

# **Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

## **Young People affected by domestic abuse**

**DRAFT**

**Report of the Task Group**

## **Foreword:**

It is so important that all children and young people have every opportunity to reach their full potential. But for some young people living with domestic abuse can lead to a spiral of disadvantage with long term physical, emotional and psychological problems.

Domestic abuse is identified within Every Child Matters (the Government's approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19), as a cause of vulnerability in children which has a negative impact on children's ability to achieve across all the five outcomes.

As a Task Group we have learned that domestic abuse is more than physical abuse – it is often emotional, causing as much pain as the visible marks of bruises and scars. It must be devastating to be abused or to see or hear someone that you love being abused for most of us is unthinkable.

Some victims still fear the outcome of reporting an incident of domestic abuse, believing that their children will be taken away. These fears amongst others must be dispelled if we are to encourage victims to come forward. With better resources and raising awareness through simple publicity for example in schools and public places we might see more victims come forward. In doing so we can then address their needs and the needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse and offer the kind of support that brings real benefits for the whole family [and society](#).

We did not feel that this was an area where we could consult directly with young people. However, we did read a number of evaluations, the 'before' and 'after' which showed not only the distress and anger in these young peoples lives but then how sharing and working on their issues either individually or through group work brought about some profound changes.

Since starting this review both the new Council Plan 2008-09 and the refreshed Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008-11 specifically mention their intentions to work to reduce violent crime (domestic abuse being the most common violent crime) and to tackle domestic abuse by supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse which is very reassuring.

I would like to personally thank all of the witnesses who willingly gave up their time to speak to us about the issues; to the members of the Task Group who were fully engaged in the process; North Yorkshire Police, representatives from Women's Aid and the NSPCC; the Domestic Abuse Coordinators and the Scarborough and Ryedale Domestic Abuse Forum; the officers from Stockport Borough Council and Durham County Council who willing gave us their time and shared their experiences, and last but by no means least, to all the officers from the various directorates of North Yorkshire County Council who so admirably supported the work of the Task Group.

**County Councillor Caroline Seymour**  
Chairman of the Task Group  
September 2008

## Executive Summary

Domestic Abuse is a cross cutting issue which impacts on society regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. It has devastating effects on victims and their families and the economic well being of communities. The cost of domestic abuse to services and the economy as a whole is a massive £5.7 billion per year nationally. This however, does not include the human and emotional cost to individuals estimated at over £17 billion a year. Characterised as a hidden crime, it remains one of the most under-reported crimes across the United Kingdom.

Although the focus of this review has been towards the services provided to children and young people affected by domestic abuse, it has been difficult to separate this one aspect from the whole question of domestic abuse. In this report, the Task Group has included its findings in relation to both the services supporting young people and those that relate to the broader aspects of domestic abuse, both at a national and at local level. However, members are keen to point out that a thorough review of all the services supporting and combating domestic abuse was not possible due to time constraints. During the course of their research they have had the opportunity to observe and gather much information which the County Council may wish to consider at some stage.

At the start of their research, the Task Group learned that domestic abuse is traditionally a hidden crime and it is thought that reported incidents are only the tip of the iceberg. The national picture shows that 1: 4 women and 1: 7 men will experience domestic abuse within their lifetime and approximately **750,000 children and young people witness domestic violence** but of course these figures could be much bigger.

Local figures reflect that in 2007/08 there were 5169 reported incidents, with 3132 young people living in households where abuse has taken place and 1278 children and young people who witnessed the abuse.

Children are affected by witnessing domestic abuse, even where they do not suffer direct violence themselves. In 90% of abusive households children either witness or hear the abuse that is occurring. For some young people living with domestic abuse can lead to a spiral of disadvantage with long term physical, emotional and psychological development problems and therefore an inability to reach their full employment potential. In a minority of cases domestic abuse contributes to serious mental health problems later in life.

Studies also show that children from violent homes may exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour. Statistics show that between 80-85% of young offenders have a domestic abuse history and 75% of children and young people issued with Anti Social Behaviour Orders have a domestic abuse history.

Identifying and matching the levels of need and interventions for children and young people is complex but as a starting point it assumes that most children's needs can be met within universal services (Tier 1) – healthy relationship education and information about domestic abuse accessed through Education – PSHCE, antenatal assessments etc.

Children and young people with complex needs and at serious risk of harm (Tiers 3 and 4) are well provided for and supported through a multi-agency approach such as Children's Social Care, refuge and community based support, childcare services, supervised contact services etc.

The Task Group found that children and young people assessed as vulnerable as a result of domestic violence (Tier 2) and requiring single agency support such as community outreach, advocacy, group work and support services etc. is an area that requires further

exploration. Evidence would seem to suggest that young people prefer to talk with people from their family or community networks or workers from the voluntary sector and tend to be less likely to use statutory organisations.

Although the Task Group found real commitment on the part of those working in the field to tackle the issues and improve the lives of young people affected by domestic abuse, the services and resources available for this group of vulnerable young people was limited and patchy, probably not helped by the rural nature and size of the county.

The varying nature of domestic abuse involved the Task Group in meeting with a number of key agencies - both statutory and voluntary bodies that are involved in providing support to children and young people and in combating domestic abuse.

As the review progressed the Task Group identified a number of emerging themes:

- leadership, strategic commitment and local coordination
- provision of services and support for children and young affected by domestic abuse
- data collection to enable better analysis and targeting of resources
- identifying best practice and training
- raising awareness across the county

## Conclusions:

This scrutiny review was undertaken with the support of the County Council who have identified domestic abuse as a priority area in the North Yorkshire Council Plan 2008-11. The Task Group members have done their best to consult with a broad a range of key partners who were very keen to support this particular scrutiny review and indeed, welcomed the opportunity to be part of the Witness Panel Meetings. The findings and conclusions drawn and the evidence gathered are set out below:

1. Leadership: The Task Group is pleased to note the County Council's commitment to tackling Domestic Abuse.

Under the remit of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership the Task Group is very supportive of the York & North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum and the work they will undertake to tackle domestic abuse along with a number of other important priorities.

The Task Group understands that the Forum maintains a heavy agenda and their query relates to whether domestic abuse will receive the attention necessary when it is part of such a large agenda. The Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DA JCG) is one of the delivery groups of the Safer Communities Forum, but the Task Group is unclear about the powers of this group to bring about change, improve training resources and deal with other service provider issues within such a broad partnership.

It is the view of the Task Group that besides the delivery group (DA JCG) domestic abuse requires direction from a dedicated group of Senior Officers from all key partnerships involved in supporting and combating domestic abuse, perhaps on a time limited basis. The task group thought that, together with the support of the portfolio holder for Community Safety, the senior group would collectively have the strategic

authority to ensure that tackling domestic abuse right across the county moves in the right direction and it would be aided [by the pooling of resources](#)

The cost of domestic abuse to services and the economy within North Yorkshire has not, as yet, been determined, but the impact on the budgets of key partners will be substantial as will be the human and emotional cost to all victims, including children and young people.

[Visits to the two other local authorities have both found senior level strategy groups vital for driving the agenda forward.](#)

*Recommendation 1.....*

2. Strategic commitment: The Countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy (CDAS)

The Task Group was pleased to see that there is a domestic abuse strategy but thought that the document required updating and that the ownership needed to be improved. The Task Group was informed that the Strategy was in the process of being reviewed. Members encouraged the Chair of the DA Joint Coordinating Group to ensure that all key partners were included in the consultation process and that their comments were incorporated into this revised Countywide Strategy. The Task Group is keen to support good partnership working and where possible agree standardised approaches, [including data sharing](#) by all key partners who accept and sign up to the revised strategy.

*Recommendation 2.....*

Having read through the Strategy, the Task Group also felt that the section referencing children and young people required updating and suggest that a separate section is developed within the Countywide Strategy for children and young people affected by domestic abuse with appropriate links and references to the Children and Young Peoples Plan. *Recommendation 3.....*

The Task Group would welcome the opportunity for the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee to comment on the draft Strategy.

3. Local coordination: The Domestic Abuse Coordinators deliver support locally and have maintained a professional and committed approach to tackling domestic abuse against a background of job security. The Task Group believes that there is a need to overcome the tensions around job security and ensure that the Coordinators are supported in delivering their role and in retaining skills. It is the view of the Task Group that looking into the feasibility of mainstreaming these posts should be explored further. Members consider that this centralised approach would support a coordinated countywide approach, establish the sharing of best practice, performance monitoring and ensure that raising public awareness is maintained and delivered across the county. *Recommendation 4.....*

4. Support available for children and young people affected by domestic abuse:

The Task Group found real commitment on the part of those working in the field to support and improve the lives of young people affected by domestic abuse but evidence shows that this is inconsistent and inequitable across the County.

The voluntary sector is a key contributor to supporting the needs of young people who are vulnerable and requiring care and help. However, the Task Group is concerned that the Women's Aid Outreach Young Persons Advocacy Worker post in the Hambleton & Richmondshire areas will be at risk if no further funding is available. It is members' view that this excellent type of provision should be considered for other parts of the county. *Recommendation 5.....*

The Task Group was pleased to learn that the 4Youth Service works with a number of Domestic Violence 'Survivors' (DAS) using the arts as a medium. DAS Groups have been established in Northallerton, Easingwold and Richmond. The Task Group members are concerned that these groups are not distributed equitably across the county and believe that this is an area which requires further investigation. The [Youth Service may be well placed to work with this vulnerable group of young people \(tier 2\) aged between 13-19 approximately](#)

Furthermore, the Task Group believes the Youth Work Plan is due to be revised shortly and would ask that reference is made to supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse and that the Youth Plan reflects the objective set out in the Children & Young Peoples Plan which is to tackle domestic abuse.

*Recommendation 6.....*

The Task Group considers that North Yorkshire Schools play a key role in informing young people about healthy relationships through PSHCE (national curriculum) and educational programmes such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) and Miss Dorothy.Com. In addition to the national curriculum Schools also have an opportunity to display leaflets and posters which signpost families to agencies that can help.

The Task Group were pleased to learn that Training on Domestic abuse issues for professionals is available for all Schools but also understand that take [up](#) can be limited due to several circumstances. The Task Group is keen to see training in this area developed and broadened to capture a more encompassing range of staff.

It is the understanding of the Task Group that after School Clubs, such as the Me2 Club, can offer a range of mainstream activities which encourage children and young people with additional needs to participate in playing and socializing alongside other children.

The Task Group recognises that Schools have a large agenda to fulfil, but it encourages the Executive Member and Corporate Director of the Children and Young Peoples Service to raise awareness with Head Teachers and Governing Bodies on the impact that domestic abuse has on young people and, wherever they can, to increase their current levels of support. *Recommendation 7.....*

The North Yorkshire & York PCT (NY&Y PCT) School Nurse Service has recently been revised and is now delivered through Corporate Teams which are based around geographical areas. The Task Group anticipates that a likely effect of these changes will be that any member of the 'Team' will attend a school in their area, rather than the same familiar face. The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee will watch these changes with interest and it has agreed with the NY &Y PCT to include an update in its Work Programme to find out what effect these changes have had and what the outcomes are. *Recommendation 8.....*

The Task Group believes that there might well be other sources of support available to children and young people across other parts of the County which their research did not uncover. Members believe this is an important issue and consider that it would be useful for the Children and Young Peoples Service to undertake a 'mapping exercise' to locate and identify all sources of support available to young people across the County. *Recommendation 9.....*

5. Data Collection: The Task Group was grateful to North Yorkshire Police for providing them with the number of reported domestic abuse incidents in North Yorkshire and in each of their Police Areas. The Task Group was concerned that this appeared to be the only source of information but it was encouraged to learn that Children's Social Care is addressing the issue of data collection.

Without better data on children and young people the Task Group believes that service providers would find it difficult to address the needs of young people affected by domestic abuse and to target their resources effectively.

*Recommendation 10.....*

6. Best Practice: The Task Group congratulates the Scarborough and Ryedale Domestic Abuse Forum on developing the 'Making Safe' scheme and on receiving the Butler Trust Award in 2008 which celebrated commitment, dedication and innovative practice in the field of domestic abuse. The Task Group is keen to support the roll out of the 'Making Safe' programme across the County and suggests that the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives an update on progress being made to include the number of families supported under this type of programme and the outcomes being achieved. *Recommendation 11.....*

7. Raising Awareness: The Task group considers raising awareness and increasing the opportunities for training in relation to domestic abuse to be a very important area.

Awareness Raising – the Task Group would like to see posters signposting people to help and support for domestic abuse related issues. They could be used in a similar way to those used for the "Drink Driving", "95 Alive" and "Teenage Pregnancy" ones which let victims know what type of support is available to them.

Training – the Task Group would like to see training broadened to encompass both Members and County Council staff through a variety of avenues.

The County Council provides support for staff through the Staff Network but asks that consideration is given to developing a County Council Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy.

The Task Group were pleased to note that domestic abuse is mentioned on the North Yorkshire website but this is very limited and the Task Group considers this to be an area that requires a good deal of attention.

*Recommendation 12.....*

## **Recommendations:**

The Task Group recommends that the Executive considers:

### **Recommendation 1**

..... the development of a time limited Domestic Abuse Executive Member and Officer Group which has the authority to bring about change and embed the sharing of best practice and supports joint working on domestic abuse issues

### **Recommendation 2**

..... in revising the Countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy that all key partners are involved in the consultation process.

### **Recommendation 3**

..... within the Countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy there is a separate section for children and young people affected by domestic abuse with appropriate links and references to the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

### **Recommendation 4**

..... a review and mainstreaming of the locality based Domestic Abuse Coordinators posts.

### **Recommendation 5**

..... the Domestic Abuse partnership consider expanding the provision of Young Peoples Outreach Advocacy Worker services across the county.

### **Recommendation 6**

..... the revised Youth Work Plan includes objectives for supporting young people affected by domestic abuse as set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan to Tackle Domestic Abuse.

### **Recommendation 7**

.....the support of the Executive Member and Corporate Director of the Children and Young Peoples Service in increasing the awareness of Head Teachers and Governing bodies on the impact of domestic abuse on young people.

### **Recommendation 8**

*..... the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives a progress report from the North Yorkshire & York PCT on the integrated Health Visiting & School Nursing Team service.*

### **Recommendation 9**

.....that a mapping exercise is undertaken by the Children's and Young Peoples Directorate which identifies all the services and support available for young people affected by domestic abuse across the county.

### **Recommendation 10**

..... the Children's Social Service continue to develop a recording method to capture data which reflects the needs of [all](#) children and young people affected by domestic abuse [and tracks outcomes](#).

### **Recommendation 11**

*..... that the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive an update on the roll out of the 'Making Safe' scheme across the county together with available data and outcomes achieved.*



### **Recommendation 12**

.....there is a greater awareness of domestic abuse issues [across](#) North Yorkshire [by](#) [considering](#) :

- [an increase in the information available which informs people where they can find help and support](#)
- review of the domestic abuse information on the NYCC website
- a review of the training opportunities in relation to domestic abuse
- raising Members awareness about levels of domestic abuse via seminars/briefings
- development of a domestic abuse workplace policy for the County Council's own staff

DRAFT

## **Scope and Membership of the Task Group**

### **Aim:**

To review the services and support available to children and young people in North Yorkshire who experience and witness domestic abuse.

The Task Group will also consider:

- domestic abuse - the impact on children and young people
- levels of domestic abuse in North Yorkshire and data collection
- the support available to children and young people who experience domestic abuse
- role of the County Council
- domestic abuse policies, strategies and performance monitoring
- evaluations by young people on recovery services
- best practice in the field of domestic abuse
- comparison with other local authorities

### **Approach**

The Task Group took a Witness Panel approach with relevant key partners, and organised visits to other local authorities who have evaluated and restructured their models of working in relation to domestic abuse.

### **Objectives, targets and indicators relevant to this review:**

#### ***North Yorkshire County Council* - Corporate Objective**

- Security for all – by promoting safe, healthy and sustainable communities

#### ***Children & Young Peoples Plan 2008-011***

Objective 2.4 – Tackling Domestic Abuse

#### ***Local Area Agreement 2 – Safer Communities target (NI 32\*)***

- % Reduction in repeat incidents of domestic violence

*\*National Indicator 32 - Reduce the repeat incidents of domestic violence*

### **Membership of the Task Group.**

Caroline Seymour (Chair )  
Heather Garnett  
Andrew Backhouse  
Liz Casling  
Melva Steckles  
Jim Snowball  
David Heather  
Philip Barrett, Safe & Sustainable O&S

## Section One: Domestic Abuse – the impact on children & young people

***At the outset of this review the Task Group became aware that the terms domestic violence or domestic abuse are used interchangeably. The term domestic violence suggests a physical assault but the issue is much broader. So, for the purposes of this report the term domestic abuse is used throughout. However, where information has been drawn from other sources relating to domestic violence the phrase has been used in those instances .***

Domestic Abuse is a cross cutting issue which impacts on society regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. It has devastating effects on victims and their families and the economic well being of communities. Regrettably it remains one of the most under-reported crimes across the United Kingdom.

Children are affected by witnessing domestic abuse, even where they do not suffer direct violence themselves. The impact that domestic abuse has on children can result in low self-esteem, poorer educational achievement and in a minority of cases contributes to serious mental health problems in later life.

- ***approximately 750,000 children and young people witness domestic violence***
- in 90% of abusive households children witness the abuse that is occurring.
- in 25% of cases, a male partner had been violent to the children either when they have tried to protect their mother or directly.
- more than a third of children in a violent home know what is happening. The figure rises to up to half if the violence is repeated.
- growing up in a household with domestic abuse can have a negative impact on children and young peoples ability to create and maintain relationships, their self-esteem, self-confidence and stability, school attainment and being excluded from school.
- Children outnumber women in refuges, making up 60% of residents.
- 1:4 males and 1:10 females think that abuse towards a partner is acceptable in some situations.

Evidence suggests that children as individuals respond differently to witnessing domestic abuse. Some may feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused.

*'They are at significantly higher risk of developing emotional, behavioural, speech and language problems, are more likely to show aggressive and antisocial behaviour, suffer from lower self esteem and tend to do less well at school.'*

Some are very resilient and develop their own coping strategies or have a network of support through families and their communities.

Studies have also shown that children from violent homes can exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour and there are suggestive strong links between bullying and domestic abuse.



Statistics suggest that approximately 75% of children and young people with ASBO's (Anti-Social Behaviour Order) and 80-85% of Young Offenders have a domestic abuse history.

For children living in rural areas the effects of domestic abuse can be particularly severe as lack of transport and physical isolation can make it harder to overcome problems. Leaving behind pets, friends and familiar surroundings can be a devastating experience for some young people.

Identifying levels of need and the interventions required is provided from a conceptual framework (adapted from Hardiker, Exton & Barker 1992) and matches levels of need for children affected by domestic abuse and applies equally to children with other needs.

At its simplest, the various tiers are defined as:

- Tier 1 – All children; Universal services
- Tier 2 – Children vulnerable as a result of domestic violence and requiring single agency service
- Tiers 3 and 4 children with complex or at risk of serious harm requiring multi agency response and risk management

The tiered model assumes as its starting point that most children's needs can be met within universal services. The aim of any intervention is to support the child wherever possible, and to enable them to return to universal services following a period of more intensive or specialist support to avoid social exclusion.

#### **Domestic Abuse national statistics:**

- *1 in 4 women experience domestic violence;*
- *1 in 6 men experience domestic violence;*
- *Domestic violence represents 25% of all violent crime;*
- *There are more repeat victims of domestic violence than for any other crime;*
- *Nationally, domestic violence claims the lives of 2 women a week*
- *Most victims are assaulted 35 times before reporting the matter to the police*
- *domestic violence is a primary indicator of child protection needs;*

Domestic abuse can involve violence, threats, or abuse between people who have a relationship with each other (or have had in the past). It can be carried out by adult siblings upon each other, or by adult children or carers upon their parents or older people (so-called elder abuse). It can occur between partners; within families; or in shared homes and affects men and women in both heterosexual and same sex relationships. It happens between people of all cultures, religions or classes and in BME communities may include such issues as forced marriage. It is based on one person having power or control over another. Domestic Abuse gets worse over time. Domestic abuse is common

The cost of domestic abuse to services and the economy as a whole is a massive £5.7 billion per year nationally. This however, does not include the human and emotional cost to individuals estimated at over £17 billion a year.

The police estimate they get a call every minute from someone who is a victim of domestic violence.

Childline receives approximately 5000 calls a day. The most common being bullying, serious family tensions and abuse, violence and addiction at home.

## Section Two: Reported Incidents of Domestic Abuse in North Yorkshire

At the beginning of the project the Task Group were provided with the following statistics by North Yorkshire Police. This informed the group of the reported incidents of domestic abuse over the last five years and to see for themselves whether the incidents of domestic abuse, the repeat incidents and child witnesses were increasing or decreasing.

Other figures also provided showed the reported incidents for 2007/08, the number of repeat incidents, young people living in the home and the number of children and young people who witnessed domestic violence for each of the Police Areas.

Figures suggest that approximately 27% of reported incidents of domestic abuse are witnessed by young people. The Police estimate that approximately 70-75% of children and young people in North Yorkshire with ASBO's (Anti-Social Behaviour Order) and 80-85% of Young Offenders have a domestic abuse history.

Reported incidents with child witnesses are sent through to the Domestic Violence Unit. Where young people are believed to be at risk Juvenile concern forms will be completed and passed to Children's Social Care.

Of the incidents reported to North Yorkshire Police, approximately 50+% are repeat incidents. Arrests made are in the region of 40%, but there is a drive within North Yorkshire Police to remove and arrest the perpetrator thereby increasing this figure to 45%.

Members of the Task Group were also advised that a large proportion of domestic abuse incidents remain unreported. So it is considered that the figures obtained are only the tip of the iceberg. (*Most victims are assaulted 35 times before reporting the matter to the police*).

The full data range collected by the Police is quite broad and includes contributing factors to incidents of domestic abuse e.g. alcohol, drugs, male or female victims; the number of referrals made by them to Childrens Social Care and to Womens Aid.

The Task Group members were most grateful to the Police for sharing this information with them. They realised during the course of this review that the main and possibly only source of statistical information in relation to incidents of domestic abuse in North Yorkshire is the Police. Other agencies may collate data but this would seem to be in isolation.

*Year	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Reported incidents	4029	5000	5515	5768	5440
Reported incidents with child witnesses	1280	1366	1511	1606	1465
Reported repeat incidents	2260	2706	3172	3379	3116

Domestic Violence Police Response 07/08			
	Incidents	Repeats	Arrests
Central	2706	1320 (49%)	934 (34%)
Western	1302	586(45%)	494 (38%)
Eastern	1161	522 (45%)	464 (40%)
Force	5169	2428(46%)	1892(37%)

Reported Domestic Violence 07/08 Children & Young People Impact				
	Incidents	YP Living	CYP Witness	Referrals
Central	2706	1640	669	368
Western	1302	789	322	178
Eastern	1161	703	287	157
Force	5169	3132	1278	703

### Section Three: Emerging themes from Witness Panel Meetings

With so many key agencies involved in supporting and combating domestic abuse, the Task Group embarked on a series of Witness Panel Meetings to understand not only the topic issue, but to explore opportunities for possible further development. The emerging themes from the Task Groups Witness Panel Meetings are set out below:

#### 1. Leadership:

Domestic Abuse being a cross cutting issue requires input from a number of partner agencies working together. The County Council is a key contributor to the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership and the Local Area Agreement thematic block responsible for Safer Communities.

In setting out its priorities for 2008-09 the County Council has identified under Community Safety domestic abuse as one of its priority areas.

Working under the wider partnership of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership the Task Group learned that the York & North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum has tackling domestic abuse as one of their priorities along with a number of other important priorities.

The Task Group understands that the Forum maintains a heavy agenda and they queried whether domestic abuse will receive the attention necessary when part of such a large agenda. There is the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DA JCG) which is one of the delivery groups of the Safer Communities Forum.

#### **Conclusions:**

***The Task Group is pleased to note the County Council's commitment to tackling Domestic Abuse and that this is supported through the Y&NY Safer Communities Forum, and the delivery group Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group.***

***The Task Group is unclear as to the powers of the DA JCG group to bring about change, improve training resources and to address other service provider issues across a broad partnership. The Task Group considers this group requires input from the portfolio holder and from a time limited, dedicated Senior Officers Group drawn from across all key partners involved in supporting and combating domestic abuse.***

#### 2. Strategic Commitment:

##### County Domestic Abuse Strategy (CDAS) 2004-08

The Task Group were advised by the Chairman of the Safer Communities Forum that the CDAS is due to be revised and finalised by October this year. This work is being undertaken by the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (JCG) which is the delivery arm of the Safer Communities Forum. They were also made aware of the problems previously encountered with the development of the current Domestic Abuse Strategy in relation to consultation and to partner agencies not feeling their views had been included. There is a brief reference made to children and young people affected by domestic abuse which is non specific and narrow.

## Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) 2008-11

The Task Group were informed that the Children and Young Peoples Service were in the process of refreshing the CYPP and were pleased to learn that the issue of children and young people affected by domestic abuse is being given a higher priority and has a specific objective under Staying Safe – Objective 2.4 Tackling Domestic Abuse.

### **Conclusions:**

**County Domestic Abuse Strategy - the Task Group felt strongly that in reviewing the CDAS careful consideration should be given to consulting with all key partners in order to ensure good partnership working, adoption of standardised approaches, ownership and sign up to the revised strategy.**

**Members also suggest that a separate section is developed within the strategy for children and young people affected by domestic abuse with appropriate links and references to the Children and Young Peoples Plan.**

**The Task Group would welcome the opportunity for the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee to comment on the draft Strategy.**

### **3. Local Coordination:**

Coordination of multi-agency working in relation to domestic abuse, at a district level, is undertaken by Domestic Abuse Coordinators who have been funded (year on year) through the Basic Command Unit (BCU). Three of the posts were originally employed through district councils and one post through the police.

An important part of the Coordinators role is the arranging of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). The MARAC is put in place to help the victims and survivors of domestic abuse that are deemed to be high risk and to improve their safety. The MARAC allows all the agencies with a role to play in the victim's safety to share information and decide the most appropriate way to reduce or manage the identified risks.

Funding for the Domestic Abuse Coordinators posts since 2004 has been year on year. This combined with differing terms and conditions and the challenges of a post that has a wide scope and purpose was seen as contributing to two of the four posts becoming vacant on a regular occurrence.

Whilst there is an opportunity for the coordinators to work together and share best practice and common goals, their practice can differ according to locality and post holder.

**Conclusions:**

***The Task Group believes that a review of the Domestic Abuse Coordinators posts together with the mainstreaming and centralisation of the locality based coordinators would overcome the tensions around job security and see that the coordinators are supported in delivering their role and in retaining skills. Members also feel that this would ensure a coordinated countywide approach, whilst delivered locally. This action would make certain that best practice is shared, performance is monitored and that the raising of public awareness is maintained and delivered across the county.***

**4. Support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse:**

Services include a Women's Aid outreach Young Persons Advocacy Worker, funded by Comic Relief for two years but this support is only available in the Hambleton and Richmondshire areas.

Women's Aid Refuges - support work on a one to one or group basis is available for children and young people residing in a refuge. There are three Women's Aid Refuges – York, Harrogate and Scarborough.

The NSPCC undertakes recovery work with young people aged 5 – 18 years and in the previous year received 30 referrals from North Yorkshire (10 of which were from Selby).

4Youth Service - since January the Youth Service are working with a number of Domestic Violence 'Survivors' (DAS) groups. Groups have been developed in Northallerton, Easingwold and Richmond. CYC arranged song-writing artists and recording studio over Easter and the Task Group were advised that work is still on-going. Area Leaders in Hambleton work with and support the Women's Aid Outreach Young Persons Advocacy Worker.

Children's Social Care deliver support services to children and young people who have complex needs, or who are at serious risk of harm and in need of protection (Tiers 3 and 4). They advised the Task Group that they receive referrals from many sources and these are all assessed with 24 hours. Children assessed as vulnerable as a result of domestic abuse (Tier 2) and requiring a single agency service are referred on to the voluntary sector, youth service, young people outreach service. Some may be considered appropriate for a Common Assessment provided parental consent has been obtained.

Children requiring Universal Services (Tier 1) are supported at School and through the national curriculum PSHCE. In addition there are educational programmes such as Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) which is an explicit whole curriculum framework and resource for teaching social, emotional and behavioural skills.

The Task Group were pleased to note that 90% of Primary schools in North Yorkshire Schools offer SEAL, some offer both SEAL and Miss.Dorothy.Com; 40% of Secondary schools and 50% of special schools offer SEAL and the group were advised that this is an area of work which is being addressed. In addition to the national curriculum Schools also have an opportunity to display leaflets and posters on their Noticeboards which signposts families to agencies that can help.

The North Yorkshire & York PCT (NY&Y PCT) School Nurse Service is now delivered through Corporate Teams which are based around geographical



areas. An effect of these changes means that any member of that 'Team' may attend a school in their area and provide the School Nurse service. The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee has already agreed with the NY & Y PCT to include regular updates on the effect of these changes and upon the outcomes.

Children's Centres are service hubs where children under five years old and their families can receive seamless integrated services such as Parenting Support, Early Years intervention and access or signposting to the many services provided by key partners.

Children in need are supported through Integrated Services and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) which is a key part of delivering frontline services and is focused around the needs of children and young people. CAFs are being introduced across the county through localities. The CAF aims to promote the earlier identification of additional needs particularly in universal services.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) - The Task Group was pleased to note the role of the LSCB to promote and facilitate initiatives to reduce harm to children by agreeing policies and procedures; monitoring and evaluating policies and services and the review of serious cases.

DRAFT

**Conclusions:**

**The Task Group was pleased to learn about the support available to children and young people affected by domestic abuse but consider this to inconsistent and inequitable across the County.**

**The voluntary sector is a key contributor to supporting the needs of young people who are vulnerable and who require care and help. The Task Group is concerned that the provision of the Women's Aid Outreach Young Persons Advocacy Worker will be at risk if no further funding is made available, and consider that this type of provision should be thought about for other parts of the county.**

**Youth Service:** The Task Group was concerned that these DAS groups are not distributed equitably across the county and believe that this is an area which requires further investigation and believe the Youth Service may be well placed to work with this vulnerable group (tier 2) of young people aged between 11-18 approximately

**Children Social Care:** The Task Group was concerned that Children's Social Care currently do not collect data on young people affected by domestic abuse who are not assessed as requiring protection and consider this to be an area that requires addressing.

**Education :** The Task Group recognises that Schools have a large agenda to fulfil, but encourages the Executive Member and Corporate Director of the Children and Young Peoples Service to raise awareness with Head Teachers and Governing Bodies on the impact that domestic abuse has on young people and wherever they can to increase their current levels of support

**School Nurse Service – The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee will await an update from the NY & Y PCT on the effects of these changes once established and what the outcomes are.**

**The Task Group believe that there might well be other sources of support available. They consider this is an area that needs addressing and would support the development of a 'mapping exercise' which identifies the services and support available for young people across the county.**

### **Visit to Risedale Community & Sports College**

The Task Group welcomed the opportunity to visit Risedale Community College to meet with the Anti Bullying Group and to learn more about the support they give to other young people.

Representatives from each of the year groups who provide peer mentoring and confidential advice to other young people suffering from bullying and other relationship issues explained the purpose and aims of the Anti Bullying Group. Members of the Task Group were really impressed by the commitment shown and the way in which these young people were very focused and positive about providing support and advice to others. They were very clear about the confidential nature of their group work and also used their Anti Bullying Meetings to support one another.

They are keen to share their experiences with other schools and the Task Group offered to mention their excellent work to Officers at the County Council.

The Task Group also heard about a possible new development the 'Bisto House' which provides facilities and support for young people after school perhaps to cook a meal, do some washing or have some help to do their homework. The Task Group look forward to receiving more information as this development progresses.

#### 4. Data collection:

North Yorkshire Police appear to be only source of statistical information in connection with Domestic Abuse. The full data range collected is quite broad and includes contributory factors such as alcohol, drugs, male or female victims; the number of referrals made by them to Children's Social Care or to Women's Aid.

Children's Social Care advised the Task Group that they do not collect or record information linked specifically to incidents of domestic abuse. However, they have already recognised that this is an area which requires addressing and reassured the Task Group that this is in the process of being progressed.

**Conclusions:**

***The Task Group were grateful to North Yorkshire Police for sharing their data with them and were encouraged by the development in Children's Social Care to address the issue of data collection.***

***The Task Group believe that it would be difficult to address the needs of young people affected by domestic abuse without this background data and would support any moves to improve data collection and data sharing.***

#### 5. Best Practice

The '**Making Safe**' Scheme originally developed by Scarborough and Ryedale Domestic Abuse Forum is a multi agency initiative supporting victims of domestic abuse to remain safe within their own homes which at the same time challenges the offender's behaviour.

Members heard that earlier this year '**Making Safe**' was awarded the Butler Trust for Public Protection and it was hailed as an exciting and innovative project. It deals with Domestic Violence in the Scarborough Borough Council and Ryedale Council areas of North Yorkshire.

The success of the '**Making Safe**' scheme has been acknowledged as best practice by the Safer Communities Forum and is being rolled out across the county with funding from Supporting People. The roll out will be monitoring by the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group.

**Conclusions:**

***The Task Group congratulates the Scarborough and Ryedale Domestic Abuse Forum for its special commitment and dedication in this field and for being awarded the Butler Trust Award. It is keen to support the roll out of the 'Making Safe' programme across the County and request that the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives an update on the progress being made.***

**6. Raising awareness:**

Members of the Task Group consider it important to increase public awareness of domestic abuse and were told that awareness raising campaigns are undertaken at a district level but there is not necessarily a coordinated approach across the whole of the County. The Task Group considers this to be an important area requiring attention.

Because victims often fear the consequences of coming forward and seeking help, it is especially important that they have easy access to information which supports them through their suffering. Members would like to be assured that information is placed in appropriate places such as on notice boards in [schools, youth clubs, sports facilities etc.](#)

NYCC Website - Members of the Task Group set themselves an exercise to access information and contact details from the NYCC website. They found that the terms 'domestic abuse' and 'domestic violence' bring up different sources of information.

- 'Domestic violence' is reported in minutes of meetings
- 'Domestic abuse' is found in the 'Community Living' part of the website and consists of a brief paragraph in amongst other topics. There is an explanation given on what domestic abuse is - physical, verbal or psychological abuse that can affect all members of a family. It informs the searcher that there are organisations in the directory offering confidential and emotional support as well as legal advice.
- Additionally, there are web links to Childline and Women's Aid further down the page and also a link to "Hideout" for children and young people but these were not easily found.

**Conclusions:**

***The Task Group is keen to encourage greater awareness of domestic abuse levels in North Yorkshire***

***The Task Group is pleased to see that domestic abuse is mentioned on the NYCC website, but feel this could be improved through clearer signposting for all victims of domestic abuse together with web links to voluntary sector organisations and contact details to District Council services. Through this medium it may be possible to include a domestic abuse newsletter for professionals which provide regular updates, availability of training and other news from around the County.***

## **Section Four: Domestic Abuse – Strategic Context**

Tackling domestic abuse features as a priority within many partner strategies, including the Local Area Agreement (LAA) framework, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP), District Strategies, Supporting People Strategy and the Children and Young Peoples Plan to name a few.

The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) brings together the principal public sector agencies responsible for promoting the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities in the County. It is responsible for the delivery of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and within its framework is the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The NYSP Sustainable Communities Strategy and the LAA are delivered through theme blocks. The theme group with responsibility for Safer Communities is the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum.

The York & North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum's (YNYSCF) membership is drawn from senior representatives across all key stakeholder agencies who have an interest or role in delivering safer communities. As a thematic partnership within the NYSP its role is to support delivery of the Local Area Agreement thematic block – Safer Communities which includes - reducing the incidents of violent crime and reducing the repeat incidents of domestic violence (National Indicator 32).

The Forum has identified a number of priorities where it considers it can add value – Domestic Abuse is one of these priorities. Other priorities relate to Alcohol, Violent Crime and Road Safety.

Delivering the priority on Domestic Abuse is the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group. The aim of the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DAJCG) is to promote the development of effective services - especially those which encourage the reporting of domestic abuse, and which serve to reduce the incidence of repeat victimisation. Membership is still developing but it is anticipated that representation will be from across all key stakeholders.

The DA JCG has been set a number of priorities which include:

- revision of the County Domestic Abuse Strategy by October 2008.
- to identify gaps in service provision for children and young people.
- the funding and line management arrangements of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators, including terms and conditions.
- Monitor the roll out of the Making Safe Programme across the County.

### **North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy**

The North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy was developed by the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators with consultancy support. The purpose of the Strategy was to ensure that future development of domestic abuse services were mirrored across the county. The document was subject to consultation with district CDRP's, criminal justice and support service providers. However not all partners felt their views were incorporated into the final document resulting in a lack of ownership and sign up.

Mention is made to Every Child Matters within the strategy and setting out a framework for improving outcomes for all children. The emphasis is on developing a common assessment framework and improving information sharing.

The Strategy is currently in the process of being refreshed and this is being undertaken by the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DA JCG). It is hoped that this will be available October 2008.

At a District level there are CDRP Strategies, Domestic Abuse Strategies, a Domestic Abuse Steering Group and Domestic Abuse Action Plans. Progression of the strategies and action plans is delivered through the Domestic Abuse Coordinators.

### **Local Context - Domestic Abuse Coordinators**

In 2004 four Domestic Abuse Coordinators were appointed in the County. Initially each had a remit to cover two districts and included the delivery of two district actions plans as well as the county domestic abuse plan. There was a need to ensure equitable distribution of time with lines of accountability to both districts. Posts were funded through the Basic Command Unit (BCU). Three of the posts were originally employed through the district council and one post through the police.

An important part of the Coordinators role is the arranging of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). The MARAC is put in place to help the victims and survivors of domestic abuse that are deemed to be high risk and to improve their safety. The MARAC allows all the agencies with a role to play in the victim's safety to share information and decide the most appropriate way to reduce or manage the identified risks.

Funding for the Domestic Abuse Coordinators posts since 2004 has been year on year which combined with differing terms and conditions; the challenge of a post with a wide scope and purpose were seen as contributing factors to two of the four posts becoming vacant on a regular occurrence.

Where Coordinators have remained in post the development of Domestic Abuse Forums in some areas may be assessed as being further forward than others.

Domestic Abuse Forums are a mix of statutory and voluntary sector representatives who work together to promote domestic abuse issues, influence policy, disseminate information, promote co-operation between agencies, offer help & advice and develop projects to tackle those issues in the local area.

The Scarborough & Ryedale Domestic Abuse Forum has developed a '**Making Safe**' Scheme which is a multi agency initiative supporting victims of domestic abuse to remain safe within their own homes and at the same time challenging the offender's behaviour.

Members heard that the scheme was given an award by the Butler Trust earlier this year for Public Protection and was hailed as an exciting and innovative project. It deals with Domestic Violence in the Scarborough Borough Council and Ryedale Council areas of North Yorkshire.

Earlier this year the success of the 'Making Safe' scheme was acknowledged as best practice and is being rolled out across the county. The roll out will be monitoring by the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group.

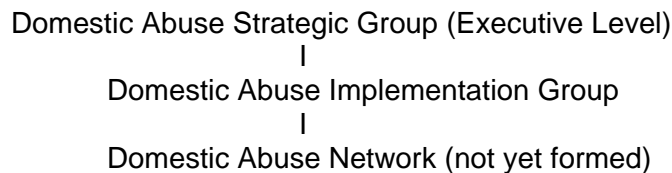
## Section Five: Comparisons with other authorities

The Task Group chose to visit two other local authorities - Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council as it was part of the Home Office project on Domestic Violence delivered through the Local Government Association and Durham County Council, a neighbouring Authority with similar issues of rurality as ourselves. It has recently undertaken a restructuring in relation to domestic abuse issues.

### Stockport Metropolitan Council

Two members of the Task Group were met by the Head of the Integrated Prevention Service, Children & Young Peoples Service, who is also the chair of the Domestic Abuse Implementation Group and Sam Price, Service Manager of Women's Aid who sits on both the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group and the Implementation Group.

The Task Group was advised that Stockport has progressed a long way since the LGA's Domestic Violence Project and that the Domestic Abuse Forum structure is:



The Council is moving from strength to strength and domestic abuse now has a high priority within its area, It is developing:

- a DAF Newsletter for professionals which details free Domestic Abuse Training for Stockport Professionals, articles from the Police, Witness Care Officers and keeps everyone up to date;
- a Partnership Domestic Abuse Checklist which is available and based on a guide developed by the Home Office, Violent Crime Unit;
- a Training Strategy;
- a Domestic Abuse Communication Strategy; and
- a Domestic Abuse Forum Code of Practice.

Raising public awareness has been high on Stockport's list of priorities but with limited funds this has been challenging. An innovative solution by the council was to create an identifiable logo, which it is hoped will help identify domestic abuse campaigns, and it will be used on the back of parking tickets to display contact details for anyone who wants help, or needs someone to talk to.

Services for young people - Women's Aid provide activities for children residing in the refuge, but also outreach services - Me2 an after school group which was a response to an unmet need. They currently have a waiting list of 100 children and from October will increase to 3 groups a week to accommodate the extra demand. Women's Aid receives 50% of their referrals from families and 50% from schools, Police/Health Visitors/GP's/Social Workers.

## **Durham County Council**

Two Members of the Task Group were met by the Community Safety Officer who leads on domestic abuse issues for the County Council. The Community Safety Officer explained how the priority given to domestic abuse had increased and the structures in place at a County and District level.

The post of the Community Safety Officer sits within Adult and Community Services and the Corporate Director has been a driving force behind raising the profile on tackling domestic abuse. In County Durham domestic abuse accounts for 25% of all recorded violent crimes report to the police. There are more incidents of domestic violence than for burglary and robbery added together.

There is a Core Group/Domestic Violence Forum which the Community Safety Officer chairs with involvement from all key partners. This group develops Actions Plans and refreshed the Domestic Violence Strategy. They have approximated that domestic abuse costs locally £1000 per household.

There is a County Domestic Violence Group made up of chief and senior officers, the portfolio holder for Community Safety and the Police Authority Chair. This Executive Group are there to challenge and prevent domestic abuse by promoting the effective participation of their agencies in the development of strategy, policy, planning and service delivery. (Terms of Reference are attached at appendix??).

The Community Safety Officer considers that the support of this high level group of Members and Officers has had a massive impact around the County and that the issue of domestic abuse is taken seriously and has raised everyone understands.

Training - the Executive Group have allocated £100,000 for a broader range of training for staff and raising aware with Members and includes –

- Participative training aimed at frontline staff and how you approach the issue of domestic abuse;
- Domestic Violence and sexual abuse;
- Lesbian and Gay domestic abuse;
- Black and Ethnic Minority domestic abuse.
- As this is a 'one off' amount of funding and in order to leave a legacy the Community Safety Officer has written up 3 E learning programmes to allow for on-going training.

The Officer went on to explain the Durham Police structure and that out of seven Districts there were 5 Community Safety Partnerships – Easington, Durham and Chester Le Street, Derwentside, Sedgefield, and Weardale and Teesdale.

Of interest is the fact that several of the Domestic Abuse Forums have been set up as charities which enables them to access funding from various sources.

There are Perpetrator Programmes in place, which run for 32 weeks and are made up of groups of 8. Of the men that have completed the programme, as yet, none have been referred to the Police, but the Officer is and cautious in referring to the success of the programme and takes a pragmatic view.

A lasting point mentioned to members of the Task Group was that in their experience victims are more prepared to attend at other 'unknown' centres linked to something else such as CAB for example and that children and young people want somewhere to go rather than talk to a teacher who is part of a statutory body.



## Section Six: Conclusions

This scrutiny review was undertaken with the support of the County Council who have identified domestic abuse as a priority area in the North Yorkshire Council Plan 2008-11. The Task Group have done their best to consult with as broad a range of key partners who were very keen to support this particular scrutiny review and indeed, welcomed the opportunity to be part of the Witness Panel Meetings. The findings and conclusions drawn from the information and evidence gathered are set out below:

1. Leadership: The Task Group is pleased to note the County Council's commitment to tackling Domestic Abuse.

Under the remit of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership the Task Group members are very supportive of the York & North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum and the work they will undertake to tackle domestic abuse along with a number of other important priorities.

The Task Group understands that the Forum maintains a heavy agenda and it queries whether domestic abuse will receive the attention necessary or whether it might get lost when part of such a large agenda. There is also the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DA JCG) which is one of the delivery arms of the Safer Communities Forum. However, the Task Group is unclear about the ability of this group to bring about change, to improve training resources and to deal with other service provider issues across a broad partnership.

It is the view of the Task Group that besides the delivery group (DA JCG) domestic abuse requires direction from a dedicated group of Senior Officers from all key partnerships involved in supporting and combating domestic abuse, perhaps on a time limited basis. They, together with the support of the portfolio holder for Community Safety, would collectively have the strategic authority to ensure that tackling domestic abuse moves in the right direction through their leadership and by the pooling of resources

The cost of domestic abuse to services and the economy within North Yorkshire has not, as yet, been determined, but the impact on the budgets of key partners will be substantial as will be the human and emotional cost to all victims, including children and young people

Visits to the two other local authorities have both found senior level strategy groups vital for driving the agenda forward.

*Recommendation 1.....*

2. Strategic commitment: The Countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy (CDAS)  
The Task Group was pleased to see that there is a domestic abuse strategy but thought that the document required updating and the ownership needed to be improved. The Task Group was informed that the Strategy was in the process of being reviewed and encouraged the Chair of the DA Joint Coordinating Group to ensure that all key partners were included in the consultation process and their comments incorporated into this new Countywide Strategy. The Task Group is keen to support good partnership working and where possible agree standardised approaches, including data sharing by all key partners who accept and signed up to the revised strategy.

*Recommendation 2.....*

Having read through the Strategy the Task Group also felt that the section referencing children and young people required updating and suggests that a separate section is developed within the Countywide Strategy for children and young people affected by domestic abuse with appropriate links and references to the Children and Young Peoples Plan. *Recommendation 3.....*

The Task Group would welcome the opportunity for the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee to comment on the draft Strategy.

3. Local coordination: The Domestic Abuse Coordinators deliver support locally and have maintained a professional and committed approach to tackling domestic abuse against a background of job security. The Task Group believe that there is a need to overcome the tensions around job security and ensure that the Coordinators are supported in delivering their role and retaining skills. It is the view of the Task Group that looking into the feasibility of mainstreaming these posts should be explored further. They consider that this centralised approach would support a coordinated countywide approach, and establish the sharing of best practice, performance monitoring and ensure that raising public awareness is maintained and delivered across the county. *Recommendation 4.....*

4. Support available for children and young people affected by domestic abuse: The Task Group found real commitment on the part of those working in the field to support and improve the lives of young people affected by domestic abuse but evidence suggests that this is inconsistent and inequitable across the County.

The voluntary sector is a key contributor to supporting the needs of young people who are vulnerable and who require care and help. However, the Task Group is concerned that the provision of the Women's Aid Outreach Young Persons Advocacy Worker in the Hambleton & Richmondshire areas will be at risk if no further funding is available. It is members' view that this type of provision must be considered for other parts of the county. *Recommendation 5.....*

The Task Group was pleased to learn that the 4Youth Service works with a number of Domestic Violence 'Survivors' (DAS) using the arts as a medium. DAS Groups have been established in Northallerton, Easingwold and Richmond. The Task Group is concerned that these groups are not distributed equitably across the county and believe that this is an area which requires further investigation. [The Youth Service may also be in a position to to work with this vulnerable group of young people \(tier 2\) aged between 13-19 approximately](#)

Furthermore, the Task Group believes the Youth Work Plan is due to be revised shortly and members request that reference is made to supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse and that the Youth Plan reflects the objective set out in the Children & Young Peoples Plan which is to tackle domestic abuse.

*Recommendation 6.....*

The Task Group considers that North Yorkshire Schools play a key role in informing young people about healthy relationships through PSHCE (national curriculum) and educational programmes such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) and Miss Dorothy.Com. In addition to the national curriculum, Schools also have an opportunity to display leaflets and posters which signposts families to agencies that can help.

The Task Group was pleased to learn that Training on Domestic abuse issues for professionals is available for all Schools but members also understand that take [up](#) can be limited due to several reasons. The Task Group is keen to see training in this area developed and broadened to capture staff from more disciplines.

The Task Group understands that after School Clubs, such as the Me2 Club, can offer a range of mainstream activities which encourage children and young people with additional needs to participate in playing and socializing alongside other children.

The Task Group recognises that Schools have a large agenda to fulfil, but it encourages the Executive Member and Corporate Director of the Children and Young Peoples Service to raise awareness with Head Teachers and Governing Bodies on the impact that domestic abuse has on young people and, wherever they can, to increase their current levels of support. *Recommendation 7.....*

The North Yorkshire & York PCT (NY&Y PCT) School Nurse Service has recently been revised and is now delivered through Corporate Teams which are based around geographical areas. The Task Group suggest that a possible effect of these changes will mean that any member of the 'Team' will attend a school in their area, rather than the same familiar face. The Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee will watch these changes with interest and have agreed with the NY &Y PCT to include an update on their Work Programme to find out about the effect of the changes once they have become established and what the outcomes are. *Recommendation 8.....*

The Task Group believes that there might well be other sources of support available to children and young people across other parts of the County which its research did not include. Members believe this is an important issue and consider that it would be useful for the Children and Young Peoples Service to undertake a 'mapping exercise' to locate and identify all sources of support available to young people across the County. *Recommendation 9.....*

5. Data Collection: The Task Group was grateful to North Yorkshire Police for providing them with the number of reported domestic abuse incidents in North Yorkshire and in each of their Police Areas. The Task Group was concerned that this appeared to be the only source of information but it was encouraged to learn that Children's Social Care is addressing the issue of data collection.

Without better data on children and young people the Task Group believe that service providers would find it difficult to address the needs of young people affected by domestic abuse and to target their resources effectively. *Recommendation 10.....*

6. Best Practice: The Task Group congratulates the Scarborough and Ryedale Domestic Abuse Forum on developing the 'Making Safe' scheme and on receiving the Butler Trust Award in 2008 which celebrated the commitment, dedication and innovative working around domestic abuse. The Task Group is keen to support the roll out of the 'Making Safe' programme across the County and suggests that the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives an update on the progress being made, the number of families supported under this type of programme and the outcomes being achieved. *Recommendation 11.....*

7. Raising Awareness: The Task group considers raising awareness and increasing the opportunities for training in relation to domestic abuse to be [a very](#) important [area](#).

Awareness Raising – the Task Group would like to see posters signposting people to help and support for domestic abuse related issues. They could be used in a similar way to those used for the “Drink Driving”, “95 Alive” and “Teenage Pregnancy” ones which let victims know what type of support is available to them.

Training – the Task Group would like to see training broadened to encompass both Members and County Council, staff made available through a variety of avenues.

The County Council provides support for staff through the Staff Network but the Task Group requests that consideration is given to developing a County Council Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy.

The Task Group was pleased to note that domestic abuse is mentioned on the North Yorkshire website but this is very limited and the Task Group considers this to be an area that requires a good deal of attention.

*Recommendation 12.....*

DRAFT

## **Section Seven: Recommendations**

The Task Group recommends that the Executive considers:

### **Recommendation 1**

..... the development of a time limited Domestic Abuse Executive Member and Officer Group which has the authority to bring about change and embed the sharing of best practice and supports joint working on domestic abuse issues

### **Recommendation 2**

..... in revising the Countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy that all key partners are involved in the consultation process.

### **Recommendation 3**

..... within the Countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy there is a separate section for children and young people affected by domestic abuse with appropriate links and references to the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

### **Recommendation 4**

..... a review and mainstreaming of the locality based Domestic Abuse Coordinators posts.

### **Recommendation 5**

..... the Domestic Abuse partnership consider expanding the provision of Young Peoples Outreach Advocacy Worker services across the county.

### **Recommendation 6**

..... the revised Youth Work Plan includes objectives for supporting young people affected by domestic abuse as set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan to Tackle Domestic Abuse.

### **Recommendation 7**

.....the support of the Executive Member and Corporate Director of the Children and Young Peoples Service in increasing the awareness of Head Teachers and Governing bodies on the impact of domestic abuse on young people.

### **Recommendation 8**

..... *the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives a progress report from the North Yorkshire & York PCT on the integrated Health Visiting & School Nursing Team service.*

### **Recommendation 9**

.....that a mapping exercise is undertaken by the Children's and Young Peoples Directorate which identifies all the services and support available for young people affected by domestic abuse across the county.

### **Recommendation 10**

..... the Children's Social Service continue to develop a recording method to capture data which reflects the needs of [all](#) children and young people affected by domestic abuse [and tracks outcomes](#).

### **Recommendation 11**

..... *that the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee receive an update on the roll out of the 'Making Safe' scheme across the county together with available data and outcomes achieved.*

### **Recommendation 12**

.....there is a greater awareness of domestic abuse issues [across](#) North Yorkshire [by](#) [considering](#) :

- [an increase in the information available which informs people where they can find help and support](#)
- review of the domestic abuse information on the NYCC website
- a review of the training opportunities in relation to domestic abuse
- raising Members awareness about levels of domestic abuse via seminars/briefings
- development of a domestic abuse workplace policy for the County Council's own staff

DRAFT

## Appendix 1: Evaluations by young people

"I watched my dad push my mum about for years, and then he abandoned us all. My Dad is really abusive, he swears and shouts all the time and really hit us kids.

My older brother hits me and I take it out on my younger brother sometimes. I'm not as bad now. My worker helped me and explained why I hit out and get angry.

I want to change. I don't want to be like my dad. "

*young man aged 16 talking about domestic abuse in his household.*

Our house was mad, everybody was always fighting and shouting, swearing. My dad was the worst, he used to really bray everyone, even after he left home.

We went over the family tree, well its was more like a hitting tree and then I really uderstood that abuse is wrong. I just thought it was normal.....

Abuse is wrong – there is never an excuse or reason for it and I deserve to live free from fear.

R.....13

Us kids didn't know what was happening 'cos my parents kept it secret – until one night when all the shouting woke us up. I thought I had a perfect family til then.

I was really scared when the police came and had a word with dad, but they were rally nice .....and very helpful. We got to look at the police car and the pliceman took us for a ride round!

Dad went to life with my Nan until he got his own place.

I remember one time when dad brought us kids home and he went into our house 'cos my mum wasn't there. He had a proper go at her when she came home and I got caught in the middle. Mum thought dad was gonna take me away with him so they started pulling me between them and shouting a lot. I was really scared and it hurt a lot. I thought things would never get better and I started to do really badly at school 'cos I couldn't concentrate.

Then I met Susan. She just let me talk about everything and explained loads of stuff to me. When she knew what I was feeling she asked if I wanted her to talk to my mum.

I don't know what she said but Mum realised how bad I was feeling after that.

Things are a lot better now.... I've joined Susan's group we will be doing music and art projects. I've been doing really well at school recently. H.....11

Appendix 2:

Participants in the Review

Appendix 3:

Meetings and Visits

DRAFT



## **Appendix 4 : Notes from Witness Panel Meetings**

The Task Group identified a number of key agencies they wished to approach to provide them with information on the support and services available to children and young people

North Yorkshire County Council - Children and Young Peoples Service  
Local Safeguarding Board  
NSPCC  
Women's Aid  
Supporting People  
North Yorkshire Police  
Acute Hospital Trust - Maternity Services  
Primary Care Trusts - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, GP's, Health Visitors, School Nurses

### **Children and Young Peoples Service**

The Task Group were provided with information on the role of the Children and Young Peoples Service in supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse and identified in the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP); about the education and support provided within North Yorkshire schools on domestic abuse.

The refreshed CYPP has a specific objective under Staying Safe for tackling domestic abuse in North Yorkshire which will be achieved by:

- developing a countywide domestic abuse strategy and ensure strategic alignment with the NYCSD
- mapping of existing services for children and young people who are victims of domestic violence (*Working Together redefines 'victim' to include children and young people who experience and witness domestic abuse.*)
- encourage the sustainability of strategic support and services for tackling domestic abuse
- identification and development of best practice, including county provision of refugees.

Mainstream support and awareness raising is available at School through PSHCE (national curriculum) and educational programmes such as Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) – an explicit whole curriculum framework and resource for teaching social, emotional and behavioural skills to pupils in a primary setting. 90% of Primary schools in North Yorkshire Schools offer SEAL, some offer both SEAL and Miss.Dorothy.Com. 40% of Secondary schools and 50% of special schools offer SEAL and this is an area which is being addressed.

*(The Miss Dorothy.Com programme focuses on prevention, especially around personal safety, and ensuring that children don't become victims or offenders. It helps children to develop confidence, enabling them to make informed choices, develop communication skills and strategies for dealing with risk, bullying and conflict. )*

The Task Group were advised it is not possible to assess the number of schools in North Yorkshire who are using the Miss Dorothy.Com programme.

There are Education Social Workers based in schools who provide therapeutic help for parents and children.

The School Nurse is another source of support, but changes in the PCT's Health Visiting and School Nursing Commissioned Service may mean that it might not be the same school nurse every time.

Specialist support is available through Children's Social Care, Family Centres, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or through the voluntary sector such as NSPCC and others.

Teacher Training is available on domestic abuse issues but not all schools have taken this up.

### **Children's Social Care:**

The Assistant Director leading on Staying Safe informed the Task Group that Children's Social Care receives referrals from many sources. These are assessed within 24 hours.

Currently there are no details specifically collected on domestic abuse but work is underway to address this issue.

The Task Group were also advised that only children and young people who fall within Tiers 3 and 4 who have complex needs or who are at serious risk and in need of protection are supported by Children's Social Care.

Children assessed as vulnerable as a result of domestic violence requiring a single agency service such as voluntary sector, youth service, young people outreach service or, may be considered for a Common Assessment with parental consent.

### **Integrated Services**

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a key part of delivering frontline services that focus around the needs of children and young people. It standardises the approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and deciding how, with the consent of the parent or carer and environmental factors, those needs can be met.

The use of CAF's are developing across the county and are the responsibility of the Integrated Service Managers

### **Children Centres:**

Children's centres are service hubs where children under five years old and their families can receive seamless integrated services and information. North Yorkshire is now at Phase 3 of developing Children's Centres across the County as part of the Government's target to have 3,500 centres by 2010.

Services can vary according to the centre but may include:

- Integrated early education and childcare - all centres offering early years provision have a minimum half-time qualified teacher (increasing to full time within 18 months of the centre opening).
- Support for parents - including advice on parenting, local childcare options and access to specialist services for families.
- Child and family health services - ranging from health screening, health visitor services to breast-feeding support.
- Helping parents into work - with links to the local Jobcentre Plus and training

#### **4 Youth Services:**

Area Teams have been working with Domestic Violence 'Survivors' (DAS) groups since January and in partnership with the York Women's Aid Young Persons Outreach Advocacy Worker. There are groups set up in Northallerton, Easingwold and Richmond and CYC (Connecting Youth Culture) arranged for song-writing artists and recording studio over the Easter period. Work is on-going with further thought being given to using the arts in connection with domestic abuse.

The Youth Work Plan has no objectives or targets for tackling domestic abuse, but this Plan is due to be revised shortly following completion of the Children & Young Peoples Plan.

#### **Local Safeguarding Children's Board:**

The Task Group heard from the Safeguarding Board Manager who informed them about child protection issues and the role of the Local Safeguarding Board in relation to children and young people who might be at risk or affected by domestic abuse. The role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board is to promote and facilitate initiatives to:

- reduce harm to children by agreeing policies and procedures
- monitor and evaluate
- review serious cases

The Task Group were advised that section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 has amended the definition of "significant harm" to include "impairment of health or development caused by witnessing ill treatment of another". In terms of domestic violence, this may have a significant impact on caseloads and resources.

The Task Group asked whether the LSCB would monitor and evaluate the delivery of a Children and Young Peoples Domestic Abuse Strategy and were advised that it would.

#### **NSPCC**

The NSPCC in York provides individual and recovery work or group support programmes for children and young people aged between 5 – 18 years.

Over the last year they have received 136 referrals:

York	103
North Yorkshire (of which 10 were from Selby)	30
Address not known	3

The Task Group were provided with copies of anonymous case studies but were asked not to use or share this information. Some of the outcomes from individual sessions and group programmes were truly amazing. Helping very angry, unhappy young children who were on the point of exclusion to achieve a new and positive direction not only at school but with their parent or carer.

The Task Group asked what the long term benefits would be but were informed that it is not possible to assess the long term benefits.

## **Women's Aid**

Women's Aid is a national charity whose mission is to provide advocacy for abused women and children and to ensure their safety through protection, by influencing laws, policy and practice and working in partnership with national and local agencies; prevention through raising public awareness and developing education programmes; and provision, by providing services needed to help abused women and children.

There are three Women's Aid Refuges in York and North Yorkshire currently – York, Harrogate and Scarborough with discussions ongoing for a further refuge centre in the County.

The Women's Aid Child Support project works with women and children who are residing in the refuge. The team are experienced in working with children who have lived with domestic violence and abuse and develop appropriate support for each resident child and their mother.

Outreach projects have been established as a direct result of demand for a domestic violence service to women in the community and provide confidential advice, practical assistance and emotional support to women who do not wish to access the refuge.

For children and young people there is an Outreach Young Person Advocacy Worker – funded by Comic Relief for three years (until 2009). This YP Advocacy worker supports and works with young people aged 11-18. Support can be on an individual or group basis.

Consultation with the YP Advocacy Worker informed the Task Group that her current caseload is 30 young people from Hambleton and Richmondshire and that she works closely with the Area Youth Leaders in these areas. There are no similar posts elsewhere in the county. Transport is an issue for young people living in the very rural parts of the County, some of which have been overcome by working with Area Youth Leaders.

Copies of the evaluations by young people were made available to members of the group.

The Task Group asked about support for children under the age of 11 and were informed that there is no one in North Yorkshire, although the NSPCC in York does work with under 11's.

## **The role of the Health Service**

Health professionals are often the first point of contact for those women and children who have suffered domestic violence. For some victims, a healthcare professional may be the only professional person they see who can identify abuse and thus provide a lifeline to the support needed. There is guidance available for health professionals when supporting victims of domestic, what to do if a patient discloses domestic abuse, keeping records and confidentiality and information sharing.

GP – Doctor identified to speak to but away at present

### **Domestic Abuse in Pregnancy - Maternity Services:**

The belief that pregnancy offers a reprieve from domestic violence is tenuous. In fact it has been shown to escalate during pregnancy. For almost 30% of women who suffer from domestic violence in their lifetime, the first incidence of violence occurred during pregnancy.

Midwives meet with all new 'parents to be' and at the introduction of routine antenatal visit will seek to have the opportunity to meet with the women alone. They take this opportunity to check if there is anything that the woman wants to talk to them or anyone else about in a very discrete and careful way. **To be completed**

#### Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Discussions with the CAMHS service revealed that they do not specifically record how many of the young people seen in CAMHS are living in families where domestic violence is an on-going issue. It is also difficult to give specific details of what interventions CAMHS offer and they do not advise giving children a mental health label as a result of their parents domestic relationship. If they do see young people in these families it would be because of other mental health difficulties also.

#### Supporting People

Supporting People focuses on 'housing related support' through partnerships with North Yorkshire County Council, 7 District/Borough Councils, North Yorkshire & York PCT and Probation. It is a funding stream and commission's services to help people to live independently; find suitable accommodation, settle into stable accommodation or simply to maintain their current situation in their daily lives.

For victims and families fleeing domestic abuse and needing support within refuge accommodation or longer-term housing the role that Supporting People plays in terms of funding this provision is an important one.

Homelessness is recognised as a major issue for victims and their families fleeing from domestic abuse and Supporting People commissions domestic abuse services such as the 'Making Safe Scheme'.

In reviewing their Commissioning Plan 2007-2010 Supporting People have identified a number of 'gaps':

- that support for children and young people is inconsistent and mostly funded by charities;
- that more permanent funding is required for Domestic Abuse coordinators;
- that if there is no support available for the perpetrator, women and children will need refuge accommodation