

## **Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner**

**Topic:** Domestic Abuse and Rape and Sexual Assault

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### **Purpose of briefing**

To advise the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on the current position and any associated issues relating to Domestic Abuse (DA), Rape and Sexual Assault.

### **Background**

As with all victims of crime, PCCs are responsible for ensuring services are available to enable victims of DA, rape or sexual assault, and their families, to cope with and recover from their experience. Subsequently, this is a 'must do' area of work. Accountability is through regular and routine performance monitoring by the MOJ and work is underpinned by several national policy and strategy drivers:

- The Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services
- The National Violence against Women and Girls Strategy
- The National Victims Strategy
- The Domestic Abuse Bill
- Domestic Abuse is Everyone's Business (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services)

The OPCC jointly commissions support for victims of DA with Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council and the main provider is Harbour. Several partners are responsible for commissioning Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) i.e. PCCs, Police, NHSE, local authorities and CCGs. Separately, the OPCC commissions the Rape and Sexual Assault Counselling Centre (RSACC) to deliver an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service and a level of counselling support.

Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation are also included in this category and the OPCC currently commissions HALO to deliver the specialist support required for victims of these crimes.

### **Lessons learnt**

Given that several partners have responsibilities in relation to commissioning services that support victims/survivors of these areas of work, it is crucial that effective partnership working is in place to avoid duplication or gaps in provision, ensure seamless pathways and secure economies of scale.

### **Current issues**

- The Domestic Abuse Bill is expected to be published later this year and will place additional duties on partners.
- Reports of DA, rape and sexual assault are increasing year on year and this impacts on waiting lists and response times by providers of support.
- There is national concern about the low number of rape cases proceeding to charge although this does not appear to be reflected locally.
- Work is on-going with NHS England and Cleveland, and Northumbria PCCs to introduce a regional commissioning approach to delivery of Sexual Assault Referral Centres.

- Several provider contracts will end in March 2022 so procurement activities will need to start in June/July 2021 to ensure sufficient mobilisation periods.

**Decisions needed**

None pending

**Partnership involvement**

The main partnership forums are the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group, the SARC Board, the regional SARC Commissioning Project Group and the various sub-groups associated with these.

**Police involvement**

The OPCC works closely with the Police Safeguarding Teams in Police when considering commissioning, policy and strategy decisions relating to DA, rape, and sexual assault. The Police are also represented on DASVEG and the SARC Board and issues specific to police responsibilities in terms of DA, rape and sexual assault are discussed at Total Victim Care meetings.

**People to meet**

Force Safeguarding Leads; Durham County Council Public Health Leads; Darlington Borough Council Public Health and Commissioning Leads, and members of DASVEG.