



CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC ABUSE PROCESSES FOR VICTIMS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is provided in response to a member request for an annual update on the services available and provided to Domestic Abuse victims and follows on from a report previously presented to this Committee on 19th March 2015.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership 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 provides an update on the level of domestic abuse across the county borough and how victims are dealt with and supported by statutory and third sector agencies.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The overarching aims 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 In the Caerphilly Council area during 2015 there were 3064 police logs of domestic abuse with 1483 crimes and 2,899 cases being discussed on the Domestic Abuse Conference Call (DACC); there were 134 high risk cases heard at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) with 36 of those being repeat cases; 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).
- 4.2 Across the Gwent Police Force area 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. However since May 2015 a DACC Pilot Scheme has been trialled in Caerphilly and each weekday police upload all

relevant information to a database named SharePoint for each agency to view and record relevant decisions they have made and any action taken. 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.

- 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.
- 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. Supporting People engage Llamau to provide Integrated Domestic Abuse Services. Within Caerphilly, at any one time they are able to house and support 17 families across 4 refuges and 1 safe house. 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. During 2014/15 they housed and supported 108 women, 66 children and had a void of only 4% for the year. In addition to support needs relating to domestic abuse, safety and risk; key identified co-occurring needs are as below:
- 17.2% with alcohol issues
 - 14.1% with drug misuse
 - 56% with emotional health issues
 - 3% with offending behaviour
 - 31% required support with parenting skills
 - 71.1% required support accessing primary health services (GP / dentist)
- 4.6 Supporting People also fund outreach services. In 2014/15 80 service users were supported; 78 female, and 2 male. Key support needs in addition to domestic abuse include:
- 66.7% with emotional health issues
 - 10% with alcohol issues
 - 5% with drug issues
 - 5% with self harm issues
 - 6.7% with anti social behaviour and anger issues
 - 23.3% requiring parenting skills support
 - 30% requiring support to access GP and dentist
- 4.7 In addition an early intervention and prevention outreach scheme has been jointly commissioned by Supporting People and Families First since January 2015. This proactive service has resulted in 151 families being supported in 2015, with a total of 261 children in the households. Within these, only 5 families have needed to access immediate safe accommodation for an interim measure whilst additional security and safety planning is completed. Therefore, due to the early intervention of the scheme 146 families have been able to remain safely within their own home. This ensures that children do not have to move areas, schools, lose their friends and families do not have to lose their homes and support networks. Staff liaise with external support providers including legal services, civil and criminal courts, police, education, social services, housing providers, third sector support, counselling services and medical intervention.

- 4.8 A number of additional wraparound support services are also provided including an outreach for children and young people in the community affected by domestic abuse. In 2014/15 the scheme supported 72 families. This scheme supports children and young people to work through how domestic abuse has affected them using age appropriate tools and resources, staying safe, healthy relationships and moving forward. 93% reported improved family relationships and feeling safer as a result of support. Supporting People also contract with BAWSO delivering specialist services to people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) backgrounds who are affected by domestic abuse; they supported 9 people during 2015.
- 4.9 Homelessness Prevention is a short term scheme supports individuals affected by domestic abuse who are at risk of crisis homelessness. The role focuses on liaising with landlords regarding eviction proceedings, notices, significant rent arrears, rehousing due to safety or the separation of families impacting on financial management of a home. In 2014/15 the service supported 75 families. 88% reported improved management of accommodation, and 100% felt safer.
- 4.10 Group work and awareness raising sessions are also provided. Group work promotes the early identification and awareness of abusive behaviours, the impact of abuse on families and building the self esteem and confidence of participants. Awareness raising takes places throughout the community to enhance participants understanding of healthy relationships and mutual respect. During 2014/15:
- 97 women attended the Freedom programme
 - 8 women attended the first course of You and Me, Mum
 - 12 children accessed Kidz Club
 - 8 Young People attended ADaPT first course
 - 1400 children and young people attended healthy relationship sessions in the community
- 4.11 Domestic abuse support services in the authority are delivered in a number of ways as set out above. The central hub for support services, the Safer Caerphilly Multi-agency Centre, is situated at Cameron House in Ystrad Mynach. It is occupied by Llamau Women's Services, the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate, BAWSO (specialist BME support provider), and other agencies on a drop in basis. Local domestic abuse centres have previously been funded via Welsh Government capital grant. As there has been no determination of capital funding for the coming year notice to quit the building has been given in advance of the current lease ending in August 2016. As the leaseholder the local authority will work with the support services currently working from the building to ensure continued support to victims. This may, however, be from other locations in the county borough.
- 4.12 From the 1st of April 2015 a regional approach to domestic abuse coordination is being piloted. Welsh Government funding is provided to Newport Council who host a Gwent Regional Team comprising of a Regional Advisor, two Domestic Abuse Officers and a Domestic Abuse Assistant.
- 4.13 On 29 April 2015, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act. The legislation aims to improve the Public Sector response in Wales to such abuse and violence. A National Adviser has been appointed to advise Ministers and improve joint working amongst public bodies under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The main functions of the National Adviser are:
- to advise Ministers and give assistance in achieving the aims of the Act
 - to monitor and advise Ministers on both the content and implementation of local strategies
 - undertake research relating to the Act and related matters by examining whether abuse of any kind is related directly or indirectly to inequality between people of a different gender, gender identity or sexual orientation
 - produce reports relating to the Act or tackling related matters.

- 4.14 Welsh Government are developing a National Training Framework for Wales on violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence for all key public sector and specialist service provider professionals across Wales and a Healthy Relationships programme in schools. Raising awareness of the issues and equipping the whole community with knowledge and information is an important aspect of tackling domestic abuse.
- 4.15 This year a new process known as “Ask and Act” will be piloted in Gwent. “Ask and Act” is a process of targeted enquiry to be practiced across the public service for forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The term targeted enquiry describes the recognition of indicators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as a prompt for a professional to ask their client whether they have been affected by any of these issues. The pilot will test how such an approach can be implemented within relevant local authority departments. These will include the development of supporting policies, a consideration of data sharing legislation and the establishment of clear referral pathways with specialist service providers in the field. It also includes a supporting training programme which will be delivered across all five local authorities. Welsh Government will be funding the work and an evaluation to assess its success.

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. Noting also the link to the Council's Strategic Equality Objective 1 - Tackling Identity-Based Violence and Abuse 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 That the report is noted.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The report is in response to a Member 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

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

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Consultees: Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Chief Inspector Nick McLain, Safer Caerphilly Strategic Lead and Delivery Group Chair
Kathryn Peters, Community Safety Manager
David W Thomas, Service Manager, Social Services
Malcolm Topping, Supporting People Manager, Social Services
Carmel Jones, Regional Domestic Abuse Officer - Gwent
David A Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager
Shaun Watkins, Human Resources Manager

Background Papers:

'Domestic Abuse Processes For Victims' – report to Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee
19th March 2015