

# Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council:

## Domestic Abuse Strategy - January 2022

### 1 About the Strategy

#### Introduction

- 1.1 Domestic Abuse has no place in the borough of Redcar & Cleveland. It causes untold harm to victims and their families and leaves a legacy behind that changes people's lives. Put simply, it should not be tolerated in any shape or form.
- 1.2 Redcar and Cleveland Council is committed to tackling all forms of domestic abuse. Our aim is to ensure all people are kept protected through the provision of safe accommodation and practical support to help survivors rebuild their lives, the funding of education programmes to help prevent domestic abuse, and work with criminal justice agencies to offer abusers the opportunity to sign up to rehabilitation programmes to change the pattern of abusive behaviour.

#### Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- 1.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will help transform the national response to domestic abuse, helping to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need. This strategy will ensure that wider measures to tackle domestic abuse across the Borough complement the requirements of the new duty.
- 1.4 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 includes a new duty on local authorities to assess the need for, and commission support to, victims and their children in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England. A key change that the duty will require is that in future, those victims currently turned away from refuges and safe accommodation will be able to access life-saving support in future to help them recover and rebuild their lives. The new duty is backed by £125 million of funding in 2021/22 across England of which Redcar & Cleveland was awarded £315,512.
- 1.5 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 also requires local authorities to prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support having regard to the local needs assessment.
- 1.6 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2024 'Our Flourishing Future' include a vision that "...people will live longer, more fulfilling and independent lives and will have access to the means of support when they need it". This is underpinned by four priorities and 12 commitments.

1.7 These include:

- We shall improve long-term physical health and mental well-being, get young people more active, and ultimately save lives; and
- We shall take more preventative actions, to keep people safe, to enable more children and older people to live safely at home, with the right support at the right time.

1.8 The Redcar & Cleveland Community Safety Partnership's commitment to tackling domestic abuse is demonstrated in its plan 2021-2024 as a theme under the priority 'Reduce Vulnerability' with the following actions:

- Implement and develop the findings from the consultation and review process.
- Increase communication of key messages to the public, as well as raise awareness and make the various services easily accessible.
- Partners and organisations to work together to create and promote a clear support pathway that is inclusive and accessible to all and developing a menu of support to meet differing levels of need.
- Design and implement a domestic abuse awareness training plan and strategy. It will be standardised to include personal, professional and community-based approaches.

1.9 The plan can be accessed via this link:

[Community Safety Plan 2021-2024.pdf \(redcar-cleveland.gov.uk\)](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/Community%20Safety%20Plan%202021-2024.pdf)

1.10 Redcar & Cleveland Community Safety Partnership also recognise the forthcoming implementation of the Serious Violence Duty. The Duty requires the specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, which includes Domestic Violence and will align RCBC Domestic Abuse Strategy with any future local and Cleveland wide Serious Violence Strategies.

1.11 Local agencies across the borough will collaborate to support victims (the vast majority, according to our local data being women and girls). We all recognise that there is still much work to be done in order to:

- Safeguard all victims and their families comprehensively.
- Reduce the number of repeat occurrences.
- Reinforce to all perpetrators that domestic abuse is unacceptable and will be dealt with swiftly and effectively using the full weight of the criminal justice system.
- Address the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people, and other family members regardless of whether they live in the same household.

- Develop our processes to help to limit the need for survivors and victims and their families to revisit their trauma.

1.12 In recent years, we have made many positive steps to improve our response to domestic abuse in Redcar and Cleveland, but we know we must go further. We must build on what we know works. In the development of this strategy, key stakeholders have been consulted, engaging in open, transparent, and reflective conversation to identify ways to improve. We have ensured that the voices of a diverse range of victims and survivors in Redcar and Cleveland are represented in this strategy.

### **Developing the Strategy**

1.13 This strategy draws together the emerging priorities from a range of sources, including interviews with victims and survivors, frontline support staff and strategic policy makers across a diverse range of organisations.

1.14 This strategy reflects the breadth of commitment and ambition from all local stakeholders to tackle domestic abuse, recognising that it is everyone's business. The approach will foster an environment that prevents domestic abuse and brings about a continual reduction in incidents across Redcar & Cleveland, by raising awareness of what constitutes an abusive relationship, encouraging victims to report earlier, and tackling the culture of acceptance. By raising awareness, we may see an increase in reports of domestic abuse whilst the delivery of the action plan begins.

1.15 We will reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse across Redcar and Cleveland and ensure that where it does occur that we provide, at the earliest opportunity, the right support and services to minimise the short-term and long-term impact it has on local victims, children and their families. We will create an environment where high quality, wide-ranging support services are accessible, that are operationally and financially sustainable, in order to protect and provide for victims and their families on their journey to recovery.

1.16 The strategy will inform our commissioning approach, growth of partnerships, our allocation of resources and our workforce development activities in the coming years to increase the effectiveness of our work and improve the lives of local residents and victims from other areas.

1.17 It is vital that we build monitoring into our strategy. We need to know it is working by measuring the degree to which our approach is creative and responsive, reflects current demands and ultimately delivers. Continuous reflection on the lived experience voice is critical; there is a need to capture the views of victims and survivors and ensure this influences services and the whole system of support for people.

1.18 We must be creative about how we can get their voices in the spaces where the decisions are being made. It is important to ask people how they want to engage and then to engage with them in the way that suits them, not that which solely suits professionals. We will find ways for people to share their experiences and be heard to a much greater extent via spaces and

means where they feel comfortable. This could be coordinated via organisations and groups where they are already receiving support.

### **What Is Domestic Abuse?**

- 1.19 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 and over and personally connected to each other.
- Persons must be 'personally connected':
  - They are, or have been, married to each other;
  - They are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
  - They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
  - They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
  - They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
  - They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child;
  - They are relatives.
- 1.20 The act also recognises post-separation abuse through coercive and controlling behaviour. It no longer makes it a requirement for perpetrators and victims to either still be in a relationship or to still live together.
- 1.21 The act also recognises children as victims of domestic abuse. This is the first time that a child who sees or hears, or experiences domestic abuse, and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right.
- 1.22 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.
- 1.23 Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes 'Honour'-Based Abuse (HBA), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender, ethnic group, or socio-economic group.
- 1.24 While the cross-government definition above applies to those aged 16 or above, 'Adolescent to parent violence and abuse' (APVA) can equally involve children under 16 as well as over

16. There is currently no legal definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse, however, it is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse.

1.25 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 can be accessed here:

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted)

### **The Social and Economic Cost of Domestic Abuse**

- 1.26 Nationally domestic abuse is a larger contributor to ill health for women aged between 18 and 44 years than high blood pressure, smoking and obesity. Both the victims and their children have an increased risk of severe short term and long-term consequences, both physical and mental. There is a risk that the cycle of abuse continues with children becoming either victims or perpetrators in the future.
- 1.27 A Home Office report from January 2019<sup>1</sup> estimates the social and economic cost for victims of domestic abuse in 2016/17 in England and Wales to be approximately £66 billion. This is greater than the total estimated economic and social cost of crime (estimated at £50 billion) for crime against individuals in 2015/16.
- 1.28 The average unit cost involved in supporting a domestic abuse victim is calculated at £34,015. The largest element of domestic abuse cost is the physical and emotional harm suffered by the victims themselves (£47 billion), accounting for 71% of all estimated costs of domestic abuse. The next highest cost is for lost output relating to time lost at work and reduced productivity afterwards (£14 billion).
- 1.29 Improving understanding of the impact of domestic abuse can help influence future policy and operational efforts system wide. Preventative actions are likely to be the most cost-beneficial, although the effectiveness of these still require robust evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> The economic and social costs of domestic abuse. Research Report 107 by Rhys Oliver, Barnaby Alexander, Stephen Roe and Miriam Wlasny (January 2019)

## 2 About Redcar & Cleveland

### The Local Picture

- 2.1 Out of the four Tees local authority areas, Redcar and Cleveland has the second lowest rate of reported incidents (28.3/1000 population) and the lowest rate of repeat victims. However:
- In the last five years there has been three domestic homicide reviews involving the deaths of four victims.
  - 3,615 incidents of domestic abuse in Redcar & Cleveland were reported to Cleveland Police during year 2019/20.
  - 2,369 (62.7%) were domestic abuse crimes, of which only 214 (9.0%) ended in a positive result for the victim e.g. a charge, a summons, a restorative justice intervention etc.
  - A total of 2,088 referrals were made into Redcar & Cleveland Specialist Domestic Abuse Services between April 2020 and March 2021.
  - 70% of all children's social care assessments included domestic abuse as a factor.
  - 1,536 (40.7%) of domestic abuse incidents in the borough involved repeat victims.
  - Most victims are females (77%).
  - Alcohol was present in 25% of all reported domestic abuse incidents in Redcar & Cleveland.
- 2.2 During 2021 there has been multiple safeguarding reviews inclusive of a domestic homicide. An emerging theme is that family members, friends, and neighbours were aware that domestic abuse was a feature in a couples' relationship and on occasions had witnessed the abuse. However, these incidences were never reported to the relevant authorities.
- 2.3 We know that too many incidents are never reported to the Police, and it is generally accepted that the number of incidents of domestic abuse is under-reported, with national research indicating that it takes on average between two and a half to three years before a victim seeks support for the first time. Victims can often require support multiple times over an extended period.
- 2.4 The recording of incidences of domestic abuse is far from straightforward, and it is clear that looking solely at the number of incidents reported to the Police does not give an accurate indication of domestic abuse incidence in the borough. It is therefore important to consider data from a wide range of other sources, including referrals to specialist domestic abuse services and key partner agencies, as well as repeat victimisation and repeat and serial offending.
- 2.5 The impact of the COVID pandemic presented challenges for domestic abuse services within Redcar and Cleveland and nationally.

- Many services adopted a predominantly virtual service offer which has inhibited ease of access to services to some victims.
- The pandemic initially prevented some women from moving on from refuges which reduced the availability of refuge spaces.
- The lockdown restrictions may have presented additional barriers for victims leaving abusive relationships, possible exposure to worsening abuse at home and reducing opportunities to access support.

2.6 The move to a virtual method of working during the pandemic has been beneficial to some victims. For example, the opportunity to access the Freedom Programme online has been successful. It is important that organisations use the learning to inform how they deliver inclusive support from 2022 onwards.

2.7 Statistics from Cleveland Police for Redcar & Cleveland show that recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes are on the increase whilst recorded sexual violence offences are decreasing. No female genital mutilation (FGM) offences have been recorded though we know this is a general trend across the country and not necessarily indicative of actual incidence. The borough has a relatively low proportion of people from BAME communities compared to other Tees Valley local authorities.

2.8 Table 2.1 below outlines the direction of travel across a number of key local indicators.

<b>Table 2.1: Recent Trends Across Key Indicators in Redcar &amp; Cleveland</b>				
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Direction of Travel</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police*	↑	3702	3615	3854
Crimes recorded against incidents of reported domestic abuse	↓	2325	2118	2191
Number of incidents of high-risk domestic crime	↑	109	192	174
Number of reported high-risk domestic abuse resulting in arrest (if available as a separate statistic)	↑	81	155	159
Number of cases heard by local MARAC	↓	149	166	117
Repeat cases heard by local MARAC	↑	27	50	38
Number of repeat victims of domestic abuse (rolling average)	↓	65	61	58
Number of repeat offenders of domestic abuse (rolling average)	↔	44	36	44
Number of serial offenders of domestic abuse (rolling average)	↓	18	8	14

\* Incidents cover reports where, after initial investigation, the police have concluded that no notifiable crime was committed.

2.9 What is evident from the incidence and demand data is that domestic abuse incidents are continuing to rise. This in turn means that there continues to be a high demand for services to support those affected by domestic abuse. It is therefore paramount that future service provision is focussed and targeted into areas of greatest need, to prevent or reduce the incidence of domestic abuse in the long-term.

2.10 Table 2.2 below compares the number of incidents and crimes for domestic abuse per ward for the years 2019 and 2020.

Ward	Incidents (No Crimes)			Crimes		
	2019	2020	Diff	2019	2020	Diff
Belmont	10	19	9	18	29	11
Brotton	86	79	-7	138	133	-5
Coatham	109	102	-7	179	170	-9
Dormanstown	62	74	12	95	110	15
Eston	107	118	11	152	224	72
Grangetown	116	144	28	257	259	2
Guisborough	77	61	-16	159	98	-61
Hutton	28	39	11	38	58	20
Kirkleatham	92	144	52	177	164	-13
Lockwood	18	18	0	33	31	-2
Loftus	84	58	-26	96	82	-14
Longbeck	13	24	11	39	36	-3
Newcomen	37	51	14	57	67	10
Normanby	51	67	16	105	98	-7
Ormesby	56	35	-21	84	82	-2
Saltburn	43	41	-2	65	54	-11
Skelton_East	57	45	-12	71	53	-18
Skelton_West	41	45	4	66	57	-9
South_Bank	97	85	-12	153	168	15
St_Germains	35	33	-2	43	61	18
Teesville	59	60	1	94	113	19
West Dyke	42	44	2	64	70	6
Wheatlands	12	24	12	30	39	9
Zetland	43	42	-1	57	52	-5

Source: Cleveland Police

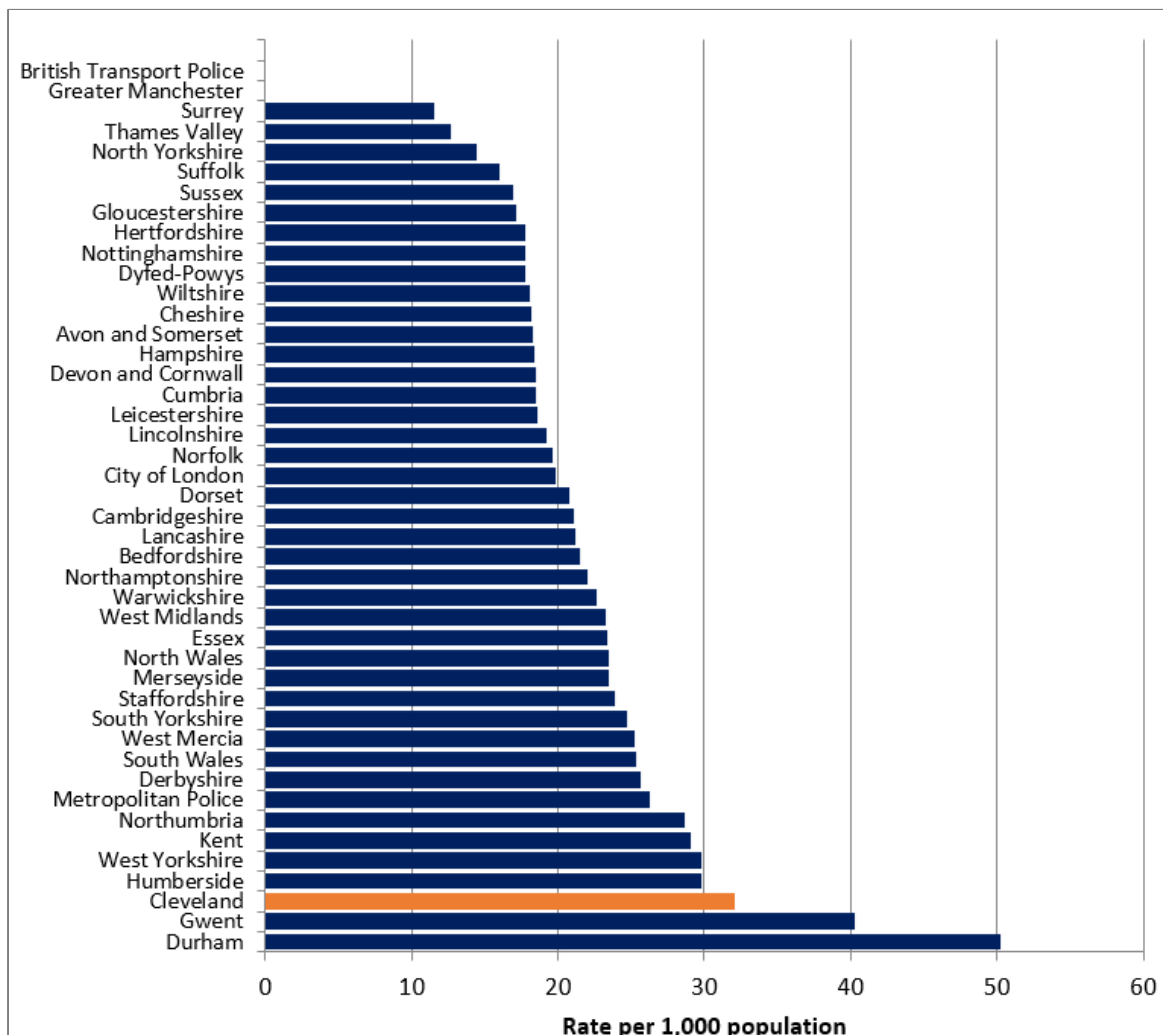
2.11 Domestic abuse is prevalent in all neighbourhoods and it is not confined to particular communities, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or social or economic status. Some groups are more likely to be victims i.e. women. Domestic abuse impacts on the individual and their family, regardless of social demographic, geographic or cultural background.

2.12 The wards with the most reported domestic abuse incidents are Grangetown, Kirkleatham and Eston. The ward with the biggest increase in domestic abuse incidents is Kirkleatham. The wards with the lowest numbers of reported domestic abuse incidents and crimes are Lockwood, Belmont and Longbeck. The wards with the biggest decrease in domestic abuse incidents are Loftus and Ormesby.



- 2.13 Domestic abuse crimes are highest in Grangetown, Eston, Coatham and South Bank wards. Eston ward had the biggest increase in domestic abuse crimes. The biggest drop in reported domestic abuse crimes occurred in Guisborough ward where crimes fell from 159 to 98 (38%).
- 2.14 We need to take a more focussed approach to understanding the issues faced by particular groups in society. This includes elderly people, BAME communities, LGBTQ+ communities (amongst others). We will ensure that all domestic abuse provision is tailored to meet the needs of all residents across Redcar & Cleveland, including all groups with protected characteristics. We also need to consider how resources are allocated. Many victims classified as low or medium risk do not have access to appropriate services at the right time.
- 2.15 Figure 2.1 below shows that Cleveland Police Force has one of the highest rates of recorded domestic abuse.

**Figure 2.1: Rate of domestic abuse incidents and crimes by Police Force. Year end March 2020.**



Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesdatatool>

2.16 Between April 2019 to March 2020 in the Cleveland Police area, which includes Middlesbrough, Stockton on Tees, Redcar & Cleveland & Hartlepool there were 18,273 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes. Equivalent to 32 incidents and crimes for every 1,000 people in the population. Surrey Police Force has the lowest rate (12/1,000) and Durham Police Force has the highest rate (50/1,000).

2.17 Safeguarding concerns received about adults with care and support needs for domestic abuse are as below:

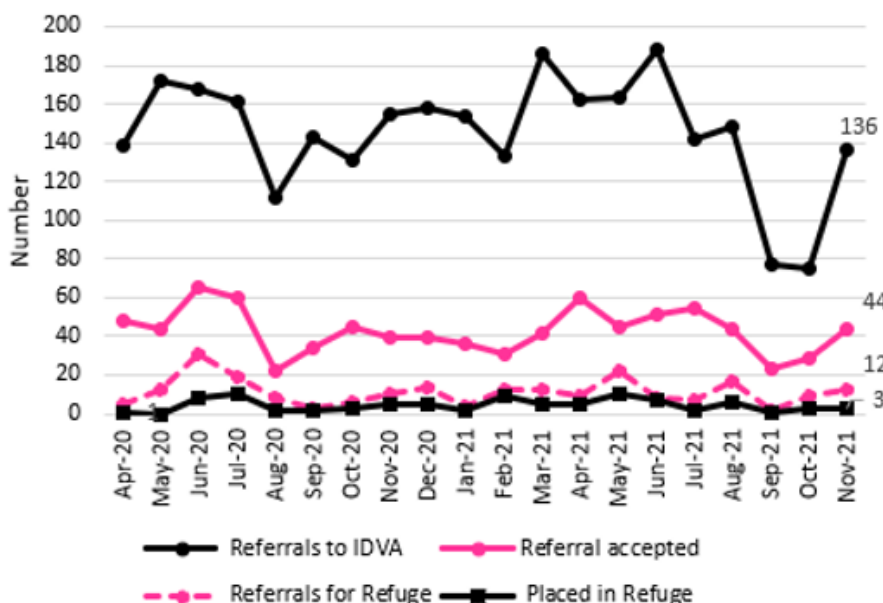
- 2018/19: Of 1,338 concerns, 77 were for domestic abuse (5.8%).
- 2019/20: Of the 1,633 concerns, 114 were for domestic abuse (7.0%).
- 2020/21: Of the 1,528 concerns, 88 were for domestic abuse (5.8%).
- 2021/22: Of the 1,446 concerns, 102 were for domestic abuse (7.1%).

2.18 Information from Children’s Services shows that in the nine months from April to December 2021 there was a total of 9,507 contacts to the Redcar & Cleveland Multi-Agency Children’s Hub. Contacts relate to any request for a service/information in respect of a child in the Redcar & Cleveland area. These are made by a range of professionals and members of the public and cover early intervention, child in need and child protection services. Domestic abuse is the most common presenting issue as 1,384 (14.6%) of those featured domestic abuse by parent carer as the presenting issue; and 91 (1%) featured domestic abuse by child/young person.

**Demand for Services**

2.19 Figure 2.2 below outlines the data from April 2020 to November 2021 in referrals to an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and then to the local refuge.

*Figure 2.2: Referrals to IDVA and Local Refuge*



- 2.20 From April 2020 to Nov 2021 (inclusive) there were 2,903 referrals to the IDVA service and 854 accepted. It should be noted that this includes notifications from the Police and often these are not consented referrals, hence the drop in the total number of referrals to those being accepted. From April 2020 to Nov 2021 (inclusive) there were 222 referrals received for the refuge and 89 placed in the refuge which means 133 were not placed.
- 2.21 Data on refuge referrals indicate a lack of supply to meet demand, demonstrated by the fact that less than half of all referrals are placed and that the main reason for each of the previous three years was 'no vacancy, unable to wait':
- For 2018/19 there were 164 referrals, 64 placed and 100 not placed – of the 100, 75 were due to no vacancy, unable to wait.
  - For 2019/20 there were 153 referrals, 73 placed and 80 not placed – of the 80, 66 were due to no vacancy, unable to wait.
  - For 2020/21 there were 132 referrals, 49 placed and 83 not placed – of the 83, 67 were due to no vacancy, unable to wait.
- 2.22 Refuge space is also accessible to people from outside the borough. The number of people seeking and not being placed in the refuge remains too high, reflecting the national picture.

### **Safe Accommodation Provision**

- 2.23 The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) recognises the critical importance of support for victims and their children within relevant safe accommodation, as they rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse.
- 2.24 The current commissioned refuge service provider has three dispersed properties (not part of the commissioned service) and these properties are consistently full. Another local specialist provider also has dispersed properties. Currently the demand for suitable community-based accommodation is high. There is a gap in data on the overall demand for dispersed properties as the data at the moment only relates to known demand from the commissioned refuge service.
- 2.25 The Housing Advice Service places clients in self-contained accommodation when no refuge space is available with a specialist provider. However, we know there is a gap in provision for suitable community-based accommodation as an alternative to refuge accommodation. Being able to provide safe accommodation in the community would enable us to support clients who have a larger family or a son aged 16+ years, who have no recourse to public funds (social care funding dependant), have too high an income (even if this takes into account perpetrator income), males or those who may not be suitable for refuge accommodation due to risk to themselves or others.

## **A Strategy Shaped by Local Consultation**

- 2.26 This strategy has been informed by the views of victims and survivors, those organisations that deliver and commission services, and a range of wider partners including VCS organisations, Cleveland Police, OPCC, and leads from a range of services including Public Health, Children’s Services, Adult Services and Housing Services. The approach has been comprehensive. We have looked at previous consultations and undertaken further research in 2021 to ensure our understanding is current and relevant.

### **Local Consultation in 2021**

- 2.27 In September and October 2021 further research was undertaken with stakeholders through an interactive workshop session and follow up one to one interviews. In depth interviews were also conducted with professionals including with those working on the frontline. Their thoughts, knowledge and experiences were captured in relation to the types of support, processes, protocols, systems and differing approaches required when supporting individuals and families.
- 2.28 We carried out ten in depth interviews with victims and survivors. The victims and survivors were selected for interview based on their personal circumstances, background, social status and family make up. This included selecting those for interview from a range of BAME, LGBTQ+ communities, socio economic statuses, and one male victim/survivor.
- 2.29 We wanted to capture the whole picture in relation to domestic abuse, so we asked victims and survivors about their journey and experiences, including when and how the abuse began, the reasons why they continued to stay in the abusive relationship or situation, and the barriers to leaving. We also asked them about how they entered services, about the types of support that they were offered and received, what worked well for them, and what they found difficult or challenging. To better understand their needs, we also asked what they felt could be done differently, in order to improve services and their individual experience.

### **Tees Valley Domestic Abuse Victim and Survivor Survey**

- 2.30 During summer/autumn 2021 a survey of domestic abuse victims was undertaken across the Tees Valley. The survey attracted the views of 114 respondents. In total 16 of the 114 respondents who had been victims of domestic abuse resided in Redcar & Cleveland at the time of the abuse. All but one of the 16 were female. Half had children aged 18 or under living with them in the household at the time that the domestic abuse took place.
- 2.31 In total 23% of the survey respondents moved to a different local authority area. For 14% of respondents, the incident of domestic abuse was committed in a place outside the Tees Valley. In total 5 of the 114 respondents moved into Redcar & Cleveland from another local authority area following the abuse (four from elsewhere in the Tees Valley). All were women, and three had children.

### **Local Consultation from 2019**

- 2.32 A review of domestic abuse services was undertaken by the Council in 2019 to ensure that the increasing demands of an ever-changing domestic abuse landscape were considered. Considerable insight was gained, looking beyond quantitative data to establish how our domestic abuse services are viewed by those with first-hand experience.
- 2.33 The review considered the support provided, how services were accessed, how they operate, inter-connect and collaborate, and most importantly, how people are made to feel when seeking help. Feedback was gathered through a mixture of informal conversation, consultation, workshops, surveys, and one to one interviews.
- 2.34 In total, 286 people from 32 organisations engaged. This included people who have experienced domestic abuse and have accessed services. Professionals, and volunteers from the statutory, voluntary and community sector were also invited to contribute to our review. They joined in conversation with us, completed a survey, attended a consultation event, joined a focus group and/or took place in an individual or group interview. 180 completed surveys were returned. Six personal experience focus groups and four domestic abuse survivors' focus groups were undertaken. The team met with people from BAME groups, LGBTQ+ groups and engaged children and young people.

### **3 Domestic Abuse – Service Provision Summary**

#### **Resourcing Priorities**

- 3.1 Whilst funding has historically been provided via fixed term contracts across partner agencies, to enable a wide range of services and interventions to be delivered, there remains opportunity to further strengthen collaboration by identifying sustainable funding to increase domestic abuse provision across all levels of risk.
- 3.2 This strategy is supported by a joint commissioning approach between relevant statutory partners and other key stakeholders. The commissioning approach is informed by ongoing work to analyse and identify the necessary financial input to support the effective delivery of the strategy. This will ensure that an adequate level of service provision is placed on a sustainable footing moving forward and provided in areas where they can have the greatest impact.
- 3.3 It is also paramount that every opportunity to maximise external funding is explored, working with our wider voluntary sector organisations to take advantage of funding that becomes available. This will provide added value and enable time limited projects to be tested, evaluated and upscaled when proven successful and funding allows.
- 3.4 Specialist agencies are reliant upon time-constrained funding and can often only commit to service delivery for a determined fixed period and because of this, they can frequently only offer time-limited support to victims/perpetrators. Consideration needs to be given as to how longer-term funding arrangements can be established.
- 3.5 More supported accommodation is needed for victims where refuge accommodation is not appropriate e.g. due to mental health issues, substance misuse issues etc.
- 3.6 More outreach support for when a victim moves on from safe accommodation or where a victim doesn't want to access safe accommodation.
- 3.7 There is also a need to explore more fully the accommodation needs of perpetrators, enabling victims to remain in the home where this is possible and preferred.

#### **An Integrated Model of Support**

- 3.8 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council is developing an Integrated Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse service which will provide a whole system approach to domestic abuse. Recognising that victims often have additional needs and domestic abuse may not always be the primary need, a holistic and multi-faceted support model will enable us to move away from a 'one size fits all' approach and build a tailored package of support for victims which aims to break the cycle of abuse and provide specialist support for multiple needs.
- 3.9 The integrated model is a starting point for implementing and embedding trauma informed services.

3.10 Adopting a whole system approach to domestic abuse through the implementation of the new integrated model will provide the greatest potential in health gain within the population. The model will look to address the multi-faceted and often interrelated needs of victims and enable seamless access to multiple types of support. The package of support must be flexible and not time limited to ensure the offer is sufficient in addressing the needs of victims over an appropriate time period. This type of intervention aims to prevent repeat referrals into the system and tackle multiple public health issues.

### **Current support provisions accessible to those living within the borough**

3.11 The current provision funded includes:

- Refuge – Accommodation and support at a purpose built 12 self-contained flats.
- IDVA – Provides support and assistance through legal process attending court, etc.
- Children’s Therapy: Therapy for children who have been most affected by experience of domestic abuse.
- Children’s Support: Provides advice and support to agencies. Also includes play support.
- Route2: Intensive support with perpetrators.
- Sanctuary Scheme: installation of security measures to enable people to remain living in their own home (tenure blind).
- Freedom Programme: Information and training programme for women and girls to understand domestic abuse and how to move forward.
- Volunteering opportunities.
- Outreach support and support groups
- In house access to external services such as substance use and alcohol services, counselling, legal advice, welfare and benefit advice.

3.12 Non-commissioned refuge and support services include:

- Safe House Accommodation (for females aged 16 and over) - 4 houses (2 standard, 1 x 45+ and 1 x specialised mental health).
- Halo BME women’s refuge.
- Keyworker Support.
- Counselling, support groups and programmes.
- Training.
- IDVA service, specially trained to work with young people.
- Fitness and wellbeing support.

- Volunteering opportunities.
- Advocacy, advice and information.
- Training/awareness-raising workshops/talks and presentations to the local community.
- Couples Project: Perpetrator programme working with couples.
- Team of Specialist Children and Young People Counsellors work with ages 4-18 yrs.

### 3.13 Additional In-house provision

- Changing Futures Programme: Offering Key Worker support to vulnerable adults with multiple and complex needs.
- Children's Services: Families Together Project will be facilitating a limited number of Freedom Programmes in community settings.

### 3.14 Additional Tees-wide Services

- The Halo Project, a national by and for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) led charity has its registered offices based in Middlesbrough. The service offers specialist support to victims of domestic and sexual violence and advice and accredited training for agencies and victims.
- ARCH – SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) TEESIDE: Working in partnership, the SARC in Teesside provides 24/7 support to anyone who has experienced rape and other sexual offences, whether this has happened recently or in the past.
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a weekly information sharing and action planning meeting between representatives of Cleveland Police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, IDVAs and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors, who hear high risk domestic abuse cases that require immediate safeguarding actions from partner agencies to protect a victim at imminent risk of harm. MARAC referrals are considered from all partner agencies as well as Police.
- MATAC is a multi-agency tasking and coordination initiative that identifies serial domestic abuse perpetrators (those offending against multiple victims) victims include family members as well as intimate partners.
- Operation Encompass is a project between Schools and Cleveland Police designed to provide the early reporting to schools, of any domestic abuse incidents where it is identified that a child or young person was present, witnessed or was involved in a domestic abuse incident. Information will be shared with a 'key adult' within school at the earliest opportunity, providing appropriate support in a timely manner.
- Domestic Abuse Solution Team (DAST) operates across the Cleveland Police area with three IDVAs and three police officers, providing specialist support to victims.



- The South Tees Changing Futures Programme will shortly be commencing a comprehensive programme of training, and wider learning and reflection, to embed a trauma informed approach across services. It is important that over the next six months relevant organisations across the borough engage in this.
- Together for Change is a one-year project funded through the National Lottery Community Fund and delivered by Groundwork NE & Cumbria. The project aims to bring together organisations throughout Tees Valley whose work supports people experiencing complex challenges and multiple disadvantages such as mental health, drug/alcohol use, homelessness, domestic abuse and offending.

## **4 Key Emerging Priorities**

### **Introduction**

4.1 Our research has identified a range of priorities for action. The emerging priorities are listed below, under three key headings.

### **Prevention of Domestic Abuse**

- Increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and its impact.
- Focus on changing attitudes, preventing domestic abuse, and promoting healthy relationships in children and young people.
- Consideration of targeted approaches to particular groups e.g., LGBTQ+, the elderly, BAME communities and people with disabilities.
- Research potential preventative interventions around domestic abuse for a better understanding of what works.
- Review the existing local domestic abuse core data set and wider data sets to identify gaps and solutions.
- Raise the skills and confidence of our workforce across the borough to implement best practice.
- Increase the use of ‘professional curiosity’ in all practitioners to encourage earlier identification or disclosure of domestic abuse.
- Take an informed approach to commissioning domestic abuse services.

### **Protect Victims through High Quality Services**

- Streamlined, easy access to and through support services providing clear support information, pathways and processes that will link together.
- Additional and bespoke support for complex needs – a more streamlined and collaborative approach.
- Adopt a whole system approach to domestic abuse, recognising the need for increased partnership working to ensure victims can access multi-faceted support, regardless of their primary need or point of entry into services.
- Provide support to meet different levels of need over varying time frames. For those with complex needs, a variety of support services will be available via the new integrated service model.
- Consider how victims can have one professional acting as a single point of contact, or ‘passport’ explaining their situation for the purpose of advocacy and communicating clearly to agencies without bias.

- Ensure support is provided to victims of ‘Honour’-Based Abuse (HBA) (including Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)).
- Ensure support is provided to male victims of domestic abuse.
- Ensure individuals, families, and children affected by domestic abuse are aware of and can access relevant support services tailored to their individual level of need.
- Provide appropriate housing-related support, including the provision of accessible safe accommodation, for domestic abuse victims.
- Offer an effective target hardening programme which increases the safety of victims of domestic abuse in their own home.
- Ensure ongoing consultation with victims of domestic abuse and their families.
- Support victims of domestic abuse to participate safely in relevant criminal proceedings.
- Support prosecutions where the victim is not able to support it.
- Ensure arrangements around MARAC and high risk IDVA provision are effective and sufficient to meet the volume of demand locally.
- Strengthen the links to the mental health and substance misuse agendas to ensure individuals affected by domestic abuse receive support for all their needs.
- Provide earlier help to prevent escalating levels of domestic abuse.

### **Engaging with Perpetrators**

- Ensure where work is undertaken with a perpetrator that support is provided to the victim and family, applying the Think Family approach from the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) guidance.
- Explore opportunities to provide a non-convicted perpetrator programme that delivers long-term positive outcomes.
- Engage early with perpetrators of adolescent to parent violence and abuse.
- Pursue victimless prosecutions where the victim is not able to support it.
- Actively engage with Crown Prosecution Service Regional Community Scrutiny Panels and Police Scrutiny Panels.
- Ensure perpetrators continue to be engaged in the Multi-agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) process to disrupt their offending activities.
- Provide support to couples who want to stay together.
- Consider alternative housing options for perpetrators, enabling victims the opportunity to stay in the family home, where appropriate.

## **Governance and Accountability**

- 4.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to appoint a domestic abuse local partnership board consisting of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims, including their children. The Act stipulates that there must be specific representation by a number of agencies.
- 4.3 The membership of the existing partnership has been reviewed and will be responsible for supporting Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council in meeting its duties under the Act.
- 4.4 The new Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will work together to develop and deliver the strategy action plan and will monitor and evaluate its progress. The resourcing of priorities is a key issue and will need to be considered by individual partners and by the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.
- 4.5 The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will report to the Redcar & Cleveland Community Safety Partnership on a quarterly basis.