

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY



VERA BAIRD QC
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER



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Two women killed a week.
One in five 999 calls.
Families driven from their homes.
Lives destroyed by fear.

The impact of domestic and sexual abuse is immense. I've talked to a woman who was so afraid of her husband that she locked herself in her children's bedroom each night for months before she found the strength to leave.

If there was this much violence at football matches, there would be Government taskforces, new laws, strong campaigns. Instead, the opposite is happening. Work backed by Government over many years to reduce domestic violence, increase rape prosecutions, tackle stalking and harassment and keep women safe has been cut and in many areas the clock is being turned back.

That's why I strongly welcome the leadership shown by Vera Baird and the partnership and joint strategy with Police and Crime Commissioners Ron Hogg and Barry Copping. Together they are showing that violence against women should never be tolerated.

This shared vision for the North East shows how broad action needs to be. It's not just about the criminal justice system, it means promoting good preventative and intervention policies to regional and local partners too. And it means looking at all aspects of violence - in the home, and journeying across the seas, from domestic abuse to human trafficking.

Agencies need to work together. Specialist training for frontline staff is key. So too is the innovative work the North East are leading to engage employers. And access to specialist services and support like Independent Domestic Violence Advocates remains vital.

This strategy from the North East's Commissioners shows we don't have to accept this cycle of violence and abuse. I note the Commissioners call for a 'culture change' in dealing with violence against women and girls. They are right too and I hope the spirit of this strategy spreads far and wide.

The Right Honourable
Yvette Cooper
Shadow Home Secretary



Vera Baird



Barry Copping



Ron Hogg

Introduction from the Police and Crime Commissioners

Our joint vision for the north east is of a strong and confident region which strives to be fair and just. This can only be achieved if all of our citizens are safe and feel safe.

Being protected from violence and exploitation is a basic human right and as public authorities we are required by the Human Rights Act 1998 to protect our citizens' rights and to ensure they are not violated. We are all fully committed to human rights and take on that obligation readily.

As Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) we are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 which requires us to work to promote equality between women and men, for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people, for disabled people, for older and younger people, for people of faith or belief and across all the diverse populations of our region. We share a total commitment to equality and a joint intention to work to make that equality real.

“ We came together to develop this strategy because we are all clear that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is at the same time a serious breach of human rights and both a continuing significant cause of women’s inequality with men and a historic consequence of that inequality. ”

We acknowledge the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), within which the UK has national obligations in exercising due diligence in preventing violence against women.

We looked at the work of the Council of Europe between 2008 and 2011 which revealed not only the magnitude of the problem of Violence against Women and Girls in Europe but also how much national responses to it vary across the continent. It gave rise to the Istanbul Convention of April 2011 which seeks to harmonise legal standards so that all victims benefit from the same level of protection. The Convention has a strong focus on prevention, the protection of victims and ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators.

Based on the premise that no single agency or institution can deal with violence against women and domestic violence alone and that an effective response requires a concerted effort by many different actors, the convention asks that parties implement comprehensive and co-ordinated policies involving government agencies and national, regional and local bodies. This north east regional strategy is intended to reflect that approach.

In the north east there are many agencies already at work tackling this issue. With the election of the PCCs in November 2012, Northern Rock Foundation and North East Women’s Network (NEWN), a network of women’s community and voluntary sector organisations, planned a project to scrutinise how the new PCCs would tackle violence against women. However, they agreed instead to work with the PCCs and have used their extensive links with women’s

organisations, on a detailed consultation about the experiences of victims and survivors of violence, to inform and help shape the Commissioners' strategy itself. Thus the major women's network in the region has been integrally involved in the development of this strategy. All the parties expect this to produce a better outcome for local women and we would like to thank all those who have taken part. A summarised and edited version of NEWN's recommendations follow at annex 1.

‘ In addition to the consultation NEWN has helped us to map current women's services in the region. We applaud the contributions to tackling VAWG currently being made by all of those services. ’

Our new role, powers and responsibilities will enable us to enhance and supplement their work in a number of ways. Firstly, we can set police priorities to ensure that VAWG is taken seriously and policed properly. Secondly, we can work with our Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) with whom we share a duty to have regard to each other's priorities. We can reinforce their current work on VAWG, help to spread best practice across the CSPs and work with them on new actions in our strategy. We have a similar duty with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) which will also give us influence and opportunities. Thirdly, we have a commissioning role, albeit relatively small which we can use to further our aims. Further, as visible, elected public representatives in our region we have a profile which we hope to use to draw other agencies, businesses and social capital into support for this work.

At a time when there are huge Government cuts to funding, both to police and to our local partners, it is imperative that we work closely together to make the best of the resources we have. Prevention and early intervention are watchwords in tackling VAWG but both are given enhanced prominence by the need for economy. Clearly if VAWG can be prevented the estimated annual costs of £15.7bn (2008) can be saved and, of course, people safeguarded.

Prevention and early intervention require the involvement of the wider society to be effective. Some of the actions in our strategy therefore reach beyond our core policing and community safety responsibilities and involve us in promoting good preventative and intervention policies to regional and local partners. If we can use our profile in that way we will, at the same time, be widening public understanding of the prevalence and consequences of VAWG, which in turn will contribute to changing the current culture.

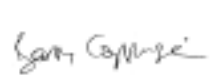
‘ We are very aware that tackling the culture which permits violence against women is a huge task. We need to work to make the north east a safe place for the next generation of women. ’

Partnership working with the statutory agencies, schools, colleges, universities and other trainers of all kinds will be especially important here. This pledge will be the most difficult to monitor and the slowest to fulfil, but it is one of the most important. In this strategy we set out what we are currently doing in this area of culture change but this work is so fundamental that we intend to publish a further comprehensive paper on how we will take this forward early next year.

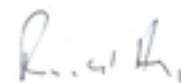
We have developed this strategy in partnership with a number of organisations and we are very aware that we can only implement it in partnership too. We look forward to the challenges ahead.



Vera Baird
PCC for Northumbria



Barry Coppinger
PCC for Cleveland



Ron Hogg
PCC for Durham





**THE SCALE OF
THE PROBLEM
IN THE REGION**



These tables show an overview of the scale of the VAWG problem across Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland using data from April 2012 – March 2013.

Domestic Violence (DV)	Durham	Cleveland	Northumbria
DV incidents	12,571	13,645	27,275
Number of incidents with a female victim	9,222	9,517	22,247
Number of actual female victims	5,702	6,821	13,133
Crimes associated with the DV incidents	2,981	2,325	4,355
Number of female victims of crime	2,113	1,137	2,544

Specific crimes/ incidents against females	Durham	Cleveland	Northumbria
Serious sexual offences	35	27	47
Violence against the person	1,894	872	2,045
Female genital mutilation	0	0	0
Stalking (since Nov 2012)	3	1	4
Honour based violence incidents	15	26	45

All three Commissioners have identified VAWG as a priority in their Police and Crime Plans and have set out how they intend to end this violence. Work has begun across the region, with progress being made and this section provides the latest overview of this.

In Northumbria the Commissioner has a Police and Crime Plan objective to ensure:

- A reduction in sexual and domestic abuse.
- An overall better service for victims and others affected.
- More confidence in reporting.
- An undertaking that police will connect those affected by domestic and sexual abuse to a local support organisation following contact, irrespective of whether a crime has been committed or a prosecution is wanted.
- Better trained 'first responders' and specialist police.
- Improved victim's experience through the criminal justice process.

Police and Crime Plan	Previous year	April – Sept 2013	Comparison against target
Ensuring 100% of high risk victims have been offered an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) or Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)	New measure	100% (1,722) IDVAs	Meeting target
		100% (181) IDVAs	Meeting target
Monitoring and improving levels of referrals of victims to partner agencies in order to reduce the victim risk	New measure	100% (1,903 referrals) Plus 43.4% of medium risk victims referred to victim support	Meeting target
Delivering 100% compliance with the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment toolkit and risk assessment for all victims of domestic abuse	New measure	100% (14,539)	Meeting target
Ensuring that high risk victims of domestic violence are supported through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process	New measure	100% (1,722)	Meeting target

In addition a number of activities have taken place to support delivery of this objective:

1. Domestic Violence, Stalking and Harassment training has been delivered to more than 2,000 frontline staff and all the workforce will be trained by April 2014. Updated stalking and harassment guidance is available on the force website.
2. A review of the criteria against which victims are assessed as high risk has been completed and has increased the number of victims being assessed as high risk and referred to IDVAs.
3. An external Northumbria wide domestic abuse campaign will run from November 2013 to February 2014.
4. To enhance the investigation of all incidents of domestic and sexual abuse and violence a critical incident board will be created. The findings of both internal and national serious case reviews will be used to shape organisational learning.
5. The performance measures above are being reviewed in order to focus on the vast majority of cases of domestic violence which are graded as medium risk.

In Cleveland in the Police and Crime Plan the Commissioner has undertaken as part of his protecting people objective, “to ensure a better deal for victims and witnesses we must focus upon safeguarding those most vulnerable in our society, victims of sexual and domestic abuse, children and young people at risk and those suffering from hate crime”.

Key Performance Indicators	12/13	Sept 2013	Percentage difference
The positive outcome rate for victims of sexual violence	33.5%		
The number of incidents of domestic abuse involving a repeat victim	2,776	2,544	-8.4%
The positive outcome for domestic abuse incidents resulting in a crime	50.4%	47.3%	-3.1%
Number of MARAC repeat cases (repeat crime whilst still in MARAC)	124	98	-21.0%

In addition a number of activities have taken place to support delivery of this objective:

- Cleveland Police utilise Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) to take Victim Impact Statements to enhance the quality of cases presented at court.
- In Cleveland, in order to ensure opportunities are not missed, all incidents of domestic violence are monitored by front line supervisors and are subject to review on a daily basis by the Protecting Vulnerable People team.
- Two risk assessments are conducted on all cases of domestic violence. A first risk assessment is carried out using agreed criteria to ensure appropriate prioritisation of force resources. This is followed by a full CAADA risk assessment to ensure all aspects of harm are addressed and that there are no 'missed opportunities' to protect victims and tackle perpetrators.

In Durham the Commissioner has a personal objective in the Police and Crime Plan “to reduce the impact of domestic abuse, particularly violence against women and girls”.

Key measurement	Percentage change	Direction of travel
Domestic abuse incidents - % change	4.6%	
% of repeat incidents of domestic violence cases reviewed at MARAC	12.5%	↔
Sexual offences - % change	65.8%	↓
Sexual offences - outcome rate	26.8%	↓

Progress towards achieving these commitments:

- The PCC has agreed to work with both Durham and Darlington Community Safety Partnerships, who tackle domestic and sexual abuse under three strands: prevent, provision and protection. Under prevent, there has been a number of successful marketing campaigns, awareness raising amongst professionals, work in schools and promotion of early intervention models, such as the Stronger Family Project. Under provision, the agencies working under the banner of the CSP, have commissioned services for victims including outreach work and refuges. Under the protection strand there have been a number of improvements such as the serial perpetrators of violence project which has been implemented to ensure we bring perpetrators to justice.
- A Domestic Abuse Seminar was held in April 2013 and a number of volunteers were identified. As a result, the Durham PCC has commissioned several work streams to identify and drive forward actions to address gaps in current service provision. In addition, one of the volunteers participated in a radio interview in support of the force Star Radio campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence.
- Durham PCC has given his support and funded a project led by the Soroptimist International of Darlington and District Group educating both men and women on the signs of potentially abusive relationships. The 'Loves Me, Loves Me Not' list was created and printed on bookmarks and posters which were distributed to schools, doctors and dental surgeries, colleges and public buildings around Darlington. The bookmarks and posters were designed to appeal to both male and female victims of domestic violence and more than 13,000 bookmarks have been handed out.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) were established by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, and first elected across England and Wales on 15 November 2012.

They replaced indirectly elected Police Authorities which functioned through committees and sub-committees at a cost to the public purse significantly higher than that of most of their successor PCCs. Commissioners provide a more visible and responsive local public representation in matters concerning crime and community safety.

PCCs have a statutory duty to develop a Police and Crime Plan (PCP), ensuring that they consult with the public so the priorities it contains for the police to deliver are those of concern to local people. It must say what resources will be provided to the Chief Constable (CC) and how performance will be measured. Both the PCC and the CC must have regard to the local PCP in the exercise of their duties.

PCCs must:

- Secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police force within their area.
- Hold the CC to account for the delivery of the PCP.
- Hold the police grant from Government and set the local policing precept from council tax.
- Be responsible for the appointment, suspension and dismissal of the CC.
- PCCs and CSPs have a duty to have regard to each other's priorities. The LCJBs have to work with PCCs to make arrangements to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for that police area.



**DOMESTIC AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND ABUSE**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: - any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Sexual assault and rape are invariably part of domestic abuse and we acknowledge that they are all very difficult to disclose. With some kinds of VAWG, such as so-called honour based violence, there is also cultural pressure against seeking help. VAWG is thus still seriously under-reported. For instance, Office of National Statistics findings from the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) suggest that of the estimated 1.2m domestic abuse victims nationwide, just under 50% never report incidents to the police.

Whilst public authorities such as police, councils, housing agencies and the voluntary sector have tried to make access to help for victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) easier, even now those who do eventually report will usually only do so after many acts of abuse have occurred.

So, our overall aim is to make help more available so that whenever or wherever a victim feels able to seek help, there is someone in her immediate surroundings who has training to cope calmly with any disclosure and can engage her with support services and a route to safety. We want also to encourage services to work more closely so that when a victim does speak out, she will not be referred on from agency to agency for each separate need, but having made a disclosure to one agency, will get access to all the sources of help she needs.

Strategy for employers - “Domestic and sexual violence and abuse in the workplace”

Employers have a responsibility to provide staff with a safe working environment and we know that for some staff the workplace can be their only safe haven from domestic violence and abuse.

The impact of DSVa on the individual can have far reaching consequences in the workplace such as undermining the employee’s ability to work. In 2009 domestic abuse cost businesses in productivity and output almost £2bn through physical injury alone. In addition, it can contribute to lateness or absenteeism, all potentially impacting on the employer through weaker performance.

Victims may be at increased risk of harm in their workplace if they leave an abusive partner, as it may be the only place where they can be located. The tragic case of Jane Clough demonstrates this. Although she moved house after reporting her partner for repeatedly raping her, he was bailed by the court and stabbed her to death at the hospital where she worked.

A current Domestic Homicide Review has disclosed that the subject of the review ‘J’ was known to police, A&E, Safeguarding and other authorities as a DSVa victim but the person who knew more than all of those was her line manager, in whom she confided at work. Through no fault of his own, he did not know what to do with the information, beyond offering a shoulder to cry on. A workplace policy could have guided him and perhaps made a difference. There is a contrasting account of businesswoman ‘F’ who was suffering from extremely persistent DSVa but told her employer about it. The employer carefully planned with ‘F’ to transfer her to a distant branch of the business without telling her colleagues where she had gone. When her partner came looking for her, not only was she no longer there but her colleagues were able to say that they did not know where she was. ‘F’ is a frequent participant at VAWG conferences and makes it clear that in her view her employer saved her life.

Our draft model employers’ strategy sets out clear policies and pathways and we will help with initial training so that selected management and employee ‘Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions’ can be

up-skilled to offer a confidential, sympathetic and well-informed first point of contact. It is at annex 2.

We will promote this strategy with businesses, working with the North East Chamber of Commerce, Institute of Directors and small and medium enterprises.

We will promote it too with colleagues in the public sector, working with both local politicians and managers. We know there are good policies already in place in some workplaces and will seek the support of those employers in passing on their good practice. Newcastle City Council recently adopted a strategy

whose impact is being monitored by the charity Refuge and we will learn from those results.

We will work with our colleagues in the trade unions to promote this, mindful that many of them are involved with this issue in workplaces and are likely to be a key link to suitable DSVa champions.

We aim to make such a strategy an accepted component of workplace policy for a modern business, in the same way that risk strategies and equalities policies are now – to both of which domestic abuse is highly relevant.

PRIORITY ONE

We will promote a strategy for employers - “Domestic and Sexual Abuse and the Workplace” to make sure that anyone affected can find confidential support at work and be helped to safety.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions

Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions will have an important role within their organisation in raising awareness around the issue of DSVa and guiding people towards help and guidance. Champions will have access to additional training and resources in order to provide this help and support to their colleagues.

The Champion will be the point of contact for their agency for information relating to DSVa. They will be backed by a Champions Network which will aim to improve community and organisational responses and provide training and assistance to enable front line staff to support to the standard and medium risk cases not picked up by MARACs or specialist IDVA services. The MARAC and the IDVA services are only available to high risk victims, whereas the overwhelming majority of cases are low to medium risk.

We aim to identify and train a substantial number of Champions between January and March 2014. Champions will meet on a regular basis to add to their knowledge and build professional relationships.

We need to ensure Champions are aware of cultural differences and needs of victims. This will include understanding and being aware of the different pathways and referral opportunities that exist to meet the needs of individuals. This would include a greater understanding of the wider VAWG that could include, forced marriage, so-called honour based violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Managers and strategic leads will be key to finding people for the Champion’s role and to encourage and support them. A role description for the Champions is attached at annex 3.

We will look to have an accreditation programme and a disciplinary code to ensure high standards are upheld.

PRIORITY TWO

We will encourage the establishment of trained Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions in as many employment, public and private arenas as possible so that there is safe access to confidential help and support in a wide range of locations.

Cultural change

Our consultation highlights the need for a strong commitment to culture change in particular amongst young people to ensure early intervention to change attitudes and promote a zero tolerance approach to violence. Violence in sexual relationships is all too common as a result of young people not being taught about relationships and consent. It is just as important to educate boys as it is girls and good quality education should not just focus on sex, it should also be about autonomy, saying no, relationships, awareness of abuse and empowering young women.

In Durham the PCC has supported and funded a project led by the Soroptimist International of Darlington and District Group educating both men and women on the signs of potentially abusive relationships. The 'Loves Me, Loves Me Not' list is printed on bookmarks and posters, distributed to schools, doctors and dental surgeries, colleges and public buildings, designed to appeal to both male and female victims of domestic violence. More than 13,000 bookmarks have been handed out.

The Cleveland PCC is working closely with EVA in an innovative project due to be rolled out in Cleveland in 2014. EVA offers specialist support including, accommodation, advocacy and counselling to women and children fleeing domestic and sexual violence and will take the lead in preventative work with young people in the Tees Valley. They will divert young people away from offending and support those young people who have experienced sexual and/or domestic violence. Based on work in schools in the past and research they will create a Tees Valley wide awareness raising campaign which incorporates:

- Briefing sessions for teachers on dealing with disclosures and supporting young people.
- Awareness raising sessions for schools - running separate sessions for boys and girls.
- Campaign materials and a mobile phone App designed to help young people stay safe.
- Support from the PCC will also cover sessional workers fees, campaign materials and the mobile phone App development together with teachers' network costs.

In Northumbria the PCC has commissioned Sage Gateshead to carry out a project in schools that will use music and creativity to engage young people to encourage personal change as well as attitude change and building confidence to advocate positive behaviours. The expected outcome for young people is that they will report a greater sense of autonomy and choice making confidence around the key issues of domestic abuse.

Educational and media campaigns can challenge attitudes across society and behaviour among individuals, agencies, organisations and communities. A series of campaigns will include 'Walking on Eggshells', aimed at encouraging women to report domestic violence; a 'consent' campaign about rape, pointing out that a person who is drunk cannot, in law, consent to sex; and a campaign to encourage healthy teenage relationships.

We will continue to lobby nationally to make personal, social and health education a statutory provision in schools. We will return to the question of cultural change in a separate paper.

PRIORITY THREE	We will develop a plan to promote the value of early interventions in schools and strengthen learning amongst young people about healthy relationships.
PRIORITY FOUR	We will have a series of promotional campaigns aimed at preventing violence against women and girls and also changing the culture at all levels of wider society.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs

We know from consultation and experience that when organisations work together and respond to DSVAs they can provide, from one contact point, a wide range of help and support services for someone who is suffering from DSVAs or trying to escape it. These can be as wide ranging as help to change a school for a child if they have moved, applying for benefits or for more personal needs such as counselling.

A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a central resource that would receive all referrals enabling this 'wrap around' care to be provided. It is staffed with professionals from a range of agencies including police, probation, health, education and social care, who share information to ensure early identification of potential significant harm to trigger interventions to prevent further harm. The staff gather together this information and use it speedily to decide the most appropriate intervention.

Working this way reduces the number of different professionals involved, while keeping the most appropriate professional to deliver interventions for the needs identified in any particular case. It avoids unnecessary duplication and visits and simplifies processes whilst also improving communication between professionals.

To be most effective a MASH would have staff co-located in one building and linked computer systems between organisations with sound analysis of information and shared training opportunities. This will mean effective resource allocation and allow professionals to react to changes in people's situations whilst carrying out continuous risk assessment determining the level of intervention needed.

There are challenges, and we can learn from other people's experiences and similarly share our own learning. Although there is no MASH in the region that is specifically for DSVAs there are examples of multi-agency MASHs.

PRIORITY FIVE	We intend to pilot a domestic violence Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to serve two local authority areas in the region with the aim of encouraging public services and the voluntary and community sector to work together more closely for wraparound support for victims.
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In Durham a safeguarding MASH has been in operation for three years and includes representatives from Adult and Children's Social Services and Mental Health with a commitment from Health to join this year. At this MASH all domestic abuse forms are considered for risk to both children and victim. An incidental example of the efficacy of this safeguarding MASH is that it removed the need for officers to complete separate child and domestic abuse forms.

Darlington Borough Council has piloted a similar MASH in Darlington Police Station. Darlington Borough Council Children's Services will incorporate their duty team and health visitors alongside the Child Abuse Investigation Team and Domestic Abuse Investigation Team. The MASH has its own diversionary officer funded by health who works closely with police and outreach services so that victims are supported appropriately.

A similar children's safeguarding MASH in Northumbria came on line in October 2013 at Gillbridge Police Station in Sunderland, there is considerable input from the local authority and health sector as well as the police.

Our aim will be to develop the specific DSVAs MASH as the other MASHs progress, working very closely to ensure that best practice is applied to all of them and especially that the DSVAs MASH, whilst pursuing its own targets, does not adopt protocols or working practices which will separate it from future integration or closer working. All of the MASH projects will be closely monitored and evaluated.

Helping police to tackle domestic and sexual violence

In Northumbria, the PCC's Plan provides that whenever a DSVa victim contacts the police, officers will attend, and take action and, whether a crime has been committed or not and whether or not a prosecution is wanted, an officer will offer to connect the victim with a local support group like Women's Aid or Rape Crisis. We understand that many women want help and support from an independent women's group rather than formal police action and we want to pass them on to the experts so they can be empowered to deal with their situation.

Police will soon be able to connect women even earlier with help and advice by using Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs), which come into force in March 2014. They permit police to order the short term removal of the perpetrator, renewable on application to the Magistrates Court, to stop his conduct but, in particular, to allow an opportunity for the victim to get advice as to her options whilst he is away. DVPO pilots across the country appear to have led to a reduction in repeat call-outs and in re-victimisation in more chronic cases. They are a valuable tool for officers as they give victims time, space and safety to make decisions and to receive tailored support, as well as reversing the usual presumption that the victim is the one who should leave.

Meanwhile, in Northumbria there is a pilot scheme in which experienced workers from the women's organisation Wearside Women in Need (WWIN) go out on duty with police at peak times in response to calls about DSVa. While the police engage with the perpetrator, the WWIN worker will talk to the woman and offer advice and support. This again will bring early intervention for the victim. It is also likely to improve risk assessment, since the WWIN workers are very experienced.

So, police are helping women to engage with support services but they are still required, as at present, to work out an action plan with every victim to keep her

safe on an ongoing basis. The dynamics of DSVa are complex and we have found through our continuing month by month scrutiny of frontline police that they are sometimes not sure how to shape their action plans to have a safe and positive impact. So we will resource an advisor, from a women's organisation, for six months as a pilot, to act as a consultee for police officers to help them with action planning.

We are confident that these various approaches will produce an optimal way to ensure that every call to the police about DSVa has the effect of connecting the victim with expert help and support whilst ensuring that police plan properly to keep her safe.

Victimless prosecutions

It is not only difficult for victims of DSVa to report what is happening but highly problematic for victims to go to court to prosecute the perpetrator. Generally, women want the abuse to stop and are uninterested in a prosecution or conviction.

Nonetheless perpetrators should be exposed, brought to Court and rehabilitated or deterred. Many will be serial perpetrators unless they are stopped and so victimless prosecutions, although difficult, can be in the public interest.

A regional protocol is being developed around victimless prosecutions between the three Chief Constables and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This will define the preferred standard for corroborative evidence in all DSVa cases and is intended to support the joint CPS and police strategy for improving investigation and prosecution. The protocol states that in all cases the investigating officer, or the officer first attending at the scene of an incident, will seek to obtain and provide to the CPS, when seeking a charging decision:

- Digital photos of the scene of the incident.
- Digital photos of injuries caused to the victim.
- Digital copy (or other audio) of the 999 call.
- Body worn camera or other video footage obtained on attendance at the scene of the domestic violence incident.

From November 2013, in Farringdon and Washington, Northumbria Police are piloting the use of body worn camcorders to support this protocol and the officers equipped with these will be the first to be deployed.

Durham Police has adopted a similar approach and also has camcorders in use. In addition where the officer in charge of the investigation believes there is sufficient evidence to charge, but CPS decline, the CPS appeal process will be robustly followed by all three

police forces. A review of this approach in Durham will be completed shortly.

Cleveland Police has adopted the Director of Public Prosecution's protocol for obtaining best evidence on initial attendance. Work is on-going in respect of body worn camcorders to assist in that, and Cleveland Police is actively considering adopting the principals of witness assessment and taking a victim focused approach. This will mean factors that previously would have deemed a victim or witness to be unreliable, may actually be factors to support the case for prosecution. This could be factors such as victims who frequently call to report domestic violence or perhaps have a history of withdrawing accusations which will now be seen to support the case for a prosecution.

PRIORITY SIX

We will pilot WWIN workers accompanying response officers on calls to DVSA and trial a Domestic and Sexual Violence Support Worker to advise police on safe action plans.

PRIORITY SEVEN

We will drive forward the new protocol for Victimless Prosecutions signed by the Chief Crown Prosecutor and the three regional Chief Constables and evaluate the impact of body worn cameras on prosecutions.

Perpetrators

Clearly, if DVPOs are to be effective, accommodation will have to be provided for perpetrators, which in the context of regionwide social housing shortages presents a challenge to providers, not least for accommodation of 'unworthy' people before others. We congratulate and support Gentoo, a local social housing provider, for their foresight in seeing this developing need and for being prepared to put accommodating perpetrators into its priorities.

Gentoo is also training local housing officials to become group facilitators and integrated support workers for a perpetrator course they are designing, which will be co-led by male and female staff. It will be a 26 week programme including assessment for risk and motivation, assessment of programme readiness and on-going maintenance with the ideal group size being approximately 12 men. The course is not a court sentence but an early intervention which aims to change attitudes and behaviour quickly and will involve monitoring and tracking outcomes.

There are other perpetrator programmes in the region, notably through women's organisations who work with both parties to offer the perpetrator a route to change his behaviour and empower the survivor to safely resist his power and control. We are awaiting the outcome of scrutiny of perpetrator programmes currently ongoing through the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit at London Metropolitan University and Durham University and will lend our support to their findings.

Alcohol and domestic and sexual violence

Alcohol is often a particular factor in domestic abuse and is often referred to as if it was a cause of DSVa, but it is not. Like all VAWG, DSVa occurs through the wish to exercise power and control and will not be solved by tackling the alcohol abuse which often accompanies it. However, there can be little doubt that both frequency of incidents and levels of violence are likely to be related to the consumption of excess alcohol.

For instance, of the 4,355 crimes linked to DSVa in one of our policing areas in 2012/13 the links to alcohol were as follows:

- 2,274 offenders were under the influence of alcohol.
- 1,031 victims were under the influence of alcohol.
- 938 cases showed both victim and offender under the influence of alcohol.

In our respective Police and Crime Plans we have all made clear our strong commitment to tackling alcohol abuse and its powerful and widespread effect on criminality in the region. Even though we appreciate that tackling alcohol is not a solution to DSVa we all, nonetheless, support a variety of alcohol and drug intervention and treatment programmes and rehabilitation schemes and expect that this work will often overlap with how we tackle VAWG.

The Cleveland PCC and Teesside Sexual Violence Strategy Group have developed an action plan and are also sharing local data to evidence problems and gaps in services. One example of data sharing was through the Cleveland Police Rape Problem Profile, which identified that there was a particular area in Cleveland where the majority of serious sexual offences are taking place and that the age range most likely to be affected was 19 to 24 years. From this, the Strategy

Group was able to put a campaign in place specifically targeting profiled areas of risk.

Through a Local Alcohol Action Area (LAAA) project, the PCC and Cleveland Police will be supporting Safer Middlesbrough CSP in tackling the blight caused by excessive alcohol consumption. The project will address many aims: tackling alcohol-related crime and disorder; reducing alcohol-related health harms and focusing on reducing levels of domestic violence and sexual violence with an alcohol link. The PCC and Cleveland Police force continue to work with local crime and health agencies, the best local partnership schemes.

In Northumbria we are working to reduce violent crime and domestic violence by addressing the impact and harm caused by alcohol. We are supporting the development of an alcohol behaviour change programme which will see the development of a course for adults who are arrested for being drunk and disorderly and who are eligible for a fixed penalty notice. In addition we are working closely with young people through a music and visual arts project to raise awareness of the issues related to domestic violence and alcohol abuse.

PRIORITY EIGHT

We will promote early intervention work with perpetrators and encourage housing associations to consider providing perpetrator accommodation, in the interests of safeguarding women and children to stay securely in their homes.

PRIORITY NINE

We will work with partners around a variety of alcohol and drug intervention and treatment programmes and rehabilitation schemes in our policing areas and expect that this work will often overlap with how we tackle VAWG.

Safeguarding

We will continue and extend the safeguarding training for staff, in the night time economy, begun in Northumbria but now taken on by both Cleveland and Durham and progressing nationally. The Security Industry Authority (SIA) has now made this compulsory training for its night-time doorstaff and ACPO and the College of Policing have committed to complementary police training to ensure effective joint work.

The scheme started following observation of predatory men in the night time economy and the horrific rape of a young woman, removed from premises by a doorman for being drunk. He was helped to escort her by another male who, when the doorman returned to his club, had sex with the woman, although she was incapable of consenting, and passed her on to two others.

Staff have been trained to understand and assess vulnerability. Door staff have a duty of care to anyone they see who may be at risk of harm and will not now eject or refuse entry to anyone who is unable to look after themselves but can be helped. Instead, they will offer them a safe place in the premises and try to contact friends and family, Street Pastors, ambulance volunteers, police or use the Safe Havens we intend to have in place shortly.

The focus was particularly on vulnerable women but males are also preyed upon for sex and all can lose mobile phones and money. There are frequent campaigns to encourage people to look after themselves but people's drinks can be spiked, some people who appear drunk may have mental health issues or head injuries and even those who have got drunk, ought to be kept safe. Ensuring that people already at work in the locality can identify the vulnerable and know how to keep them safe is straightforward and has been so well-received by the trade that is now the national norm.

Complementary training for police is important. Frequent calls to them would otherwise mark specific licensed premises as trouble spots and police also have to support a door supervisor who is helping someone beyond their own premises and not regard him/her as trespassing into police territory.

Of particular importance is training through a core conversation around a situation where a vulnerable

women is seen by police with a man, as the victim above was. A person who is drunk is incapable of consenting to sex and concerns about the relationship should either be confirmed or dispelled through this conversation.

This partnership, though the first of its kind, should highlight the continuing need for us all to look for new ways of working to identify and respond to risks so as to safeguard others. Currently the training is being delivered to a number of other services including Street Pastors, university security staff, hotel staff, taxis, St John's Ambulance, bar staff and public transport staff.

Work is already underway on a Safe Haven in Newcastle City Centre, to be open on Friday and Saturday nights potentially from 10pm to 3am, staffed by the ambulance service to provide a place of safety to which door staff and others might take a vulnerable person. It will be available for minor injuries, treatment and will be a source of emergency care. We hope to open similar Safe Havens throughout the region where necessary.

Designing and developing training

NEWN's research suggests that we should strengthen police training to ensure officers "get a better grasp of the feeling and circumstance women and girls go through". All three forces will work with the women's sector to design and deliver training to front line officers and staff. Cleveland currently works closely on this with the voluntary and community sector. An event organised recently on the specific issue of rape was attended by police officers, police staff and partners from the community and voluntary sector. It was delivered by a psychotherapist and around the psychology of sex offenders and was extremely well received with almost 100 attendees at the two sessions. A further event arranged by police and the CPS, to improve processes for obtaining best evidence utilised three barristers from Newcastle to provide an input on Achieving Best Evidence in recorded interviews, was attended by Durham Police as well as CPS and partners.

Durham Police are working with other statutory services such as Health to develop a multi-agency domestic and sexual abuse training strategy and actions. They also have a strong partnership with Durham University's Centre for Research into Victims and Abuse. Following several domestic homicide reviews where the victim was over 40 and often had not reported the abuse to the police, the CPS asked Durham University to undertake research into this age group to see if they are less likely to report and whether they face additional barriers to reporting. The research led to a media campaign and developments around training.

The force and university partnership has almost secured £130,000 to look at a detailed study into feedback from victims and how this can influence their training of officers. Durham Police will share the outcomes of any work which follows from this funding bid with its partner police forces regionwide.

Northumbria Police undertook a domestic violence training package earlier this year (February-March 2013) shaped by victims at the design stage. Influences on the training were from a victim of domestic violence in North Tyneside and from a victim of domestic abuse as outlined in 'Emily's story', in a national campaign video produced by Women's Aid. CAADA trained the trainers during the package to support appropriate delivery.

We also expect a secondary outcome of the deployment of body worn cameras to provide a better appreciation of the level of service being delivered to victims currently by police and to point to any further training needs.

Rape and sexual violence

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity and can be committed by someone you know and trust or perpetrated by a complete stranger. It is an

integral part of domestic violence and abuse but also occurs, of course, outside relationships.

There is no excuse for sexual violence, it can never be justified, it can never be explained away and there is no context in which it is valid, understandable or acceptable.

There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and sexual harassment, rape within marriage / relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation and ritual abuse.

Sexual violence is not the fault of the victim in any circumstance, no matter where they were, what they were doing, what they were wearing or if they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Sexual violence and rape is never asked for or deserved.

PRIORITY
TEN

We will continue to expand our safeguarding training for personnel working in the night-time economy so as to keep vulnerable people safer and will develop Safe Havens where they are needed across the region.

Sexual Violence Strategic Forum

In March 2011 the Home Office and Department for Health commissioned Sexual Violence Needs Assessment across the country. A key regional outcome was a recommendation for a cross-sector strategic forum responsible for a sexual violence strategy and action in Northumbria, to match what is already in place in the other two police areas.

The purpose of the forum will be to ensure there is full engagement from all key partners in setting the strategic direction of sexual violence services.

In addition, Professor Marianne Hester’s recent report ‘From Report to Court: Rape Cases and the criminal justice system in the north east’ identifies that over three years, the north east had an 89% attrition rate between the number of rapes reported and the number of cases ultimately referred to the CPS. From that greatly reduced number of cases referred, the CPS conviction rate in 2012/13 was 63%.

It is very hard to give evidence in public about such intimate events, it will be very traumatising and often the survivor will not be strong. Other factors that contribute to attrition are that some victims are children and that many people do not report the rape immediately through shame or fear and are then penalised by having their later complaint described as false.

It should be noted that in Professor Hester’s research, the force area, with a well-developed ‘strategy group’ involving a wide range of criminal and non-criminal justice agencies, was the most effective in achieving progression of cases from report to court. Non-criminal justice agency staff also highlighted that different ways of organising links across agencies had led to differential degrees of information exchange and access to support for victims.

In Cleveland, the Teesside Sexual Violence Strategy Group represents the Sexual Violence Services across Teesside, including Helen Britton House, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) for the area, and the agencies that provide follow on support for clients who have experienced rape or sexual assault (whether recently or in the past). Their vision is for a society in which no person, child or adult, has to live in fear of sexual abuse, sexual violence or sexual exploitation.

The groups works to:

- Ensure full engagement from key partners in the setting the strategic direction of sexual violence services.
- Ensure a strategic approach to commissioning of SARC services for adult, adolescent and child provision.
- Define and agree a shared strategy and vision for the future model of SARC services for adults, adolescents and child victims from across Teesside.
- Raise awareness of sexual violence issues across Teesside.

In addition, work is currently ongoing in Cleveland through the Special Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Strategic group to map out issues of both under reporting and ineffective trials. This will subsequently form the basis for an improvement plan to target areas of learning for agencies and better support for victims through more use of special measures such as video evidence, which help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses to give their best testimony in court. Initial research indicates that the main factor for under reporting and not wanting to go to trial is victims having to face the perpetrator. This can be avoided through special measures and this has consequently identified a gap in the understanding of special measures that are available.

In Durham, a multi-agency sexual violence group, established in 2011, includes all relevant partners and covers both Durham County and Darlington Borough with the purpose of quickly addressing emerging threats and Government steers such as seen recently in Child Sexual Exploitation and VAWG. It is chaired by the Detective Chief Inspector for Safeguarding and funding from partners is used to employ a full time Sexual Violence Co-ordinator. A single action plan is used by the partnership with regular focus events to encourage third sector and other partner agencies to contribute. The group has gone from strength to strength with all aspects of sexual violence and domestic abuse incorporated into an action plan.

All three of these organisations, albeit at different stages of development and with slightly different focuses, will work together to ensure best practice and to learn from each other.

PRIORITY ELEVEN

We will establish a Sexual Violence Strategic Forum with a dedicated co-ordinator in Northumbria building on the work of Strategic Forums in the other two parts of the region, which have contributed to increasing complaint and prosecution levels.

Rape Scrutiny Panel

This will supplement the work of the North East CPS Rape Scrutiny Panel which scrutinises CPS case files. The purpose of these panel meetings is to ask the voluntary and community sector what the CPS could be doing better to improve the handling and outcome of such cases. The panel also raises awareness of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and improves confidence in the decisions it makes thereby encouraging victims and witnesses to report incidents. Working closely with

the voluntary and community sector in this scrutiny has assisted the CPS in working towards local priorities.

Our volunteer-based Police Rape Scrutiny Panels will apply similar scrutiny to the police investigation and case files. Negotiations have commenced for an enhanced joint panel or a workable interface to be set up so that scrutiny of the same cases by both the CPS and the police panels can be carried out notwithstanding the need for additional separate scrutiny of the greater numbers of police files.

PRIORITY TWELVE

We will establish a Police Rape Scrutiny Panel in each police area to scrutinise case files which have failed to attain the requisite evidential level for prosecution or where a prosecution has failed and look for lessons to learn.

Court Observers Panels

The courts are frequently, seriously criticised for the way they deal with rape and sexual abuse cases by women’s organisations, the media and the public. They are said to be disregarding of complainant needs, do not understand the impact of sexual abuse on the ability to testify and “put the victim on trial rather than the defendant” and these views still play a significant part in why women will not make complaints and do not pursue prosecutions to court.

All the criminal justice agencies have taken significant steps in the last decade to improve how they deal with

these cases but unless there is a piece of academic research in progress, no observers systematically consider rape trials so they can confirm or dispel what might be an outdated reputation.

We are grateful to Dr Olivia Smith whose recent work at Bath University has suggested the advantages of scrutiny. We will establish a panel from members of the public who will attend all rape trials in the region and publish the results of their observations with a view to increasing understanding between the courts and female victims of abuse in the hope of improving process where necessary and of building women’s confidence.

PRIORITY THIRTEEN

We will pilot Court Observers Panels to scrutinise rape and sexual abuse trials at Newcastle and Teesside Crown Courts with a view to collating and publishing observations of how these cases are tried.



**HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
AND
SEX WORK**

Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone’s vulnerability. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of human trafficking within your own country. Our primary concern in this strategy is with trafficking for sexual exploitation, which includes prostitution, escort work and pornography (although people are also trafficked for domestic servitude, forced labour and other purposes).

A NEWN consultation focus group expressed concern about the lack of knowledge about domestic trafficking policies and the need to ensure close links with the UK Human Trafficking Centre, now part of the National Crime Agency (NCA), which plays a central role in the fight against trafficking. Although the point of contact for all human trafficking crimes should be the local police force, NCA provides expert tactical advice to police forces to help in determining whether individuals may be trafficking victims. There is a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) by which police, other agencies and ‘first responders’ who include Barnardos, are able to identify that someone is trafficked and that they are entitled to help and support.

Trafficking victims can be wrongly identified, both by the public and the authorities, as illegal immigrants who are being smuggled into the country with their consent. Trafficking victims have not consented and are likely to be extremely vulnerable.

Awareness raising is important so the public is aware that people in particular situations may be trafficked and that they should report concerns to the police who will apply the NRM and wherein doing so, trigger the availability of help and support.

Campaigns are also run internationally from time to time to raise awareness amongst potential victim populations and, nationally, amongst actual victims who will, in addition to feelings of fear and intimidation, feel dependent on their controllers and traffickers and may not understand the concept of trafficking or identify themselves as a victim. They may fear revealing their status or experiences to authorities and have problems of psychological, emotional and physical ill health.

It is important too, to make clear that trafficking is not just an international crime but can happen within the United Kingdom. It was this aspect that the consultation felt was less understood. In connection with recent child sexual abuse cases, children have been moved from place to place in a vehicle to facilitate the commission of sexual offences (contrary to Section 58 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003). It is therefore extremely important that there should be clear understanding.

However women get involved in sex work, they are likely to be vulnerable, either as trafficking victims, through the issue which brought them into this arena or because of the multitude of ways in which sex work itself brings danger and abuse.

Women become involved in sex work through homelessness, child sexual abuse, mental ill health, trauma, previous sexual violence, drug and alcohol misuse, money pressures and poverty. These factors should not be mistaken for the cause of sex work itself, which is the demand from men to buy sex. If men were not prepared to buy sex, then sex work would not be possible as a survival behaviour.

Once the factors behind women’s involvement in sex work are understood it makes no sense to label it as work or legitimate employment, to do so would legitimise exploitation. Neither is it fair to criminalise those who are abused and exploited. There are no other areas of violence against women where we would criminalise the victims.

Much research has been carried out to look at the barriers to exiting sex work. In ‘Breaking Down the Barriers’, a study of how women exit prostitution (Eaves and London South Bank University) the key findings were that the vast majority of women who were interviewed wanted to leave sex work and could leave relatively quickly when they received appropriate support.

Barriers to exiting include, problematic alcohol and drug use; housing, physical and mental health problems; having had experiences of violence as a child; criminalisation; debts, experiencing coercion from others to remain in sex work; a lack of qualifications or training and entering into sex work at a young age. These barriers combine and interact, sometimes reinforcing each other, so that it is necessary to unravel the complex relationships between these obstacles and address them from a coordinated and holistic perspective.

For instance, one third of women interviewed in this survey became involved in sex work prior to commencing drug or alcohol use. For others, their drug use increased after entry into prostitution. A number spoke of using substances as coping mechanisms whilst in prostitution.

However, many women attempting to exit found themselves ‘shoehorned’ into drug treatment rather than being able to access the holistic support needed to exit effectively. Such an approach fails to address the complex interaction of drug use, involvement in sex work and other underlying issues that the women in this study reported.

Providing dedicated support to help women who want to exit was found, in the study, to be an extremely cost-effective way of preventing further physical or emotional harm associated with their continued involvement in prostitution. Services that provide support to women in prostitution should ensure that the support they offer doesn’t just help to maintain women in sex work but proactively seeks to assist them to exit and rebuild their lives.

Exiting services should actively promote their work and what it offers to both women involved in prostitution and other local support services and agencies. We will support national campaigns to decriminalise and also support those that seek to ensure that the focus of any enforcement activity is shifted to those who coerce others to sell sex or who purchase sex.

PRIORITY FOURTEEN

We will seek to assess in more detail the extent of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the north east by operating a police helpline for three months to encourage reporting, in particular, where necessary, anonymous reporting and by promoting the helpline with a campaign to raise public awareness of trafficking in particular of domestic trafficking.

PRIORITY FIFTEEN

We will obtain and make available good practice guidance about exiting to all services that may have contact with women involved in sex work, including police, community organisations and safeguarding teams and we will work with groups such as Changing Lives to expand support work with sex workers across the region.



**FORCED MARRIAGE
AND SO-CALLED
HONOUR CRIMES**



Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

‘Honour’ based violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. Honour based violence is a fundamental abuse of Human Rights. There is no honour in the commission of murder, rape, kidnap and the many other acts, behaviour and conduct which are frequently involved.

Parents who force their children to marry often say they’re protecting their children, building stronger families and preserving cultural or religious traditions. They may not see anything wrong with their actions. However, forced marriage cannot be justified on religious grounds, every major faith condemns it.

At present forced marriage, although a Human Rights abuse, is not in England and Wales a criminal offence. The Forced Marriage Act 2007 provided civil remedies for those faced with forced marriage, by which the court will order those involved to stop what they are trying to do, however they are doing it. These are Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) which can also be obtained by someone who is concerned that another person is a victim and by a number of organisations listed in the legislation who work in the area of forced marriage prevention and safeguarding. Breach of an FMPO is a contempt of court and can be dealt with by a fine or imprisonment at the discretion of the court.

Clauses in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill, currently going through its parliamentary stages, will criminalise both forced marriage and breach of an FMPO. The criminalisation of a breach of an FMPO may be appropriate and not unhelpful

to victims who have, by definition, already made a complaint or been supported to do so. However, it has been widely recognised that criminalising forced marriage itself may deter reporting, since it is likely to be the family members who are forcing the marriage and a report to the authorities may result in criminal charges, a prosecution and imprisonment of the victim’s closest relatives.

The Government has assured us they will be working closely with partners to ensure a sensitive, appropriate response.

Listening to views of local women potentially affected by forced marriage, suggests there are some specific practical solutions we can promote to protect potential victims.

Honour based violence encompasses a variety of violent crimes including assault, imprisonment and murder; where their family or community is punishing the person for conduct which they believe has undermined the correct code of behaviour.

Infringements of the so called code of behaviour may include a woman having a boyfriend; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; interfaith relationships; seeking divorce, inappropriate dress or make-up and even kissing in a public place.

So-called honour based violence is a fundamental abuse of human rights which will not be tolerated and which the police in our region take very seriously.

PRIORITY SEVENTEEN

We will continue to provide a 24-hour crisis helpline for honour based violence and forced marriage and will make sure that training for DSVa Champions includes awareness of intervening to prevent and tackle these evils.

In Cleveland the HALO Project, launched in 2012, supports victims of forced marriages and honour based violence with appropriate advice and influences referral pathways for key services. The programme of work is also helping to raise the awareness of these issues to frontline staff and HALO is seen as a lead agency for training provision in the north east region. It is also helping to raise the awareness to local BME communities and is working with the national Forced Marriage Unit to foster strong messages as part of an ambassador programme to be launched soon. To date, the project is dealing with over 76 victims, has received more than 520 calls and, in the context of the criminalisation of forced marriages in April 2014, is the conduit between Home Office guidelines and Tees Valley providers.

The Halo Project is also helping to improve case management through a forced marriage and honour based violence case group which highlights good practice and influences areas for improvements.

In Northumbria the Angelou Centre, which opened in 1993, has an excellent track record as an inclusive provider of high quality community training and employment services where black and minority ethnic women are supported by a team of multilingual and culturally diverse workers and volunteers. The Centre offers community-based provision to advance economic and social independence for women who are excluded due to disadvantages of race, gender and age. It provides advice and support to women about VAWG, honour based violence and forced marriage and engaging in strategic partnerships, networks and consortia ensuring access and appropriate service provision and encouraging progression and achievement to empower BME women economically, socially and politically. Angelou is helping to design measures that are age appropriate and meet the need to encourage victims to seek help and report concerns to the police and other agencies.

PRIORITY SIXTEEN

We will help organisations supporting potential victims of forced marriage to gain a better understanding of how to protect them as the law changes and will focus in particular on agencies supporting those with learning disabilities, who can be particularly vulnerable to forced marriage.

PRIORITY EIGHTEEN

We will actively promote the ‘Freedom App’, a free phone app which looks like a game. It is not easily detectable but can help young people to understand and make contact with supportive organisations in cases of forced marriage.



**FEMALE
GENITAL
MUTILATION**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) – also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation as “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”. FGM is illegal in the UK - it's also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this. The maximum sentence for carrying out FGM or helping it to take place is 14 years in prison. However, to date there has not been a prosecution in the UK. All three forces intend to investigate all complaints or suspicions of FGM and will prosecute where evidence can be found.

'Tackling FGM in the UK: Intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, recording and reporting', was launched at the House of Commons on Monday, 4 November, 2013. The report recognises that implementing a comprehensive multi-agency action plan is urgently required to ensure that young girls at risk of undergoing FGM are protected by the existing UK legal framework, which has been in place since 1985.

The report makes nine recommendations for tackling FGM in the UK and considers issues such as the lack of consistent data collection about FGM in the NHS. The recommendations suggest that babies, children and young girls suspected of going to be cut or presenting with FGM should be considered as potential victims of crime and referred to support services and the police, as appropriate.

We accept the report's recommendations and will play a full part in their dissemination. They include:

1. To treat FGM as a severe form of violence against women and girls and to integrate it into all UK child safeguarding procedures in a systematic way.
2. The NHS should develop protocols for sharing information about girls at risk of – or girls who

have already undergone – FGM with other health and social care agencies, the Department for Education and the police, who will respond appropriately.

3. Ensuring there is sustained information and support given to families to protect girls at risk.
4. Implementing an awareness campaign. The Government should implement a national FGM awareness campaign, similar to previous domestic abuse and HIV campaigns.

**PRIORITY
NINETEEN**

We will raise awareness, in particular with health professionals and across communities and schools, about the illegality of FGM. Police will investigate and prosecute where evidence is available.





HARRASSMENT AND STALKING

We have recently celebrated the first anniversary of the introduction of two new specific offences of stalking which were introduced through an amendment to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The changes to the law followed a campaign by a number of organisations, including Protection against Stalking. A report published in February 2012 by the Justice Unions' Parliamentary Group found that victims of stalking had a profound lack of confidence in the criminal justice system and recommended that the 1997 Act be amended as part of a package of reforms.

The impact of stalking can vary widely depending on the victim's characteristics, past experience, current circumstances and relationship with the stalker. It is important for key agencies to understand that the way they manage the situation or episode can influence the overall impact on the victim. Victims of stalking can suffer a wide range of psychological, physical, occupational, social and general lifestyle effects as a consequence of being stalked.

The reason that stalking is hard to delineate is that it consists of a catalogue of incidents that, when taken alone, can seem innocuous enough to begin with. It is only when they are taken together that their cumulative and sinister effect can be seen. In many stalking cases the perpetrator may never issue an overt threat, but rather plague his or her victim with flowers, phone calls, letters and gifts. It is thought that victims tend to wait until the 100th incident of stalking before reporting the matter to the police.

Research by Laura Richards in November 2011 revealed the horrendous long-term nature of stalking behaviour, as well as the effect that has on victims. One in every two victims who took part in the survey had been stalked for longer than 18 months, and 42% were stalked for more than 24 months. With protracted stalking campaigns there is a real risk of escalation. Offenders can ultimately go on to attack, rape, cause serious harm or even murder their victims.

In the past few months, the Government has taken proactive steps to improve the treatment that victims of crime receive from the criminal justice system. The

Government has raised the possibility, for example, of giving victims the opportunity to challenge decisions taken by the CPS not to charge suspects or to drop prosecutions. This is essential work and it must be followed through if we are to see any real change. But having a robust law is not enough; we must ensure that it is properly and thoroughly implemented. Thorough and complete training must be rolled out for all police and criminal justice professionals. Most importantly, however, and since stalking is characteristic of obsessive behaviour, getting conviction rates up on its own will not stop these problems occurring.

Paladin, the National Stalking Advocacy Service, was launched in July 2013 and is the first advocacy group for stalking victims in England and Wales. Developed as one of the recommendations from the February 2012 Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Stalking Law Reform relating to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and training and practice issue, Paladin aims to:

- Provide strategic advocacy to high risk victims of stalking.
- Establish a network of victims who have endured stalking, providing mutual support and empowerment.
- Provide test case advocacy aimed at changing law and practice through the courts.
- Campaign based on extrapolating from our case work experiences.
- Provide training.
- Provide post-legislative scrutiny.

Locally all three forces have delivered training to their frontline staff and have information on their websites for members of the public seeking advice. Cleveland Police hosted a multi-agency Stalking Professional Development Day to tie in with Stalking Awareness Day in April 2013, with input from two national speakers who have personal experience of the devastating consequences stalking had on their families.

As Commissioners we need to ensure victims of stalking are aware that they can get help and will be listened to by the police and the criminal justice system. We will launch a poster campaign that reminds people that they are not alone and that they can 'speak out about stalking'.

As well as increasing awareness we must combat the root of the problem by continuing to focus on implementation of this legislation and working with key agencies to understand and enforce new laws and support lobbying campaigns for improvements such as the introduction of a register of perpetrators and treatment programmes for serial stalkers.

**PRIORITY
TWENTY**

We will undertake a marketing campaign across all three forces to encourage victims to report stalking and support national lobbying to strengthen implementation of the stalking law.

MONITORING THE STRATEGY

Regular monitoring of the strategy and delivery plan will help us assess how we are progressing towards achievement of our priorities and identify any new and emerging issues that we must address in any future review of the strategy.

We intend, where possible, to integrate scrutiny mechanisms into the various strands of work so that we can learn as we go, improving implementation on an ongoing basis. Every new scheme provides an opportunity for learning from experience and improving our understanding of the performance of the policy or approach used.

Police performance scrutiny is already carried out by the PCCs in their own police force area and will be adapted locally to incorporate monitoring of the strategy.

Overview of community safety work is already done through monitoring the application of PCC funding to Community Safety Partnerships and similarly where there are other partnerships in place in each PCC area.

A delivery plan will be developed for each of the PCC areas which will be refreshed annually.

Scrutiny in each area will be supported by a range of key stakeholders and will lead to the involvement of the North East Women's Network, the Cleveland Women's Network and other local PCC advisory arrangements such as the Northumbria PCC's Gender Advisory Group.

The Police and Crime Panel in each area will also play a key role in the scrutiny and support of the Police and Crime Commissioner's priorities as outlined in this strategy.

North East Women's Network Informing and Shaping the Police and Crime Commissioners Strategy to tackle violence against women and girls in the North East

Summarised findings and recommendations

Integral to this research is the Government's definition of violence against women and girls (VAWG). That is acts of violence that are committed towards women because they are women and that result in, physical, sexual or emotional harm or suffering including threats of such acts, coercion, or depriving women of their freedom. This does not mean that men are never victims of rape, forced marriage, or domestic violence; but women are far more likely to be victims.¹

The above definition of VAWG along with understanding and applying intersectionality (i.e. the differences and inequalities between women²), have been central to the methodology and all of the research frameworks and processes. The research highlights the diverse and varied support needs of women in relation to the many manifestations and pervasiveness of VAWG in the North East of England. A central implication is that the current frameworks and systems for the Protection of Vulnerable People (PVP) in the North East be reviewed in accordance with the following findings and recommendations.

¹ Adapted from Call to End Violence against Women and Girls, HM Government (2010)

² Particularly along the lines of race and ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, age and faith.

³ The Equality Act 2010 makes it clear that women-only services are legal and appropriate in certain contexts; it is still legal and appropriate for public authorities to fund (and provide) female-only services (Equality Act 2010, Schedule 3, Part 7)

Key recommendations

1. The PCCs are recognised as instrumental in tackling the culture of violence against women and girls at all levels of communities, agencies, media and wider society.

There needs to be a strong commitment to culture change and a positive action approach across all Police Services. This needs to be 'top-down' and 'bottom up' and be underpinned by a better understanding of under reporting, more powers for the Police to act when women feel powerless to do so, and more improved communication for women victims through the prosecution process.

Commitment to culture change is needed across all agencies, including better inter-agency working and sharing information to increase the safety of women and girls, whilst acknowledging that there are different working practices in each area. Wherever inter-agency approaches to forms of VAWG are working in practice, the models and learning need to be shared region-wide.

Intensive and widespread prevention education and high-level media campaigns, are needed to challenge attitudes and behaviour among individuals, agencies, organisations, communities and wider society. There should be a multi-agency commitment to developing and funding prevention education and campaigns.

All three PCCs should champion a substantive model of equality for women (and men) as enshrined in the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This should include promoting awareness of the various obligations of Government and public bodies at all levels to tackle VAWG.

2. Women's voluntary organisations (including those addressing inequalities within women) need maintaining and developing to provide support services for women and more broadly to tackle VAWG in partnership with the Police and other agencies in a needs-led approach.

The PCCs have an opportunity to protect women only services (those run by women for women) by providing direct funding and by influencing other local commissioners and funders to do the same with reference to their duty under the Equality Act 2010.³

3. The PCCs should work in partnership to develop and deliver learning and development through a range of specialist providers both for the Police and for other agencies involved in tackling VAWG, including commissioners and funders of services

Police and multi agency training and learning should cover specific aspects of each strand of VAWG in relation to the varied and diverse needs of women. For example, detailing the challenges of tackling Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in communities in the North East of England, and understanding abuse in Lesbian and bi-sexual women's relationships.

Training needs to reflect inter-sectionality among women and girls and the impact of power differentials in communications.

Those with relevant experience and knowledge, particularly in relation to quality, creating safe learning environments and encouraging self-awareness and reflection where appropriate should develop and deliver training. The training needs to utilise a range of media to draw heavily upon the real lived experience of women in order to inform the thinking, practices and policies of all agencies involved in tackling VAWG.

4. There is a resounding call for tougher sentencing and more focus upon 'Holding the perpetrator to account'. Co-ordinated interagency communication, information sharing and improved multi-agency accountability to protect women; and existing systems for investigation, evidence gathering and surveillance should be better utilised, particularly in relation to serial perpetrators. Early intervention work should focus upon preventing people from being violent, rather than just focusing on how girls and women can keep themselves safe.

Detailed recommendations

PCCs' PLEDGE

The PCCs have made a pledge to tackle the culture of violence against women and girls, working with schools, local authorities and community based organisations to change attitudes and behaviour

According to the research findings, there is some excellent Police work in relation to tackling VAWG. PCCs should continue, when holding forces to account to ensure that training and development that officers receive is designed, developed and where possible led by victims.

- i. The PCCs should be widely recognised as instrumental in tackling the culture of violence against women and girls at all levels within communities, agencies, media and wider society.
- ii. There needs to be a strong commitment to culture change and positive action approach across all Police Services. This needs to be 'top-down' and 'bottom up' and be underpinned by a better understanding of under reporting, more powers for the Police to act when women feel powerless to do so and more routine communication for women victims through the prosecution process.

Particular focus needs to be upon the following:

- a. Training to address attitudes and behaviours - listening to women, being non-judgemental and having empathy with victims and recognising immigration status and its implications.
 - b. A broader understanding of the factors preventing the woman reporting, for example;
 - i. Fear of the perpetrator
 - ii. Lack of confidence in the Police
 - iii. Distorted public awareness messages that hold women somehow responsible for abuse
 - iv. Immigration regulations
 - c. Reassurance that All reports of VAWG are taken seriously by the Police
 - d. Better contact and communication with victims through the prosecution process
 - e. More powers for Police to act where women feel powerless to do so
 - f. A positive action approach from the Police, with more serious penalties needed to decrease the volume of VAWG.
- iii. Commitment to culture change is needed across all agencies, including better inter-agency working and sharing information to increase the safety of women and girls, whilst acknowledging that there are different working practices in each area. Wherever inter-agency approaches to forms of VAWG are working in practice the models and learning need to be shared region-wide.

Particular focus needs to be upon the following:

- a. A strong commitment to the ongoing culture change within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Courts and the Police and all agencies involved in VAWG
- b. Strengthening support for women throughout the criminal justice process
- c. Ensuring that the Specialist Domestic and Sexual Violence Units and specialist POs across all Policing areas that are accessible to victims

- d. A justice approach to VAWG with more powers to prosecute without witness testimony
 - e. Building upon existing multi-agency structures - interagency and information sharing is vital towards the success of the VAWG strategy at many levels, e.g.
 - i. Safeguarding women
 - ii. Increasing reporting
 - iii. Supporting women through the judicial process
 - iv. Increasing conviction rates for VAWG
 - v. Reducing the need for women having to retell their story
 - vi. Improving responses at an early stage to reduce complex cases
 - f. Women's organisations play a central role in supporting women, securing prosecutions and promoting culture change. These organisations could work with local police to strengthen confidence between victims and the police. The role of women's organisations is particularly significant as there can be a perception from women that the Police will collude with the perpetrators.
- iv. Intensive and widespread prevention education and high level media campaigns, led by the PCCs are needed to challenge attitudes and behaviour among individuals, agencies and organisations, communities and wider society.

According to the research findings, the PCCs and the Police have a role in promoting widespread preventative education and in challenging wider 'institutionalised' sexism within communities and in the media. The following are suggested:

- a. Awareness raising and prevention education in all schools (from a very young age), colleges and universities and in neighbourhoods and communities
- b. A zero tolerance approach to VAWG to be adopted in all schools,⁴ colleges and Universities, to include teacher training. Addressing the 'Laddish' culture in schools and Universities should be a priority.
- c. Prevention work with boys and men and with women and girls in single sex groups with a differentiation in approach (educating young men to respect women and girls, educating young women and girls not to accept abuse in any form and recognise this in the context of same sex relationships)
- d. Women's organisations, schools and the Police together with other partners including community safety partnerships, health services and local authorities working in partnership to deliver awareness raising and prevention education
- e. Utilising the personal stories of victims and survivors (and perpetrators) of VAWG to bring about culture change, ensuring the victim is supported to do so by trained/qualified supporter.
- f. Police providing clarity about The Law and how to report VAWG
- g. Reaching the public by targeting employers, including the public and private sector
- h. Challenging ideas that victims are responsible for VAWG, to include consultation with women's voluntary organisation about any future campaigning messages
- i. A high-level publicity campaign to convey a widespread 'Zero Tolerance'⁵ message

⁴ Including academies and public schools

⁵ <http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/>

- v. All three PCCs should champion a substantive model of equality for women (and men) as enshrined in the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).⁶ This should include promoting awareness of the various obligations of Government and public bodies at all levels to tackle VAWG using a range of measures

The substantive model of equality is based upon the principle that discrimination is socially constructed and is not a natural principle of human interaction, recognising the need for concerted action against inequality and the institutional mechanisms that perpetuate it. Substantive equality promotes:

- Equality of opportunity through law, policy programme and institutional arrangements
- Equality of access by eliminating all obstacles that prevent access to opportunities and taking positive steps to ensure the goal of equality is achieved
- Equality of results

Of particular relevance to tackling VAWG is the awareness and implementation by public bodies of the following concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (CEDAW 26, July 2013):

- Intensify efforts to train police officers to eliminate prejudice of the credibility of victims of domestic and sexual violence and all forms of VAWG
- Increase efforts to protect women, including BME, against all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence and so called 'honour' killings
- Review the policy of commissioning services where it may undermine the provision of specialised women's services
- Continue public awareness-raising campaigns on all forms of VAWG including BME women
- Extend Destitution Domestic Violence Concession to all women victims of violence, including women with insecure immigration status and asylum seekers
- Ratify the Istanbul Convention and criminalise forced marriage
- Ensure full implementation of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) legislation
- Ensure that trafficking victims are properly identified and adequately supported and protected
- In trafficking/exploitation or prostitution - shift the burden of proof from the prosecution to the purchaser of sexual services"

⁵ CEDAW places obligations on Governments to eliminate discrimination against women. CEDAW binds the UK Government (including local public bodies) to take action to achieve substantive equality for women, and to comply with its articles and general recommendations.

PCCs' PLEDGE	<p>The PCCs have made a pledge to maintain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialist domestic violence and public protection units within the police service• Networks of independent advisors and advocates to women survivors of violence
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PCCs should be aware of the issues that the research reflects around growing concern over the threat of closure or reduction in services for women only provision of services for VAWG, with disproportionate impact upon BME women's services (also evidenced from other research).⁷ When considering the allocation of resources to services and their own funding concerns. Increase in incidences of abuse are attributed to changes such as legal aid reforms, lack of financial independence due to the Universal Credit and the way that is paid rendering women less likely to leave violent situations.⁸

- vi. Women's voluntary organisations (including those addressing inequalities within women) need maintaining and developing to provide support services for women and more broadly to tackle VAWG in partnership with the Police and other agencies in a 'needs led' approach. Whilst ensuring that commissioning of services is within a robust commissioning framework. PCCs have an opportunity to protect women only services (those run by women for women) and also where to work with other local commissioners and funders to do the same with reference to their duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Issues raised:

- The impact of austerity measures on VAWG services (i.e. decreased provision and increased need) must be acknowledged by budget holders and commissioners
- Sustaining **women only VAWG services** (including existing services) is an absolute priority, this should include:
 - Ring-fenced / continued funding to protect VAWG services
 - longer term funding to enable forward planning
 - Better partnership working with the voluntary sector to secure contracts to maintain support services
- There is a lack of specialist services for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women and girls and other marginalised and/or vulnerable groups such as lesbian and bisexual women, disabled women, those with mental health issues and substance mis-users etc. Those in place need maintaining and developing. With specific reference to BME women and girls this should include:
 - Support for women with uncertain immigration status and those with no access to public funds
 - Addressing language and access barriers for BME women
 - Better understanding of immigration, cultural issues within mainstream specialist agencies and BME women's organisations providing advocacy for women within refuge provision
 - Understanding and knowledge for BME women and for Police and local authorities
- The PCCs directly influencing other key local funders to ensure the sustainability of embedded independent specialist sexual violence services and women only space (to include funding for ISVAs that are employed by voluntary sector organisations)

⁷ The Impact of the Austerity Measures upon Women in the North East of England, NEWomen's Network, June 2013
⁸ Ibid

- e. More services for women to support emotional well being during and after high- risk criminal proceedings. Better informed commissioning processes and more integrated approaches to commissioning are needed, including PCCs, Local Authorities (LAs) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS England.
- f. Equity of access to VAWG services by geography (particularly in rural areas)
- g. Women affected by VAWG need a whole spectrum of holistic support services that provide a seamless pathway from initial access to help and advice, how and where to report, all the way through to re-building their lives as survivors of VAWG.
- h. Existing services need to be mapped, to avoid duplication but also to ensure the existing legacy of grassroots VAWG services provided by women's organisations in the North East is maintained and strengthened

PCCs' PLEDGE

The PCCs have made a pledge to deliver specialist training in domestic and sexual violence – as well as other forms of violence against women and girls for neighbourhood police officers for those in specialist protection units and for those involved in commissioning services for the survivors of violence.

The research findings reflect broad agreement that multi –agency training, learning and development for Police and other agencies at all levels, delivered by specialist women's services should be a priority within this PCC pledge.

vii. The PCCs and women's organisation should work in partnership to develop and deliver a package of training, learning and development through a range of specialist providers both for the Police and for other agencies involved in tackling VAWG, including commissioners and funders of services.

Particular focus on VAWG training for the Police.

- a. Women's services to contribute and be involved in training for Police Officers, including placements of the Police within specialist agencies 'to get a better grasp of the feeling and circumstances women and girls go through.'

Particular focus needs to be upon the following for specialist VAWG training for commissioners, funders and other agencies, including multi agency training:

- c. Multi-agency training in VAWG should be mandatory, continuous and/or topped up, across all agencies working with women and girls.
- d. All agencies to engage in training to improve their responses to VAWG and this should include spotting signs of abuse and better links with the Police. Specific agencies highlighted are local authorities, CAFCASS, housing, health workers, including GPs and nurses, Judges, teachers, solicitors and social workers (for SWs training surrounding contact with and placement of children with perpetrators is particularly highlighted)
- e. A partnership between the Police and women's organisations in training multi-agency development and delivery.

viii. Police and multi agency training and learning should cover specific aspects of each strand of VAWG in relation to the varied and diverse needs of women. For example, detailing the challenges of tackling Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in communities in the North East of England, understanding abuse in Lesbian and bi-sexual women's relationships and so on and so forth.

Training needs to reflect inter-sectionality among women and girls and the impact of power differentials in communications

The research reflects a broad agreement that changing negative, judgemental, stereotypical attitudes across all agencies should be a training priority. However, many found that it was difficult to prioritise elements of training because all are vital.

Particular focus needs to be upon the following:

- a. Addressing attitudes towards women, making judgements and assumptions (about the 'worthiness' of the victim and the plausibility of the perpetrator-particularly where communication with perpetrator/s is easier, with victims difficult or impossible due to language, disability or other barriers) and victim blaming
- b. Ensuring that all training reflects the diversity and intersectionality among women and girls
- c. Focussing upon the significance of power differentials in communication with women who have experienced particular forms of VAWG (e.g. negation, oppression, subjugation, violence and torture)
- d. Training in all forms of VAWG, including basic understanding of what constitutes VAWG and legislation relating to all forms of VAWG
- e. Understanding connections between poor responses from women, women being considered 'poor witness material' and victim blaming with low reporting.
- f. Understand the whole range of emotional, cultural, social, immigration, practical and financial reasons why women do not report VAWG and the complex barriers that prevent vulnerable and/ or marginalised women from reporting.
- g. Recognising the role of women's organisations in encouraging reporting from these groups of women
- h. Training in unsupported prosecutions and gathering effective evidence (although policy and procedure backing is also required)
- i. Training around women's support needs, such as, understanding why women do not leave, communicating and the needs of different groups of women, culturally appropriate responses, best practice in evidence gathering, keeping women informed during investigations etc. and the impact of negative sexist attitudes towards women.
- j. Specific issues in relation to understanding the complex decision making processes in identifying abusers and victims including the dangers of Police and other agencies colluding with perpetrators and recognising the complexity in all cases of VAWG. For example, Police Officers trained to challenge BME male perpetrators and to understand the unique serial abuse they may perpetrate.
- k. Understanding and knowledge of the latest legislation in relation to VAWG, e.g. legislation and policies affecting women with no recourse to public fund.⁹

⁹ Women who are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits or public housing

ix. Those with relevant experience and knowledge, particularly in relation to quality, creating safe learning environments and encouraging self-awareness and reflection where appropriate should develop and deliver training. Training needs to utilise a range of media to draw heavily upon the real lived experience of women in order to inform the thinking, practices and policies of all agencies involved in tackling VAWG.

The largest body of agreement surrounding training is the perceived value of victims and survivors of VAWG being involved in the delivery of Police and multi-agency training (whether in person or through multi-media and/or case studies). **Particular focus needs to be upon** drawing upon women's experiences in training to promote understanding and empathy about the victim's perspective and help to challenge stigma and stereotypes, drawing out good and bad practice and helping to 'join up thinking throughout the services.'

The value of self-awareness and personal reflection training and development emerged from the research as a contested area. On the one hand, there are those who perceive that the Police and other professionals confronting their own personal conflicts and attitudes should be mandatory and that training should develop 'a standard that should never be breached.' For others, it is a given that opportunities for personal reflection should be built into all training. However, other research participants suggested that although it might be a good idea for Police to open up about their own personal experiences, this is unlikely to happen in practice, with one not perceiving self-awareness and reflection to have any value to training at all.

PCCs' PLEDGE

The PCCs have made a pledge to pilot a preventative policing project – to promote the active monitoring and management of serial perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence.

- x. There was general agreement from all three PCC areas of the link between under reporting, poor conviction rates and lenient sentencing for VAWG abusers. There should be more focus upon the perpetrator and tougher sentencing. The emphasis should be on holding perpetrators to account rather than focusing upon the victim. Interventions that focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators was a common theme and having interventions accessible at a community level, as not all perpetrators progress to the criminal justice system, was felt to be important.
- xi. There is a resounding call for tougher sentencing and more focus upon 'Holding the perpetrator to account'. Co-ordinated interagency communication, information sharing and improved multi-agency accountability are needed to protect women; and existing systems for investigation, evidence gathering and surveillance should be better utilised, particularly in relation to serial perpetrators. Early intervention work should focus upon preventing people from being violent, rather than just focusing on how girls and women can keep themselves safe.

Particular focus needs to be upon the following:

- a. Improved investigation and evidence gathering
- b. Better identification and management of serial perpetrators
- c. Co-ordinated interagency communication and information sharing AND improved multi-agency accountability
- d. Ensuring that all local partnerships have information sharing agreements to inform local plans and measure progress against

- e. A review of the MARAC's
- f. Effective data sharing across the region using the National Police Database more effectively.
- g. More focus on the perpetrator; with the emphasis upon the perpetrator's responsibility and not the victim (e.g. attacks on sex workers treated as Hate Crime using the Merseyside Model¹⁰)
- h. Tougher sentencing, with greater powers for police and longer sentences for those committing serial abuse (A 'Totting System')
- i. Ensuring that there are effective processes to review the learning from specialist courts and that the learning is embedded.
- j. Co-ordinated prevention work is needed for perpetrators in the community
- k. More protection for women against serial perpetrators, including more publicity about Clare's Law and more protection of women when perpetrators are released from prison
- l. Prevention work with perpetrators in the community to link with prison release
- m. More monitoring and surveillance of known perpetrators who are not on a programme
- n. Early intervention work focused upon preventing people from being violent, rather than just focusing on girls and women; and how they can keep themselves safe.
- o. The following elements are suggested (predominately for with work with boys and men).
 - i. Gender equality
 - ii. Respect for women and girls
 - iii. The consequences of breaking the law etc
 - iv. About the meaning of 'consent'
 - v. Relationships
 - vi. Sex and sexuality
 - vii. Also making sure all schools are able to spot and work with those who they feel are at risk (boys and girls).

¹⁰ Treating attacks on sex workers as a hate crime, and having trained officers focusing on the victim, not her sex working - http://www.policingtoday.co.uk/staying_safe_82072.aspx

Domestic and sexual abuse and the workplace

1. Introduction

(Name of organisation) has a responsibility to provide all staff with a safe and effective working environment. For some staff, the workplace is a safe haven and the only place that offers routes to safety.

(Name of organisation) acknowledges that domestic abuse is a significant problem which has a devastating impact on victims and their families. This procedure represents a commitment to take all reasonable steps possible to combat the reality and impact of domestic abuse on those being abused and to challenge the behaviour of perpetrators.

This procedure ensures that both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse are aware of the support that is available within the organisation. It also provides guidance to line managers when supporting staff who are affected by domestic abuse. A training course regarding domestic abuse and the workplace is available for line managers to attend.

It is important to note however that domestic abuse is not condoned under any circumstance and all staff must adhere to the standards of professional behaviour.

2. Definition

Domestic abuse is defined by the Home Office as “Any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or are family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.”

This definition includes honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The impact of domestic abuse can range from loss of esteem to loss of life.

[Link to guidance - Types of domestic abuse](#)

Domestic abuse happens in all communities, regardless of gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity. When dealing with domestic abuse it is important to recognise differences between all protected characteristics. It follows that different approaches and resources are needed when addressing domestic abuse with different groups.

3. Workplace effects of domestic abuse

It should be noted that there may be incidents which occur in the workplace or specifically affect the work of a member of staff.

Possible signs of domestic abuse include:

- changes in behaviour including uncharacteristic depression, anxiety, distraction or problems with concentration
- changes in the quality of work for no apparent reason
- arriving late or leaving early
- poor attendance or high presenteeism without an explanation
- needing regular time off for appointments
- inappropriate or excessive clothing
- increased turnover.

It is recognised that colleagues may also be affected by domestic abuse by:

- being followed to or from work
- being subject to questioning about the victim's contact details or locations
- covering for other workers during absence from work
- trying to deal with the abuse and fear for their own safety
- being unaware of the abuse or not knowing how to help.

(Name of organisation) expects all staff to report their concerns if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. A member of staff should speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence. Alternative a confidential reporting line is now available through Crime Stoppers 0800 111 4444. This is a 24 hour hotline that allows any member of staff to report any concern they may have about a colleague or practices in the workplace in relation to integrity. The hotline can be used anonymously. Line managers should refer to this procedure and advise that there is internal and external support available.

4. Confidentiality and right to privacy

Staff who disclose that they are a victim of domestic abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not be shared with other colleagues without their permission.

There are however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. This may occur when there are concerns regarding children, vulnerable adults or where the organisation is required to protect the safety of their staff. In these circumstances, the member of staff will be informed as to the reasons why confidentiality cannot be maintained. As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

Confidentiality cannot be assured for staff who disclose that they are a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

6. Support for line managers

6.1 Victims

6.1.1 Identifying domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is unlikely to be disclosed easily by victims or perpetrators. There are a number of steps that can be taken to address the workplace effects of domestic abuse including how to recognise the problem, respond, provide support and refer to the appropriate help.

[Link to guidance - Ten steps to address the effects of domestic abuse](#)

Below is guidance for line managers when facilitating a conversation with a member of staff about domestic abuse.

[Link to guidance - Asking difficult questions – Guidance for line managers](#)

If line managers require further advice or assistance before speaking to a member of staff, further support is available from Human Resources (HR) Advisers / Managers.

6.1.2 Support available

Line managers may consider offering a broad range of support to staff experiencing domestic abuse including (dependant upon what your organisation offers):

- annual leave, flexi-time or lieu time for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments.
- special leave provisions (e.g. compassionate leave or unpaid leave) where the officer or member of staff's annual leave entitlement has been exhausted.
- temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns using existing procedures i.e. flexible working.
- changes to specific duties, for example to avoid potential contact with the perpetrator in a customer facing role.
- measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example blocking emails / screening telephone calls; alerting reception / security if the perpetrator is known to come to the workplace; and ensuring arrangements are in place for safely travelling to and from work.
- redeployment or relocation.
 - i. advise colleagues on a need-to-know basis and agree a response if the perpetrator contacts the workplace.
 - ii. provide a photograph of the perpetrator to line management, security staff and reception.
- review the security of personal information held, such as temporary or new address and bank details.

The right of staff to make their own decision about the course of action at every stage will be respected. It is recognised that a member of staff may need some time to decide what to do and may try different options during this process.

Support is also available from HR Advisers / Managers, Trade Unions (if applicable) and Staff networks (if applicable).

6.2 Perpetrators

Domestic abuse perpetrated by staff will not be condoned under any circumstance nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Staff should be aware that domestic abuse is a serious matter which can lead to criminal convictions. Conduct outside of work may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff; as such conduct may undermine the confidence and trust the organisation has in them. However, (Name of organisation) recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting perpetrators to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

If a member of staff discloses perpetrating domestic abuse, the police should be informed as well as the HR Adviser / Manager so that the disciplinary procedure (or other internal procedures) can be considered. However, the member of staff will be provided with information about the services and support available to them and encouraged to contact / or be referred to OHU (if applicable) and local / national support contacts.

This procedure can be applicable in cases where a member of staff has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or threatened their partner
- possibly committed a criminal offence against their partner
- had an allegation of domestic abuse made against them
- presented concerns about their behaviour within an intimate relationship.

(Name of organisation) will ensure:

- allegations will be dealt with fairly and in way that provides support for the person who is the subject of the allegation or disclosure
- all staff will receive guidance and support
- investigations will be sufficiently independent.

The accused member of staff will be:

- treated fairly and honestly
- helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved
- kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary process
- advised to contact their Trade Union representative or a professional organisation.

7. Further guidance

For further advice please click the link below for local support contacts:

[Link to guidance - Domestic abuse – North East England external contacts](#)

ANNEX 3

Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions Role Outline

1. Role aims and objectives

- To be a point of contact within your organisation for information relating to DSVVA.
- To proactively raise awareness and enhance the overall level of knowledge of DSVVA.
- To ensure up to date and accessible information is available in relation to referral processes and services for victims at all levels of risk.
- To ensure poster and leaflets are displayed and available with-in your organisation.

2. Key result areas

- Put together an action plan that reflects how you will promote the role of the DV Champion within your organisation.
- Provide appropriate information, support and guidance to all who seek it.

3. Engagement with the Northumbria Domestic Violence Champions Network

- Attend three local network meetings per year and one Northumbria wide network event. Network meetings will generally be 2-3 hours long and will involve a round table update and virtual team support followed by knowledge and skills training.
- Act as a conduit for information between the network and your organisation.
- Provide feedback to the network in relation to training and development needs.

4. Training and support

- Each champion has two days training followed by a half day MARAC course.
- Training is scheduled every quarter for new Champions and refresher training will be offered annually.
- The Champion will sign an agreement/commitment and will promote their role across their organisation, put posters up and support people who approach them.
- Tailored support will be given to Champions to give them the right tools to promote their role.
- Very clear guidelines will be put in place that cover the issue of complaints/disciplinary/appeals.



ANNEX 4

Court Observers' Scrutiny Framework

The volunteer observers will be asked to make a report that considers how the court deals with:

- The deployment of ISVAs in the court setting.
- Utilising other witness/victim support.
- Whether CPS/Prosecution Counsel hold pre-trial interviews with complainants.
- How the case is opened.
- Management of applications to admit or cross examine on previous sexual history.
- How those applications are put forward by the defence or prosecution.
- Whether and how rape myths are deployed by either defence or prosecution and how they are countered.
- How and in what circumstances the judiciary use the 'myth-buster' directions which are available from the Judicial College Bench Book, when directing the jury.
- How the case is summed up.
- How jury questions are dealt with.

Contact details

Helplines for your area

Always dial **999** if you are in immediate danger. For advice or support go to:

Northumbria

Women's Aid/Domestic Violence helpline - **0808 2000 247**

Tyneside and Northumberland Rape Crisis Centres - **0800 035 2794**

North East 'Choice' helpline for victims of honour based violence and forced marriage – **0800 5999 365**

Durham

Women's Aid/Domestic Violence helpline - **0808 2000 247**

Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (Darlington and Co Durham) - **01325 369933**

North East 'Choice' helpline for victims of honour based violence and forced marriage – **0800 5999 365**

Cleveland

Women's Aid/Domestic Violence helpline - **0808 2000 247**

Eva Rape Crisis Service (Redcar and Cleveland) - **01642 835079**

ARCH (Rape Crisis Centre Teesside – Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool) - **01642 822335**

North East 'Choice' helpline for victims of honour based violence and forced marriage – **0800 5999 365**

For general victim support for domestic and sexual violence and abuse and any other crime call North East Victim Support on **0845 277 0977**.

Police and Crime Commissioner Contact Details

Northumbria

enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

0191 221 9800

www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

Durham

enquiries@durham-pcc.gov.uk

03000 264 629

www.durham-pcc.gov.uk

Cleveland

pcc@cleveland.pnn.police.uk

01642 301 623

www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY



Alternative formats (including large print and easy read) of this strategy are available upon request.

Please contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria on **0191 221 9800** or email **enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk** and we will be more than happy to provide additional copies, translations into other languages and alternative formats.