

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive

30 April 2009

Domestic Abuse – Strategic Lead

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the NYSP Executive in relation to specialist domestic abuse work in North Yorkshire and to request that the Executive take on a high level strategic role with relation to this issue in the County.

2 Background

- 2.1 In December 2008 North Yorkshire County Council's Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee produced a report on young people affected by domestic abuse. The report aimed to review the services and support available to children and young people in North Yorkshire who experience and witness domestic abuse.
- 2.2 The report acknowledged that domestic abuse prevention is supported and co-ordinated through the Y&NY Safer Communities Forum and the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (JCG), but recommended that there is a need to 'champion' the issue at a strategic, multi-agency level and to drive work forward on a time limited basis.
- 2.3 It was suggested that this might best be done through the NYSP Executive given the cross cutting nature of the issues, and that this new arrangement could be put in place for two years and then be subject to review.

3 Strategic role and suggested reporting procedures

- 3.1 The intention of the recommendation for a more specific strategic role is not to bypass the existing reporting relationships and structures but to ensure that there is commitment at the highest level within partner organisations to prioritise the issue. The role is one of raising and maintaining the profile of this important issue rather than strategic management which is the role of the thematic partnerships.
- 3.2 The strategic direction for domestic abuse prevention work is contained in the York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2009-11 which defines domestic abuse and provides information about its prevalence in a national and local context. It also highlights good practice where strengthened partnership working is having an impact on keeping families safe, reducing homelessness and reducing repeat incidents of domestic abuse. There are links made to the Homelessness Strategy and the Supporting People Strategy.

- 3.3 Within the Local Area Agreement (LAA2) there is also a target to reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence (indicator NI 32). A repeat incident is the same victim and the same perpetrator coming back to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) within a 12 month period. Victims will need to be tracked throughout North Yorkshire as repeats within the county count towards this figure. Different areas will be in different positions as regards baseline figures.
- 3.4 Data on reporting of domestic abuse and homelessness presentation as a result of domestic abuse is also collected.
- 3.5 It is suggested that a six-monthly report to the NYSP Executive be made for a period of two years, and that this is on the basis of 'exception' reporting, for example highlighting areas where progress is slow or stalled and where action is needed to alleviate the situation.

4 Overview of specialist domestic abuse work in North Yorkshire and York

The figures for police reported incidents of domestic abuse for the years 2005 – 2008 are included below:

	05/06	06/07	07/08
York	1581	2094	2059
North Yorkshire	3934	3673	3389
Total	5515	5767	5448

4.1 Accommodation

- 4.1.1 Current provision of specialist accommodation is in the form of refuges. There are currently three of these in North Yorkshire and York, providing a total of 28 family spaces, located within the Harrogate Borough, Scarborough Borough and City of York council boundaries. Scarborough refuge is closing in July 2009 and will move to dispersed housing in the community. The building of a new refuge in Scarborough is an objective of the Homeless Strategy. In addition a further refuge is soon to open in Hambleton adding another 16 family spaces.
- 4.1.2 Support costs for adults who are living in the refuges are met through Supporting People funding but there is no core funding for children and young people, and providers have to bid for funds from various sources to cover these costs. However, generic providers such as housing associations cannot apply for this funding which means there will be a shortfall in this situation. One of the above refuges is provided by a housing association.
- 4.1.3 The York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum has approved £25,000 for 2009/10 from the 'top-slicing' pot of the Area Based Grant for temporary accommodation.

- 4.1.3 In terms of non-specialist emergency accommodation, victims of domestic abuse are given priority under homeless legislation.

4.2 Support for victims

- 4.2.1 Provision of support services across the county and York varies and funding is provided from a range of sources including Supporting People, the Home Office, local Safer Communities Partnerships, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
- 4.2.2 Harrogate and district – Two community based workers working with adults are employed by Women’s Aid and a part-time Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) is managed by Victim Support. IDVA services work from the point of crisis with survivors of domestic violence providing support through the criminal justice system. Their work is typically short term and following the outcome of criminal proceeding clients will be referred to specialist services provided by WA for longer term support, civil remedies and recovery work. All agencies work within a multi-agency setting to manage the risk that clients face. There are no specialist children’s services.
- 4.2.3 Scarborough and district – Three full time outreach worker and two part time outreach workers are funded through Supporting People to work with adults. One part-time IDVA is managed by Victim Support. The NSPCC carry out safety planning and some one-to-one work in Scarborough and Whitby but there are no long term specialist children’s services.
- 4.2.4 Craven district – There is a good outreach service funded jointly by the Safer Communities Partnership and Supporting People. A part-time IDVA is managed by Craven Domestic Violence Service. There is some funding for community based children’s services from Children in Need.
- 4.2.5 Selby and district – There is one full time worker funded through Supporting People and a number of volunteers. The funding is for work with adults. There is a part-time IDVA managed by Victim Support. There is no specialist children’s provision.
- 4.2.6 Hambleton and Richmondshire – Two full-time and one part-time workers are funded by Supporting People and employed by Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) to work with adults. A part-time IDVA is also managed by IDAS. One young persons’ advocacy worker is in post to provide a specialist young people service for 11 to 18 year olds.
- 4.2.7 York – Three full-time outreach workers are funded by Supporting People and employed by IDAS. Two part-time children’s advocates are employed through the Children’s Trust Early Intervention Fund. The NSPCC provide group interventions.

- 4.2.8 The Domestic Abuse JCG is currently working to stress the benefits of mainstreaming the IDVA posts.
- 4.2.9 The York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum has approved £35,000 for 2009/10 from the 'top-slicing' pot of the Area Based Grant for IDVA provision.

4.3 Work with perpetrators

- 4.3.1 Programmes are in place across the county, including York, which aim to work with perpetrators, change their behaviour and resettle them. These schemes are provided by Foundation Housing and the Probation service. Funding is provided via Supporting People and the National Probation Service.
- 4.3.2 Domestic Violence Intervention Programmes (DVIP) were piloted in all areas across York and North Yorkshire in 2008/09 (Scarborough has been running a DVIP for a number of years). The aim of the programme is to prevent the commission of a criminal offence through early intervention.

4.4 Making Safe

- 4.4.1 Making Safe is a multi-agency initiative supporting victims of domestic abuse to remain safe within their own homes at the same time as challenging the offender's behaviour. It has won a Butler Trust Award and is nationally recognised as good practice having been successful in Scarborough and Ryedale at reducing re-offending figures dramatically. It is valued by all partners as a very effective mechanism towards achieving NI 32. The Making Safe Scheme has been adopted across York & North Yorkshire as best practice and is currently being rolled out by the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators, who are the project managers of the scheme.
- 4.4.2 All the support services previously mentioned contribute to the Making Safe programme.

4.5 Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators

- 4.5.1 Four Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators are in post for Harrogate/Craven, Scarborough/Ryedale, Hambleton/Richmondshire and Selby/York. (Note: In Richmondshire the post-holder is a Community Safety Officer who tackles Domestic Abuse and who is also developing Making Safe on behalf of Hambleton. This is to cover a part-time post in Hambleton which was vacant in 2008/09. This issue is currently being addressed)
- 4.5.2 The funding for these posts has been somewhat ad-hoc and fragmented leading to uncertainty and difficulty in forward planning, together with some difficulties with staff retention and recruitment. All co-ordinators currently have different employing authorities, slightly different job descriptions and gradings.

4.5.3 These posts are vital for the rolling out of the Making Safe programme, and the Co-ordinators also have a key role in Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and in progressing the North Yorkshire and York Domestic Abuse Strategy.

4.5.5 Work has been progressing for some considerable time to address funding issues, mainstream the posts and to ensure that the Co-ordinators work more as a team to share good practice and expertise across agencies locally, regionally and nationally and maintain a consistent approach across the area. The aim would also be to ensure resilience in the service with cover being able to be provided for sick leave etc. A common job description has been developed.

4.5.6 Agreement to joint fund these posts between NYCC, North Yorkshire Police and NHS North Yorkshire is being sought.

4.6 Generic services

4.6.1 It is also possible to refer clients into generic services such as lock changing. There are contracts and protocols developed for this purpose within the Making Safe programme.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The NYSP Executive is recommended to:

- Note the current provision for specialist domestic abuse services
- Agree to take a strategic lead in prioritising and raising the profile of domestic abuse prevention in North Yorkshire
- Agree to receive a six-monthly 'exception' report for two years, after which the reporting procedures to be reviewed

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