

To the Chair and Members of the Community and Environment Scrutiny Panel (In its capacity as the Crime and Disorder Committee)

SCRUTINY UPDATE REGARDING HIGH RISK DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Mayor Ros Jones		All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This Report provides an update to the Chair and Members of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee following a scrutiny relating to high risk domestic abuse victims in Doncaster conducted between January and March 2014. The scrutiny resulted in a number of recommendations being made relating to children, schools, MARAC, raising awareness across Doncaster and establishing stronger links to the Health and Well Being Board. This report highlights the progress made in relation to those Scrutiny recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Members are asked to consider the progress made in relation to recommendations made following the Scrutiny in relation to high risk domestic abuse victims and make comments accordingly.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

3. Protecting vulnerable people and safeguarding our communities is a priority for Doncaster. High risk domestic abuse victims and their families are particularly vulnerable. The harm to victims and families suffering domestic abuse is well documented and statutory services supported by the community and voluntary sector provide a range of services to keep high risk victims and families safe. Implementing the recommendations assists in ensuring that high risk victims and families in Doncaster receive a quality service and are kept safe.

BACKGROUND

4. The Scrutiny Review in early 2014 examined whether high risk victims were receiving timely and appropriate support, whether the MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference process was working effectively and whether the emergency refuge and dispersed housing arrangements were appropriate. A total of 14 recommendations were made to seek to improve the support provided to high risk victims and families of domestic abuse in Doncaster. These recommendations were grouped into a number of key themes as detailed below:

- Children
- Schools

- MARAC
 - Training
 - Raising Awareness
 - Health and Well Being Board
 - Monitoring of Recommendations to include health activity to support Domestic Abuse and progress in developing the voluntary Perpetrator Service in Doncaster.
5. Significant progress has been made in relation to implementing many of the scrutiny recommendations, although it is fair to say that progress in relation to others, especially around the development of a co-ordinated approach to supporting children affected by domestic abuse has been limited. This is not to say that children affected by domestic abuse are not receiving some support but the range of targeted interventions is limited. It is acknowledged that more interventions are required to support children of high risk victims that are being affected by domestic abuse but the work to scope out existing provision, identify priorities for future provision and commission appropriate services for children still needs to be prioritised.
6. Progress made against the themed recommendations is detailed below.

Children.

Recommendations 2 and 3.

7. These 2 recommendations relate to the provision of targeted support for the children of high risk victims of domestic abuse and include counselling, therapeutic services, recreational support and emotional support all of which are important in assisting child victims to recover from the ordeal of domestic abuse. Programmes and interventions are available and are being delivered but not in a co-ordinated way where the individual needs of children can be met. High risk victims and their children receive a variety of support programmes when accessing emergency refuge and dispersed housing provision in Doncaster but this provision only caters for a relatively small number of children.
8. A number of positive initiatives have been developed by the Community Safety Team and partners that will be delivered in the very near future to help support children and families affected by domestic abuse. Firstly the Community Safety Team have linked up with the NSPCC to develop an awareness package highlighting the impact of domestic abuse on children and encouraging professionals to identify and appropriately challenge abusive behaviour within the family. The programme will be delivered to front-line professionals from March 2015.
9. Secondly, The Youth Offending Service and Community Safety Team will pilot the 'Getting On' programme from April 2015. This programme is a teen to parent domestic abuse programme which addresses abusive behaviour in single parent families. This is an 8 week programme where abusive teenagers and abused parents receive separate group therapy and support culminating in a final session whereby teenagers and parents are brought together to agree a way forward to minimise future abuse.

10. Additionally there are also a number of health related initiatives and programmes being developed and delivered in Doncaster. One such programme offers support to young pregnant females and their partners during pregnancy. This initiative is being led by the Health Visitor Service within RDaSH [Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust] in partnership with the Doncaster Foundation 4 Change perpetrator service and seeks to support couples during pregnancy which is often a period of increased risk within a relationship. A further programme in the latter stages of development called 'Heart of the Home' is targeted at school children of all ages. The programme is based around the 'Build a Bear' box theme where age appropriate visual images are used to engage children in discussion around safe and healthy relationships. This programme will be delivered from May 2015 following final discussions with partners at the Domestic Abuse Theme Group.
11. The key to creating a menu of age appropriate interventions for children is to scope out the existing provision across the partnership, identify gaps and agree priorities around the wide range of support services required for the children of high risk victims. A Children and Young Peoples Group led by Children's Services was established some months ago comprising of key statutory and voluntary agencies to progress this strand of work. Unfortunately the work of this group has stalled due to changes in personnel within Children's Services and the emergence of the Trust. This has now been addressed and key lead officers identified from both within the Council and the Trust.
12. The Children and Young Peoples Group will be re-established as a matter of urgency and work to scope out existing provision, identify gaps, agree priorities and commission appropriate support services for the children of high risk victims of domestic abuse will be prioritised. Some programmes, interventions and services are available to support both adult and child victims of domestic abuse but the identification and commissioning of the most appropriate support for children of high risk victims needs to be jointly progressed, co-ordinated and led by Children's Services and the Trust as a matter of urgency. The Trust has also included Domestic Abuse in their proposed Innovation Bid to bring in new resources to address this important agenda.

Schools

Recommendation 4.

13. This recommendation relates to improving engagement with schools to raise the profile of domestic abuse issues and the impact on children and young people. Each school in Doncaster has a designated safeguarding lead staff member and safeguarding lead governor. DMBC has a designated Lead Officer for Safeguarding Education in schools who works closely with all schools to ensure staff can access relevant training and materials in relation to Safeguarding matters which includes domestic abuse. Schools across Doncaster have been provided with a range of materials and toolkits in relation to safe and healthy relationships to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities such as the Expect Respect Home Office Toolkit aimed at addressing teenage relationship abuse. A Domestic Abuse Policy for schools has also been developed linked to Ofsted Inspection Guidance.

14. Health Visitors and School Nurses are working together to raise awareness of domestic abuse within Doncaster Schools and a number of initiatives are being developed and delivered. Examples include the 'Heart of The Home ' initiative referred to elsewhere in this report and a proposal to create health champions in all schools to promote safe and healthy relationships. School nurses and family support workers are also piloting lunch-time drop in sessions at Campsmount Technology College for any pupil concerned about any form of relationship abuse. These sessions have proved popular and discussions are taking place to expand this initiative. A further initiative involves the development and publication of a z- card which is a credit card size document providing practical advice to children on safe relationships which will be linked into the Crucial Crew programme delivered by police and fire service to all Y6 Doncaster children.
15. Additionally Health Visitors are offering support to all pregnant girls and their partners at a time of heightened risk and Foundation UK who deliver the perpetrator service are delivering regular domestic abuse awareness sessions at Doncaster College.

MARAC

Recommendation 5.

16. This recommendation relates to strengthening Education links to the MARAC process.
17. It has become increasingly problematic in recent times to have one single representative for Education attending MARAC due to the changes in school status. The responsibility to attend MARAC used to rest with the role of Education Welfare Officers, but with the change in governance of almost all schools to Academies, and reduction in EWO capacity, it is no longer feasible to expect one person to represent all schools. Having said that, cases referred to MARAC where children are involved will invariably either already have a social worker allocated to the family, or will be being supported by a family support worker who will engage with relevant schools. Schools' safeguarding responsibilities require that they work in partnership to protect children and through this partnership working, relevant information is made available to the MARAC without the necessity for a dedicated representative from Education to attend. Where more information is required from Schools the MARAC Chair will ensure that an action is raised and allocated accordingly.

Training.

Recommendations 6 to 9.

18. The Workforce Development Strategy and Core Capability Standards document for 2014/15 and 2015/16 outlines the various training and development modules relating to domestic abuse available to staff from all agencies. Multi-agency training is encouraged so that practitioners can share knowledge of roles and experiences and learn from each other. All Domestic Abuse modules are made accessible to partners although some agencies such as police and RDaSH continue to deliver mandatory domestic abuse training as part of wider safeguarding training. There are 3 levels of training dependant on the role of the professional accessing the training and how closely they are working with families. This enables the training to meet the needs of individuals and ensure the input provided is commensurate with

their particular role. New modules have been recently developed and are now available on the DMBC Learning Zone at <http://doncaster.learningpool.com/>

The list of current domestic abuse modules is detailed below:

- Domestic Abuse Level 1 Awareness. 3 hour classroom based session for DMBC and partner agency staff who are not working directly with families but need basic knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse.
 - E-learning Level 1 Introduction to domestic abuse. This module is now available to all DMBC and partner staff via the Doncaster Learning Pool and is appropriate for any staff who require a basic introduction to domestic abuse.
 - Domestic Abuse level 2 Training. One day course. Designed for staff working directly with families and is open to all DMBC and partner agency staff.
 - Risk assessment and MARAC training. One day course. Level 2. Designed for staff working directly with families and is open to all DMBC and partner agency staff.
 - Protecting Children Living with Domestic Abuse is a new Level 3 learning package delivered as part of the DSCB Safeguarding training.
19. The development of new domestic abuse modules now means that that is far greater choice and flexibility in relation to staff receiving the most appropriate input relevant to their particular role within the partnership. The amount of time spent working with families determines the level and extent of training/awareness required. The discussion regarding whether domestic abuse training should be mandatory took place following last year's Scrutiny but at that stage the options available were limited to one day training events which were considered to be too detailed for many front line staff. Therefore domestic abuse was not designated as mandatory at that time. The development of more options, particularly at Level 1, means that further discussion can now take place to determine whether any of the modules should be mandatory for specified groups of DMBC and/or partner staff and whether any of the level 1 modules should now be compulsory as part of the DMBC induction programme for new staff. These new level 1 modules are less time consuming than the whole day training events and could be useful for elected member to raise their awareness of domestic abuse and ensure they are aware of where to signpost victims and families within the communities they represent.
20. A total of 320 staff from a variety of agencies have completed the full day level 2 Domestic Abuse course in the last 12 months. We will continue to monitor attendance on the level 2 courses which are delivered each month and will also collate numbers of staff completing the various other flexible modules now available. Additionally we have now identified contacts within key agencies such as Police, National Probation Service, CCG [Clinical Commissioning Group] and RDaSH NHS Foundation Trust who will provide data in relation to staff trained in domestic abuse at each level so that we have a full picture of the numbers of staff accessing domestic abuse training across the partnership.

21. A concern was raised in the Scrutiny Review regarding the need for more targeted training of health staff, especially GPs, to ensure there is an understanding of domestic abuse and the range of services available to support victims, families and perpetrators. Two TARGET training sessions were delivered to GPs in 2014 and attendance was very good. The engagement of GPs into MARAC has been improved by raising awareness of the process via a letter to all GPs and by the development of a simplified referral form for GPs to complete. More work is needed with GPs to ensure the knowledge of domestic abuse increases and ensure they are aware of services available to support the whole family where domestic abuse is an issue. Further TARGET training sessions for GPs have been scheduled from April 2015 onwards by the CCG to continue to raise awareness of domestic abuse amongst the GP community. Engagement and support from other health professionals continue to improve although more work is required. Examples mentioned earlier in relation to health visitors supporting young pregnant couples and school nurses developing the 'Heart of the Home' initiative demonstrate the commitment and motivation of front-line professionals to tackle domestic abuse although co-ordination and integration with Children's Services remains a challenge. Discussions are currently taking place within the partnership regarding the need to improve knowledge of staff within the Accident and Emergency hospital setting. The domestic abuse knowledge of many staff within A and E is limited and the offer to victims presenting there tends to be inconsistent. DBH [Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals] NHS Foundation Trust are keen to raise staff awareness and appropriate training will be delivered in the forthcoming months. One further option under consideration is the provision of a dedicated IDVA or Domestic Abuse Caseworker in A and E to provide specialist support to victims presenting there and to work alongside health professionals and support staff to increase knowledge and awareness. This approach has been successful in other parts of the UK and a business case is being developed to seek funding to support such an initiative to enhance the current service being offered.

Raising Awareness.

Recommendations 10 to 12.

22. During the last 12 months a range of communications and marketing activity has taken place across the partnership aimed at raising awareness of domestic abuse amongst the public of Doncaster and to publicise the range of statutory and 3rd sector support available to victims and families. So far the work of the Communications Group has largely been focussed on general awareness raising with specific campaigns aligned to key times of the year such as Christmas and Valentines' day when incidents and demand for services increases. We know that domestic abuse continues to be significantly under-reported and raising awareness is aimed at encouraging early reporting to enable support to victims and families to be both timely and appropriate. The partnership has used a variety of leaflets, posters, bus advertising, radio and local press to raise general awareness over the last 12 months.
23. In July 2014 the new service offer was launched at a drop-in event in the town centre in partnership with Riverside who deliver the high risk Victim Service and Foundation UK who deliver the perpetrator service. Case studies of victims of different ages and circumstances were used to demonstrate how anyone can be affected by domestic abuse. This attracted significant media interest particularly from local radio. We have since used

video footage on the domestic abuse website to highlight how support services can assist individuals and to demonstrate the role of the perpetrator service and the importance of the holistic early intervention approach.

24. Promotion of domestic abuse services has continued to be generic but the most recent Christmas campaign also directly targeted perpetrators, with the support of Doncaster Rovers Football club. This campaign at a Rovers fixture just after Christmas used a variety of words, images and visual messages to target supporters including an extensive social media campaign and the wearing of T-shirts by the players.
25. The Valentine's Day campaign has been planned following which the focus will be on progressing specific targeted activity directed towards identified priority groups such as teenagers, BAME groups and older generation abuse.
26. Publicity material in relation to domestic abuse has been widely circulated across the partnership including DMBC, police, probation and health. Posters advertising various elements of the domestic abuse service have been circulated widely and displayed in DMBC buildings, police stations, GP surgeries, leisure Centres and Family Centres. Other strategic locations are under consideration during this spring/summer including Robin Hood Airport and The Keepmoat stadium. We will continue to focus on general awareness raising supplemented by targeted campaigns. Elected Members continue to have a part to play in raising awareness of domestic abuse within their respective communities. Some members have been in contact with their local Domestic Abuse Caseworkers and are aware of the services available to support victims and families It would be useful to hold a further members event in the near future to ensure information and knowledge is current and as mentioned earlier the new level 1 training events would be suitable for elected members as a means of increasing their awareness.

Health and Well Being Board.

Recommendation 13.

27. Domestic Abuse is a more explicit priority on the Health and Well Being Board and is also a specific priority within the Council's Corporate Plan. The issue of Domestic Abuse continues to be well supported by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and is regularly discussed at strategic Team Doncaster meetings. Domestic Abuse is supported actively and financially by Public Health who part-fund the perpetrator service and fund Domestic Abuse Caseworkers working in localities with partners supporting families where domestic abuse is an issue. Furthermore the Health and Well Being Board are also sponsoring a multi-agency Task and Finish Group looking at the mental health implications of domestic abuse for children and the support available to such victims.

Monitoring of Recommendations.

Recommendation 14.

28. This paper provides the 12 month update required by the Community and Environment Scrutiny Panel. The Panel also requested an update on the progress on the Perpetrator Service and how the domestic abuse agenda is being taken forward within health [in particular GPs]. The latter has been covered earlier in this report at Paragraphs 12 and 21.

29. In terms of the Foundation 4 Change voluntary perpetrator service early signs are positive. A total of 143 perpetrators have been referred to the service, 137 males and 6 females from a variety of sources including self-referrals, social care, police, CVS Organisations, GPs, Care Leavers Service, probation, IDVAs, DA Caseworkers, 16 plus service and Riverside Victims Service. Following initial needs and risk assessments clients are offered a bespoke service involving 1:1, group therapy, on-going support and post programme drop-in service. Engagement levels have been good following initial assessment and the feedback from professionals and perpetrators has been very positive. The 8 group sessions address a range of issues and behaviours with subjects covered including communication skills, impact on children and developing parenting skills. Police call-outs to domestic abuse incidents involving clients engaged on programmes have shown a significant reduction although further monitoring is required to determine whether the reductions are maintained over time. Overall police incident levels have reduced significantly during Quarter 3 of 2014/15 which could be a result of perpetrator interventions although other factors may also be contributing to the reduction. Formal evaluation by SchARR [School for Health and Related Research] will commence in April 2015. Doncaster has done extremely well to secure the support of SchARR who will conduct in-depth academic analysis during 2015/16 which will be of national and international significance. The evaluation will look closely at the effectiveness of our perpetrator interventions which will be extremely important in tailoring future services and will greatly assist in making future commissioning and de-commissioning decisions.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

	Priority	Implications
	We will support a strong economy where businesses can locate, grow and employ local people.	None
	We will help people to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> 	We provide a range of accessible support services for victims, perpetrators and families affected by Domestic Abuse is essential to break the cycle of abuse and enable families to be safe and prosper. Doncaster has expanded the support available to victims and families by commissioning new services and increasing the number of specialist staff working in the Domestic Abuse field to minimise risk and reduce harm.
	We will make Doncaster a better place to live, with cleaner, more sustainable communities.	None
	We will support all families to thrive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	Families affected by Domestic Abuse face many challenges which impact on all aspects of family life. Maintaining and enhancing the vital services available to victims and families is a key priority. Despite

		financial pressures Doncaster Council and its partners have continued to improve the service offer to victims and families by expanding the IDVA Service, creating the role of Domestic Abuse Caseworkers and commissioning new victim and perpetrators services.
	We will deliver modern value for money services.	DMBC and its statutory and CVS partners continue to work together to deliver modern and innovative value for money services. One example is the unique voluntary service offered to perpetrators of domestic abuse. The focus is on early intervention to address abusive behaviour and prevent escalation. Early feedback is very positive and a full evaluation by SchARR [School for Health and Related Research] will commence in April 2015.
	We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.	Domestic abuse in Doncaster is a key priority within the Community Safety Strategy. Strong governance and leadership across the Partnership is ensuring that the whole family approach is implemented to keep victims and families safer.

RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

30. There are no risks and assumptions associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

31. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

32. There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

33. There are no HR implications associated with this report

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

34. The vast majority of domestic abuse victims are female and approximately 80% of victims have children. The provision of a wide range of domestic abuse services to support victims and families has a positive impact on the statutory due regard responsibilities of DMBC and its partners to promote equality and ensure services are appropriate to meet the specific needs of service users.

CONSULTATION

35. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

36. Overview and Scrutiny Review into Domestic Abuse 2014

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

**Bob Sanderson – Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead DMBC
01302 862806**

Robert.Sanderson@doncaster.gov.uk

**Jo Miller
Chief Executive**