

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Domestic Abuse and Children as Survivors

Meghan Field, VAWGDASV Strategic Lead

Plymouth City Council

12th September 2023

Ofsted Report and Domestic Abuse (DA)



Issues raised:

- DA referrals not triaged well
- Lack of recorded use of DA risk assessment tools and escalation to MARAC
- Impact of DA on children not understood (including repeat incidents and history of abuse) and children not seen as survivors in their own right
- Thresholds not applied appropriately in understanding and identifying when children are at risk of harm from DA and concerns not escalated
- Assessments lack comprehensive analysis of patterns of parental behaviour and impact on children
- PDAS (Local DA Service) not used sufficiently to strengthen front door practice

Improvements to date



1. Re-procurement of DA Service to include expanded offer for children
2. Workforce Development: PDAS DASH RIC Training; Internal training for social workers; PSCP Safeguarding and DA training
3. Specialist Services for children provided by Barnardos via their DA Pathway in Family Hubs; Specialist Services for people who harm provided by Ahimsa
4. PCC White Ribbon Accreditation Action Plan
5. Reviews of prevention, early intervention and healthy relationships work in schools
6. Embedding DA across all service areas

Recommendations and Planned work



1. Workforce development: Increase social worker confidence in engaging with perpetrators and understanding person who harms' patterns of behaviour and impact on child survivor(s)(e.g. *Safe and Together Model*)
2. Strengthen Whole Family Approach: Additional disruption interventions and specialist behaviour change services for people who harm, joint support for non-abusive parent and child and tailored child-only support
3. Shadowing opportunities and monthly surgeries with PDAS; Co-located IDVA in Early Help
4. Continue to improve info-sharing and close feedback loops between Early Help/Social care and other services
5. Implementation of Whole Schools Approach in Autumn 2023 (Together for Childhood, Public Health, VAWG Commission)
6. Coordinated Community Response Accreditation and MARAC Review

Safe and Together Model



- Would support Plymouth in responding to Ofsted concerns
- Aims to help change the conversation about how practitioners work with families impacted by domestic abuse perpetrators' behaviours.
- Is an internationally recognised, evidenced-based suite of tools and interventions designed to help children's services professionals become more domestic abuse-informed, improve competencies and cross-system collaboration.
- Offers language, thinking and practices that help increase accountability for perpetrators as parents, reduce victim-blaming and improve outcomes for children and families.
- Provides a set of principles and components to guide domestic abuse-informed practice:
 - Keeping the child safe and together with the non-offending parent;
 - Partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position; and
 - Intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child.

For more information:



Meghan Field, VAWGDASV Strategic Lead

Meghan.Field@plymouth.gov.uk

07950963730