



Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Report of: Joe Fowler, Director of Commissioning

Subject: Responding to Domestic and Sexual Abuse in Sheffield

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Summary:

At the request of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, this report describes what we know of the prevalence of domestic and sexual abuse in Sheffield (in relation people aged 16 years and over), sets out the city’s current response in relation to domestic and sexual abuse for adults, and outlines recent developments and issues.

It illustrates that demand is rising for support services but that this should be viewed in the context of national estimates that only 40% of domestic abuse is reported. Support services in Sheffield have more capacity than ever before but there are still pressures in responding to increasing levels of referrals particularly in the services offering early intervention and prevention.

Agencies across the city are also under pressure as a result of high caseloads at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and as a result of the work associated with Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Note the report, comment generally, and comment on the current pressures.

Background Papers:

Strategic Review of Domestic Abuse Structures and Services
Sheffield Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2014-7
Supporting Document for Domestic Abuse Commissioning 2013

Category of Report: OPEN

Report of the Director of Commissioning Responding to Domestic and Sexual Abuse in Sheffield

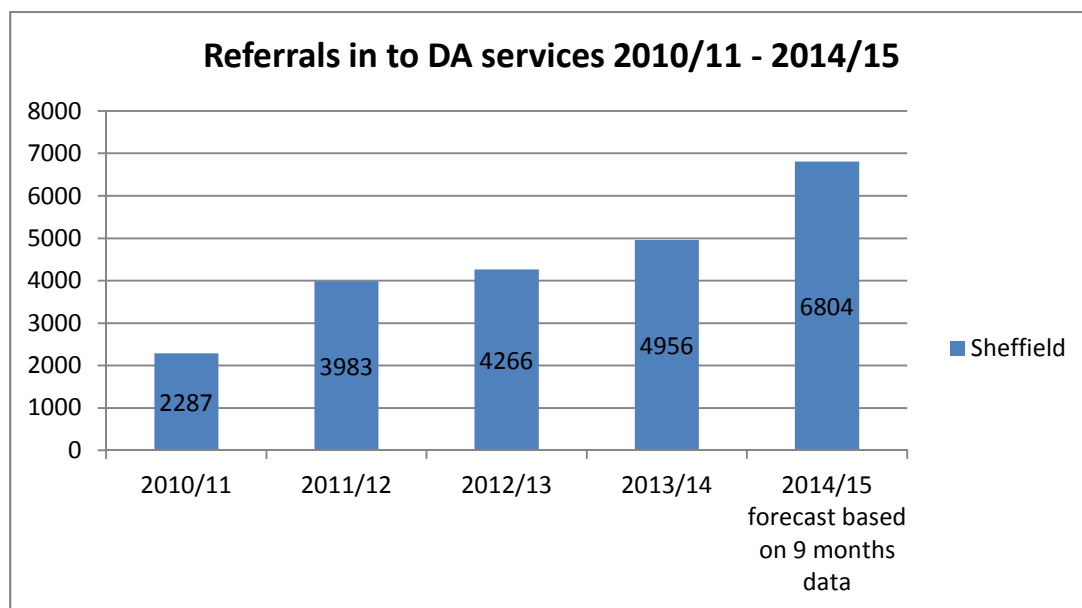
1. Introduction/Context

- 1.1 At the request of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, this report describes what we know of the prevalence of domestic and sexual abuse in Sheffield (in relation people aged 16 years and over), sets out the city's current response in relation to domestic and sexual abuse for adults, and outlines recent developments and issues.
- 1.2 Domestic Abuse is defined by the government as follows:
'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 members¹ regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:
- *psychological*
 - *physical*
 - *sexual*
 - *financial*
 - *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 assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'*¹
- 1.3 Reports of domestic abuse are rising in Sheffield. Reports to the Police have risen from 9,208 in 2011/12 to 11,639 in 2013/14 and this figure is expected to reach 12,200 by the end of 2014/15. However national estimates are that only around 40% of domestic abuse is reported.²
- 1.4 Demand for support in Sheffield is increasing as people are increasingly confident about coming forward and agencies are getting better at identifying people affected by domestic abuse. This is a good thing: it

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

² British Crime Survey

means we can get support to people as early as possible and to those that need it most. Support services that were receiving around 2,300 referrals in 2010/11, received nearly 5000 in 2013/14 and are likely to have received 6804 referrals by the end of 2014/15 – see diagram below.



1.5 Referrals from people from BME backgrounds are on average 26% of the total which is higher than the BME proportion of the Sheffield population i.e. 19%.

1.6 There is no national data set in relation to Domestic Abuse – the only national comparator other than police statistics is the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) data considered on a national basis by specialist charity CAADA³. This tells us that Sheffield is in line with the recommended rate of 40 per 10,000 adult female population identified as high risk cases and discussed at MARAC.

1.7 High Risk domestic abuse cases are those that have been assessed as being at high risk of serious harm or homicide. In Sheffield, since 2009, agencies have used the ACPO⁴ DASH⁵ risk assessment model in order to determine the risk that people are facing as a result of domestic abuse e.g.:

- Standard risk
- Medium Risk
- High Risk

of serious harm or homicide.

This assessment helps to determine the support they are offered and whether or not their case is referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC – which meets to address and manage the risks to High Risk victims and their dependents). This process reviewed 867 victims last year (13/14) and is likely to receive

³ Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse www.caada.org.uk

⁴ Association of Chief Police Officers

⁵ Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour' Based Violence risk model <http://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/>

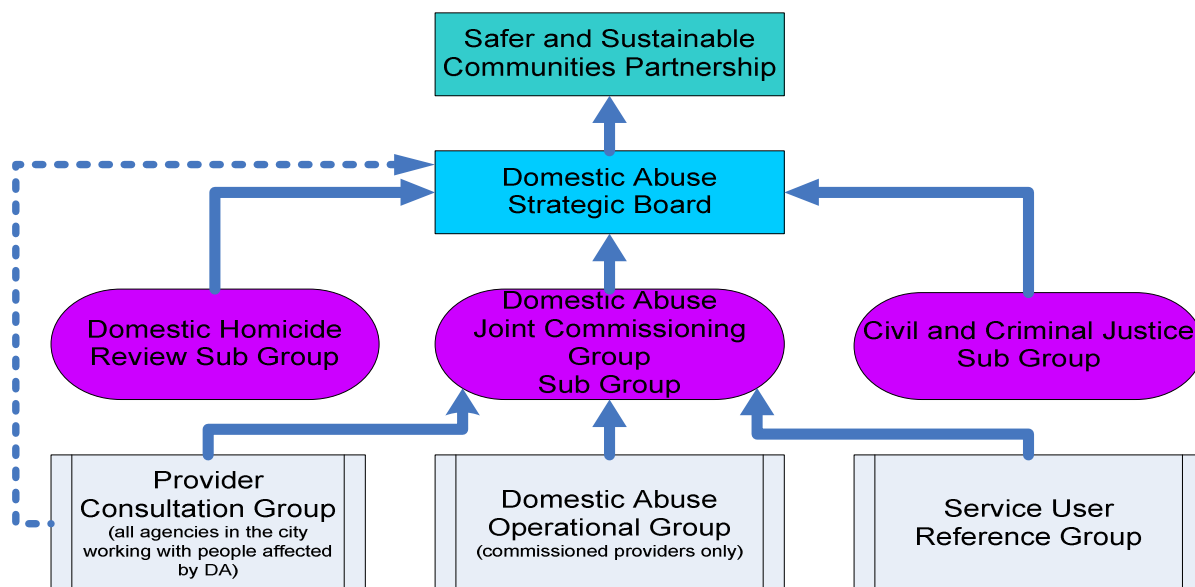
1000 referrals by the end of this year. The increasing caseload at MARAC has put pressure on many participating agencies e.g. the Children's Safeguarding Service is having to consider the level of support they can provide for the process.

- 1.7 Since 2011, there has been a statutory duty to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) into deaths as a result of domestic abuse. Sheffield has completed 4 DHRs and 3 others are in progress. Unfortunately, our data tells us to expect an average of 2 deaths a year as a result of domestic abuse in Sheffield.

2. Main body of report

- 2.1 In 2012 a Strategic Review of Domestic Abuse Structures and Services was undertaken, which was approved by Cllr Mary Lea in November 2012, and the resulting action plan was implemented in 2013/14.
- 2.2 This led to a new governance structure being put in place with clear roles and responsibilities and accountability for different bodies in the structure (see diagram below).

**Sheffield Domestic Abuse ORGANISATION STRUCTURE
DIAGRAM OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**



- 2.3 Following the Review, Sheffield Drug and Alcohol Action Team took on the responsibility for leading on domestic abuse for the authority and became the Drug and Alcohol / Domestic Abuse Coordination Team. Jo Daykin Goodall, Head of DACT, Chairs the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board which meets quarterly and includes representatives from CYPF, Housing, Police, Health and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 2.4 The Joint Commissioning Group is responsible for the commissioning and performance management of all domestic and sexual abuse services in the city.
- 2.5 The Domestic Homicide Review Sub Group oversees the progress of DHRs and the implementation of DHR action plans.

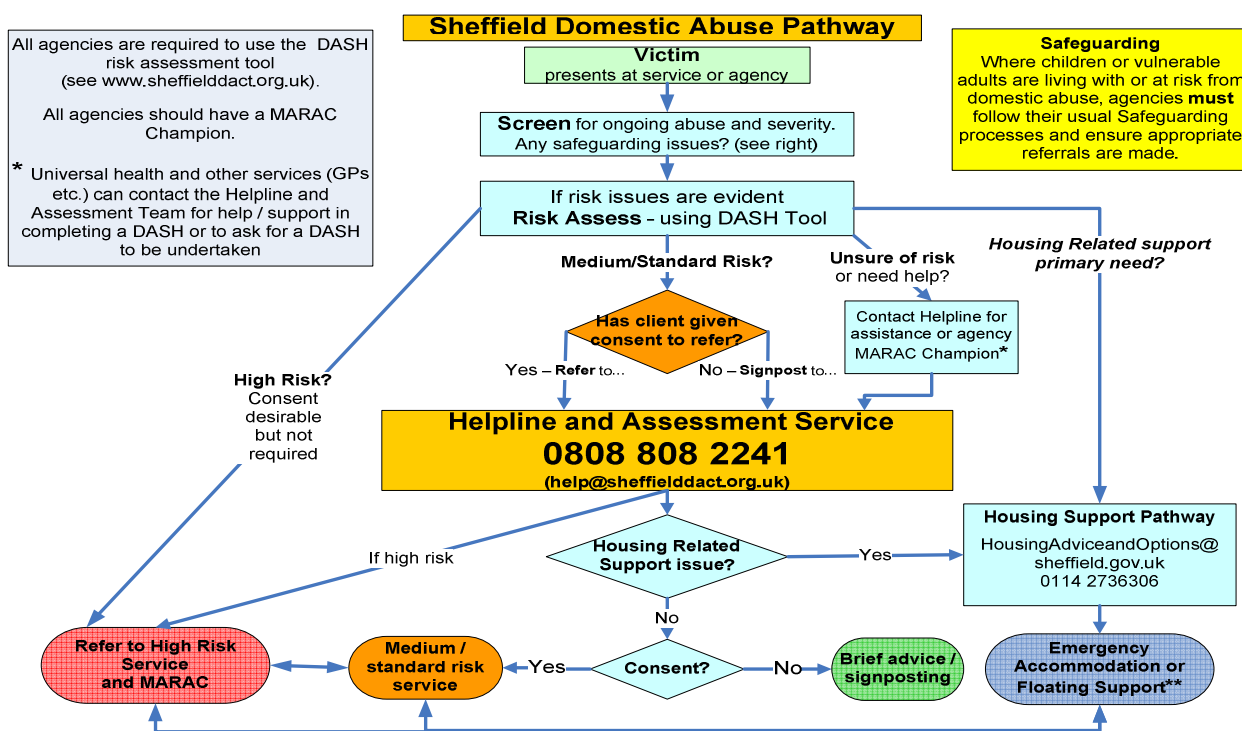
- 2.6 The Civil and Criminal Justice Sub Group oversees the MARAC process and monitors the effectiveness of criminal and civil justice responses to domestic abuse in the city.
- 2.7 The Provider Consultation Group has representation from all agencies in the city who work with people affected by domestic abuse including specialist providers and local agencies such as Roshni Asian Women's Resource Centre. This group considers policy, strategy, new developments etc. and provides expert views for consideration by the Strategic Board.
- 2.8 The Operational Group is comprised of representatives from commissioned providers who also attend the Provider Consultation Group however this group is focussed on service delivery, pathways and performance.
- 2.9 The Service User Reference Group brings the voice of service users into the decision making process – on issues ranging from the content of the domestic abuse website to the content of service specifications.
- 2.10 The new governance structure allows for clear communication and consultation which has been a significant improvement compared to the structures in operation up to 2012, and has enabled work to progress in a timely manner e.g. the development of the new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (see point 2.22 below).

Services

- 2.11 The Review also led to community based support services being re-aligned on the basis of risk. Current commissioned services for adults are as follows:
 - **High Risk Domestic Abuse Service** - which provides Independent Domestic Violence Advocates to support high risk victims (men and women) plus specialist workforce training (e.g. risk assessment, lessons from Domestic Homicide Reviews). This service was recently tendered and has been awarded to Action Housing and Support to deliver from April 1st 2015.
 - **Medium and Standard Risk Domestic Abuse Service** - which provides the free to phone Domestic Abuse Helpline, one to one Outreach Support and structured group work programmes (to men and women) plus workforce briefings (e.g. domestic abuse awareness, and referral pathways). The current provider's contract has been extended to the end of September in order that a tender process can be conducted and a new provider to be in place in October.
 - **Women's Refuges** - a one provider refuge model (provided by Sheffield Area Refuge and Support) was put in place in April 2014 and a state of the art replacement refuge building for 20 families, with provision comprised of self-contained flats plus communal areas, was opened in the autumn of 2014. Self-contained facilities are important to all users but are particularly important for BME women who may have specific cultural needs and for whom shared facilities, as per the old model, are therefore a barrier to moving to a refuge to escape abuse.

- **Domestic Abuse Floating Support Service** – which provides housing related support to people (men and women) affected by domestic abuse, to enable them to continue living independently in the community. Contract held by Action Housing and Support.
- **Sheffield Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre** – which provides counselling and a helpline for women who have experienced sexual violence or abuse in their past or more recently. Grant aided until end of March and then to be contracted from April 2015.
- The budget for these services for 2015/16 is **£1,361,641**. Domestic Abuse services have been prioritised in the budget setting process. The overall figure is similar to spending in 2014/15 however efficiency savings have been found in the accommodation based services while the community based services have received extra investment. The net result is that there will be increased capacity in support services next year.

2.12 Realigning the services based on risk enabled a clear pathway to support to be developed. This now incorporates the new Housing Support Pathway as the route for referrals to the women’s refuges and the specialist floating support provision for people affected by domestic abuse (see diagram below).



2.13 Multi Agency Working

DACT works closely with the Police to facilitate the operation of the MARAC process. MARAC meets three times a month and all agencies (statutory and voluntary) that have knowledge of a high risk victim’s situation share relevant information in order that a multi-agency safety plan can be put in place to manage risk and prevent serious harm or homicide. Officers from the DACT provide the administrative and monitoring support for MARAC and Chair the meetings around once a month.

- 2.14 In 2011, section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act was implemented, and the DACT has coordinated Domestic Homicide Reviews on behalf of the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership Board. These reviews are similar to Serious Case Reviews conducted in relation to children – the intention being to learn lessons from a death related to domestic abuse in order to help prevent such deaths in the future.
- 2.15 4 DHRs have been completed and quality assured by the Home Office (three of which were commended for their quality and victim focus) and 3 DHRs are still in progress. An independent Chair / Author is appointed to write the Overview Report. Each agency involved appoints an author to write an Individual Management Report regarding their involvement and develops an action plan to implement. These are monitored and ‘stuck’ actions and issues are considered by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board. The completed DHRs are published on the SSCP website and learning is disseminated through ‘update and refresher events’ and written briefings. The city has also undertaken 2 Serious Incident Review (Chaired by the Head of the DACT) – one for a ‘near miss’ case of attempted murder, one relating to a suicide of a woman who had been assessed as being at high risk of serious harm or homicide.
- 2.16 **Emerging themes - Refugees, new arrivals and vulnerable women**
4 of the DHRs in the city out of 7 (2 completed and 2 still in progress) have involved people who were recent arrivals in the city and / or were from BME backgrounds. 2 victims and 2 perpetrators were recent arrivals. 3 victims did not speak English as a first language.
- 2.17 This has led to Domestic Homicide Review Chairs seeking to understand more about how recent arrivals to the city, and those who do not speak English, are given information in relation to issues such as domestic abuse and how to seek help. It has also led to consideration being given as to how ‘routine enquiry’ is undertaken in settings such as maternity and health visiting in order to ensure that the person being asked understands the question and feels comfortable and safe enough to respond. Initial findings have also been that people in these groups experiencing domestic abuse may choose to disclose to an agency that is not a specialist in domestic abuse e.g. a voluntary sector agency supporting new arrivals, and therefore these organisations need support with developing policies and procedures to enable them to respond appropriately.
- 2.18 The issue of neighbours failing to report domestic abuse that they are aware of, despite it being of a serious nature, has also been considered as a result of DHRs, with Neighbourhood Watch working with us to develop a leaflet to encourage third party reporting which can be done anonymously via Crimestoppers.
- 2.19 **Strategic Direction**
Domestic and sexual abuse are areas that are recognised as priorities and areas of rising demand in the city’s Joint Strategic Needs

Assessment⁶ and Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment. 'Domestic abuse related reported incidents continue to increase year on year, with over 10,000 incidents in 2012/13. [NB 2013/14's total incidents had risen to 11,639] This should not necessarily be interpreted negatively as we know a significant number of incidents go unreported and the rise may be a reflection of increasing public awareness following national and local campaigns alongside improved police domestic abuse processes'.

- 2.20 The rise in reporting can also be attributed to the development of a more robust governance structure following the Strategic Review of Domestic Abuse in 2012. This enabled focussed workforce training and briefings, in the context of the clear pathway to support, on supporting agencies to identify, risk assess and refer people affected by domestic abuse. There has also been greater agency awareness of the issues as a result of domestic homicide reviews. However Sheffield is still in a phase of identifying the level of domestic abuse and actively seeking cases for intervention particularly in certain communities or groups that we know are underrepresented in terms of reporting - such as new arrivals to the city. Data collection has been problematic in the past but is improving so we are becoming more confident in our estimation of the size of the problem in the city. The rise in demand led to increased investment by the Council in the community based services this year of £69,000. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has also agreed to invest £86,250 this year in the High Risk Service. However demand pressures still remain in the Medium and Standard Risk Service.
- 2.21 The first needs assessment in relation to domestic and sexual abuse was published in 2013 and can be found at <http://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-needs-analysis-2013/>. DACT officers are currently working to refresh this document with the aim of signing off an updated version by April 2015.
- 2.22 The first Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy since 2007 was produced in 2014 and approved by Cllr Mary Lea. It has been published at: <http://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/resources/local-strategies/>. The implementation of the multi-agency action plan will be overseen by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board. Some of the priorities and ongoing work are outlined below.
- 2.23 **Areas of development:**
Sexual Violence and Abuse Counselling Service (Rape Crisis Centre) – this is the only service funded by the council to respond specifically to sexual abuse and violence in relation to adults (although the service works with women and girls only from aged 13 up). As part of the recent Grant Aid review it was agreed that the grant aid for this service would transfer to the DACT from April 2015 and a commissioning process based on a needs assessment currently underway will be undertaken so that a newly commissioned service will be in place by April 2016. A sexual violence and abuse pathway to support will also be developed.

⁶ <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/caresupport/health/health-wellbeing-board/JSNA/positionstatement.html>

2.24 **Children and Young People**

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse are generally supported through universal services and / or Multi Agency Support Teams (MAST), Community Youth Teams or Social Care services including support for parents. However, it is recognised that specialist support is necessary for some children who have had traumatic experiences and this is impacting on their educational attainment, putting them at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and / or affecting their relationships in the family or with their peers.

2.25 A post, specialising in children and young people affected by domestic abuse, is based within the Multi Agency Support Teams offering consultations to staff members working with families where domestic abuse is an issue. However demand for this support is greater than the current post holder can meet and there is also a need to consider a similar resource in Children's Social Care.

2.26 The definition of domestic abuse changed in March 2013 to include 16 and 17 year olds both as victims and perpetrators. This has meant that the MARAC has heard referrals from this age group during the past two years. DACT is working closely with colleagues in CYPF to develop a pathway for young people affected by domestic abuse alongside training for the Sheffield workforce on the particular issues and vulnerabilities facing this group.

2.27 The Building Successful Families programme has been expanded by the government to include families affected by domestic abuse and the DACT is working with CYPF to ensure that appropriate interventions are in place to meet the needs identified and enable sustained successful outcomes to be achieved. A gap that has been identified is for targeted specialist support for children and young people who have been traumatised by parental domestic abuse and / or are under 16 and experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationships.

2.28 **Perpetrators**

Programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse were provided by Probation on a court mandated basis and will now be provided by the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). A recognised gap is that there is no commissioned voluntary programme for adult perpetrators at present in the city and this is one of the areas for development identified in the strategy. A recent positive development however, is the inclusion of serial perpetrators of domestic abuse in the Integrated Offender Management Programme (led by the Police and the CRC) which should enable improved multi agency management and diversion of some of the more serious offenders in this area in the city.

2.29 Another area of work that is starting this year is the mapping of work around prevention with young people both in terms of those who may be vulnerable to being victimised in their own relationships and those who may be at risk of becoming abusive in their behaviour, consideration of gaps and agreement of key messages. Proposals are under consideration re. the setting up of a task and finish group to begin this work.

3 What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

3.1 Demand is increasing (national estimates are that only around 40% of domestic abuse is reported - British Crime Survey) as people are increasingly confident about coming forward and agencies are getting better at identifying people affected by domestic abuse. This is a good thing: it means we can get support to people as early as possible and to those that need it most.

3.2 The updated needs assessment will estimate that 19,406 people between the ages of 16-59 will have been a victim of domestic abuse in the past year. Around 12,000 of these will have been women. Approximately, 12,000 children and young people will have been living with a parent experiencing domestic abuse during that time. Another area of development is to ensure that services are accessible to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people who are currently underrepresented in those seeking support.

3.3 Ethnicity

An average of 26% of referrals to services are from BME backgrounds. We are aware however that BME people may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and asking for support. The DACT encourages the involvement of specialist BME organisations in the DA Provider Consultation Group, is making specific attempts to link to community groups working with ethnic groups that are underrepresented in services e.g. the Chinese Community Centre, is working with providers to develop accredited training on issues such as Forced marriage, 'Honour' Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation and requires commissioned providers to ensure they have skilled staff able to respond appropriately to the specific dynamics of domestic and sexual abuse in BME communities. A community event is being planned for the NE of the city in March in partnership with Public Health to promote awareness of domestic violence services and how to access support as there were 2 domestic homicides in this area last year.

3.4 **Conclusions:** Sheffield has more capacity in its commissioned domestic abuse services than ever before but there is still more demand than supply. Efforts are continuing to ensure that these services are accessible to all sections of our communities. However there is more work to be done, and agencies that are already stretched also have to respond to the pressures arising from agendas of 30 high risk cases per MARAC, and writing IMR reports and attending meetings for Domestic Homicide Reviews.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That the Committee notes the report, comments generally, and comments on the current pressures.