

NORTHUMBERLAND'S DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY **2021-2024**



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FOREWORD

I am very pleased and privileged to be chair of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which has been set up to develop and implement the Northumberland Domestic Abuse strategy in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This will build on and take forward the significant work that is already taking place to respond effectively to domestic abuse.

The importance of engaging with, listening to and learning from people who have experienced and suffered from domestic abuse is central to our work and the prevalence and impact of this means that we must encourage everyone to play their part and work together to achieve our vision.

Chair
Graham Reiter



Our Vision

Northumberland is a county committed to having a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Everyone matters and for that reason our vision is to make it everyone's business to help prevent and put a stop to domestic abuse and sexual violence in the county.

We will listen and learn from victims, survivors and their children.

We will be proactive, provide support and raise awareness in our communities.

We will seek to change culture.

Our vision is a vision for all and by working together we can make a difference.



Lead Councillor
Wendy Pattison

If we want to make change in Northumberland and end domestic abuse and sexual violence, we must not only lead the way, but we must also outline how our organisations and communities can play a vital role in helping us achieve our goals.

Ending domestic abuse and sexual violence is everyone's business. By working together with partners and those who live and work within Northumberland's communities we can make a difference.

We need people in our organisations and communities to stand behind us and call out abusive and sexist behaviour among friends, colleagues, and communities to promote a culture of equality and respect.

Our vision has focus and I believe by working together we can end domestic abuse and sexual violence in our county.

INTRODUCTION

The Northumberland Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024 outlines how Northumberland County Council will implement the recommendations of the refreshed Domestic Abuse needs assessment and the statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation and support as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Strategy will be supported by a work plan with four key priorities:

1. Early intervention and prevention
2. Provision of support
3. Partnership working
4. Criminal justice outcomes and risk reduction

The Domestic Abuse Strategy has been developed by the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB, referred to as the Board). The membership of the Board is as follows:

- Northumberland County Council Children's Social Care Service Director (Chair)
- Northumberland County Council Public Health Team
- Northumberland County Council Children's Social Care
- Northumberland County Council Adult Social Care
- Northumberland County Council Housing
- Northumberland County Council Commissioning Team
- Northumberland County Council Education Service
- Northumbria Police
- National Probation Service
- Northumbria Healthcare Trust
- Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group
- Domestic Abuse Support Service Northumberland (Provider and rep for adult survivors)
- Acorns (Provider and rep for children and young people)
- Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Coordinator
- The Office of the PCC is being represented on the Board by the Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit's Domestic Abuse Specialist



HM Prison &
Probation Service



KIM MCGUINNESS
NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER

violence
reduction
unit



Northumberland
Clinical Commissioning Group

Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE

The Board is responsible for supporting Northumberland County Council in meeting its duties under the Domestic Abuse Act.

The Board will work together to support, advise, and work in partnership with Northumberland County Council:

- to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services.
- to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support within safe accommodation services.

The Board from April 2021 to October 2021 has:

- Undertaken a refresh of the Northumberland Domestic Abuse needs assessment.
- Developed a draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment for consultation with partners.

The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy will be led by the Board supported by the following sub-groups:

- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Providers group – supported by service user forum sub-groups
- Data performance and quality assurance group
- Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) post accreditation steering group
- Housing Sub-group – Registered Social Landlord's and Northumberland County Council Housing
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) steering group
- Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA) steering group

The Board will receive quarterly performance data and analysis reports to ensure it can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. The Domestic Abuse needs assessment will be refreshed on an annual basis.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

A new Domestic Abuse Act was passed into law in April 2021. The Act aims to:

- “Raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families.
- Further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice.
- Strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies.”

“Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime perpetrated on victims and their families by those who should love and care for them. This landmark Bill will help transform the response to domestic abuse, helping to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need.”

Victoria Atkins MP, Minister for Safeguarding.

Additionally, the new legislation:

- Creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse.
- Establishes in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and sets out the Commissioner’s functions and powers.
- Provides for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order.
- Creates a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts.
- Places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing.
- Provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance.
- Creates a new statutory guidance.
- Recognises children as victims in their own right.

Statutory Definition of Domestic Abuse under Section 1 of Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:
(a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- This includes physical, emotional, economic, sexual abuse and controlling and coercive behaviour.
- ‘Personally connected’ means: intimate partners, ex-partners, family members or individuals who share parental responsibility for a child

NORTHUMBERLAND SPECIALIST DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES 2021/22

Since March 2018, domestic abuse service provision in Northumberland comprises of an integrated service providing refuge-based accommodation, outreach support, assertive outreach, an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service. A therapeutic support service for children and young people has also been developed to ensure support is available for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

The integrated service is a single point of contact for all self and agency referrals for male and female victims over the age of 16 and aims to provide services to address all levels of risk, and severity of domestic abuse.

Importantly, the integrated service now also ensures Northumberland County Council is meeting the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which places a range of duties on Local Authorities, including to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation services in their areas.

In addition, from August 2021 until March 2022, Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS) have been commissioned to pilot a rural domestic abuse support service to ensure rural proofing of the commissioning process.

OVERVIEW

Domestic Abuse Support Service Northumberland (DASSN)

The domestic abuse support service in Northumberland is currently delivered by Places for People. It includes refuge-based accommodation (9 units), outreach and assertive outreach support, and an IDVA to support those victims who are assessed as high risk. The service is a single point of contact for all self and agency referrals, male and female victims over the age of 16, and provides services to address all levels of risk, and severity of domestic abuse.

Children's Therapeutic Service

The specialist therapeutic support service for children and young people (aged 4-18) who have experienced domestic abuse is currently delivered by Acorns. This includes counselling and play therapy.

Domestic Abuse in Rural Northumberland Pilot

The domestic abuse support for males and female victims over the age of 16 who reside in the North and West of the county is currently delivered by NDAS. Offering both face to face and virtual sessions, one to one sessions and support groups. Additionally, the service is working with other agencies to raise awareness in the communities of domestic abuse and sign-post service users to where additional support is available.

Northumbria Sanctum Project

The six Local Authorities in the Northumbria Police Force area were successful in securing Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (now known as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)) funding for a domestic abuse accommodation and complex needs project. This project has been extended for 2021 to 2022 and in the North of Tyne Local Authorities this will continue until 2026 as part of the Northumbria Changing Futures project.

The accommodation element of this project is delivered by the specialist provider Changing Lives and known as 'Sanctum'. Sanctum was developed to complement existing domestic abuse provision, support safeguarding, community safety and reducing offending agendas, and provide critical support to a cohort of people for which refuge is not suitable and often have multiple and enduring needs that more traditional refuge provision was unable to meet.

The aim is to provide a different offer to people in need, reduce repeat victimisation, alleviate reasons as to why people stay in abusive relationships, foster engagement with health and wellbeing services and support people to obtain permanent, safe, sustainable accommodation following a period of intensive support.

Currently there are five properties in Northumberland and thirty one in total across the six Local Authority areas. Referrals are accepted across the six areas.

Over the next two years, Sanctum will be part of the Changing Futures project which seeks to test new ways of bringing together the public sector and community sector to address cross cutting issues and drive the modernisation of public services for people experiencing multiple disadvantages. Changing Futures aims to improve outcomes for the most excluded adults locally who are experiencing multiple disadvantage and placing a high demand on local response services, but for whom current systems of support are not working. Forms of multiple disadvantages and complex needs include homelessness; substance misuse; mental health issues; domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system.



NORTHUMBERLAND DOMESTIC ABUSE NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2021

During 2021 Northumberland County Council has undertaken a refresh of the Domestic Abuse needs assessment, the full document can be accessed via our webpage.

The recommendations and actions are set out below.

Recommendations	Actions	Lead	Target dates
1.Improve the accuracy and consistency of domestic abuse data across statutory, community and voluntary sector organisations.	• Recruit Domestic Abuse data officer (0.5 post).	Business Intelligence Team	Dec 21
	• Establish a data performance and quality assurance multi agency sub-group.	DA & SV Coordinator	July 21
	• Develop a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Dashboard.	Business Intelligence Team	March 22
	• Develop and agree multi agency information sharing protocols.	Business Intelligence Team	July 22
	• Develop and agree arrangements for regional refuge data sharing.	DA & SV Coordinator and Business Intelligence Team	March 23
	• Explore arrangements for national refuge data sharing processes.	DA & SV Coordinator and Business Intelligence Team	March 23
2. Improve multi-agency early intervention and prevention responses.	• Ensure there are Domestic Abuse Champions in all services and also workplace Domestic Abuse policies for staff.	DA & SV Coordinator & Organisational	March 24
	• Ensure all schools in Northumberland are delivering high quality RSE in line with national requirements.	Development Education & Skills	Sept 21 - March 24

Recommendations	Actions	Lead	Target dates
3. Increasing reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange regular domestic abuse campaigns to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the support available. 	DA & SV Coordinator & multi-agency partners	Nov 21 – March 24
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot the Ask Me scheme to increase community awareness of domestic abuse and the local support services. 	NP VRU	March 22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a domestic abuse in Rural Northumberland project from 1st April 2022. 	DA & SV Coordinator & Commissioning team	March 22 - March 24
4. Further develop and invest in services particularly those for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a Counselling, Therapeutic and outreach support service from 1st April 2022. 	DA & SV Coordinator & Commissioning team	March 22 - March 24
5. Commission services which incorporate the victim/survivor experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Service User Forums and service user representation at the DALPB. 	DA & SV Coordinator & Commissioned Services	Dec 22
6. Broadening response to Perpetrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a Changing Behaviour Service from 1st April 2022. 	DA & SV Coordinator & Commissioning team	March 22 - March 24
7. Continue to develop the Domestic Abuse Health Advocate role in the Acute Trust and explore options to extend the offer into primary care and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the impact of the DA Health advocate post and share the learning with the CCG and wider partners 	Northumbria Healthcare Trust	Sept 22

Recommendations	Actions	Lead	Target dates
8. Continue to enhance frontline professionals understanding of domestic abuse, appropriate responses and referral pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit a specialist Domestic Abuse Trainer (0.5 post). 	Organisational Development	Nov 21
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the multi-agency domestic abuse training Strategy. 	Organisational Development	Dec 21- March 24
9. Investment in services, multi-agency responses and research into the links between domestic abuse and broader health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed assertive outreach in the requirements of the commissioned domestic abuse Support Service from April 22. 	DA & SV Coordinator & Commissioning team	April 22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed learning from the Northumbria Changing Futures Project into future commissioning arrangements. 	DA & SV Coordinator & Commissioning team	March 24

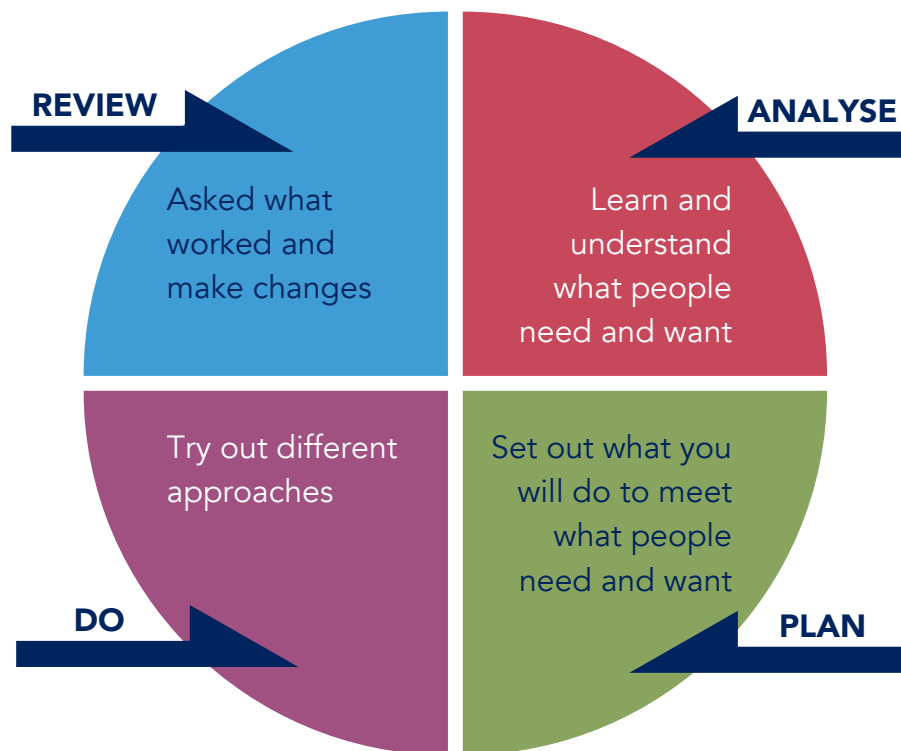
COMMISSIONING DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES 2022-24

What is Commissioning?

Commissioning is the process of specifying, securing and monitoring services to meet people's needs at a strategic level. This applies to all services, whether they are provided by the local department or by the Local Authority, other public agencies or by the private or voluntary sectors.

It is widely accepted that commissioning activity should follow the commissioning cycle if it is to be effective.

Figure 1 below depicts the steps within the commissioning cycle.



Commissioning must define what is needed and how these needs are best met before consideration can be given to what services are purchased.

The Benefits of Strategic Commissioning

Strategic commissioning will allow Northumberland County Council to:

- Understand the evolving needs of the community in relation to domestic abuse, as well as the key priorities that can be most effectively delivered against.
- Design and deliver appropriate trauma-informed, needs-led and strengths-based services to meet these needs, utilising the capabilities of in-house services, market providers and voluntary, community groups and other key stakeholders.
- Constantly review and validate whether the work done by those commissioned to deliver services is effective, thereby making best use of resources.
- Manage the process effectively, facilitating the work done by commissioned services to identify and maximise opportunities for collaboration, challenging the “status quo” and encouraging innovation in order to better meet priorities.

This approach will bridge the gap between strategic vision and business delivery. Northumberland County Council have undertaken the analyse phase, which is the Domestic Abuse needs assessment, along with the planning phase via consultation events.

Consultation events

To help inform the development of the service provision in Northumberland, two consultation events were held in July 2021, a stakeholder and provider engagement event. At the events, current identified need was described, which was informed by the needs assessment, along with Northumberland's proposed commissioning proposal to ensure Northumberland County Council met the duties of the new Domestic Abuse Act.

The feedback was positive particularly around the inclusion of the Behaviour Change Service, which is aimed at:

- reducing the harm caused to families by domestic abuse
- challenging the acceptance of abusive behaviour
- facilitating a process of change in the behaviour of individual perpetrators of domestic abuse
- preventing abusive behaviour in the future
- promoting respectful relationships

It was raised that the proposal did not include counselling for adults of domestic abuse. This feedback has been implemented, with Northumberland going to the market to seek a provider who will deliver a counselling service to both male and female service users of domestic abuse who require counselling to help overcome the various issues that they have faced during the time when they have experienced the abuse.



The refreshed domestic abuse needs assessment 2021 and consultation events allowed Northumberland County Council to move to the third phase of the commissioning cycle with Northumberland County Council going to the market with the following commissioning intentions for 2022 – 2024.

1. An integrated Domestic Abuse Support service - to provide an assessment hub, refuge, dispersed properties, resettlement, IDVA, sanctuary scheme, outreach, assertive outreach, groupwork and to establish a service user forum. This provision will be for both male and female victims of domestic abuse over the age of 16.
2. Children's Counselling and Therapeutic and Outreach Support - to support children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. The key elements of this provision will be to provide an initial response, counselling and outreach support and to establish a children and young people's service user forum.
3. Changing Behaviour Service - to work with both males and females (aged 18 and over) and operate as a single point of entry for referrals and subsequent delivery for residents who agree to engage and take responsibility and wish to change their abusive behaviour. The service will focus on increasing the safety of partners, children and family members to reduce the incidents of domestic abuse within these relationships.
4. Adult Counselling Service - to work with both males and females (aged 18 and over) to support those who have experienced domestic abuse, which will allow victims to explore how they feel and discuss experiences in a safe non-judgemental environment.
5. Domestic Abuse in Rural Northumberland - to work with males and females who reside in the North and West of the county to offer both face to face and virtual sessions, one to one sessions and support groups. Additionally, to work with other agencies to raise awareness in the communities of domestic abuse and sign-post service users to where additional support is available.

During the life of the contract, the final phase of the commissioning cycle 'review' will be continual undertaken, via contract monitoring and quality assurance with each of the above contracts. Service monitoring will be undertaken on a quarterly basis or more frequently, if required. These meetings will look at both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure the provider is working towards or achieving key performance indicators, with any actions being recorded.

Approximately, 6-12 months prior to contract expiry evaluation data is used to inform the analysis of future need and service development and will influence how services will be shaped going forward. This monitoring and evaluation data may also inform the decision to decommission services, if, need is not being met effectively.

Next Steps

We will develop an action plan by April 2022 to detail how we will deliver the strategy and review its progress, effectiveness and impact.

APPENDIX 1: DUTIES ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Under this new legislation there are new statutory duties placed on Local Authorities. These are:

- Creation of a new Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which must contain representation of the following as a minimum:
 - A representative of the relevant Local Authority.
 - At least one person appearing to the authority to represent the interests of Local Authorities for areas within its area.
 - At least one person appearing to the authority to represent the interests of victims of domestic abuse.
 - At least one person appearing to the authority to represent the interests of children of domestic abuse victims.
 - At least one person appearing to the authority to represent the interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in its area.
 - At least one person appearing to the authority to represent the interests of persons who provide, or have functions relating to, health care services in its area.
 - At least one person appearing to the authority to represent the interests of persons with functions relating to policing or criminal justice in its area.
- To provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. The new duty covers the following kinds of safe accommodation:
 - Refuge accommodation.
 - Specialist safe accommodation.
 - Dispersed accommodation.
 - Sanctuary schemes.
 - Move on or second stage accommodation.
- To assess the need for domestic abuse support in the area, this includes:
 - Advocacy support- development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers).
 - Domestic abuse-prevention advice- support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online) and to prevent re-victimisation.
 - Specialist support for victims with protected characteristics and/or complex needs for example interpreters, faith services, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, and immigration advice.
 - Children's support – including play therapy and child advocacy.
 - Housing-related support as discussed above.
 - Counselling and therapy for both adults and children.
- To work to ensure that all existing policies and new policies are written and carried in such a way as to be inclusive of the new statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling and economic abuse.

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY

C

Child to Parent Violence and Abuse – CPVA

D

Domestic Abuse Support Service Northumberland – DASSN

Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board – DALPB

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance – DAHA

I

Independent Domestic Violence Advisor – IDVA

M

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference – MARAC

N

Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service – NDA

Northumbria Police Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit – NP VRU

R

Registered Social Landlords – RSLs

S

Safeguarding Adults Board – SAB

Sexual Violence – SV
