



2018-2022

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

Ensuring Torbay remains a safe place to live

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1 Introduction

Domestic abuse and sexual violence is unacceptable at any level. Everyone deserves to, and should, live without fear, abuse and violence. There is no excuse.

One in three women and one in four men will be affected by domestic abuse in their lifetimes, with women in particular suffering from high rates of repeat victimisation and serious injury.

Domestic abuse and sexual violence has a devastating effect on victims, their children, their families and the wider community. It is characterised by patterns of coercive, controlling or threatening behaviour, and can involve physical, psychological, financial, emotional and sexual abuse.

We know that domestic abuse and sexual violence are disproportionately gendered which is why our approach strongly reflects the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. However, we recognise that men can also be victims and the approach set out in this strategy will benefit all victims.

Nationally every year, around 120 people are killed by a current or former partner, while over 100,000 victims are estimated to be at high risk of serious harm or murder. It is estimated that 66% of victims have children living in or visiting the home, and that over 100,000 children are living in households where high risk abuse is taking place.

Most adult perpetrators of sexual violence are male and most adult victims are female and they are usually known to each other. In many cases it goes unreported, leaving victims unsupported and isolated.

The impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence upon the victim, their children and family members can be sustained, traumatic and damaging. The average length of an abusive relationship is five years, though many victims suffer from abuse for much longer. Children living with domestic abuse are at increased risk of short, medium and long term impacts such as poor health, withdrawal, behavioural problems, low self-esteem and increased vulnerability.

The definition of domestic abuse and sexual violence (as updated by the Home Office in March 2013) is:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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 and emotional.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour’

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.”

This definition incorporates any unwanted sexual act or activity including rape, sexual assault, and child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage/relationships, forced marriage, so called honour based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation and ritual abuse. It recognises that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group, that parents can also be victims of abuse and that sexual violence can be perpetrated by a complete stranger, or by someone known or even trusted such as a friend, colleague, family member, partner or ex-partner

Torbay Council, as stated in its Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019, is committed to protecting all children and giving them the best start in life and protecting and supporting vulnerable adults. The principles of activity that underpin these commitments are threefold: to use reducing resources to best effect, to reduce demand through prevention and innovation and to integrate and join up approaches. This strategy reflects these commitments set out in the Corporate Plan.

Domestic abuse and sexual violence have been identified as a priority and of concern by the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership's Stronger Board, Safeguarding Adults Board and Torbay Safeguarding Children Board.

To effectively tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence requires a multi-agency response. In Torbay, all local agencies have a vital part to play in supporting victims, bringing perpetrators to account and raising awareness. Many of these agencies are already undertaking significant and valuable work to promote safety and provide effective interventions; however, we know there is still much more for us to do.

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy has been produced to assist partnerships and agencies in delivering appropriate responses to those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence across Torbay, assisting people to live free from abuse. It takes account of the legal framework for protecting vulnerable children whereby children who witness abuse will be considered within a child protection framework as reflected in the Working Together guidance.

This Strategy is underpinned by commitment to partnership working so that agencies will be able to maximise the utilisation of existing resources and, where possible, seek to draw upon additional resources, to improve the response to domestic abuse and sexual violence across Torbay. It is a call to action for us all over the next five years to work together to achieve our shared vision for Torbay and send out a clear message that domestic abuse and sexual violence will not be tolerated.

2 Context

2.1 Local Context

In preparation for this Strategy, a comprehensive mapping exercise has been conducted across statutory, commissioned and voluntary organisations. This helped highlight what we do and do not know about domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay, whilst also seeking the views of those working within and receiving such services to inform our approach. The details of which will be available as a supplemental report.

Torbay experiences higher than average volumes of domestic abuse than other areas with a similar profile, with continued increases in the number of recorded domestic abuse related crimes and sexual offences throughout 2016/17. Rates of crime, and in particular sexually violent crime, are higher in Torbay than the England and Wales. Local analysis shows that between 30 and 40% of Children's Social Care activity (including Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection) is related to domestic abuse and a high proportion of referrals into the Sexual Assault Referral Centre are for children and young people under 18 years old. In 2016 / 17 Torbay Domestic Abuse Services outreach workers (not including high risk victims) assisted 430 clients with whom there were 496 children. There were 309 referrals of high risk victims of domestic abuse for support from their Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, 283 of which engaged with support. It is estimated that in 2016 / 17 there were 2597 female victims of domestic abuse and 1437 male victims in Torbay.

The highest number of female victims fall into the age groups 15-29 years (40%), with 35% of these being aged between 20-29 years. Other known risk factors for becoming a victim of domestic abuse include being within the criminal justice system, being homeless, having a disability, alcohol and substance misuse, being pregnant and identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Violent breakup of a relationship is one of the most common reasons for loss of tenancy and homelessness presentation.

Well documented risk factors are present within Torbay, including high levels of poor mental health and alcohol and drug misuse. Data recorded by Torbay Domestic Abuse Service shows increasing numbers of victims presenting with complex needs including drug and alcohol misuse, mental ill health, financial difficulties and experiencing social isolation.

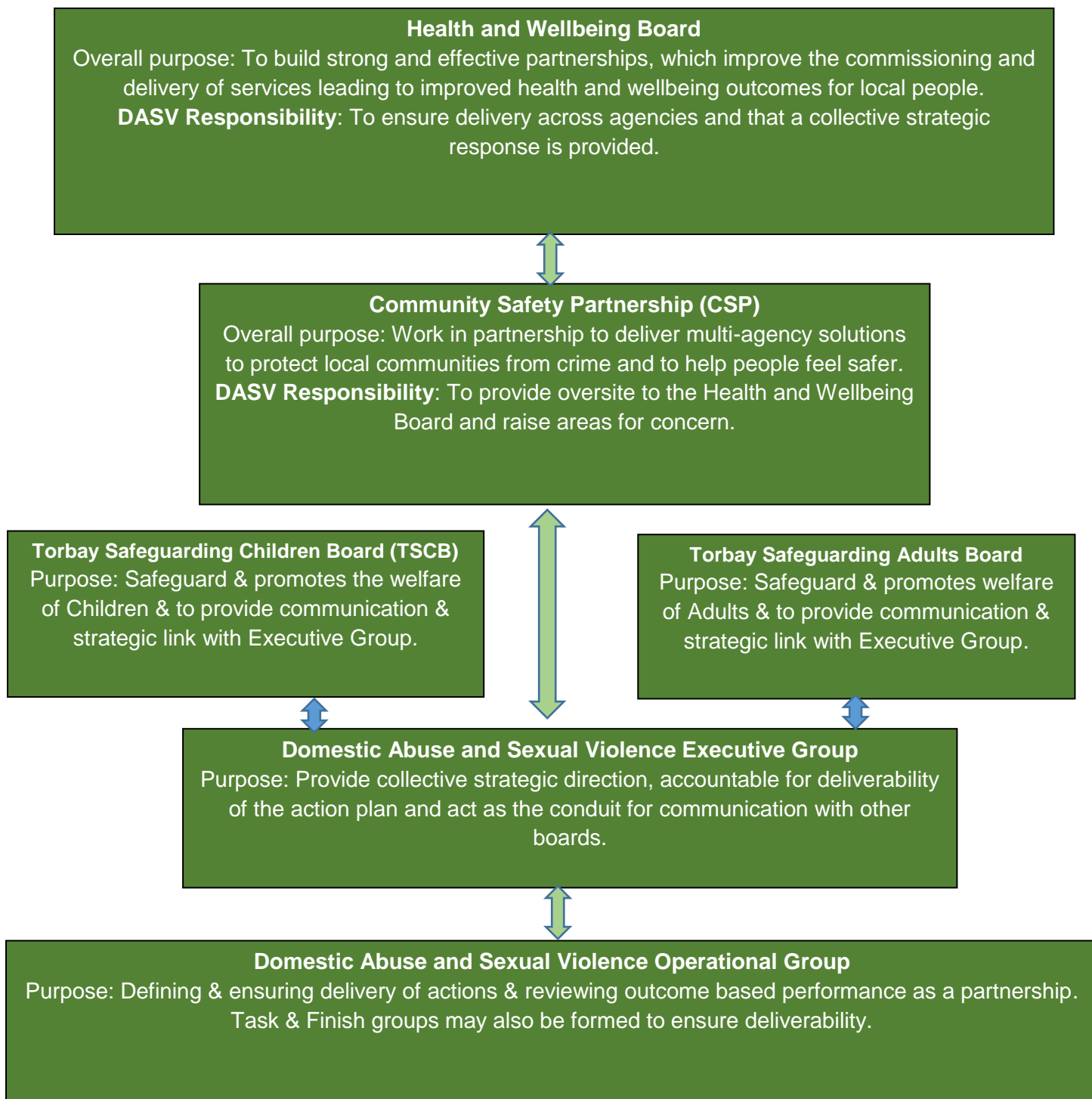
A recent survey was undertaken in Torbay with people who had experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence. Just over 28% described experience of sexual violence and 56% reported that their children had been in the household when the abuse or violence took place. Generally, victims report that abuse often started at a very young age, that they were unaware that their relationships were abusive and that they did not know they could ask for help or who to ask. When victims did consider reporting it they were concerned that services would not respond or understand. Most victims chose to confide in either family and friends, or their GP, others had never told anyone of their abuse. It was also apparent that when people did choose to disclose their experiences, it was years after it had happened.

2.2 Current Service Provision

A number of Council services, partner agencies and commissioned providers have responsibility for the delivery of direct support, accommodation or advocacy services, or the provision of services that address particular issues faced by victims, survivors, their children and families, or that deal with perpetrators of abuse. This has been included in the mapping exercise and details included in supplementary report.

2.3 Governance Arrangements

A new 'Executive Group' has been formed of key leaders to ensure the strategy is delivered. It consists of senior leaders who will, over time, incorporate themes of substance misuse and mental health due to comorbidities with domestic abuse and sexual violence.



2.4 Future challenges and trends

The mapping exercise and engagement with stakeholders that took place as a part of it identified the strengths and issues with current provision. From this we were then able to identify opportunities for development. These are listed in the table below:

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Specialist commissioned Domestic Abuse Service with outreach and supported accommodation ❖ Integrated Youth Support Service with key statutory and partner agencies co located providing support, advice and information for young people ❖ Victim Programmes have a positive response from attendees ❖ Early Help Panel uses the knowledge and experience of a range of services to decide which service should take the lead ❖ The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) implemented to safeguard Torbay's children and families ensuring all safeguarding activity and intervention is timely, proportionate and necessary. ❖ Integrated Offender Management (IOM) brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities with the most persistent and problematic offenders identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together ❖ The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Operational Group is well established and maintains positive engagement from partners. ❖ An enthusiastic and committed workforce across the partnership exists. ❖ Operation Encompass in Torbay schools. ❖ 'areyouok.co.uk' provides single point of contact for advice and guidance on all matters relating to domestic abuse and sexual violence. ❖ Good levels of engagement from those on the voluntary community perpetrator programme. ❖ Yearly campaigns successfully raised awareness of local services and increased access to them. ❖ Role of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator created and recruited to in July 2017. ❖ Successful partnership bids for funding from central government obtained for several projects to advance work around domestic abuse and sexual violence. ❖ Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) a safe, secure and discreet location. All staff are specially trained to support those who have experienced rape and/or sexual assault, recently or in the past 	
Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Domestic Abuse Services in Torbay tend to focus on high-risk cases/crisis intervention but there are gaps and inconsistencies in provision within early intervention and prevention services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To address the balance of a crisis based response system, to include prevention and early intervention, safeguarding future generations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sexual violence has been viewed as a secondary agenda to domestic abuse and therefore received less attention in terms of action to address. ❖ There is no commissioned service to support victims of sexual violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Raise awareness, understanding and profile of the prevalence and impact of sexual violence and consider this need when commissioning services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ There is an absence of a consistent, rigorous outcomes framework that effectively evidences distance travelled by victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual violence ❖ Providers and statutory services have silo approaches to data collection making it difficult to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Work with partners to produce more meaningful information around domestic abuse and sexual violence to enhance responses and future planning

<p>evaluate the impact of services provided to victims, perpetrators and children. Data collected often also lacks context.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Services tend not to take a holistic whole-family approach to working with people or families, often dealing with single presenting issues of individuals and not considering the full context of other relevant factors (for example substance misuse, mental ill health) and impact on or from others. ❖ There is not enough Intensive, person-centered holistic support for all involved or affected, including children, perpetrators and male victims, and also including parenting support and integrated support to address co-occurring substance misuse and mental health problems ❖ Efforts focus primarily at support for victims, less attention is paid to pursuing perpetrators, holding them to account and working with them to address abusive behaviours ❖ People working in adult focused services tend not to understand or recognise and respond to the impact that domestic abuse and sexual violence can have on the children and young people of the adults they work with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Explore and develop an integrated and targeted way of working with offenders, alongside supporting their victims and families ❖ Torbay Domestic Abuse Services to be recommissioned in autumn 2018 provides the opportunity to reassess key services against identified need, which could incorporate and should consider a whole family, co-ordinated, co-located, trauma informed, multi-agency service. ❖ Review the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process and consider any necessary improvements or alternative means of managing risk, particularly in relation to work around repeat victims ❖ Conduct targeted work to address the impact of domestic abuse witnessed by young people and of the experiences of domestic abuse and sexual violence perpetrated by, on and between young people. Provide routine and holistic assessments of victims/perpetrators in order to establish a streamlined, consistent way of working
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increased public awareness through high profile reports of abuse has encouraged more victims to come forward, highlighting the demand and need for services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence ❖ Insufficient capacity within current range of support programmes and outreach work exists to cope with levels of demand ❖ As demand increases, resources across all agencies has reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review of all awareness courses being delivered in Torbay with courses being co facilitated with different agencies and pooling skills and resources together ❖ Work with the voluntary sector to enhance and develop the range of local support available, utilising the assets, skills and commitment found across our communities ❖ Improve communication and coordination within and between services, to maximise the efficiency of the current system and ensure all resources are being used to best effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ High levels of domestic abuse 'naivety' exists, with individuals unable to identify themselves in abusive relationships or situations ❖ People most likely to seek assistance from persons known to them or their GP, rather than specialist services or Police ❖ Professionals who may encounter a disclosure often do not feel confident about how to respond, nor necessarily see it as within their role to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To increase education and awareness around abusive relationships ❖ Increase the support for young people going through Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) around healthy relationships. ❖ Develop a workforce across all agencies who are able to recognise, sensitively enquire and appropriately respond to all forms of abuse ❖ Promote and develop the concept that safeguarding, inclusive of domestic abuse and sexual violence, is everybody's responsibility and provide the means to embed this across the workforce of <u>all</u> sectors.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gaps and inconsistencies in provision within early intervention and prevention services. ❖ Access to voluntary perpetrator programmes is not being fully utilised ❖ As recommended by the Torbay Safeguarding Children’s Board, there is no service meeting the need for peer on peer and familial abuse. ❖ There is a lack of therapeutic interventions for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. ❖ There are no Independent Domestic Violence Advocate roles within healthcare settings ❖ There are increases in the following types of issue, where there are gaps in terms of the support available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households where the victim and the perpetrator are interchangeable • The normalisation of violence within families • Where substance misuse linked to chaotic lifestyle is a central factor • Teenager aggression and violence towards parents, grandparents or carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Torbay Domestic Abuse Services to be recommissioned in autumn 2018 provides the opportunity to reassess key services against identified need, which could incorporate and should consider a whole family, co-ordinated, co-located, trauma informed, multi-agency service. ❖ Improve communication and coordination within and between services, to maximise the efficiency of the current system and ensure all resources are being used to best effect ❖ Raise awareness of and identify means to provide support for the impact of fear/trauma on very young children and the long term consequences that are known to be associated with
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3 Objectives

Aims and Vision




Domestic abuse and sexual violence are unacceptable and too often remain hidden. Only by mobilising all parts of our communities to work together to recognise, understand this and respond, can we make fundamental change to end domestic abuse and sexual violence.











The overall aim of this strategy is to enable partnership work with organisations, communities and individuals to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay, to enable our residents to live safe and happy lives.

Together we will address the balance from a crisis based response to incorporate preventative measures and a whole-family approach. We will also ensure that perpetrators are identified, pursued, challenged, held to account and supported to change. The strategy recognises that domestic abuse and sexual violence disproportionately affects females and that our holistic approach will respond to this fact while not excluding male victims. We also commit to not just view domestic abuse and sexual violence on their own, as all too often there are other factors present which may have the potential to increase vulnerability to abuse and further isolate victims. A truly holistic approach will take into consideration how substance misuse, mental health, homelessness, coercion and control (as well as other factors) may need addressing at the same time. To do this we will co-operate with partners signed up to this strategy who recognise their role in tackling these issues holistically and create a system whereby people can at any point seek help safely and without fear, shame or judgement.

Priority Themes, Aims and Outcomes

The following themes have been identified to form the ‘golden threads’ which should underpin all commissioning and service activity across the partnership.

Our Vision		To work in partnership with organisation, communities and individuals to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay, to enable our residents to live safe and happy lives.	
Strategic Aim		Outcomes	
Prevention	Prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it, and intervening early where possible to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.	Victims, perpetrators and their children are identified early and provided with the appropriate level of support to break cycles of domestic abuse and sexual violence and overcome the impact it has on their lives.	
		Communities and professionals understand what domestic abuse and sexual violence is, and know how to respond.	
		Create a culture whereby attitudes and beliefs around domestic abuse and sexual violence are fundamentally changed.	

Protection of children	We will recognise the needs of, and provide support for, children and young people and their families by providing preventative approaches through early interventions and awareness raising.	Children and young people at risk of harm are identified and referred appropriately. 
		Victims are safer and have improved resources to remain safe. 
		Perpetrators are challenged and supported to change their behaviour and improve their overall wellbeing. 
Provision of Service	Individuals who are experiencing abuse will receive the support and services that enable them to identify and address their needs which consider issues such as accommodation, finance, support for children and young people, health and emotional support.	A whole-family approach that incorporates appropriate interventions and programs at the right time and place for client and considers in context of their wider family relations and needs. 
		All identified victims are offered an equally accessible service, which meets their needs irrespective of gender. 
		Victims report improved health, wellbeing and resilience for themselves and their families. 
Protection and Justice	Work in partnership to provide appropriate levels of support where abuse occurs.	Robust multi agency risk management arrangements exist to safeguard victims and their families. Legislation used to best effect to safeguard. 
		Victims have increased access to justice and perpetrators are pursued and held to account through the policing and justice system. 
		Increased reporting of domestic abuse and sexual violence to police and fewer repeat victims each year.  A robust and effective police response to incidents of domestic and sexual abuse that victims can trust and rely upon 

4 Action Plan

This Action Plan is for 2018 / 19 and shall be reviewed and refreshed each year by the Executive Group. It shall be assisted by the formation of a more detailed Delivery Plan that will form the basis of activity for the Operational Group.

Theme 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Action	By whom?	By when?
Develop and market 'Are You OK?' as the single point of contact for all domestic abuse and sexual violence information, ensuring links to sexual health and wellbeing campaigns	Community Safety	April 2018
Ensure there are integrated care pathways for identifying and referring (either internally or externally), that include for mental health, drug and alcohol services.	DASV operational group	October 2018
Coordinate and deliver a Violence Against Women and Girls project in Torbay with Devon County Council around routine, sensitive and clinical enquiry and community navigators to identify and address domestic abuse and sexual violence at earlier stages, particularly across primary healthcare.	Devon County Council Torbay Council CCG	March 2018
Raise awareness and ensure that there is an understanding of domestic and sexual violence and the support available to victims and perpetrators across the entire workforce of the public sector. Ensure that this information is also readily available for the general public.	CCG Public Health DASV Operational Group	November 2018
Education and media campaigns to change public attitudes (particularly amongst children and young people with links to healthy relationship & sexual education in schools).	Children Services IYSS Schools Public Health	December 2018
Establish a Torbay Champion network across statutory and voluntary organisations to provide advice, and guidance where domestic abuse and sexual violence is a concern and identifying access to appropriate services	Community Safety DASV Operational group Workforce training and development	May 2018
Ensure that a sustainable and effective Voluntary Perpetrator Programme is included in the commissioning of future domestic abuse and sexual violence services	Commissioning team	November 2018

Theme 2: Protection of Children and Young People

Action	By whom?	By when?
Ensure agencies know, or have access to information about the services, policies and procedures of relevant local agencies for people experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse and sexual violence with clear pathways into our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and safeguarding services	Children services MASH TSCB	April 2018

Develop clear pathways from Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to external and internal services ensuring a swift coordinated response.	Children Services	June 2018
Improve the services and support for all victims inclusive of their children and ensure there is a whole-family response to disclosures of domestic abuse and sexual violence that includes age-appropriate children and young people interventions, alongside programmes for families.	Children's Services Adult Services TSCB DASV Operational Group	December 2018
Explore opportunity for co-located services to increase rapid sharing of information and risk assessments to provide a holistic, seamless and effective response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.	DASV Operational Group Commissioning Team	November 2018
Improve assessment processes in adult focused services (including mental health and substance misuse) to provide opportunity to identify children and young people for whom clients have parental or carer responsibility, or to whom they have access.	Adult services Devon Partnership Trust	September 2018
Provide a dedicated social worker trained in using the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Risk Assessment Checklist.	Children Services	May 2018
Delivery of effective community education such as CRUSH to increase awareness and understanding of healthy relationships, domestic and sexual abuse.	IYSS Children Services YOT TSCB	July 2018

Theme 3: Provision of support

Action	By whom?	By when?
Ensure the commissioning of an appropriate range of support (core offer) to meet the needs of Torbay and these services are communicated to all stakeholders	Commissioning team DASV operational group	September 2018
Build community capacity to respond to domestic abuse and sexual violence – develop training, support and quality assurance mechanisms to develop existing practice across the statutory and community/voluntary sector	TSCB and TSAB Training Boards DASV Operational Group	July 2018
Embed an appropriate response model across organisations (e.g. inform-enable-support) to respond at an early stage for families and deinstitutionalise response	Early Help Children Services DASV Operational Group IYSS YOT Health	August 2018
Commission and promote whole-family approach that incorporates appropriate interventions and programmes (link to protection of children and young people)	Commissioning team	September 2018
Victims to receive personalised support through the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's).	IDVA service DASV Operational group	April 2018
Increase delivery of education around healthy relationships, domestic and sexual abuse, confidence and assertiveness	IYSS YOT DASV Operational Group Schools Health	March 2018
Design and implement a future model for accommodation based service	Commissioning team Housing	September 2018

Theme 4: Protection and justice

Action	By whom?	By when?
Ensure effective police initial response to incidents of domestic abuse & sexual violence that victims can trust and rely upon.	Police DASV Operational Group	May 2018
Effective use of protective and restrictive sanctions to manage risk to victims and their children - both civil and criminal.	Police DASV Operational Group Solicitors Probation NPS/CRC	April 2018
Conduct fundamental review of Torbay's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference in consideration of other means of multi-agency collaborative mechanisms to improve response to risk and demand.	Police DASV Operational Group MARAC	April 2018
Ensuring consistent and supportive response to victims.	Witness care Victim support/Care unit DASV Operational Group	December 2018
Specialist interventions to meet the levels of need in Torbay. This will include consideration of co-located services to increase information sharing and co-ordination of resources to provide a holistic, seamless and effective response to domestic abuse and sexual violence . Promotion and engagement with Early Help processes.	DASV Operational Group Early Help	September 2018
Identify perpetrators not in the criminal justice system and address the harm they cause as part of a whole-family approach.	Devon Partnership Trust Police Children Services DASV Operational Group	August 2018
Increase the volume of successful court prosecutions whilst providing better support for victims through use of specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates.	CPS Police DASV Operational Group	June 2018
Improve mechanisms for sharing the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews including how the learning is embedded in to practice	Police DASV Operational Group Stronger Board	February 2018

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Strategy will be reviewed and monitored by the Executive Group, with the Action Plan being refreshed each year. Any issues or amendments requiring escalation will be brought to the attention of the Health and Wellbeing Board via the governance structure on page 6 of this document.

A series of performance measures will be developed by the Executive Group to help evaluate the impact of this Strategy and reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board through the Community Safety Partnership.

The mapping exercise highlighted that we do not collect sufficient information in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence that enables us to fully understand the whole picture. The Executive and Operational Groups will work together to establish a data monitoring framework that collects appropriate levels of information from across the partnership.