LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

27 JUNE 2018

PART I

3. DOMESTIC ABUSE REVIEW

(CED)

1. Summary
   1. This report provides the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) Board with a review of key performance data in relation to Domestic Abuse and highlights areas for consideration to improve the response of services within Three Rivers.
2. Details
   1. The LSP Board has previously invested in the development of the Domestic Abuse Caseworker service for standard to medium risk victims of domestic abuse. In October 2016 it invested the remaining £5,500 of the Revenue Performance Reward Grant as match funding to increase the role to a full-time one for a period of three years. Match funding was secured from Three Rivers District Council, The Police and Crime Commissioner, Thrive Homes and Watford Community Housing Trust and this service has been delivered by Herts Mind Network since March 2017.
   2. This report seeks to review the performance of the Domestic Abuse Caseworker within the context of a wider analysis of performance data of services in relation to domestic abuse.
   3. **Domestic Abuse and the Community Strategy 2018-23**
      1. It would be easy to consider that domestic abuse sits solely under the ‘Safety’ theme of the Community Strategy as a crime. However it is important to reflect how it affects the other four themes as well:
         1. Housing – that victims are safe in their accommodation from domestic abuse and have access to both temporary accommodation when required to escape domestic abuse and affordable accommodation in the long term to live independently away from domestic abuse.
         2. Ambition – that children affected by domestic abuse are able to attend and engage in education and victims are supported to secure work to promote their independence.
         3. Independence and resilience – that children affected by domestic abuse are supported to develop the resilience to overcome the adverse experience of living with domestic abuse; that victims are given the skills and support to manage their finances to live independently away from the abuse.
         4. Health and wellbeing – that victims and their children are given access to mental health and physical care services to support their recovery from domestic abuse, and its secondary effects.
   4. **Police Reports** 
      1. The number of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police in Three Rivers during 2017 was 617, an increase of 10.4% from the previous year figure of 559. The District had the second lowest rate of such reports within the County.
      2. The number of non-crime domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police in Three Rivers during 2017 was 653, an increase of 6% from the previous year figure of 616.
      3. In total the Police recorded 1,270 crimes and non-crime incidents for domestic abuse in 2017 in Three Rivers. This will include repeat victim counts, and repeat perpetrator counts.
      4. Of the 18,760 domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police in Hertfordshire in 2017/18, the rolling number of cases that went to court (as at end of November 2017) were 1,374 (7.3%) of which 790 (4.2%) were successful. For the vast majority of domestic abuse cases reported there is not a criminal prosecution process. It is therefore important to consider what other outcomes are achieved through such Police reports. The Police intervention provides the opportunity for referral into a number of processes – and these are considered below.
   5. **Referrals to IDVA**
      1. The Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service is provided by Refuge across Hertfordshire. In 2017/18 the service received 141 referrals for clients living in Three Rivers. 49% of these referrals were engaged, with 45 receiving long-term support, and 25 receiving short-term support. The remaining clients (71) were either non-contactable, did not wish to take up the offer of the service, or were still trying to be contacted by Refuge to offer support. The level of engagement compares favourably to the County position. The latest data presented to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for quarter three 2017/18 showed the engagement rate to be 37% (quarter 2 was 38%, and quarter 1 was 47%).
      2. The data reporting periods between the police and IDVA are not the same. Ignoring this and using the annual figure of 1,270 crimes and non-crime in Three Rivers shows 11.1% of incidents resulting in referral to the IDVA and 5.5% of them engaging with the service. So the majority of reports to the police do not result in a victim receiving IDVA support.
      3. Using the County-wide reported domestic abuse incidents data for December 2017, of a total 1,710 reported crimes and incidents 1,019 were standard risk (59.6%), 536 were medium risk (31.3%), 78 high risk (4.6%) and 77 no risk allocated (4.5%). We do not have access to this data at a District level. However, the proportion of cases referred to the IDVA that are engaged is above the proportion of high risk cases. Whilst not statistically reliable as different data sets are being used, it suggests that referral and engagement rates are better than could be expected.
   6. **Referrals to MARAC**
      1. The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meets monthly for agencies to agree actions for high risk and very high risk victims of domestic abuse. During 2017 Three Rivers had 87 cases heard at these meetings. Cases that are referred have not necessarily engaged with services. 25 (28.74%) of those cases were repeat cases. This was the second highest repeat referral rate in the County.
      2. The 87 cases heard would represent 6.9% of the 1,270 domestic abuse incidents and crime recorded by the Police in Three Rivers in 2017. It is not clear why this figure is lower than the referral rate into the IDVA service and should be explored. However, as a proportion of cases, it is above the snapshot proportion of high risk cases in Hertfordshire in December 2017 of 4.6%. There is no outcome data shared regarding MARAC referrals at present.
      3. A County MARAC Audit Group has presented a report to the MARAC sub-group of the Domestic Abuse Partnership. This is yet to be circulated. Further work is to be delivered by SafeLives to self-assess the MARAC process, analysing the victim’s journey, and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. It will be important for the Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership and the Watford and Three Rivers Families First Implementation Group to feed into that MARAC self-assessment.
   7. **Referrals to Domestic Abuse Caseworker**
      1. During 2017/18 there were a total of 556 referrals to the Domestic Abuse Caseworker (DAC) service in Three Rivers. 496 of these referrals (89%) came from the Police. The service engaged with 118 unique individuals during the year. That reflects an engagement rate of 21% of those referred.
      2. The DAC monitoring reports divide the level of engagement into three levels:
         1. Level 1 – Low level sign posting or advice given no further contact. All clients given contact details if they wanted to get in touch in the meantime.
         2. Level 2 – 3 different contact sessions either phone, face to face or email. Support featured emotional support and advice along with referral to services such as Herts Home Security Service and Watford Women’s Centre. Civil injunction advice is also provided.
         3. Level 3 – Intense long term support with multiple contacts either phone or face to face including advice and referrals to support services, support with attending meetings and liaising with other services on the client’s behalf.
      3. The number of contacts at each level in each quarter is shown in table 1. The totals within this do not add up to 118 as the same client will be counted in each quarter a service is provided, in order to monitor workload on the worker. This shows that in the busiest quarter 4 – the DAC was engaging with 51 clients.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Level 1 | 24 | 8 | 10 | 15 |
| Level 2 | 11 | 10 | 14 | 19 |
| Level 3 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 17 |
| Total | 48 | 27 | 30 | 51 |

Table 1: Levels of engagement with DAC in 2017/18

* + 1. The number of referrals to the DAC reflect 44% of the 1270 crimes and non-crimes recorded by the Police in 2017. Again, the time patterns do not directly match for this data. The number of people engaging with the service reflects 9% of the 1270 crimes and non-crimes.
    2. The number of referrals to the service reflects 156% of the target set for the service. The number of clients engaged reflects 122% of the target set for the service. In comparison the previous provider, Victim Support, had 357 referrals in one year of which 77 clients were engaged. The engagement rate has therefore been consistent with the previous provider. However, referrals have increased by 56% whilst the staffing resource has increased by only 20%. There is a strain on the capacity of the service to deal with the number of referrals coming in. Herts Mind Network has therefore been asked to estimate the additional resource it requires to cope with the level of service demand.
    3. The DAC service aims to measure client perceptions about what has happened to the domestic abuse during their engagement with the service. Of those that have provided a response to this question, 6 (4.5%) reported a total cessation of the abuse, 97 (73.5%) reported a reduction in the abuse experienced, and 29 (21.9%) reported no change.
    4. The types of interventions provided to clients during the year are shown in table 2:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Intervention | Count |
| Housing support | 19 |
| Emotional support | 46 |
| Legal measures (Civil justice) | 16 |
| Legal measures (Court cases) | 4 |
| Legal support (Civil) | 9 |
| Child protection support | 11 |
| Mental health support | 7 |
| Wellbeing support | 23 |
| Social services meeting attended | 16 |
| Court attended with client | 19 |

Table 2: Types of intervention support provided by DAC in 2017/18

* + 1. Domestic Abuse Caseworkers are not currently available across the County. The current Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) funding held by the Police and Crime Commissioner is being used to contribute towards up to 5 such posts until the end of March 2020. Part of this funding will be offered toward the Three Rivers post. The funding is not sufficient to provide the level of service currently received in Three Rivers across each District.
    2. Some case studies from the DAC will be presented at the meeting.
  1. **Families First Assessments**
     1. Of the 105 Families First Assessments completed in Three Rivers in 2017/18 56.2% had Domestic Abuse as a presenting issue i.e. 59 cases. As these assessments have been completed, this will reflect the number of families that have consented to engage in support. Some of these families will also have access to an IDVA or the Domestic Abuse Caseworker. It is hard to assess the number of cases (individual families) in relation to the workload of the Police in Three Rivers as the data available to us does not count victims, rather incidents.
     2. The outcomes of Family First interventions are routinely assessed using the Family Outcome Star. This outcome tool does not measure domestic abuse directly. It does measure physical health, well-being, emotional needs, keeping your children safe as well as six other areas. The areas of greatest improvement for cases in Watford and Three Rivers are ‘Your wellbeing’ followed by ‘Physical Health’. The areas with the lowest initial scores are ‘Your wellbeing’ and ‘meeting emotional needs’.
     3. Data on the number of referrals to children’s services where domestic violence is a key issue is not broken down to District level. At a county level the number of referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub, and the number of referrals through Families First Triage are counted. The data for May-Dec17 is shown in Table 3.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | May-17 | Jun-17 | Jul-17 | Aug-17 | Sep-17 | Oct-17 | Nov-17 | Dec-17 |
| No. of Referrals- MASH | 1312 | 1419 | 1544 | 1173 | 1096 | 1729 | 1327 | 1422 |
| No. of Referrals- FFT with case alerts | 1107 | 1236 | 1083 | 710 | 845 | 1012 | 969 | 1146 |

Table 3: No of Domestic abuse related referrals to MASH and Families First Triage

* + 1. At a county level, the number of referrals into child protection (MASH) or Families First Triage far exceeds the number of referrals into the IDVA service. What is not clear from this data is the level of engagement of those families in support. Many of these referrals will take place following Police call outs.
  1. **Adult safeguarding referrals**
     1. There is currently no data provided regularly at District level on the number of adults safeguarding concerns and enquiries where domestic abuse is reported as a type of risk. The data is collected at a County level and reported to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The latest data is shown in Graph 1:

Graph 1: Concluded safeguarding adult concerns and enquiries involving domestic abuse

* + 1. Graph 1 shows an increasing trend in concerns and enquiries up to quarter 2 of 2017-18. This reflects the more accurate recording and reporting of domestic abuse in safeguarding concerns for adults at risk. Concerns for example reporting financial abuse by a family member may have only been previously reported as financial abuse rather than as meeting the definition of domestic abuse as well. Similarly, physical abuse may have been previously reported from intimate partners rather than it being classified as domestic abuse. The increase in reporting has followed training of those working in the field of adult social care.
    2. It is hard to compare this reporting rate to police recorded data without consideration of who is the victim of the domestic abuse.
  1. **Domestic Homicide Reviews**
     1. All but one of the Domestic Homicide Reviews carried out in Hertfordshire have been with victims who have not been previously assessed as high risk. This suggests that those at risk of homicide are more likely to be referred into the Domestic Abuse Caseworker Service or into the Families First Triage (where children are present).
     2. This suggests reviewing the capacity of our Domestic Abuse Caseworker service and local Family First Practitioners is of importance.
  2. **Three Rivers Domestic Abuse Group**
     1. After reviewing practice in Stevenage, the Community Safety Partnership has established a Domestic Abuse Group for Three Rivers. This has been in response to some of the challenges of not being able to engage certain victims of domestic violence in support services, and steps being taken to enforce against these victims where they have also been involved in anti-social behaviour - often related to drug and alcohol use.
     2. The complex nature of some needs in relation to domestic abuse was reflected in the archetypes identified in the cohort of adults with complex needs from the Pilot project You Can. Two of these archetypes were reported as :
        1. *Archetype 1: Women who have experienced exploitation and trauma.* This is primarily a group of women who have faced domestic violence, who have had children removed from them; many have been involved in sex work. The group are often dependent drinkers, including binge and street drinking, yet also are known drug users. The group has a history of both acquisitive and anti-social crime; some are known to be prolific offenders. The women are well known to services, yet have high levels of mistrust of public and support services. Limited literacy and numeracy is common.
        2. *Archetype 3: Long-term rough sleeping and homelessness.* This archetype is predominately male. The group will have experienced rough sleeping and homelessness, some being classified as intentionally homeless. Known in the local community for street drinking, begging and anti-social crime. The archetype will be dependent on alcohol, also a poly-drug user. Complex physical problems are common, as is a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of personality disorder. Both men and women are likely to have experienced domestic violence and sex work, and children are likely to have been removed. The group will report loneliness, also to mistrust services. Literacy and numeracy will be poor.
     3. The Domestic Abuse Group meets every two months. Its terms of reference are:
     4. To share information to prevent domestic abuse related crime and disorder within Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership and specifically:
     + to review the support we give our top 10 DA victims in Three Rivers.
     + to look at how we as a CSP can better manage our top 10 DA offenders.
     + to look at patterns within our low and medium risk reports repeat victims – especially those not engaging in services – to identify ways to engage from a range of services.
     + to review our collective data against what we know against the community demographics
     1. The group will have met three times by the date of this LSP Board. It has been relatively easy to identify cases for discussion. Information-sharing has been helpful to those services attending which are local Police, Housing Needs, Community Safety Intervention Officer, Domestic Abuse Caseworker, IDVA, and the Housing Challenge (Intensive Family Support Team) Worker. Actions for individual cases have been identified. There are a number of people identified who have refused to engage with IDVA and DAC services. The meeting has been helpful to review the local strategies for responding to such people.
     2. The effectiveness of the group will be reviewed at the end of the year. Consideration needs to be given for the outcomes to be measured in terms of reducing domestic abuse.
  3. **Safer Places** 
     1. On 1 October 2017 a new contract was put in place to provide refuge and community-based support to victims of domestic abuse across the County. This service is commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council under the supported accommodation commissioning arrangements. No current performance data is shared.
     2. Due to the limitation of the VAWG funds consideration is being given to how the Community based IDVAs within Safer Places are utilised in areas without the equivalent of the Three Rivers DAC. The referral rate from the Police into the DAC has been commented on as ‘very good’ as referrals into the Community element of the Safer Places service have been low.
     3. In trying to improve the effective use of existing resources across the County to support standard risk victims, local staff have wanted to limit any changes to Police referral processes in Three Rivers, as they appear to be working well. The county-wide challenge that remains is how to support onward referrals from Police cases whilst there are differing options for intervention by District.
  4. **Perpetrator Services**
     1. At present there are no perpetrator services delivered in Three Rivers. Those that are available across the County are limited to those required through the probation process. No data is available or shared at present. This is a key area of development for the Domestic Abuse Partnership which presents further financial challenges.
     2. At present there is no shared framework across Hertfordshire for assessing the needs of domestic abuse perpetrators.
  5. **Sunflower and Domestic Abuse Champions Network**
     1. Using funding from the Violence against Women and Girls funds received by the Police and Crime Commissioner, a Domestic Abuse Hub Manager has been commissioned through Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline. A Champions Network training programme has also been commissioned. The aim of this work is to increase the reach of existing services, and members of workforces to respond to domestic abuse, and to support this with the development of the Sunflower website as a virtual hub. The Hub Manager has only recently been appointed and progress in these areas will need to be reviewed at a later date.

1. Options and Reasons for Recommendations
   1. The Board is being asked to consider how to respond to the level of referrals being received by the Domestic Abuse Caseworker (DAC) service, and whether any partners will be able to consider further contributions to increase capacity of this service. From Police records it is evident that this area of service receives the largest number of referrals in Three Rivers, other than MASH and the Families First Triage. The DAC is locally funded, whilst the MASH and Families First Triage are county-wide arrangements. It would appear more relevant for the LSP to focus on the capacity of the DAC.
   2. The Board is being asked to encourage relevant staff in local services to support the further assessment of MARAC processes and to share the findings of the audit with key staff and the Community Safety Partnership and Families First Implementation Group. It is hoped that this will ensure the most effective outcomes are achieved from the MARAC process.
   3. The Board is being asked to suggest to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board that the performance data related to MASH and Families First Triage is enhanced to demonstrate outcome of that processing. This is to better understand whether this process is resulting in greater engagement in support services.
   4. The Board is being asked to request that the Community Safety Partnership review the effectiveness of the Three Rivers Domestic Abuse Group at the end of the year to establish if this is an effective use of resource.
   5. The Board is being asked to promote the Domestic Abuse Champions Network within its own partner agencies and to support staff to volunteer to be trained as Champions. This is to increase the wider understanding of Domestic Abuse and increase the reach of current services beyond the baseline of current Police reported incidents.
2. Policy/Budget Reference and Implications
   1. The recommendations in this report are within the Local Strategic Partnership’s Community Strategy 2018-2013. The Local Strategic Partnership does not hold any budget. Any financial decisions will need to be made within the financial processes of each partner agency.
3. Financial, Legal, Environmental, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website Implications
   1. None specific.
4. Equal Opportunities Implications
   1. Relevance Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact? | Yes |
| Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required? | No |

* 1. Impact Assessment - Equality monitoring data is already collected from the Domestic Abuse Casework Service. Whilst this demonstrates under-representation of older people, male victims, disabled victims and LGBT victims of domestic abuse the service is contributing to reaching more of these victim groups. Increasing the capacity of the service may further increase access for these protected groups to support services.

1. Staffing Implications
   1. The current DAC service is staffed by one full time member of staff. It is not realistic to expect this service to cope with a referral level that is 156% of the level the service was designed to respond to.
2. Community Safety Implications
   1. Domestic Abuse is a priority of the Community Safety Partnership’s Strategic Assessment.
3. Public Health implications
   1. Domestic abuse is a key target in the Starting Well and Developing Well sections of the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The County Public Health Service Strategy recognised the impact of Drug and Alcohol interventions on Domestic Abuse.
4. Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications
   1. The Local Strategic Partnership makes use of Three Rivers District Council’s agreed risk management strategy which can be found on the website at http://www.threerivers.gov.uk. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council’s duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
   2. The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnership service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.
   3. The following table gives the risks if the recommendations are agreed, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Risk | | Impact | Likelihood |
| 1 | The Local Strategic Partnership fails to achieve the priorities of the Community Strategy | III | C |

* 1. The following table gives the risks that would exist if the recommendations are rejected, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Risk | | Impact | Likelihood |
| 1 | The Local Strategic Partnership fails to achieve the priorities of the Community Strategy | III | D |

* 1. The risk above is already managed within the Community Partnerships service plan.

1. Recommendation
   1. That Local Strategic Partnership agencies identify which partners may be able to make further contributions to the Three Rivers Domestic Abuse Caseworker in order to increase the capacity of the service to respond to referral rates.
   2. That the Board encourages all relevant staff in their constituent agencies to support the further assessment of MARAC processes and that the outcomes of this work are shared with key staff, the Community Safety Partnership and Families First Implementation Group.
   3. That the Board recommends to the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board that the performance data related to MASH and Families First Triage is enhanced to demonstrate outcome of that processing.
   4. That the Board asks the Community Safety Partnership to review the effectiveness of the Three Rivers Domestic Abuse Group at the end of the year to establish if this is an effective use of resource.
   5. That the Board members promote the Domestic Abuse Champions Network within their own partner agencies and support staff to volunteer to be trained as Champions.

That public access to the report be immediate.

Report prepared by: Andy Stovold, Head of Community Partnerships

Data Quality

Data sources:

Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Performance Reports

Families First Performance Report

Three Rivers Community Safety Strategic Assessment

Domestic Abuse Forum Briefings

Domestic Abuse Caseworker Service Quarterly Performance Reports

Data checked by:

Shivani Dave, Community Safety Co-ordinator

Data rating: Tick

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Poor |  |
| 2 | Sufficient |  |
| 3 | High | ✓ |