

## **Due Regard Statement for the Development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy**

A **Due Regard Statement** (DRS) is the tool used to demonstrate that due regard for equality, diversity and inclusion has been shown when Doncaster Partners plan and deliver their functions.

The DRS was initiated at the beginning of the strategy development process and reviewed throughout.

<b>1. 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>
<b>Domestic Abuse (DA) Strategy</b>  An updated DA strategy is required for Doncaster (statutory requirement). This must be consistent and complimentary to national DA policy framework, and exist as a partnership strategy rather than specific to any given partner organisation. The nature of, and response to DA is such that no single organisation can tackle it alone. It is essential that all victims (including children) of DA are identified and that they, along with agencies that can help with the response to and prevention of DA are involved in both the development and delivery of the strategy. The DA strategy is a 3-year strategy that sets out the higher-level aims and priorities, as well as the short and medium-term specific activity to achieve them.
<b>2. Service area responsible for completing this statement.</b>
Domestic abuse strategic lead as part of the Community Safety Team (Doncaster Council) and Policy, Insight and Change team (Doncaster Council), as part of the DA Strategy development group - on behalf of the Safer, Stronger Doncaster Partnership (SSDP).
<b>3. Summary of the information considered across the protected groups. Service users/ residents. Doncaster Workforce</b>
Data and information collated has been borough-wide, covering all geographic areas and all demographic groups – as per the nature of domestic abuse.  Evidence that suggests a specific response is required in a specific group or cohort will prompt this at a more operational level; the higher level strategy may not delve into such detail, but will reference its existence where appropriate.  Service users, or victims/survivors (including children) of domestic abuse have been at the forefront of the partnerships thinking on the direction and content of the strategy, and have been a key stakeholder in the development of the priorities and activities set out throughout the document.  Engagement with perpetrators of domestic abuse and the practitioners that respond to and prevent DA has also been a major part of the strategy development. Discussions with cross-(local authority) border organisations and neighbouring equivalent partnership groups has taken place to enable a consistent approach to DA across the wider South Yorkshire and beyond area.
<b>4. Summary of the consultation/engagement activities</b>
Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategy development group</li><li>• DA Chief officer group</li><li>• Domestic and sexual abuse theme group and task group</li><li>• Safer Stronger Doncaster partnership board</li><li>• Elected leadership</li><li>• Victims/survivors of DA, (including children)</li><li>• Practitioners of response and prevention services</li><li>• General public</li><li>• Consultation with Ashiana – specialist BAMER organisation in South Yorkshire for violence against women and girls</li><li>• Consultation with Age UK</li></ul> Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific Doncaster Talks surveys for Survivors, practitioners, general public, and young people</li><li>• Strategy development group consisting of key stakeholders from Health, Probation, Police, specialist domestic abuse services, housing, children’s services and Doncaster Council – Policy Insight and Change team</li></ul>

- Article in the Talking News for visually impaired residents of Doncaster
- Unhealthy/healthy relationship survey promoted in schools
- Direct approaches by Probation to perpetrators of domestic abuse for their feedback
- Elected member engagement
- Elected leadership briefings
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

## 5. Real Consideration:

### Summary of what the evidence shows and how has it been used

A full needs assessment has been conducted with evidence from South Yorkshire Police, Doncaster domestic abuse services and housing providers with the following key findings:

**VOLUME.** There is an upward trend nationally (England and Wales), regionally (Yorkshire and Humber), sub-regionally (South Yorkshire), and locally (Doncaster) in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes. The same applies to the percentage of all crimes that are DA-related.

**TYPE.** The most common types of domestic abuse crime reported to SY Police is Stalking & Harassment and Violence (both with and without injury). These account for around 77% of the total. Coercive/Emotional abuse is the most common reason for referral to the Doncaster DA Hub with 57%, 36% are for physical abuse.

**RATES.** Rates of domestic abuse per population are higher in Doncaster than in Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield, with all four showing a similar rate of increasing trend.

**AGE.** The age group most at risk of domestic abuse is those aged 26-29years. The number of reported cases decreases with increasing age quite uniformly from this age group. The same findings apply to the age of DA suspects. This gives rise to the most common victim/suspect age difference being in the 0-4years age range (almost half of all crimes).

**GENDER.** More than three quarters of victims of domestic abuse are female. Reported DA crimes have increased by over 10% for both males and females in 2021 vs 2020. The majority of suspects (79%) are male, with an increasing rate of offending increasing by 14% and 17% for males and females respectively.

**ETHNICITY.** There is a slow, but increasing trend in the proportion of victim that are BME; this figure currently stands are around 11%, up almost 0.5 points from the previous year. Doncaster's population is over 95% white and so these figures show a slight overrepresentation compared to the borough population.

**DISABILITY.** The proportion of cases in Doncaster involving people with a disability is decreasing; but is significantly higher than the national proportions. Doncaster's figures show a decrease from 21% to 11% in the year to March 2021, whereas national data shows an increase from 6.5% to 7.5% over the same period.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION.** The majority of DA victims reporting in Doncaster are heterosexual, with a very low proportion from the LGBT community. Doncaster's data shows this is increasing, but from a very low base of 0.2% to just below the national level at 1.3%.

**HOUSEHOLD TYPE.** DA victim households accessing Riverside and SLHD accommodation are an even mix of households with and without children. A significant proportion of referrals to the Hub (81%) have children, the majority of which being primary school age.

**HOUSING TENURE.** Although different accommodation providers saw different pictures regarding the most prevalent housing tenure, all of them report that the rented sectors are most common i.e. social housing tenants and private rented sector tenants.

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS.** The vast majority (9 out of 10) of those accessing accommodation are unemployed. Benefits normally cover the cost of accommodation, but in some cases, victims have to give up their employment to move to a refuge due to the risks.

**TEMPORAL.** There are no particular months of the year where DA crimes or incidents stand out above all others. Incidents/crimes are evenly spread across the week with only a slight bias towards the weekend (i.e. 12-14% each weekday, 16-17% on weekend days). DA incidents tend to increase steadily, but not significantly, from midday to around midnight.

SPATIAL. Data shows that the Central locality has the most referrals with around 30-33%; East, North and South each have around 20-24%. Balby and Thorne/Mexborough rank 1st and joint 2nd respectively when looking at individual settlements, but when considering the populations of each settlement and rate per 10,000, Stainforth ranks 1st (92) followed by Thorne (84), Balby (82) and Bentley (82).

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In May and June 2021 a consultation exercise took place with members of the public, practitioners, survivors of domestic abuse, young people and with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

There were 216 responses from the public, 123 from practitioners, 100 from victims and 4 from perpetrators. There were six responses from young people and so work is now happening with the Youth Council to develop this work and gain more feedback from young people about unhealthy relationships.

The findings of the consultation were:

- There is a lack of understanding of what constitutes domestic abuse amongst the public.
- Only half of all responders said they would know how to get help/what services are available for themselves or a friend/family member if they were in an abusive relationship.
- Near universal support, from practitioners and victims, for campaigns to increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse – particularly amongst younger people.
- Significant opinion amongst practitioners that services and activities in response to or to prevent DA require further funding. Near universal opinion, from practitioners and victims that there is a shortage of accommodation.
- Most people would contact the Police first if they were reporting domestic abuse.
- Majority of victims say single-sex services are important.
- Majority of victims said there was no support available for the children or whole family

## 6. Decision Making

Strategy development group	May – August 2021 Key stakeholders collectively agreeing the draft strategy.
Doncaster Council Directors	16 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Doncaster Executive Board	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Domestic abuse chief officer group	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Safer, Stronger Doncaster Partnership Board	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 and September 2021
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (which one?)	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
Team Doncaster	TBC
Doncaster Cabinet	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021

## 7. Monitoring and Review

Given the multi-partner nature of the Strategy, performance management will ultimately fall under the remit of Team Doncaster; with individual partners using their own performance management frameworks to monitor their own contributions.

There will also be a multi agency performance and quality assurance framework that will be populated by partner agencies and coordinated by the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Theme Group with strategic oversight and scrutiny by the Domestic abuse strategic group and the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership.

Doncaster Cabinet, and in particular, the Cabinet portfolio holder for community safety will provide leadership and challenge to Team Doncaster partners throughout the strategy period to ensure progress is being made at the required pace and scale.

## 8. Sign off and approval for publication

The Strategy will be signed off and approved by Doncaster Cabinet, as elected representatives of all residents in Doncaster. It will also be signed off by the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership and by Team Doncaster. The strategy will also be endorsed by the Doncaster safeguarding partnerships.

