

Northamptonshire
Domestic Abuse Forum
(NorDAF)

Operational Agreement 2006 – 2009



www.nordaf.co.uk

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum

Strategy 2006 – 2009

CONTENTS PAGE

Core Working Definition of the County Forum	Page 1
Key Themes	Page 2
Role of the Sponsor	Page 3
Role of the County Forum Member	Page 3
Compulsory County Forum Attendees	Page 4
Crosscutting Themes	Page 4
Terms of Reference	Page 6
Operational Goals of the County Forum	Page 7
Membership of the County Forum	Page 9

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum

Strategy 2006 – 2009

CORE WORKING DEFINITION OF
DOMESTIC ABUSE ADOPTED
BY ALL PARTNERS:

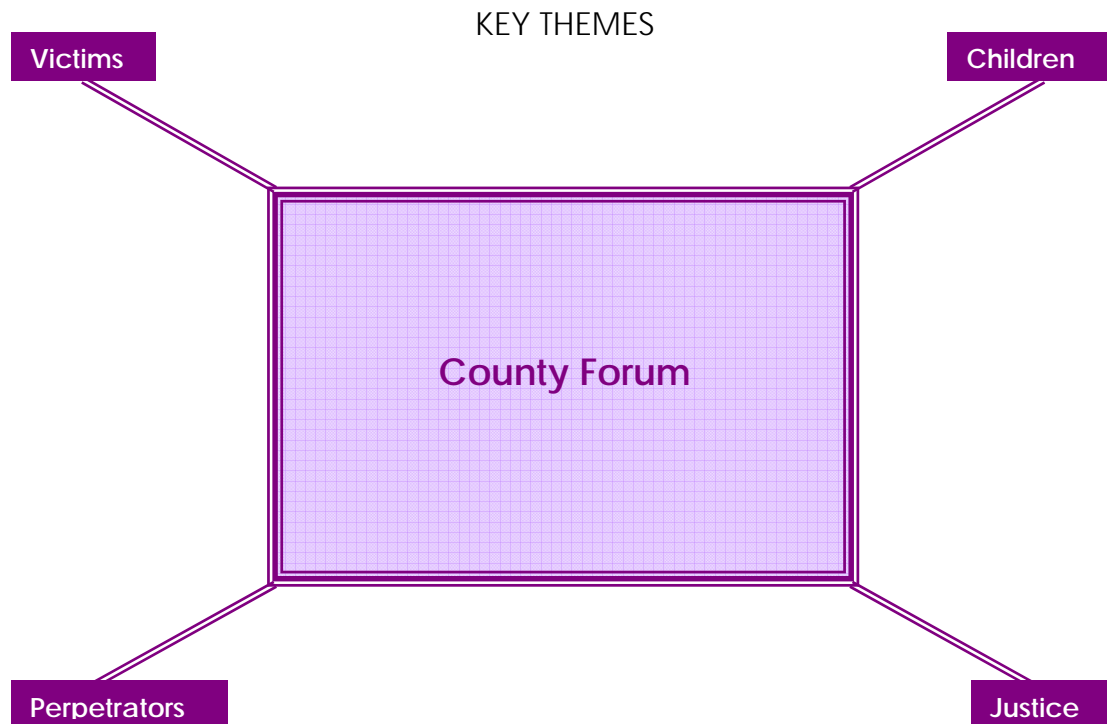
**“...any incident of threatening behaviour,
violence or abuse (psychological,
physical, sexual, financial or emotional)
between adults, aged 18 and over, who
are or have been intimate partners or
family members,¹ regardless of gender
and sexuality.”**

ACPO definition
NCPE Guidance on Investigating
Domestic Violence
2004, p.5

¹ “(Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)”

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum

Strategy 2006 – 2009



The four themes that have been prioritised by the County Forum are:

Supporting Victims

Supporting Children

Working with Perpetrators

Bringing Offenders to Justice

These four themes will be progressed by four sponsor agencies that will nominate a sponsor representative or sponsor nominee to lead the theme. This is to ensure that the agency or organisation's commitment to the theme is not dependent on the individual alone.

The sponsors are as follows:

Supporting Victims – Thematic Partnership for DV and VS – Elaine Guarnieri

Supporting Children – County Children's Domestic Abuse Forum – Janet Frost

Working with Perpetrators – Probation Service – Judith Horsefield

Bringing Offenders to Justice – Crown Prosecution Service – Grace Ononiwu

ROLE OF THE SPONSOR

Each theme will be progressed by a Sponsor organisation/agency/forum and a nominated representative. Effectively, the named individual will take responsibility on behalf of their organisation/agency, and the County Forum, to facilitate a “working” party and chair the group to progress the theme. Each sponsor will be responsible for writing an action plan that will detail the projects and actions for the theme, and ensure that all actions are delegated to specific members, with specific deadlines and specific anticipated outcomes and measurements of success.

Each action plan should be forwarded to the County Coordinator as a record of County Forum projects, but can be considered a relatively fluid, working document. Amendments to the plan should be recorded, disseminated to the membership of the working party and sent to the County Forum Coordinator. In addition to the action plan formulated, a Situation Report should be written by each sponsor to feed back to the County Forum bi-monthly, the information from which will also be collated and sent to the Safer and Stronger Communities Block Delivery Group.

Each sponsor should prepare the Situation Report but also be present at the County Forum meeting to present their report in person and to answer any questions that may arise. Any unresolved issues should be taken back to the working party.

ROLE OF THE COUNTY FORUM MEMBER

If you are not a sponsor, then you will need to identify which of the themes relates to your core work.² Once you have identified the theme towards which you wish to contribute, you are required to contact the relevant sponsor and express your commitment to this theme. You will then be expected to attend working party meetings and to action any points for which you are held responsible.

You will not be expected to attend the County Forum meetings, although you are very welcome to attend all meetings should you wish to. It is intended that the County Forum meetings will be themed, a schedule of which will be released and made available to all County Forum members. The agenda for the next County Forum meeting will also be distributed to all members. County Forum members can then decide which meetings they attend dependent on their availability and interests, whether schedule-related or as a result of a particular agenda item.

² If you find that your core work relates to more than one theme and time will not allow multiple commitments, it is suggested that you commit to the theme that best represents your working priorities or most important goals. You will also be able to keep updated on developments in other themes through Situation Reports and we anticipate some connections between the groups to ensure integrated delivery of services where relevant and where issues are crosscutting.

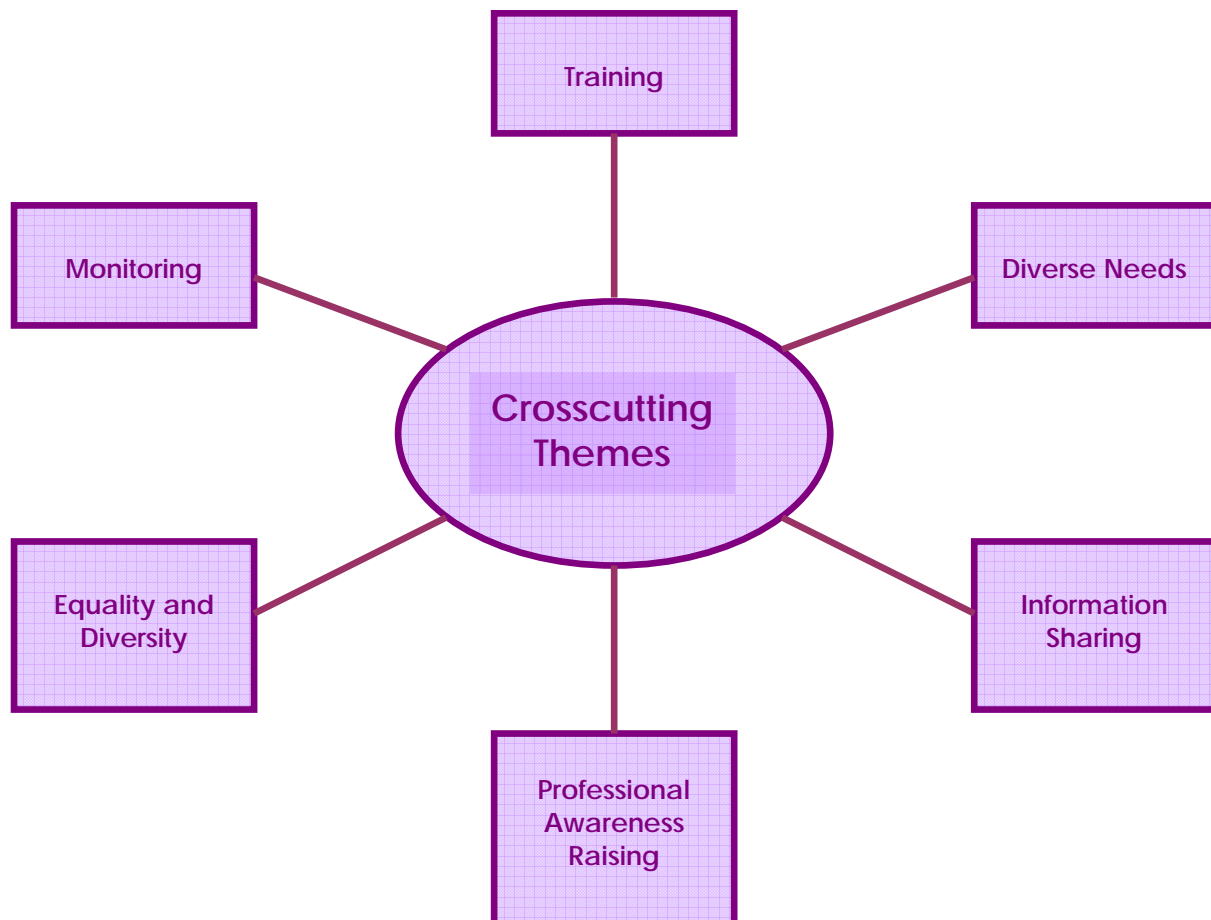
COMPULSORY COUNTY FORUM ATTENDEES

The following positions will be expected to attend all County Forum meetings:

- Elected members of the County Forum (Chair, Treasurer)
- County Coordinator of the Forum
- Sponsors (Nominated Representative or selected informed replacement)
- Local Domestic Abuse Forum Chairs (or Forum representative)
- Family Support Forum link
- Local Criminal Justice Board link
- Local Safeguarding Children Board link
- Community Safety Officers Group link
- Community Funding Advisory Panel link

CROSSCUTTING THEMES

Each sponsor must consider the following crosscutting themes as part of the key theme.



CROSSCUTTING THEMES

(continued)

TRAINING:

As a theme what training do the working party members require? Are there regular arrangements we can make as partners?

PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS RAISING:

In order to develop this theme what agencies or organisations should we deliver awareness raising to improve delivery? What training should we supply to external bodies to progress our theme?

DIVERSE NEEDS:

Within this theme, do the services we provide cater for a diverse a range of needs and individuals?

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY:

Do our working arrangements allow for equal representation and opportunities for all members of the group?

INFORMATION SHARING:

What information sharing is currently taking place for this theme? To improve our services, how do we need to develop our information sharing practices and policies?

MONITORING:

How will we monitor the progress and achievement of outcomes in the work planned and completed for this theme? Are there any data capture headings that would help planning and completion for the theme? How can we collate this information?

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum

Strategy 2006 – 2009

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The members of this Forum believe that every person has equal rights whether they are male or female, regardless of age or sexuality, whether they have any learning difficulty or physical disability, and whatever their religious belief, race or colour.

All Forum Members agree to the following terms:

- To attend all County Forum meetings or to send representation on any occasion where absence cannot be avoided
- To sign up to the County Forum as an organisation rather than as an individual in order to maintain the organisation membership of the partnership
- To send a management level of representation to enable strategic advances to be made where necessary
- To offer constructive comment and feedback in relation to the work of other members
- To challenge constructively and supportively, and to offer assistance
- To take collective responsibility for the decisions of the County Forum
- To work using the agreed definition of domestic abuse
- To work in a non-judgement way with victims and families
- To encourage Forum partners to work in a non-judgemental way
- To work in an open and transparent way
- To equally share the work of the County Forum amongst members
- To engage positively to support sponsors from relevant themes
- To value the work, contribution and opinions of all County Forum members
- To recognise the equal rights of the members of the Forum
- To ensure that all members of the professional community are adequately represented
- To work in partnership with the County Forum membership to improve service provision around the county
- To develop services in all areas of the county according to need, demand and area specifics
- To ensure that all members and their organisations have a comprehensive knowledge of what resources are available throughout the County

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum

Strategy 2006 – 2009

OPERATIONAL GOALS OF THE COUNTY FORUM

The operational goals of the County Forum are as follows:

Organisation

- To meet on a bi-monthly basis
- To release minutes and action grids within 2 weeks of County Forum meetings
- To keep all members informed of County Forum related information
- To keep all contact details for County Forum members confidential other than where permission is granted for release to other bodies

Partnership Working

- To bring key agencies to work together
- To use a top down and bottom up approach in the partnership
- To value and respect all agencies involved
- To establish the strategic direction of domestic abuse work in the county
- To develop plans of work that embrace the integration of services in Northamptonshire
- To assist partners in achieving their targets
- To support agencies to take forward issues from regional and national arenas e.g. Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, forced marriage, trafficking etc.
- To be the vehicle to drive the county LAA agenda for domestic abuse
- To encourage member organisations to offer representation at a local level
- To provide information and facilitation that enables members to deliver on their responsibilities via the County Coordinator
- To give full recognition to the County Forum when promoting work that has been achieved through the partnership

Promoting Good Practice in Service Delivery

- To promote good practice and offer guidance on best practice drawing together the work of local fora and national best practice
- To recognise, highlight and encourage good practice across agencies working directly with domestic abuse

Communication and Sharing Information

- To ensure effective and efficient communication to all partners
- To disseminate information to agencies and organisations around the county

- ☑ To ensure government legislation and national guidance is synthesised and distributed to all county groups
- ☑ To receive reports of work and initiatives for countywide implementation and dissemination
- ☑ To promote and develop information sharing
- ☑ Through the County Coordinator, to identify funding streams and opportunities, and sharing that information with partners
- ☑ To lead some PR, marketing and campaigning activities on domestic abuse awareness raising through the remit of the Communications group
- ☑ To advertise the existence and remit of the County Forum and maintain a high profile

Identifying Service Gaps

- ☑ To provide the opportunity for local service gaps and needs to be identified by local fora and agencies
- ☑ To collate and disseminate local information so that a picture of the situation across the county emerges and services can be tailored to meet the needs of all residents in Northamptonshire

Access to Training and Networking

- ☑ To provide accessible opportunities for training and networking across the county
- ☑ To position the crosscutting themes of training and professional awareness raising as priorities for all sponsors

County Coordinator Role / Communication

- ☑ To improve the communication links between partners, fora, agencies and organisations around the county
- ☑ To encourage a joined up approach to domestic abuse by agencies and by local areas across the county
- ☑ To circulate information
- ☑ To monitor the provision of local reports and sponsor reports
- ☑ To monitor and report on the effectiveness of the structure delivering the themes of the strategy
- ☑ To share information with local groups on work arising from the strategy
- ☑ To keep the County Forum informed of new guidance and good practice
- ☑ To keep the County Forum informed of funding opportunities
- ☑ To facilitate a Communications group that will focus on general awareness raising, communication to high-risk groups and improved communication between partners and countywide fora

Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum

Strategy 2006 – 2009

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNTY FORUM

Membership of the County Forum purposefully consists of:

- A combination of representatives from the statutory agencies and voluntary organisations
- A combination of managerial representatives and those working directly with victims of domestic abuse
- Members that can make key decisions on funding and practice

Core members of the Forum, and associated membership, include representation from the following agencies and organisations:

CAN

Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC)

Northamptonshire Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Local Domestic Abuse Fora

Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire

Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge

Northampton Sunflower Centre

Northampton Women's Aid

Northamptonshire County Council Children and Young People's Service

Northamptonshire County Council Community Safety

Northamptonshire County Council Family Support Service

Northamptonshire Police Force

Northamptonshire Probation Service

Northern Sunflower Centre

Relate

Supporting People

Victim Support

Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Women's Aid

In addition to these members, the Forum actively recruits new members and seeks specialist input from particular agencies in the county when required.

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Written in partnership for the Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum (NorDAF)

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