

# Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Dorset County Council**



Date of Meeting	5 October 2016
Officer	Sara Tough – Director for Children’s Services
<b>Subject of Report</b>	<b>Domestic Abuse Scoping Paper</b>
Executive Summary	<p>This paper provides background information on domestic abuse in Dorset in preparation for a discussion by the Committee.</p> <p>In addition to the individual and personal costs, domestic violence and abuse carries a significant economic cost through the response of statutory agencies.</p> <p>The key performance indicators relevant to this area show that the number of domestic abuse incidents is falling, however the number of domestic abuse crimes is rising. Domestic abuse is a significant feature in child protection plans. The number of these plans are rising.</p> <p>People may experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, age or disability. While both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, women are much more likely to be victims than men.</p> <p>There are some groups that are more vulnerable to domestic abuse than others and it is common for victims to suffer repeat incidents. Repeated exposure to domestic abuse has a cumulative harmful effect on children.</p> <p>The paper goes on to describe current governance arrangements, service responses and the evidence of what works.</p>
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: N/A

## Domestic Abuse Scoping Paper

	<p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>National and local data sources have been used, alongside National research evidence of 'what works.'</p>
	<p>Budget: N/A</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Not applicable at this stage.</p>
	<p>Other Implications: N/A</p>
Recommendation	<p>The Committee note the information in the report, consider and debate those issues highlighted and decide how it would like to progress matters going forward.</p>
Reason for Recommendation	<p>The purpose of this paper is to provide background information to aid discussion at the Committee.</p>
Appendices	<p>None.</p>
Background Papers	<p>None.</p>
Officer Contact	<p>Name: Claire Shiels          Tel: 01305 224682          Email: <a href="mailto:c.shiels@dorsetcc.gov.uk">c.shiels@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a></p>

## Domestic Abuse Scoping Paper

1. This paper provides background information on domestic abuse in Dorset in preparation for a discussion by the committee.

### 2. Corporate Plan Priority: - SAFE

- Crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse across Dorset is minimised

#### 2.1. Why is it important?

Domestic abuse is defined as: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and Emotional”.

In addition to the individual and personal costs, domestic violence and abuse carries a significant economic cost through the response of statutory agencies such as health, police, social care and the criminal justice system as well as the loss of economic output from days of work lost.

The impacts of domestic violence and abuse on children include poor emotional and mental health; aggression and anti-social behaviour that can persist into adulthood and difficulties in forming in forming healthy adolescent and adult relationships. There is a strong association between domestic abuse and maltreatment.

#### 2.2. Outcome indicators

Primary Indicators																																																					
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<p><b>Other relevant indicators</b></p> <p><b>Number of incidents of domestic abuse where children are present</b></p> <p>On average 61% of all incidents of domestic abuse have children present.</p> <p><b>Proportion of child protection plans where domestic abuse is a feature</b></p> <p>On average 97% of all child protection plans have domestic abuse as a feature.</p>	<p><b>Rate of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 pop</b></p> <table border="1"> <caption>Rate of children subject to a child protection plan per 10,000 pop</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Rate per 10,000 pop</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2010</td><td>42.00</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>38.00</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>42.00</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>32.00</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>35.00</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>48.00</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Rate per 10,000 pop	2010	42.00	2011	38.00	2012	42.00	2013	32.00	2014	35.00	2015	48.00																																						
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### 3. What are the stories behind the baselines?

#### 3.1. What is the data telling us?

Over the past three years in Dorset, the number of reported domestic abuse crimes has increased by 68%. Whilst the number of reported domestic abuse incidents has fallen by 27%. However, the data in relation to domestic abuse incidents has been unreliable so may not reflect the true trend. The Community Safety Partnership has identified that the number of recorded domestic abuse crimes could be on the increase due to a number of factors including:

- Increased confidence in reporting
- Changes in recording practices
- Impact of increased capacity in support services to support victims and the ability to attend court with them, further increasing confidence in and willingness to engage with the criminal justice system.

The number and rate of children subject to child protection plans in Dorset has increased significantly over the past 3 years and is higher than the rates of our statistical neighbours and nationally. The rate of increase is greater than regionally and nationally.

#### 3.2. Who is most likely to be affected?

People may experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, age or disability. Domestic abuse may also occur in a range of different relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender, as well as within families. While both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, women are much more likely to be victims than men.

Domestic abuse occurs in all communities and economic groupings. However, reported domestic abuse is more closely correlated with those in the more deprived communities. Two of the biggest predictors of both perpetrating and being a victim of domestic abuse as an adult are exposure to domestic abuse and physical abuse in childhood.

National research shows that 30% of reported domestic abuse starts or escalates during pregnancy. Women with children may be more vulnerable to staying in an abusive relationship because of their reluctance to disrupt the children and limited opportunities to gain financial independence and the ability to support an independent household.

Being disabled significantly increases the susceptibility of being a victim of domestic abuse. There are associations between domestic abuse, alcohol use and homelessness.

Domestic abuse is distinguished by the fact that victims are more likely to experience repeat incidents than victims of other crimes.

Repeated exposure to domestic abuse has a cumulative harmful effect on children. There are a number of factors that can exacerbate the adverse impacts of domestic abuse on children and young people's wellbeing which include poor maternal mental health; parental substance misuse; criminal lifestyle associated with drug use; experience of other forms of abuse or neglect; dislocation, confusion and multiple losses as a result of leaving abusive households.

The presence of poor mental health, substance misuse and domestic violence, also known as the 'toxic trio', can indicate increased risk of harm to children and young people. In a recent audit of child protection conferences, the combination of these 3 factors was identified in 44% of all cases.

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### 3.3. What are we currently doing to address these indicators?

#### Governance

Reducing the number of domestic abuse incidents and domestic abuse crimes are key priorities of the Community Safety Partnership<sup>i</sup>. In addition, improving outcomes for families affected by Domestic Abuse has been identified as a priority for our Dorset Families Matter Board<sup>ii</sup>.

The Dorset Adults Safeguarding Board<sup>iii</sup> and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board<sup>iv</sup> take a lead role in ensuring that partners are safeguarding vulnerable children and adults. The respective boards have developed policies and procedures for professionals working with adults and children affected by domestic abuse and coordinates training opportunities related to safeguarding and domestic abuse.

#### Service delivery

Working together to respond to Domestic Abuse:

<b>Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)</b>	Local, multi-agency victim-focussed meetings where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies
<b>Information sharing</b>	In order to increase awareness of and responses to domestic abuse the police share the details of all domestic abuse incidents where children are present (DV1 reports) with a range of professionals including: Children's social care; Children's Centres; Health Visitors; School Nurses and Dorset Families Matter. Information from MARAC is routinely shared with Children's Services
<b>Domestic Abuse Protocol</b>	<p>The Dorset Safeguarding Children's Board has published a Domestic Violence Protocol, which seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raise awareness amongst professionals in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole about domestic violence and abuse in relation to safeguarding children</li><li>• Set out single agency and interagency roles and responsibilities when working with families where there is domestic violence and abuse</li><li>• Ensure that there is an appropriate and safe response to children and their non-abusing parent by professionals involved in safeguarding children</li></ul>

Services provided or commissioned by the local authority and partners to support families affected by domestic abuse or to prevent domestic abuse include:

Name	Provider	Description
<b>Integrated Domestic Violence Programme: IDAP</b>	Dorset Probation Services	National programme for the treatment of convicted male perpetrators of domestic violence. Female partners and children, receive intensive outreach support from a women's safety worker, whilst the man is attending the programme.

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Specialist workers: IDVA</b>	Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA)	To support high risk victims of domestic violence and abuse referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
<b>You First</b>	The You Trust	You First provides outreach support to both male and female victims and survivors of domestic abuse (not specifically commissioned to work directly with children and young people)
<b>North Dorset Refuge</b>	Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA)	Provide accommodation and emotional and practical support for victims of domestic abuse. A child support worker directly supports children and support parents in their role.
<b>West Dorset Women's Refuge</b>	Raglan Housing Association	Provide accommodation and emotional and practical support for victims of domestic abuse. A child support worker directly supports children and support parents in their role.
<b>The Freedom Programme</b>	Various	A rolling 12 week programme which aims to help women identify abusive behaviours and beliefs held by abusive men; gain self- esteem and the confidence to improve the quality of their lives; show how domestic abuse affects children and help women recognise future abusers and move on to abuse free lives.
<b>Pattern Changing Programme</b>	Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA)	A 14 week programme for women who are or have been in an abusive relationship and have moved through the initial stages of crisis intervention
<b>The Recovery Toolkit</b>	Various	Trauma focused cognitive behavioural therapy programme based on guidelines set by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).
<b>Mandala Service</b>	Barnardo's	The course is suitable for men or women who are not currently in an abusive relationship Training for professionals in supporting children affected by domestic abuse and an offer of support to individual or groups of children affected by domestic abuse.
<b>Perpetrator Programme</b>	Poole local authority	The local authority has recently agreed to work with Poole local authority in order to pilot a new approach to working with perpetrators of domestic abuse in

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Name	Provider	Description
<b>Housing related support</b>	Various	Weymouth & Portland (the area of the county with the greatest proportion of Domestic Abuse incidents) Local authority housing advice services (can include financial assistance), interim accommodation, floating support services
<b>Children's Services</b>	Dorset County Council	Children's social work, children's centres, family workers, parenting courses
<b>Safe Schools and Communities Team</b>	Dorset Police and Dorset Youth Offending Service	The team has a remit to prevent and reduce crime and wrong-doing amongst children and young people and help keep them safe in a digital world. As part of this, the SSCT run a comprehensive Community Safety Education programme which includes domestic abuse prevention

### 4. Identification of Key Partners (external to Dorset County Council)

A number of partners have been identified that can help support improvements in this area and include (but are not limited to):

- Police
- National Probation Service
- Housing Providers
- District/Borough Councils
- Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Substance use treatment providers
- Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust
- Dorset Fire and Rescue
- Local Criminal Justice Board
- Schools/colleges

### 5. What works analysis

#### 5.1. The need to act

Domestic violence and abuse is a complex issue that needs sensitive handling by a range of professionals. The cost, in both human and economic terms, is so significant that even marginally effective interventions are cost effective. Working in a multi-agency partnership is the most effective way to approach the issue at both an operational and strategic level. Initial and ongoing training and organisational support is also needed.

#### 5.2. Survivors of domestic abuse

Survivors of domestic abuse may require a range of interventions such as emotional support, advocacy, health services, housing, criminal, civil or family law remedies, welfare and financial advice, training and employment.

#### 5.3. Good practice

Research indicates that good domestic abuse practice is underpinned by 8 key factors:

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- Definitions of domestic abuse used should be widely known and understood, to provide a parameter for victims, perpetrators and staff in understanding what is being tackled.
- Monitoring processes and screening must include systematic and regular data collection and set protocols for asking questions by trained staff who are able to manage disclosure and signposting.
- Readily available good practice guidelines and policies that incorporate equalities considerations include service users input, provide clarity and are embedded within an organisation.
- Safety planning for survivors and witnesses of domestic abuse should be an underlying principle of all domestic abuse work.
- Mandatory training for staff in all agencies.
- Independent evaluation processes that incorporate survivor input, and feedback from survivors and practitioners, following-up where necessary.
- Multi-agency integration and coordination of processes and procedures to provide consistency of service and accountability within and across agencies.
- Working with women and children should be a central focus of the work.

### 5.4. Early Intervention

- High quality sex and relationships education and other forms of pastoral support in schools can foster a sense of identity that makes abusive relationships less likely e.g. Safe Dates
- The evidence suggests that programmes that aim to educate and support positive attitudes among young people at risk may be effective e.g. Love U2: Communication Smarts
- Health services can also provide an important context for the identification of domestic violence and abuse, in particular through GPs and health visitors
- Parenting programmes and Early Intervention services provide a significant opportunity to identify and address domestic violence and abuse early
- Use of screening tools can improve identification and support

### 5.5. Perpetrator programmes

- The evidence around perpetrator programmes is not strong and it is recommended that local areas pilot, test and evaluate approaches for effectiveness to improve the evidence base

**Sara Tough**  
**Director for Children's Services**  
October 2016

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<sup>i</sup> The Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) aims to deliver safer communities, including by taking forward the statutory duties placed on CSPs by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent legislation. Partners work together to reduce crime and the fear of crime, address the risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities, and facilitate the strengthening of communities in the delivery of local activities. This year the Dorset CSP agreed to establish a new partnership group to support its work and that of the statutory CSPs



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in Poole and Bournemouth. The pan-Dorset Community Safety & Criminal Justice Board (CSCJB) deals with community safety issues common to each area and works at a strategic level complementing the more locally focused work of the statutory CSPs.

<sup>ii</sup> The Dorset Families Matter Board is a sub-group of the Children's Trust Board and provides the governance for the local implementation of the government Troubled Families Initiative which seeks to deliver service transformation for the most complex and hard to reach families in the country. The Board is responsible for championing the troubled families' initiative across all sectors and organisations; supporting the implementation a range of approaches that will change the way individuals and organisations work with families with multiple and complex needs and assessing, as far as is possible, the financial impact of such changes for all partners; promoting and encouraging joint working across all partner agencies to secure appropriate integrated service solutions to meet family needs.

<sup>iii</sup> The Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board is a board made up of senior representatives from all the statutory agencies, including the County Council, Health Trusts, Police, Dorset Probation, Dorset Fire and Rescue service, Ambulance service, District and Borough Councils and the voluntary sector, including representation for people with learning disability and older people. It has been established to improve practice which protects and safeguards adults in vulnerable circumstances in Dorset.

<sup>iv</sup> The Dorset Safeguarding Children's Board is made up of representatives from statutory, voluntary and community organisations/services and meets regularly to agree and oversee the effectiveness of agencies working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Dorset.