



CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 19TH MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC ABUSE PROCESSES FOR VICTIMS

REPORT BY: REBECCA HAYCOCK, DOMESTIC ABUSE COORDINATOR

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is provided in response to a member request for information on the services available and provided to Domestic Abuse victims by agencies operating across the borough and in particular what support is available to victims in crisis outside of normal working hours. The report is provided as agreed at the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee meeting of the 20th of March 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership (SCCSP) addresses domestic abuse and support to victims through direct intervention by Gwent Police in supporting victims and investigating crimes, and through the support and refuge provision provided by third sector and funded agencies.
- 2.2 This report summarises the level of domestic abuse across the county borough and how victims are dealt with and supported by statutory and third sector agencies. In particular the support available outside normal working hours is set out in the body of the report.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The overarching aims of Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) in relation to domestic abuse and crime reduction are detailed in Caerphilly Delivers – The Single Integrated Plan 2013 - 2017. They are as follows:

Safer Caerphilly

S2 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime for the residents of the county borough.

S4 – Ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. Whilst this definition of domestic abuse is both gender neutral and age specific the overwhelming majority of the most severely affected victims are women (British Crime Survey 2004) and an increasing proportion of incidents refer to younger people both within their familial and intimate relationships.

- 4.2 In Caerphilly during 2013 there were 3897 police logs of domestic abuse with 1346 crimes and 2567 cases being discussed on the Domestic Abuse Conference Call (DACC); there were 277 high risk cases heard at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs); 75% of children on the Child Protection register have domestic abuse within the household. Despite the high numbers of reported incidents they represent only part of the true picture of domestic abuse across Caerphilly; on average only 23% of all incidents are reported to the police (British Crime Survey 2004).

DACCs are dialled into each weekday morning by all agencies that have a response duty to victims of domestic abuse including third sector support agencies, local authority housing, social service and health.

MARACs are attended by agencies who have a role to play in continued safety planning for victims and providing support through the court process and beyond.

The cost of domestic abuse for Caerphilly has been estimated based upon the research used within the British Crime Survey and based on mid-year 2009 population estimates. Including both economic and human/emotional costs domestic abuse is estimated to cost Caerphilly over £48 million; this only includes domestic abuse perpetrated by intimate partners and is limited to the 16-59 year old local population.

- 4.3 Services within Caerphilly are provided in the main by third sector agencies with the exception of one direct funded specialist support worker, the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate who supports high risk, and very high risk victims through the criminal justice system. Support services offer a co-ordinated multi-agency response to victims of domestic abuse through a single pathway which places the victim and their family at the centre of support. All services recognise the need for tailored support and with the exception of refuge provision and the Freedom Programme are non-gender specific.

(The appended flowchart below represents the pathway of support)

- 4.4 Following a disclosure of domestic abuse, and once immediate safety is established, all victims should be referred to a specialist agency whereby a DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking Harassment and Honour Based Violence) risk assessment must be carried out and appropriate safeguarding put in place. As led by the victim, support can be offered based upon their identified needs.

- 4.5 The victim and their children may require emergency accommodation and this can be accessed 24 hours through the numbers provided. Access is available to 4 refuges and one Safe House that also accepts male victims. The victim may request support to return/remain safely within their home and a variety of safety measures can be put in place to achieve this. Home safety support is limited by funding but may be provided via the Gwent Police specialist unit and also via the Community Safety Partnership team. Support includes home security e.g. locks, lighting, CCTV and also in serious cases the provision of refuge rooms. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service also provide arson prevention measures. The victim may choose to relocate to a new area. In all instances on-going emotional and practical support is available for the family.
- 4.6 If following a disclosure of domestic abuse the victim declines any intervention then information on how to access support should be given and any child protection/POVA referrals considered.
- 4.7 The flowchart represents the specialist domestic abuse services available to victims within Caerphilly and accessible through a single point of entry. Services are subject to and restricted by funding.

4.8 **Gwent Police**

The Gwent Police Domestic Abuse Safety Unit provides the specialist response within Gwent Police with Local Policing Units and Response Staff and the Force Control Room providing the immediate response to incidents and subsequent investigation.

On first notification of a domestic abuse incident, or crime, the main priority is for the safety of the victim and other persons at risk, including children. The Force Control Room ensure that initial safety is secured and that the victim is supported through the process and kept informed of the deployment of officers. The immediate response is to ensure that a DASH risk assessment is carried out and that a safety plan is in place for victims. Where there is a high risk of harm or the incident involves honour based violence the matter is referred to bronze or silver cadre to consider what enhanced response may be needed. All DA calls are automatically referred into the Domestic Abuse Conference Call system so that a multi-agency response can be discussed to the needs of the victim.

The Domestic Abuse Safety Unit manages the DACC and MARAC processes and reviews all risk assessments and safety planning. In addition the Unit manages the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs). DVPOs are newly enacted and allow for the court to provide an order immediately excluding a perpetrator from an area.

4.9 **Prevention**

Prevention work within Caerphilly is paramount to tackling domestic abuse; raising awareness of the issues and equipping the whole community with knowledge and information is crucial. Training of professionals working in the borough is available through the Caerphilly Workforce Development Programme as is more bespoke agency/role specific training.

Domestic Abuse workplace policies are present in all public authorities in Wales including Caerphilly. The current policy is under review and alongside the launch of this will be an awareness raising campaign and a newly developed training package for identified Domestic Abuse Champions within the Council. This work is on-going as part of Welsh Governments 10,000 Safer Lives agenda with plans to work with employers within the private sector.

- 4.10 Much of the work done with children and young people around healthy and respectful relationships is done on an ad hoc basis with no secure funding. It is hoped that the Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill will help to address this.

There is limited service provision within Caerphilly for children and young people who display aggressive behaviour within the family. Drawing upon pockets of good practice across agencies a model of work is currently being developed aimed at working with children and young people under the age of 18, around abusive behaviours within their intimate and familial relationships.

5. SUPPORT CONTACTS

Safer Caerphilly Multi-agency Centre (MAC) **01443 819317** (Mon-Fri 9am -5pm) Cameron House, 57 Commercial Street, Ystrad Mynach, CF82 7DW

Out of hours **029 2086 0255** (Caerphilly Domestic Abuse Service)
All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline **0808 80 10 800**

For further information and links to support services visit: livefearfree.org.uk

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied, however in practice there are very clear links between Domestic Abuse and Equalities issues and the two areas overlap on many levels. Domestic Abuse by its very nature can involve issues around gender, age, disability or sexual orientation for example.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications, this report provided service information only.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications for the Council.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The report has been sent to the consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The report is noted.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The report is in response to a Scrutiny request and is for information only.

12. STATUTORY POWER

Crime & Disorder Act 1998

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (as amended by the Protection of Freedom Act 2012)

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Authors: Rebecca Haycock, Domestic Abuse Coordinator
Tel: 02920 860255 E-mail: 01443 819101

Consultees: Councillor Hefin David, Chair Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee
Councillor David Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Councillor Sean Morgan, Vice Chair, Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee
Superintendent Marc Budden, Safer Caerphilly Strategic Lead and Delivery Group
Chair
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Vice Chair Delivery Group
Kathryn Peters, Community Safety Manager
Chief Inspector Paul Staniforth, Caerphilly Local Policing Unit
David A Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Paul Adams, Senior Assistant Accountant
Sian Phillips, Human Resources Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Caerphilly multi-agency/single pathway response for victims of domestic abuse