

Suffolk

Violence Against Women and Girls, Men and Boys

2018 - 2021 Strategy and Action Plan

“He would do it as a means of control – put his hands round my throat and throttle me. I would start choking and he would laugh. It would hurt, really painful and I would have bruises round my neck for days afterwards. He did it until I turned blue and passed out. Every time I thought ‘This is it, I am going to die.’ When I would come to he would laugh at me like it had been a game and I had lost because I was so stupid and he was better than me – and I believed him” (Survivor)”



Suffolk Community Healthcare



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“After our daughter was born, he stopped me seeing my family and friends, criticized my cooking, told me what to wear. They seem silly things but they add up over time. ... I fell pregnant when she had just turned one and I was on edge the whole time hoping it was going to be a boy. ... I took my mum to the 20 week scan 'cos I knew he would react badly. I suspected it was a girl. I phoned him after and he hung up on me and I found out later he smashed up the flat basically because we were having another girl” (Survivor)”

“The biggest thing this place (specialist Sexual Violence service) does is the first thing they said to me is there is no magic wand, it won't go, we won't fix you, but we will give you the tools to get on with the rest of your life” (Survivor)”

“Computer systems should be linked together more. I have to start from scratch when I work with a victim that may have worked with several people before me.” (Practitioner)”

Forward

In an ideal world we wouldn't need to deliver crisis interventions. There would be no call upon front line staff to worry about missed opportunities to identify and support the vulnerable. The coordination of preventative campaigns and commissioned services would be in abundance.

Unfortunately, we do not live in an ideal world, and the impact of Violence against women, girls, men and boys is devastating and often long-term.

Suffolk Police receive a report of Domestic Abuse once every 1hr 20mins¹. A serious sexual offence is reported every 5 ½ hours².

Every report has an offender and a victim at its heart. Even if not directly involved, a child will often feel the consequences and be affected by what they have seen, heard or witnessed.

Crisis interventions, by definition, is support delivered too late, when things have gone wrong and lives have been affected. We need a system wide shift from being reactive, to being pro-active - both in prevention and enforcement. And where we do need to intervene, that individuals and families are safe and supported and get the help they need at the right time.

We want Suffolk to be a safe place to live and work, intolerant to behaviours that ruin lives, break up families and impact across generations.



Detective Chief Superintendent Simon Parkes

Chair of the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls, Men and Boys Steering Group

Head of Safeguarding and Investigations
Suffolk Police

“There was continued trauma (Sexual Violence) throughout my childhood so I suppose I grew up to just accept that was normal.” (Survivor)”

¹ Average 520 offences per month over the last 12mths (Jan 2018)

² Average 130 offences per month over the last 12mths (Jan 2018)

Background

In September 2017, the Suffolk Health & Wellbeing Board agreed to broaden its responsibilities around Domestic Abuse to include Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) in line with a refreshed [VAWG strategy](#) published by the Home Office in 2016.

Whilst the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy name acknowledges the gendered nature of domestic and sexual violence, we recognise that both female and males can be victims/perpetrators and therefore have broadened the VAWG remit to include men and boys.

The strategy compliments the thematic areas highlighted by the national VAWG strategy and builds upon the good work already achieved in the fields of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Whilst the national strategy considers the areas of crime listed below, there is no evidence to suggest any instances of Faith-based abuse in Suffolk and therefore, we will not be proactively targeting this area. We have also combined Sexual Harassment within other defined strands rather as these are intrinsically linked.

- Domestic violence & abuse
- Sexual violence (Inc. rape)
- Stalking
- Prostitution & trafficking
- Sexual harassment
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based violence (HBV)
- Sexual exploitation
- Faith-based abuse

There are obvious linkages and benefits of tackling the issues together as many victims often find themselves subjected to one or more of these offences. In this regard, Suffolk has set up a multi-agency VAWG Steering Group to bring together the skills, expertise and resources from across the Suffolk System to look at the whole VAWG agenda rather than specific issues in isolation. The VAWG Steering Group reports directly into the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Groups as detailed in Appendix A its Terms of Reference in Appendix B.

Definitions of the VAWG crime types are;

(All definitions, for consistency are taken from the Home Office although we appreciate other definitions are used by various parts of the system).

Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse is defined by the Home Office as a 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.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. In extreme cases this includes murder.

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 assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Sexual violence (including rape)

Sexual contact without the consent of the woman, girls, man and boys. Perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners, but most are known in some way.

Stalking

Repeated (that is on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters, damaging property, spying on and following the victim.

Prostitution and trafficking

Women and girls are forced, coerced or deceived to enter into prostitution and/or to keep them there. Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries ('internal trafficking').

Sexual harassment

Unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Involves the complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is mostly carried out on young girls at some time between infancy and the age of 15. Unlike male circumcision, which is legal in many countries, it is now illegal across much of the globe, and its extensive harmful health consequences are widely recognised.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage is a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor.

Honour-based violence

Violence committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of a family and/or community.

Sexual exploitation

Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives 'something' (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, protection money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Sexual Exploitation relating to Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is an umbrella term, encompassing human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour. Sexual exploitation: victims may be forced into prostitution, pornography or lap dancing for little or no pay. They may be deprived of their freedom of movement and subjected to threats and violence.

Faith-based abuse

Child abuse linked to faith or belief. This includes a belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil, the evil eye or djinns and dakini acting through children or leading them astray.

Vision

To reduce the likelihood of becoming, and impact of, being a victim of VAWG in Suffolk

Strategic Objectives

By 2021 we want to reduce the occurrences of VAWG in all its forms by:

1. Developing a shared and richer understanding of current and emerging VAWG threats
2. Developing the capability and capacity of a) early intervention, b) prevention and c) crisis services. Ensuring a focus on perpetrators as well as survivors.
3. Building and draw upon an evidence base and best practise when framing our strategies and plans.
4. Developing the ability of both front-line staff and the system to recognise, record and respond to victims of VAWG.
5. Ensuring the commissioning and use services is coordinated and that efficiency and effectiveness is challenged through evaluation and victim's voice.
6. Developing clear links with partners to understand how the wider VAWG system can influence and add value to the criminal justice response.

Key Themes

a) Commissioning

Commissioning is about deciding how to use the total resources available to improve outcomes in the most efficient, equitable and sustainable way. It is not just about buying goods or services. It is about understanding local need and then designing services that meet these needs whilst providing value for money.

Commissioning includes needs analysis, service design, procurement (the buying of goods and services), the monitoring of contracts, and the development of strategic relationships.

In the current national and local context, it is important that partners make the best use of the resources available and continue to deliver high quality services.

b) Insight

Having a clear understanding of the scale and nature of the threats and vulnerabilities we face in Suffolk is key. We need to effectively collate and analyse all the data available to us to generate a rich understanding of all VAWG crime types. Survivor's experiences of the system will be pivotal to this.

c) Prevention & Education

Our ambition is to 'get upstream' with these issues. We need to raise awareness of VAWG crime types to encourage disclosure and early help. We want to train and upskill the system to respond appropriately and educate young people around healthy relationships, respect and consent and prevent them from becoming the victims/perpetrators of the future.

d) Coordination and Communication

Suffolk is large county with an ageing population, a mix of urban centres, small market towns and rural villages. There is a lot of good work and services already out there, but we need to build on this, strengthen the connectivity and ensure everyone knows how to access support. The effective and coordination of services and effective communication will help build a better offer for communities.

e) Protection and Justice

Our responsibility as Public services doesn't stop at the criminal justice systems front door. We need to advocate and influence decision makers to ensure that victims are supported, and perpetrators and held to account, helping us to break the cycle of abuse and Suffolk's intolerance to these behaviours.

Governance

The Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Steering Group feeds into the system wide governance structure for 'community safety' issues which brings partners together to tackle a number of priorities which require a system wide response. See Appendix A for structure chart and Appendix B for Terms of Reference.

Multi Agency Working

Members of the VAWG Steering Group are committed to addressing the root causes of VAWG, challenging behaviours, safeguarding, and alleviating the wide-ranging effects of all forms of VAWG on victims, survivors, their children, and our communities.

These crimes are cross-cutting issues, requiring robust responses from across the partnership both organisationally and geographically. A collaborative effort is needed in the commissioning and delivery of services to realise efficiencies, mitigate risk, address potential gaps in service, and shape new approaches.

We don't underestimate the critical role our communities play in tackling VAWG in all its forms. The strategy addresses the importance of our communities having a shared understanding and ownership of the issues, including them in developing our response. More details of the multiagency work being undertaken in Suffolk is available in Appendix C.

"Trying to join our systems together is too difficult, we could however all share a bare minimum dataset about our work which would create a sensible base line to start from" (Practitioner)

Understanding the System

VAWG Self-Assessment

The VAWG Steering Group has conducted a self-assessment to measure Suffolk against the Home Office National Statement of Expectations:

The Home Office expects to see local strategies and services that:

1. Put the victim at the centre of service delivery;
2. Have a clear focus on ³perpetrators in order to keep victims safe;
3. Take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG;
4. Are locally-led and safeguard individuals at every point;
5. Raise local awareness of the issues and involve, engage and empower communities to seek, design and deliver solutions to prevent VAWG.

Previous reviews into Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence have taken place and helped inform the self-assessment (see Appendix D). Both reports made recommendations around Commissioning, Data and Information, Prevention and Education, and Coordination and Communication.

Working with the Steering Group, we have been able to identify what we know about these offences; what services are currently provided and where we might need to do more.

This has enabled us to get a better understanding of our current response and helped us to take a more collaborative approach across the VAWG agenda, ensuring victims get the help they need and public services commission scarce resources more effectively.

Priority areas which have been identified are as follow:

- A need for proactive work to engage with marginalised or hard to reach communities
- No clear focus on perpetrators for the whole System
 - A clear plan to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice
 - Effective interventions to change behaviour
 - Where is the victims voice to help shape services?
- More data and information needed to commission services effectively and understand more about the system and how the impact of local commissioning is measured.
- Improved, whole systems approach to education and early intervention

As a result of Suffolk adopting a VAWG approach, a single action plan to incorporate all aspects of work under this workstream has been developed. This will help to connect the various actions and to understand the inter-relationships, including how any future activity can be resourced.

“I had been beaten to a pulp – other people have seen me bruised with spilt lips and split eyes and nose splattered all over – people have seen that but I never ever went to the police” (Survivor)”

³ We recognise national research that acknowledges that some perpetrators are also victims of abuse.

Data

National Picture

-  An estimated 2 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year, according to the year ending March 2017 Crime Survey for England and Wales (1.2 million women, 713,000 men).
-  There were 46 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by 39 police forces in the year ending June 2017.
-  Seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.
-  The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims and 631,000 male victims.
-  The CSEW showed that around 5 in 6 victims (83%) did not report their experiences to the police.
-  The increase in sexual offences recorded by the police is thought to be driven by improvements in recording practices and a greater willingness of victims to come forward to report such crimes, including non-recent victims.
-  An estimated 3.1% of women (510,000) and 0.8% of men (138,000) aged 16 to 59 experienced sexual assault in the last year, according to the year ending March 2017 CSEW; no significant change from the previous year's survey.

The Local Picture

-  From Jan 2016 to December 2017 there were 9814 reports of Domestic abuse in Suffolk. 4576 were recorded as crimes, 5243 non-crime. Arrest rates average 50%. From Jan 2017 to December 2017 1,611 Serious Sexual Offences (crimes) reported.
-  The outreach service in Suffolk gets approximately 108 referrals per month. 34% of referrals come from the MASH and 92% of all cases we for female service users. The most referrals come from the west of the county and the largest type of support offered by outreach is intensive support.
-  There are currently three refuges operating in Suffolk, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. Within those 29 refuge bed spaces are provided for adults (there are additional ones for children) which has an average occupancy rate of 87%.
-  The Independent Domestic Violence Advice (IDVA) service referred an average of 159 cases per month totalling 1912 cases in 2017. The highest volume of referrals come from Ipswich (35%) and 64% of service users were White British, 89% of service users were female and 88% of referrals were from the police Domestic Abuse team.
-  MARAC is currently seeing approximately 130 cases a month across Suffolk. 80% of referrals come from the police Domestic Abuse Team, 92% of victim referrals were female and 33% of victims were aged between 21 and 30 years old.

Commissioned Services – what is currently available in Suffolk?

There is a huge amount of energy, enthusiasm and commitment to deliver across the VAWG agenda in Suffolk. Appendix C outlines some of the excellent work undertaken by partners in the last year, putting us in a good position to build on, enhance and expand going forward for the duration of the strategy 2018-21.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)

A countywide service provides support for 'high risk' adult victims of domestic abuse. Advisors work in partnership with statutory and voluntary services which supports victims, facilitating access to relevant services and information as well as completing risk assessments and safety plans.

The current service is commissioned by the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner and commenced in February 2015, it comprises 11 equivalent full-time members of staff and a county IDVA manager.

The service is currently being recommissioned in parallel with the Outreach Service. The new service will commence 1 October 2018 for up to five years.

Domestic Abuse Outreach Service (DAOS)

The Outreach Service provides an accessible service across Suffolk for individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse to receive appropriate information, support and interventions. And in doing so, maintain their safety, enable them to recover, rebuild stability, become more resilient and develop their personal wellbeing. High risk cases are referred to the IDVA service, medium and low risk will be managed and case worked where appropriate.

The service is currently commissioned by Suffolk County Council and is being recommissioned in a parallel procurement process with the PCC's Office. The new service will commence 1 October 2018 for up to five years.

Domestic Abuse Refuge

Suffolk County Council commission the three Women's Refuges in Suffolk located in Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. The service provides refuge for female victims and their families fleeing Domestic Abuse. During 2016 Suffolk Refuges provided sanctuary for 141 people feeling abuse from both inside and outside the county.

Specialist Domestic Abuse Refuge

Suffolk County Council and the seven District and Borough councils are piloting a project to make 23 bed spaces available across Suffolk for victims of Domestic Abuse available for women who are not eligible for support through the existing refuges. This could be due to substance dependency, mental health issues or they may have a male child over the age of 16 which would prevent them from accessing refuge. There is also a bed space available for a female victim who has no recourse to public funds. The specialist refuge is offered alongside Domestic Abuse and Housing Options support.

*Support for survivors of childhood sexual abuse - **Survivors in Transition***

This specialist service is currently responding to over 800 calls in the last year. Men are the most frequent users of this specialist service which is attributed to the massive media presence of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) and a confidence in male victims to come forward and ask for help.

The service is based in Ipswich but also has hub locations in Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket (because of the demand) but will also travel to reach people that are unable to reach these locations for an initial assessment. The service will take referrals from anywhere and sometimes these are from out-of-county victims that may have found their service online.

The service is currently operating at capacity and relies heavily on the work of specialist, trained volunteers. There can be a waiting list of approximately 80 people for the SiT service however they try to flex their service response in innovative ways to see as many people as possible without compromising quality. On average victims tend to have approximately 15 sessions of therapy at a frequency of one session per week.

40% of their referrals come from the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust with the majority of others coming from Adult Social Care (Suffolk County Council), Suffolk Constabulary and the SARC.

All of the victims SiT see have at one point or another been in contact with other services before seeking help from SiT. Many of the victims also present with a multitude of cross cutting issues which always make their cases complex and unique.

Support for children and young people who have reported being sexually abused - *Fresh Start New Beginnings*

This specialist service works mainly with children but they work with people up to the age of 21. When children are being abused at a very young age the service works with the parents. FSNB are based in Suffolk but also work in Norfolk (Norfolk County Council) and North Essex as these areas have asked the service to operate in these locations.

They have a central location in Suffolk but also work flexibly to work out of other public and voluntary facilities to take care to the victims. All initial referrals must be made by a professional however after the first referral the victim may self-refer to the service. The service takes a holistic approach to therapy, working often with sibling and the parents.

The service is half funded by the Suffolk CCGs and other funding comes from sources like the PCCs office, Comic Relief and others.

Most referrals for the service come from Children and Young People's (CYP) service within Suffolk County Council, Child Mental Health Services, Health and the Suffolk SARC. Most adult referrals are self-referrals after the victims has already been in the service as a child.

The service recognises that it is more difficult for young boys and men to report sexual violence and as a consequence this group is likely to be hugely underreported to agencies.

Demand for the service is within capacity at the moment but there is room for expanding the service into other areas of Suffolk.

Support for survivors of rape and sexual abuse - ***Suffolk Rape Crisis***

This specialist service works with women from the age of 13 and over when they have been victims of rape. Demand for the service mainly comes from Ipswich (approximately 60%) St Edmundsbury (20%) and Lowestoft (20%) and is focused on Suffolk as other Rape Crisis services are available in other counties.

The service works with victims for approximately 25 weeks of counselling with a training professional. They also offer pre-trial therapy with the understanding of the victim that all notes are available to the courts within this time.

Funding for this service mainly comes from the Ministry of Justice, Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner and the Big Lottery. 45% of referrals comes from the ISVAs which are part of the SARC.

With the 25 weeks of counselling, which provides a very high-quality service, Suffolk Rape Crisis currently see approximately 90 women per year. The demand for the service in Suffolk does not match the current level of funding available to the service and there are about 55 victims on the waiting list for the service.

The service does go into schools in Suffolk to raise awareness of Sexual Violence in workshops and they also offer support to the Schools 6 months after the training to make sure there is a connection between the training and the service.

Nationally, Rape Crisis is currently developing more tools for victims to engage which includes online services, funded by the National Lottery which will include chat rooms with practitioners, emotional support and online self-help therapy.

The service is about to trial drop in sessions and are looking to explore the possibility of offering the service to men in the future. The service is also looking at working with BME organisations to be able to be able to promote the service to a wide range of communities.

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) provides a one-stop location, offering medical care and emotional support to any victim of sexual assault. Specifically, when victims of sexual assault first visit the centre a medical examination can be undertaken to gather as much physical evidence as possible.

The SARC is based in Ipswich but covers the whole of Suffolk. All medical assessments must be done at the specialist centre in Ipswich but subsequent support and initial ISVA assessments will be done in a safe place of the victims choosing.

Support to victims is assessed on a case by cases basis but ISVA support is given for approximately a year. In some cases, support can be given for up to three years and this is dependent on police processes, the court process and input from social care.

Anyone can refer to the SARC including self-referrals and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) are allocated case by case.

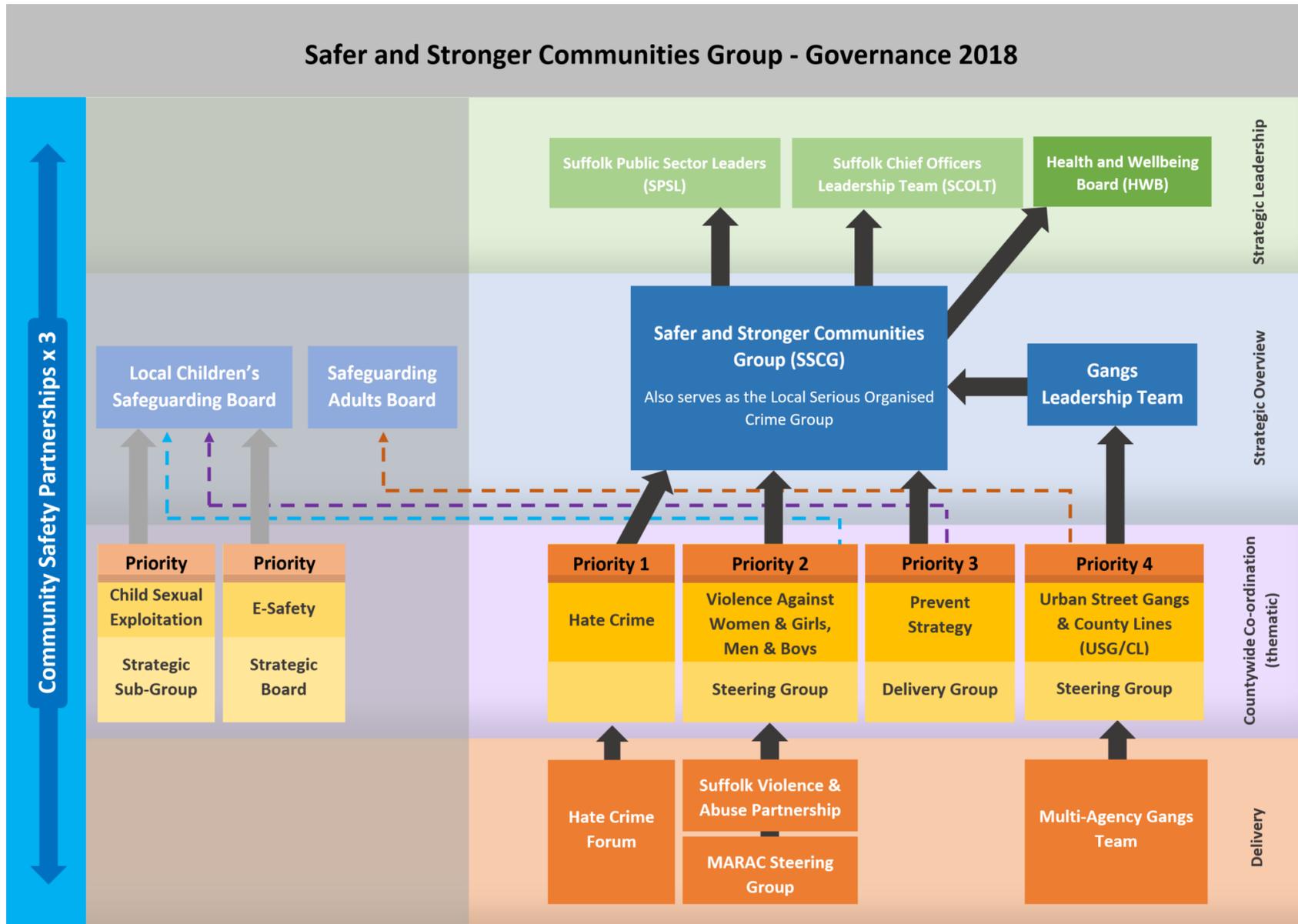
Many of the victims the SARC see have mental health issues which need to be considered within the care that is provided. There is an ambition in the SARC that all ISVAs are upskilled to be able to provide basic mental health assessments and treatment.

2018-2021 Action Plan

The VAWG action plan brings outstanding actions from previous plans, new actions and identified gaps into a single plan that all partners can contribute to. It will identify actions and activity that need to be undertaken to achieve our agreed objectives. It will capture performance and progress quarterly, providing ownership and accountability for the things that are going well, for those areas that need improvement and new areas that may arise as the threats and vulnerabilities change.

Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan							
Vision		Ensure that victims and survivors of abuse in Suffolk are Safe and Supported / To reduce the likelihood and personal impact of becoming a victim of VAWG in Suffolk					
Key Objectives	1	Developing a shared and richer understanding of current and emerging VAWG threats					
	2	Developing the capability and capacity of a) early intervention, b) prevention and c) crisis services.					
	3	Building and draw upon an evidence base and best practise when framing our strategies and plans.					
	4	Developing the ability of both front-line staff and the system to recognise, record and respond to victims of VAWG.					
	5	Ensuring the commissioning of services is coordinated and that efficiency and effectiveness is challenged through evaluation and victim's voice.					
	6	Developing clear links with partners to understand how the wider VAWG system can influence and add value to the criminal justice response.					
Themes	Ref	Action	Lead agency/owner	Resources	Measure + Completion Date	Update on action [include date of update]	RAG
Commissioning	1	To put in place joint commissioning arrangements for Domestic Abuse Services in Suffolk by September 2018.	SCC / OPPC				
	2	Establish who is funding what in the Suffolk VAWG System and make the most of the envelope of resources available in Suffolk					
Insight	3	Develop a minimum data set of useable data to inform commissioners, practitioners, and decision makers to improve services. Use Police Data as the example of best practice					
	4	Understand the nature and scale of Modern Slavery (adult exploitation and prostitution) in Suffolk.					
	5	Take every opportunity to ensure that the victims voice is heard and their experiences help to shape the provision of services					
Prevention & Education	6	Raise awareness of VAWG. Specifically, what it is, how to identify it and how to report it and get help.					
	7	Encourage and support employers within Suffolk to adopt Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policies for their organisation.					
	8	Establish a Domestic Abuse Community Champions network including opportunities for regular update training and information sharing.					
	9	Work with partners to start proactive targeted work with marginalised communities in Suffolk.					
	10	Understand the impact and take advantage of measures in the Homelessness Reduction Act to support victims of abuse.	District and Borough councils				
	11	Ensure that the effect of Domestic Abuse on children is appropriately identified and addressed	LSCB				
Coordination and Communication	12	Develop a Suffolk coordination centre to provide clear pathways to support as well as helping us to understand more about VAWG in Suffolk.					
	13	Broaden the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership to include the wider VAWG work, feeding recommendations into the VAWG Steering Group as the strategic lead.					
	14	Professional support training to be embedded as part of SDAP, ensuring that as learning from Suffolk Domestic Homicide Reviews are highlighted.					
	15	Work across the system to ensure that the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is efficient and effective.					
Protection and Justice	16	Support DA victims through the court system.	Norfolk and Suffolk Criminal Justice Board				
	17	Develop clear links with the partners to understand how the wider VAWG system can influence and add value to the criminal justice response.					

Appendix A – Suffolk SSCG Governance Chart



Appendix B – VAWG Steering Group Terms of Reference and Membership

Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group Terms of Reference - February 2018

1. Remit

VAWG strands as defined by the Home Office are;

Domestic Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence, Prostitution and Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Violence and Rape.

**The Steering Group has taken the decision to remove Faith Based Abuse as there is no evidence to suggest that this is an issue within Suffolk. Sexual Harassment has also been removed as it falls within other identified strands of VAWG.*

The Steering Group recognises that there is a disproportionate impact on women and girls, but that men and boys are also affected by these issues.

2. Overall aims:

To co-ordinate and develop quality services to effectively meet the needs of Suffolk residents. These include direct service provision to VAWG, victims/survivors, perpetrators, and their children, holding abusers to account and work to reduce the tolerance of VAWG issues amongst the public.

The responsibilities of the VAWG Steering Group will include the following:

- To co-ordinate a System response to prevent violent and abusive behaviour within intimate partner, former partner, and family relationships in Suffolk by working with victims and perpetrators.
- To review priorities and to make recommendations regarding policy and practice to the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board via the Suffolk Safe and Strong Communities Group.
- To raise awareness and understanding of VAWG amongst the public with the aim of reducing its tolerance of violence towards women and children and to educate and inform young people, to enable them to construct and maintain relationships built on trust and respect.
- To identify gaps in service provision and make recommendations for the development of services in Suffolk to improve the effectiveness of services in providing protection and support to people experiencing or affected VAWG, including children in households where such abuse is taking place.

3. Suffolk VAWG Strategy

Vision

To reduce the likelihood and personal impact of becoming a victim of VAWG in Suffolk

Strategic Objectives

- By 2021 we want to reduce the occurrences of VAWG in all its forms by:
- Developing a shared and richer understanding of current and emerging VAWG threats

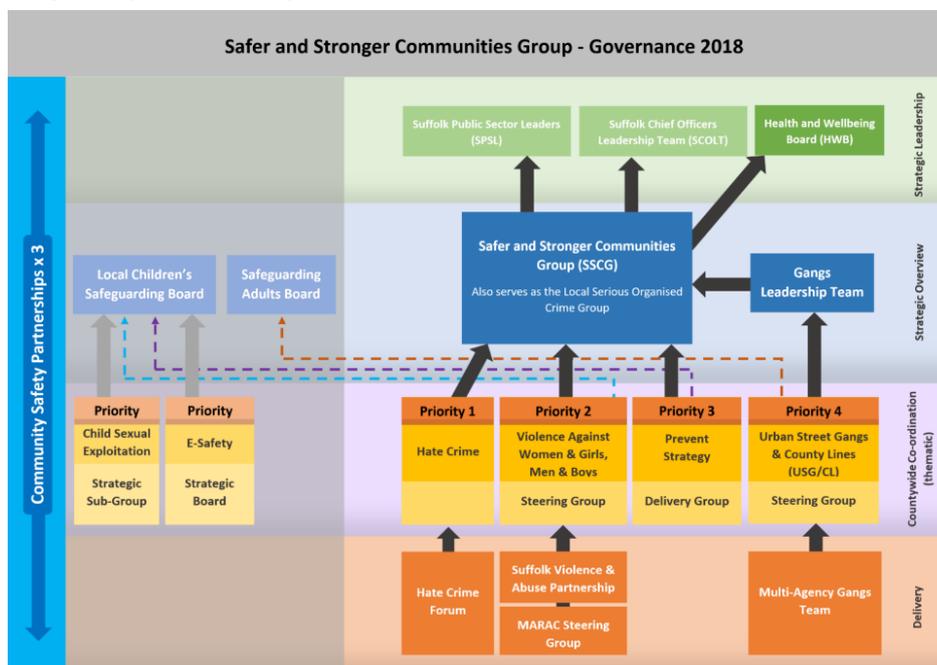
- Developing the capability and capacity of a) early intervention, b) prevention and c) crisis services. Ensuring a focus on perpetrators as well as survivors.
- Building and draw upon an evidence base and best practise when framing our strategies and plans.
- Developing the ability of both front-line staff and the system to recognise, record and respond to victims of VAWG.
- Ensuring the commissioning and use services is coordinated and that efficiency and effectiveness is challenged through evaluation and victim’s voice.
- Developing clear links with partners to understand how the wider VAWG system can influence and add value to the criminal justice response.

4. Membership

- Membership will include key experts from organisations in the Suffolk System who can positively affect the VAWG agenda (commissioners).
- Members will be responsible for cascading and communicating information to their colleagues.
- Members will be responsible for seeking approval from their respective organisations to progress actions agreed at the steering group.
- Agenda items from members of the Steering Group can be requested 14 days in advance of meetings.
- The Steering Group is a non-decision-making body.

5. Governance

- The Steering Group reports to the Suffolk Safe and Strong Communities Group (SSCG) which is the forum in which discussion and co-ordination for ‘community safety’ matters at a strategic level takes place. The Steering Group supports the work of the SSCG to co-ordinate VAWG issues across the various partnerships, committees and forums. It provides governance and scrutiny to all the partners delivering on VAWG work.
- The Steering Group will form time limited steering and sub groups for specific projects, consultations etc. when required.
- The Steering Group meets every three months.



Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group - Membership

Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)

Senior Health Improvement Commissioner, Suffolk County Council

Adult Safeguarding Lead, Clinical Commissioning Group

Community Safety Lead, Suffolk County Council

Deputy Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Suffolk Police

Senior Probation Officer, Probation Service

Families and Communities Manager, West Suffolk councils

Joint Head of Trading Standards, Suffolk County Council

Head of Communities, East Suffolk councils

LSCB & LSAB Manager, Suffolk County Council

Head of Adult Safeguarding, Suffolk County Council

Head of Localities and Partnerships, Suffolk County Council

Head of CPY Health Improvement, Suffolk County Council

VAWG Steering Group Chair

Detective Chief Superintendent, Safeguarding and Investigations, Suffolk Police

Strong and Safe Communities, Mid Suffolk and Babergh councils

Primary Care Safeguarding Lead, Clinical Commissioning Group

Area Commander, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

Interim Head of Safeguarding CYP, Suffolk County Council

Community Safety Manager, Ipswich Borough Council

Head of Youth Offending, Suffolk County Council

Business Manager, Norfolk and Suffolk Criminal Justice Board

Operations Director, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, NSFT

Appendix C - Current activity relating to VAWG

Specialist Refuge

23 specialist satellite refuge beds are being established across the county, following a successful bid for DCLG funds. The satellite refuge will provide sanctuary for victims fleeing domestic abuse who are not able to access refuge due to complex needs around mental health or substance misuse. There is also a bed space being hosted by Lighthouse Woman’s Aid in Ipswich for victims who have no recourse to public funds. Joint advisory groups are being established in East and West Suffolk to ensure coordinated referral routes and care pathways.

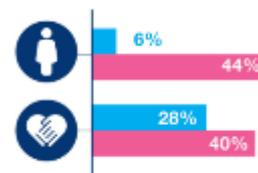
Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)



A strategic review of the Suffolk MARAC has taken place with the support of SafeLives. The review saw peer reviews take place for the three Suffolk conferences along with a representative’s questionnaire and a development afternoon. The review highlighted a number of areas where efficiency could be improved as well as identifying a need for training and strong governance. The MARAC Steering Group are progressing the recommendations of the review and will report back to the VAWG Steering group.

System Data

The Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership is looking at what Domestic Abuse data we hold within the Suffolk System. The aspiration is to draw up a common data set which will provide us with a richer picture of Domestic Abuse in Suffolk. Early work highlights an opportunity where data collected via Citizens Advice and the Early Help teams can be layered and mapped which may highlight some hot spot areas in the county.

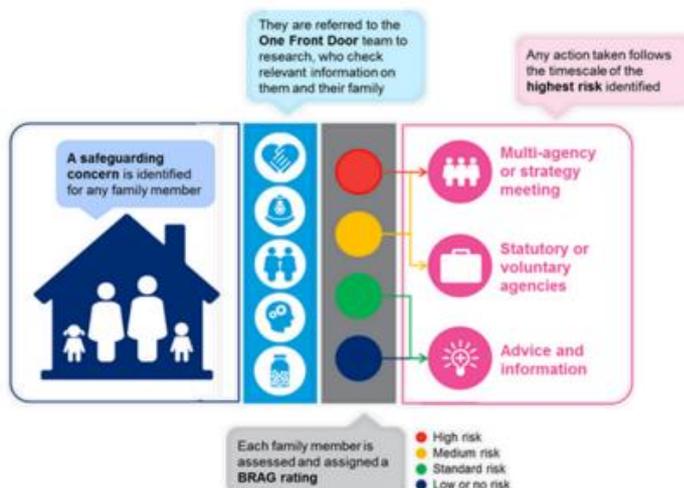


Communication

There is a new SDAP newsletter which will be published quarterly alternating with the SDAP meetings and help to coordinate activity across the county.

Target Hardening

£20,000 has been committed from partners who have pooled funding to develop a countywide process for securing the homes of high risk victims. External funding is also being sought and Housing Associations across Suffolk have been approached for their support in the form of a financial contribution to the pot. A working group has been established to develop the assessment and referral processes.



Sex and Healthy Relationship Education

Public Health at Suffolk County Council have established a 'Reference Group' of interested parties to consider how as a system Suffolk can support schools to implement the new statutory guidance due to be in place in September 2019.

White Ribbon Campaign 2017



This year Suffolk County Council have teamed up with a wide range of partners including Suffolk Football Association, Suffolk Sport, Ipswich Town Football Club, BBC Radio Suffolk, Suffolk Constabulary and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner to support the campaign.

The White Ribbon Campaign is aimed to stop domestic violence against women and encourages men to take a share of the responsibility in putting an end to abuse. The White Ribbon Annual Campaign is built on this premise giving a consistent message that wearing a white ribbon makes it clear that domestic violence and abuse against women should never be condoned.

Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Training

Programme of Multi-Agency Training in place which includes workshops on FGM, HB, FM and MDS and has been delivered throughout the year. Over 100 practitioners are already booked to attend.

Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Champions Network approach to training which will see a long term, cascaded solution to training.

Multi Agency training event held in May 2017 to consider the Domestic Homicide Review process and learn how findings can be embedded in service delivery. DHRs to be a standing item on both the SDAP and VAWG Steering Group Agenda to ensure learning.

SafeLives One Front Door

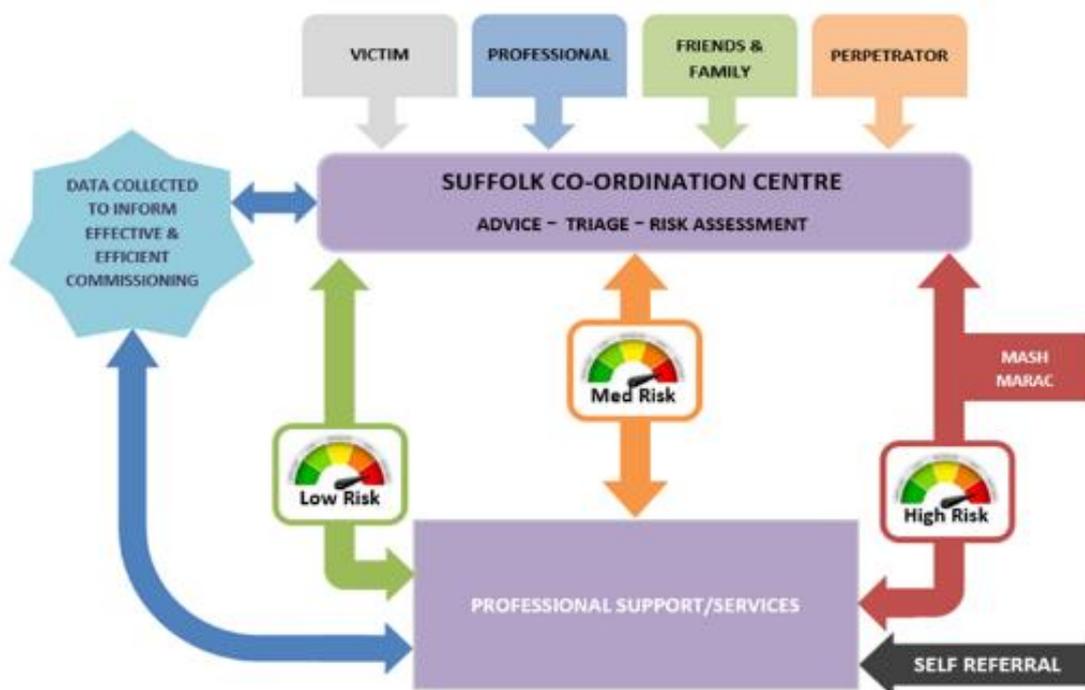
The national charity SafeLives continue to support the delivery of the 'One Front Door' pilot project with Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The project aims to identify and safeguard vulnerable individuals at the earliest opportunity; creating an integrated pathway and response for all safeguarding concerns, for individuals and whole families.

The pilot introduces the first step of the diagram below, integrating the child safeguarding framework and domestic abuse response:

Suffolk Domestic Abuse Coordination Centre

There remains both a need and an aspiration to establish a Domestic Abuse Co-ordination Centre for Suffolk which will map people through the system to ensure they get the right service at the right time as well as gathering essential information in order to inform future commissioning.

A funding application submitted to the Home Office Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG) Transformation Fund in early 2017 was unsuccessful but work will continue to source alternative funding to progress the work. Research currently being undertaken by Suffolk Police to map victim journeys will help to inform this work.



Suffolk DHR Guidance Event

An event held on the 26th May 2017 outlined the approach being taken in Suffolk in meeting the Domestic Homicide Review statutory requirement. Over 100 people from across the system came together to hear from Independent DHR Chair Gary Goose MBE and go through both national and local learning and local revised guidance. At the time of this event, there were three published DHR and two underway in Suffolk and since writing this report, more homicides have occurred.

Domestic Abuse Champions Network

In July 2017 the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board agreed a Domestic Abuse Champions model. The proposed programme will be developed in-house or delivered alongside our local VCS partners, rooted in a whole community response. It is a model which trains front line staff but looks to replicate a programme currently being delivered in Norfolk. The Norfolk Domestic Abuse Champions Network is a network of multi-agency professionals and community champions with free training for people to recognise domestic abuse and respond to it appropriately. Options for resourcing the network are currently being explored.

Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership (SDAP)



The SDAP has become an informal space where practitioners and partners can share best practice and coordinate a system wide response to Domestic Abuse.

The Partnership has recently been widened to include partners organisations who provide support for victims of Sexual Violence and will be the place where all VAWG strands are discussed at an operational / delivery level.

Suffolk Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group

The Home Office National VAWG Strategy is a good fit with what Suffolk is trying to achieve in relation to Domestic Abuse, but this is acknowledged as just one of the ten 'strands' of crime that falls into this category of offences, as defined by the Home Office.

There are obvious linkages and benefits of tackling the issues together as many victims often find themselves subjected to one or more of these offences. In this regard, Suffolk has set up a multi-agency VAWG Steering Group to bring together the skills, expertise, and resources from across the Suffolk system to look at the whole VAWG agenda rather than issues in isolation.

Commissioning Services for Domestic Abuse

In-depth research has been conducted over the last two years to develop a better understanding of the effectiveness of services across the county. In the light of our research, Suffolk County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner feel that it is important that vulnerable individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse receive specialist support, and we are committed to ensuring services remain available to victims despite the current financial challenges.

SCC and the PCC have agreed to work together to commission the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service and the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service which will commence following the conclusion of the current services in September 2018. The aligning of these procurement processes will help both agencies to enhance the services offered to victims of domestic abuse, so they can offer the right services at the right time, avoiding duplication and making the best use of the available resources.

Modern Slavery and Adult Exploitation

The Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Steering Group has commissioned the University of Essex to carry out a research project and agreed that members of the steering group need to share information with University of Essex relating to their organisation in order to gain a greater understanding of the issues.

Violence Against Women and Girls Self-Assessment

The Suffolk VAWG steering group has designed and conducted a self-assessment tool which has been used to set a baseline of knowledge around each strand of the National VAWG strategy and its associated National Statement of Expectations. This self-assessment tool is now used at each steering group meeting to give an update in learning and possible changes in to VAWG work in Suffolk.

PCC Commissioning

The PCC has invested over £3m in supporting organisations providing services to victims of domestic and sexual abuse since 2013. The following organisations were commissioned to provide services addressing Violence against women and girls (and men and boys) in 2017-18: Lighthouse Women's Aid, Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid, Waveney Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum, Compassion, Icen Ipswich (Venta Project), Volunteering Matters, Bangladeshi Support, Survivors in Transition, Suffolk Rape Crisis, and Fresh Start-new beginnings.

West Suffolk councils

Domestic Abuse Link Worker: will sit within the West Suffolk Housing Team and offer support and advice to victims of domestic abuse when presenting as homeless. The post is hosted by Anglia Care Trust and funded by DCLG

West Suffolk Domestic Abuse Forum: meet on a bi monthly basis and cover the whole of West Suffolk. Supported by partners across a range of services. Through this forum the need for a freedom programme within the Brandon area was identified and Alumah received funding to establish the Brandon Freedom Programme.

Additional support for specialist services: Through the West Suffolk Community Chest grant scheme we have supported the following services within West Suffolk:

- Fresh Start New Beginnings: to provide sexual abuse support services (for young people) within Forest Heath
- Survivors in Transition – to provide sexual abuse support services within St Edmundsbury
- Suffolk Rape Crisis – to provide a counselling service within St Edmundsbury
- Women's Aid – to provide training to staff in order to establish a family support project within St Edmundsbury

Suffolk Police Strategy

Suffolk Constabulary have a strategy that addresses Domestic Abuse which is focused on the themes of Purse, Prevent, Protect and Prepare. The detail of the strategy is available on the next page.

Chief Officer Strategic Lead: ACC Kearton

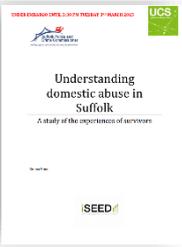
For the purposes of this Strategy, Domestic Abuse (DA) will be read to include Honour Based Abuse (HBA), Forced Marriage (FM) & Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

<p>Pursue</p> <p>Prosecute and disrupt individuals/groups responsible for Domestic Abuse (DA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the capability and capacity of Suffolk Police to manage the increase in DA referrals, perpetrators and victims.• Ensure effective operational connectivity between local Area, Force and ERSOU capabilities through TTCG processes.• Develop our understanding of the threat and use multi agency intelligence and collection plans to identify early intervention methods.• Maximise opportunities to capture evidence and safeguarding victims through effective use of body worn cameras.• Ensure effective performance with regard to arrest, investigation, bail and prosecution. <p>Prevent</p> <p>Prevent people from engaging in Domestic Abuse (DA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with a wide range of partners to strengthen local stakeholder engagement to raise awareness and to develop intelligence e.g law enforcement agencies, public sector, commercial sector, community leaders and voluntary sector.• Develop a communication strategy to raise public awareness. Seek to encourage reporting and target offenders and victims.• Maximise Suffolk Police intelligence assets to identify potential perpetrators and victims.• Engage Safer Neighbourhood Teams to help identify victims, build confidence and encourage reporting.• Engage foreign national volunteer network and other relevant community groups to build community engagement with hard to reach groups.	<p>Strategic Lead D.Supt PVP</p> <p>Strategic Lead D.Supt PVP</p>	<p>Reduce Threat</p>
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<p>Protect</p> <p>Strengthen safeguards, increase confidence in reporting, and protect vulnerable people from Domestic Abuse (DA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen the multi agency partnerships in conjunction with the MASH to protect the vulnerable.• Ensure policy, process and practise is victim focused whilst acknowledging the greater good which may be served by victimless or hostile prosecution.• Through multi agency partnership networks maximise provision of services that improve the quality of life of victims and associated children.• Develop effective mechanisms to share best practice and lessons learned to safeguard and protect victims in the future.• Develop our effective use of preventative powers including DVPN and other civil preventative measures.• Reduce the likelihood of those living in Suffolk becoming victims of DA crimes. <p>Prepare</p> <p>Create effective processes and structures to improve victim identification and develop enhanced support services for victims of Domestic Abuse (DA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the awareness and training of SIOs, Critical Incident managers, Domestic Abuse Champions, CCR, first responders and investigators.• Support the development of a multi-agency vision 'Suffolk Coordination Centre' for victims, families and perpetrators providing professional support & commissioned service.• Develop 'data-rich' systems including an enhanced Op Comfort process. Coordinate the effective use of analytical products.• Develop a DA, HBA, FGM and FM strategic profile to provide comprehensive understanding of the threat, harm and risk.• Increase our understanding of the levels of reporting and likelihood of becoming a victim• Manage performance and build upon crime recording and NCRS compliance.	<p>Strategic Lead D.Supt PVP</p> <p>Strategic Lead D.Supt PVP</p>	<p>Reduce Vulnerability</p>
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Appendix D – Suffolk research and learning

Understanding Domestic Abuse in Suffolk



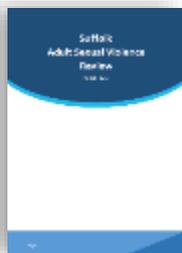
The [research](#), commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore and led by UCS's Senior Lecturer Dr Emma Bond, considers verbatim data drawn from individual interviews and focus groups based on the experiences of 69 Suffolk survivors (63 females and 6 males) who volunteered to take part in the study.

Domestic Abuse Interim Review



In February 2016 the Suffolk County Council Community Safety Unit started research in Suffolk on the System of Domestic abuse. The review consulted with approximately 40 partners about current and future issues relating to domestic abuse, gaps in the current system and where parts of the system may need to change to better support victims and their families. The review identified several gaps in the system which ultimately formed the Suffolk Domestic Abuse action plan which now feeds into this strategy.

Sexual Violence Review



In August 2017 a review of Sexual Violence was completed by the Suffolk County Council Community Safety Team which details the system of Sexual Violence support in Suffolk, the challenges those services face and makes recommendations relating the potential gaps and improvements to help support victims. The review recommendations were made into actions for partners which are now part of this VAWG strategy and associated action plan.

“I was in an abusive relationship – I didn’t recognize the patterns of escalation and the erosion of self and autonomy and those various other issues – so it was pushing and shoving as well as emotional manipulation and erosion of self and worthlessness over a ten month period. The pushing and shoving came to strangulation, throttling, biting and punching and culminated in what was for me a horrific attack on [date] and I managed to escape and get away” (Survivor)”

“I was scared to contact police or social services in case it made things worse” (Survivor)”

“Victims can make applications to be rehoused in any part of the country. I need the information at my fingertips to make quick decisions on housing provision for people.” (Practitioner)”

“you need to educate people about what a healthy relationship is and what it’s not, the emphasis shouldn’t always be on being a victim, what about educating to recognise what a perpetrator is rather than a victim” (Practitioner)”

“I have lost everything since I came out with it (Sexual Violence) but the real benefit is that freedom, I haven’t got that nagging guilt or shame or anger” (Survivor)”