

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership – Executive

7 October 2010

Domestic Abuse: Update

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the NYSP Executive with an update on strategic issues within the County in relation to domestic abuse.

2 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting of 30th April 2009 the NYSP Executive agreed to take a strategic lead in prioritising and raising the profile of domestic abuse prevention in North Yorkshire.
- 2.2 To this end, the Executive would receive an update report at alternate meetings of the Executive (typically six monthly) over the subsequent two years, commencing with a report to the June 2009 meeting setting out the strategic planning and delivery components in place at the time and to highlight areas where improvements could be made.

3 Strategic planning and delivery of domestic abuse prevention in North Yorkshire

- 3.1 The following components of planning and delivery were considered at the June 2009 meeting:
- Data collection
 - Policies and procedures
 - Co-ordination
 - Information sharing and joint decision making
 - Partnership working
 - Services
 - Monitoring and review.

Key issues and developments against the above components, where applicable, are set out as follows:

3.2 Data collection

- 3.2.1 Relevant data is continuing to be collected through the Police and Supporting People. Police data includes incident data and repeat incidents as well as hotspot areas which is available from Quarter 1

2010/11. Supporting People data relates to homelessness presentation as a result of domestic violence and the origin of those using refuges in the county.

- 3.2.2 In addition to the data already collected, all areas are now using the same data collection database for Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) (see paragraph 3.5.1).
- 3.2.3 North Yorkshire Police have also commissioned a 'Problem solving' profile across York and North Yorkshire for additional analysis.
- 3.2.3 A domestic abuse data set is being developed with all the data being in one area; this will be useful for the JSIA's around the County.

3.3 Policies and procedures

- 3.3.1 The overall strategic direction for domestic abuse prevention work is contained in the York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- 3.3.2 The Safer Communities Forum has been formally consulted on the revised Strategy at its Forum meeting on 30th March 2010 and the Chair of the Safer Communities Forum stressed the importance of responsibilities amongst interested parties and associated processes moving forward.
- 3.3.3 Work is also needed to gain an understanding regarding whether employers have sufficient and functional procedures in place for providing support to employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse (this is also in the Strategy).
- 3.3.4 A pilot to develop a 'champions' scheme is being piloted in Hambleton and Richmondshire. 17 practitioners from 8 different agencies (including NYCC, HARCAS, Broadacres HA, Probation, Police, Hambleton District Council, NHS Trust and NSPCC) have been trained as Champions and the initial feedback has been positive. Additional Champions training for new recruits is being arranged for early 2011 as there has been more volunteers for the project. The scheme involves a network of trained, supported and resourced practitioners across a range of agencies. As the lead for domestic abuse in their agencies/unit, Champions give expert advice on how to get help/ support for victims. The Champions are aware of, and have access to, local resources/support. They can also act as an external contact for other agencies. This is also an action in the Selby Action Plan.

3.4 Co-ordination

- 3.4.1 Members of the NYSP Executive may recall that four Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators are in post for Harrogate/Craven, Scarborough/Ryedale, Hambleton/Richmondshire and Selby/York areas, but all currently have different employing authorities, and slightly different job descriptions and grades. The fragmented and ad-hoc funding arrangements which have been in place for these posts for a number of years has led to uncertainty and difficulty in forward planning, together with staff retention and recruitment problems. Access to data can also be an issue for those Co-ordinators not employed by the Police.
- 3.4.2 With regards to funding of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator posts, NYCC and NY Police will each contribute a third (circa £50k each) of the costs, with the remaining third being secured from a top slice of the allocation of Area Based Grant to the Safer Communities Forum. This is a short term arrangement; further consideration is being given to achieving a sustainable arrangement over the long term. There is some uncertainty as to the final third of this funding should there be any reduction in the Area Based Grant. Currently the Scarborough/ Ryedale post is vacant.
- 3.4.3 A further point of note concerning the Domestic Abuse Strategy is in regard to arrangements currently underway to align the Domestic Abuse Coordinators under a single employing entity; this will be the Police. Once achieved, greater co-ordination and standardisation of approach in delivering the agreed Domestic Abuse Strategy is likely to follow. Progress in this alignment is still ongoing.
- 3.4.4 It is already acknowledged within the NYSP structure that the subject of domestic abuse is of direct interest to other thematic partnerships, not least Children and Young People, and Adults, where joint awareness and coordination of activity is important. A similar level of awareness needs to be achieved and maintained on those fora that sit outside the NYSP structure, for example, the Local Criminal Justice Board and the Safeguarding Boards if partnership effort and performance is to be improved further.

3.5 Information sharing and joint decision making processes

- 3.5.1 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are in place across the county. The role of a MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety.

- 3.5.2 A review of MARACs in North Yorkshire has concluded and all areas have now received their second visits from Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) who are nationally recognised as best practice for MARACs across the country. Recommendations from the reports are currently being considered and actions put in place. Scarborough and Ryedale is now at the third stage of the Quality Assessment, which the DA JCG has agreed to continue with the process. Other areas will be requested to joint the third stage within the next year.
- 3.5.3 The information sharing protocol and procedures have now been finalised and agreed at the DA JCG on 20th July 2010 with actual sign up requested on 28th September 2010. A countywide MARAC group has been set up with the key agencies that are involved in MARAC for any issues that arise. Police agreed to govern the MARAC process at the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group on 19th January 2010.
- 3.5.4. Funding has been secured from the Home Office for 2 MARAC Administrators to be piloted for 6 months, they will be in post by mid-October 2010 and will enable one-point of contact for all MARAC referrals in York and North Yorkshire.
- 3.5.5 North Yorkshire Police continue to deliver their recently merged community protection, vulnerable persons, child protection and public protection units to form Protecting Vulnerable Persons Units (PVPs). There will be 4 of these units across the county – in Northallerton, Scarborough, York and Harrogate. Each of these units have a dedicated Detective Inspector and it is intended where possible, to build resilience by sharing intelligence and specialist skills. The Detective Inspector is also the Chair of each MARAC area.

3.6 Partnership working

- 3.6.1 Partnership working is facilitated through the structures and processes which have already been mentioned. One important component of partnership working in North Yorkshire is Making Safe which has now been rolled out across City of York and North Yorkshire. This 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. A revised Protocol is presently being developed.
- 3.6.2 Co-ordination of Making Safe is facilitated by the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators and is therefore subject to the limitations mentioned within 3.4.
- 3.6.3 It has been agreed to develop Specialist Domestic Violence Courts in the Harrogate, Skipton and Northallerton Courts. A multi agency working group led by the Local Criminal Justice Board has been set up to develop

this further. A protocol is presently being agreed. The public consultation regarding the possible closure of Skipton Courts is due to be considered after 15th September. Closure of the Courts will have a knock on effect at Harrogate Magistrates Court. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) are set up in all areas. In addition, funding has been received from the Home Office to provide additional (accredited) CAADA IDVA training for specialist domestic abuse services across York and North Yorkshire to increase capacity.

- 3.6.4 The World Cup Awareness Raising Campaign has been completed. This was funded by the NYSP. The 34 out of hours calls receive of these were from individuals seeking advice, outreach services and support. Increase of in-hours calls approx 25% linked to publicity but not to an increase in DV incidents.
- 3.6.5 The NYCC Domestic Abuse Officer (Gemma Ingles) has been working with the Domestic Abuse Coordinators to role out some training for Safety Planning with children and young people which aims to develop skills in confidently providing safety planning to children and young people. A countywide package has been agreed and the training will commence in January 2010.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1. That the NYSP Executive notes the content of the report and in particular the unresolved issue of securing a sustainable resource to tackle domestic violence.

Nigel Hutchinson

Chair of York & North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum
24th September 2010