

Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group

Statement of Purpose

This strategy is constructed around five key strands. Each strand has an identified “outcome” which is designed to contribute to the overall vision of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group. A number of “priorities” are identified within each strand. These priorities should form the basis for the development of future Action Plans.

Within this plan it is essential that all agencies recognise that domestic abuse includes intimate and non- intimate relationships. This group uses the government defined definition of domestic abuse.

Definitions:

A new criminal offence was introduced on the 29th December 2015 of ‘Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an intimate or family relationship’, which complements existing legislation and closes the gap in law around patterns of controlling or coercive behaviour. The cross Government definition is as follows :

Domestic abuse ‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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’ The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: Psychological; physical; sexual; financial and emotional

Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used by a person to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Sexual violence and abuse is defined as *any behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding.*

1. Driving Change

This strand focuses on collaborative working and promoting a more cohesive approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The strand acknowledges that more can always be done to promote integrated working across all sectors.

Driving Change Outcome - The DASV Executive Group will continue to recognise the adverse impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse on society, and the need to promote change through leadership and partnership working.

2. Prevention and Early Intervention

This strand focuses primarily on prevention - that is aimed at preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse from happening, so that early intervention and prevention, not crisis response, is the norm. We will ensure that victims get the help they need when they need it. This needs a collaborative response by all agencies and effective support must also make the links to targeting wider vulnerability such as child exploitation, FGM, gangs and substance misuse. This will be achieved through promoting better knowledge and understanding of violence and abuse, promoting healthy relationships, changing behaviours and attitudes in our society towards violence, and early intervention for those at risk of harm - such as vulnerable individuals, children and older people. It will focus heavily on the risk posed by perpetrators and ensure there are robust services in place to manage that risk.

Prevention and Early Intervention Outcome – Reduce the incidence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse through, effective preventative educational programmes, a skilled and resourced workforce and promotion of a culture of prevention, and earlier intervention at societal, governmental and local levels.

3. Provision of services

This strand focuses on preventing further violence and abuse of those victims and families who are at risk of the violence. All agencies should work together to build more responsive services for those who need them. This is not just about statutory or community services but about everyone knowing their roles and responsibilities – from family members and co-workers, to professionals, community workers and faith leaders being able to recognise signs and symptoms and being able to access information and advice to assist individuals. To achieve this requires a greater focus on training, and expertise, as well as further development of specialist services. Safety planning, following disclosure of violence, is an integral part of this Strand.

Provision of Services Outcome – Responsive services for individuals and/or groups at risk of, or subject to, domestic and sexual violence and abuse and its reoccurrence.

4. Partnership Working

This strand reflects the provision of additional support for those who have been victims of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse through better partnership working. It is about the support needed to come to terms with what has happened and to manage the longer term consequences of violence and abuse. Support comes in many forms and can include educational support services, housing support, outreach and advocacy services and improving access to more specialist psychological interventions.

Partnership Working Outcome – Provision of appropriate support services that promotes equality of access and positive outcomes for all victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. Ensuring that lessons from domestic homicide reviews are learnt and that agencies work cohesively together

5. Pursuing Perpetrators

This strand focuses on continually improving protections and justice available. Ensuring that victims of violence and their families are protected from harm; this can include civil and criminal justice outcomes. All agencies should recognise that the harmful and violent behaviour of perpetrators needs to be addressed. Through supporting interventions that lead to sustainable behaviour change in perpetrators themselves, we will drive an overall reduction in prevalence of domestic abuse and sexual violence crimes and reduced rates of re-offending.

Pursuing Offenders Outcome – Provision of effective, engaged, supportive, responsive and timely protection and justice in relation to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Our Priorities

We have identified priority areas for taking the Strategy forward. They will underpin the development of Action Plans within the life of this Strategy.

Our Aim is to ensure efficient and effective governance and accountability throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

This Strategy will be supported by the development of Action Plans by key stakeholders across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. Implementation of the priorities will not be an easy task, and will require sustained commitment from all if we are to continue to make a significant difference to the lives of victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Data should be collated from each agency on how they are delivering against these strands. Each agency should ensure that they have effective inspection mechanisms. The monitoring of progress of this strategy will be the responsibility of the Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive Strategy Group. This group will provide annual monitoring reports to the safeguarding boards setting out progress against delivery objectives.

Driving Change

1. All agencies reaffirm their commitment to working together and in partnership with other organisations to continue to promote societal change in attitudes and in the provision of services, support and justice for victims, witnesses, children of domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

2. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group will provide governance through leadership and strategic direction to drive this strategy. The Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive Strategy Group will continue to be chaired by Assistant Chief Constable and vice-chair Senior Executive KCC Katie Stewart

3. Stakeholders will ensure that effective records management systems and information conduits are established and maintained in order to ensure data protection and the sharing of appropriate and necessary information across statutory bodies.

Prevention and Early Intervention

4. All departments will work together to consider how best to establish a baseline on societal attitudes to domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The strategic assessment will set out the baseline and areas for improvement.

5. An integrated Information Plan will be developed to promote and encourage an understanding and recognition of domestic and sexual violence and abuse among the general public and specific audiences.

6. All departments and agencies will work together to highlight the interrelationship between domestic and sexual violence and abuse, substance misuse (alcohol/drug abuse), and poor mental health.

7. All agencies will ensure that their workforce will have the necessary skills to identify those at risk and ensure that their staff are equipped to recognise signs of those affected by abuse including child abuse, and domestic and sexual violence and abuse and sex and healthy relationships¹.

8. All agencies will work together to promote preventative safeguarding for all those at risk of harm.

9. Through education victims, perpetrators and those affected by abuse will understand healthy relationships.

10 All agencies will work with the Safeguarding Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and the Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to prevent domestic and sexual violence and abuse from occurring.

11. Each agency recognises that it is everyone's business to prevent abuse from occurring. All agencies should work together to prevent incidents of abuse from occurring. This should include developing plans for perpetrator intervention to divert or intervene, where a criminal justice sanction has not been achieved.

12. All agencies will work together to ensure that there is a robust approach to perpetrators. This will include understanding the behaviour of the perpetrator, supporting interventions that

¹ <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/sex-and-relationships-education>

lead to sustainable behaviour change in perpetrators themselves and having a clear plan to bring them to justice² or divert from offending.

13. All agencies will work together to identify those perpetrators most at risk of reoffending and ensure there are robust procedures in place to support and prevent reoffending, and ensure that partners, children and family members are supported and included in these programmes and their voice is heard.

Provision of services

14. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group will ensure the ongoing monitoring of the service provision across the County to ensure that all victims, their families, children and perpetrators are able to access support. Any gaps in provision will be monitored and the members will work in partnership with commissioning bodies and providers to address these.

15. The development of a safety plan will be an integral part of the pathways approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse for children, young people and adults, in order to support individuals (and families) through the immediate and longer term consequences of violence and abuse.

16. The provision of information on available services will be reviewed to take account of the development of an integrated pathways approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and the diversity and emerging needs of client groups.

17. Through the Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive Group, a multi-agency evidence-based standards and/or guidance will be taken into account to inform the commissioning of domestic and sexual abuse services.

18. The commissioning and provision of services will be informed by the views of those who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse, or are at significant risk of it.

19. A map of the provision of services to be produced to identify any gaps so that agencies can be confident that they can support all diverse vulnerable groups and support the implementation of this strategy.

20. Appropriate partnership networks will be in place to increase multi-agency recognition and responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

21. Further work will be completed to ensure that the delivery of local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, MARACs, are maximised, to reduce repeat victimisation or death for victims at high risk of domestic violence and abuse.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-national-statement-of-expectations>

22. The services provided by Beech House, Sexual Assault Referral Centre, (SARC), will be reviewed in 2018 to incorporate the views of service users, potential changes in demand and evolving evidence on effectiveness.

23. There will be a renewed emphasis on awareness training, on how to recognise, disclose and seek help for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, in line with recognised standards.

24. All agencies to ensure that included within any awareness training that staff are able to identify those at risk of offending and the identified pathways.

Partnership working

25. Victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse will be provided with the appropriate outreach and advisory services.

26. Stakeholders will review and evaluate the provision of emergency housing support based on emerging and complex needs.

27. The emotional and psychological needs of individuals who have suffered as a result of violence and abuse will be recognised and addressed in order to improve outcomes. In particular the psychological impact of coercion and control.

28. All agencies to ensure they participate in DHR process when required and that any learning is provided to the wider workforce.

29. Agencies to ensure that they are aware of the links to each different area of business such as MAPPA, Integrated Offender management, Local Criminal Justice board, MARAC and troubled families so that they can work cohesively.

Pursuing Perpetrators

30. Focused protection, support and information will be available for all victims throughout the Criminal Justice System process. All agencies should ensure that the victim's voice is heard throughout these processes.

31. Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the Justice System to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to the protection of victims.

32. Continue to develop and deliver practices and interventions, based on best practice, to effectively address harmful, violent and abusive behaviour.

33. Ongoing assessment of the capacity of the justice system to respond to current, new and emerging issues will be undertaken in relation to responding to harmful and violent behaviour and provide greater focus on changing the behaviour of the perpetrator through a combination of disruption, support and the management of offenders.

Key Objectives

Through the recent consultation regarding key objectives (there were two responses: Swale Council and Kent Police) , agencies would like to focus on

Provision of Service

1. There will be a renewed emphasis on awareness training, on how to recognise, disclose and seek help for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, in line with recognised standards.

Pursuing Offenders

1. Pursue perpetrators and reduce re-offending. Police seek to ensure swifter sanctions against perpetrators and intervention opportunities (including perpetrator programmes)

Prevention and Early Intervention

1. Work to prevent domestic abuse by developing a bespoke process for the management of women and girls, both new initiatives and within existing structures. The aim will be to work in a holistic and multi-agency way to divert women and girls from custody
2. Work collaboratively with partners to ensure children are kept safe and receive support at the earliest opportunity (Operation Encompass)