

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 05 December 2023

Report Title

Domestic Abuse Strategy Progress Report

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Kayley Charlton, Community Safety Officer

kayley.charlton@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected.

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report provides an update on progress towards the Rotherham Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27. Information is also provided about the referral pathway, which delivers a single point of access to services for victims of domestic abuse, along with details of victim / survivor engagement with support services.

Recommendations

Improving Lives Select Commission note and make comments on the progress towards the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27

List of Appendices Included

Not applicable

Background Papers

Domestic Abuse strategy 2022 – 2027 [safer-rotherham-partnership-domestic-abuse-strategy-2022-27 \(saferrotherham.org.uk\)](https://safer-rotherham-partnership-domestic-abuse-strategy-2022-27.saferrotherham.org.uk)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Not applicable

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Domestic Abuse Strategy Progress Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Domestic Abuse strategy was developed in partnership with the multi-agency Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group, on behalf of the Safer Rotherham Partnership in 2022 and approved by Cabinet on Monday 24th January 2022. In the preparation of the strategy, the Council consulted with various stakeholders, professionals from a wide range of disciplines and statutory and voluntary sector partners, including domestic abuse service providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, South Yorkshire Police, NHS, as well as consulting with service users and members of the public. Using the information collected, the proposed priority areas of the strategy, potential gaps, and how these could be addressed were identified and agreed.
- 1.2 One aim of the strategy was the transformation of Rotherham's Domestic Abuse services, to ensure a more seamless pathway through the service for victims/survivors. From 1st October 2022 Rotherham Rise was awarded the contract to provide domestic abuse outreach services with a single point of access for domestic abuse victims at all risk levels.
- 1.3 Rotherham Rise provide a triage service ensuring every victim has the most appropriate support available. This includes one to one support, group work, counselling, and peer support. The service operates a helpline, website, and a webchat. Referrals can be sent via all partners/professionals or from a victim/survivor as a self-referral.
- 1.4 If a victim's needs are complex, the triage process could place them with the Council's in-house Domestic Abuse Assertive Outreach Service (DAAOS) This service provides support to individuals with additional and multiple complex needs which would otherwise provide a barrier to domestic abuse support. Additional complexities may include mental health, drug, and alcohol and/or children going through the care system, where a more intensive and person centred, face to face approach is required.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Progress towards the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27:

2.1.1 An action plan was created to ensure the aims of the strategy are achieved. Currently 44% of actions within the plan have been completed which runs from 2022 – 2027 therefore it is currently on target for completion by 2027. Some key progress has been made is as follows:

2.2 Drive change together:

2.2.1 The partnership Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group meets quarterly and promotes integrated working across all sectors. To ensure a more cohesive approach to tackling domestic abuse, targeted presentations have now been delivered to all GPs across Rotherham via their allocated training day, to spot the

signs and promote the reporting of domestic abuse as well as ensuring all partners are aware of the single point of access support for victims.

2.2.2 Next steps:

- Continue to promote awareness of Domestic Abuse via various methods.
- Continue to learn from Domestic Homicide Reviews and share practice with all partners.

2.3 **Prevention and early intervention:**

2.3.1 We have improved the way we work with schools and nurseries; 100% of schools are now signed up to Operation Encompass (a police, Council and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse) and 53 nurseries – Rotherham is the only area in South Yorkshire to have 100% of schools signed up and the only area to have nurseries on board with the safeguarding process. An enhanced toolkit for Rotherham schools is also being developed to ensure staff are able to spot the signs, are trauma aware and trained, and know the pathways to report domestic abuse as well as where to get support for both victims and children.

2.3.2 Domestic abuse operational meetings are also under review such as the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), to ensure they are working as efficiently and as effectively as possible to reduce repeat incidents.

2.3.3 Next steps:

- Continue to develop the schools domestic abuse toolkit.
- Work to enhance the therapeutic / counselling support offer (ROTHACS)
- Continue to review domestic abuse operational meetings.

2.4 **Minimising harm / early help support:**

2.4.1 Rotherham Council work alongside Doncaster Council to provide a consistent domestic abuse training model and Community Safety officers monitor the attendance of this training regularly, ensuring this is well attended and promoted to all Rotherham partners. As well as requesting feedback on any training gaps, so that further training provision can be provided when needed.

2.4.2 A specific domestic abuse awareness campaign has been delivered to address peak support demand in Rotherham, for example, within the previous 2 years Rotherham incidents have spiked during the summer months of July and August, therefore a targeted social media campaign was delivered to capture those who may be isolated within those months to ensure victims and survivors know where to get support and that there is help available, sharing both local and national support offers.

2.4.3 Next steps:

- Continue to identify any gaps in training and aim to fulfil these.
- Continue to monitor trends and promote support at the earliest point possible

2.5 Responding to changing need and demand:

2.5.1 One significant achievement since April 2022 is the 13 specialist local authority properties that are fully furnished and equipped with target hardening essentials. These properties have supported 107 victims and children to date (including those currently in residence) and will hopefully accommodate many more in the future.

2.5.2 An additional 10 refuge units and 11 safer options houses have also been commissioned totalling a further 73 families who have received support.

2.5.3 The Homeless Prevention Fund has been set up alongside weekly partnership safer homes monitoring meetings. This fund has provided support to 146 families who without the opportunity of additional short term financial help, would otherwise have remained homeless.

2.5.4 The fund has also provided essential target hardening appliances for 232 properties to ensure victims/survivors can remain safely in their own home.

2.5.6 Next steps:

- Continue to monitor the homelessness prevention fund and provide support.
- Continue to work with marginalised groups and develop innovative ways of responding to their needs.

2.6 Justice and ongoing protection: Cranstoun - Inspire to change:

2.6.1 A vital part of the strategy is gaining justice for victims and ensuring ongoing protection. Domestic abuse perpetrators in prison will usually complete a probation led programme called 'Building Better Relationships' which is a cognitive-behavioural programme for adult men convicted of an intimate partner violence.

2.6.2 The Cranstoun Inspire To Change programme was commissioned as a county-wide programme by Doncaster Council with joint funding from Rotherham, Sheffield, Doncaster and Barnsley Councils, and the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner. It delivers domestic abuse interventions with male and female perpetrators aged 16 and above, including those with complex needs, to encourage, empower and support perpetrators to change their behaviour. It is a voluntary programme which plugs the gap for those who have not been convicted, but recognise they cause harm. Inspire to change tackles and challenges perpetrator behaviour and gives participants:

- An understanding of how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse.
- A better understanding of why they use violence or aggression in their relationships.
- An awareness of how attitudes and beliefs can affect behaviour.
- The practical tools to develop and maintain change.

- An improved and better life for themselves, their children and others affected by their behaviour.

2.6.3 The main program is 6 months long.

Number of Referrals onto the Inspire to Change and Course Completions (Rotherham)				
	Referrals	Referrals engaging	Started Course	Completed Course
Q3 2021-22	87	21	21	0
Q4 2021-22	130	11	11	1
Q1 2022-23	123	4	4	4
Q2 2022-23	97	3	3	11
Q3 2022-23	44	6	7	6
Q4 2022-23	33	15	8	5
Q1 2023-24	28	11	11	9
Q2 2023-24	31	13	13	7
Total	573	84	78	43

2.6.4 Overview & Steps taken:

In Rotherham, from the commencement of the program in September 2021 there has been 573 referrals, 78 individuals have started the program with 43 completing it to date, therefore a 55% completion rate.

2.6.5 The significant rise in referrals and therefore drop-in engagement rate seen in Quarter 4 21-22 to Quarter 2 2022-23 was due to Cranstoun accepting referrals that were incomplete or inappropriate referrals, some without the perpetrators consent, as well as issues around staff shortages due to the much higher referral rate than they were initially commissioned for.

2.6.6 These issues have been addressed and Cranstoun have taken steps to ensure that they are only accepting appropriate referrals into the programme. Alongside this, the Police Crime Commissioner has provided additional resources to address staffing issues and to clear any waiting lists or backlogs.

2.6.7 Cranstoun staff have delivered several training programmes with partners to both promote their service but also to educate them on what a good referral looks like. An additional training session for Rotherham is arranged during safeguarding awareness week (November 2023).

2.6.8 Cranstoun has reported that 91% of victims / survivors report the abusive behaviours have stopped or reduced because of Rotherham perpetrators attending the programme.

2.6.9 Next Steps

- Continue to attend contract monitoring meetings with Cranstoun and South Yorkshire partners to address any identified performance issues.

2.7 Victim / survivor engagement with domestic abuse support services:

2.7.1 Within the first 2 quarters of the commencement of the single point of access domestic abuse service, the victim engagement rate was 44%.

2.7.2 This is because there were two methodologies for calculating the engagement rate. Previously Rotherham Rise and the Domestic Abuse Assertive Outreach Service (DAAOS) had used differing methods to calculate engagement rates.

2.7.3 Steps taken:

A consistent definition was introduced across the two services to provide a more accurate reflection of engagement.

2.7.4 Rotherham Rise data previously included inappropriate referrals such as people who had not given consent to be contacted or did not have a contactable phone number as non-engagement. This was not giving a true reflection of clients engaged by Rotherham Rise who were appropriate to their service. The definition of engagement and the rate is now measured consistently from those where initial contact has been successful.

2.7.5 Where victims inform Rotherham Rise that they do not want support, many still receive immediate triage support such as safety planning, target hardening or signposting before declining further support.

2.7.6 Close monitoring across a range of performance indicators, including referrals and engagement rates, is taking place through contract monitoring meetings with Rotherham Rise. The outcomes of monitoring are being used to help understand the impact of the new contract and service arrangements.

2.7.7 Next steps:

- Continue to collect and report engagement rates to the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group and the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board in order to identify and address any necessary improvement action.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal.

3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress towards the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27 and invites comments on progress from Commission members, therefore no other options are presented.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision.

5.1 Not applicable

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.
- 6.2 The following services commissioned by RMBC and highlighted within the body of the report, were formally awarded a contract following the successful completion of individual procurements, undertaken in accordance with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations (as amended).
- Domestic Abuse Refuge .
 - Domestic Abuse Community Outreach Support Service.
 - Target Hardening for Domestic Abuse victims in private rented or own property

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 Under section 58 (part 4) of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Local Authority is required to provide support for victims of domestic abuse. They must.
- (a) assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area
 - (b) prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area, and
 - (c) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Protecting vulnerable children and protecting vulnerable adults are adopted as continuing priorities by the Safer Rotherham Partnership from 2022-2025. The Domestic Abuse strategy and Domestic Abuse Action Plan reflect continuous work in both these areas.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct equalities and human rights implications associated with this report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change implications associated with this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are no direct implications for partners associated with this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The production of this report for scrutiny ensures that the minimum legal requirements are met.

Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Ellis, Head of Service, Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Name	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Rob Mahon	24/11/23
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	24/11/23
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Claire Cox	24/11/23
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		24/11/23
Head of Procurement	Lorna Byne for Karen Middlebrook	24/11/23
Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment	Sam Barstow for Paul Woodcock	24/11/23
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Alam	24/11/23

Report Author: Kayley Charlton, Community Safety

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