



Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment – Executive Summary

June 2025

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The needs assessment aims to understand the nature and prevalence of domestic abuse in Middlesbrough. It will be used to inform the development of revised Middlesbrough Domestic abuse Strategy and provision and commissioning of domestic abuse services from April 2026.

Domestic Abuse is a cross-cutting theme and effective protection, support and prevention is reliant on maintaining a robust system wide partnership across Middlesbrough. The data used in the report was extracted from case load management systems and regulatory statutory data returns, published nationally and locally.

2. IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse has significant impact on victims and their children. The impact of domestic abuse can be exacerbated by pre-existing inequalities. There are also wider societal costs. The Home Office estimates that domestic abuse has an economic and social cost of around £81 billion in England and Wales each year.

DOMESTIC ABUSE DATA FROM INCIDENT TO CONVICTION, ENGLAND AND WALES, YEAR ENDING MARCH 2024 (ONS)

2,307,000 = Estimated number of victims of domestic abuse, in the 12 months to the 31st of March 2024, based on the Crime Survey of England and Wales – published by the Office for National Statistics.

851,062 = The number of domestic abuse flagged offences, recorded by the police in England and Wales, in the 12 months to the 31st of March 2024, as collected by the Home Office.

72,641 = The number of suspects of domestic abuse related offences referred to the CPS by the police in the 12 months to the 31st of March 2024, for charging decision.

49,046 = The number of suspects charged by the Crown Prosecution Services in Domestic Abuse Related cases, in the 12 months to the 31st of March 2024.

38,776 = Offenders were convicted in the 12 months to 31st March 2024.

3. STRENGTHS

- Budget is well spent and delivers a range of services, with victims, children and young people and perpetrators.
- Well-rounded service offer with good robust support.
- Flexible approach, empathetic and trauma informed.
- Integrated Specialist DA service
- Expertise in the Violence against women and girls' sector, bringing a wealth of knowledge, experience, and a holistic approach.
- Chief Executive Officer of Specialist services respond to issues as they arise investing in training and support for their staff.
- Highly skilled and experienced Independent Domestic Violence Advocates with specialisms
- The IRIS service has delivered support to victims who had not previously disclosed, many of those with has upskilled both clinical and non-clinical staff in Primary Care in Middlesbrough.
- Domestic Abuse Counselling and trauma informed therapeutic interventions for adults, children, and young people.
- Investment in Prevention work training over Ask Me Ambassadors in communities.
- Additional Investment in Sanctuary Scheme will prevent homelessness.
- Proactive Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead
- Established Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership
- Victim / Survivor Voice satisfaction with services commissioned.
- Survivor Panel is established in collaboration with specialist providers.
- Investment in mandatory Domestic Abuse training which has been delivered to adult and children social care staff and increased awareness and understanding.
- Investment in Domestic Abuse Navigator post in specialist service funded to work with those placed in emergency interim / complex need.
- Intensive and trauma informed level of support for victims and their children placed in refuge creating a supportive and nurturing environment not only for the victims and children, but also the staff.
- Investment in increasing Dispersed options for those unable to access refuge and those ready for move on/ semi-independent living.
- Robust referral pathways & partnership working between Housing Solutions / Community interventions and DA Specialist Providers and new Domestic Abuse /Housing specific roles to improve homeless prevention offer.
- Flexible Flee Fund created and administrated Local authority for no recourse to public funds barriers to access refuge in and out of area.
- Translation service funded for all domestic abuse commissioned services.

4. NEEDS

- Increase capacity to meet services demands for victims/survivors beyond initial crisis.
- More resources and High intensity pathway for high-risk victims so Independent domestic violence advocates can effectively case manage.
- Volume and demand due to increasing number of police Public Protection notice passed to Domestic abuse services continues to impact on their ability to deliver contracts need to review and negotiate arrangements in relation to police referrals in line with new statutory guidance for IDVAS.
- Increase funding for Parenting support, including dedicated roles, and funding for practical support re childcare / access to funding re transport.
- Increasing numbers of victims presenting with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds disparity in relation to support provided in statutory services.
- Strengthen work with protected characteristics, ensuring we have mapped all services, sourced training for partnership, prevention work is embedded and helped support smaller organisations and groups to improve their offer and provide tailored support.
- High rate of homeless presentations due to Domestic Abuse and there is not sufficient safe and appropriate accommodation to place those in emergency and housing crisis impacting on time it takes to rehouse victims.
- Cleveland Marac is not effective in reducing risk. The process is not robust and does not provide effective safety planning. Cleveland Police and statutory partners need to revisit Marac governance arrangements and complete job evaluation of roles and responsibilities to ensure they are delivering what is required to embed all recommendations from review.
- Considerable proportion of victims experience mental health problems but find the pathways for professional help difficult to navigate.
- There is not a safe or trauma informed space for victims to present if they require emergency accommodation / and or needs to access ongoing support re homelessness.
- Strategic commitment and participation from all statutory providers in Domestic Abuse strategic partnership is inconsistent.
- Early intervention for children and young people with a greater focus on working with children who are exhibiting early signs of problematic behaviour especially within intimate relationships or towards their parents.
- Increasing numbers of 16–18-year-olds identified who at risk of abusive attitudes and behaviours towards parents, other family members and in intimate relationships.
- Referrals, engagement, and successful completions on Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme is disproportionately low.
- Strengthen multi agency working and how statutory agencies work together, and address risk and recommendations identified in internal audit including developing a joint working protocol between children and adult services.
- Consistent and good quality Domestic Abuse training needs to be made available across partnership and prevention work delivered across all communities.

- More proactive outreach DA support with opportunities for co working between statutory services such as adult social care and children's.
- Funding allocation for DA Children and Young Person service is insufficient to adequately support the growing number of children affected by domestic abuse.
- Children social care and expectations within protection plans. Victim not ready to engage time but time intensive for Domestic Service as time spent trying to engage service but not in safe space for action. Lack of consistency & effectiveness.
- Increasing number of victims presenting with insecure immigration status and / or no recourse to public funds but there are significant delays in being able to arrange immigration advice which impacts on timeliness of migrant victim concession applications / and or decision making regarding statutory duties.
- Increasing number of co dependant individuals with overlapping problems such as homelessness and substance misuse and contact with criminal justice system are identified as experiencing bidirectional abuse.
- Need to identify suitable trauma /gender informed location to see victims/survivors experiencing homelessness.
- Trauma Informed Emergency crash pads for single person, families, and male victims.
- Criminal justice system and significant delays fails to support victims and impacting on resource and capacity for IDVA support.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Protect and Support specification will be developed and commissioned as one contract which will incorporate adult and children's community-based provision into one contract. This will sustain single point of access for all Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse services. This will include provision for expertise in police control room, referral, and response, IDVA support including roles specifically tailored for Mental health, children and young person, DA and Stalking and male victim support, Domestic Abuse Support workers, Adult and Children Counselling, CAPVA and family work.

Safe Accommodation specification (24-hour response, Sanctuary Refuge Dispersed and Semi Independent/ Move on Accommodation and complex need provision will be commissioned as one integrated contract.

Domestic Abuse Prevention specification will be developed and commissioned as one contract which will incorporate delivery of programmes in schools, Community Champion ideally ASK ME ambassador programmes and Domestic Abuse Champion Training for professionals.

By and For Service Framework specification will be developed which will establish a set of terms and conditions, including pricing, scope of services, and quality standards, which will be agreed upon in advance with suppliers of By and for services. Funding will be assigned this to ensure there is a mechanism for Local authority departments to access interventions and services on a case-by-case basis.

DA Senior Practitioner hours in Multi Agency children hub should be increased to F/T on a permanent basis. A further F/T post will be developed in Adult access and safeguarding to support and embed good practice in enquiry and assessments for vulnerable adults with care and support needs.

Marac funding will be set aside to support Cleveland Police along with other statutory partners to sustain Marac administration, coordination, and improved chair arrangements but

A suitable safe space or building needs to be identified so Domestic abuse housing appointments and emergency interventions can be offered in a safe confidential and accessible location.

Translation Service contract should be extended.

Sustain Flexible Flee fund with local authority administering this.

Tender for Approved immigration provider to deliver advice for victims/ survivors and their children who present to local authority in financial hardship or experiencing housing / homeless issues with no recourse to public fund so appointments and casework advice.

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme will be reconfigured and extended until formal agreement reached as per statutory duties set out in Victims Bill

IRIS contract will be extended with existing provider to sustain provision until formal agreement reached as per statutory duties set out in Victims Bill.

Through the Tees Perpetrating Abuse Strategy **develop a service specification and/ or support route for 16 to 18-year-olds** displaying perpetrator behaviour to educate them about healthy relationships and challenge behaviour before it becomes entrenched.

Through the Tees Perpetrating Abuse Strategy need to complete analysis in relation to those identified as experiencing **Bi-Directional Abuse/ Counter allegations** to understand system change needed and how risk is going to be assessed and managed in relation to this

Victim / Survivor Voice Engagement will be incorporated into all DA and SV contracts and a financial enhancement applied to contracts to build capacity for domestic abuse and sexual violence services to continue supporting this work via their own services and Middlesbrough Survivor Panel.

The End