

### Crime & Safety & Strong Communities Scrutiny Panel

#### Domestic Abuse

#### 1. Background/Information

Rises in violent crime are of paramount concern to the Community Safety partnership in Enfield. The rises are consistent across London and Domestic abuse accounts for the vast majority of violent crime. Increases in reported crime can be considered a measure of confidence in agencies to do something to help. Repeat offences need to be reduced to maintain this confidence.

The emotional and physical impact of violence on victims is greater than that of any other crime type and it is important that the partnership can access all victims, including those that may not seek a police response.

Repeat victimisation is common. 44% of victims of domestic violence are involved in more than one incident. No other type of crime has a high rate of repeat victimisation. There is a long term increase in repeat victimisation in Enfield and many other areas of the UK.

#### 2. Purpose of Briefing

This report is to update the Scrutiny Panel on our partnership response to domestic abuse including recent developments.

#### 2.1 Reporting rates

There continues to be a rise in reported incidents to the police. Since 2011/12 we have seen an increase in reported incidents by 47.4%.

Crime Type	Baseline 2011/12	Target 2015/16	Current 12- months	Enfield % Change 12- months	MPS % Change 12- months	Enfield % Change Baseline	MPS % Change Baseline
Domestic Abuse (data as of 15/12)	1,946	N/A	2,868	16.8%	12.4%	47.4%	n/a

DV is not a crime classification in itself, rather an “aggravating factor”. The vast majority of Domestic Abuse offences fall within the Violence against the Person (VAP) category (approx. 80%) with the majority of remaining offences being classified as Criminal Damage (approx. 10%, largely Criminal Damage to a Dwelling). There were also 168 reported rape offences in the rolling 12-months within a domestic setting..

From Jan 2015- Sept 2015 there have been 2550 domestic incidents that the police have been called to. The comparison with the previous 12 months is set to increase by about

21%. There are challenges around resourcing to meet this demand. (Source: Police statistics – reviewed by CSU analyst)

There has been a significant increase in the number of MARAC (Multi agency risk assessment conference) referrals made by police over the past year. MARAC deals with the more serious cases and aims to reduce risk and develop action plans for victims at high risk of serious harm or homicide. Enfield received 723 referrals last year. (Source: MARAC quarterly returns to SafeLives)

The IDVA service continues to increase the number of referrals it receives and the number subsequently referred to MARAC. Latest data returns from IDVA show exceptional outputs which are exceeding most targets.

## **2.2 Recent Developments**

Police have noted that the largest area of growth in reported offences are for domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and tackling extremism. Following the Savile report and arrests and convictions of others for historic crimes there has been a substantial increase in reporting.

The general public, including new communities, have a much greater understanding of domestic abuse and that this constitutes crime. We have been running an awareness raising campaign on domestic abuse including how to find help and information. This is aimed at helping people at an earlier stage access the help and support they need before reaching crisis point.

The first peer support domestic abuse group launched in December 2015. This is being coordinated by volunteers in Enfield and aims to provide peer support for women who have or are experiencing domestic abuse and to reduce isolation. The partnership is keen for this to be extended across the borough and for a network of groups to be available to residents to help build resilience in our communities and improve individuals own agency and independence.

On March 8th 2015 the Serious Crime Bill received Royal Assent and became the Serious Crime Act. This contains legislation for coercive control which is now a criminal offence, having come into force on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

Proposals for future work include proposals for a Victims Act and to improve resources for families and individuals affected by domestic abuse. (Source: Home Office)

In other countries that have introduced legislation on coercive control there has been a 50% increase in reporting. Coercive control is recognised as being a high risk factor and common to domestic homicides particularly where there are high levels of control.

The Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) project was extended earlier this year and will run to end of April 2016. The project provides training for everyone working in GP surgeries on identifying victims of domestic abuse and making direct referrals to a domestic abuse specialist. The project also promotes use of routine enquiry provides software that assists GP's.

## **2.3 Funding**

Partners across the council deal with high volume levels of domestic abuse. The Single Point of Entry has previously noted that approx. 70% of referrals received have domestic abuse as the presenting issue of one of the issues faced by families. Similarly we are seeing an increase in reporting via the MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. Many of the families subject to Child in Need or a Child Protection Plan will be experiencing domestic abuse. Many Children's Centres report that high levels of families accessing their services are experiencing the associated risks of domestic abuse.

We recognise that the Local Authority, along with many other partners, are working in a difficult climate and will continue to face challenges as demand increases and resource reduces.

These pressures have inevitably resulted in agencies trying to maximise funding which has resulted in the decommissioning of some services. Media reporting on domestic abuse and violence against women is at an all-time high with much publicised about reduction in funding to specialist services and in particular where there is a reduction to refuge accommodation. There have been numerous campaigns to highlight this issue include Women's Aid SOS campaign

We have however been successful in a recent bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This is a collaboration with numerous partners which include the London boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Haringey and Islington. Enfield is the lead for this project which has secured £100,000 to help victims access support and refuge who have complex needs including mental health.

The Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls Operational group has set up a funding sub group to help voluntary and statutory sector partners seek and bid for further funds and will have a particular focus on consortium and partnership working. The voluntary sector often has access to funding streams that are not accessible to Local Authorities, so we are keen to try to facilitate applications.

## **2.4 Future work**

There are numerous plans in place to continue developments in Enfield. The Community Safety Unit DV Coordinator has already started delivering training to the multi-agency partnership on Coercive Control. Domestic abuse training is mandated for all Children's Social Workers and also delivered through the Safeguarding Boards for Children's and Adults.

Training will be extended to the business sector in 2016, particularly focusing on areas where victims may disclose e.g. hairdressers, nail salons, banks, dental surgeries.

We want to ensure that there are increased opportunities for help seeking and providing help and advice across our communities. This is to enable victims and their families to access help and support at an earlier time, reduce repeat victimisation and reduce the overall impact on the victim and services.

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