

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Community Leadership Committee</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">24 June 2015</h3>
Title	An update on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Girls
Report of	Jamie Blake, Commissioning Director, Environment
Wards	All
Status	Public
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Kiran Vagarwal, Strategic Lead, Safer Communities Kiran.vagarwal@barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 2953

Summary

This report provides an update on the partnership approach, services and the council role in responding to Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Girls (DV & VAWG).

Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board (through its sub group – The DV and VAWG Delivery Group) oversees the strategic and partnership approach to DV and VAWG.

Barnet's DV and VAWG strategy 2013-2016 sets out the partnership commitment to:

- Develop a comprehensive response to DV & VAWG, which includes all agencies working together so that we are able to prevent abuse before it happens and stop it from happening again.
- Providing victims and their families with information, support and care by a knowledgeable workforce.
- Continuing to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour and support them to change their behaviour.
- Develop an approach that focusses on partnership, prevention, provision and protection.

As well as domestic violence, the 2013 strategy focusses on rape & sexual violence, female genital mutilation, prostitution, trafficking, forced marriage, honour based violence, gang violence and sexual exploitation. It also includes support for men and boys but

accepts that this disproportionately affects women and girls.

Barnet Council leads on co-ordinating delivery of the DV and VAWG strategy, monitoring performance of the partnership, securing funding, commissioning and monitoring services to support victims of domestic violence, delivers the DV MARAC (a multi-agency risk assessment panel for high level cases) and facilitates the joint work of the partnership in delivering the 2013 strategy.

Barnet Council employs a Domestic Violence and VAWG Co-ordinator and a DV MARAC Co-ordinator to support delivery of this priority. Following the recent senior management restructure both posts were transferred from Children's Services to Barnet Community Safety Team under the direction of the Strategic Lead, Safer Communities, Commissioning Group.

In 2015-2016, a full review of :

- the domestic violence services will take place to inform the re-commissioning of services as all the current contracts will come to an end in March 2016
- the DV and VAWG strategy and delivery plan – in order to refresh the strategy so that it addresses the findings and the recommendations of the two domestic violence homicide reviews

Barnet Safer Communities Partnership adopts the Home Office Cross- Government Definition of Domestic Violence (March 2013) as:

“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 it is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial, Emotional”

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee note the progress and action taken by the Council and its partners to respond to DV & VAWG.**
- 2. That the Committee note the role of Barnet Council in commissioning and delivering services to victims of DV & VAWG and delivering the DV and VAWG strategy.**
- 3. The Committee note the service review taking place to inform the re-commissioning of DV and VAWG services and the refresh of the DV and VAWG strategy.**
- 4. The Committee agree that the annual report on the progress of the DV and VAWG Strategy can be included in the annual update to the Committee by the Safer Communities Partnership Board.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Tackling domestic violence and violence against women and girls (DV & VAWG) remains a top priority for the Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) as set out in its 2015-2020 Community Safety Strategy.
- 1.2 It is essential that the SCP continues to work towards reducing the prevalence of DV and VAWG over time and improving confidence of victims by working with partners to:
 - Focus on prevention
 - Hold perpetrators to account
 - Ensure women and girls have access to protection, justice and support to rebuild their lives.
- 1.3 Resources are limited and it is important to understand the high human and fiscal cost of DV & VAWG. Research estimates that responding to domestic violence alone costs our borough £38 million a year¹. This highlights the need to improve our data in order to understand local needs and develop our preventative and targeted approach to DV and VAWG.
- 1.4 Reducing harm caused to victims, their children and families and the wider community against a back drop of reduced resources requires delivering services in a smarter way. Reducing duplication, repeat victimisation and early intervention and prevention can contribute towards making significant savings across partner organisations. We must also maintain a strong justice system and work effectively with partners in the criminal justice system, holding perpetrators to account in order to stop repeat violence and ensuring swift access to justice for victims.
- 1.5 A strong partnership approach will best encourage a bold and creative response across a range of services and emphasise the message that we all have a role to play in ending violence against women.

Refuge Provision

- 1.6 Barnet Council currently commission Solace Women's Aid to deliver DV Services which include refuge provision, advocacy and support for victims (IDVA services) and the perpetrators service.
- 1.7 Solace Women's Aid works in partnership with Jewish Women's Aid, Barnet Asian Women's Association and the Domestic Violence Intervention Project to deliver these services.
- 1.8 The refuge service works closely with the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), BMER (Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee) and disability organisations across London included Deaf Hope, the Ascent Project and the Rape and Sexual Violence Services.

¹ The Cost of Domestic Violence: by local authority, Trust for London and the Henry Smith Charity (2011)

Barnet has 18 adult bed spaces and 24 children spaces at any one time, across two refuges.

- 1.9 The Council, in partnership with Barnet Homes and Jewish Women's Aid were successful in securing funding for 2015-2016 for a further 6 adult bed spaces and 8 children bed spaces. This will provide support to approximately 24 service users and their families over the duration of a year.
- 1.10 All referrals of domestic violence where there are children in the household are referred to the Barnet MASH (Multi-agency Safe Guarding Hub) to ensure the safeguarding process is followed.
- In 2013/14, 41 women and 56 children were assisted by Barnet's two refuges.
 - 87% of the service users surveyed in 2014 said that Solace had helped them feel more in control of their future.
 - In 2013/14, 47 of the 48 children aged under 8, housed in the refuge received at least two hours of support from Solace staff each week.
 - 100% of service users surveyed in 2014 said that Solace had helped them feel safe.
- 1.11 The need for additional refuge space in Barnet is demonstrated by the high occupancy rates of the existing refuges and the high levels of women being 'turned away' from refuges because of full capacity. The two existing refuges in Barnet run at a level of 99.9% occupancy.

Domestic Violence MARAC

- 1.12 The DV MARAC is a multi-agency panel that receives high risk DV cases. It is managed by Barnet Council. In 2014/15 the DV MARAC discussed the cases of 306 victims of DV.
- 1.13 Referrals had increased by 24.8% in comparison to the previous year (234 cases).
- 1.14 There were 353 children involved in these households in 2014/15.
- 1.15 The repeat rate of victimisation was 8.5% this is relatively low in comparison to other boroughs as calculated by the Safe Lives analysis of other boroughs showing a range of 28%-40%.

Raising awareness

- 1.16 Raising awareness is a continuous process to ensure victims and practitioners are able to support DV and VAWG victims.
- 16 sessions of MARAC training was delivered to 170 practitioners in 2014/15

- 14 sessions and 2 events of promoting Young Peoples Violence Advice (YPVA) role and the role of MARAC were delivered to 110 young people.
- The council delivers Level 1 and Level 2 DV training.
- Four DV and VAWG theatre projects have been delivered in schools by Tender, Face Front, Youth Shield, Just Enough UK.

Barnet Homes

- 1.17 Barnet Homes provides support to victims of DV and VAWG, this includes homelessness prevention advice and enabling victims to remain in their home by installing additional security measures via the Sanctuary Scheme.
- 1.18 To further improve the support for victims of DV and VAWG, a '**one stop shop**' will be set up in September 2015. Victims will be able to access a range of advice and support in one place, enabling easy-to-access, comprehensive and joined-up support that will enable survivors to determine and pursue their next steps. This will be co-ordinated by Barnet Homes.

Barnet Sanctuary Scheme

- 1.19 Barnet's **Sanctuary Scheme** is also managed by Barnet Homes. The scheme enables some domestic violence victims to remain in their home by making it safe and secure. Barnet Homes works in partnership with representatives from the Police, Fire Brigade and Solace Women's Aid to risk assess victims and provide free additional security measures to their homes which give them the option of remaining in their home if it is assessed as safe and their partner no longer lives with them. In 2013/14, 76 survivors and in 2014/15 55 survivors were helped in this way. This service is offered to victims regardless of their tenure in so far as they have the permission of the landlord for recommended installations.

North London Domestic Violence Reciprocal Agreement.

- 1.20 Barnet Homes is a signatory of the North London Domestic Violence **Reciprocal Agreement**. This involves members of the North London sub-region (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Islington and Westminster) working together to assist social housing tenants who need to flee from their borough because of domestic violence. Through joint working between the housing allocation services of the different boroughs, social housing tenants are allocated new social housing homes within a borough that has been assessed as safe for the victim to live. Between October 2013 and October 2014, a total of 20 victims have been moved his way.
- 1.21 In relation to women presenting to Housing for DV homelessness at Barnet Homes, we know that in 2013-2014 81 DV victims presented for homelessness and 45 victims of DV were placed in emergency temporary accommodation.

Rape Crisis Services

- 1.22 The North London Rape Crisis is funded by MOPAC. Table one below shows the referrals received from each borough in 2014-2015.

Borough	Referrals this Quarter	No. on Counselling Waiting List (on last day of Q)	ISVA Active Cases (on last day of Q)
Barnet	18	12	9
Camden	22	10	6
Enfield	22	13	10
Haringey	30	14	11
Islington	31	37	13
Kensington & Chelsea	7	6	4
Westminster	10	8	5
TOTAL	140	100	58

- 1.23 The type of Violence experienced by the victims supported:

- 28% of women referred to the service disclosed at referral stage being a victim of more than one experience of sexual violence in her lifetime including child sexual abuse
- 15% of referrals were related to Child Sexual Abuse
- 19% to Rape that happened over 12 months ago
- 20% to Rape within the previous 12 months
- 9% to Sexual Assault

- 1.24 The Rape Crisis Services accessed by victims is as follows:

- Counselling received 386 referrals
- Advocacy received 202 referrals
- Groups received 71 referrals
- Body Therapies received 30 referrals

Domestic Violence and Advocacy Support Service (IDVA)

- 1.25 This service is also commissioned by the council and works to support women and men, aged 16+, who live in Barnet and are experiencing DV. The Service includes the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor services (IDVAS) who specialise in high risk cases. Advice and practical support is provided on housing-related issues, advice on financial issues, legal and welfare rights.
- 1.26 The IDVAS also provide support to high risk victims referred to MARAC. The service includes a part time Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) to

work with the Specialist Domestic Violence Court(SDVC) and provides one to one support for clients going to court.

Specialist Domestic Violence Court

- 1.27 Barnet has access to the North West London Local Justice Area specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC).
- 1.28 A SDVC is where a local court agrees and sets aside a fixed time for all cases of domestic violence. Barnet's allocated slot is on a Thursday at Hendon Court. In 2014-2015 64 services users were referred from Barnet.
- 1.29 DV cases are clearly identified by the police from the outset. The Crown Prosecution Service flag the case files and ensure timely referral to the SDVC.
- 1.30 The SDVC aims to:
- Provide a co-ordinated judicial response to adult criminal proceedings involving domestic abuse.
 - Expand and co-ordinate the provision of victim / witness services within the criminal justice system.
 - Reduce delays and fast track domestic abuse cases.
 - Bring Offenders to justice.
 - Consider the needs of the victims and witnesses and enabling them to access and use the criminal justice system.
- 1.31 The SDVC deals with defendants aged 18 years and above.

Perpetrator Programme

- 1.32 The Perpetrator Programme is delivered as part of Solace's Women's Aid contract. The programme provides the following:
- A 26 session group-work programme for male heterosexual perpetrators aged 18+
 - 1-2-1 work with female, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender perpetrators and men who are unable to attend the group programme
 - 1-2-1 work with young people aged 11-18 years who are using dating violence and/or being violent and abusive towards another family member e.g. parent or sibling
- 1.33 Partners of those men on the Programme will be offered support by SASS Barnet.
- 1.34 Perpetrators can self-refer, be supported by a referral via an agency or can be referred by a statutory agency such as Children's Services.
- 1.35 In 2014/15 32 new referrals were received by the project.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To update the Community Leadership Committee and set out the council's commitment and actions to respond to Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Girls, highlight the positive partnership work taking place across both the statutory and voluntary partners in Barnet and set out priority actions for the council in 2015-16.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

Not relevant to this report

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The council will complete its service review for DV and VAWG services to inform its future commissioning of services.
- 4.2 A tendering process will be followed and completed by March 2016. Quality and value for money will be considered.
- 4.3 A further report will be submitted to the relevant committee seeking authorisation to award the tender.
- 4.4 The DV and VAWG Strategy 2013-2016 will be reviewed and a refreshed with a 2016-2020 DV and VAWG strategy by March 2016. This will bring the DV and VAWG strategy in line with the 2015-2020 Community Safety Strategy and the councils 2015-2020 Corporate Strategy.
- 4.5 The annual Safer Communities Partnership update provided to the Community Leadership Committee will include a progress update of the DV and VAWG Strategy.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1 Barnet's 2020 vision set out in its 2015-2020 corporate plan is for Barnet to be amongst the safest places in London, with high levels of community cohesion, and residents feeling safe.
- 5.2 The corporate plan also states a clear council commitment to take a partnership approach to preventing domestic violence through co-ordinating service provision to those at high risk of repeat victimisation.
- 5.3 This report has highlighted the strong partnership approach in place to deliver co-ordinated services to victims of domestic violence for example the partnership delivery of a refuge service, the information and advice service, the perpetrator programme and the Specialist Domestic Violence Court.
- 5.4 The Domestic Violence MARAC enables the partnership to identify high risk, repeat victims and provide more intensive partnership support to reduce the risk of violence to women, girls and to safeguard children who are impacted

by domestic violence. All which is evidence of working towards the vision set out in the Council's corporate plan.

Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.5 As previously stated in this report there is currently a full service review taking place to inform the future commissioning of DV and VAWG services. The re-commissioning of services will need to be completed by March 2016. Value for Money and sustainability will be a key factor throughout the commissioning process.
- 5.6 Currently the council employs a DV and VAWG Co-ordinator and a MARAC Co-ordinator. Strategic management of this agenda will be taken on by the Strategic Lead for Safer Communities.
- 5.7 The council's annual budget for DV and VAWG services is £771,210.00. This includes a commissioning budget of £650,806.02, broken down as follows:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Advocacy Support | £268,358.08 |
| Refuge | £274,805.34 |
| Perpetrator and Partners Services | £107,642.60 |
- 5.8 Barnet Homes in partnership with the council Jewish Women's Aid submitted a bid to the 2015-16 Department For Communities and Local Government (DCLG - Strengthening accommodation based specialist domestic abuse service provision) were awarded £100,000. This is one year's funding for the One Stop Shop and the additional refuge spaces.
- 5.9 Partners will ensure an exit plan is in place in the event that further funding is not available post 2016/17.
- 5.10 Partnership budgets spent on DV and VAWG are not included in this paper, however we would like the committee to note the positive contributions made by all partners both financially, operationally and strategically, examples of which have been provided in this report. The revised DV and VAWG strategy will clearly set out the contribution and commitment of all partners.

Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.11 Under s.17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is also a duty of the Council (and other partner agencies, including police, fire & rescue, GLA, TfL) when exercising its functions to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour), misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and re-offending.

The Council's Constitution (Responsibility for Functions – Annex A) sets out the Terms of Reference of the Community Leadership Committee which includes:

- To contribute to achieving better outcomes in the Safer Communities Strategy through CCTV, fighting crime and anti-social behaviour, combating graffiti fly-tipping and other environmental crime, action against Domestic Violence and any other relevant Council activity.
- To work together with partners on the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership including Police, Fire and Criminal Justice Agencies to help make Barnet a safer place.

Risk Management

- 5.12 The re-commissioning timescales are challenging with re-commissioned services to be in place by April 2016. This process is being tightly project managed and follows the council's project management approach which includes identifying and tracking risks and issues, and implementing actions to mitigate.

Equalities and Diversity

- 5.13 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty to which the authority must have regard. The Council's public sector equality duty is set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010:
A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

- 5.14 Equalities is considered across the DV and VAWG agenda in Barnet. This is clearly demonstrated in this report, for example the partnership with the voluntary and community sector, the criteria for the perpetrator programme. In addition to this equalities information is robustly collected and monitored by all partners to support provision of services that are accessible and meet the diverse needs of victims as well as offenders.

Consultation and Engagement

- 5.15 The Safer Communities Partnership annual community consultation will include consultation on DV and VAWG. The DV and VAWG strategy revision will include consultation and partnership engagement will take place.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None