



ROCHDALE  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Domestic abuse

Improving outcomes for children and families

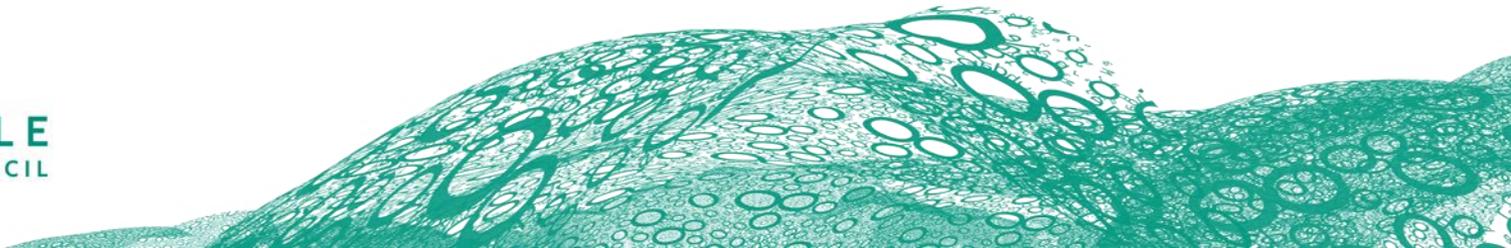
Rochdale Safeguarding Children Board

16<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## What Ofsted told us:

*“An increasing number of children in Rochdale experience emotional harm as a result of the impact of domestic abuse. Children and adults experiencing domestic abuse have access to specialist services. However, the nature of abuse, the behaviour of those who abuse, and the experiences of the victims of domestic abuse are not always comprehensively assessed and understood. This means that some children repeatedly experience harmful situations because the plans to protect them are overly optimistic”.*

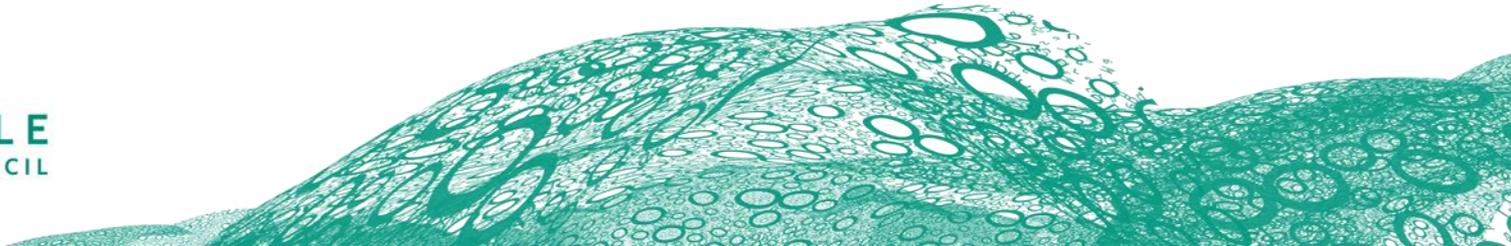
**June 2021**



# Context and getting started

We put in a bid for a peer review to the **Children's Social Care COVID-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund** which together provides opportunity to accelerate the pace of recovery and improvement. Access to the funds is also designed to bolster the region's readiness for the outcomes of the Independent Review of children's social care and DfE SEND review.

Salford children's services were identified as our Sector Led Improvement Partner, with 39 days allocated. We set about identifying the priority areas and challenges through a diagnostic process, identifying where Salford could provide support to improve partnership/social work practice, systems and processes. Between us we agreed the key areas where learning and innovation could be shared. We set the baseline through a stock-take in November 2021.

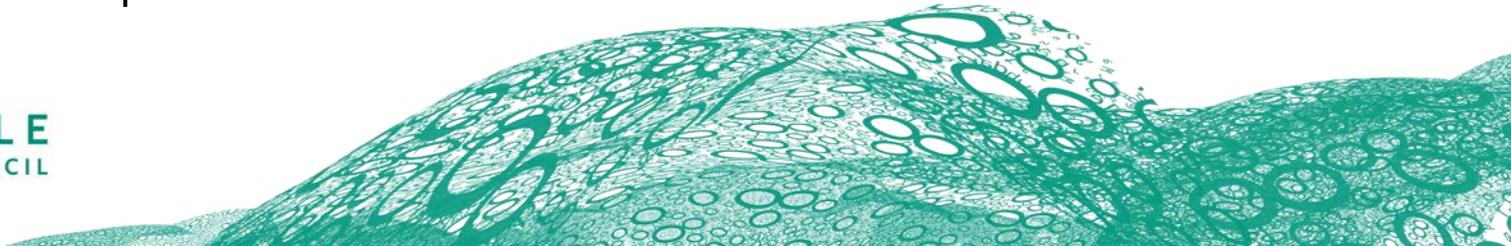


# Theory of change – our ambitions

Where are we now?	How are we going to make this happen	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	How will it be different	What impact will this have
<p>Inconsistent approach to victims, children and perpetrators affected by DA, depending on which service they deal with.</p>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; FAMILIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Midwifery services will continue to see women alone allowing space for DA disclosure.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAFF &amp; SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current commissioned services DA offer. Steering Group propose a Business Case for evidenced sustained and resourced services to meet need.</li> <li>GP practice buddying system to embed knowledge and skills from webinar sessions.</li> <li>All staff are trained and equipped to respond, in an agreed Rochdale partnership way, to domestic abuse incidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased referrals to support services for victims and families</li> <li>Challenge Visits will evidence GP's proactive approach to DA and early identification of DA through 'Think Family'.</li> <li>Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy is live and informs a tender process.</li> <li>Reduced DA repeat GMP call outs.</li> <li>Reduction in care proceedings, CP, CLA as a result of DA.</li> <li>Case audits and dip samples evidence impact of improved service offer.</li> </ul>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; FAMILIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bespoke and targeted nuanced services.</li> <li>Early and appropriate response from confident and informed frontline practitioners.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAFF &amp; SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipped workforce who will recognise indicators of DA and respond appropriately based on knowledge of support services and pathways.</li> <li>Improved partnerships resulting in a resourced integrated system wide approach.</li> <li>Practitioners are curious and challenging to arrive at an accurate assessment.</li> <li>Resourced services based on a shared strategic plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic abuse is identified at the earliest stage by confident and skilled professionals.</li> <li>Practitioners are confident and resourced to respond to DA in a timely way without the need to refer to another agency is this is what a victim wants.</li> <li>Domestic abuse services are informed by a multi-agency strategic plan, resourced, and meet the need of families, victims and perpetrators.</li> </ul>
<p>Lack of a practitioner toolkit and training compounds inconsistent responses across agencies.</p>	<p><b>STAFF &amp; SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurate and purposeful data informs targeted service delivery and overall strategic policy.</li> <li>Systemic change working towards a shared and nuanced DA response.</li> <li>Agree Rochdale tools and model for understanding and responding to domestic abuse.</li> <li>Common shared response accurately informs assessments and risk plans.</li> <li>Differentiated response with bespoke responses which recognises the difference between family conflict and depending on circumstances.</li> <li>Informed assessments mean families can safely be supported in Early Help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy is in place.</li> <li>Reduced number of children on CP plans as a result of DA as cases are managed at a lower threshold.</li> <li>Potential rise in DA reporting and service intervention as all agencies are better informed and equipped to identify at the earliest stage.</li> <li>Reduced referrals to high-risk DA meetings.</li> <li>Cross agency case audits (similar to PPP) evidence informed assessments.</li> <li>Dip sample evidences improved outcomes when families have remained together.</li> </ul>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; FAMILIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to the right service first time.</li> <li>Services are local which increases chance of take up at an early stage.</li> <li>Families understand how they are supported and what to expect.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAFF &amp; SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"We are clear about what we do around here and the so what?"</li> <li>Future Needs Analysis will not have gaps in data.</li> <li>Services are outcome not output (KPI) focussed.</li> <li>Trained workforce will have a menu of services to deliver bespoke interventions.</li> <li>Evidence based pathway informing a multi-agency offer.</li> <li>Increased number of cases safely held in Early Help rather than CP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families are able to stay living together where it is safe to do so. Known risk is managed.</li> <li>Families are supported as a whole unit- victim, perpetrator and children- if this is what they want, and it is safe to do so.</li> <li>Systemic multi agency improvements as partners are clear about their role in a joined-up plan.</li> <li>Less crisis and emergency situations requiring GMP attendance as families are not living in abusive situations.</li> <li>Practitioners feel confident in safely assessing risk of DA.</li> <li>Families are voluntary working with support, rather than feeling 'done to'.</li> <li>Children tell us they feel safe living with their family.</li> </ul>
<p>Current response is victim focussed with some limitations in resources for perpetrator and children.</p>	<p><b>STAFF &amp; SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of current commissioned services and DA offer. Identify new service model and present an informed business case for resource allocation and investment with Senior Management oversight and permission.</li> <li>Better understanding of drivers of perpetrator behaviour.</li> <li>Plans are written from child's perspective "When you do this daddy, it makes me feel...."</li> <li>Education partners are active members of Project Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in GMP call outs to longstanding DA cases.</li> <li>Increased perpetrator attendance at and participation in meetings and discussion- particularly CP.</li> <li>Evaluation of DA Toolkit and Healthy Relationship courses in secondary schools reduces harmful behaviour in adolescent relationships.</li> <li>MARAC data evidences reduction in 16 / year olds presenting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; FAMILIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All family members, including perpetrators are heard and participate in decision making and case conferences.</li> <li>Potential perpetrators are identified and worked with at a younger age to reduce their abusive behaviour and risk of criminalisation.</li> <li>Lived experience of DA does not develop into abusive and controlling behaviour.</li> <li>Perpetrator services are informed by professional insight into early trauma.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAFF &amp; SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist DA triage/front door.</li> <li>Defensible decision making based on robust joint working, assessments, and information sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent cross agency approach with an evidenced based response will give a greater strategic understanding of DA in Rochdale.</li> <li>Perpetrators participate in meetings.</li> <li>Services are working with perpetrators to address and affect long term behaviour change.</li> <li>DA responses and risk plans are based on shared and robust joint working.</li> <li>Services understand barriers to perpetrator engagement and adapt delivery to increase their participation.</li> <li>Adolescents with lived DA experience are viewed as victims rather than criminalised as perpetrators.</li> </ul>

# What we are doing to make the difference

- Our Sector Led Improvement Partner worked with us to review our existing framework to capture impact and outcomes and provided advice and guidance on developing our joint commissioning strategy;
- Supported the development of our practice guidance to effectively risk assess people who abuse with the aim to offer an appropriate platform for change;
- Planned workshops with us to enhance the existing offer to early help and social care staff in developing their skills and confidence in whole family approach where responding to domestic abuse;
- Supported us to get the governance right through the Domestic Abuse Steering Group – which will provide oversight, review the impact and seek evidence of sustained improvements. Securing leadership oversight and engagement through the Rochdale Safeguarding Children’s Partnership and the Children and Young Peoples Partnership.

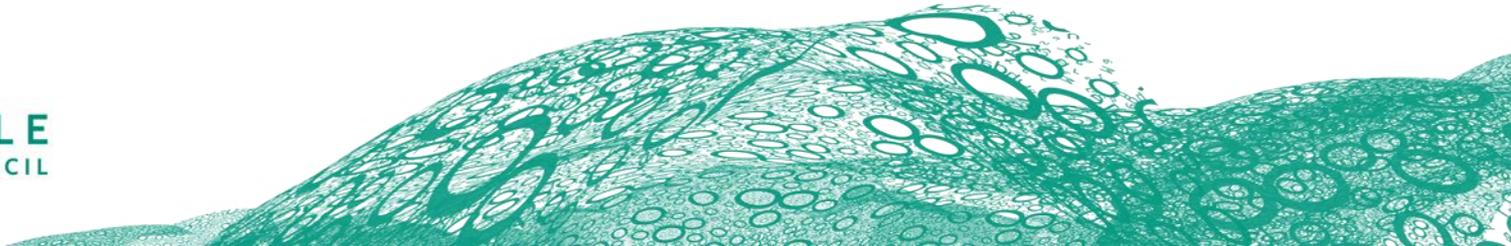


# Our Practice Guidance

Launched in draft on 27 April 2022, now finalised following consultation.

The main aim of our approach in responding to domestic abuse is to ensure:

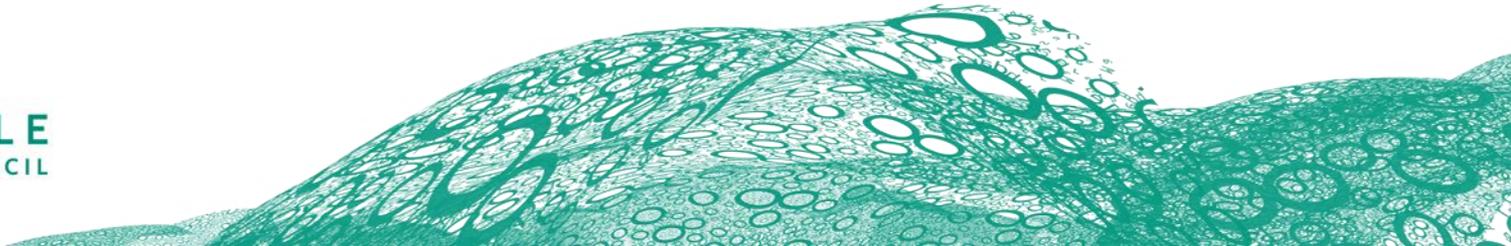
- Victims are not held responsible for the domestic abuse they are subjected to and are offered sufficient support;
- Perpetrators, when possible, are held accountable for their actions and offered a platform for change;
- Children who have been exposed to, been within an intimate relationship or display abusive behaviours within a domestically abusive relationship will be offered specialist support;
- A trauma informed approach will be taken through our identification and response to conflict and domestic abuse.



# Our Practice Guidance

The guidance and approach is to support practitioners to:

- Clarify responses in the first instance when dealing with conflict or domestic abuse
- Complete a clear safety plan which is accessible, efficient, transparent and person centred
- Complete an informed risk assessment through the use of effective assessment tools.



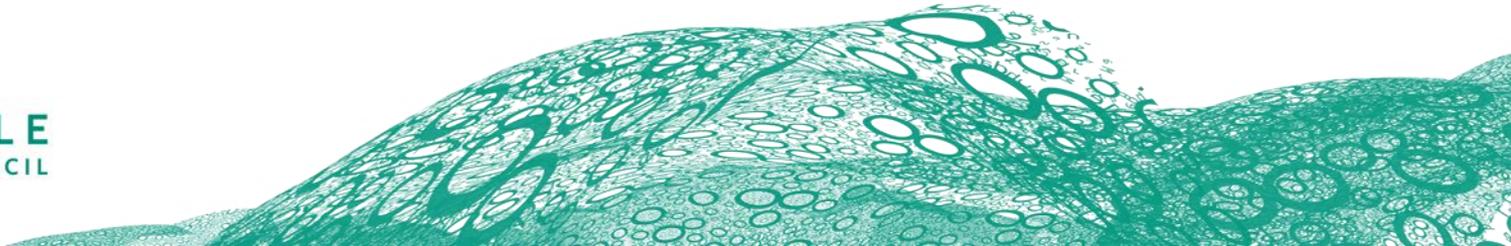
# Training for senior managers (April 2022) and front line early help and social care managers (May 2022)

**4 Tools** for engagement will be explored and demonstrated how they could be implemented into Rochdale's perpetrator engagement pathway:

- Perpetrator DASH
- Inventory of controlling behaviours
- De-escalation plan/ control logs
- Working agreements

**3 tools** for engagement will be explored and demonstrated on how they could be implemented into Rochdale's victim support pathway:

- DASH
- SOAG (severity of abuse grid)
- Safety plan



# Next steps.....

- Launch the Practice Guidance and pathways with a series of communication events by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.
- Hold a partnership task and finish group during June to confirm the mechanism for gathering and collating the partnership indicators of success, to be routinely reported at the DA Steering Group
- Develop the standard templates in electronic data recording systems (for Children's Social Care and Early Help) so that we can track the tools usage with families where domestic abuse is a concern.
- Plan to undertake periodic, planned thematic audits of the records of children who live in families where domestic abuse has been a concern.
- Develop a domestic abuse section of the Safeguarding Children Partnership website with the pathways, practice guidance, tools and other resources.



# ACTION RESEARCH

Sketchnote by Hayley Lewis  
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