

Communities and Environment Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 21st January 2016

UPDATE ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

1. Background

At the Last Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee, an update report specifically on domestic abuse was requested from Safer York Partnership. This report provides the domestic abuse data, adds the context to allow more accurate understanding of the data, outlines the work that has been taking place in York and also at a sub-regional (York & North Yorkshire) level.

2. Data

2014-15

Key Statistics	Total
Total Domestic Incidents	2746
Repeat Incidents	1017
% Repeats	37%
Incidents involving arrest	593
% Incidents involving arrest	22%
Incidents with child present	660
% Incidents with child present	24%

2015-16 (April – December)

Key Statistics	Total
Total Domestic Incidents	2182
Repeat Incidents April – July*	269
% Repeats	27%
Incidents involving arrest	506
% Incidents involving arrest	26%
Incidents with child present	461
% Incidents with child present	24%

* Please note that North Yorkshire Police (NYP) are changing the way in which Domestic Abuse Data is collected and reported and therefore repeat victim data has not been available since July

Incident Levels 2014-2015

Incident Level	Total	%
Standard Risk	1095	55
Medium Risk	715	36
High Risk	188	9
Unknown	748	-
TOTAL	2746	100

2015-16 April - July

Incident Level	Total	%
Standard Risk	373	52
Medium Risk	261	36
High Risk	86	12
Unknown	283	-
TOTAL	1003	100

All Domestic abuse incidents are recorded according to the risk level. Medium cases are those which would immediately trigger a multi-agency response. High risk cases are those subject to significant intervention e.g. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) . Standard risk cases would normally be dealt with as any other reported police incident. However, York has an early intervention project in place which provides more support at this stage. More detail on this is provided later within the report.

- 2.1 Data sets for 2015-16 are incomplete as NYP is currently reviewing the way in which data on Domestic Abuse is collated and reported. This is referenced later in the report.
- 2.2 The number of recorded domestic abuse incidents in York increased by 3% between 2013/14 and 2014/15. Slight increases have also been recorded in the first eight months of 2015/16. This is in line with a national increase and has been attributed to more consistent crime recording by the police and more public confidence in reporting incidents to the police.

- 2.3 York continues to experience the highest level of reported domestic incidents in the force area representing no change from previous years. However, decreases have been recorded in Westfield, Clifton and Heworth Wards which are likely to be attributable to the Early Intervention work undertaken within these wards.
- 2.4 Weekend periods record the highest number of occurrences with July being the peak month closely followed by December. This corresponds to the school holidays where families will spend more time together. Anecdotally, Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) have identified an increase in reporting after domestic related storylines have been incorporated into popular television soaps.
- 2.5 Domestic occurrences containing contributory elements of alcohol, drugs, mental health or linked to vulnerable adults or children are difficult to measure. From data that is available, 22% have alcohol and 2% have drugs as a contributory factor. Mental health is a factor in 6% and vulnerability is a factor in 1%.
- 2.6 Although York has the highest number of repeat victims across the North Yorkshire Police force area, averaging at 30%. Whilst this may seem high, it is within the national norm (28-40%). Slight reductions recorded in repeat incidents are attributed to the success of the Making Safe Scheme.

3.0 **Victims**

Female victims continue to dominate, although the number of male victims has increased. The age profile for both is similar i.e. between 22 and 28 years.

- 3.1 The early intervention project implemented within York 2013- 2016 has reduced repeat incidents for victims graded as standard risk, preventing them from increasing to a higher risk level. The project enables an IDAS early intervention worker and Police Community Support Officer to visit standard risk victims to provide support and advice. Between December 2014 and December 2015, 129 victims were contacted by the Early Intervention Worker of which 103 (80%) engaged with the service. These were then signposted to triage services or safety planning. Of those cases monitored

through Early Intervention, 124 victims (61%) did not experience repeat occurrences of domestic abuse and 86% experienced less than three calls for service. Prior to the piloting of this service, victims recorded as 'Standard' would not have received contact from a support worker and would most likely have resulted in a repeat incident. The project has been deemed successful and will form part of the specification for domestic abuse victim support services commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for York and North Yorkshire from April 2016.

- 3.1 Emotional abuse is most prevalent amongst victims in York, followed by physical abuse, verbal abuse and control.
- 3.2 The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator works other support agencies/groups to support communities where research suggests domestic abuse is more prevalent. Literature highlighting all local services available to victims is made available to these groups.
- 3.3 A new awareness campaign was launched by IDAS in November which includes information on how they intend to raise awareness and provide additional services to 'hard to reach' or overlooked groups experiencing domestic abuse. This includes parents who are victimised by their children, male victims and those who wouldn't normally report to the police. The service provides a single point of contact for self referrals via a 24 hour, 7 day week helpline and is intended to add value and enhance the services of IDAS by completing a victim needs assessment at point of contact. Increased access to the current Live Web Chat facility and additional outreach resources will be embedded into existing services provision.

4.0 **Perpetrators**

Male perpetrators continue to dominate with most aged in their mid 20s. The number of repeat perpetrators has decreased

- 4.1 In York, Safer York Partnership has been piloting a perpetrator project in conjunction with IDAS and Probation. Implemented in April 2015, Positive Steps is a 15 week programme specific to perpetrators, delivered in a safe, non-judgemental environment. The project enables them to build on their strengths and skills in order to make positive changes in current or future relationships. Subjects covered include relationships/communication and

feelings, children, parenting and co-parenting together with managing emotions and non-violent conflict resolution. Positive results within the first four months include one child returned to parents, one child moving from child protection to child in need and one family removed from any social care involvement due to the work that the victim and offender have undertaken. The pilot has been deemed so successful that it will form part of the specification for domestic abuse victim support services commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for York and North Yorkshire (OPCC) from April 2016.

5.0 Children and Young People

In 2014-15, York held 176 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). This is a decrease from 199 in the previous year but recognises the work that has been done on earlier intervention to reduce the risk level of domestic abuse cases. Data is not available for 2015-16 at this time although this will form part of ongoing work to improve the quality of future performance reports

- 5.1 City of York Council recorded 660 North Yorkshire Police incidents where children were recorded as present in 2014-15. This represents almost a quarter of domestic abuse incidents and is a 19% increase on the previous year. Within enquiries to York Childrens' Social Care, 1.44% were listed as 'Concern: Domestic abuse by child' with 13% as 'Concern: Domestic Abuse by Parent/Carer'. Detailed analysis of other factors relating to the remaining cases is not available. These figures place domestic abuse within the top three reasons for the enquiry alongside neglect and parental mental health. These issues are all the focus of multi-agency work within the city to tackle Domestic Abuse and its underlying causes.
- 5.2 The Family Focus (Troubled Families) programme in York has identified 160 children from 74 families supported by the programme as affected by domestic abuse. It should be noted that specific national criteria apply to those cases which are picked up through the troubled families programme. Those cases involving children who fall outside the remit of the Family focus cases are
- 5.3 IDAS have reported an increase in the number of parents presenting because of domestic related issues with their children,

consequently they are offering increased support to parents and young people, the latter via the 'Respect' programme. Although Respect funding was only available until March 2016, this will form part of the victims support service commissioning process for domestic abuse by the OPCC from April 2016.

6.0 Forced Marriage/Honour Based Abuse

The number of honour based abuse occurrences reported remains low. However, the number of calls made from York to the 'Honour Network Helpline' increased from 4 in 2014 to 14 in the first six months of 2015. Of these calls, 40% were from victims and the remainder from professionals e.g. NYP, Education, Safeguarding etc.

7.0 Improving the Governance arrangements for Domestic Abuse

In June 2015, a conference call took place as a result of a meeting between the Deputy Chief Constable and Safeguarding Adult and Children's leads for York and North Yorkshire. This followed concerns about the lack of clarity of governance arrangements for Domestic Abuse. Previously, York had a Domestic Abuse Strategy Group and the County received reports through the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership with separate reports being presented to the respective Safeguarding boards for the City and County. The result of the conference call was the establishment of a task and finish group comprised of representation from City of York Council, North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The remit was to review governance arrangements and report findings and recommendations to the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) for York and North Yorkshire.

- 7.1 The group met in July 2015 and reviewed the existing arrangements and reporting channels. The resulting report was submitted to both North Yorkshire CSP and Safer York Partnership in September 2015. The proposed model was to review the existing York and North Yorkshire Joint Coordinating group (JCG), comprised of operational leads on domestic abuse. It also proposed that the JCG collate a comprehensive quarterly performance report which presents both the statistical picture alongside the context and progress reports of work supporting

delivery of domestic abuse services. This report would then be submitted to both North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and Safer York Partnership where safeguarding children's' and adults' representatives could then take the same report to their respective boards. The CSPs would have the overall strategic governance responsibility for domestic abuse with safeguarding boards reporting on their activities through their representation on the partnerships.

- 7.2 Both CSPs have approved the proposal and work is being led by Odette Robson, Head of Safer Communities for North Yorkshire County Council and Jane Mowat, Head of Community Safety for City of York Council to revise the JCG and develop the performance structure.

8.0 **The Future of Domestic Abuse Services**

Domestic Abuse support services are commissioned by the OPCC. Until March 2016, this is confined to victim services, although other services in York such as the Perpetrator programme have been funded via Safer York Partnership from their allocation of OPCC funding. The OPCC has collated all information relating to both directly commissioned services and those funded as projects through the community safety partnerships in order to develop a single comprehensive specification for all domestic abuse support from April 2016. This will include extending the York perpetrator and early intervention projects across York and North Yorkshire and continuation of the 'Respect' training programme.

9.0 **Conclusion**

Domestic abuse continues to be a priority within City of York council and Safer York Partnership. The revision in governance arrangements will clarify reporting processes and ensure that consistent information is provided to both the community safety partnerships for York and North Yorkshire and also to the respective county and city Safeguarding Boards. Work has continued in York to further develop services provided to both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, recognising that this dual focused approach delivers the most beneficial outcomes. Projects funded through Safer York Partnership have included the continued development of the Early Intervention project, the pilot of

the Perpetrators Programme and the extension of IDAS's helpline for emergency support and advice to a 24 hour, seven days a week service. As a result of success achieved in York, these projects have informed the development of the overall service specification for domestic abuse from April 2016 to be extended across the city and county.

Jane Mowat
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Glossary of Abbreviations

CSP – Community Safety Partnerships

JCG – Joint Coordinating Group

IDAS – Independent Domestic Abuse Service

MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

NYP – North Yorkshire Police

OPCC – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner