

## **Cabinet – 16 March 2011**

### **Domestic Abuse Strategy 2011-14**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Zahid Ali, Communities and partnerships

**Service:** Public Safety

**Wards:** All

**Key Decision:** No

**Forward Plan:** No

#### **1. Summary of Report**

- 1.1 Domestic Abuse has been recognised as a priority for the Safer Walsall Partnership for several years. Nationally at least one in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime and one in five will experience sexual assault. The government's vision for tackling the problem was set out in a ministerial statement, "Call to End Violence against Women and Girls", in November 2010. The draft strategy provides a focus for the council and partner organisations to work together to reduce the incidence of abuse and to co-ordinate the support provided to victims.
- 1.2 This new strategy set outs a shift in direction towards commissioning of local domestic abuse services to meet identified needs, looking at the potential of a service re-design exercise during 2011/12. It identifies an important link to the first joint Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy which is being developed to describe how the adult social care and health communities of Walsall intend to achieve a strategic shift from statutory core services towards preventative services over the next three years.
- 1.3 The draft strategy, as considered by the Safer Walsall Partnership Board on 8 March and a wider group of consultees, is brought before Cabinet for approval, subject to any views arising during the consultation process.
- 1.4 This report describes a new Community Safety grant of £299,898 that has been made available for 2011/12 and seeks Cabinet approval to delegate decisions relating to funding allocations to the Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Safer Walsall Partnership Board.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) approves the Domestic Abuse Strategy;
- b) delegates responsibility to commit expenditure against the new Community Safety grant of £299,898 for 2011/12 to the Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Safer Walsall Partnership Board and;
- c) agrees to receive a report on a six-monthly basis to note funding allocations.

### **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Panel received a report about Domestic Abuse Services on 26 November 2009, having expressed an interest in scrutinising the work carried out by the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum (a registered charity), the nature of its funding and future funding opportunities. The specific services provided by Walsall Domestic Violence Forum have enabled the local area agreement stretch targets to be met and have attracted a 'reward grant' to be allocated by the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 3.2 The Joint Area Review conducted by OFSTED (2008) concluded that Walsall has *"good systems to identify children and young people affected by domestic abuse and good services to support families affected by domestic abuse"*. The annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Walsall MBC Children's Services conducted by OFSTED in December 2010, found that:  
*"There are strong multi-agency partnership arrangements in place, particularly with the police to ensure a prompt and effective response to children, young people and their families affected by, or at potential risk of domestic abuse. There is a high level of multi-agency commitment to resourcing the daily consideration of domestic abuse incidents strengthening the safeguarding arrangements for the affected children and young people."* (OFSTED 31/12/2010)

### **4.0 Domestic Abuse - A Time for Change 2011-14**

- 4.1 Domestic Abuse is defined as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Domestic Abuse is a concern to the Safer Walsall Partnership and is not restricted to just violent incidents.
- 4.2 Domestic abuse has been recognised as a priority in the last 3 years of the strategic assessment as a subset of Violent Crime, with a specific focus on Domestic Abuse and Town Centre Violence.
- 4.3 There has been national publicity around the topic of Domestic Abuse and there is speculation that the current economic downturn might be a contributory factor to reports, especially considering that more people are choosing to consume alcohol in the home.

The dramatic increase in unemployment also adds to the frustrations faced by families. However, Domestic Abuse is still a vastly under-reported offence and the expectation is that the level of reported incidents and offences will continue to increase.

- 4.4 A national survey conducted by the Home Office in February 2009 shows results that suggested that one in seven people believe that it was acceptable in some circumstances for a man to hit their partner. Whilst the overall majority of people questioned in this survey stated that it was never acceptable to hit or slap a woman the poll found that those aged 25-39 and over 65 in lower social class groups were more likely to hold such views.
- 4.5 Over this period there have remained concerns over the extent of partner funding available to continue with work of key service providers that has been recognised as good practice. In many senses Walsall has been celebrated as a leader in the multi-agency arrangements that have been developed to support victims of domestic abuse. This is despite grant funding uncertainty. WDVF (a local registered charity and service provider) have commented that reductions in their annual grant funding have impacted upon their ability to promote and deliver their full range of services, making it more difficult for victims to obtain support.
- 4.6 The draft strategy document attached at Appendix A, seeks to summarise current arrangements for supporting victims of domestic abuse, the contributions of partner agencies in terms of prevention, early intervention, protection, justice and offender management. It also proposes a shift towards working smarter using joint commissioning to bring forward service re-design. It has been developed by partners and the range of stakeholders who work together through Walsall's multi-agency Domestic Abuse Steering Group (DASG) which is chaired by the Head of Public Safety and represents the third borough wide strategy, aiming to build upon the work of previous strategies 'No More Excuses (2000)' and 'No More Excuses (2006 - 2009.)'
- 4.7 It is proposed that work will commence in April 2011/12, led by the preventative arm of the Joint Commissioning Unit, to develop an integrated pathway for domestic abuse prevention, intervention, support and offender management in conjunction with the statutory services, agencies and stakeholders currently involved in this work. It is anticipated that a service specification will have been prepared by September 2011.

Step 1 : To identify all of the contributions in financial terms and human resources, all of the key stakeholders and the funders, to be brought together into a service re-design workshop.

Step 2 : To develop the architecture of an integrated pathway

Step 3: To develop a service specification

Step 4: To develop a commissioning action plan

Step 5: Deliver services consistent with the integrated pathway

- 4.8 The Domestic Abuse Steering Group has developed this strategy at a time where new national priorities are beginning to emerge. There remains some uncertainty in future funding and yet our commitment and reliance on multi-agency contribution is vital to support council core service delivery, and to maximise contributions from partners and the third sector so we can focus on outcomes and meeting local needs; to avoid duplication and meet perceived gaps in local needs. We recognise that we must work together with families, and the wider community to achieve this. This strategy identifies key issues for us to focus on in order to tackle domestic abuse, to take forward a local response to the government's "Call to End Violence against Women and Girls"<sup>1</sup> and all addressing the other aspects of domestic abuse that occur across the Borough.
- 4.9 Despite changes in direct grant funding to the local authority, measures are being explored to put into place some transitional funding for a range of domestic abuse services during 2011/12, and work is ongoing to look to medium term funding of this important work.
- 4.10 The draft strategy has been considered by the Safer Walsall Partnership Board on 8 March and is brought before Cabinet for approval, having regard to any final comments that have come forward during a wider consultation exercise. A schedule of consultation comments received by the closing date of 3 March will be tabled for consideration by Cabinet, to enable a final document to be published.

## 5. Resource Considerations

### 5.1 Financial:

- 5.1.1 Although to date there hasn't been a single commissioning agency with a strategic overview for domestic abuse services, over the last 3 years the financial resources allocated through grant funding are set out in the table overleaf. In addition, there is daily mainstream involvement by the statutory agencies and local partners in terms of staff time to support the multi agency risk assessment conferences, the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and in the delivery of their main stream services multi-agency domestic abuse responses, and other support for victims committed across the local partnership, which has been less easy to quantify.

Project	Funding Source	0809 (£)	09/10 (£)	10/11 (£)	Description
<b>Walsall DV Forum Family Support Team</b>	ABG Children's Fund Children's Services	132,500	132,000	132,000	160 indirect support to children per year  40 direct support to victims
<b>Walsall DV Forum Social Worker secondment</b>	Mainstream Children's Services	34,000	36,000	36,000	

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/parliamentary-business/written-ministerial-statement/violence-against-women-wms/?view=Standard&pubID=845069>

<b>INDIRECT SUPPORT - Women at Risk of Domestic Violence</b>	Supporting People	373,852	407,748	323,643	<b>Accommodation based services</b> Service specification for Accommodation based service with 24 units Floating support worker with 24 placements
<b>Walsall Domestic Violence Forum</b>	Area Based Grant Safer and Stronger Communities Fund	152,000	75,000	90,000	Service level agreement

- 5.1.2 Pressures on the Area Based Grant funding stream have resulted in the contribution via the Safer Walsall Partnership Board being reduced from £152,000 in 2008/9 to £75,000 in 2009/10, and then increased to £90,000 in 2010/11. Uncertainty around Area Based grant funding for 2011/12 has initially led to no funding allocation for 2011/12 for WDVF via the Safer Walsall Partnership Board, and discussions have been progressing to explore alternative funding streams.
- 5.1.3 A grant of £20,000 to match a grant carry forward of the 2010/11 allocation has so far secured £40,000 IDVA funding for the WDVF during 2011/12. Similar pressures on the suspension of the Children's Fund have also initially led to no funding allocation for 2011/12 for WDVF for children's safeguarding work. But again, discussions are ongoing to explore alternative funding streams.
- 5.1.4 With the announcement from the Home Office on 9 February of a new Community Safety grant of £299,898 for 2011/12, there has been a discussion at the Safer Walsall Partnership Board meeting around funding allocation for tackling the community safety priorities for the Borough. A proposal has been considered to allocate some funding to support the work carried out by WDVF, and also to make funding available for future commissioning around meeting the gaps in domestic abuse service provision and the service re-design process identified within the strategy, linked to the joint commissioning process which is to commence in April 2011. At present, the Safer Walsall Partnership Board has no delegated authority to approve funding decisions, therefore Cabinet's approval is sought to delegate authority for funding allocations to the Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Safer Walsall Partnership Board, as detailed in recommendation 2.1 (b) of this report. Accordingly, it is proposed that Cabinet will receive a report on a six-monthly basis to note funding allocations to date.
- 5.1.5 Significant funding for providing accommodation for victims of domestic abuse through the Caldmore Housing group has been sustained over the last 3 years through the Supporting People programme, and this funding and service levels will continue into 2011/12.

## **5.2 Legal:**

- 5.2.1 There are no known direct legal implications arising from the recommendation that the draft strategy be approved by Cabinet. However, the data collection activities and planned activities will contribute to the Equality Framework for Local Government and promoting integration will ensure that we comply with the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

## **5.3 Staffing:**

- 5.3.1 The commitment of elected Members; senior staff; strategic partners; front line delivery staff, partner agencies and the third sector and the community will be required to ensure the implementation of the activities described within the strategy.

## **6. Citizen Impact**

- 6.1 Citizen impact is expected to be positive, should the recommendations be agreed. Improving the support for victims, improving early intervention and increasing perpetrators brought to justice will improve the quality of life of local people.
- 6.2 The work of the WDVF, Caldmore Housing Group, the statutory agencies and other agencies supporting victims of Domestic Violence Forum has a significant impact on vulnerable communities and the perpetrators and victims of violent crimes and children within these families.

## **7. Community Safety**

- 7.1 Impact on community safety is expected to be positive, particularly where this is raised as a priority issue for our customers. We are aware that some of the area partnerships have identified concerns around domestic abuse, and we will be seeking to build this into our service redesign.
- 7.2 The proposals to develop a new joint commissioning process, which takes account of local needs and opportunities, will enable local areas to ensure they commission services that are appropriate and effective.

## **8. Environmental Impact**

- 8.1 It is not anticipated that the scrutiny exercise will have direct impact upon the environment. However, there may be an indirect impact by empowering local people to make a difference in their community.

## **9. Performance and Risk Management Issues**

### **9.1 Risk:**

9.1.1 There is a risk to the sustainability of the domestic abuse support services currently commissioned from WDVF arising from the cessation of former Area Based grant funding via the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund and the Children's Fund and measures are underway to support new Home Office IDVA and MARAC funding bids, and to explore alternative sources of funding.

### **9.2 Performance Management:**

9.2.1 The performance of service providers commissioned through grant funding has been subject to appropriate performance monitoring arrangements as reported to the Safer Walsall Partnership Board and Children's Trust.

9.2.2 It is proposed that the new commissioning arrangements to be developed through the new Domestic Abuse Strategy will include performance monitoring and reporting to the Supporting People Core Strategy Group and Supporting People Board.

## **10. Equality Implications**

10.1 The new strategy will impact positively on improving our performance on equalities by seeking; considering and acting upon the views and needs of minority or vulnerable groups.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to look at the positive impact on service provision that is likely to arise from implementing the recommendations within this report. Equalities implications are also considered in the development and delivery of interventions and programmes. Equality Impact Assessments arising from the introduction of the new Equality Act are underway following changes in government grant funding.

## **11. Consultation**

11.1 The draft Domestic Abuse strategy has been prepared based on the views and contributions of statutory services and voluntary sector agencies who participate in the Domestic Violence Steering Group and the Supporting People Core Strategy Group.

11.2 Prior to presentation to Cabinet the draft strategy was circulated for wider consultation to all the Community Services Scrutiny panel members, to the above consultees who have contributed and to the Area Partnership managers with a closing date for consultation of 3 March 2011. These comments have been consolidated within the draft strategy. The report is also being considered by the Board of the Safer Walsall Partnership at its meeting on 8 March 2011.

## Background Papers

Walsall Children's and Young People's Plan 2009/10 and 2011/12  
Draft Community Safety Plan 2011-2014  
Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010

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7 March 2011

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7 March 2011



# Domestic Abuse Strategy 2011 - 2014



*A time for change*



**Walsall Council**

## A time for change

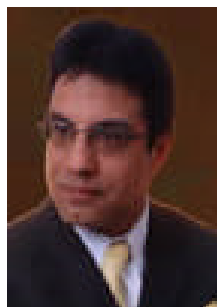
### Foreword

This strategy has been developed by partners and the range of stakeholders who work together through Walsall's multi-agency Domestic Abuse Steering Group (DASG).

This document represents the third borough wide strategy and aims to build upon the work of previous strategies 'No More Excuses (2000)' and 'No More Excuses (2006 - 2009.)'

The Domestic Abuse Steering Group has developed this strategy to take forward our shared vision to tackle domestic abuse at a time where new national priorities are beginning to emerge when there remains some uncertainty in future funding; and at a time when our commitment and reliance on multi-agency contribution is vital to enable council core service delivery, and to maximise contributions from partners and the third sector so we can focus on outcomes and meeting local needs; to avoid duplication and meet perceived gaps in local needs. We recognise that we must work together with families, and the wider community to achieve this. This strategy identifies key issues for us to focus on in order to tackle domestic abuse, to take forward a local response to the government's "Call to End Violence against Women and Girls"<sup>1</sup> and all addressing the other aspects of domestic abuse that occur across the Borough.

*"The biggest challenge will continue to be that of bringing domestic abuse into the open so that it can be overcome. It is all too often concealed behind closed doors. Through raising awareness, we can begin to shed some light on this hidden crime and give people the confidence to speak out. "*



*Community Services Portfolio holder and  
Chair of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership  
Cllr Zahid Ali*

1. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/parliamentary-business/written-ministerial-statement/violence-against-women-wms/?view=Standard&pubID=845069>

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## Consultation

This strategy has been subject to a consultation process, involving stakeholders from the Domestic Abuse Steering Group who kindly gave their time to support the development of this important work, together with colleagues from across public sector organisations who have contributed data and challenge.

If you would like to be involved in the consultation the next time this strategy is reviewed please contact Safer Walsall Partnership at:

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## 1. Introduction

At the heart of this strategy is a recognition that times are changing. Those agencies that have been involved in developing this strategy share a clear understanding that investment in preventative services and early intervention is a priority for addressing domestic abuse and breaking the cycle of abusive patterns of behaviour. They also value the different ways of supporting victims and increasing those actions that bring perpetrators to justice.

Contributors include agencies with statutory responsibilities to deliver and provider agencies as described in chapter 2.

How we respond to the continued issues around domestic abuse is not just a factor of concern of legislation or of central government, it is also a key local concern to model ways in which we can work with families and communities to change attitudes. New ways of working are already being piloted across the Borough to work smarter and break down traditional boundaries between services and partner agencies to improve services and deliver greater value for money.

In the recommended evolution made in this document towards commissioning of local services to meet identified needs, an important link is identified to the first joint Adult Social Care **Prevention Strategy** which is being developed to describe how the adult social care and health communities of Walsall intend to achieve a strategic shift from statutory core services towards preventative services over the next three years.

Moving to greater use of early intervention and preventative style services will reduce dependence on costly and inappropriate residential services and in the long term will reduce the need for supporting victims through the criminal justice process. Applying a commissioning framework to the provision of this service will support delivery of the national "*Putting People First milestones and the Healthy lives, healthy people*"<sup>2</sup> White Paper operating framework to reduce health inequalities and build a sustainable community. It will complement the strategic commissioning plans of Walsall Council and NHS Walsall – linking with the priorities of Walsall Strategic Partnership which co-ordinates the work across health, the local authority and other key stakeholders.

In the document "*Call to end Violence against Women and Girls*"<sup>3</sup> the Home Secretary has indicated that local authorities, the proposed Police and Crime Commissioners, voluntary and community organisations, Community Safety Partnerships, the NHS and developing public health service all need to work together to meet the needs of our local community. Although there are voluntary groups and charities supporting the victims of domestic abuse, she has recognised that there is a continued call for central funding to be made available on a stable basis over the coming spending review period, and to give the police the tools they need, to spread best practice and to give communities the information they need to hold government to account.

The agencies that have contributed to developing this strategy are committed to maximise available resources to help us work together to tackle our local issues, and to be open to the changes that we may need to make to meet local needs.



2. [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_121941](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_121941)
3. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/parliamentary-business/written-ministerial-statement/violence-against-women-wms/?view=Standard&pubID=845069>

We welcome the clarification from government around a shared vision to:

- Prevent violence from happening by challenging attitudes and behaviours that foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it;
- Provide support where violence occurs
- Work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families; and
- Reduce risks to those who are victims of these crimes and ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice

The government has pledged to work together with partners, and with families and local communities and to ensure that local areas have the tools that they need to respond to their priorities and we will support them by gathering and spreading effective practice and innovations from across the country. The next few years will see experiments in new ways of working being mainstreamed into general practice.

Underpinning this approach to these complex issues and reform of child protection are the principles of early intervention; trusting professionals; and removing bureaucracy so they can spend more of their time on the frontline and work to ensure more children are protected.

Between now and 2013/14, government has indicated that there will be a radical change in the way these services are commissioned and delivered and they will encourage the involvement of local communities in deciding which local priorities should be funded over the coming spending review period.

Government has pledged to:

- provide over £28m (in total) of stable Home Office funding for specialist services over the next four years including making funding and advice available to local areas to support Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) posts, Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) posts and the role of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) co-ordinators and continue central funding for quality assurance and for training places for IDVAs and MARAC co-ordinators to ensure there is a consistent delivery of service nationally;
- conduct a review of multi-agency risk assessment conference processes to improve our understanding of how they are working and potential areas of development; and as part of the review process, consider the case for putting MARACs on a statutory basis;
- maintain levels of funding support for specified national functions including making over £900,000 available per year over the next four years to support



national helplines; work closely with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to ensure that effective practice in relation to stalking is shared between all police forces and CPS regional areas; continue provision of over £10 million in funding until March 2011 to develop a network of effective community based alternatives to custody with the aim of tackling the underlying reasons of offending and meeting the needs of vulnerable women;

- develop, using proceeds from the victims surcharge, a sustainable funding model for rape support centres and the development of new centres where they are most needed and work in partnership with the sexual violence sector to develop a mechanism through which funding can be provided on a stable basis;
- raise awareness of tackling violence against women and girls in the professional lives of all frontline practitioners - through training and effective practice including ensuring that awareness of violence against women and girls is part of the information provided to alcohol and drugs workers located in custody suites;
- fund the development of an e-learning course aimed at GPs to raise their awareness of violence against women and children. The course will cover domestic violence, sexual violence, child sexual abuse and practices
- work with our police partners to see what we can learn from the police response to violence against women and girls in other countries and how those approaches might be applied in England and Wales; and
- support information sharing and effective practice in the criminal justice system through a network of Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) specialist co-ordinators. The co-ordinators will be responsible for implementing CPS policy locally, supporting specialist prosecutors as necessary, and working with local violence against women and girls services;
- take steps to ensure that issues relating to consent and confidentiality when information is shared in this way are also taken into account;
- conduct a review of the multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage to evaluate how it has been implemented across agencies to identify effective practice and possible areas for improvement;
- develop effective practice information which will highlight the sensitivities in cases of forced marriage commission services locally and explore how this could be integrated with the work of the proposed health and wellbeing boards and how they might take responsibility for producing a joint strategic needs assessment;
- use effective practice to help local areas understand intelligent commissioning and how it can be used to support specialist women-only services where these best meet the local need;
- explore whether new initiatives such as social impact bonds could provide a good model for longer term sustainable funding in the violence against women and girls sector; and
- explore with experts and practitioners how best to introduce the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act 2009 to allow victims of domestic violence





- claiming Jobseekers Allowance an automatic deferral of job-seeking activity to allow them to get into a stable situation before seeking work;
- consider the case for the implementation of Section 60 of the Family Law Act 1996 to enable third parties to allow for a 'prescribed person' to apply to the civil court for a domestic violence injunction on someone else's behalf;
- consult on revising the current definition of domestic violence to include younger victims;
- take appropriate steps to help local authorities, and in due course GP commissioning consortia, consider how they can ensure that child victims are identified, protected and given support that is appropriate to their age.

We consider that joint commissioning is an important means of improving services by getting rid of inefficiencies and duplication, and there is an opportunity to link with joint commissioning in the health sector potentially through the local development of a joint governance structure. This governance structure or local "Board" might bring together elected representatives, NHS and local authority commissioners and local Health Watch to promote partnership working between the NHS, social care, public health and other local services and improve accountability might provide a useful way of engaging with local commissioners of health, social care and other services.

Value for money is a key driver in commissioning services. It is important that it is not interpreted just as a need to secure low cost services, because lower cost does not necessarily mean more effective provision and quality of service.

Intelligent commissioning, which takes account of local needs and opportunities, will enable local areas to ensure they commission services that are appropriate and effective.

As described within this document, the Domestic Abuse Steering Group, as an operational arm within the governance structure, is committed to moving towards commissioning services to meet local need utilising the Joint Commissioning Unit that has already been established around joint commissioning between health and local authority professionals for services across adults and children. Plans are already underway to increase the investment of prevention services such as those for domestic abuse victims, with a clear strategic shift as defined in the joint Adult Social Care and Health Prevention Strategy.

We are keen to embrace change to deliver better outcomes for Walsall residents.



## 2. Domestic Abuse – the national picture

### 2.1 Definition

Consistent definitions across the partnership remain an issue as definitions are typically linked to delivery of statutory responsibilities, or the core business of the provider agency. There is a view that agencies need to agree on a common definition for reliable data collection and information sharing so that we can better understand the scale of the problem and focus a partnership response to tackle individual issues to increase victims safety and hold perpetrators to account.

The current definition for 'domestic abuse' as used by the Home Office in order to take legal action against perpetrators is :

"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."

*(Association of Chief Police Officers and the Crown Prosecution Service,)*

where an adult is classified as anyone over the age of 18, and family members (who may be may be direct relatives, in-laws or step-family )include:

Mother	Son	Brother	Grandparents
Father	Daughter	Sister	Children

This definition does not include cases where the victim of the abuse is less than 18 years of age. In such cases, the incident may be treated as child abuse. The Home Office is considering whether the definition should be broadened to include child abuse.

The *Walsall Domestic Violence Forum*<sup>4</sup> uses the following definition:

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners

### 2.2 Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse ?

Over recent years, the term 'domestic violence' has been replaced by 'domestic abuse' in order to embrace the behaviours demonstrated by perpetrators against victims.

These are more fully explored by the 'Power and Control Wheel' shown overleaf.



4. Walsall Domestic Violence Forum is a registered charity <http://www.wdvh.co.uk/>



Originally developed by the Deluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project of Minnesota in 1984, and globally recognised by practitioners and victims alike, this tool was developed to demonstrate the patterns of actions that a man uses to intentionally control or dominate a female partner, although the model is equally applicable to male partners or same gender partners. It also illustrates tactics most experienced by the victims consulted through the project and depicts violence and abuse as a repeat pattern of behaviour as opposed to isolated incidents.

Domestic abuse may take various different forms:

- **psychological abuse** - making the victim feel scared or intimidated. Evoking feelings of worthlessness.



- **physical abuse** - this could range from pushing or hair pulling, to more serious injuries, like broken bones, and, in extreme cases, can result in death.
- **sexual abuse** – including rape, sexual assault, forcing any kind of sexual activity upon you against your will.
- **financial abuse** - e.g. taking away financial independence.
- **emotional abuse** - shouting, name calling, threats
- **cultural based abuses** - such as forced marriage or 'honour based violence'

### 2.3 National trends, resources and policy

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in the UK will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives.<sup>5</sup> There were over 1 million female victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales in the last year. Over 300,000 women are sexually assaulted and 60,000 women are raped each year. Overall in the UK, more than one in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, often with years of psychological abuse. Around 2 women a week are killed by their partner or former partner.<sup>6</sup>

Domestic violence accounts for 16% of all reported violent crimes. Domestic Abuse has more repeat victims than any other crime, with repeat victimisation accounting for 73% of all reported incidents. Around 38% of cases involve incidents which are reported more than once a year.

The vast majority of these violent acts are perpetrated by men on women. In 2009/10, women were the victim of over seven out of ten (73%) incidents of domestic violence. More than one third (36%) of all rapes recorded by the police are committed against children under 16 years of age<sup>6</sup>. This is unacceptable.

Nationally, studies suggest that only two in every five violent crime offences are reported to the police for varying reasons with domestic abuse making up a large proportion of unreported offences<sup>5</sup>.

A concerning trend that has been concern raised by the NSPCC regarding the level of domestic abuse that occurs amongst young people<sup>6</sup>. Bases on a nationwide survey that they undertook along with the University of Bristol, they estimated that approximately 15% of girls aged 13 to 17 had been in intimate relationships and had been pressured into sexual intercourse. One in four girls that were surveyed had suffered physical violence, including being slapped, punched or beaten. The NSPCC believe that teenagers are under a lot of pressure to behave in certain ways which can lead to this behaviour, although it is also likely that this behaviour could be as a result of young people's experiences of domestic abuse in their own homes. (The previous government announced that relationship education would become statutory for children of all ages in England by September 2011).

Domestic violence is estimated to have cost the UK £25.3 billion in 2005-2006. The estimated total cost of domestic violence to society in monetary terms is **£23 billion per annum**. In addition, this figure includes an estimated **£3.1 billion** as the cost to the state and **£1.3 billion as the cost to employers** and human suffering cost of **£17 billion**. (Walby 2004).

The estimated total cost is based on the following:



- The cost to the criminal justice system is **£1 billion per annum**. (This represents one quarter of the criminal justice budget for violent crime including the cost of homicide to adult women annually of £112 million).
- The cost of physical healthcare treatment resulting from domestic violence, (including hospital, GP, ambulance, prescriptions) is £1,220,247,000, i.e. **3% of total NHS budget**.
- The cost of treating mental illness and distress due to domestic violence is **£176,000,000**.
- The cost to the social services is **£0.25 billion**.
- Housing costs are estimated at **£0.16 billion**.
- The cost of civil legal services due to domestic violence is **£0.3 billion**.

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5. Home Office Statistic Bulletin – Crime in England and Wales 2007/08

6. BBC News Report – ‘Many girls’ abused by boyfriends, 01/09/2009

The statistics collated by Walby may be seen as an **under-estimate** because public services don't collect information on the extent to which their services are used as a result of domestic violence. The research doesn't include costs to those areas for which it was difficult to collect any baseline information - for example cost to social services work with vulnerable adults, cost to education services, the human cost to children (including moving schools and the impact this has on their education), and it excludes the cost of therapeutic and other support within the voluntary sector.

The cost of domestic homicide is estimated by the Home Office at over one million pounds: a total of **£1,097,330 for each death**, or **£112 million per year**.

This is just a snap shot of the compelling evidence that engages Government nationally, keeping domestic abuse on the agenda and challenges the drive for change.

In their “Call to end Violence against Women and Girls”, Government have now unveiled details of funding across a range of areas to help agencies tackle domestic abuse and support the victims in different ways, as described in the introduction. These are new funding streams which have been launched to demonstrate that violence against women is a priority for the government and to provide some funding over the next 4 years to add stability to the work of voluntary agencies and secure national telephone helplines.

## 2.4 Legal Framework

This Domestic Abuse Strategy will be implemented within the following legal framework:

**Children Act 1989** which sets out the statutory obligations for Domestic Abuse, and is a comprehensive integrated statutory framework ensuring the welfare of children. It covers virtually all the law relating to the care and upbringing of children and the social services to be provided for them. It applies to courts hearing all kinds of



children's cases, whether in divorce or other family proceedings and those relating to the care, supervision and protection of children. The Children Act 1989 introduces the concept of "significant harm". Exposure to domestic abuse is recognised as a significant contributing factor.

**Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)** which gives local housing authorities a duty to secure suitable accommodation for households experiencing domestic violence who are unable to remain in the family home and who are assessed as being unintentionally homeless and in priority need. It also created a new ground for possession in relation to domestic violence.

**Crime and Disorder Act 1998** (as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002) which introduced a number of provisions for dealing with crime and disorder. This included the introduction of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, a new power for public bodies to disclose information for the purposes of the Act, as well as reforms to the youth justice system. Walsall has a successful crime and disorder reduction partnership, has recently appointed a Domestic Abuse champion reporting to the Safer Walsall Board and promotes a partnership Domestic Abuse Steering group to oversee the multi-agency contributions for tackling domestic abuse

**Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003** which builds on existing legislation and reinforces powers available to practitioners. The provisions include powers to social landlords to take action against anti-social tenants, courts to consider the impact of anti-social behaviour on the wider community in all housing possession cases and improving the operation of Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

**The Children Act 2004** which refreshes the statutory obligations provides a legislative spine on which to build reforms of children's services. It establishes a duty on key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, requires local authorities to set up Local Safeguarding Children Boards and that key partners take part, as well as making provision about services provided to and for children and young people. Independent inspection has found Safeguarding arrangements in Walsall to be robust.

**The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004** which is intended to introduce reform to the civil and criminal law in these areas by criminalising the breach of non-molestation orders under the Family Law Act 1996; by extending the availability of restraining orders under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; and by making common assault an arrestable offence. Section 9 implements a requirement on local areas to hold a multi-agency review following a case of adult domestic homicide. Such reviews are an effective learning and prevention tool for local areas and we are working through the implications of this with our partners before implementing the power.

### **Equality Act**

The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance of equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. Public bodies will be bound by various specific duties, including a requirement to set one or more specific equality-related objective,



and to publish (a) data and other information relevant to their performance against the general duty; (b) details of any assessments they made of the impact of their policies on equality issues; and (c) details of engagement they undertook with relevant parties about their equality data and objectives.

The Act also makes it clear that complying with the Equality Duty may involve a public body delivering services which are specifically targeted at particular groups, this enables the development of services to support victims of violence against women and girls where such a need is established.

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### 3. Domestic Abuse – local context

It is a sobering statistic that there were 4,099 incidents reported to the police in Walsall during 2009/10 that were flagged as 'Domestic related', an average of 342 incidents per month, and of these, a total of 1365 domestic abuse incidents were logged as crimes.

The current Safer Walsall Partnership strategic assessment indicates that Domestic Abuse offences account for 7% of Total Recorded Crime and 28% of all violent crime, which represents an increase where compared with the last strategic period (where 6% of total crime and 26% of violent crime were domestic related).

However there has been a slight reduction (3%) in the level of Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the police between 2009/10 when compared with 2008/09 levels, as this has occurred at a time when partner agencies have seen steep increases in requests or support. This potential under reporting to the Police is a significant local concern. The recent death from domestic violence in the Borough was from a victim who had made one complaint. Anecdotally, victims can frequently suffer repeat abuse before making an official complaint.

#### 3.1 Reporting through Accident and Emergency (A&E) and Ante Natal Screening

With Accident and Emergency (A&E) data, of the victims of assaults that are questioned by A&E staff regarding their relationship to the assailant, the majority of those questioned were not inclined to want to divulge this information (37%). In addition to this, a further third of assault were committed by an attacker who was a stranger to the victim, whilst 29% were committed by a known individual. It might be inferred that those assaults where the victim left no details about the assailant indicated a potential relationship between victim and offender. However, only 9% of A&E reported assaults were committed by a Partner/Ex-Partner, much lower than the 26% of police reported violent crime that has a domestic abuse marker.

#### 3.2 Who is the victim?

Although a detailed breakdown of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographical area, disability etc is not available for all victims, the peak age for domestic abuse victims in Walsall is 21, with the peak age range from 20 to 24 accounting for 23% of victims. Amongst male victims, the distribution of ages is far more spread out. As with the general population there was a peak in male victims aged 20 to 24 but also another peak amongst older males, aged between 37 and 41. There is also a worrying trend of domestic abuse in teenagers, in Walsall 10% of domestic abuse victims are teenagers. We need to find out whether there is under-reporting of domestic abuse to the police given the national growing trends and whether there is a need to influence future provision or address gaps in service.

The majority of victims of domestic abuse in Walsall are female with almost nine out of every ten domestic abuse offences involving women as the victim. This is consistent





with recent years with no evidence to suggest any change in the proportion of female to male victims.

The gender pairing of victims and offenders suggests that the main type of domestic abuse was by a male upon a female (80%), followed by male upon another male (9%). It is unclear from this data whether the male upon male and female upon female offences refer to family or same-sex relationship offences.

In terms of the ethnicity of victims, the majority were White (81%), followed by Asian/Asian British (12%) and Black/Black British (4%). The proportion of Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British victims is slightly above the expected population demography, but the broad proportions compare with the overall ethnicity split of the population of the borough and confirm the fact that domestic abuse offences occur equally across all cultures and communities. There has been little change in the ethnicity split of victims of domestic abuse in recent years.

### **3.3 Under Reporting**

Caution should be applied when interpreting police reported domestic abuse offences. Levels of offences that were reported to the police may have reached a plateau, but this should not be used to describe all domestic abuse in general. The numbers of domestic abuse offences reported may have levelled out because an optimal level has been reached for victims who are willing to report the offence to the police, something that has occurred across the majority of other local authorities in the West Midlands. The partnership should therefore explore methods of drawing out unreported domestic abuse incidents and improve the awareness of reporting systems. We also need to capture and understand the incidents that are reported to the variety of agencies other than the police who are supporting victims, to understand the true extent of need. As yet we do not have a single system across all agencies for logging all incidents, so we can only ever see part of the picture.

Increased publicity around the topic of domestic abuse is likely to have an impact on levels of reported incidents in the Borough and the opinion held by the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF) is that the current economic downturn has had an impact on reports. We can expect to see an upturn in demand for all agencies. As domestic abuse is still a vastly under-reported offence the expectation is that the level of reported incidents and offences will continue to increase, despite attitudes differing amongst offenders and victims towards whether or not domestic abuse is a crime. Despite anticipated increases the partnership needs to continue to encourage victims of domestic incidents to come forward and make reports in order to prevent this problem from going 'underground' again.

### **3.4 Repeat Incidents**

In terms of repeat incidents more work is required to enable the police to calculate accurately the proportion of repeat victims of domestic abuse offences due to the migration of this data across to a different recording system. Partners have identified the need to improve generally on data capture, to share details of their service users confidentially and to improve how we identify and track repeat victims. However, based on the 4,099 domestic related incidents that were reported to the police at



least 165 victims had reported a repeat incident within a month of this, whilst a further 227 victims had reported repeat incidents within 12-months. When combined, it can be estimated that at least 10% of domestic related incidents were repeat incidents. However, these figures should be viewed with caution and should be treated as absolute minimums due to the fact that a number of incidents have no victim recorded. The reality is likely to be that the repeat incident rate may be higher.

### 3.5 Uptake of Support / Referral support

The Walsall Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF) is a local service provider of specialist services that also administers the MODUS database of domestic abuse referrals from the police. A total of 5,955 people accessed the services of the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum in 2009/10, an increase of 23% on 2008/09 levels. Uptake continues to increase during 2010/11.

These data shown in the table below will only include service users supported by other partner agencies if they also reported abuse to the police. There is no single system handling all referrals and self referrals.

*Walsall Domestic Violence Forum Activities 2007/08 to 2009/10*

	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
Total People accessing WDF Services	5,955	4,826	4,175
DART Referrals	3,426	2,787	1,826
S.A.F.E (programme for perpetrators)	125	69	57

The increase in the number of people accessing WDF services is due to the number of police referrals made to the multi agency Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART), where referrals increased by 23%. As described later (page 38) DART is a process where partners meet daily at the offices of the WDF to consider the police referrals received in the last 24 hours and consider the recommended intervention based on the Barnado risk assessment model.

There was also a significant rise in the number of self referrals that came from men who sought to put a stop through their abusive behaviour through the WDF Stopping Aggression in the Family Environment (SAFE) programme.



When combining levels of police incidents and WDVF activities it can be inferred that there has been an improvement in the identification of domestic abuse amongst front-line workers. However, with limited funding opportunities available, there is concern held within WDVF that this could impact on the services that they are able to provide.

There is a suggestion, nationally, that 59% of women who leave abusive partners return to them owing to a lack of suitable accommodation. We don't yet have the local picture. However, this highlights a need for support for women to ensure that as victims of domestic abuse they are to remain free from being involved in an abusive relationship. Although it is unclear at a local level whether Walsall residents experience this issue, and what the needs are of homeless men or women arising from an abusive relationship, this is considered to be an important area for further investigation.

### 3.6 Impact of the Court System

Walsall has a Specialist Domestic Abuse Court which has helped in improving the local conviction rate, and which is intended to reduce the delays in processing criminal matters, supported by trained IDVAs to support witnesses through the court process. In addition to the penalty awarded on conviction, a number of the Judges are keen to put restraining orders in place for when the perpetrator is released from prison to prevent re offending.

The police, crown prosecution service and the courts have worked hard to improve the successful completion of cases or bring perpetrators to justice.

Anecdotally, there is a reluctance for victims to press charges and for domestic abuse cases to be seriously considered by the courts. In the three year period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 a total of 1,214 domestic abuse cases were heard in the Walsall Specialist Domestic Abuse Court. Of these cases 866 were successfully prosecuted and 348 were unsuccessful.

This 'attrition' rate in cases reaching completion has been attributed to lack of support to victims and witnesses, and delays in the court processes.

As shown in the table below the 'attrition' rate in cases in Walsall is 28.67%, placing Walsall in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in comparison to the other West Midlands courts.

Position	Council	Attrition rate %
1 <sup>st</sup>	Dudley	26.01
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Coventry	26.59
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Walsall	28.67
4 <sup>th</sup>	Sandwell	31.78
5 <sup>th</sup>	Sutton Coldfield	32.78
6 <sup>th</sup>	Wolverhampton	34.46
7 <sup>th</sup>	Birmingham	40.12

The Family Court offers another route to support victims and to challenge domestic abuse. As a civil court the burden of proof is based on the "balance of probability"



rather than “beyond reasonable doubt” as required in criminal cases. The use of ‘non molestation orders’ issued by the Family or Civil court, can be served on the perpetrator by a solicitor and faxed to the police as a valuable alternative to instituting criminal proceedings.

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## 4. Objectives

Partner agencies have made great strides in their joint working to tackle domestic abuse, and our primary objective now is to deliver significant improvements during this period of policy change and uncertainty to maximise local resources and improve our response to domestic abuse in order to meet our local needs.

By embracing the opportunities that flow for service redesign and working smarter, we will be moving forwards as part of the overall Prevention programme to develop an integrated pathway around Domestic Abuse.

Work will commence during 2011/12, led by the preventative arm of the Joint Commissioning Unit, to develop an integrated pathway for domestic abuse prevention, intervention, support and offender management in conjunction with the statutory services, agencies and stakeholders currently involved in this work.

**Step 1** : To identify all of the contributions in financial terms and human resources, all of the key stakeholders and the funders, to be brought together into a service re-design workshop.

**Step 2** : To develop the architecture of an integrated pathway

**Step 3** : To develop a service specification

**Step 4** : To develop a commissioning action plan

**Step 5** : Deliver services consistent with the integrated pathway

Key priorities in this process will be to:

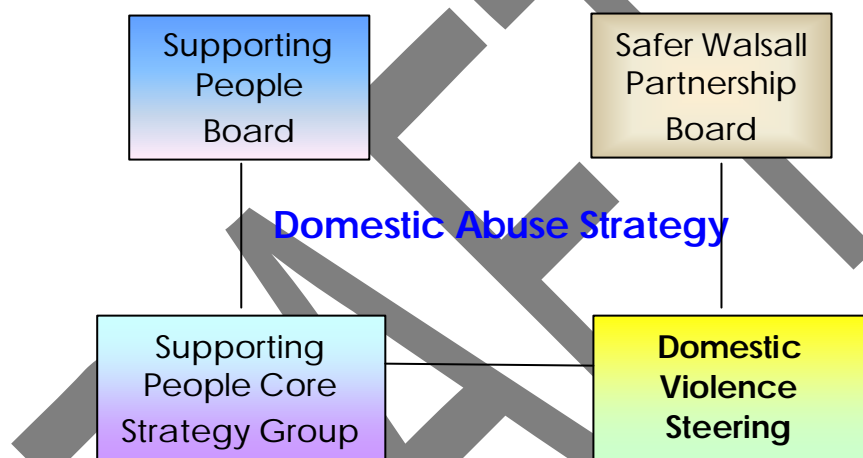
- increase the numbers of incidents reported by all sections of the community through DART and introducing appropriate support – we need to promote the services available locally
- increase early reporting of domestic abuse into a single system, with clearly defined referral pathways to the relevant agency
- work with children and young people, seeking to reduce the cycle of repetition for future generations
- reduce the number of repeat victims
- Provide support for victims, by informing survivors about access to support and justice, linking to our work with the government funded victim support networks, and appropriately qualified IDVAs and ISVAs
- assist residents to access support to take actions through the courts
- increase the numbers of perpetrators who will face consequences for their actions and reduce repeat offending,



- maintain training and support for services and partners to identify the early signs of domestic abuse. Actions planned will continue to raise awareness of abuse among front-line services and professionals such as GPs and teachers and educating children and young people about the fact that domestic abuse is not acceptable and about its consequences.
- monitor and review of our target outcomes and efficient use of resources.

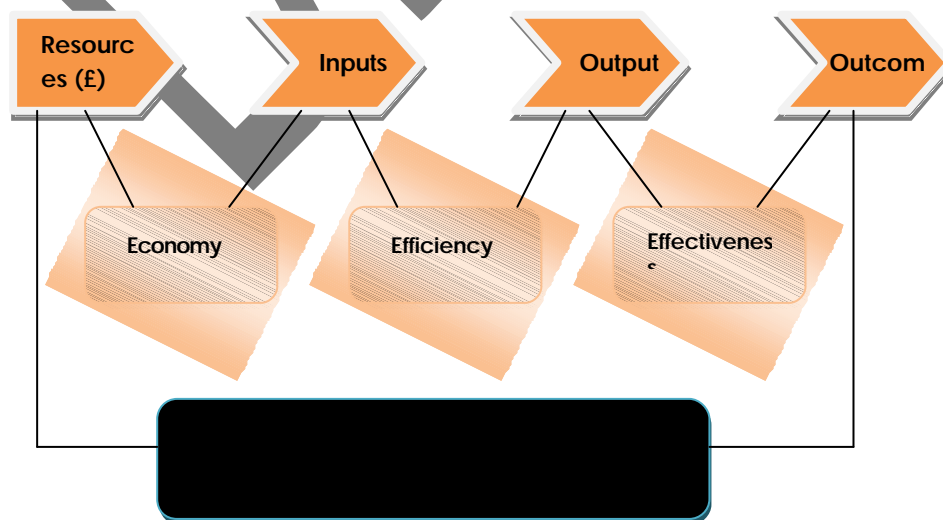
The multi-agency Domestic Abuse Steering Group will maintain our focus on the key outcomes and ensure that actions are progressed.

### Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy



In particular, partners have recognised the need to utilise our partnership governance mechanisms to highlight cross-cutting activity. We have also agreed on the importance of being outcome based to help us look at commissioning opportunities and new models of service delivery to deliver the outcomes required.

### Outcome Based Approach (OBA) - commissioning around



The commissioning model will utilise an outcome based approach (OBA) which asks the three 'common sense' performance measures of each activity undertaken, i.e. how much did we do?; how well did we do it? and is anyone better off?

This will focus on improving outcomes for victims, supporting perpetrators to recognise the consequences of their behaviours, increasing the number of legal sanctions imposed, increasing confidence in reporting domestic abuses and training partners and front-line staff in measures for early intervention.

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## 5 Guiding Principles

- **Leadership**

All partners are committed to providing clear leadership in challenging attitudes and behaviours that foster domestic abuse, intervening early where possible to prevent it and providing support where abuse has occurred.

In its role as major employers and civic leaders, the Council and the other statutory services of Health, Police, Fire and Probation are well placed to exercise strong leadership in challenging unacceptable and abusive behaviours, to address attitudes in its workforce and impact positively on tackling Domestic Abuse and to support any workers who are victims of abuse.

In addition to the shift to commissioning, it is proposed that these partners would progress these principles within this strategy in their Human Resources policies to ensure service managers are alerted to the likely prevalence of victims of abuse in the workforce, and mechanisms of support for victims, underpinned by appropriate awareness training.

- **Safety of victims and families**

The safety of victims and their families is the primary consideration in service delivery, strategic development and implementation.

- **Responsibility**

Working together to prevent, intervene and reduce the impact of domestic abuse, increasing the safety and wellbeing of those living with its effects in Walsall.

- **Partnership**

Domestic abuse cannot be tackled in isolation and a co ordinate partnership approach is essential. It is imperative that domestic abuse is recognised as a strategic priority.

- **Focus on what works**

Building on the previous strategies, future work should reflect the necessity for prevention and early intervention to reduce further harm, as well as the provision and accessibility to support and increase confidence in bringing perpetrators to justice.





## 6. Local Strategies – working together in Walsall

Greater awareness of issues around domestic abuse has led to adoption of new arrangements for assessing risk across the partnership, and there has been an increase rather than decrease in specialist referrals.

We need to work smarter in combining local intelligence to exert our efforts where there can be greatest benefit. We also need to establish clear lines of governance so that we can maximise the effectiveness of all of the partner agencies, working to common guidelines and priorities, to ensure we commission services based on need, that clarifies and values the contribution of all agencies and that minimises duplication of effort and maximises outcomes.

Currently, there is no single service specification for domestic abuse services, and boundaries are blurred around who is delivering what. We need to tackle this quickly to understand local needs and allocate our scarce resources wisely.

- **Safer Walsall Partnership Strategic Assessment 2010/11**

The Strategic Assessment has identified the impact of domestic abuse in Walsall. Over 1 in 4 violent crimes that are reported to the police are domestic related whilst the proportion of domestic abuse offences accounted for a larger share of Total Recorded Crime in the past year. However domestic abuse is still vastly under reported despite increased marketing of domestic abuse services in recent years. The number of referrals by the police to Walsall Domestic Violence Forum increased 23% last year which suggests that front line workers are getting better at identifying and referring victims.

- **Community Safety Plan 2011-2014**

The recent Strategic Assessment has identified as **priority** Tackling Violent Crime – with a specific focus on Domestic Abuse, Town Centre Violence and Serious Youth Violence.

- **Walsall Children & Young People’s Plan 2009/10 and 2011/12**

These plans have specifically targeted reductions in the number of Domestic Violence referrals to Children’s Specialist Services and to:

- develop a confident and competent workforce so that all people working with children, young people and their families will be playing their part to support vulnerable children.
- ensure Children’s social workers have more manageable caseloads, additional advice and support and more time for post qualifying study.
- enhance current resources and existing targeted support by our approach to Think Family and a range of early intervention and family support services available across the Borough in Early Years and Extended Schools settings.
- more joint working and information sharing across adult and child care services.
- continued response from Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) to all domestic abuse incidents with targeted support at a much earlier stage to prevent escalation



However, the number of referrals of children made for Domestic Abuse in 2009/10 was 561 against a target of 405 for the year. This increase in referrals has been attributed to a combination of earlier identification, economic recession and national response high profile child abuse cases. The number of adult safeguarding referrals for 2009/10 was 891 and the forecast for 2010/11 is likely to exceed 1200.

In the current plan there has been a change in emphasis in order to define the key improvements, measures and actions to be taken in 2010/11 in tackling domestic abuse.

What we will improve	How much will we improve	What we will do (Our key actions)
Improve the response of all services to domestic abuse.	Increase uptake of domestic abuse training for staff by 10% (from 09- 10 level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure staff are appropriately trained to address domestic abuse through our training programme.</li> </ul>
Improve the targeted intervention of specialist staff.	Reduce the % of re- referrals to Domestic Abuse Referral Team (DART) by 5% points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure that interventions are effective in resolving underlying issues to avoid re- referral and utilise the skills of specialist staff to ensure these are used to maximum effect.</li> </ul>
Build on successful MARAC training programme	Provide 2 sets of training each year with additional specialist events were needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All agencies will comply with MARAC protocol</li> </ul>

• **Walsall Children’s Trust Equalities Strategy 2010 – 2013.**

Walsall Children’s Trust arrangements place a high priority upon the involvement of children, young people, their families and carers in the planning and delivery of our services. They believe strongly that children are equal citizens and, by giving them a strong voice and influence, that real outcomes have been achieved over the last three years. Where possible they have included responses to these messages into their equality action plan supporting the five ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes. In Walsall’s Children and Young People’s Plan 2009/12 one of the 6 key priorities specifically relates to the importance **of targeting early intervention to ensure safety**.

Consultations with children and young people and/or parents and carers over last 3 years tell us;

- Teenage relationships are a worry and some parents struggle to manage problems;
- Children and young people want to be consulted about decisions affecting them when there are child protection concerns;
- Children and young people want professionals to explain why decisions are made particularly when different plans are made for siblings;



- Services should work together more to avoid putting extra burden on families, with one person coordinating all the supports to avoid too many meetings and visits

- **Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy**

There has been a changing national agenda around social care, "Putting people first" which enables an integrated approach in working with NHS and local partners, moving from crisis intervention to a more pro-active preventative model, involving commissioning around high quality prevention/early intervention and re-enablement and for intensive care and support where needed.

Underpinning this network of agencies is an universal joined up information and advice for all individuals linked to information from all strategic partners within a framework for proportionate contact and needs assessment, with greater emphasis on self assessment with appropriate support and advocacy. A key part of this change agenda in terms of emergency response, assessment, care planning and review is addressing adult safeguarding.

- **Homelessness Strategy**

The council's second Homelessness Strategy covers the period from 2007 – 2010 and was also produced through joint working with partner agencies and consultation with service users and providers. It aims to prevent homelessness wherever possible and ensure that people who become homeless receive appropriate support and sets out strategic priorities for action:

- preventing homelessness arising where possible,
- providing support to vulnerable people and people at risk of homelessness,
- addressing the wider causes and effects of homelessness,
- increasing access to settled homes to help reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation.

and outlines the approach to homelessness and evaluates its effectiveness and success, identifies what gaps there are in service provision and how they will address these gaps.

## **6.1 Local resources working together**

Increasingly partners are being encouraged to align budgets and work in a coordinated way to ensure services are planned and delivered in a joined up way for greater impact at a local level. The coalition government have proposed a range of alternative ways of working, as described in the introduction, which cut across agency boundaries, and partners are open to the prospect of working in new ways to improve outcomes. The opportunity exists to explore working smarter and on a locality basis in the six area partnerships.



This section provides an outline of the activities of the statutory services, partner agencies and voluntary sector organisations in tackling domestic abuse.

The current services for supporting victims of domestic abuse are not joined up and funded separately, relying on a plethora of grants, and individual commissions or grants. In the current economic climate, we need to be clearer about the value for money of all elements of spend, to drive out inefficiency and duplication, to prioritise spend to meet the greatest need and to establish a more secure funding basis is needed to sustain service delivery and to maximise the health and well being of those who access our services.

The financial resources set out in the table overleaf have been committed across the partnership, although to date there hasn't been a single commissioning agency with a strategic overview. This made up of central government grant funding, and some mainstream funding.

Uncertainty around central government grant funding has required a review of alternative funding sources, and the need to explore opportunities provided for funding voluntary sector providers through the alternative arrangements described within the introduction.

Project	Funding Source	08/09 (£)	09/10 (£)	10/11 (£)	Description
<b>Walsall DV Forum Family Support Team</b>	ABG Children's Fund Children's Services	132,500	132,000	132,000	160 indirect support to children per year 40 direct support to victims
<b>Walsall DV Forum Social Worker secondment</b>	Mainstream Children's Services	34,000	36,000	36,000	
<b>INDIRECT SUPPORT - Women at Risk of Domestic Violence</b>	Supporting People	373,852	407,748	323,643	<b>Accommodation based services</b> Service specification for Accommodation based service with 24 units Floating support worker with 24 placements
<b>Walsall Domestic Violence Forum</b>	Area Based Grant Safer and Stronger Communities Fund	152,000	75,000	90,000	Service level agreement

The vulnerable adults' Joint Commissioning Unit is now well established. Work is also underway to combine with adult service commissioning within a broader joint commissioning framework.



### Safer Walsall Partnership

There is a Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which in Walsall is administered through the Safer Walsall Board whose purposes is to deal with issues of crime and disorder, based on a local strategic needs assessment and following a target action planning process to channel resources to meet the greatest need. The CSP is a statutory function, but the new coalition government is reviewing community safety legislation and tools, and this operating model may change.

As tackling Domestic Abuse is one of the strategic priorities, there has historically been access to a share of SSCF funding administered through the Area Based Grant. As described in the introduction, the new government have changed the ways in which funding is to be administered for tackling domestic violence and there are new 4 year Home Office funding streams for voluntary organisations to bid for, with the support of the local Community Safety Partnership.

Where possible the partnership will seek to maximise opportunities to fund the preventative and programmes of work for supporting victims and bringing perpetrators to justice, as set out in this strategy.

### West Midlands Police

Domestic abuse forms part of the strategic assessment for West Midlands Police and is a key element across all areas of Public Protection. The Public Protection Unit deliver investigations and safeguarding to victims and families of domestic abuse. Front-line uniformed officers initially attend domestic violence incidents, and where a criminal offence has been committed they will proactively seek to arrest the offender to bring them to justice. The Public Protection Unit provides a specialist domestic abuse team of officers to assist with investigations, deal with offenders within the custody environment and take responsibility for ongoing safeguarding strategies. The Public Protection Unit officers also provide specialist investigation, advice and safeguarding for victims of forced marriages or Honour Based Violence.

There are specialised domestic abuse workers within the Borough Public Protection Unit and all front-line officers receive mandatory domestic abuse training and regular refresher training.

A number of procedures and protocols have been developed:

- **Protocol on the Prosecution of Domestic Abuse Cases** - between the Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on prosecution of domestic abuse to ensure victims of domestic abuse are fully supported through positive action and that offenders are quickly brought to justice. This includes checklists around lines of enquiry, evidence gathering and file preparation to gather and preserve the widest range of evidence.

To address the fact that more than 40% of domestic abuse cases that enter the criminal justice system currently fail this joint protocol is intending to improve the



charging arrangements and support of witnesses as the case proceeds through the courts, closely tracking the time periods leading up to a trial.

- **Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure** – which recognises that domestic abuse is a vastly under reported crime for all victims, whether men, women in heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender relationships, as well as the abuse of older relatives. It sets out a number of principles around early positive intervention, firm positive action, thorough investigation and commitment to working in partnership with other agencies. The West Midlands has specialist Domestic Violence Courts supported by trained Magistrates and Legal Clerks, CPS lawyers and Domestic Abuse Officers from the various agencies combining to increase the cases of domestic abuse brought to justice, reduce the number of repeat victims, increase trial effectiveness and reduce the time between arrest, charge and completion. Measures are also described around information sharing with the civil court system. The report also describes crime prevention strategies and practical safety advice for victims to support the victim to remain in their own homes.

The Police work closely in partnership with Childrens' Services, Housing, the Crown Prosecution Service, Probation and health professionals through the daily Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) process.

### **National Offender Management Service Staffordshire and West Midlands Trust – Local District Walsall**

The Probation service has both strategic and operational levels of response to Domestic Abuse. Walsall is a local operational district within the Staffordshire and West Midlands regional area and provides services to offenders and victims of domestic abuse. Reports are provided for the courts on who has committed domestic abuse, and detailed risk assessments of the perpetrators using nationally recognised risk assessment tools. The service aims to protect the public by supervising offenders in the community and also contributes to custodial assessments where necessary. Probation is the only statutory agency that is involved in the offender journey from entry into the criminal justice system, through court preparations, the court hearing, in prison, in the community and afterwards to support voluntary through care.

Domestic abuse is one of a number of priority areas. Offender managers are trained in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) which is a nationally recognised intervention. Victim liaison staff also have specific training for work with Domestic Abuse.

Work is generated through the court process, or via prevention agendas and from other partners. Again there are information sharing protocols between agencies and close partnership working as required.

### **Adult Safeguarding Unit**

The Adult Safeguarding Unit (ASU) works according to Walsall's Multi Agency Audit Safeguarding procedures to ensure consistency and effectiveness in safeguarding vulnerable adults (18 and over) at risk of abuse in the borough. The unit seeks to



empower vulnerable adults to retain independent choice and seeks to prevent them being subject to abuse and coordinates all safeguarding referrals. They utilise Safeguarding practitioners to lead on investigations and develop protection plans to support vulnerable adults. It is important to recognise that older adults can be subject to domestic violence and raise awareness, particularly in BME communities.

Issues are reported to the Adult Safeguarding Board and statistical information is also provided to the Department of Health.

### **Walsall Supporting People service**

Walsall Council Supporting People Service is part of the Joint Commissioning Unit for Vulnerable Adults - NHS Walsall and Social Care and Inclusion. Housing related support is not considered to be a statutory requirement.

Supporting People funds Housing related support services to help 20 vulnerable client groups to remain or achieve independent living. The Supporting People service works directly with providers and stakeholders to commission and develop services and to manage contracts in place and commissions services to meet the support needs of vulnerable people including people experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. Two services to support women experiencing or at risk from domestic abuse are funded through Supporting People, provided by Caldmore Housing, a floating support service for up to 20 women, and refuge accommodation to support up to 24 women and their dependants the refuge provides direct emergency access and provides 24 hour support. Each service provides quarterly returns detailing outcomes achieved for service users, exclusions, evictions, complaints, safeguarding issues and move on arrangements. Referrals are made directly to the service providers.

The council has a duty under homelessness legislation and is required to offer housing options, advice and guidance free of charge to everyone who requests assistance. Walsall Interagency Sanctuary Panel (WISP) is commissioned to provide a victim centred initiative that aims to make it possible for victims to remain in their own homes and feel safe.

### **Caldmore Housing**

The Caldmore Housing provision is commissioned by Supporting People to provide support victims in Walsall experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse including a floating support service and the direct access refuge. Floating Support services respond to the immediate needs of women fleeing abuse by providing safe accommodation and support and a 24 hour helpline for support and signposting services. They also help to secure and manage new and existing tenancies for women who are setting up a home free of abuse.

### **WHG**

WHG, the largest social housing provider in the Borough, has recently established advice and support services for their tenants to deal with domestic abuse issues.

### **Childrens' Safeguarding Unit**



The Unit responds to all referrals relating to vulnerable children in Walsall, to keep children safe through exercise of statutory powers, to carry out an initial assessment to consider the child's needs and set up a plan to meet their needs. Where necessary, to ensure children have a chance of achieving their potential, this will utilise child protection investigations, child protection plans, children in need plans, in care proceedings, and legal proceedings. This child protection service is a statutory function, and services are commissioned through the Joint Commissioning Unit between the Council and Health Service.

Children's service staff attend Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) meetings daily, in support of the services commissioned through Walsall Domestic Violence Forum, and performance monitoring data and reported to the Children's Services Performance Board. The number of referrals for domestic abuse for looked after children was adopted as a local performance indicator within the Local Area Agreement, and performance is also monitored by the Safer Walsall Board, and Neighbourhood Services Performance Board.

### **Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART)**

People resources are allocated by partners to the daily Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) process which is managed by the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF). Representatives from Children's Services, Health, Police, Education, WDVF and where appropriate Walsall Housing group (WHG) meet daily to consider each incident of Domestic Abuse reported to Police and implement timed and appropriate interventions for each victim, child and perpetrator. Where appropriate, referrals are made to specific points of contact at the Probation and Drug and Alcohol Services.

The specific partner mainstream resources that support domestic abuse services and the daily Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) that have yet to be fully quantified, and it is anticipated they will be clarified through the proposed commissioning process. This includes funding for the Specialist Health Visitor for Domestic Abuse that equates to approx £38,000 p.a. who covers all the health related work from the DART, and the Community Nurse for Domestic Abuse (approx £25,000 p.a) who works with families in the refuge to address health needs.

DART has had a direct impact upon the reduced number of cases now requiring to be discussed at the fortnightly MARAC meetings where an Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) from WDVF attend to inform on the victims perspective.

As outlined previously, Walsall Borough's Police Public Protection Unit is a statutory partner in delivering investigation and safeguarding to victims and families affected by domestic abuse. Criminal investigations and domestic abuse incidents, where no criminal offence has occurred are initially attended by front line uniform officers. These officers will effectively deal with the incident and, where a criminal offence has occurred, will proactively seek to arrest the offender and bring them to justice.





The Police Public Protection Unit provides a team of specialist domestic abuse officers that assist with investigations, deal with offenders within the custody environment and take responsibility for on-going safeguarding strategies. The police Public Protection Unit officers also provide specialist investigation advice and safeguarding for victims of forced marriage or 'honour' based violence. Domestic Abuse forms part of the strategic assessment for West Midlands Police and is a key element across all areas of public protection.

All frontline officers receive mandated domestic abuse training with regular refresher sessions.

In the year March 2009 to February 2010 the police investigated **241** domestic abuse incidents which represent an increase of 245.9% on the previous year to February 2009. In the current year to date recorded incidents of domestic abuse are up 222.8% on the year to date. Detection rates have increased slightly from 52.7% for year ending February 2010, to 52.8% in the current year to date.

### **Walsall Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF)**

WDVF formed in 1992 and began delivering client-led services in 1998 before becoming a company limited by guarantee in 2003 and a Registered Charity in 2005. WDVF is unusual in that it is not only a multi-agency forum for statutory and voluntary agencies to share information about good practice in domestic abuse but also a major service provider in its own right. Referrals to this service are taken from DART, partner agencies or directly from the client.

WDVF has representation at all multi-agency meetings including the Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Adults, MARAC, MAPPA and the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Steering Group. WDVF act as a single point of contact of information sharing, contact, assessment and intervention for all domestic abuse incidents reported to the police. Referrals are considered on a daily basis and actions agreed. Urgent or high risk situations continue to be dealt with by the individual agencies in line with statutory responsibilities and local adult or child protection procedures.

WDVF services include:

- administering the MODUS domestic abuse database and is responsible for coordination and facilitation of the daily meetings of the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) that was first implemented in 2007
- providing a range of victim focussed interventions
- two 24 hour help-lines (Stepping Stones and SAYA multilingual)
- family support and domestic abuse risk assessment - Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) specifically trained by CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) work directly with victims and interventions include: victim and child risk assessment, individual safety planning, safeguarding victims and children, arranging safe accommodation and transport to this where required, assistance with housing, benefits and legal issues, referral to the Walsall Inter-agency Sanctuary Scheme (WISP), individual and group work for victims, and on-going support for as long as required by the client. They deal with referrals from Children's Services and carry out Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) with families where domestic abuse is the primary factor regarding child protection



concerns. DARA includes a comprehensive assessment of perpetrators to assess their capacity to stop being abusive, and of victims to determine their capacity to protect themselves and their children

- an outreach service providing support to victims within the 'hard to reach' client groups including: BME, LGBT, older people, disabilities, mental health, substance misuse and male victims
- Perpetrators programme for men who wish to stop being abusive to their partners
- weekly drop-in support groups

IDVAs have all been and are trained in the use of Visual Evidence for Victims (VEV) to take and store confidentially in line with VEV procedures, photographs of injuries where clients are not currently wishing to instigate legal proceedings but may wish to pursue this course of action in the future. This reliable photographic evidence is vital in evidencing historic incidents and improves outcomes for the criminal justice system.

WDVF generate funding from delivery of training programmes for multi-agency professionals and prospective volunteers throughout the year. Current modules include:

- Domestic Abuse Awareness
- Domestic Abuse & Child Protection (developed in conjunction with Children's Services)
- Supporting Victims of Domestic Abuse
- Working with Perpetrators
- Adult Protection (developed in conjunction with Adult Services)

Robust joint training provision is available to all workers across partner agencies and the table below gives an indication of take-up across partner agencies.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Domestic Abuse Awareness (module 1)</b>	<b>Domestic Abuse / Safeguarding Children (module 2)</b>
Children's Services	16	9
Health	11	25
Police	17	0
Children's Centre's	21	22
Family Centre's	2	2
Caldmore Housing	1	1
BCHA	3	0
WHG	11	8
Accord	0	2
Schools	32	14
Education	12	5
Playgroup / nursery (private)	5	5
Spurgeons	9	8
SWIIS	7	10
Fire Service	2	2
Volunteers	10	4
Other	55	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>173</b>



Walsall Domestic Violence Forum is commissioned by both the council's Children's Services and Adult Services departments to provide awareness and safeguarding training. Adult Protection Awareness training is mandatory training for all internal and external staff involved in providing services to vulnerable people, and there is good take-up as can be seen from the table below, which gives an indication of take-up. This forms a base-line for a new 'measure' included in the current Children's Plan.

<b>Module</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>
	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Stage 1: Domestic Abuse Awareness	344	232	214
Stage 2: Domestic Abuse & Child Protection	214	258	173
Stage 3: Supporting Victims	203	190	136
Stage 4: Adult Protection Awareness	354	691	685
<b>Total</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>1371</b>	<b>1208</b>

### **Substance Misuse Services**

This is a statutory service who commission substance misuse treatment for individuals registered with a Walsall GP. Performance monitoring reports are provided through the National Drug Misuse Database, which are monitored via the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust.

### **Victim Support**

Victim Support help victims of crime, whether reported to the Police or not. Some self referrals for domestic abuse lead to a report to the police following the right support. The service takes photographic evidence which may then be used in a court of law and also provides assistance with benefits, housing, refuges/hostels, interpreters, personal attack alarms, signposting to appropriate agencies to assist with household furniture and also removing the victim's personal effects from their home. Using listening, empathising and support, they aim to empower the victim to take back control of their lives and to move on without fear of abuse, supporting the victim in the choices they make.

## **6.2 The difference the joined up approach is making**

There are now specialist workers now available within Children's Services, Community Health and Police who have been trained to recognise and deal with domestic abuse issues.

Greater awareness of this issue and new arrangements for assessing risk across the partnership has mean that we are responding to early signs of concern. We are increasingly identifying children who are at risk and require safeguarding.

The number of referrals to Dart has increased by 18% from 2787 from April – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008/09 to 3307 from April – March 19<sup>th</sup> 2009/10.

The number of referrals of looked after children for Domestic Abuse in 2009/10 of 561 exceeded the target set of 405 for the year.



The multi-agency assessment process has improved the effectiveness of information sharing between police, children's social care and health, and has enabled a more consistent response to domestic abuse referrals.

There has also been an increase in the take up on perpetrator programmes by perpetrators

Given the possibility of improving mapping of referral pathways into all of the agencies involved, and linking in with the positives arising from Walsall's court provision, we may wish to consider other specialist roles for partner staff extending beyond MARAC.

- **Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART)**

The successful joint working of agencies through the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) process implemented in August 2007 has enabled a robust response to reported domestic abuse through police, children's services, community health, and the local authority's education contractor, SERCO. DART is a multi-agency service made up of statutory and voluntary services which acts as a single point of information sharing, contact, assessment and intervention for all domestic abuse incidents referred to the police.

Referrals are considered on a daily basis and actions agreed, urgent or high risk situations continue to be dealt with by individual agencies in line with statutory responsibilities and local adult and child protection procedures. In these circumstances DART follow up is determined on a case by case basis.

The Joint Area Review conducted by OFSTED (2008) concluded that Walsall has "*good systems to identify children and young people affected by domestic abuse and good services to support families affected by domestic abuse*".

DART has become recognised as a model of best practice, attracting much attention from other local authority areas who visit with a view to emulating the Walsall approach to Domestic Abuse. DART was 'Highly Commended' in this years West Midlands Safeguarding Awards (April 2010).

All victims referred to DART are subject to a multi agency risk assessment (MARAC) and receive a response at level 1-4. Routine use of the Barnardo's Screening Tool, introduced in 2008, for all children in families referred to DART, ensures that risk to children is fully assessed and managed. Appropriate multi-agency interventions are swiftly implemented to secure safeguarding of these children.

- **Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment ( DARA)**

Implementation of Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) for families referred by Children's Services is providing social work professionals with specific information to assist them in appropriate decision making for safeguarding children affected by Domestic Abuse. DART has significantly reduced the numbers of cases necessary to be considered by MARAC. Pre DART the average was 15 – 20 cases at the multi



agency risk assessment (MARAC). Since DART, MARAC averages 5 – 8 cases. This has significantly reduced the time spent by all agencies in both pre-MARAC checks as well as the time that senior professionals actually spend in the meeting.

Installation and implementation of the MODUS database (Feb. 2007) allows production of reliable socio-geographic statistical information and tracking of incidence including 'repeats'. It also ensures consistent tracking of cases, particularly essential in high risk cases included in MARAC process. MODUS is proving invaluable in highlighting gaps and trends where special measures may need to be taken to address the issue i.e. on average, 30% of all victims referred to DART are aged 16 – 25.

- **Networking and Joint Case Work**

Networking and joint case-work between partner agencies has improved considerably since the implementation of DART. This in turn provides victims and their children with greater continuity, cohesion and better safety planning. It is also removes the necessity for them to repeatedly 'tell their story' to a variety of agencies in order to achieve safety. The need to address domestic abuse in Walsall has been prioritised within the children and young peoples plan, Children's Trust and domestic abuse is a sub group of Walsall Safeguarding Children Board.

Wide ranging promotion of services has been successful in encouraging victim confidence in reporting incidents to Police. As evident from the year on year rise in reported cases.

The 3 year 'stretch target' to reduce repeat incidence of Domestic Abuse was successfully achieved in 2009.

- **What have WDFV service users reported ?**

Client A was a young woman who had experienced extensive physical and emotional abuse from her partner who had mental health issues and drug misuse. Client A has received support through WDFV from November 2009 to the present date. Client A was identified as a 'high risk' victim of Domestic Abuse and her case was considered at MARAC. Feedback from Client A is as follows:

Q How have you found the service so far?

A *"Fantastic I could not have got through this without you"*

Q Are there any improvements you feel are needed for the service?

A *"No not at all the only thing I can think of as being a problem were the police, that they were not taking me seriously at first"*

Q Any other suggestions or feedback?



A *"Yes when I went to the solicitors I thought that the solicitor believed I was exaggerating about what had happened". "The support letter and chronology you put together was a great help and the solicitor believes I will now get the funding from the LSC (Legal Services Commission) thank you I really do appreciate all the things you have done for me". "I've come out of this the other end and I'm proud of myself, I'm happy and content".*

- **Key Successes from Walsall's Children and Young People's Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12**

"We continue to perform very well against key performance indicators, remaining in the top quartile against comparator authorities. Domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use remain significant contributory factors leading to child protection plans. Our successful bid to pilot Think Family has meant that we are well placed to develop more creative solutions to drugs and alcohol issues with enthusiastic support from colleagues in adults and children's universal settings. We have made good progress with assessment activity, meeting timescales for core assessments in 90% of all cases. The stability of children looked after continues to improve. 462 children are looked after; this is above the target we set but in line with deprivation adjusted targets. We have made more placements available locally and reduced reliance on external residential provision. Recruitment of adopters remains strong and new ways of caring for young people in group settings is underway. We have improved our arrangements to support disabled children and we have secured the resources to replace our respite group unit. All disabled young people have a transition plan to support their move to adult services; respite provision has improved with additional places made available.

Management of child protection planning remains strong. We have maintained our child protection plan performance which averaged at 26.3 per 10,000 children in line with our statistical neighbours despite considerable challenges and increased concern about drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse issues.

Activity relating to second and subsequent child protection plans has been challenging but performance has been consistently good and in the top quartile. All reviews are held within the required timescales and children with child protection plans all have an allocated social worker. Safeguarding awareness raising has seen a proportional increase in child protection planning for children from minority ethnic communities.

Key partners have invested in joint working arrangements and development of an integrated team response to domestic abuse; this has led to a significant reduction in numbers of repeat victims and referrals to Specialist Children Services. We have exceeded our target on assessment activity with 80% per cent of all initial assessments and 90% of core assessments completed within timescales. Our approach to sexual exploitation continues to have the support



of all partner agencies, group work activity with a small number of very vulnerable young people has increased self esteem and contributed to their return to mainstream education."

### Case study

The School made a referral to child concern workers that the mother was not coping with the behaviour of her 7 year old son, one of six siblings. There was domestic violence, financial problems and mom had no self esteem. Several meetings were held and Sure Start, education and school health were all involved, an assessment (CAF) was completed and additional support offered. It was a chaotic household with no routines and boundaries. Support offered was a success; the mother started working as a volunteer at Sure Start and progressed to paid work in the kitchen.

Work was carried out with the mother with regard to her self esteem, and reducing domestic abuse. Since this happened there have been significant changes in the home, dad is now taking on some responsibility with looking after the children and the house.

The annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within Walsall MBC Children's Services conducted by OFSTED in December 2010, found that:

*"There are strong multi-agency partnership arrangements in place, particularly with the police to ensure a prompt and effective response to children, young people and their families affected by, or at potential risk of domestic abuse. There is a high level of multi-agency commitment to resourcing the daily consideration of domestic abuse incidents strengthening the safeguarding arrangements for the affected children and young people." (Ofsted 31/12/2010)*

- **Criminal Justice System**

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Walsall Local Operational Group brings together partners from the Magistrates Court, Police, Community Safety, Probation, Crown Prosecution, Witness Service and Walsall Domestic Violence Forum.

A recent example of their work has been to unblock the system following the entry of a guilty plea.

The individual once having pleaded guilty would be bailed and leave Court to be notified by post of the date to attend Court and complete the risk assessment of the defendant to the victim with Probation. This is needed by the Court for sentencing. The letter with these appointments would frequently be 'missed' resulting in no risk assessment being completed and causing the Court to have to wait a further three weeks before sentencing.



The Court service have undertaken to contact the probation service directly to arrange the appointment for the perpetrator there and then to avoid any delays and enable to the Court to sentence in a timely manner.

- **Youth Opportunities Fund and Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Team**

Youth Opportunities Fund and Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Team have jointly funded a creative arts project to develop and deliver a film project to raise awareness around domestic abuse for young people, in particular highlighting the links between domestic abuse and teenage pregnancy. Groups of young people are currently working with appointed arts workers to develop scripts, ideas, style and content of the film. A DVD will be produced which can be used as an informative, friendly and accessible resource for young people aged 13-19.

### **6.3 Identifying gaps in current provision**

Through the consultation process, partner agencies have identified the following gaps in current provision. It is intended that the commissioning process described in section 4 will focus on realistic actions to address these gaps in mapping current service provision, and need, and in developing an integrated pathway for domestic abuse prevention, intervention, support and offender management in conjunction with the statutory services, agencies and stakeholders currently involved in this work.

1. No single reporting system used by all agencies to establish the true picture – at the moment different agencies hold different statistics, there may be duplication and omissions
2. No clear local picture of need and take-up of services as providers do not all specify referrals directly related to domestic abuse.
3. No clear picture of the total spend in tackling domestic abuse across all partners – where efficiencies might be made, and where more spending is needed
4. Lack of appropriate provision for
  - a. older people
  - b. victims and perpetrators with physical and/or mental health issues.
  - c. young people - The need for a Young Persons Advisor (YP IDVA). 30% of all referrals to DART involve victims age 16-24.
5. No regular representation at DART by specialist workers for mental health and alcohol misuse.
6. Lack of specialist support for those with mental health issues as a result of domestic abuse or vice versa.





7. No provision of a local Crisis intervention Service to victims at all times (out of hours) as support immediately following an incident is proven to reduce repeat incidents. [Due to resource constraints the Crisis intervention Service which had previously been operating ceased in November 2010.]
8. Safe and appropriate accommodation for victims with additional needs - women with older children, male victims, substance misuse issues etc.
9. Safe emergency accommodation for victims who, because of their immigration status, have no recourse to public funds.
10. Flexible accommodation to enable victims to safely plan to leave an abusive partner.
11. Clear programme for work in schools to challenge attitudes and behaviours towards domestic abuse to improve awareness and to increase early reporting.
12. A stable funding stream.

DRAFT



# Appendix One

## Adult Protection Awareness Course

### Target audience

Everyone who has contact with vulnerable adults.

The course is designed for those who are working directly with older people and/or their carers whether in residential, day care, community or hospital setting.

### Objectives

To enable participants to identify abuse of vulnerable adults and make appropriate referrals.

### Course outline

By the end of the course participants will be able to:

- List at least two definitions of abuse
- Give examples of those who are at risk
- List the different categories of abuse
- Explain environmental and personal factors which may make abuse more likely
- List possible reasons for why being a carer can precipitate an abusing environment
- Describe a strategy for referral of such a case to the appropriate authorities, taking into account the new 'no secrets' guide

### Assessment method

Test paper



## Appendix Two

### Cases flagged at Special Domestic Violence Court

UP TO 31.3.10

		2007-08	2008-09	2009 - 10	TOTAL
<b>Birmingham</b>	Unsuccessful	447	416	474	1337
	Successful	603	609	783	1995
	Total	1050	1025	1257	3332
	Attrition Rate	42.57%	40.58%	37.70%	40.12%
	League Position	7th	7th	7th	7th
<b>Sutton Coldfield</b>	Unsuccessful	83	81	74	238
	Successful	169	162	157	488
	Total	252	243	231	726
	Attrition Rate	32.93%	33.33%	32.03%	32.78%
	League Position	4th	6th	4th	5th
<b>Coventry and Solihull</b>	Unsuccessful	182	191	212	585
	Successful	520	520	575	1615
	Total	702	711	787	2200
	Attrition Rate	25.92%	26.86%	26.93%	26.59%
	League Position	1st	3rd	2nd	2nd
<b>Dudley and Halesowen</b>	Unsuccessful	86	62	76	224
	Successful	218	194	225	637
	Total	304	256	301	861
	<b>Attrition Rate</b>	<b>28.28%</b>	<b>24.21%</b>	<b>25.25%</b>	<b>26.01%</b>
	<b>League Position</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>1st</b>
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	Unsuccessful	147	143	174	464
	Successful	260	307	311	878
	Total	407	450	485	1342
	Attrition Rate	36.11%	31.78%	35.88%	34.46%
	<b>League Position</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>6th</b>
<b>Warley and West Brom.</b>	Unsuccessful	147	121	136	404
	Successful	285	299	283	867
	Total	432	420	419	1271
	<b>Attrition Rate</b>	<b>34.02%</b>	<b>28.80%</b>	<b>32.46%</b>	<b>31.78%</b>
	<b>League Position</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>4th</b>
<b>Walsall</b>	Unsuccessful	131	94	123	348
	Successful	304	271	291	866
	Total	435	365	414	1214
	<b>Attrition Rate</b>	<b>30.11%</b>	<b>25.75%</b>	<b>29.71%</b>	<b>28.67%</b>
	<b>League Position</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>3rd</b>



