

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017 - 2020 3rd DRAFT

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CONTENTS

Foreword

Executive Summary

2015 – 2017 Strategy – What’s the story...?

Priorities

- i. Prevention - To prevent domestic abuse from taking place
- ii. Provision of Services - To deliver co-ordinated and sustainable services to victims, and perpetrators, of domestic abuse

Definitions of Domestic Abuse

Where to get more information:

- **Useful Publications**
- **Useful Websites**

Foreword

Domestic Abuse can have a devastating effect. It ruins lives, breaks apart families and has an impact across generations. Much has been done over recent years to increase protection for victims and to punish perpetrators. There has been an increase in the level of reporting of these crimes. However, domestic abuse remains an underreported crime.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic Abuse can involve a range of behaviours, which are abusive and which would not always necessarily be classed as violent. The new definition of domestic violence and abuse as defined by the Government from 1st April 2013 is:

'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.'

The definition was also widened to include 16-17 year olds and reflect coercive control, 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. The new definition recognises that abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. Additionally, the Care Act (2014) introduced Domestic Abuse as a category of abuse that particularly affects adults with care, and support needs, and which includes older people.

Executive Summary

Tackling Domestic Abuse is a key priority for the Shropshire Community Safety Partnership. This strategy has been developed on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership by the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Forum (SDAF) in consultation with a wide range of agencies, organisations and individuals. This strategy aims to assist partnerships and agencies across Shropshire in delivering a joined up response to those affected by domestic abuse, underpinned by a recognition and understanding that no single agency can address this complex issue in isolation.

The aim of the strategy is to improve services for victims of domestic abuse within Shropshire and respond effectively to domestic violence and abuse. The Strategy builds on previous domestic abuse strategies, and the Governments Violence against Women and Girls Strategy, in order to support victims and to explore ways to encourage offenders to seek the assistance they need to change their behaviour.

Domestic abuse is a problem that occurs, predominantly, within the home, often without witnesses. It has tremendous costs for the victim, the family and friends of the victim, and upon the community as a whole. Importantly, domestic abuse and partner abuse can affect men and women. Whilst domestic abuse, both nationally and locally is significantly underreported, Shropshire has seen an increase in the number of reported incidents of domestic abuse over the three-year period 2013 to 2015.

What do the statistics say...?

It appears, from the data available, that the total number of recorded incidents has risen again in 2016-17. Based on the trend, it was expected the total number of reported incidents (crimes with a domestic abuse marker) in the 12 months period to the end of March 2017 would be in the region of 3,800 but the final number was 4,316. This represents a significant increase in the number of recorded crimes as we know that domestic abuse is an underreported crime and: "even if it were possible to put a figure on individual offences, and hence calculate a domestic abuse 'rate', this would not be a particularly telling reflection of the number of people at risk."(House of Commons Library, December 2013).

The overall aim is to reduce the number of people who are victims of domestic abuse. In order to do this the Partnership will need to have a far clearer view of precisely how many women and men are victims of abuse. The Partnership will continue to analyse incident and referral rates and attempt to calculate the level of under-reporting by monitoring the activity of commissioned domestic violence services; record incidents of domestic abuse where children are involved; identify and analyse 'key markers' that are often associated with domestic abuse, such as alcohol consumption and sports tournaments etc.

2015 – 2017 Strategy – What’s the story...?

Refuge and Outreach Service in Shropshire

In April 2017, Shropshire Council awarded the contract to deliver refuge and outreach services to Shropshire Housing Group. Shropshire Housing Group, through Shropshire Domestic Abuse Services, now provides 10 bed spaces in the current South Shropshire refuge and, in addition, will provide a further 10 units of accommodation within “dispersed refuge” properties in North and Central Shropshire. This dispersed accommodation will provide smaller, but more flexible, safe places for women, or men, who need safe refuge accommodation. Services are also provided in Shropshire by West Mercia Women’s Aid. This includes the IDVA service for those at high risk, and the provision of group work with children and young people that is funded by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.

White Ribbon Campaign

Agencies and organisations across Shropshire came together to pledge their support for the White Ribbon Campaign. This included Health services, Probation, West Mercia Police and Children’s Services. The White Ribbon Campaign is the largest effort in the world where men are working to end men's violence against women. The international campaign, which ran from 25 November for 16 days, invited men, women and children from Shropshire to support the campaign by wearing a white ribbon and to make a pledge: ***Never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women***. In the UK, 45% of women have experienced some form of domestic abuse and sexual violence or stalking, and there are still, on average, 2 women a week killed by their violent partner or ex-partner in England and Wales. In November, there was a display at Shirehall in Shrewsbury providing white ribbons and badges. The display remained in place for the duration of the 16 days of action. In Ludlow, the South Shropshire Domestic Violence Network arranged a vigil in St Laurence’s Church, on Friday 2nd December from 09:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., as a tribute to victims of domestic abuse.

For more information on the White Ribbon campaign, visit:

<http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/>

Domestic Abuse Forum

The purpose of the Forum is to encourage agencies and organisations to work in partnership in order to create an environment where domestic abuse is not tolerated and to reduce the impact on families and the wider community in Shropshire. Partnership working is essential in developing effective and safe services for all victims and providing holistic and appropriate responses to all abusers, as well as working with relationships where there is abuse on both sides; it is accepted that no agency can address these problems in isolation.

Domestic Homicide Review

Shropshire Community Safety Partnership undertook its first independent domestic homicide review, into the death of a woman on 23rd-24th December 2014. The review was commissioned by Shropshire Community Safety Partnership in line with Home Office guidance to identify what can be learned from the circumstances of a domestic homicide. The review examines, in detail, the circumstances of the case in order that agencies and organisations can learn from, and prevent, future homicides from

occurring. Both the findings and recommendations of the review have been accepted by the Community Safety Partnership and agencies have committed to act upon the recommendations.

A full copy of the review and executive summary can be found by following the link to:

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-2020

Domestic Abuse is a complex issue and its far-reaching effects require a co-ordinated and integrated multi-agency response. The 2017 – 2020 Strategy sets out what agencies in Shropshire will be doing in order to prevent domestic abuse taking place; and provide services to protect the victim and their families, and deal with perpetrators. The strategy has one overarching outcome: to 'Stop Domestic Abuse'. The forum has two key priorities: To prevent domestic abuse from taking place and to ensure that co-ordinated and sustainable services are delivered to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Prevention

Priority –To prevent domestic abuse from taking place.

Action 1:

Targeted campaigns and key messages utilising existing programmes and media.

- Ensure staff know, or have access to, information about the services, policies and procedures of all relevant local agencies for people who experience or perpetrate domestic violence and abuse.

Campaigns will promote key messages that emphasise:

- Domestic abuse will not be tolerated;
- Freedom from abuse and from the fear of violence is a basic right;
- Sexual assault may accompany domestic violence;
- Those who have experienced domestic abuse are not responsible for it;
- Help is available from a wide range of services.
- People identifying domestic abuse should work with victims and perpetrators to stop it where it is safe to do so.

Outcome	Action	Development	Owners
The public are informed what constitutes abuse and are made aware of the services available in Shropshire.	Targeted campaigns and key messages utilising existing programmes and media.	Work with groups on targeted campaigns and focussed group work in order to promote key messages on domestic abuse.	Shropshire Domestic Abuse Forum
Victims access services more quickly, leading to early intervention and a reduction in further harm.	Keeping Adult Safeguarding Board poster campaign to address the Domestic Abuse of older people		Shropshire Domestic Abuse Forum KASiSB (Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board)

Action 2: Ensure that staff are trained to a level where they have, as a minimum, a basic understanding of Domestic Abuse, and are able to support victims.

Workers from varying disciplines and organisational backgrounds, possessing a range of skills and abilities currently provide a frontline response to families and individuals experiencing and / or perpetrating domestic abuse. These workers require varying levels of training, development and support to enable them to work safely, effectively and consistently.

The NICE Guidance (Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working Public health guideline [PH50] Published date: February 2014) recommends that:

- Frontline staff in all services should be trained to recognise the indicators of domestic abuse and be able to ask relevant questions to help people disclose their past or current experiences of such violence or abuse;
- Staff in antenatal, postnatal, reproductive care, sexual health, alcohol or drug misuse, mental health, children's and vulnerable adults' services need to ask service users whether they have experienced domestic abuse;
- Services have formal referral pathways in place for domestic abuse. These should support people who disclose that they have been subjected to it; the perpetrators; and children who have been affected by it.

The guidance sets out four levels of training:

Level 1: Staff should be trained to respond to a disclosure of domestic abuse sensitively, and in a way, that ensures people's safety. They should also be able to direct people to specialist services. This level of training would be appropriate for staff in direct contact with people including; social workers; dentists, youth workers, care assistants, receptionists, interpreters and non-specialist voluntary and community sector workers.

Level 2: Staff should be trained to ask about domestic abuse in a way that makes it easier for people to disclose it. This involves an understanding of the epidemiology of domestic abuse, how it affects people's lives and the role of professionals in intervening safely. Staff should also be able to respond with empathy and understanding, assess someone's immediate safety and offer referral to specialist services. Typically this level of training is for: nurses, accident and emergency doctors, adult social care staff, ambulance staff, children's centre staff, children and family social care staff, GPs, mental health professionals, midwives, health visitors, paediatricians, health and social care professionals in education (including school nurses), prison staff and alcohol and drug misuse workers. In some cases, it will also be relevant for youth workers.

Level 3: Staff should be trained to provide an initial response that includes risk identification and assessment, safety planning and continued liaison with specialist support services. Typically, this is for; child and adult safeguarding workers, safeguarding nurses, midwives and health visitors with additional domestic abuse training and multi-agency risk assessment conference representatives.

Level 4: Staff should be trained to give expert advice and support to people experiencing domestic abuse. This is for specialists in domestic abuse. For example, domestic abuse advocates or support workers, independent domestic violence advisers or independent sexual violence advisers, refuge staff, domestic abuse and sexual violence counsellors and therapists and children’s workers.

Outcome	Action	Development	Owners
<p>Frontline staff in all services should be trained to recognise the indicators of domestic abuse and be able to ask relevant questions to help people disclose their past or current experiences of abuse;</p> <p>The Partnership will continue to ensure that the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) procedure is supported by all agencies and that training is available for all staff who attend the MARAC.</p>	<p>Ensure that staff are trained to a level where they have, as a minimum, a basic understanding of Domestic Abuse, and are able to support victims.</p> <p>Keeping Adult Safeguarding Board will ensure that its training programme raises awareness of Domestic Abuse and helps those attending understand their responsibilities for keeping people safe.</p>	<p>Training should give staff, as a minimum, a basic understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Ensure specialist support services meet national standards of good practice</p>	<p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Forum</p> <p>Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference</p> <p>KASiSB (Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board)</p>

Action 3: Implement a pathway for victims of domestic abuse, including helpline provision, so that services meet clients' needs without duplication or gaps, and are part of a single response.

Shropshire is a large rural county. Its rurality may prevent those who need help, and support, from accessing services or groups. It is important that any barriers that prevent people accessing services need to be identified and removed. This should be done in consultation with local groups that have an equality remit (including organisations representing the interests of specific groups), and in line with statutory requirements. This includes; people from black and minority ethnic groups, or with disabilities, older people, transgender people and lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

Outcome	Action	Development	Owners
<p>Victims are able to access support via a single pathway</p> <p>Consistent and improved level of service to victims.</p> <p>Re-establish a Specialist Domestic Violence Court in Shropshire</p> <p>To continue to support and strengthen the MARAC process</p> <p>To continue to encourage the reporting of domestic abuse incidents to ensure victims and survivors of abuse receive a comprehensive service</p> <p>Keeping Adult Safeguarding Board and Shropshire Council will ensure the adult safeguarding pathway includes responding to Domestic Abuse in order to provide a level of support determined by the victim and/or their representative.</p>	<p>Implement a pathway for victims of domestic abuse, including helpline provision, so that services meet clients' needs without duplication or gaps, and is part of a single response.</p>	<p>Ensure that a single countywide assessment and referral framework is in place for all services in order to report domestic abuse. This should ensure that services meet client's needs without duplication or gaps, and as part of a single offer.</p> <p>Put in place local arrangements to ensure that people presenting to frontline staff with indicators of possible domestic abuse are asked about their experiences (see Action 2);</p> <p>Specialist advice, advocacy and support forms part of a comprehensive referral pathway.</p>	<p>Shropshire Community Safety partnership / Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner</p> <p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service / West Mercia Women's Aid</p> <p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Forum</p> <p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Forum / West Mercia Women's Aid</p> <p>KASiSB (Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board)</p>

Provision of Services

Priority

Action 4: Ensure that the strategies and action plans developed by Shropshire’s Strategic Partnership Boards demonstrate the work they are undertaking to tackle domestic abuse in Shropshire.

Domestic abuse, like substance misuse, is a crosscutting issue for all Partnership Boards in Shropshire. It affects health, housing, parenting, benefits, social functioning, criminal activity, employment, finances and aspirations, and like substance misuse, it is often hidden until a crisis point is reached by which stage problems are complex, embedded and long lasting. Therefore, it is crucial that all the strategic partnerships in Shropshire ensure that domestic abuse is addressed in their strategies.

Outcome	Action	Development	Owners
<p>There are sufficient resources available to meet the needs of vulnerable and minority groups; children; older people; those wishing to remain safe in their homes; those needing safe accommodation; those in need of community-based support; and those at high risk.</p> <p>Embed the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews to ensure recommendations are addressed.</p>	<p>Ensure that the strategies and action plans developed by the Shropshire Strategic Partnership Board’s demonstrate what work they are undertaking to tackle domestic abuse in Shropshire.</p> <p>(Need links here to various partnership strategies that reference domestic abuse)</p>	<p>Ensure officers from both statutory and voluntary services participate in local strategic partnerships in order to prevent domestic abuse, and that all Shropshire Partnership Boards champion the prevention of domestic abuse</p> <p>The Partnership has conducted a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) and, along with any Serious Adult Reviews and a review of other DHRs, it will aim to learn lessons and help to prevent further domestic homicides and serious incidents.</p>	<p>Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Children’s Safeguarding Board</p> <p>Health and Well-being Board</p> <p>Children’s Trust</p> <p>KASiSB (Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board)</p>

Action 5: Ensure that interventions are in place to meet the needs of a diverse range of victims and families.

Domestic abuse is a significant issue to children and young people living in households where abuse is taking place. Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident, or because they attempt to intervene. Children may be victims of Domestic Abuse, but even if they are not directly injured, children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent. Although the abuse may not be a daily occurrence, the risk of an incident places great strain on those living with it, with those involved feeling responsible for the abuse and living with a high level of shame and guilt. Research has shown that children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively affected in every aspect of their functioning: safety, health and well-being, emotional development, school attendance and achievement. To work effectively with victims of domestic abuse, it is important to understand the reasons why people remain in abusive relationships, and why they may not seek or respond to offers of help. When working with victims of domestic abuse, the first key principle to follow is to enquire safely about the abuse and where possible agree with them actions to keep them safe. Ideally, any discussions should be private in order to establish the level of risk posed to the individual, child or family. Whilst victims may be reluctant to disclose what is happening to them, often they are also hoping that someone will ask them in order to get help and support.

Outcome	Action	Development	Owners
<p>Ensure that children (0-25years) living with, or at risk of, domestic abuse are referred for safeguarding support;</p> <p>Educate, inform and challenge young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent, and engage men and boys, through campaigns such as White Ribbon, to challenge abuse.</p> <p>Support for the survivors of domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Ensure that interventions are in place to meet the needs of a diverse range of victims and their families.</p> <p>Ensure there are resources available to meet the needs of vulnerable elderly people who are victims of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Ensure that interventions primarily aim to increase the safety of the victim and their children (if they have any) and that this is monitored and reported.</p>	<p>Victims of domestic abuse receive appropriate support at the right time and in the right place;</p> <p>All staff, in direct contact with people affected by domestic abuse, understand equality and diversity issues. This includes those working with people who perpetrate domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service / West Mercia Women's Aid</p>

Action 6:**Improved links to other areas of safeguarding, improved risk mitigation, and needs led interventions for victims, children and perpetrators, supported by commissioning frameworks.**

Working with perpetrators, particularly those not in the criminal justice system is a priority for this strategy. Voluntary perpetrator programmes are behaviour change programmes that aim to help individuals stop being violent and abusive; learn how to relate to their partners in a respectful and equal way; and show them non-abusive ways of dealing with difficulties in their relationships and cope with their anger and to keep their partner safer. The most successful interventions in stopping domestic abuse work from the assumption that perpetrators, both men and women, intentionally use their behaviour to control or intimidate partners and family members. The voluntary perpetrator programme will be available to men and women who do not have a court sentence but wish to address their behaviour. Such interventions require the perpetrator to engage in the programme and be honest about the abuse they perpetrate. Proactive partner contact must also take place while the perpetrator is undertaking a programme, so that the changing risk can be managed appropriately.

Outcome	Action	Development	Owners
<p>Change in the behaviour / attitudes of the perpetrator pre and post intervention;</p> <p>Number of people making a self-referral to the perpetrator programme;</p> <p>Reduction in repeat domestic abuse;</p> <p>Number of people using refuge and IDVA services.</p>	<p>Improved links to other areas of safeguarding, improved risk mitigation, and needs led interventions for victims, children and perpetrators, supported by commissioning frameworks.</p>	<p>Commission an evidence based intervention programme for people who perpetrate domestic abuse, but who have not been through the criminal justice system, in accordance with national standards and based on a local needs assessment.</p> <p>Link perpetrator services with services providing specialist support for those experiencing domestic abuse (including children and young people). For example, link ongoing risk assessments of the perpetrator with safety planning and support provided by specialist services.</p> <p>To support the re-commissioned domestic abuse service to deliver updated objectives and outcomes</p>	<p>Shropshire Council</p> <p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service / West Mercia Women's Aid</p>

Definitions of Domestic Abuse:

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 the victim.

Domestic abuse is a learned intentional behaviour and perpetrators choose this behaviour to get what they want and gain control frequently avoiding taking responsibility for their behaviour, by blaming their violence on someone or something else, denying it took place at all or minimising their behaviour. These behaviours whilst not inherently violent or criminal offences may include:

Psychological and emotional violence which includes harassment; destructive criticism; threats; verbal abuse; isolation; destroying possessions; humiliation and degradation and a range of other abusive behaviours.

Physical violence which may include punching; slapping; hitting; biting; pinching; kicking; pulling hair out; pushing; shoving; burning or strangling.

Sexual violence within a domestic violence context (perpetrated by current or former partners and/or family members) includes rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse and exploitation. The majority of rape and sexual assault takes place within this context but is often poorly recognised. In addition, there is an association between the existence of physical violence in adult relationships and child sexual abuse within the family.

Financial abuse is one of the most prominent forms of control tactics involving three distinct but overlapping factors, all of which can have a negative impact on a survivor's economic wellbeing. These include the perpetrator using male privilege to exploit existing economic disadvantage causing survivors to incur financial costs because of domestic violence, and using economic abuse to threaten their economic security.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, involves procedures that include partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or other non-medical reasons. Medically this is unnecessary, extremely painful and depending on the degree of mutilation, has serious short and long-term health consequences both physically and psychologically. The origins of FGM are complex but it generally derives from beliefs that it is a religious requirement or a necessary rite of passage to womanhood, that it ensures cleanliness or better marriage prospects, prevents promiscuity and excessive clitoral growth, preserves virginity and enhances male sexuality. It also relates to tradition, power inequalities and the compliance of women. When mutilation is performed ranges from a few days old to adolescence, before marriage and occasionally on pregnant women and widows.

FGM is illegal in the United Kingdom (UK) either to perform or arrange for a girl to be taken abroad to have it performed. However, it is estimated that over 20,000 girls

under the age of 15 years are at risk of FGM in the UK each year, and 66,000 women in the UK are living with the consequences of FGM. However, due to the hidden nature of this crime the full extent is unknown.

Forced Marriage

In the UK, forced marriage is recognised as a form of violence against women and men, domestic /child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. This can be in the form of physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

There is a clear distinction between forced marriages and an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Honour crime or honour based violence

Honour crime or honour- based violence consists of a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women), including assault, imprisonment and murder where the person is being punished by their family or their community. They are being punished for actually, or allegedly, undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. Not conforming to this code of behaviour brings shame or dishonour on the family.

Honour- based violence can exist in any culture or community where males are in position to establish and enforce women's conduct but males can also become victims when a relationship has been deemed as inappropriate

Where to get more information:

Useful Publications

Shropshire Community Safety Partnership, Crime Reduction, Community Safety and Drug & Alcohol Strategy 2017 – 2020

<http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/media/5226/cspda-strategy-shropshire-2017-20.pdf>

Safe West Mercia Plan – West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

<http://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Safer-West-Mercia-Plan.pdf>

Home Office (2016 - 2020) Call to End Violence against Women and Girls

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97901/action-plan-new-chapter.pdf

The NICE Guidance (Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working Public health guideline [PH50] Published - February 2014) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50>

Useful Websites

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service - <http://www.shropsdas.org.uk/>

Refuge - <http://www.refuge.org.uk/>

West Mercia Women's Aid - <http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/>

Men's Advice Line - <http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/>

Man Kind - <http://new.mankind.org.uk/>

Victim Support - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/west-midlands/west-mercia>