

Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

'Working Together to Keep Children & Young People Safe'



Introduction

The Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) was established in October 2009 to conduct multi-agency screening and risk assessments of domestic abuse incidents within households where children reside using the Barnardos Screening Tool. An interim evaluation was conducted by Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB), in collaboration with Dudley Domestic Abuse Forum in October 2010 and a further evaluation was undertaken in September 2011.

The original aims of the DART were to:

- improve information-sharing across key agencies in order to improve the qualitative assessments of children & young people subject to domestic abuse
- improve the timeliness of responses to children living within households where there is domestic abuse;
- increase the proportion of CAF's leading to earlier intervention, prevention and a team around the child/family;
- improve the co-ordination of responses from key agencies involved in assessing, supporting and protecting children at risk of domestic abuse, and where appropriate signposting to other services;
- reducing repeat victimisation

The core agencies involved with Dudley's DART are West Midlands Police, Children's Social Care and Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The fourth core member is education (although not represented since May 2011, funding has been agreed by Dudley Schools Forum for an Education Liaison Officer).

The DART has strong working relationships with Dudley & Walsall Mental Health Trust, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (Victim Support), Integrated Service Managers (CAF Team), and the Youth Offending Service.

Methodology

The purpose of the review is to establish the effectiveness of the DART in meeting the above aims. It will be conducted by the Local Forum on behalf of DSCB and involve the following strands of activity:

- review of implementation of recommendations arising from previous DART evaluations
- collation and analysis of relevant statistical information
- direct consultation with DART members
- survey of key stakeholders

The review commenced in December 2012.

Progress

The Evaluation of the DART in September 2011 made a series of recommendations for action. A summary of progress against these is outlined below:

TABLE 1: Summary of Progress against recommendations from DART Evaluation Report (September 2011)

AIM: Improve information-sharing across key agencies in order to improve the qualitative assessments of children & young people subject to domestic abuse		
Commentary (September 2011)	Recommendations (September 2011)	Progress (December 2013)
There is evidence to suggest that the DART has improved information-sharing between agencies, leading to improved assessment and interventions to safeguard children & young people living in households where domestic abuse has occurred. The key risk to this at present is the information sharing to and from schools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review membership of DART to ensure effective engagement of education, and links to Probation Service and YOS, where appropriate 2. Identify training needs of DART members including consideration of commissioning CAADA training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YOS engagement achieved to consider young people as 'perpetrators' (new definition from 31.3.13). Probation engagement on case by case basis 2. MARAC & DART members received CAADA training in April 2012
AIM: Improve the timeliness of responses to children living within households where there is domestic abuse		
It remains difficult to assess the impact of the DART in terms of the timeliness of responses, notably where cases have been assessed to require further inter-agency responses at Stage 2 and Stage 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Consider audit of cases to consider impact of DART 4. Review arrangements for partner agencies referring other DA to DART (not via police 392) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. No joint audit activity has taken place, but health have conducted post-DART outcomes survey 4. Message given to DART member agencies, but little evidence of implementation
AIM: Increase the proportion of CAFs leading to earlier intervention, prevention and a team around the child/family		
There is no actual data to confirm either way whether there has been a direct impact of DART on the proportion of cases leading to common assessment and earlier intervention. There has, however, been an upward trend in the proportion of cases screened and assessed to be at Scale 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Improve data collation and analysis across key partner agencies to more effectively assess the impact of the DART on outcomes for children 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. No significant progress on data collection
AIM: Improve the co-ordination of response from key agencies involved in assessing, supporting and protecting children at risk of domestic abuse, and where appropriate signposting to other services		
The Service Improvement Review of Domestic Abuse has taken into account the views of DART members and a number of partner agencies involved in supporting families where domestic abuse has occurred. Evidence from a range of sources suggests that there are increased pressures on existing support services and genuine concerns that resources are not available to support children at risk of significant harm as a result of domestic violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Contribute to Service Improvement Review 7. Consider conducting further analysis of the impact of resource gaps on the protection of children suffering from domestic abuse 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Funding for DART part of Action Plan – funding secured from Dudley Schools Forum for Education Liaison Officer 7. Not implemented
AIM: Reducing repeat victimisation		
Whilst social care data suggests that around 25% of cases involve 'repeat victims', no comparative data is available from previous years to assess whether the DART is having a positive impact on this issue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Include within audit and data collection activity (as above) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Not implemented

Feedback from DART Members

Members of the Local Forum met with a focus group of practitioner members of the DART and their line managers. The key issues identified included:

- The DART continues to have a positive impact on children and families through improved information-sharing and understanding of the history of family engagement with key services
- There has been a significant reduction in the number of referrals to DART as a result of identification at the front-line by police (completion of DASH assessment) and evidence that some notifications are not reaching the DART
- Measuring the impact of DART remains a challenge
- Concerns remain in respect of conversion rates i.e. where a CAF is recommended by the DART, only a small percentage are initiated and completed. This is particularly pertinent to health and education
- The role of the Youth Offending Service and Probation Trust requires further consideration
- There is a need for an escalation process where recommendations are not acted upon e.g. initial assessments or child protection enquiries
- 16-18 year-olds remain an issue for agencies, particularly where their vulnerability is linked to their housing/accommodation
- Different thresholds for consent can be a barrier to effective inter-agency working
- Families that are new to the area or children being educated at home can cause difficulty in terms of information-sharing
- The electronic 392's contain much less information than previous versions (regional issue)
- Cover arrangements for DART members continues to present a challenge for some agencies
- Feedback to key professionals such as health visitors as a result of Initial Assessments

The group identified the following possible solutions or areas for further development and improvement:

- Post-DART outcomes, joint audit activity, case studies and analysis of data were seen as key to capturing impact
- DASH training for front-line police and other agencies to raise awareness of domestic abuse and referral to DART
- Consider role of the Targeted Youth Support (TYS) Panel in respect of 16-18 year-olds, who may be victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Increase capacity to support children via Children's Centres

Feedback from DART Stakeholders

A total of 12 questionnaires were completed and returned to the Safeguarding & Review Unit, including from the following agencies:

- My Space, My Time (Barnardos)
- Victim Support (IDVA)
- Children's Centres
- Youth Offending Services
- Children's Social Care
- Primary Schools
- Dudley & Walsall Mental Health Trust

A summary of the key responses is outlined below:

Impact of DART

- *Very supportive and good multi-agency working involving the IDVA (Children's Centre)*
- *Improved information-sharing enabling us to plan and deliver service to more effectively meet the needs of the child (Voluntary Sector Project)*
- *When information is shared it enables us to monitor the child as to whether there is a change in their behaviour (Primary School)*

- *DART information has led to Initial Assessments being completed and in some cases concerns have led to children being made subject to child protection plans or concerns have been raised about children already subject to plans (Children's Social Care)*
- *The volume of 392's prior to the establishment of the DART took us away from dealing with other referrals – the DART highlights the domestic violence concern and provides a clear summary of the issues (Children's Social Care)*
- *Some examples of referrals to the YOS early intervention team enabling the allocated worker to address the behaviour in the young person as perpetrators of domestic abuse (Youth Offending Services)*
- *Involvement with the DART and the IDVA has raised awareness of how difficult it can be to deal with a parent who is in an abusive situation – the DART has been informative in supporting both the family and the children's centre team to make a positive impact for future family life (Children's Centre)*
- *The co-ordinated action of DART (Criminal) and IDVA helps provide a package of support that the survivor recognises and feels far more empowered to take action and make decisions to safeguard her children (Victim Support)*
- *Information from DART has led to more joint visits to happen in a shorter time scale, thus enabling safety measures to be put in place sooner helping to reduce repeat victimisation (Victim Support)*
- *IDVA has provided information for DART that may give a different indication of risk to the individual than the 393 suggests (Victim Support)*
- *The joint working has led to quicker service responses (Mental Health Trust)*

Improving DART

- *Specific training for family support teams (Children's Centre)*
- *On-going information from DART on cases that we are working with and access to DART to share concerns (Voluntary Sector Project)*
- *Information is often too delayed after the incident, usually via School Health Advisor (Primary School)*
- *More robust system in place for making schools aware when a domestic incident has taken place (Primary School)*
- *Extension of the DART social worker's role to complete some initial assessments and targeted work with families or more joint working with district social workers to improve practice (Children's Social Care)*
- *Gaps in services to adult perpetrators is likely to lead to improved safeguarding outcomes for children living in households where domestic abuse has occurred (Youth Offending Services)*
- *More provision for work to be undertaken with children who have witnessed domestic violence (Victim Support)*
- *Inclusion of Probation Services to gain more information on domestic violence offenders (Victim Support)*
- *Inclusion of Mental Health representative on DART (Mental Health Trust)*

Data Analysis

The following data is taken from Children's Social Care database, and relates to police notifications of a domestic abuse incident involving a child (known as a 392).

Table 1 above shows that there were a total of 7398 children who were subject of 392 notifications during the reporting period. Of these children it can be seen that 5023 (68%) were only the subject of notification on one occasion during the period. The table shows how many children were subject of 392's by the number of times. For instance it can be seen that 83 children were subject to 392's a total of 6 times during the reporting period, and 1 child was the subject of 392's on 13 separate occasions.

Table 2 works in a similar way to Table 1, except that it relates to households and not to children. The total of 6684 is the total number of times that the 4220 households (with children) were visited by police, and a 392 form was completed.

TABLE 1: Number of Children Subject to 392

TABLE 2: Number of Households with child subject to 392

1st April 2008 to 31st December 2012

Children

Households

Number of Children	Number of 392 notifications	Total Children Notifications
5023	1	5023
1360	2	2720
512	3	1536
253	4	1012
99	5	495
83	6	498
28	7	196
16	8	128
16	9	144
3	10	30
4	11	44
0	12	0
1	13	13
7398		11839

Number of Households	Number of 392 notifications	Total Households Notifications
2855	1	2855
811	2	1622
298	3	894
129	4	516
52	5	260
35	6	210
18	7	126
11	8	88
5	9	45
2	10	20
2	11	22
0	12	0
2	13	26
4220		6684

TABLE 3: Repeat Domestic Abuse Notifications

Repeat DV notifications* - time since previous notification	Number	%
Less than 1 week	103	2.3%
1 to 2 weeks	249	5.6%
2 weeks to 1 month	344	7.7%
1 month to 3 months	1035	23.3%
3 months to 6 months	730	16.4%
6 months to 1 year	876	19.7%
1 year to 2 years	827	18.6%
Over 2 years	277	6.2%
Grand Total	4441	100.0%

Table 3 shows the length of time between all repeat 392's in the reporting period. 23% of all repeat 392's occurred between 1 and 3 months after the previous notification. 2.3% were repeats in the same week. A further 6.2% of issues re-occurred over 2 years later.

78% of 392's that were repeats had recurred between 1 month and 2 years later.

The date in Table 4 is taken from recordings of DART outcomes by the Children's Social Care Senior Practitioner between October 2009 and December 2012. The data relates to a sample of recorded outcomes during this period, but provides helpful insight into the recorded outcomes of DART screening.

TABLE 4: Outcomes of DART by Scale of Risk October 2011-December 2012

Period	Risk Scale 1 (NFA)	Risk Scale 2 (CAF)	Risk Scale 3 (IA)	Risk Scale 4 (S47)
October 2009 – March 2010	54.5%	23.2%	19.5%	2.9%
April 2010 – March 2011	55.7%	21.2%	20.4%	2.7%
April 2011 – September 2011	47.1%	25.6%	24.9%	2.4%
October 2011- December 2011	55.4%	19.6%	24.2%	0.8%
January 2012 – March 2012	44.4%	27.5%	26.7%	1.7%
April 2012 – June 2012	45.1%	26.3%	25.6%	3.0%
July 2012 – September 2012	41.9%	26.2%	27.5%	4.4%
October 2012 – December 2012	42.9%	23.3%	30.9%	2.9%

There has been an overall decline in the proportion of outcomes assessed as requiring no further action, which could suggest that the domestic incidents referred to the DART are increasingly more appropriate.

Taking into account variations, the proportion of outcomes scaled as requiring a common assessment (Scale 2) has largely remained static along with those leading to an initiation of child protection Section 47 enquiries (Scale 4).

Since 2009, there has been an overall increasing trend in the proportion of screening outcomes that have recommended an Initial Assessment by Children's Social Care. However, comparing this to the data below, there is a marked difference in the both the number and proportion of screening outcomes that recommended an Initial Assessment compared to the actual number of Initial Assessments carried out by Children's Social Care. There is evidence that this is a similar picture in terms of recommendations for a Common Assessment. This discrepancy is worthy of further investigation.

TABLE 5: Outcomes of DV 392 notification contacts - Trends

Period	DV Contacts	Initial	% went to Initial	Core	% went to Core	S47	% went to S47	ICC	% went to ICC	CPP	LAC after CPP
2009-10 Year	2915	195	6.7%	34	1.2%	26	0.9%	15	0.5%	15	5
2010-11 Year	2970	153	5.2%	24	0.8%	14	0.5%	10	0.3%	10	2
2011-12 Year	2606	109	4.2%	14	0.5%	10	0.4%	5	0.2%	5	3

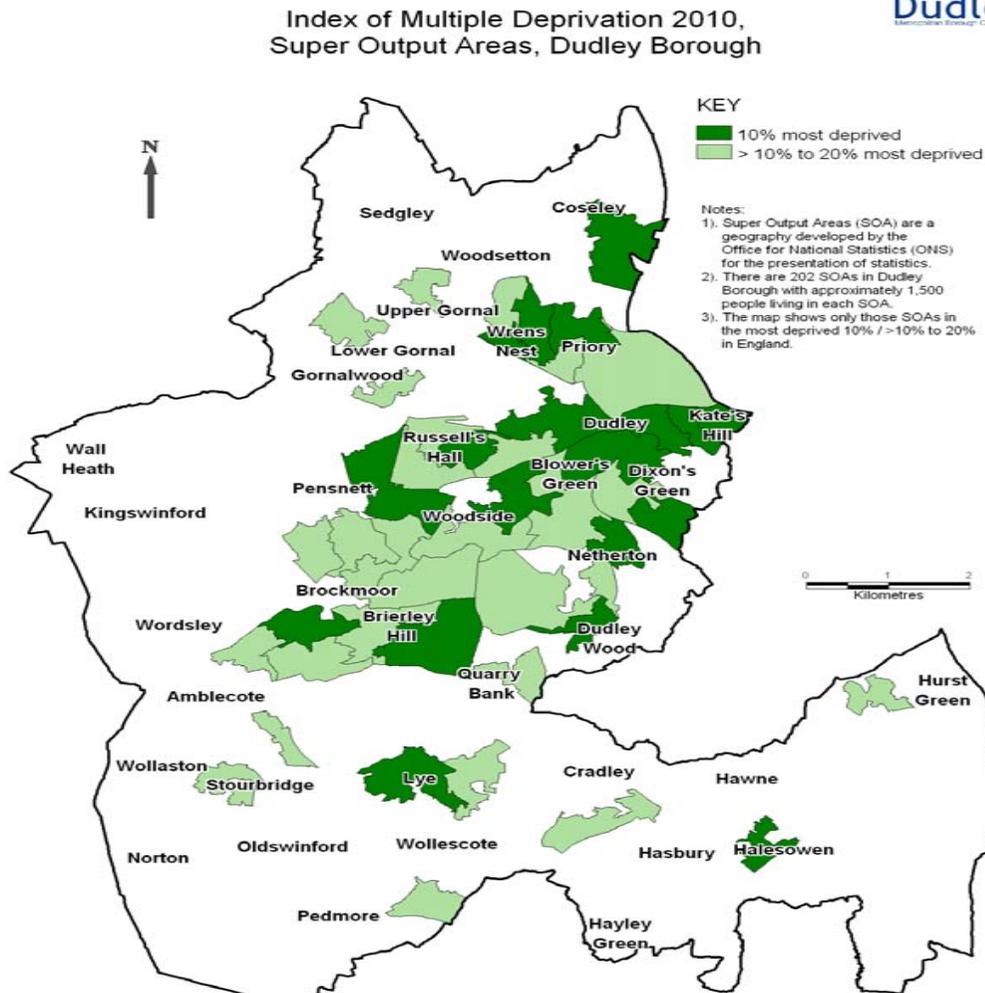
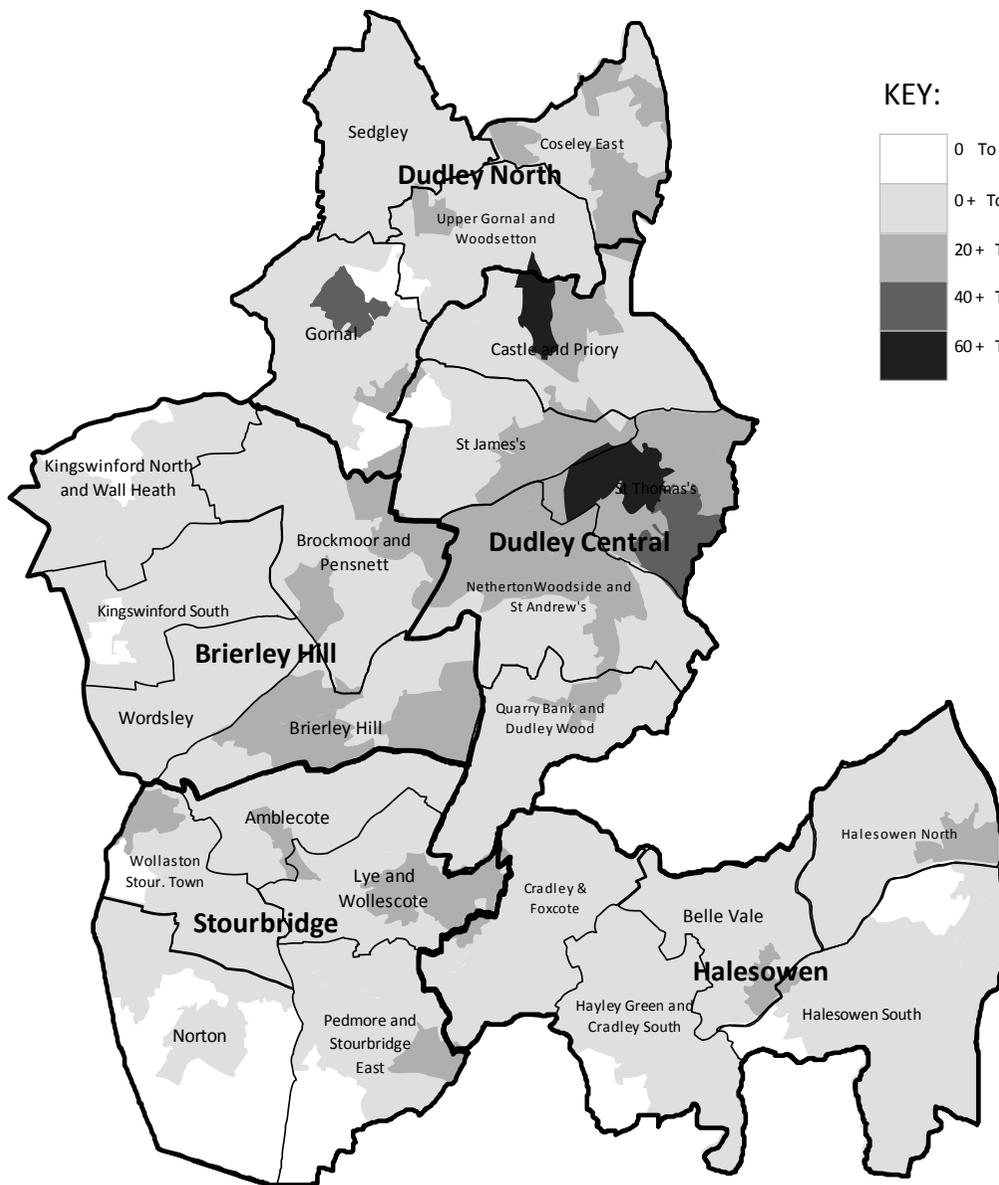
Table 5 above provides data on the outcomes of 392 contacts during the three year period to 31st March 2012.

Of the 2915 DV 392 contacts recorded in 2009-10, 93.3% resulted in "No Further Action", 195 or 6.7% went on to an Initial Assessment, 34 or 1.2% went on to a Core Assessment etc. 15 (0.5%) of the DV 392 contacts received in 2009-10 resulted in children becoming subject to a CP Plan. Of those 5 went on to become looked after by the local authority after the CP Plan ended. There has been an overall decline in the proportion of 392 notifications that have resulted in action by Children's Social Care.

It can be seen that the number of reported DV 392 reports decreased in 2011-12 from the previous year from 2970 to 2606, a reduction of 12%.

The maps on the following page show where the children affected by Domestic Violence in 2011-12 lived within the Dudley Borough at the time of the 392 DV notifications. It can be seen that whilst some areas had no reported incidents, for instance, much of the Norton ward shown in white on the map, other areas had particularly high levels reported. Higher levels of DV are indicated on the map by darker shading. The highest levels were in parts of St Thomas's and Castle and Priory Wards in the darkest grey, near black shading.

It is interesting to compare the map to the right which shows levels of deprivation in the borough in 2010 with the DV map. It can be seen that where Dudley SOA's fall in the 10% most deprived nationally, there are in the main, correspondingly high rates of DV contacts



Source: Indices of Deprivation 2010, CLG
 Produced by: NL, 28/03/2011, Corporate Policy & Research Team, Dudley M.B.C.
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Summary of Data Analysis

The key headlines from the analysis of data are:

- There has been a downward trend in the number of police domestic abuse notifications to the DART since 2009;
- There is a strong correlation between incidence of domestic abuse involving children and levels of multiple deprivation in the borough;
- There has been a downward trend in the proportion of domestic abuse notifications leading to an assessment by children's social care, despite an overall rise in the proportion of DART outcomes at Scale 3

Impact Assessment

In order to evaluate the impact of the DART, it is worth reflecting on its original aims:

Improve information-sharing across key agencies in order to improve the qualitative assessments of children & young people subject to domestic abuse

- There is some evidence from feedback that the DART has led to improved information-sharing between key agencies and improved risk assessments in respect of children living in households where there is domestic abuse
- There is some evidence from feedback that schools are not adequately engaged in the DART process due to the absence of an education representative – funding was approved for this in December 2011, but it has taken over 12 months for the Directorate of Children's Services to recruit to the post of Education Liaison Officer (commences April 2013)

Improve the timeliness of responses to children living within households where there is domestic abuse

- There is some evidence from feedback of improved timeliness in service responses to children due to better and more qualitative information-sharing relevant to the child and adult survivor's needs
- There is some evidence that children living in households where there is domestic abuse are not receiving timely support due to a lack of capacity within some statutory and voluntary sector services

Increase the proportion of CAF's leading to earlier intervention, prevention and a team around the child/family

- There is evidence from feedback and data analysis a high level of DART recommendations for Common Assessment/Team Around the Child processes are not being actioned by agencies, notably health and schools

Improve the co-ordination of responses from key agencies involved in assessing, supporting and protecting children at risk of domestic abuse, and where appropriate signposting to other services;

- There is some evidence from feedback that DART has led to improved co-ordination of responses, alongside improvements to the MARAC made since the Ofsted Inspection of November/December 2011;

Reducing repeat victimisation

- There is some evidence from feedback and data of reduced numbers of repeat victims of domestic abuse

Conclusion and Next Steps

Evidence suggests that the DART continues to have a positive impact on risk assessing children and young people living in households where a domestic abuse incident has been reported to the police.

However, the real impact of this work is restrained by a number of key elements such as:

- The absence of robust management information and administrative support to the DART
- The lack of inter-agency quality assurance and audit work to date in evidencing improved outcomes such as through case studies

The introduction of the West Midlands Police Central Referral Unit (CRU) is yet to have a direct impact on the operation of the Barnardos Screening Tool across the 7 local authority areas. It is envisaged that that the CRU will aim to standardise procedures for Screening and take-on the pre-search phase of the DART, leaving the multi-agency meetings to continue to meet within the local Public Protection Units to assess risk and progress actions.

The new government definition of domestic violence and abuse comes into force on 31st March 2013. The key change relates to the change of age to 16 years of age rather than 18 years of age. The new definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Although it is not a legislative change, agencies are encouraged to review their guidance and policies on domestic violence and abuse to reflect the change in definition.

Recommendations

1. The Local Forum should support an approach to greater consistency of Screening across the region based on best practice which enables partner agencies to research cases pre-DART and share information effectively with practitioners
2. The Local Forum should conduct an audit of cases with a view to:
 - Identifying why cases have not been actioned in accordance with DART recommendations
 - Identifying ways to improve information-sharing and screening processes
3. The Local Safeguarding Children Board should identify ways to measure the effectiveness of the DART to include:
 - Audit activity
 - Data collection
 - Case studies
 - Service User feedback
 - Practice observation
4. The Domestic Abuse Service Improvement Group, supported by the Domestic Abuse Forum should consider the content of this report and it's implications for improving service provision.

Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

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Review of the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) Evaluation Survey

This survey will contribute to the review of the DART – please take time to share your experience and views about how the impact of the DART and how it can be improved

The review is being conducted by the Local Forum on behalf of Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

Briefly describe your role in respect of domestic abuse

Have you been involved directly with a member of the Domestic Abuse Response Team?

Yes/No

What impact has the DART made on your role, that of your organisations or inter-agency responses to domestic abuse?

In what ways would you like to see the DART improve in terms of contributing to improving safeguarding outcomes for children in households where domestic abuse has occurred?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY

If you wish to add your name and contact details below (optional), this will help us in terms of analysing the impact of the DART from an inter-agency perspective – a copy of the final report which be accessible on the DSCB website (see SafER newsletter for more information)

What is your job title or role?

What organisation/service do you work for?

Please return your completed questionnaire to:

Heidi Williams, Safeguarding & Review Unit,
6 St. James's Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 3JL or via email to heidi.Williams@dudley.gov.uk
or via fax to 01384 813062



Glossary of Terms

CAADA	Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CIN	Child in Need (Section 17 of the Children Act 1989)
DART	Domestic Abuse Response Team
DASH	West Midlands Police – Domestic Abuse Assessment
IA	Initial Assessment led by Children’s Social Care
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board (statutory partnership)
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (high risk victims of domestic violence)
Screening Tool	Risk Assessment Tool (Barnardos)
SOA	Super Output Areas
S47	Child Protection Investigation (Section 47 of the Children Act 1989)
TAC	Team Around the Child
TYS	Targeted Youth Support
392	West Midlands Police - Notification of Domestic Incident involving a child