

# Croydon's Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Prevalence

## October Data 2017

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### **Outline of the project:**

The aim of the project was to collate as many reported and disclosed incidents of domestic abuse, across as many services as possible within the borough, for the month of October (2017). The purpose of counting domestic abuse incidents was to develop a more accurate understanding of the prevalence of domestic abuse across the borough, as well as to identify any services with a particularly high level of domestic abuse disclosures, so that the DASV partnership can provide the service with additional support.

Where possible post code data was also collected so that any geographical areas could be prioritised by the community IDVAs in terms of hubs or specialist sites.

It is important to remember that domestic abuse is significantly underreported. This is arguably due to the view that this a private matter, fear of retaliation from the perpetrator, lack of trust in the police to deal with the incident, concerns regarding the implications of social care involvement and for cultural reasons, such as not wanting to bring shame to the family, whilst some victims believe they are to blame for the abuse. Therefore, the true count of domestic abuse reported in the borough within a given month is likely to be much higher than identified within this data collection exercise. However, the data collected will be more accurate than relying on police figures alone to understand the prevalence of domestic abuse within Croydon: research indicates women will experience 35 incidents of domestic abuse before they report it to the police.

### **The Criteria:**

- Any incident of abuse (physical, emotional, physiological, financial, sexual, coercion or control)
- Incident within the home environment (familial or intimate partner abuse)
- Domestic abuse incidents have taken place in the last 12 months
- Both the victim and perpetrator are 16 years or older

Data was recorded from the following:

- Children’s Social Care
- Early Help
- Family Justice Centre (FJC)
- MARAC
- Freedom Together Programme
- Domestic Abuse Merlins
- Police
- Croydon Drop-In
- Youth Offending Service
- Housing
- A&E

### Limitations

There is little data from health, despite various teams being approached. One of the difficulties, for example with A&E data, is that the injury itself is recorded instead of how the injury occurred.

Where possible double counting in the data has been removed. For example, the Early Help team use the same case management system as the Family Justice Centre and so needed to ensure the Early Help team did not include any episodes referred or opened to the FJC within the month of October in their report, as well as ensuring cases listed under the FJC were not then duplicated within MARAC. However, there could still be double counting, for example a police call for DA in October could have resulted in a Merlin and then a contact for Children’s Social Care. As no person identifiable data was shared, further elimination of duplicates is difficult. It could be argued that elimination of double counting would have occurred when producing the maps as not all services, including the police, were able to provide postcode data.

### Total Count

For October 2017, 1296 incidents of domestic abuse were recorded. This equates to approximately 16,200 incidents or disclosures of abuse per year in Croydon. This does not take into consideration the known spikes that occur following a school holiday; a trend that has been observed the last few years from FJC referral data.

Service	Count
Housing	6
Croydon Drop-In	11
Early Help	13
Referrals to MARAC	30
Freedom Together	49
A&E	50
Youth Offending Service	88
Referrals to FJC	149
All DA Merlins (including non-crime domestics)	163
CRS Contacts DA main issue	209
Total DV Call Outs (Police)	578
	<b>1304</b>

## Service Breakdown

### *Housing*

The housing team work closely with the Family Justice Centre, with families and individuals often being supported by the two services. In addition to those already referred to the Family Justice Centre in October, there was an addition of six individuals who discussed domestic abuse with a housing offer but did not want a referral to the FJC.

### *Croydon Drop-In*

Croydon Drop-In provide counselling, advocacy and health support for young people in Croydon. In October 11 young people discussed domestic abuse within their home environment, with someone at Croydon Drop-In.

### *Early Help*

Through searching case notes, there were 13 open cases in October where domestic abuse was highlighted as an issue.

The cases were open to the Early Help Hub, the Family Resilience Service and Best Start. The Family Justice Centre use the same case management system as Early Help, but their cases were not included in this 13.

### *Referrals to MARAC*

There were in fact 55 referrals made to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) during October 2017, however 25 were made by the FJC so these have not been counted as would have already been captured in the number of referrals made to the FJC. Other sources of referrals to MARAC include from the police, health, MARACs in other boroughs and victim support.

### *Freedom Together Programme*

The 49 people reported by the Freedom Together programme includes anyone attending a course in October or anyone who contacted or was referred to the programme. This does not include those who made contact or were referred by email and so the number is likely to be higher.

### *A&E*

The data from A&E captures anyone in the month of October who was recorded for attending A&E in Croydon due to 'maltreatment', 'neglect and abandonment' or 'problems relating to family'. This includes non-elective and emergency admissions.

### *Youth Offending Service*

During the month of October, the Youth Offending Service worked with 88 young people who discussed domestic abuse. 41 of the young people were the perpetrators of the abuse. 25% of the young people said the domestic abuse was current rather than being something that had taken place within the last year.

9 of the young people also reported being a victim of sexual violence as well as domestic abuse.

### *Referrals to the Family Justice Centre*

The 149 referrals made to the Family Justice Centre in October include those who self-referred, were sign-posted or directly referred by another agency.

Direct referrals were made from SLAM, Schools, the Police, Housing, Health, Children's Social Care and other domestic abuse services

### *Domestic Abuse Merlins*

163 Merlins were received by the MASH team in October, including all domestic abuse Merlins and non-crime domestic abuse incidents.

54 of the Merlins received in October were for non-crime domestic abuse incidents.

### *Children's Social Care*

209 contacts were created where domestic abuse was listed as the greatest cause for concern for the month of October. There will be more contacts opened to social care where domestic abuse was an issue but not the greatest cause for concern.

The 209 contacts refers to 206 children or young people: three children had each received two contacts to social care during the month of October in which domestic abuse was the greatest concern.

43% of those who had the domestic abuse contacts in October were for children 5years or under.

### *Police*

For October, there were 578 police call outs in Croydon for domestic abuse incidents, with 302 of these call outs resulting in offences. The remaining 276 were non-crime domestic abuse incidents.

## **Geographical Breakdown**

The following services were able to provide postcodes in addition to a count of domestic abuse incidents, meaning postcodes for 38% of the total count were used for geographical mapping:

- MARAC referrals
- Family Justice Centre referrals
- Early Help
- Housing
- Freedom Together Programme
- Children's Social Care
- A&E

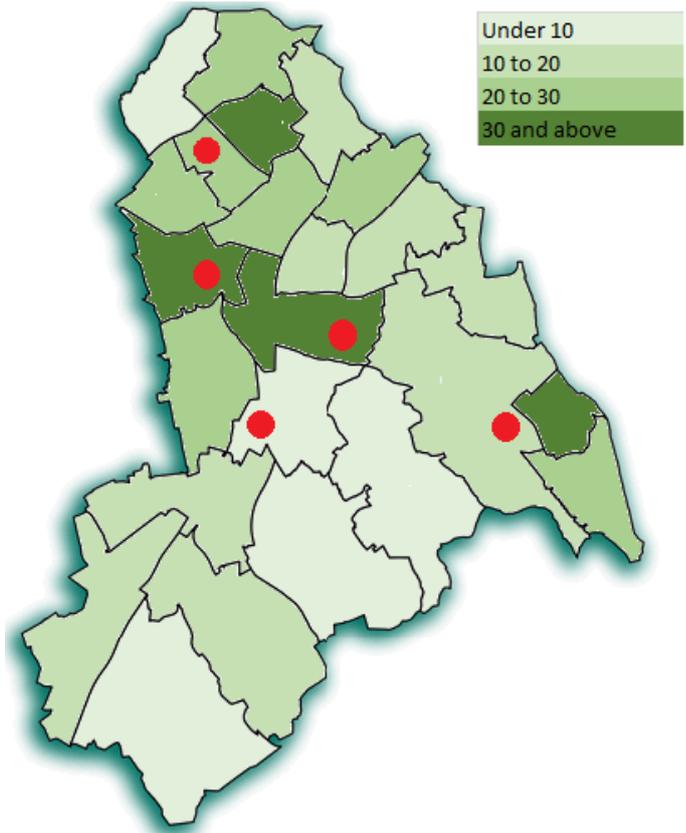
**Total Count**

This map plots the total number of DASV incidents for the services who provided postcodes.

From the map it is clear that DASV is an issue across the borough, with reported incidents in every ward.

The higher levels of DASV incidents are focused around the community hubs, particularly the police station and Croydon University Hospital.

The south of the borough has the lowest rates of reported DASV incidents, an area without a community hub. Coulson East and Coulson West are two neighbouring wards with few reported incidents. However, based on their population and the national average that one in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, 2,800 women within these two wards could be experiencing abuse.



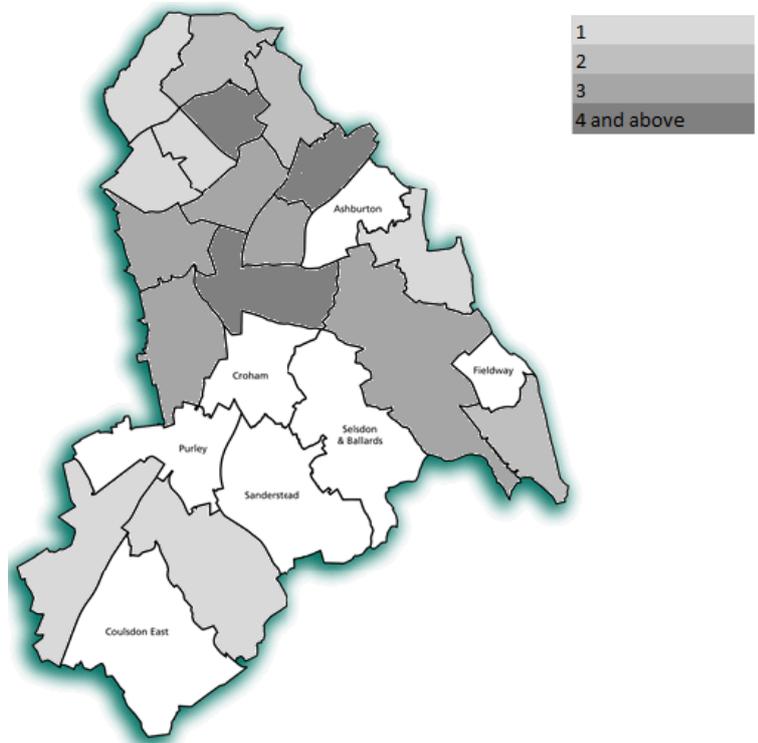
**MARAC only**

This map shows only that of MARAC, as these are the cases identified with the highest risks.

From just two MARACs heard in October, it is clear that domestic abuse is an issue across Croydon.

There is a large geographical area with no MARAC referrals. It is worth noting that this area generally disclosed fewer incidents. However, it could mean that services within this particular area are unclear how to access support, with professionals needing guidance around MARAC referrals.

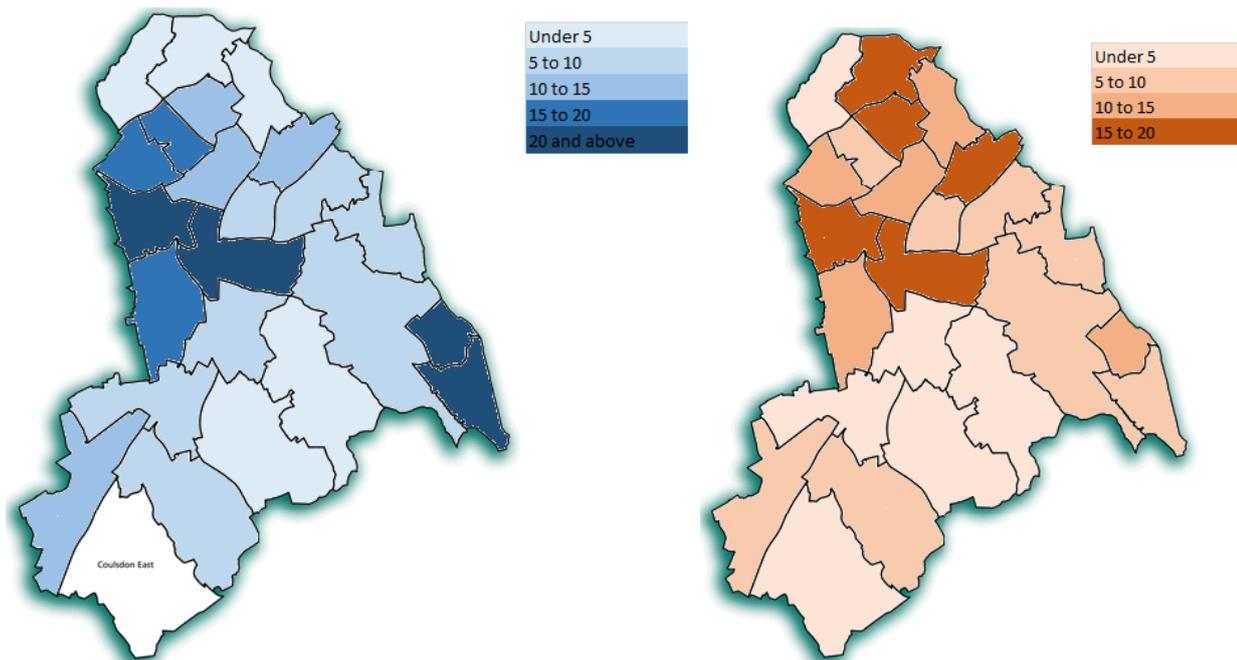
It is interesting to note that Fieldway had a particularly high level of reported DASV incidents, but none of which have been heard at MARAC.



### Domestic abuse specific support services

The blue map shows the services that are not DASV specific (Early Help, Housing, Children's Social Care and A&E). Whilst the orange map shows the DASV specific services (FJC referral, MARAC referral and the Freedom Together programme).

From the two maps, it is clear that areas where non-DASV specific services report high levels of DASV correlates with that of DASV specific services. This would indicate that non-DASV specific services know of the Family Justice Centre and are referring or signposting individuals following a disclosure.



### Summary and recommendations

There is a clear pattern of domestic abuse incidents, regardless of the service being accessed or the level of risk. For the month of October 2017, the wards or neighbouring wards of community hubs have the highest number of incidents. This demonstrates the positive impact the community sites have had in identifying and working with victims of DASV.

The wards of few or no reported incidents of DASV cannot be ignored, as statistical evidence shows that many people within such wards will still be experiencing domestic abuse. It is therefore recommended, that the fifth community hub is located within the south of the borough and that promotional and outreach work is targeted at services and organisations within the south to ensure they have a better understanding of DASV and where individuals can access support.