



# SaferPlaces

**Domestic Abuse Support Services**

**Annual Report 2017/2018**



# Contents

Introduction.....	p3
Our Objectives.....	p5
Aims.....	p7
Recognition.....	p9
Response.....	p12
Risk.....	p17
Recovery.....	p19
Triple R.....	p21
Resilience.....	p24
Training Professionals.....	p26
Community Support.....	p28
Resources and Governance.....	p30

# Introduction

Safer Places is an independent domestic abuse service with over 40 years of experience and has been recognised as delivering excellent services to adults and children affected by Domestic Abuse across Essex (including Southend and Thurrock) and Hertfordshire.

Domestic abuse and social isolation rob people of their confidence, self-esteem and their hope for the future. We work comprehensively with those who have experienced domestic abuse to help them

recover, to empower them, to rebuild their lives and to go on and achieve for themselves things they might once have thought impossible.

Safer Places are passionate about diversity and equality and will do all that we can to ensure that everyone who needs our services can use them. We offer services for women and men as well as having LGBT trained staff. We will arrange interpreters for people who do not speak English as their first language

if we do not have a member of staff who can speak that language. We can also accommodate people who have disabilities and require ongoing care.



The people who use our service are at the heart of our organisation and we aim to work closely with them to overcome the impact of their experience and to build a brighter and safe future for themselves and their children.

We provide either community support or support within one of our refuges. We offer a wide range of services which anyone affected by domestic abuse can access. This includes legal advice, counselling, specialist advice and guidance regarding the

circumstances that people may be facing.

We also run the Triple R programme, a CBT based programme written and developed by Safer Places in collaboration with other experts in the areas of Domestic Abuse, Trauma and Children, which helps victims and survivors recognise the abuse and its impact on them, as well as allowing them to recover and develop resilience for a safer future. This programme has been evaluated by the University of

Worcester Centre for Violence Prevention.

We also offer excellent training and employability within a safe and nurturing environment where learners can develop new skills, gain qualifications and get the support and help they need to be able to go on to further education or employment.

# Our Objectives

## Our Mission

To support those who use/need our services in their journey from risk and crisis to recovery and resilience. We are determined to promote recognition of Domestic Abuse and its impact, for individuals, families and communities.

We will respond to Domestic Abuse by providing a range of evidence based on the basis of risk, need and choice.

We will work collaboratively with individuals, families and partner agencies to reduce risk of harm.



We are committed to using effective governance to provide an efficient, effective, flexible and innovative service

making best use of our resources on behalf of our funders.

## Our Vision

We want to see a society where all people are safe and can feel safe within their close relationships and for children to grow up free of Domestic Abuse in their lives.

A society with zero tolerance of domestic abuse.

We want to be certain that victims of domestic abuse

have the confidence to report any abuse and to know where to get the support they need.

We want a society where perpetrators are enabled to recognise and address their abusive behaviours.

## Our Values

- Building on the strengths and developing resilience.
- Respecting choice and self-determination.
- Ensuring evidence based assessment and interventions.
- Collaborating with partner organisations, respecting the roles and specialisms of others.
- Being passionate about the welfare of children.
- Being committed to a community wide approach to recognising and responding to Domestic abuse.
- Ensuring inclusiveness across diverse communities.
- Proactively reaching out to those experiencing hidden harm.
- Taking a professional non-judgemental approach to all those we work with.
- Working toward zero tolerance of Domestic Abuse.
- Ensure the right interventions which ensure we get it right first time.

# Aims and Objectives for 2017/2018

The following sets out our main objectives for 2017/2018.



## Recognition

To continue to promote awareness amongst individuals, professionals and agencies about domestic abuse and how best to respond to it.

## Response

To provide a timely and professional response to victims, partner agencies and professional thus improving engagement, partnership

working and delivery of desired outcomes.

## Risk

To maintain a clear focus, prioritising response at the individual, service and organisational level on the basis of risk assessment and developing our expertise and the toolkits we use to better assess, understand and manage risk.

## Recovery

To focus on what works in terms of assisting victims to recover from the impacts of domestic abuse and continuing to search for and develop evidence based approaches.

## Resilience

To continue to work through even closer integration with partners and by delivering evidence based practice to enable victims to build better futures, addressing vulnerabilities and building on

strengths to prevent re-victimisation, sustained recovery and limit the risk of future vulnerability.



# Recognition

**Continuing to promote awareness amongst individuals, professional and agencies about domestic abuse and how best to respond to it.**

In 2017/2018, we expanded upon our work in the previous years to deliver strategic objective. This meant we continued with our implementation of in-reach work, increasing the number of professionals in partner agencies supported to seek disclosure and provide a swift

response. We also continued with our goals to reach out to those groups usually left behind by other domestic abuse agencies to provide a service that is equal for all, and solely based on risk, need and choice.



To do this we have improved and expanded on the unique aspects of services.

## **DAISY**

The DAISY partnership with Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow has been as successful as ever. Hospital staff are aware of all the indicators of an abusive relationship meaning that staff are able to refer a patient directly to us. The DAISY project has also been a success in that it has increased the reach of our services to mainly high risk

victims and other 'hidden groups' that would have struggled otherwise to get the support that they need.

Due to the success that we have had with DAISY in PAH, we have extended the service to Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford and Southend Hospital.

In total, through the DAISY Project, we have been able to train around 900 professionals at these hospitals.

## Partnerships

One of our long standing partnerships has been with Job Centre Plus. The J9 roll out in all Essex Jobcentre Plus's continues to remain strong.



This year we have been fortunate enough to roll this model out across Job Centre Plus's in Hertfordshire and have been swiftly welcomed

by our partners there. This includes training all frontline staff in job centres across the county to feel comfortable and confident to ask the question or accept disclosures.

They have also been given training in providing victims the support and resources in order for them to make their next choices. It also gives victims and survivors a place that they know they can safely disclose.

Also in Hertfordshire, we have established productive partnerships with many other agencies and forums such as

Families First, (participating within their triage panels), Children's Centres, Heads of Housing, Schools, local Domestic Abuse forums, local MARACs etc.

### Hope House

During the year we continued to develop partnerships to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse were able to get the support they need. Through one off funding from DCLG, we were able to deliver refuge provision to women with multiple needs that had experienced domestic abuse.

This service was called Hope House.

Hope House is delivered directly by Safer Places staff and also, under subcontract, by staff from Open Road substance misuse services and MIND

### OCNLR

In line with our aim to promote domestic abuse awareness, we have secured OCNLR accreditation and became an accredited centre for the delivery of specialist qualifications for the sector.

### Graduate Scheme

We introduced a graduate training scheme available to graduates with a least a 2:1 degree in criminology, psychology or any other relevant discipline. In 2017/2018 we had 12 trainees qualify, with a new cohort starting.

# Response

**To provide a timely and professional response to victims, partner agencies and professional thus improving engagement, partnership working and delivery of desired outcomes**

Evidence proves that the quicker we reach or respond to a victim of domestic abuse when they ask for help, the more likely they are to accept the support and have the courage to take actions to reduce the risk to themselves or their children.

For many victims of domestic abuse they are fearful for repercussions or recriminations from their abuser. Not only this but they are also fearful that other authorities are becoming more involved in their lives and that the consequence of this may put them at risk of losing their children.

A swift response is therefore required so that we can provide the reassurance the victim needs. Also we can develop a full picture of the

risk that a client is facing and any additional risk that may make them more vulnerable.

Key to our service is that all clients are informed as soon as possible of their options so that they can make a well informed choice for themselves and their children. We need to build trust so that the victim will feel confident and supported as they begin their journey away from abuse and towards a better and safer future away from their abuser.

## Gateway Services



The 24/7 Gateway service, which deals with all referrals excluding MARAC and police referrals, has been extended to cover Hertfordshire as well as Essex. This means that every victim within our service area is able to receive a quick response in order to make informed, safe choices to

reduce their risks and take the initial steps to recovery

As mentioned previously, there is a clear relationship between the time taken to respond to the victim and the likelihood of the victim engaging with the service. The Gateway is key to ensuring there are few delays between a client reaching out and being allocated the support they need.

The Gateway responds to 80/90 client calls per week.

## IDVA

Another key aspect of our swift response to Domestic Abuse victims is the IDVA service. The IDVA service takes referrals for High Risk victims that have either been identified at the Safer Places Gateway or MARAC or Police if they have been referred there.

IDVAs support clients over a short to intermediate time frame or until the criminal justice process is completed. They also empower clients to embark on the path to long term safety.

As well as helping victims through the criminal justice process, IDVA's also provide support and advocacy around the MARAC process, sanctions and remedies available through the criminal and civil courts, housing options and services available through other organisations tailored to the clients' needs.

In 2017/2018 the IDVA service dealt with 2552 referrals of high risk victims of domestic abuse, responding to 89% within 24-48.

## Refuge and Outreach



We have a number of refuges that victims can use if they are at risk within their own homes as a temporary measure in order to start the process of reducing their risk and rebuilding their lives. These refuges are across Essex and Hertfordshire, with our subcontractors St Albans and Hertsmere Women Refuge as

well as Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge providing accommodation in these areas.

We also provide outreach support across Essex and Hertfordshire, apart from in the Three Rivers Area, where our subcontractor is St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge. This can range from help with housing, legal money and employability issues as well as increasing the emotional wellbeing of clients, managing their risk, access to therapeutic support and

support with children and parenting.

In 2017/2018 2121 people and 2838 children were supported through our refuge and outreach services.

We worked with victims for a variety of backgrounds, including those groups that are typically left behind by other domestic support agencies. 15% of victims were men, 31% came from a BME background, 2% of victims were from the LGBT community, 10% of clients had a disability and 46% had a

diagnosed mental health problem.

Victims with children were also given the support that they needed in regards to their family. 70% of the victims with children had safeguarding issues addressed or had safeguarding initiated. 47% of victims with children were given support in respect of child contact issues. 36% of children within community services had the benefit of Safer Places and Social Care colleagues working alongside each other to support the family.

## LGBT IDVA



During the year we were especially pleased to be able to support an increased number of transgender people, assisted by our specialist LGBT IDVA.

Transgender people are at the highest risk of domestic abuse of any group in society with 4

out of 5 experiencing abuse in a year.

Excellent work was undertaken with one particular client who was at very high risk of being killed. After a stay in refuge she is now settled in another area of the country and she is well, rebuilding her life and attending college.

### Colchester and Tendering

This year we have established community services with Colchester and Tendering, following the withdrawal of the subcontract and taking

over direct provision. We now have a 10 strong team working in those communities alongside partner agencies as well as a new hub in Colchester town centre.

Reach has improved significantly now that we have taken the community service over as many were unaware they had support in their area. Tendering in particular is European Hotspot for Deprivation and many of the people in that community face challenges which compound the experience of domestic abuse. The impact of the

service on Community Safety and people's lives in those areas is substantial.



# Risk

**To maintain a clear focus, prioritising response at the individual, service and organisational level on a basis of risk assessment and developing our expertise and the toolkits we use to better assess, understand and manage risk.**

In line with our response objective, assessing a client's risk is vital to providing a quick and appropriate response to the clients and giving them the options for them.

## **Risk Assessments**

Building on our work in the previous year, we have continued to focus on risk assessment and how we can build upon the DASH risk indicator to ensure that we deliver the best risk assessment and safety planning we can.

We have worked with a range of agencies and reviewed various tools and developed a new matrix tool which is currently being piloted to underpin our risk assessment

and support decision making around the individual packages of support we offer to clients, guided as always by our commitment to equality and responding on the basis of risk, need and choice.

## **Stalking Advocates**

We also recognise the increasing relevance of stalking within the context of domestic abuse and based on the research as to how this increases risk. As a result we have developed a team of specialist, qualified stalking

advocates to provide expertise to colleagues. Additionally, they will take on the most complex of cases and act as a resource to colleagues and other partner agencies.

### Project 360



Project 360 is another project that we embarked on this year. Project 360 was a collaborative project with the

Police in Essex, working on medium risk cases where the risk was escalating. The service proved very successful and we are looking to roll this approach out across all areas.

### Safeguarding

A review of all safeguarding policies has taken place this year, and they have been updated. Alongside this we have updated our staff training in line with these policies so that all staff and volunteers understand that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation



# Recovery

To focus on what works in terms of assisting victims to recover from the impacts of domestic abuse and continuing to search for and develop evidence based approaches.

## Peer Support groups

One of the additional services that our clients can access at Safer Places is our Peer group support. These are run by our clients for the clients and are usually accessed after Triple R, although you don't need to be on Triple R.

The purpose of these groups is to reduce the social isolation for victims/survivors and ensure ongoing long term peer support for those who need it. They also help victims/ survivors develop self-confidence.

In 2017/2018 we hosted 4 weekly peer support programmes across Essex

## Counselling

As part of our long standing commitment to recovery, all of our clients, whether they

are in refuge or receive outreach support, can receive counselling.



This year we employed 12 counsellors, made up of

placement counsellors and qualified volunteers, to help clients with whatever issues they feel need addressing. Sessions are tailored to the individual and that flexibility allows for a variety of counselling formats.

## Results

The work that we do across the service to help victims of domestic abuse overcome their abuse does help clients improve their current circumstances.

77% experience a cessation in all types of abuse

83% report a significant or moderate reduction in the risk

76% report feeling confident or very confident

77% report an improved or much improved quality of life

Our work on recovery can also empower victims to feel more comfortable reporting the abuse to other authorities.

77% of those leaving had their case reported to the Police

52% of case had charges brought against the perpetrator

30% of those cases resulted in a successful prosecution

Finally, our work with clients helps improve their wellbeing making it far easier to recover.

91% reported that their self-esteem has increased

88% reported that their emotional wellbeing had improved

92% reported that they felt safer

88% reported that their social networks had improved

# Triple R

Triple R is a CBT based Domestic Abuse programme with has three aims;

- To enable victims/survivors to recognise the abuse and its impact on them and their children
- To enable them to recover from the abuse and support their children to do so
- To develop resilience, building on their strengths and address their challenges in order to

build a better, sustainable, safe future for themselves and their families.

The programme has four module;

## **Recognition**

- Naming the abuse
- Understanding the abuse
- The cycle of abuse/trauma bonding

## **Recovery**

- Psychology of abuse

- The effects of abuse/the effects of leaving
- Understanding identity/self esteem

## **Children**

- Values and parenting
- The effects of abuse on children/communicating with children about abuse
- Keeping children safe

## **Resilience**

- Physical and emotional risk/safety
- Society and victim blaming

- Moving on, dating and values

The programme runs for 12 weeks, with each session lasting for 90 mins.

Participants can do all four modules or select a module based on their own circumstances/stage they are at on their recovery to resilience journey.

During 2017/2018 we delivered 24 x 12 week programmes to victims of domestic abuse.



*“This course has literally saved my life, from being at the point where I felt worthless and hopeless; I now know the abuse wasn’t my fault. [...] I feel like this group is helping me rebuild myself and improve my self-esteem”*

*“Triple R has had a huge positive impact on my mental health [...] it made such a difference to my mental health, confidence in my decisions and understanding of the situation I was in”*

*“I have come a very long way from attending this group [...] I’m walking with my head held high and all the strength I need”*

*“For the first time in 20 years I don’t feel alone. People believe me and I feel that I have made the right decision in getting out. I am so grateful for the skills and knowledge this course provides.”*

*“This group has really saved my life and helped with my confidence. I didn’t think I deserved to be here anymore but this all changed with Triple R”*



# Resilience

**To continue to work through even closer integration with partners and by delivering evidence based practice to enable victims to build better futures, addressing vulnerabilities and building on strengths to prevent re-victimisation, sustained recovery and limit the risk of future vulnerability.**

All of our service work together to ensure that a client develops the self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of self-worth, to ensure

that clients remain resilient in the future.

Our Gateway service assesses the client's needs when the referral is placed, so that we have a greater understanding of all the issues they face. This means that whilst we can arrange refuge or community support for the client, we can also signpost to other organisations and our partners if we feel our clients would benefit from it.

The safe accommodation that we provide further assists in making our clients resilient for the future. Safer Places proved a wide range of programmes including parenting and practical skills programmes to improve client self-confidence and self-esteem.

In the community as well, our clients tell us that our group work programmes are very valuable to them in helping to develop the knowledge, skills,

self-belief and confidence to rebuild their lives.

### **Hope House**

As mentioned before, this year we delivered the Hope House service.

The service for victims of domestic abuse with multiple needs is a 4 unit refuge which was occupied throughout the year. The service made it possible for women who would have otherwise would have been too complex to be managed safely within a family refuge, to access the

services and support that they need.

The number of clients supported through the Hope House service may be small in comparison to some of our other projects, but we are immensely proud of the service has achieved. For many of the women it has been life transforming by providing them with the stability, opportunity and support that they need to recover from the abuse, ultimately building their resilience for the future.

# Training Professionals

## **Safer Places offers a range of specialist Domestic Violence/Abuse training to professionals.**

All of our training is developed and delivered by experts to meet the needs of practitioners who come into contact with people affected by Domestic Abuse or to raise awareness to members of the public.

Our training includes a range of courses, at various levels from basic Domestic Abuse

Awareness to tailored training packages designed to meet the specific needs of organisations and National Occupational Standards

### **Areas we cover include:**

- DV Awareness
- Coercive control and the new legislation
- DASH Risk Model training
- Working with Complex Needs
- Working with Older victims
- Stalking
- Effects on Children
- Response to DV in the health

sector

- Working with male victims
- Routine enquiry
- Honour Based Abuse
- Domestic Abuse awareness in the workplace (policies and procedures for human resource departments)

During 2017/18 we have delivered training to 1280 individuals working for various agencies including Police, Social Services, Family Solutions, Schools and local councils.



# Community Support

Support isn't received only from those working at Safer Places. We have many local partners and community volunteers that contribute to enriching our client's lives.

## Free Cakes for Kids

Free cakes for kids are a Harlow based, community baking team providing free cakes for children who otherwise may not receive one. They have generously provided cakes for the birthdays of all the children living in our Harlow Refuges.



## Morplan

Staff at Morplan over the last year have been more than generous in their donations to Safer Places, not only donating toiletries for the Raja Initiative but also by donating the generous sum of £2,500. This was through their various fundraising campaigns.



## Essex Womens Advisory Group

The Essex Womens Advisory Group kindly donated £2,000 to Safer Places, as well as box of toiletries for the women in our refuges.



## Easter Donations

Mackenzie King Recruitment firm and Jackmans Solicitors donated generously for Easter 2017.

Mackenzie King donated 155 Easter eggs for children in our service, as well as £150 monetary donation.

Jackmans Solicitors donated 120 Easter Eggs for the children in our service.



## The Charity Awards

We were shortlisted for The Charity Awards for the Daisy project.



# Resources and Governance

**To sustain the revenue we have and increasing the value we get from the resources we have through managing existing revenue, capital and human resources effectively. Attracting additional resources through income generation from grants, additional contracts and developing our volunteer force.**

Managing the finances of the organisation requires substantial effort in order to ensure that the peaks and

troughs in demand for refuge (which accounts for a significant proportion of our income) and the changes in contracts which result in redundancies or having to rapidly increase the workforce. There has been much change this year but due to unrelenting monitoring and strong financial management the budget has achieved a small surplus this year in spite of the turbulence.

A challenge that we have faced in the past has been the

recruitment of people with the skills and qualifications we require to undertake client work. This has led, from time to time, to an over - reliance on agency as there is a shortage of suitably skilled staff in the South East. The establishment of our graduate scheme and accreditation as an OCNLR centre able to deliver the national framework qualification is already impacting on the quality of the service and our ability to recruit high quality staff. We have also changed

the way we recruit and now hold assessment centres rather than interviews alone so that we can test out the skills, experience and values of those who apply to work with us. This has proved most useful and more reliable than interview alone. It has also assisted in the assessment of development needs which are fed into our annual training plan and the individual plans of each member of staff.

### Priorities for 2018/2019

- Ensuring that the evidence of the effectiveness of our

service model and individual services is recognised both locally and nationally

- Making sure our voice is heard at the national level affording us the opportunity to help shape policy based on our commitment to effective practice and the evidence we have from external evaluation to support our position
- Sustaining and improving our performance against contracts.
- Continuing to drive better practice through better

supporting our staff with training , supervision and clinical supervision and through working ever closer in partnership with key agencies

- Continuing to manage our budget effectively, building on the success of 2017/18
- Securing the Essex contract from March 2019
- Securing other sources of income by extending service delivery into other service and geographical areas



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