

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Delyth Curtis, Director of People
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	6 April 2016

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE THEMATIC DISCUSSION**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

To enable a thematic discussion around domestic abuse in order to ensure effective scrutiny is undertaken.

### **2.0 Recommendation:**

2.1 To scrutinise domestic abuse in Blackpool and identify any issues for further scrutiny.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 To ensure Members of the Committee have an understanding of domestic abuse in Blackpool and have the knowledge to undertake effective scrutiny.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council?

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget?

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

### **4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

## 5.0 Background Information

5.1 Preventing and managing the impact of Domestic Abuse continues to be a priority for the town and is being approached as a partnership. Both the Blackpool Safeguarding Childrens Board and the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board identify Domestic Abuse as a key priority as does the BSafe Community Safety Partnership.

5.2 Why is Domestic Abuse a priority?

Blackpool experiences a high volume of domestic abuse incidents, with a large number of high risk cases that are dealt with through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). With Domestic Abuse contributing to 10% of all crime, as well as scoring highly in terms of harm, it is vital that it remains a priority for the Partnerships. There are also high numbers of children living in abusive homes; and alcohol consumption is often a key factor within domestic abuse settings.

Domestic abuse in Blackpool appears to be significantly high compared to Lancashire and England as a whole.

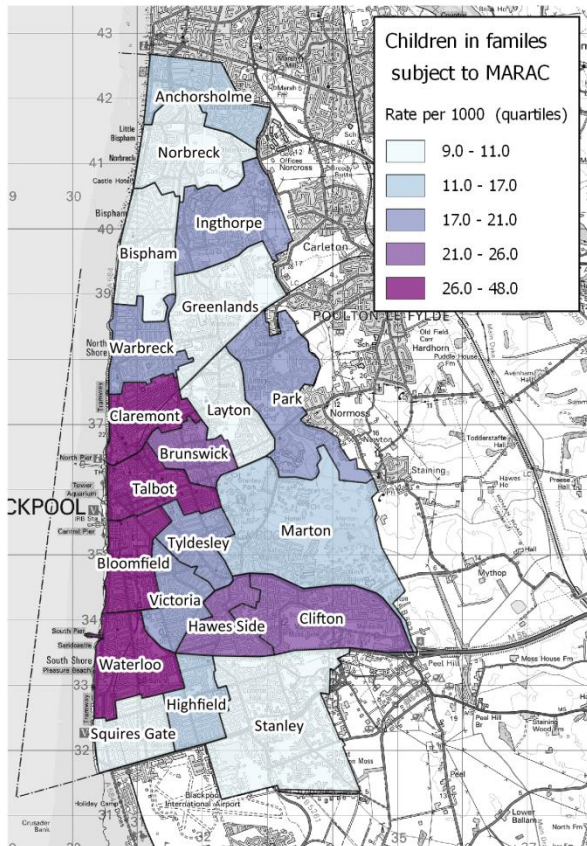
- In Blackpool, 1,506 crimes were recorded with a qualifying factor of Domestic Violence. This is the highest rate in Lancashire at 10.6 per 1,000 population, compared to a rate of 14.52 for Lancashire as a whole. (Source: Safer Lancashire MADE, 2014/15)
- In terms of ALL incidents reported there were approximately 4,400 incidents which were classed as potential domestic violence. Reported incidents recorded by the police have reduced to 29.58 from 44.27 incidents per 1,000 population between 2011/12 and 2014/15.

National research into domestic abuse highlights that it is a significantly under reported area and many victims forego taking forward formal criminal proceedings. It is likely that the underlying need is higher than reported statistics.

For high-risk abuse cases, referrals are made to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which will determine a risk management plan for all parties i.e. victim, perpetrator and associated children. MARAC conference data for Blackpool shows:

- Blackpool discussed 593 cases at a MARAC, a rate of 99 per 10,000 population - this is three times higher than the national rate of 32 per 10,000 in 2014. Of the cases, 26% were repeat victims.
- In 2014, the conferences identified 734 children were present in families and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse incidents.
- Males were victims in 7% of cases, compared to 5% for England.
- 16-17 year olds were victims in 4% of cases, compared to 2% for England.

### Children in families subject to MARAC - Ward Rates



Data Source: Blackpool MARAC Data 2015

### Additional local case data for 2013/14 highlights

- The majority of children identified in families subject to MARAC are infants, with 40% of all children identified as aged under 5, and 39% aged between 5 and 11.
- Overall, there has been a small reduction in MARAC cases since the original needs assessment though not to a degree that suggests it is becoming less of a priority.

The map, above, shows the ward distribution of children in families subject to the MARAC process as a rate per 1,000 children resident in the ward for 2013/14. The map only includes records where the home ward of children was known (approximately 75% of all records).

The central wards of Claremont, Talbot and Bloomfield are in the upper quintile of the highest rates of children in families subject to MARAC. Waterloo also has a high rate and Clifton, Brunswick and Hawes Side fall into the second quintile and above average rates of children.

A further geo-demographic analysis of MARAC records highlighted that the majority (59%) of children in families subject to MARAC were from 2 MOSAIC types: M Family Basics and L Transient Renters.

Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling or coercive behaviour, threatening behaviour, or violence or abuse. This applies to individuals aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family

members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological abuse (isolation, excluding from events etc.), physical abuse (slapping, burning, cutting etc.), sexual abuse (rape, voyeurism, harassment etc.), financial abuse (withholding money, having to ask for money etc.) and emotional abuse (name-calling, bullying, mocking etc.). The harm caused by this abuse is often long lasting, with some victims being at risk of becoming future perpetrators.

Having spent a number of years encouraging victims to report Domestic Abuse, many more victims have started to come forward about their experiences. This enables the Partnerships to more effectively support victims, as well as tackling the perpetrators, and helps greater numbers of victims receive the help they require. Consequently, it has been encouraging to see reports of abuse gradually begin to decrease. However, further work on the causation factors that often link to Domestic Abuse, such as alcohol misuse, is needed to tackle abuse as early as possible.

It must be noted that 52% of Child Protection Plans nationally are as a result of Domestic abuse and impact significantly on family breakdown and children becoming looked after. Locally we need to do more work to capture the data and this is being taken forward through a multi-agency group which is Chaired by the Deputy Director of People and outlined below.

### 5.3 What we propose to do:

The Partnerships in Blackpool are currently conducting a comprehensive review of Domestic Abuse Services. This piece of work involves all Partnerships and Commissioning representatives looking at an integrated commissioning approach to services and includes further workforce development for front line staff. Further to this, there are currently Domestic Abuse Pilots being implemented as follows:

#### 5.3.1 **The Inner Strength Programme (See Appendix 3(a) Case Study)**

The Inner Strength Programme targets perpetrators of Domestic Abuse and the first cohort has already been completed. The programme has been developed to impact upon offending behaviour, support victims who decide to remain with their offending partner, and reduce the risk of repeat offending patterns. The pilot has been funded by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, in conjunction with Public Health, and uses therapeutic intervention to tackle medium risk domestic abuse perpetrators. The programme is grounded in academic research and was written by experts in the field of partner violence.

Four cohorts of Domestic Abuse perpetrators will be worked with during the twelve months of the pilot. This will be an additional asset and key intervention for the large numbers of Domestic Abuse offenders within Blackpool. A robust monitoring and

evaluation framework will be established throughout the project to provide an evidence base for the outcomes achieved.

### 5.3.2 **Step Up Project**

The Step Up project will work with families who have experienced a domestic violence incident and have at least one child aged 15 or under (or a pregnancy). The initiative is a research pilot aimed at assessing how early support can be provided through targeting families of standard risk domestic abuse in an attempt to reduce the risk of escalation.

The project is due to commence in February 2016 and the wards being studied will be Talbot, Brunswick and Park. The research aims to assess whether the domestic abuse incidents experienced by families participating in the study change following intervention. For example, whether there are fewer incidents subsequent to intervention, or a lower likelihood of experiencing escalation to medium/high risk abuse. This information will then be compared with a family who are not participating in the study to assess how effective the interventions are.

All families identified by the police in these wards at standard risk incidents will receive a whole family assessment

In addition to pilot programme we are also delivering a range of support programmes:

### 5.3.3 **Parents as Partners**

Training has been delivered to frontline staff from the Tavistock Foundation to prepare us to run the 'Parents as Partners' programme. This is an opportunity to deliver a strong evidence based group work programme that supports couples to address conflict in their relationship reducing the impact negative behaviours have on parenting. Early Help, the Police, Department for Work and Pensions and Housing Services officers have currently been trained. The feedback from the group so far has been very positive and the delivery of the first programme is planned to parents later in the year.

National roll out of the programme has commenced and Blackpool is one of the first areas to be trained to deliver this approach.

### 5.3.4 **Local Family offer**

In conjunction with, and to compliment the 'Parents as Partners' group intervention, resources have been identified to deliver, as part of our Local Family Offer, arrangements that include couple/co-parental relationships becoming a key part of

the current assessment process and to ensure that both parents are routinely involved in both the assessment and the interventions.

Practitioners will be part of the development of the materials/tools and learning from current conversations regarding relationships, conflict and specifically Domestic Violence will be explored.

The materials/tools will support practitioners to ask the right questions and the right time. The trial of the materials/tools will start with Early Help Services including Children's Centres. A wider roll out will then include partners such Health Visitors and Schools.

#### 5.4 **Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) service for high risk victims of Domestic abuse**

The contract for the IDVA service has recently been subject to a procurement exercise which has resulted in a change of provider from Empowerment to Safenet Calico.

##### **AIMS OF THE SERVICE**

- To provide an integrated response to adult victims who are at high risk of domestic abuse including children within the family as part of the whole family approach.
- Increase the safety and wellbeing of victims and their children who have been exposed to domestic abuse to ensure that they are enabled to lead healthy and safe lives now and in the future
- Reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse in Blackpool by taking a whole family approach to preventing further violence/abuse
- Protect adult victims including their children by challenging the behaviour of perpetrators and enhancing partnership working and practice to deliver positive outcomes
- Increase the resilience of children and young people who have/are experiencing domestic abuse at any level within their lives.

The new provider will take over the contract on 25 April 2016 and from that date on will be providing the service. SAFENET will continue with the pre-screening MARAC meetings and will attend the MARAC meetings.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 3(a): Case Study

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 The statutory obligations are monitored and continue to be met.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Background papers**

13.1 None