

# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

## **DONCASTER METROPLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Due Regard Statement Template**

How to show due regard to the equality duty in how we develop our work and in our decision making.

## **Due Regard Statement**

A **Due Regard Statement** (DRS) is the tool for capturing the evidence to demonstrate that due regard has been shown when the council plans and delivers its functions. A Due Regard Statement must be completed for all programmes, projects and changes to service delivery.

- A DRS should be initiated at the beginning of the programme, project or change to inform project planning
- The DRS runs adjacent to the programme, project or change and is reviewed and completed at the relevant points
- Any reports produced needs to reference “Due Regard” in the main body of the report and the DRS should be attached as an appendix
- The DRS cannot be fully completed until the programme, project or change is delivered.

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Name of the ‘policy’ and briefly describe the activity being considered including aims and expected outcomes. This will help to determine how relevant the ‘policy’ is to equality.</b></p>	<p>The development, publication and implementation of a new Domestic Abuse Strategy for Doncaster, covering the period 2016-2020.</p> <p>This is a Partnership strategy led by the Community Safety Service, and equality is central to it. Domestic Abuse is a specific objective in the Council’s Equality and Inclusion Plan. Research tells us that domestic abuse arises out of social driven gender inequality, with women being victimised disproportionately to men. In addition people who experience domestic abuse are by definition already vulnerable, but this is exacerbated when combined with other characteristics such as Age, either being young or elderly, Disability, Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, Maternity and Pregnancy, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership.</p> <p>In many cases these characteristics actually trigger or facilitate abuse, in others they may result in an escalation of behaviour, leading to increased risk of serious harm, and the victims finding it harder to access support for themselves and their children. For these reasons Equalities is a central theme of our Domestic Abuse Strategy. We want to ensure that everyone who needs support with domestic abuse issues is able to access the services we provide and those services are able to fully meet their needs.</p> <p>In order to ensure that domestic abuse is seen as an issue that we will not accept or tolerate, we have also ensured our Domestic Abuse Strategy is clear that, in addition to holding perpetrators to account, we will support perpetrators to address their abusive behaviour and lead abuse free relationships in the future.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Service area responsible for completing this statement.</b></p>	<p>Community Safety</p>

<p><b>3 Summary of the information considered across the protected groups.</b></p> <p><b>Service users/residents</b></p> <p><b>Doncaster Workforce</b></p>	<p>Information on Ethnicity, Disability, Gender and Sexual orientation, is routinely collected from service users. In respect of High Risk Cases which are subject to Multi Agency Risk Assessment conference, this data is submitted to Safelives and benchmarked against the national average and most similar areas. From this we know that our highest risk service users do not accurately reflect the demographics of Doncaster.</p> <p><b>BME</b> National 15% , South Yorks 11.7% Doncaster 9%</p> <p><b>LGBT</b> National 1.0% South Yorks 0.9% Doncaster 0.6% (Recommended 5% )</p> <p><b>Disability</b> – National 3.8 South Yorks 0.5% Doncaster 0% (Recommended 17%)</p> <p><b>Male victims</b> – National 4.7% south Yorks 4.5% Doncaster 3.8% (Recommended 4-10%)</p> <p>There is work to do to ensure that all of these group have access to services. This is why we have included a specific Equality Plan as part of the Strategy. These figures suggest that information about disability is not being routinely collected and this will be addressed as part of our performance management framework.</p> <p>The workforce providing domestic abuse service is predominantly female, reflecting the fact that a large majority of service users are female. However we also have male workers, and, where appropriate, our recruitment is open to anyone meeting the criteria. All staff receive training on domestic abuse which includes the additional barriers caused by the equalities issues, and appropriate responses, including specialist responses in line with statutory guidance. Our training also ensures that, in line with new legislation, we are increasing the workforce’s awareness of coercive control and shifting the focus on domestic violence to domestic abuse that includes non-physical violence and control. Through Growing Futures we have also developed hour length multi agency “taster” seminars that enable the wok force to increase knowledge on various aspects of domestic abuse, reflect on practice and identify additional learning they need to undertake in relation to domestic abuse. We have refreshed the joint workforce competency framework to ensure that responsibilities are clear, and to inform future redesign of our training. Through Growing Futures, and in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire, we have developed a masters level module, Developing Practice with Children and Families Living with Domestic Abuse. This well attended module has enabled us to develop multi agency domestic abuse champions who share consistency in knowledge base and</p>
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		<p>approach. We have also developed the role of the Domestic Abuse Navigator who undertake direct therapeutic practice with children and young people living with high risk domestic abuse, and mentor practitioners supporting families living with non-high risk domestic abuse. Doncaster Children’s Services Trust have committed to retaining this role.</p>
<p><b>q</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of the consultation/engagement activities</b></p>	<p>In September 2015 we held a multi-agency stakeholder day which involved representatives from a wide range of statutory and voluntary services. This identified the key priorities and outcomes for the strategy. Once we have completed the draft, we intend to consult on it widely, and a separate consultation plan is being developed. This will include a residents’ survey, consultation with service users, and other stakeholders .</p> <p>Local consultation and engagement highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While some adults recognise domestic abuse is a problem and unacceptable they see this as a private matter and an accepted part of life. This also extends to acceptance of aggressive behaviour in the community which, in part, is fuelled by misuse of alcohol and drugs.</li> <li>• In contrast although children and young people recognise domestic abuse is an aspect of many of their lives or their friends lives, they want to change this but are not sure how to and would be unlikely to access support or advice from a professional or family member.</li> <li>• Staff members delivering local services express the need to assess risk sooner and respond more effectively through collective effort with the whole family. They state there should be greater understanding of what works with individual family members including direct work with children. Many staff express a lack of confidence in working with perpetrators as well as not seeing this as their job.</li> <li>• Families in Doncaster continue to experience significantly higher levels of DA compared with neighbouring local authorities and against national figures and benchmarks. DA presents at relatively high levels of concern through Children’s Social Care, or referral to MARAC as high risk mainly through Police responses.</li> </ul>

<p><b>5 Real Consideration:</b></p> <p><b>Summary of what the evidence shows and how has it been used</b></p>	<p>Domestic Abuse does have an impact on groups with protected characteristics, Women, Children/Young People, pregnant Women in particular. The Strategy has recognised the gaps that do exist in access to services and a real focus of Growing Futures has been identifying and dealing with the gaps in provision that exist for Children and Young People affected through living with abuse. The whole family approach, highlighted within the strategy, brings together different sectors and professions- including services for children, adults and communities – to provide a coordinated, collective, effective response.</p> <p>The closure of Doncaster Women’s Aid in 2016 left a gap in terms of services to the BME and LGBT Communities and we are aware that BME communities often prefer to access support from services that promote the addressing of their particular needs. Working with a new organisation South Yorkshire Women’s Aid (Doncaster) grant funding has been identified to recruit a specialist worker to provide support to local BME and LGBT Communities.</p> <p>Domestic Abuse has been seen for many years as something which only happens to women. However, increasingly men are reporting incidents of domestic abuse, some of which are high risk. Last year 64 male victims were heard at the MARAC.</p> <p>So despite the fact that gender inequality and attitudes to women is often the root of domestic abuse, because most services provide gender based support to women and girls impacted by domestic abuse, the group which is likely to be disadvantaged in accessing services is actually men and boys. They may find it difficult to disclose due to feeling they will not be believed, and because they, and others, don’t recognise the treatment they are receiving as domestic abuse.</p> <p>In providing a voluntary perpetrator service which predominantly has men as its service users, we are mindful of the needs of LGBT men who are abusive. One man commented that ‘the group is not for me, it’s far too ‘male’ and not an environment I feel comfortable in’.</p>
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	<p>A group work programme for children and parents is provided called 'You and me mum' and we have recognised that this again could exclude fathers. So work is being done to adapt the content so as to be meaningful to non-abusive fathers</p> <p>Where service users have a disability or mental health issue this is often exploited by the perpetrator, who is often the person's carer, and their vulnerability to serious harm is increased.</p> <p><b>How the evidence has been used?</b></p> <p>Headway has been made to identify domestic abuse earlier through the stronger families agenda, with the expanded criteria which includes DA as a concern factor for support.</p> <p>We are also seeing signs of early identification through early help assessments logged through the Early Help Hub for families with children. Further work is taking place to ensure this becomes routine practice through all services for all people.</p> <p>The Growing Futures brand is developing new therapeutic practice and innovative ways of thinking and working with families, with the aim of addressing the long term harm caused by DA and thus preventing our younger generation re-presenting as perpetrators and victims in their own intimate relationships as they become older.</p> <p>Doncaster has committed to working differently with perpetrators of abuse and this is being further developed through our focus on the whole family. By identifying abusive behaviour earlier we can support people to change before serious harm is done. We are also mindful of female perpetrators who access our voluntary perpetrator service and have worked with the provider to deliver one to one support to females or LGBT males where appropriate to do so. We are also exploring the provision of parenting programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse and this includes female perpetrators.</p> <p>Experience, research and consultations in the last two years show that many abusers have experienced trauma and abuse in their own lives. We are therefore committed to supporting people who are behaving abusively to understand their life experience,</p>
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	<p>appreciate what abusive behaviour is and how it affects their partner and any children whilst providing support to address wider or contributory issues such as poor mental health, substance misuse, alcohol abuse, etc.. Through the work of Growing Futures, we can now provide a range of programmes that support behavioural and attitudinal change .</p> <p>We are committed to equality and diversity and recognise that DA has specific gender and cultural issues, as well as additional vulnerabilities for people with disabilities, or who are older or younger than the average victim profile. The stated outcomes of the strategy are to provide a range of services to support the holistic needs and recovery of victims which are appropriate to their age, gender and ability or other circumstances (e.g. physical, legal, cultural, social, or emotional wellbeing). Through Growing Futures, we have provided training to our workforce to ensure they can respond appropriately to domestic abuse, in line with legislation, statutory guidance and contemporary best practice.</p> <p>Our preventative approach will also ensure earlier identification of vulnerable families or suffering from DA, assessing the level of risk within the family, and the impact this has on each member of the family, acting swiftly to safeguard and protect all victims and children.</p> <p>Work within Communities and families will provide education to children and young people so they know abusive forms of behaviour are not acceptable and through work in schools promoted through the new DA website and education toolkit we will ensure they are equipped to make healthier relationship choices in the future. We are also extending our telephone helpline service to ensure children and young people can also receive age appropriate advice either as a family member impacted by domestic abuse or as a victim in their own intimate relationships.</p> <p>We aim to increase the visibility and communication of DA and gender inequality with the public to challenge the social and cultural norms and attitudes that perpetuate acceptance and inequality. This will be done through working with employers and stakeholders (including local Councillors) to identify and challenge the acceptance of abuse and violence in families, developing policies and procedures to support organisations to act responsibly for the well-being of their staff.</p>
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<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Making</b></p>	<p>It is important that the Mayor and Cabinet understand the obligation demonstrating due regard from the review of this strategy and any changes to priorities are presented with a clear rationale and evidence base.</p> <p>The Mayor and portfolio holder have been made aware of due regard considerations through regular briefing updates reporting upon progress of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.</p> <p>As the Strategy has progressed through the Councils Governance structures the Mayor and Cabinet have been able to comment upon the content and provide feedback as to due regard considerations.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Monitoring and Review</b></p>	<p>The strategy is owned by Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership which will receive regular reports from the Domestic Abuse Theme group and the Domestic Abuse Chief Officer Group.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy will be monitored through various mechanisms which include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSDP Board meetings, reports and presentations to Health and Well Being Board, Adult and Children’s Safeguarding Boards. Discussions are also taking place as to</li> </ul>

		<p>the Strategy being adopted as part of the DN21 project, under the 'Caring Doncaster' element.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The consideration of equality standards and impact will be a required theme of action plans and new policies.</li><li>• Action plans developed from the strategy will be monitored through the Partnership theme board structures.</li><li>• An annual review of the Strategy will take place and will be informed by on-going consultations with communities, established partnership forums and engagement with Elected Members.</li></ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>Sign off and approval for publication</b>	<p>The community and Partnership consultation has examined a full range of evidence across all protected groups and has used the information as a basis to show due regard to the aims of the general duty.</p> <p>This has enlightened the development of the strategy, based upon the changing nature, needs and concerns of our communities and Partners.</p>