

Report of the Assistant Director of Housing & Community Safety.

Update on Domestic Abuse

Summary

1. The following report provides an update on work to tackle Domestic Abuse in York.

History

2. A joined up delivery structure for domestic abuse across York and North Yorkshire was first established in 2003 in order to recognise the movement of perpetrators and victims between the City of York and districts that make up the county of North Yorkshire. It also ensured consistency of service provision by North Yorkshire Police across the whole force area. At this time, the Home Office made available funding to Community Safety Partnerships to support the establishment of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators within Local Authorities. However, this funding was limited to three years and at the time, because of issues with the way in which police in York were tackling domestic abuse, it was agreed to postpone the appointment of a co-ordinator until a police review of domestic abuse had been completed.
3. Despite, the delay in appointing a co-ordinator for York, work continued to develop the first Domestic Abuse strategy for York and North Yorkshire led by Probation and involving all of the Community Safety Partnerships in the city and County.
4. Following the police review, it was agreed that the co-ordinator post would be better employed by North Yorkshire Police in order to give direct access to police data and intelligence. The post was established toward the end of 2003 for York and Selby, funded from Home Office funding awarded to the Community Safety Partnerships. It was mainstreamed by the Police and funded from 2008 by them.

5. In 2008, a Joint Co-ordinating Group to oversee delivery of domestic abuse services was established under the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum (a strategic multi-agency body to oversee delivery of the North Yorkshire Local Area Agreement (LAA), be accountable for Home Office funding aligned to the LAA and share good practice with York). This group continued to oversee development of subsequent Domestic Abuse Strategies and was accountable for the commissioned Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service (IDVA), the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process and the work of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators.

6. In 2013, in order to resolve the issue of unsustainable funding sources supporting IDVA/MARAC and Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator posts, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner commissioned a review, culminating in a request for a joint funding commitment from City of York Council, OPCC and North Yorkshire County Council to support these services until March 2016.

7. To reflect the financial commitment by City of York Council and in support of the council's aim to achieve White Ribbon Status for Domestic Abuse, a Strategic Board was established to oversee delivery of domestic abuse services specifically within the City and to drive the City's commitment to the York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy. This Strategic Board has now been disbanded.

Domestic Abuse Data

8. Domestic Abuse incidents:

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
2982	2739	2819	2823	2746

The number of domestic abuse incidents has remained fairly steady for the last five years. There have been no domestic abuse homicides in the city. The data shows a decrease in the total number of incidents involving 16-29 year olds and 30-49 year olds. Since the beginning of January 2015, there has been an increase in the number of incidents reported involving 50-69 year olds. This has been due to increased reporting through closer working between City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Domestic Abuse Strategy Delivery aims

Early Intervention, prevention and victim: Early Intervention Pilot

9. Safer York Partnership developed and funded an Early Intervention Project in 2013/14 to enable support to be given to victims before they become high risk. An early intervention worker is employed by Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) and visits standard risk victims together with a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). The worker is based within the local Childrens Centres providing links with practitioners who can provide support. This work links to the troubled families project. The project has gained interest from the OPCC who are looking to role this model out across the whole force area.
10. Reductions in domestic abuse incidents would indicate that the early intervention programme has made a positive impact. High referral rates to the programme were made though October and November.
11. **Victims/Perpetrators and Partnership Commitment: MARAC**

The co-location of the domestic abuse co-ordinator, police officers and City of York Council staff within the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub continues to make the MARAC process very effective within York.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
No or MARAC Cases discussed	160	188	176
No of Repeat MARACS	30	30	51

The majority of MARAC referrals are made by the police followed by IDAS.

Children & Young People: Expect Respect

12. Expect Respect is the toolkit recommended for schools to address Domestic Abuse and promote equal and healthy relationships from KS1 through to KS4. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator and Senior Adviser for the Behaviour, Attendance and Safety Unit have delivered examples of good practice and domestic abuse advice and information to Clifton Cluster and Acomb Cluster this year. This has been well received, with

positive feedback and schools have requested further input on children as victims. Education are also participating well through the Domestic Abuse Forum.

Sharing Good Practice: Domestic Abuse Forum

13. The last Domestic Abuse Forum took place on 27th March with a theme of 'introduction to the Domestic Abuse Champion Scheme'. This formally launched the scheme in York. Attendance at Domestic Abuse forums has steadily increased over the last twelve months with multi-agency representatives keen to share good practice and discuss topical themes.

The Perpetrator Programme

14. In 2015, Safer York Partnership has funded a perpetrator programme in the city in recognition of the fact that success in tackling domestic abuse requires work with both the perpetrator and the victim to stop the cycle of abuse. Seven assessments have been undertaken by IDAS and Probation. The programme is named 'Positive Steps' and can only be accessed via a referral from Children's Social Care via a safeguarding requirement or a child in need voluntary arrangement, through the Troubled Families programme or via Making Safe. The programme runs for 16 weeks with risk assessments carried out with the offender/victim at the beginning and end of every programme. Offenders will be asked to consent on feedback for the evaluation of the programme.

Victim Support Services

15. Victim support services are delivered through a contract with Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) which is a York based charity. Funding is from contributions by North Yorkshire Police, City of York Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and North Yorkshire County Council. This ensures a consistent approach to service delivery across the county and city and enables agencies to co-ordinate support to both victims and perpetrators.
16. Victims who present to CYC Housing Options during Office hours as fleeing domestic abuse may be placed in temporary emergency accommodation or provided with contact may be made with IDAS who will source refuge accommodation and link with Housing Options for a more permanent solution. City of York Council and Harrogate District Council were recently successful in securing Government Funding for three years for IDAS to provide a 24hour hotline which enables them to

source refuge accommodation, linking with the Emergency Duty Team at CYC. Refuge accommodation for a York victim would normally be provided in the Harrogate refuge and vice versa. IDAS are also able to source refuge accommodation where victims have specific needs eg. Health/faith/disability.

Governance Arrangements

17. The North Yorkshire Police Deputy Chief Constable has commissioned a piece of work to look at the Governance arrangements in York and North Yorkshire for Domestic Abuse. Currently, separate reports are received by the adult and children's safeguarding boards for both county and city as well as by the two Community Safety Partnerships. In addition, local governance is held by the District Community Safety Local Delivery Groups across North Yorkshire. In 2008, the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum, a body comprised of the responsible authorities for community safety delivery, chairs of the former district and York Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and local authority representation, assumed responsibility for overseeing performance against the community safety elements and funding of the Local Area Agreement for North Yorkshire. Joint Co-ordinating Groups (JCG) were established for each of the community safety themes including Domestic Abuse. York also had representation on the Domestic Abuse JCG from the CSP and also from CYC as Supporting People funding contributed to county and city domestic abuse services.
18. The current review of Governance will oversee the revision of this JCG to include better representation for York and develop a consistent single report on performance in relation to Domestic Abuse. This report will be taken to both Safer York Partnership and the county Community Safety Partnership where representatives from both adult and children's safeguarding will, in turn, provide this report to their respective boards.

Conclusion

19. York is regarded as the flagship area for North Yorkshire Police Force in terms of the interventions and partnership working that is delivered to tackle domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Strategic Board has developed an action plan specific to York which sits under the sub-regional York & North Yorkshire Strategy and the strategy has been formally signed off by the County and the City. Initiatives such as the Early Intervention and Perpetrators projects which have been developed and funded by Safer York Partnership, are showing positive

results and are being monitored by OPCC with a view to rolling these out more widely across the county.

Analysis

20. The analysis is set out within the body of the report.
21. Domestic abuse levels have remained consistent over the last five years and no domestic homicides have occurred in the city. There is a direct link between increases in reporting and the pro-active marketing campaigns which are delivered through Safer York Partnership at key times eg. Christmas, World Cup etc. However, the benefit of early intervention work and close partnership working between the voluntary sector, police and local authority means that support is quickly provided to those victims who come forward.

Council Plan

22. Work to tackle Domestic Abuse links to “Build Strong Communities” and ‘Protecting Vulnerable People” within the Council Plan.

Implications

23. The implications arising directly from this report are:
 - **Financial** – Continued support to the IDVA/MARAC/DV Coordinator posts
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications.
 - **Equalities** – delivery of outcomes related to hate crime, fits with the ongoing work on equalities
 - **Legal** – There are no direct legal implications.
 - **Crime and Disorder** – Domestic Abuse features as a priority within the Community Safety Plan for York
 - **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications
 - **Property** – There are no property implications
 - **Other** – There are no other implications

Risk Management

24. There are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

25. Members of the Communities and Environmental Policy and Scrutiny Group are asked to note the content of the report.

Reason: To provide an update on the work being carried out to tackle domestic violence.

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Report **Date** 16 July 2015
Approved

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report