

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive

2 October 2008

Domestic Abuse

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has made Domestic Abuse a priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The report recognises that Domestic Abuse is a priority for many of the thematic partnerships in the NYSP, with the Safer Communities Partnership having the central role. It also recognises that the improvement priorities proposed for work focussed on children's needs cannot proceed – or be effective – unless it is coordinated with other initiatives led by other partners.
- 1.3 The report, therefore, aims to inform and seek alignment with other thematic partnerships via the NYSP Executive.

2.0 Background

2.1 How Domestic Abuse is defined

Domestic Abuse is defined within the Government's National Domestic Abuse Plan (2005) as: 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'

2.2 The impact of domestic abuse

The full scale of domestic abuse in North Yorkshire is unknown but nationally 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience domestic abuse within their lifetime and 750,000 children witness domestic abuse. Much of this is hidden with victims reluctant to talk about their experiences or to seek access to services. In North Yorkshire service provision is operated through a wide range of services and agencies. Locally much of this work is highly effective but county-wide the provision is inconsistent and inequitable¹.

- 2.3 The annual cost to services and the economy of domestic abuse nationally is £5.7 billion (with a personal cost to individuals estimated to be £17 billion). The cost to social services, health and housing in North Yorkshire is estimated to be around £24million.

2.4 The Scale of Domestic Abuse

In North Yorkshire, figures suggest that approximately 27% of reported incidents of domestic abuse are witnessed by young people.

¹ Young People affected by Domestic Abuse, Report of the Task Group, NYCC Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee, August 2008

*Year	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Reported incidents	4029	5000	5515	5768	5440
Reported incidents with child witnesses	1280	1366	1511	1606	1465
Reported repeat incidents	2260	2706	3172	3379	3116

- 2.5 The impact on children who witness domestic abuse is considerable. Studies have shown that children from violent homes can exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour and there are suggestive strong links between some bullying and domestic abuse. Approximately 75% of children and young people with ASBO's (Anti-Social Behaviour Order) and 80-85% of Young Offenders have a domestic abuse history.
- 2.6 For children living in rural areas the effects of domestic abuse can be particularly severe as lack of transport and physical isolation can make it harder to overcome problems.
- 2.7 The determination of partner agencies to reduce levels of domestic abuse has resulted in it becoming a priority within the North Yorkshire Local Area Agreement (linked to NI32").

3.0 How We Are Responding in North Yorkshire

3.1 Development of Strategy

The Domestic Abuse Strategy is currently under review, with a cross-agency working group having been established to take this work forward. The strategy will have a section covering children and young people, sharing common priorities with the Children and Young People's Plan Staying Safe Objective 3.4 (see Annexe 1).

- 3.2 **MARACs** (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) have been established in two areas of the County. These form part of the Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) arrangements (see Annexe 2). The operational linkage and information sharing procedures between MARACs and other integrated working arrangements are currently unclear, which is causing operational difficulties. A joint agency group is being convened to address these issues as a priority.

3.3 Programmes

There are 5 main types of support provision:

1. Support services for children and families
2. Women's Refuges
3. Target Hardening
4. Making Safe programmes
5. Floating Support

- 3.4 **Support services for children and families** are provided by a wide range of agencies and services:

Universal/mainstream provision

- School curriculum supports the development of healthy relationships.
- Pastoral systems support individuals and identify early signs of exposure to Domestic Abuse.
- Education Social Workers provide staff with training on DA and through their generic work help to keep children in school, where they are safe.
- School Nurses provide linkage to the Health Services.

Targeted work with children and families

- Education Social Workers, Home School Support Workers and Parenting Support Advisers work with families at risk.
- Children and Family Centre programmes support vulnerable families.
- Community based domestic violence support, group work and advocacy (for example NSPCC & York Women's Aid).

Multi-agency and specialist support (dependent on need)

- Individual support, advocacy and counselling from specialist services including North Yorkshire Advocacy Service, Children's Social Care and CAMHS.

Acute service support

Multi-agency child protection services linked to support and safety plans for children and for the non-abusing parent where appropriate. MAPPA processes may be followed for the perpetrator

3.5 **Women's Refuges** have been established in:

- Scarborough - 10 places
- Harrogate - 8 places
- Hambleton & Richmondshire - 14 places

3.6 **Target Hardening** is a scheme that makes it hard for the perpetrator to access the ones they are abusing. Examples include equipping homes with stronger doors, locks, windows and alarms. Schemes have been set up in Hambleton and Richmondshire, alongside "floating support" to women and families. Target hardening is also sometimes provided as part of "Making Safe" solutions.

3.7 **Making Safe** is an innovative scheme developed in Scarborough District. In this scheme the perpetrator is removed from the family home² and housed away from the family. This allows the mother and children to stay in their community. In this scheme it is the perpetrator who is clearly identified as the person at fault and who needs to be removed. A key element of successful schemes, is to provide suitable accommodation and mentoring for the perpetrator – a feature that is sometimes difficult to provide) given the hostility that often surrounds the perpetrator. It is also difficult to secure resources to maintain or extend this option to other parts of the County.

3.8 **Floating Support** is provided in all Districts. In the main this is through voluntary sector organisations but in Hambleton and Richmondshire this has been commissioned from York Women's Aid. Very often domestic abuse is linked to debt, alcoholism, drugs, mental illness and chaotic lifestyles. Floating Support schemes have been developed which support families under these kinds of stress.

² By Courts through non-molestation, occupation and restraining orders

4.0 Children and Young People – issues to address

4.1 Key points are:

- Not all cases of domestic abuse are identified in schools and early years setting. More, and more consistent, training about identification and support should be provided. This is a CYPP priority.
- Domestic abuse is a factor in a significant proportion of cases which become Child Protection registrations.
- Many children living in households where there is domestic abuse, however, do not meet the thresholds for multi-agency intervention under Child Protection legislation (what the CYPSP Board regards as a Level 4 service).
- Whilst that may be a reasonable judgement in many cases, it does not mean that such children and families do not need help. Serious Case Reviews nationally and locally confirm that where children are below the Child Protection radar early warning signs have been missed, leading to some very poor outcomes.
- Common Assessments (CAF) have been introduced as part of locality based integrated services in the last two years. They promote earlier identification of children's needs and proportionate, multi-agency responses. Cases handled through CAF include Level 2 and 3 needs, and often identify domestic abuse as a risk factor.
- Whilst integrated, preventative services are developing, they are not yet in a position to meet all needs. For domestic abuse specifically we need to strengthen further the services which can be provided eg through Parent Support Advisers, Family Support Workers and projects with third sector. There is also a need for protocols and training for such services to operate safely – particularly given that children's needs at Levels 2 and 3 can reveal serious parental needs.
- Processes for making CAF, MARAC and other referrals are not well understood. Information to schools and early years settings is to be reviewed to help.
- Increasing identification of potential domestic abuse cases via children's needs across the County can be responded to in part by services covered by the CYP Strategic Partnership though they are not uniform across the County. Importantly, however, there are other services and arrangements beyond those under the CYP Partnership which will also need strengthening. It is particularly important that improvements are coordinated because individuals can be at their most vulnerable when they disclose difficulties.
- The Police have the most comprehensive data on DV and are often the first to identify domestic abuse involving children and young people. Currently this is not always shared with C&YPS. There is a need to establish information sharing protocols and processes to enable information sharing and support multi-agency work, below the level of Safeguarding (via MARACs).
- Effective multi-agency operating procedures and training for those involved in MARACs needs to be developed and implemented.
- A senior officer has been designated for the Children and Young People's Service to lead and coordinate work across the Directorate relating to domestic abuse, supported by a cross-Directorate team of existing staff.
- Additional support capacity is needed, possibly for a two year period, to ensure detailed developments and monitoring are embedded.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 Domestic abuse is currently the subject of detailed consideration by a number of partnerships and partners – principally the Safer Communities Partnership, CDRPs, North Yorkshire Police, the North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board and

the Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The following recommendations appear to be emerging from that work at this stage.

- **Leadership:** there is a need for a strategic overview group to support and hold to account the JACGDA.
- **Strategic commitment:** the Domestic Abuse Strategy needs to be refreshed as a priority, with a specific section for children and young people (aligned with the Children and Young People's Plan).
- **Local Co-ordination:** the DA co-ordinator posts need to be mainstreamed. Placement within NYP is currently the preferred option (JACGDA).
- **Support to children and young people:** there is a need to move forward the service coordination, improvement and capacity building in C&YPS to deliver on 3.9.
- **Improve data and information sharing:** protocols and information sharing arrangements need to be improved to support integrated working.
- **Build on best practice:** programmes delivering best practice need to be rolled out county-wide to provide a more equitable and consistent provision.
- **Raise awareness and build capability:** information about domestic abuse services and access to them need to be improved. We need to be mindful that at the point of disclosure individuals are at their most vulnerable – and ensure that we do not compromise their safety by not having sufficient capacity, or skilled workforce to meet needs.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 The NYSP Executive is asked to consider how coordinated progress can be agreed, prioritised and monitored across and between the contributing thematic partnerships.

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Annexe 1: Extract from the Children and Young People’s Plan

<p>2.4. Tackle Domestic Abuse in North Yorkshire</p>	<p>Lead Safeguarding Board Manager Education Officer: Social Inclusion</p>
<p>What we are going to do...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a countywide domestic abuse strategy and ensure strategic alignment with the NYCSB • Map existing services for children and young people who are victims of domestic violence • Encourage the sustainability of strategic support and services for tackling domestic abuse • Identification and development of best practice, including county provision of refuges 	
<p>What we are going to do this year... Action points for year 2008-9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming the work of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators with direct accountability and linkage to strategic partnerships. • Review the Police Domestic Violence Protocol for its impact on children and young people. • Review the role of Integrated Services in relation to victims of domestic violence. 	
<p>How we will know we are improving...</p>	
<p>Targets Yr 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an integrated Domestic Violence Strategy that takes account of children and adults. • Reduction of NI 32 ‘Repeat Incidence of domestic violence’ by 1% (PSA 23). 	
<p>Targets Yr 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countywide development of MARAC. • Reduction of NI 32 ‘Repeat Incidence of domestic violence’ by 1% (PSA 23). 	
<p>Targets Yr 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of NI 32 ‘Repeat Incidence of domestic violence’ by 1% (PSA 23). 	
<p>Where can I find more information? NYSCB Business Plan Domestic Abuse Strategy Safer Communities</p>	

Annexe 2
From the National Indicator Set technical guidance:

58 | National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions

This is an APACS indicator	
NI 32: Repeat incidents of domestic violence For introduction within APACS in 2009/10 when complete coverage is achieved.	
Rationale	<p>Activity by police and local partners should be focused on protecting the most vulnerable victims from serious harm. Domestic violence (DV) victims currently have the highest level of repeat victimisation, often with the severity of incidents escalating over time.</p> <p>Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARACs) focus on high risk victims of DV as indicated through the use of risk assessment tools. By sharing information, agencies get a better picture of victims' situations and so develop responses that are tailored to the needs and goals of individual victims and their children. Safe information-sharing also allows agencies to manage the perpetrator in ways that reduce risk. The aim of the MARAC is to construct jointly and implement a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm and to reduce repeat victimisation.</p> <p>The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individual agencies; it is not transferred to the MARAC. Local authority services will need to ensure that they have in place a framework to identify those victims at risk and will need to carry out the appropriate risk assessments when presented with victims of domestic violence and their children. Jointly with the police, services commissioned by local authorities and health agencies will have a primary role to play to ensure that the MARAC is an effective process.</p>
Background and update on indicator development	<p>This indicator is proposed as the percentage reduction in repeat victimisation for those domestic violence cases being managed by a MARAC.</p> <p>Domestic violence is defined by ACPO as: 'any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.</p> <p>MARAC: Victims of domestic violence referred to a MARAC will be those who have been identified (often by the police) as high or very high risk (i.e. of serious injury or of being killed) based on a common (or compatible) risk assessment tool that is informed by both victim and assessor information. It is recommended that MARACs are held at fortnightly intervals, where information relevant to the immediate safety of the victim is shared. All cases that are reviewed at a MARAC should be flagged by the police.</p> <p>Repeat victimisation refers to a violent incident occurring within 12 months of the original incident coming to the MARAC.</p>
Expected collection arrangements and spatial level	<p>It is anticipated that this indicator will be drawn from reported domestic violence incident data from the police (via ADR), and MARAC data from operational MARACs.</p> <p>The indicator will be reported at Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership or BCU level (Single tier and district level).</p>
Timetable for development	<p>Over 100 MARACs are operating across England and Wales, with 100 more planned for development in 2008/09. The remaining roll out will occur during 2009/10.</p>
Notes	<p>For the latest guidance for this indicator, including any corrections or clarifications, please consult the APACS technical guidance which is available at: http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/performance-and-measurement/assessment-methods/assessment-technical-guidance/</p>

From the APACS technical guidance:

Of those indicators consulted upon, the following indicators have been delayed for further development and possible introduction in 2009/10.

- **Domestic violence enforcement:** Data on domestic violence (DV) offences is currently not collected by the Home Office so introduction of this indicator is delayed until the data can be consistently collected.
- **Domestic violence victimisation (NI 32):** The support arrangements measured by this indicator are not yet available across the country. This indicator is delayed until the support arrangements are further rolled out across the country.