

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO HEALTH, WELLBEING AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**01 December 2019**

**Report Title:** Domestic Abuse

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**Portfolios:** Community Safety and Wellbeing

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Purpose of the Report**

This report seeks to update the Scrutiny Committee on arrangements for the co-ordination and delivery of domestic abuse services in the Borough as part of the Staffordshire conurbation. This will include information for Members on Governance arrangements, local demand, available services, processes in place to access specialist services and complementary initiatives.

**Recommendation**

That the Scrutiny Committee consider the information presented and provide constructive challenge to the approach to service delivery in the Borough.

**Reasons**

The report has been written in response to a request from Scrutiny Members.

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The definition of domestic abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

This definition, includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

- 1.2 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background.
- 1.3 For a number of years the Borough Council commissioned domestic abuse services for Newcastle to complement existing domestic abuse services commissioned by the County Council. From April 2015 to September 2018, the Borough Council commissioned a whole family approach, to ensure that there was a consistent service to offer early intervention and prevention and more intensive support to high risk cases. The service ceased when Staffordshire Commissioner's Office commissioned a baseline pan Staffordshire service (see 1.4 below).
- 1.4 In October 2018, Staffordshire Commissioner's Office, working with Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, jointly commissioned pan Staffordshire domestic abuse services in a contract valued at £1,930,000 pa, with contributions of £909,000 pa from the Staffordshire Commissioner, £600,000 pa from Staffordshire County Council and £421,000 from Stoke-on-Trent City Council. The services support all those affected by domestic abuse and provides a consistent provision across the County and City areas; it is branded as New Era.
- 1.5 As part of its work programme the Scrutiny Committee agreed at its June meeting that it would scrutinise "the incidence of domestic violence and the impact of local initiatives". This report has been prepared to facilitate that scrutiny and enables Members to explore issues such as service demand, how demand is met and the impact of services in line with the June resolution.

## **2. Governance**

- 2.1 Pan Staffordshire multi-agency governance of the Domestic Abuse (DA) agenda was established in Spring 2018, taking the form of the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board (DACDB). Jointly chaired by strategic leads within Staffordshire County and Stoke-on-Trent City Councils, the Board manages and oversees delivery of the pan Staffordshire DA Strategy (2017-2020) through the DA Action Plan (2017-2020).

The DA Action Plan is overseen by three DA working groups;

- Preventing Violence and Abuse;
- Provision of Services & Partnership Working;
- Perpetrators.

Additionally and to support the DACDB, a DA Performance Framework is under development through the DA Performance Framework Working Group.

The Board and Working Groups comprise multi-agency representation which includes District/Borough Authorities.

## **3. Local demand**

- 3.1 The period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 has been used as the monitoring period in this report because it is the first year of the pan Staffordshire domestic abuse service New Era, as outlined in Section 4 below.
- 3.2 During the review period, Staffordshire Police have received 2907 new reports of Domestic Abuse in the Borough, 2283 of those were partner/ex-partner incidents and 624 were due to an incident with a family member. There were 41% repeat cases over this period. A snapshot of demand data in Newcastle-under-Lyme is presented at Appendix 1 for information.
- 3.3 A DIAL is a risk assessment used by a Police Officer, attending an incident of domestic abuse to assess the level of risk that the victim faces. If a victim scores over 10 on the DIAL this triggers a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for risk assessing onward referral to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) (see section 5 below). If it scores 14 and over it

automatically goes to the MARAC as a high risk case and a score of 9 and below is classed as standard or low risk. 48% of all DIAL's completed (1200 cases) scored 10 and above during the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

3.4 Across the 10 Staffordshire (including Stoke-on-Trent) Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs), Newcastle-under-Lyme NPT has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest recorded domestic incidents, behind Stoke-on-Trent North and Stoke-on-Trent South.

#### **4. Local services and performance information**

##### **4.1 New Era**

The pan Staffordshire contract for provision of support for victims of DA was awarded to Victim Support, and the contract for the provision of rehabilitation services for Perpetrators of DA was awarded to the Reducing Reoffending Partnership (RRP) in contracts valued at £1,670m for victim services and £260,000 for perpetrator support. The services operate jointly under the brand of New Era.

##### **4.1.1 Background**

Historically, DA services were independently funded through grant arrangement by Staffordshire County Council in the County area, by commissioning arrangement in the City area and independently commissioned by individual district / borough authorities. The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office (SCO) provided some top-up funding to County / City due to increasing demands on services.

The challenges however faced by those individuals seeking DA support continued, and included:

- A lack of consistent service provision and issues with service capacity;
- Gaps in the provision of services;
- Limited and inconsistent perpetrator support and programmes;
- Limited and inconsistent support for young people;
- No agreed approach to DA education provision, with no consistent and locally agreed education packages;
- Lack of recognition of and capacity to serve the full diversity of DA;
- Significant investment focussed on complex needs provision;
- A volume of confused, disjointed processes and referral pathways into services, some of which were duplicated;
- The number of different levels of service / interventions, with measures of contributions and outcomes not always clearly visible;
- Links between providers of DA services and the criminal justice service not as robust as could be.
- Multiple DA governance, planning and commissioning arrangements with unaligned budgets, and that an integrated whole support system approach not always evident.
- There was a recognition of the good work and commitment of all providers operating in the DA arena.

Considering the volume/nature of challenges faced by those in need, the SCO led discussions with Staffordshire County and City Councils with a view to jointly procuring consistent services that sought to address the issues identified.

The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (DANA) was produced in 2016 by Staffordshire County Insight Team and this formed the basis of the commissioning DA services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

#### 4.1.2 Procurement

An extensive EU procurement exercise was undertaken, with representatives from the SCO, Staffordshire County and City Councils, Newcastle Borough Council, Police and Safeguarding forming the commissioning panel.

#### 4.1.3 Service Provision

The New Era service was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and as a result of the joint commissioning approach, services have been significantly extended to provide geographically consistent support for victims, perpetrators, children and young people, businesses and the local community through a tiered support comprising:

- Prevention
- Early Intervention;
- Targeted & Acute Support.

Investing in prevention and early intervention services is well recognised as the one of the most important factors to reduce the generational cycle of abuse, and such investment was always anticipated to increase levels of demand and indeed confidence in reporting of this form of unacceptable behaviour.

#### 4.1.4 Localised Additional Demand

If and when increased localised demand is identified by local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), District and Borough authorities are able to secure additional DA services through locally available funds.

#### 4.1.5 New Era Service Offer

##### **Victims**

There is a consistent, comprehensive service offer available from New Era, including 24/7 telephone contact and Webchat (victims service). For both adults and children, the team provides locally based one to one support and a range of group work programmes alongside step down out of service through peer support.

In the community New Era provide the DA in the workplace programme, run legal surgeries, have court based IDVA support, hospital based support and provide specialist DA awareness training to key cohorts including GP's, dentists, hairdressers, community groups, engage in prevention education and have more recently been asked to deliver a magistrates awareness training programme.

Numbers of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA's), identified by SafeLives as significantly under resourced in Staffordshire, have been increased to meet national requirements.

##### **Perpetrators**

The perpetrator service aims to rehabilitate offenders and change their behaviour operates with consent. It provides locally based 121 support and a range of group work programmes for both adults and children and again supports the DA in the workplace programme and prevention education in the community.

#### 4.1.6 Contract Management

Oversight and scrutiny of the jointly commissioned contract is provided by the DA Joint Commissioning Working Group (DAJCWG) made up of representatives from each of the three commissioning organisations, on a quarterly basis.

## **Victim Service - Performance Information 12 Months to 30/9/19**

The Victim service has received over 5,500 referrals/enquiries in the first 12 months, which resulted in almost 3,000 cases where the victim has support (86% adults / 14% children). In Newcastle, this equated to almost 380 individuals receiving support, 12% of which were children (45).

### **Perpetrator Service – All Referrals**

The Perpetrator service has received over 230 referrals/enquiries in the first 12 months, which resulted in 211 cases receiving support (93% adults / 7% children). In Newcastle, this equated to 35 individuals receiving support, 9% of which were children (3).

#### **4.1.7 Summary**

It is recognised that whilst new services are delivering positive outcomes, improvement opportunities will continue to be identified. Individual agency referral process pathways will continue to be refined to provide workable streamlined solutions for partners and service users alike.

Whilst relationships between the new commissioned providers and previously commissioned service providers are developing positively, the need for greater harmonisation to meet increasing demand is ongoing and Commissioners are working with all parties to ensure services can effectively meet community pressures.

#### **4.2 Children and Young People's (CYP) Domestic Abuse Service**

After undertaking a local needs assessment in 2019, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council as the lead partner for the Newcastle Partnership commissioned a specialist domestic abuse provider, Glow, to deliver domestic abuse services specifically for CYP to complement the pan Staffordshire New Era service. It is important to note that this is a small and specialist service compared to the baseline New Era service. The main purpose of the service is to offer specialist support to children and young people affected by domestic abuse, either due to them witnessing it within the family home or experiencing it in their own relationships. This is to safeguard the CYP and to help them move on and reduce the chances that they will go on to become victims and perpetrator's in the future.

4.2.1 First Response in Staffordshire report that there are 1000's of children and young people affected by domestic abuse. In Newcastle Families First suggest that over 50% of the referrals received each week are affected and it is the biggest cohort of children at risk in the Borough.

There are also known to be a large number of teenagers in abusive relationships from as young as 12, these young people need the support to prevent them becoming high risk adults and help them understand the principals of healthy relationships. The last domestic homicide review (DHR) in the Borough was a teenage relationship.

4.2.2 The key aims and objectives of the CYP service are;

- To reduce significant risk of harm to the child or young person from both direct abuse or by witnessing abuse in the family home.
- Increase the safety of the children and young people witnessing and experiencing domestic abuse.
- To ensure that children and young people are more confident in seeking help and support
- To offer a high level of specialist domestic abuse support to children and young people at low, medium and high risk.
- To improve the availability and quality of information and resources for children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse
- To contribute to reducing the long-term effects of domestic abuse on children and young people
- To raise awareness of the issues faced by children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse.

- To provide regular drop in's for students at Newcastle College and the schools in the Borough in order to provide support for students and guidance and advice for professionals.
- To understand the links between gangs/criminal exploitation and teenage abusive relationships and to be able to work with this particular cohort of young people.
- To understand the links between domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation and be able to identify and respond to exploitation.
- To work within SafeLives best practice guidance for the role of the YPVA (Young Persons Violence Advisor) by working with 13 – 17 year olds in their own abusive relationships and have the SafeLives YPVA qualification.
- To support children and young people in a setting that best suits their need.

#### 4.2.3 Contract Management

Once the CYP contract was awarded considerable preparatory work was undertaken by Glow in readiness for accepting referrals. All primary and secondary schools in the Borough were visited and informed about the service. A networking event was hosted by Glow and attended by school support staff, school safeguarding leads, teachers and deputy heads. An introduction was given on the work that the CYP team could deliver, how to complete referral forms and all contact details for staff. Information was also given on future training events that were being delivered for school staff. Glow also attended a roadshow hosted by the Kings CE School and a number of other events and 18 safety packs were given out to students who had concerns about their own relationships or relationships at home. They have also regularly attended both the anti-social behaviour panels and also the child sexual exploitation panels in the Borough.

As a result of the preliminary work that was carried out by the service provider in the first quarter, over the summer period with the schools, referrals to the CYP service were received. The total number of enquiries / referrals to the service from 1<sup>st</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> October was 33. The total number of cases given support to date has been 27 and a further 6 cases declined further assistance or were referred elsewhere. At the time of writing the current caseload for the Young Persons Violence Advocate (High risk) (part time) is 6 and for the CYP practitioner (lower risk)(full time) is 18.

### 5. Local working arrangements

- 5.1 The Children and Families Transformation Programme co-ordinated by Staffordshire County Council through the Families Strategic Partnership, encouraged the introduction of a Place Based Approach (PBA) for Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 5.2 PBA seeks to respond to the challenges of reducing budgets and resources while dealing with increasing demand and complexity of cases presenting to statutory services. A project group was created in the Borough to further develop and refine a local efficient and effective system for providing support to families and vulnerable people who do not meet a statutory threshold, to de-escalate risk and improve local resilience within their own community networks of support.
- 5.3 The project working group established a multi-agency team and maximised the opportunities of co-location following the move to Castle House in 2018. More specifically it was tasked to create a Daily Hub bringing partners together to deal with cases where vulnerability has been identified and seeking to deescalate risk and reduce demand to statutory services, via a common referral process, supported by a shared computer system to administer cases and share information.
- 5.4 Referrals are currently made to the Daily Hub using 'professional judgement' from partners who may need to ascertain further information following issues relating to vulnerability, which have given a cause for concern or having already identified that a single agency response is not sufficient to resolving the issue or to de-escalate the presenting risks.
- 5.5 The Daily Hub works alongside the Weekly Hub, which manages more complex vulnerability cases, needing longer term attention and the weekly MARAC forum, which manages high risk domestic abuse cases in the Borough. Where a more considered review of vulnerability is required, cases are

referred from the Daily forum to the Weekly forum and for high risk domestic abuse cases they are referred directly to the MARAC from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) but with immediate safeguarding and problem solving put in place locally.

- 5.6 The MARAC is held at Castle House each week and is well attended by a range of partners including Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, New Era, Children's safeguarding and Early Help Team, Aspire Housing, Glow, Newcastle Housing Advice, Homestart, Mental Health, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Maternity Services. The forum is Chaired by either the Neighbourhood Commander from the Neighbourhood Policing Team at Staffordshire Police or the Partnerships Manager at the Borough Council, who ensure that appropriate tasking is assigned to partners who contribute to reducing the risk and harm around vulnerable victims of domestic abuse.
- 5.7 Once it is decided that the a case is being reviewed by the MARAC, it is referred to New Era's Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) and in line with Victim Support's Policy, they contact the victim if they agree to be referred onto a DA specialist to receive support, in order that their feelings and wishes can be brought to the MARAC and taken into consideration when trying to reduce risk around the victim and their family.
- 5.8 The issue of consent in the context of high risk domestic abuse cases is not straightforward and is a topic of debate within the profession. For example, SafeLives (a national charity with particular expertise in this field), advise that consent is not the appropriate lawful basis for sharing information when someone has been assessed as high risk. The requirement for consent by the service provider has been raised with Commissioners and New Era and is currently being worked through, as in the event of a domestic homicide review it is likely to be raised as a considerable concern.
- 5.9 Prior to October 2018 the Borough Council commissioned an Early Intervention service, using external funding, which ended 18/19. This service picked up the lower risk cases that had contacted the Police but didn't meet the threshold for MARAC. Contact was made with the victim and support was offered. The aim of the Early Intervention Service was to prevent victims from becoming high risk and preventing them becoming MARAC level by giving them the support and assistance at the earliest opportunity. These lower risk cases now need to self-refer as that direct contact is no longer available.
- 5.10 The Council was allocated further external funding into 19/20 with the Locality Deal Funding for the Newcastle Partnership to deliver against the agreed priorities, as outlined in the Local Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020, on the understanding that they did not commission services which would duplicate those delivered by the New Era baseline service model. The Partnership undertook a comprehensive needs assessment and identified that there was a limited service capacity for CYP in the pan Staffordshire New Era service, therefore a decision was made to commission an additional provision for CYP using the Locality Deal Funding.

## **6. Local initiatives**

- 6.1 Previously the Borough Council has led on a large range of domestic abuse awareness campaigns. The Borough had previously achieved White Ribbon status for the range of awareness activity it has co-ordinated. Some of the campaigns have been delivered over domestic abuse week which is in November each year, during major football tournaments such as the World Cup and the European Championships. The Borough Council has co-ordinated a number of Christmas awareness campaigns and local fundraising. There is research to show that during times such as football competitions and during Christmas domestic abuse increases. The Borough has also run campaigns over Valentines Day. Several campaigns have been run and targeted towards young people with work specially targeted towards Newcastle college students.

## **7. National specialist domestic abuse services**

- 7.1 There are a wide range of national services available to victims of domestic abuse and their families some of the main services include:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247 24hr (Run in partnership with Women’s Aid and Refuge)
- ManKind – Helping Men escape domestic abuse – 01823 334244 10am – 4pm
- Broken Rainbow LGBT Domestic abuse helpline – 0300 999 5428 10am-8pm
- Karma Nirvana – Honour based violence helpline – 0800 5999 247
- Childline – 0800 1111
- NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 24 hr helpline.

## **8. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 8.1 The Council has statutory duties under the Children Act (1989) and (2004), the Care Act (2014) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging functions we have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect.
- 8.2 The Council also has statutory duties under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), when a domestic homicide occurs in the Borough, to instigate and lead a domestic homicide review (DHR), as the accountable body for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Overall responsibility for establishing a DHR rests with the local CSP as they are ideally placed to initiate a DHR and review panel due to their multi-agency design. CSPs are made up of representatives from the ‘responsible authorities’ (police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, probation service and health) who work together to protect their local communities from crime and help people feel safer.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been developed for this area of work.

## **10. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 10.1 The costs of the Pan Staffordshire service are met by Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue and Crime, with contributions from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council.
- 10.2 The costs of additional Children and Young People’s service are currently met by the Newcastle Partnership using the Locality Deal Fund from the Staffordshire Commissioner and partnership contributions. Discussions are underway with partners to consider funding for the 2020-21 period for the CYP service to ensure that the service can be sustained and beyond.

## **11. Major Risks**

- 11.1 If domestic abuse services are inadequate and/or do not have enough capacity, support to vulnerable victims and their families will be unavailable which would reduce the ability to undertake preventative work and increases the risk of the occurrence of domestic homicide.
- 11.2 The New Era service is currently commissioned for 3 plus 2 years and therefore has 2 plus potentially 2 years remaining. Commitment to provide funding for the initial contractual term is in place with the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council under a tri-partite legal agreement. Parties will reach agreement on any plans to extend the service, as per the tri-partite agreement timescales at a date to be defined.
- 11.3 New Era provides baseline services for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Commissioners Office have identified the opportunity to secure additionality based on local identified need. There is a risk however, that if the funding is not available to continue the locally commissioned CYP service from April 2020, vulnerable children and young people in the Borough could potentially go without the vital support they need.



12. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

N/A

13. **Key Decision Information**

N/A

14. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

N/A

15. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Statistical snapshot of domestic abuse in Newcastle-under-Lyme (Staffordshire Police).

16. **Background Papers**

N/A