.
- 5.8.2. By sharing their experiences with the domestic abuse research programmes in both Kent and Medway, giving their ideas and their time Survivor Voice Ambassadors are influencing and co-designing services, policies, projects, training and more.
- 5.8.3. Their voices are included to bring alive press articles, social media posts and training materials; ensuring their experiences are front and centre in our work, guiding partners, and practitioners to remain focussed on the importance of responding to their needs. Survivor Voice Ambassadors will also help to develop the new Kent & Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Services Website and input into the domestic abuse service recommissioning.

## **6. Sexual Violence & the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership**

- 6.1. While this strategy seeks to coordinate aims and delivery on domestic abuse it does incorporate sexual abuse when this aligns with the domestic abuse definition. The Partnership also seeks to support coordinated working on sexual abuse which is not included within this strategy. Sexual Violence leads from Kent Police, KCC, Medway, Probation, Youth Justice, the Integrated Care Board, Kent Fire & Rescue, Education, the Prison Service and Police and Crime Commissioners Office have developed a Sexual Violence Action Plan.
- 6.2. The Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (SVPP) Board's Strategic Needs Assessment shows that sexual violence disproportionately affects those under the age of 25 with the majority of victims being girls aged 11-15 and the majority of suspects being boys aged 12-18. The Sexual Violence Participation worker has gathered insight from 485 young people around consent, boundaries and sexual violence. Feedback has been insightful with many young people feeling that more needs to be done to support them in understanding consent, how to keep themselves safe and how to safely report incidents.
- 6.3. The Police have been active in identifying funds to drive an awareness campaign on public place sexual harassment and unacceptable language. The 'Respect for Girls' campaign was developed in collaboration with young people and will be released in the new year. The Board have also endorsed the 'Safe Spaces' campaign that is already in place across parts of the County with more businesses becoming part of this as it gains momentum.
- 6.4. The Strategic Needs Assessment is in the process of being refreshed, the Sexual Violence Leads will develop the approach and align workstreams to the needs assessment and gap analysis to tackle sexual violence and report back into the SVPP Board and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse Executive group.

## 7. Measuring Success - Activity Indicators

- 7.1. To achieve the ambitions set out in the strategy, progress against the delivery plan and a suite of activity indicators are being monitored through the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Group. Quantitative measurements in this complex area must always be applied with caution but paired with qualitative learning can help us identify progress.
- 7.2. Kent Analytics have developed a Microsoft Power BI dashboard which contains the activity indicators data provided by data source owners across the Partnership. This report is interactive and updated dynamically every quarter.

Access to the dashboard is restricted to key nominated partners across the Partnership and a Memorandum of Understanding around the use of the dashboard is in place with them.

- 7.3. An update on the activity indicators is provided at each Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Group.

## 8. Risks & Funding

- 8.1. The Domestic Abuse Act created specific funding to support those impacted by domestic abuse who access safe accommodation. Whilst statutory funding is specific to the support of those who reside in safe accommodation, we know that most people experiencing domestic abuse will choose to access support in the community, over 90% of those accessing support in Kent, wanting to increase their safety whilst maintaining their networks and homes. Protecting community provision across Kent and Medway is key in maintaining our ability to safeguard those at highest risk of serious harm or death.
- 8.2. Funding for some areas of this strategy are dependent on continued local and national funding, and options for collaborative bids. The Partnership will seek opportunities to access monies to support commitments and work with providers to strengthen local bids from Kent and Medway.
- 8.3. There is currently particular uncertainty about the future of domestic abuse funding with Ministry of Justice grants that support services across domestic abuse and sexual abuse due to end in March 2025 not yet released and a single year allocation for New Burdens Funding to support the Domestic Abuse Act duties announced in December. Officers are monitoring the impact of central government funding decisions however there are significant risks to frontline services and therefore the ability to fully meet the ambitions set out within the strategy.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1. This is a five-year strategy which embodies our approach to tackling domestic abuse and our work to 'reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly.' In year one of delivery a comprehensive delivery plan has been developed alongside a Power BI to help the Kent & Medway Executive Group to monitor activity.
- 9.2. Under Early Intervention & Prevention work has been undertaken to increase awareness of domestic abuse and the services available through the multiagency Know, See, Speak Out campaign and 16 Days of Action workstream. This has increased press coverage, fostered new strategic

partnerships, and increased open access training opportunities. A new referral pathway has been created and embedded alongside an accessible British Sign Language version and the Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website is under development. The White Ribbon working group have been working to involve men in taking a stand against abuse to drive a cultural shift in attitudes towards domestic abuse.

- 9.3. To support professionals across our services to be domestic abuse informed, take opportunities to identify risk and use trauma informed approaches all Delta e-learning has been reviewed, a new Kent Domestic Abuse Champions programme has been developed and a series of webinars have been produced to reflect learning identified through Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- 9.4. For Immediate Need there has been work undertaken to strengthen the services we offer via the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service. This has included support for children within safe accommodation, a new county wide sanctuary scheme, a men's refuge, and facility to accept pets into refuge reducing the barriers that victims experience. The MARAC steering group and tactical delivery group have prepared for implementation of the new MARAC hub model and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation working group have brought together all our District, Borough and City councils to work towards the accreditation.
- 9.5. To meet commitments under Recovery KMPT produced a learning webinar bringing together speakers to highlight the links between domestic abuse, mental ill health, and suicide. The Kent Suicide Prevention Programme have continued their work to track suicides linked to domestic abuse and increase understanding and good practise within this area. Kent Public Health commissioned a new framework for the support of people needing the help of more than one service, delivering training and introducing new tools and processes for smooth joint working.
- 9.6. There has been significant activity from across the partnership against each of the strategy pillars. Whilst this report has focussed on multiagency and KCC led projects significant progress has also been made by agencies across the Partnership. A full progress report reflecting the Partnership's progress against the strategy will be published following the 2027 strategy review.

## **10. Policy & Resources Committee are asked to:**



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## Appendices:

Appendix A: The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Summary Strategy

[Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy](#)

Appendix B: Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 – 2029

[Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-2023: Summary](#)