

Overview of Domestic Abuse Service Provision in Sunderland

Nationally, the police receive a call about domestic abuse every 30 seconds (HMIC: Everybody's Business 2014). Sunderland's Domestic Violence Health Needs Assessment (2013) established that there are 11,600-15,600 incidents of domestic abuse (DA) occurring in Sunderland homes each year. This report also noted that DA was a factor in a third of all referrals to Children Services and in almost half of families subject to a child protection plan.

1. Wearside Women in Need

- **Supported Accommodation – Refuges:** The health needs assessment informed the commissioning of all Housing Related Support Services in the city, including DA services. It established the need for building based and dispersed accommodation with housing related support, for women and men (aged 16 years and above) and their dependents who are experiencing or who are at risk of domestic violence. It also identified the requirement for a floating support service to assist independent living and reduce the incidence of tenancy breakdown and/or individuals losing their homes.

Wearside Women In Need (WWIN) were successful in securing the 3 year contract for DA services. The residential services they are providing as part of the contract include:

- A Washington-based refuge – offering 11 bedrooms (maximum 31 bed spaces). This one also specialises in supporting older women, women with learning difficulties and women involved in high risk child protection cases
- A Sunderland- based refuge – offering 7 bedrooms (maximum 17 bed spaces) – This one specialises in supporting women with mental health and/or substance dependency issues
- A Coalfields-based refuge – offering 11 flats (maximum 41 bed spaces). This one specialises in supporting BAMER women/children, victims with older male children, and those with physical disabilities/infirmities.

These 3 refuges accommodated 276 victims (173 women and 103 children) in 2013/14. WWIN also provide an IDVA/outreach service which met the needs of an additional 440 adult victims in 2013/14, including 2 male victims.

In addition to these services, WWIN also deliver The TZ Project, which offers specialised support to young abuse victims aged 16-18 and accommodated 57 women in 10 bed spaces during 2013/14. TZ specialises in supporting younger victims of abuse including young lesbian/bi-sexual women and those vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

- **Helplines and Drop-In**
 - Telephone 0800 066 5555 (24hr Domestic Violence helpline) – 24/7
 - Telephone 0191 416 3550 for women suffering domestic violence (also head office)
 - Telephone 0191 510 8010 for 24 hour advice and support for men who are abusing and want help

- **IDVA Service;** Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service (IDVA) Service works with victims to explore and identify risks, and developing a care package of services to implement a safety plan. The IDVA service also supports victims of domestic violence through any police investigations and subsequent court hearings in relation to the abuse. The service acts as a liaison between the victim, the police and the court, and provides support and advice around a whole host of issues such as housing, childcare and benefits. A key element of the WWIN IDVA service is that it actually accompanies victims of domestic violence to other agencies.
- **Outreach work:** Not all service users will go to live in refuges, many do not wish to give up their homes and outreach work is undertaken by WWIN whereby service users are provided with support to deal with the issues they have as a result of domestic violence. Women are invited to participate in group sessions and undertake the Freedom Programme. This programme deals with male violence to women and children. One woman reported that this gave her a 'much wider understanding and perception of domestic violence'. WWIN also provides support to service users by accompanying them to appointments and this type of support can be instrumental in them seeking the appropriate healthcare and other types of support. WWIN offer weekend and evening appointments for outreach work

In summary, WWIN provide:

- Advice, support and safe accommodation (3 refuges) for women and children experiencing sexual, physical or emotional abuse. They are also able to access separate units of accommodation for male victims.
- Helpline for anyone experiencing or affected by domestic abuse
- Drop-in (at The Elms, Front Street, Concord, Washington)
- IDVA Service and outreach advice services.
- Furniture and clothing store.
- Support to victims whose partners are on a voluntary perpetrators programme of domestic violence

2. Northumbria Police

- **The Neighbourhood Policing Teams** are also responsible for providing support to medium risk victims who report to the police. Referrals to Victims First Northumbria are offered to medium and standard risk victims. There has also been successful pilot work done where WWIN workers have accompanied the police (as second responders) to all DV incidents on weekend nights to increase victim engagement with support services (which increased from 1% to 55%).
- **Safeguarding Unit.** This Unit is staffed by Police Officers who are specially trained to support victims of domestic abuse and investigate domestic violence offences. They can also give advice about legal options and safety issues
- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)** are chaired by the Police (DI Denise Clark, Northumbria Police PVP) and meet fortnightly to share info to increase

victim safety (those assessed as high risk of immediate harm) and gain a full picture so that a robust safety plan can be created.

- **Ebeat:** website targeted at young people and also includes teaching resources. This link <http://www.ebeat.org.uk/myres/teachers/teenabuse/index.html> includes information about teenage relationship abuse
- Delivery of the policing aspects of the **regional Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy** and various **partnership interventions** and new technologies e.g. bodyworn cameras, TecSOS phones, PPU alarms, voluntary tagging.

3. Gentoo

Gentoo is the major provider of social housing within the city and plays a central role in identifying and responding to DV. Gentoo has a dedicated team of Victim Support Officers, who can provide victims with help and advice around housing issues including rehousing, home safety and signposting to refuge services. The service consists of 2 x Victim Support Officers and 1 x Victim Support Service Supervisor who support victims of Domestic Abuse & High Level ASB. The supervisor is also IDVA trained. The service uses CAADAs Insights data collection tool to gather outcomes for those victims supported.

In addition, Gentoo 'Cause for Concern' is a proactive initiative in which potential victims of DV are identified by front line and maintenance staff trained to recognise specific repairs which may indicate DV occurring in the household. Issues such as 3 bathroom door lock changes, or damage to internal doors etc. leads to a 'Cause for Concern' being raised with Gentoo Victim Support staff, who will discretely make contact with the potential victim. It therefore represents an innovative approach to identifying DV cases that may otherwise have gone unreported.

Gentoo has a Business Manager - Domestic Abuse. A key component of the role is to develop national standards for housing providers in domestic abuse, in conjunction with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. In doing this Gentoo are critically evaluating its own approach to domestic abuse.

Gentoo also operates the small scale city wide Home Security and Sanctuary Scheme (HSSS) which is cross tenure and for the highest risk domestic abuse victims. Referrals are via the police crime prevention advisor. The HSSS is commissioned and funded by the Safer Sunderland Partnership using the Council's community safety budget.

4. Impact Family Services (IFS)

- IFS service remit is wider than domestic violence. IFS is a non-profit organisation that provides services for individuals and families who are facing a difficult time due to separation and/or divorce; domestic violence and abuse; and for children and young people affected by family or peer relationships (including bullying). Across its full service (Sunderland, South Tyneside etc), IFS have experienced and qualified professionals that

can provide domestic violence risk assessments to assist those managing cases to identify strategies for risk management in relation to child contact in private law.

They can make recommendations that address the risks in different levels of contact, risks in changes in levels of contact, exit strategies for supervised / supported contact progression and prognosis and what needs to happen for reduction of risk.

In cases where either CAFCASS or the court believe that they do not have a full picture of the domestic violence risks and so no consideration of the viability of contact that is safe and positive for the child is yet possible:

- Where there has been domestic violence post-separation, particularly at contact handovers
- Where levels of hostility, conflict and fear need to be more fully understood and addressed before contact should be positively considered by the court
- Where there are uncertainties about the extent, severity and nature of the domestic violence in particular where it appears to be escalating
- Where there are significant concerns that the child will be at risk of further exposure to domestic violence if contact takes place
- Where there is a complex pattern of intersecting risk concerns e.g. history of violence, substance misuse, non-violent criminal activity, and mental health concerns etc.

In terms of domestic violence specifically, IFS:

- Supports women whose ex-partners are completing the Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme they run, as part of a family court direction via CAFCASS (Child and Family Court and Advisory Support Service)
- As part of the IFS Supported Contact Service they have a Women's Support Worker – as they have a remit to support women who have been victims of DV and whose children are using the Child Contact Centre for seeing the other parent who is a perpetrator of DV. (note: A Child Contact Centre is a safe, neutral venue for children to meet and have quality time with a parent they no longer live with)
- They also deliver the Respect Young People's Programme (RYPP) for adolescent to parent violence (see perpetrator section below)

5. Sunderland Counselling Services

- They provide range of counselling and talking therapies services for broad range of issues and common mental health problems e.g. bereavement, depression. They don't have a specific domestic violence service, but their staff may work with clients experiencing DV, where there is another primary presenting issue. They do offer a specific service for women and men aged 18 and over who are victims of rape and / or sexual abuse, whether current or historic / childhood.

6. REACH – the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

- SARC is a place where victims can receive help and advice and a forensic examination if they have been raped or seriously sexually assaulted. REACH (Rape examination, advice,

counselling and help) is the name of the SARC that is operated in the Northumbria Police area. REACH is a free, confidential counselling, advice and support service which helps women and men aged 16 or over who have been raped or sexually assaulted. The centres are staffed by women who are experienced in dealing with the effects of rape and sexual assault. They will be happy to help victims whether or not they wish to report the assault to the police. It also has two forensic examination centres: the Rhona Cross Suite located in Newcastle and the Ellis Fraser Suite in Sunderland. Visits are by strict appointment only. Tel: 0191 221 9222 www.reachsarc.org.uk and http://www.reachsarc.org.uk/download/reach_booklet.pdf

7. Statutory Perpetrator Programmes

- **Probation's (CRC) Building Better Relationships (BBR) Programme:** This is a group-work programme is for men who have been convicted of an offence against a female partner which can include physical violence, criminal damage, threatening behaviour or harassment. Men who have been assessed as posing a risk of harm to their partner and children, and are able to discuss at least one act of violence against an intimate partner are also eligible. The course prioritises the safety of women and children, and information is exchanged with other agencies such as the police, Social Services and women's support services as appropriate. Victims are also given the opportunity to have contact with a partner link worker from Barnardos, who provides support and advice. The programme is based on the latest research evidence about men who perpetrate domestic violence as well as the most effective ways of working with them to change. The programme consists of four modules: foundation, my thinking, my emotions and my relationships. The aim is to enable men to acknowledge the abuse they have committed and its effects on others as well as to build an understanding for appropriate behaviour and responses in the future.
- **Probation's (CRC) SOLO:** This is a specified 'activity' where: offenders may be unavailable for the group due to employment and child care commitments; where there are specific learning needs which would be more appropriately met on a one-to one basis; in lower risk cases where the offending and criminogenic needs are less entrenched and there is no supporting evidence of a pattern of abusive behaviour beyond the incident. It needs to be attached to a Community and/or suspended Sentence Order as a Specified Activity Requirement by the courts. **Probation's SOLO Enhanced** is for offenders of abusive behaviour in intimate same sex relationships regardless of how gender and or sexuality are identified. Can be delivered as part of a supervision on a community order, suspended sentence order or license. Currently, Southwick Office alone supervise 30-40 offenders with SOLO, alongside a similar number of offenders with BBR (there is the Hendon Office, Houghton Office and the IOM Team too), so quite a number of offenders being subject to some kind of domestic abuse programme

8. Voluntary Non-Statutory Perpetrator Programmes (and young people who harm)

- **The BIG Project: Voluntary Perpetrator Programme:** This is a consortium between Impact Family Services, Barnardos, Gentoo and WWIN. It went live in January 2015 and is a voluntary non-statutory perpetrator programme for Sunderland and is **Respect Accredited**. It uses the Action for Change programme, which consists of:
 - 4 one to one assessments of risk and motivation
 - 4 week pre-group group work programme
 - 26 weeks group work core programme covering 7 modules e.g. Effects on Children; Respect Trust & Support; Future Conduct

It is a rolling programme and men can join the core group work at any module other than 3 and 5. It is based at 35 West Sunnyside, Sunderland SR1 1BU Tel: 0191 567 8282 Fax: 0191 5660629 Email: BIG@impactfs.co.uk

- **Deter Innovations – Relationship Skills Programme (RSP)** This is now operating in Sunderland by Deter but it is **not** Respect Accredited. It is a 26 weeks group work programme, following 3 one to one assessment interviews. Two facilitators of either gender deliver the material.

9. Mental Health Needs and Domestic Abuse

- **The IAPT programme** is delivered by a range of providers in Sunderland and managed by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW). IAPT is an open access self-referral service and therefore can be accessed by anyone affected by DV, however intervention would only be provided for those experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems. The IAPT service refers severe cases to secondary mental health care services, while those requiring counselling services are referred to third sector organisations.
- **Washington Mind** is a local independent charity offering a range of mental health and wellbeing services, as well as training of other agencies to respond to local need. Washington Mind accepts referrals from other agencies and self-referrals from victims of DV and is able to provide emotional support and counselling services.
- **Sunderland Mind** is a local independent charity offering a range of mental health and wellbeing services. Sunderland Mind accepts referrals from other agencies and self-referrals from victims of DV and is able to provide emotional support and counselling services.
- **CAMHS** Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW) provide the CAMHS for Sunderland. The CAMHS supports children and young people aged up to 18 who have been affected by DV and are showing signs of psychological effects. In addition to providing individual care, CAMHS also offers training to organisations that work with children and young people who have been affected psychologically by DV.

10. Other Mainstream Services

- These are wide-ranging and include for e.g. children's social care, adults social care, safeguarding, community safety, NHS services such as A&E, GPs, midwives etc., policing, relationship education in schools (school's own choice), homelessness services, Probation services such as the women's hub, prevention work, drug and alcohol treatment, MASH, marketing and comms activity/awareness raising campaigns etc.

11.Domestic Abuse Training

- The Safer Sunderland Partnership has paid for licenses for domestic abuse e-learning training which is administered through Debra Doran, Training and Development Officer for Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Board. Any partner agency can access this by emailing Debra.Doran@sunderland.gov.uk with a request to complete it and she will set up an account and password for you.
- Sunderland City Council has also commissioned multi-agency domestic abuse training (3 levels).

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