

Swindon and Wiltshire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy

2014-2015

Foreword

Domestic abuse continues to be a complex and challenging priority; it is a crime, as well as a social and public health issue, cutting across all geographic and cultural groups. The impact on those living with its effects is long lasting and devastating.

Victims experiencing domestic abuse may suffer not only physical violence but also be subject to long systemic periods of psychological and emotional assaults, financial control and threats. The impact extends to their families and includes children and young people.

It is largely hidden and under-reported; a victim may experience around 35 incidents of abuse before talking to anyone. Only one in five incidents of domestic abuse will be reported, with many more people presenting at hospitals or GP surgeries as a result of injuries caused by a current or former partner.

The Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships are committed to reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in our local communities.

In this strategy we have set out our joined up approach to working with victims and survivors, children and young people and perpetrators of domestic abuse as well as training and awareness raising and continuous improvement. It promotes the need for both the statutory and voluntary organisations to work together effectively, alongside service users. This strategy is our continued commitment to realising that ambition.

Domestic Abuse is unacceptable and has to stop; there is no excuse for abuse.

Definition

Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships are committed to reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in our communities through a co-ordinated community response.

This strategy will adopt the definition of domestic abuse, as set out by the Home Office (to be implemented March 2013):

“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.”

This definition incorporates abuse between family members (including children to parents/grandparents, between siblings), partners in intimate relationships and includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. It is clear that victims are not confined to age, gender or ethnic group.

The Community Safety Partnerships in Swindon and Wiltshire are committed to working together to seek resolutions to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse. This strategy builds on the achievements of the previous strategies and sets out the next stages in addressing the issue, in both existing work and plans for future work. It is intended to complement and help strengthen existing provision rather than replace existing projects or initiatives.

This strategy will tackle domestic abuse across five identified themes and will set out how we will work with:

- **Victims and Survivors**, Swindon and Wiltshire agencies will work together in partnership to meet the needs of all victims and survivors to ensure access to quality appropriate support.
- **Children and Young People**, to recognise the specific needs of and provide support for children and young people whose lives are affected by domestic abuse.
- **Perpetrators of domestic abuse**, to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and brought to justice, using both supportive and enforcement approaches to reduce offending behaviour and harm.
- **Training and Awareness Raising**, to increase the local communities and organisations understanding and awareness of the extent and impact of domestic abuse.

- **Continuous Improvement**, in both statutory and voluntary agencies, sharing skills, resources and good practice to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse.

The strategic aims will be achieved through actions which will be set out in the localised Community Safety Partnership implementation plans.

Agencies will be accountable for the delivery and implementation of this strategy; this will include but are **not limited** to:

- Local Authorities
- Criminal Justice agencies
- Health partners
- Voluntary and community sector organisations
- Community groups
- Private sector

The strategy is underpinned by research and needs assessments which can be referenced at the end of this document and should be read in conjunction with the supporting documents listed.

Implementation and Delivery

The strategy is the overarching document which sets out a common understanding and commitment from key stakeholders to tackle Domestic Abuse. It will promote working together in a planned and coordinated way that will drive activities in partnership.

Supporting the strategy is an implementation plan, which has been developed to ensure the strategy is delivered. The implementation plan includes county-wide measures and actions targeted to specific areas. In addition, localised implementation plans will be produced detailing each of the strategic priorities, highlighting:

- Objectives
- Actions required for delivery
- Outputs
- Outcomes

Implementation plans will identify appropriate lead agencies, as well as resource required to deliver outcomes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Domestic Abuse Reduction Co-ordinators will have the responsibility for monitoring the progress against the implementation plans. This will be led through the appropriate

Domestic Abuse Reduction delivery groups, who will have the remit for implementation of the strategy.

Interim progress reports will be made to the respective Swindon and Wiltshire Domestic Abuse reduction groups and reports by exception submitted to the Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships.

Accountability

The Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships have the responsibility to reduce crime and disorder, including Domestic Abuse.

The partnerships will provide the overarching governance for the Swindon and Wiltshire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy, whilst recognising the links to the Criminal Justice Board, Safeguarding Children's Board, Children's Trust Board and Adult Safeguarding Board.

Implementation and delivery of the strategy will be the responsibility of individual agencies through a co-ordinated joined up approach.

Partner agencies recognise their obligations to promote race, equality and diversity in the method, quality and style of service delivery.

Victims and Survivors

This strategy recognises all victims and survivors who are living with or witnessing domestic abuse as either direct or indirect victims and/or survivors.

The strategy will ensure that we:

Through interventions will increase confidence in reporting, protecting victims from further harm and break the cycle of abuse.

This will include:

- Providing clear, accessible information and support.
- Working with local services to further increase opportunities for victims to report domestic abuse in a private and confidential manner.
- Support third party reporting.
- To recognise the impact of domestic abuse on 'adults at risk'.

Take positive action in assisting and supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse by working in partnership with local agencies to keep them safe and further reduce the risk of re-victimisation.

This will include:

- Maintain and promote the effectiveness of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) to mitigate further risk of harm.
- Proactively engage with local agencies and commissioned services to continuously improve multi-agency responses to prevent and reduce domestic abuse.
- Assisting victims by providing information and community based specialist domestic abuse support services; to enable them to make informed choices about their legal options, accommodation, and finance.
- Professionals when identifying domestic abuse will use appropriate tools to safeguard victims and signpost to specialist services.
- Specialist support services to encourage engagement of victims in criminal and civil justice processes to challenge perpetrator behaviour.

Ensure appropriate and sustainable provision of specialist support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

This will include:

- Providing specialist services to assist victims engaged in criminal or civil justice routes.
- Ensuring outcome based commissioning of future domestic abuse interventions and services are appropriate and reflective of local need.
- Ensuring equality and diversity are embedded in all domestic abuse services so the needs of victims from minority and vulnerable groups.

Children and Young People

This strategy recognises Children and Young People as either direct or indirect victims and/or survivors. This could include:

- Within their family environment, either living with/or witnessing domestic abuse;
- Experiencing domestic abuse within their own relationships

The strategy will ensure that we:

Recognise the needs of and provide support for children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse.

This will include:

- Having safeguarding procedures that professionals are aware of and use the pathways to enable early identification of children and young people at risk and those deemed vulnerable.
- Ensuring information sharing is robust in identifying and protecting children and young people.
- Appropriate signposting to services at the first point of contact for advice and support.
- Ensuring services for children and young people are coordinated and link appropriately to existing services, following [Working Together 2013](#) and [South West Child Protection Procedures and Policy](#).

Provide preventative approaches through early interventions and awareness.

This will include:

- Increasing awareness that young people can be victims (*either direct or indirect*) and perpetrators of domestic abuse and the impact this has.
- Working to ensure children and young people have awareness and understanding of domestic abuse, the support that is available and the ways to access it.
- Increasing awareness with Young People of what is a 'Healthy Relationship' and challenge perceptions and attitudes.
- Raise awareness of the impact social media has and how to reduce risks to young people(e.g. sexting, cyber-bullying, child exploitation)
- Working with children and young people's services and educational establishments to raise awareness of domestic abuse and protect young people from becoming victims and potential perpetrators.

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

The strategy will recognise that in addition to adult perpetrators of domestic abuse, young people may be identified as having or developing abusive behaviours.

The strategy will ensure that we address the systematic nature and cyclical pattern of abuse:

Working with perpetrators of domestic abuse, both convicted and non-convicted to reduce risk of reoffending and harm.

This will include:

- The use of criminal and civil options being fully utilised.
- A timely and proportionate criminal justice response to crime reports.
- The regular multi agency information sharing to manage the risk of perpetrators.

To enable perpetrators to recognise and understand their own behaviour and the impact that it has, to be held accountable and to take responsibility.

This will include:

- Develop and maintain programmes for perpetrators for behaviour change (both court mandated and voluntary/community) programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse to address and change abusive and controlling behaviour.

Early identification of young people at risk of developing abusive or unhealthy behaviours.

This will include:

- The provision of appropriate support for children and young people engaging in or at risk of unhealthy and abusive behaviours in relationships.

Training and Awareness Raising

The strategy will ensure that we:

Work to increase understanding of the extent and impact of all forms of domestic violence and abuse in local communities, agencies and employers.

This will include:

- The delivery of sustainable multi-agency training in domestic abuse awareness, identification, risk assessment, safety planning and appropriate referral to support services for victims and perpetrators.
- Providing opportunities for practitioners to maintain continuing professional development and ensure their learning is incorporated into their working practices.

Develop a coordinated approach for domestic abuse awareness raising opportunities.

This will include:

- Using research and data to inform a targeted awareness raising activities
- Publicity and awareness information to be easily accessible to the public and frontline practitioners.
- To undertake targeted campaigns in local communities to raise awareness that domestic abuse is not restricted or confined to age, gender or ethnic groups.
- To promote a culture that challenges the acceptance of domestic abuse in all its forms.
- Developing greater awareness about 'adults at risk' and the identification of appropriate referral pathways, the role of carers and the impact this has on families.

Continuous Improvement

The strategy will ensure that we:

Strengthen existing partnership working to address domestic abuse across Swindon and Wiltshire to protect victims.

This will include:

- Agencies will share best practice, work towards national standards and promote continued professional development.
- Strategic partners to secure future sustainable funding for domestic abuse interventions and services, which are responsive and reflective of local need.
- Ensuring domestic abuse is included within the local strategic planning framework and implemented within relevant organisational policies and plans.
- Work with agencies to record and share domestic abuse data and intelligence to inform future strategic need assessments and evidence based responses to addressing domestic abuse.
- Ensure knowledge of local and national good practice around outcome focused interventions.
- Agencies will ensure the appropriate sharing of information to reduce risk.
- Extending working relationships, where gaps have been identified.

Glossary of Terms

The Community Safety Partnership – is made up of statutory partners in Swindon and Wiltshire, including police, fire and rescue service, councils, NHS and probation services. These agencies are committed to tackling the reduction of Domestic Abuse as an identified priority in the Strategic Assessment.

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

MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences for domestic abuse, a case conference meeting for victims identified at highest risk. It provides a forum for sharing information and taking action that will reduce harm. MARACs are outcome focused. Attendance is by key agencies from the statutory and voluntary sector working in the field of domestic abuse.

Victim and Survivor - The difference between a victim and a survivor is that a victim is someone who has been or is being harmed by another person. Harmed can mean many different things including molested, insulted, demeaned, abused and assaulted. A survivor is someone who despite having been a victim has left the emotional, mental and physical captivity of an abuser behind and has committed themselves to moving.

LSCB – Local safeguarding Children Board - Local partnership boards were set up by the Government as part of the system of checks and balances to make sure that partners are held to account about how children and young people are kept safe and that they receive consistent and excellent provision.

LSAB – Local safeguarding Adult Board - is a multi-agency partnership, which actively engages in providing better protection for individuals needing care and support. Whilst safeguarding adults' protocols refer to all people over the age of 18 years and who fit the definition of a vulnerable adult, the majority of alerts and/or concerns raised fall within people aged 65 years and over.

CJB – Criminal Justice Board – is responsible for the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Wiltshire and Swindon. It brings together the agencies involved in delivering criminal justice within the county, which are Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Probation Area, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, Her Majesty's Prison Service, Wiltshire Youth Offending Service, Swindon Youth Offending Team and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Children's Trust – Children's Trust arrangements are no longer mandatory, local decisions have been made to continue to work together to make a difference and the Children and Young People's Trust works closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (and other groups such as Health and Wellbeing Boards).

Health and Wellbeing Board - The Health and Social Care Act 2012 establishes health and wellbeing boards as a forum where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities. Board members will collaborate to understand their local community's needs, agree priorities and encourage commissioners to work in a more joined up way.

Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) - This is a tool to help make sure that we carry out our functions and deliver our services in the way they are intended and for everyone, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion and/or belief. DIAs make sure we meet our legal equality duties through assessment of the likely (or actual) equality effects of our policies, functions or services on Wiltshire and Swindon's diverse populations. This includes looking for opportunities to promote equality that have previously been missed, as well as negative impacts that can be removed, mitigated or justified.

Adults at Risk – are those; aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Useful supporting documents for DA strategy links:

- Implementation plan
- Consultation report
- Diversity Impact Assessment

Useful related documents:

The Wiltshire strategy and future work around Domestic Abuse will link with other national, county and local strategies, policies.

- Police and Crime Plan for Wiltshire and Swindon 2013 – 2017
<http://www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk/Transparency/Police-and-Crime-Plan.aspx>
- Wiltshire's Joint Strategic Assessment
<http://www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk/joint-strategic-assessment>
- Swindon's Joint Strategic Assessment
<http://www.swindon.gov.uk/sc/sc-healthmedicaladvice/jsna/Pages/Joint-Strategic-Needs-Assessment.aspx>

- Working Together 2013 – This document sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children>
- As well as being reflected through agencies own plans and strategies including but not exclusively:
 - Health and Well Being Strategy
 - Homelessness Strategy
 - Supporting People
 - Alcohol Strategy
 - Hidden Harm Strategy
 - Anti Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy
 - Local Safeguarding Children’s Board
 - Local Safeguarding Adult’s Board
 - Police and Crime Plan