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| Committee(s): | Date(s): |
| Safer City Partnership | 09 November 2015 |
| Subject: City of London Domestic Abuse Forum Quarterly report | |
| Report of: Chris Pelham, Assistant Director People Department of Community & Children's Services | For Information |
| Summary | |
| The attached Report relates to the City of London Domestic Abuse Forum Quarterly report, detailing progress of the two year action plan. | |
| Recommendation(s) | |
| Partnership Members are asked to note the report. | |

City of London Domestic Abuse Forum quarterly report

The Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF) has continued to deliver the targets set by the two year action plan. This report details the progress from June to December 2015.

Referral pathway meeting

In November the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator met with victims services from the community and voluntary sector who offer services in the City. The aim of this meeting was to look at referral pathways and aid in providing the best response for people experiencing domestic abuse.

Strategically, mapping both services and pathways will provide a clearer understanding of:

- What is on offer for people experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse in the City of London?
- What therapeutic services can we offer children experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse?
- How does the service work?
- Who is the commissioner?
- How long is it commissioned for?
- What are the impacts of the service?
- Are there any gaps?

The pathways will be used in a Development Workshop taking place in the December DAF meeting where presentations will be given by the Corporation and the Police on their procedures. Development will come from a facilitated conversation on how all services work together.

Once we have clear pathways, agreed by strategic leads on domestic abuse and VAWG, we can use this information for training frontline workers.

Subgroup updates

To deliver the two year DAF action plan, three subgroups were proposed at the Forum: Training, Engagement and Commissioning.

The first Training Subgroup is due to meet in November. Membership is made up of the Corporation and the Police. The focus will be on providing consistent and appropriate training to front line workers on risk assessment, safety planning and understanding how coercion operates within an abusive relationship. The subgroup will additionally look at awareness raising programmes, including those offered for free from pan-London programmes, for staff that may be observing relationships within people's homes or places of work, such as repair staff or Fire officers.

The work of the Training Subgroup will feed into the Workforce Development Group in DCCS in addition to the City of London Police Learning & Development Team.

Also in November, the first Engagement Subgroup will meet to discuss:

- the next steps after the Behind Closed Doors Conference held in October
- the Christmas Campaign and how to involve the community and voluntary sector and their service users and
- the Rape Awareness Conference being held in January

The group will create an action plan for the response to these pieces of work alongside other engagement activities for the next two years.

The Commissioning Subgroup is on hold temporarily until the New Year. This will give time for the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator and the Chair of the DAF to develop a clearer understanding of commissioning needs in the City.

MARAC review

Since the June meeting there have been:

- 1 case in July
- 0 cases in August
- 0 cases in September
- 2 emergency cases (1 case each) in October
- 2 cases November (both repeat cases from this year)

The administration templates have been useful in giving agencies more information to research and making it clear in the minutes actions applicable to the victim, the perpetrator as well as any children involved either directly within the family or within the household either party is staying in.

Children's Social Care and domestic abuse

Children's Social Care underwent a review of cases involving children who had witnessed domestic abuse resulting in an action plan for taking recommendations forward. The action plan focuses on:

- Standardising case review in supervision to be clear practitioners are using specialist support in the City
- Staff are clear on how to use the Thresholds of Need document
- Tailored specialist therapy services for Bangladeshi families

The action plan will be incorporated into the DAF action plan and a presentation will be given on this review at its December meeting.

Domestic Abuse Awareness Workshop

The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator will be delivering an awareness raising workshop in November. Aimed at staff from the Corporation and the Police, the workshop will focus on definitions of domestic abuse, myths and realities, impacts and barriers to accessing support.

Attendees will also be given information on victim services available in the City as well as Duty of Care responsibilities if there are concerns regarding an adult or children who may be at risk of harm or neglect.

HMIC inspection

In the summer, City of London Police underwent an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) with a focus on the Police's response to vulnerable adults and children. The Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) and the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator were invited to share their experiences of partnership working with the Public Protection Unit.

Very positive feedback was received, with particular attention given to how the police respond to incidents involving vulnerable people, the management of the Public Protection Unit and the work of the Vulnerable Victim Coordinator in supporting people.

Partnerships arrangements around domestic abuse and preventing Child Sexual Exploitation were deemed to be working well with no requirement for a traditional Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as this was delivered virtually. HMIC concluded vulnerability is well supervised and the force has a victim-focused approach.

Ascent Advice & Counselling Social Impact Report 2015

Ascent is a pan-London partnership of 14 specialist advice and counselling services who work with women and girls affected by violence.

Since starting in 2013, the partnership has supported over 24,000 women and girls in London affected by violence or abuse.

Ascent works with the Corporation to provide support, advice and counselling to women and girls in the City. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator attended an event launching the Social Impact Report, detailing their work to date.

More information can be found at: www.solacewomensaid.org/social-impact-2015

Funding bid to Department for Local Government

City of London have joined with Hackney Council and put a joint bid into the Department for Communities and Local Government to acquire funds to train front line workers to give advice to people experiencing domestic abuse on Do It Yourself (DIY) injunctions.

Delivering a customer-focused, risk-assessed and safety-enhancing first response from our frontline staff is vital to maximising the City's response to men and women, and their children, experiencing domestic abuse. Ensuring Corporation staff, Victim Support and other local victims services are trained in DIY injunctions would enable people experiencing domestic abuse to have greater knowledge on personal safety and security.

The DAF is waiting to hear the outcome of the funding bid and will provide an update through this report.

Engagement work in the City

Opening Doors

The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator met with the Open Doors project in early November. The Open Doors project provides information, advice and support to female sex workers in the City of London.

Open Doors have been in operation since 2004 and works predominately with Brazilian women involved in sex working. Help is offered in the form of advice on GP registration, immigration advice and tax registration. Additionally, it works alongside the Latin American Women's Rights Service to provide advocacy, crisis intervention and counselling for women experiencing violence. This year they have worked with over 4500 women across London.

The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator has requested information on women who live and work in the City who have experienced violence. This information will help us to work with other members of the Forum and the Safer City Partnership to detail the Corporation's response. Open Doors have been invited to attend the City of London Domestic Abuse Forum.

Respect

The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator met with Ntokozo Dlova from Respect in September to understand the level of service we can offer to men experiencing domestic abuse in the City.

Ntokozo talked about engagement, explaining a lot of men using their service will contact them from their place of work. This information is useful when we start to look at business engagement regarding domestic abuse as we use the Behind Closed Doors conference as a launch pad to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

Respect are also working with Safe Lives to review standards of working with men and how this can be quality assured. This good practice can be incorporated into our own quality assurance mechanisms being developed for the City's response to domestic abuse.

In addition to working with men who have experienced domestic abuse, Respect is also the membership body for services who work with perpetrators. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator will be meeting with the Domestic Violence Intervention Project to find out more about spot-purchasing services so we can provide this to perpetrators involved in City domestic abuse cases.

Respect have been invited to sit on the City of London Domestic Abuse Forum and were invited to attend the Behind Closed Doors conference to raise awareness alongside other victim services.

Neaman Practice

A presentation on the work of the DAF was given detailing the action plan and how health practitioners, and in particular GPs, can play a role in helping people. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator talked about how a large percentage of men and women are more likely to tell their GP they are experiencing domestic abuse than other professionals.

Training has been provided to the Neaman Practice in the past, through the Iris Project (a UK-wide referral programme operated in the City by the Nia Project) and a refresher would be helpful to make GPs aware of the signs, how to ask people if they are experiencing domestic abuse and where to refer for help.

The Neaman Practice are now included in the DAF circulation list to receive information on domestic abuse from the Corporation.

Behind Closed Doors Conference

The Behind Closed Doors conference returned in October and was aimed at raising awareness to City businesses and in particular those working in facilities management, human resources and security. The conference helped to increase knowledge and provide insight into a manager's duty of care to people who are experiencing domestic abuse and stalking.

Attendees at the conference were given personal and professional experiences of stalking and harassment to help them:

- understand what constitutes domestic abuse and stalking
- how it occurs and
- the specialist support available to people who live and work in the City

There were 116 people who came, giving positive feedback such as:

"The most thought provoking and moving conference I've ever attended. Awe inspiring."

(Bank of England)

"More People need to be aware of this and the support available."

(ISS)

"It really made you think about how prevalent it is and how to help."

(MAN Group)

The next steps will be for the DAF Engagement subgroup to design how we can continue to engage and support businesses to have HR policies responding to domestic abuse and stalking, consider the introduction of champions and train and support managers.

Calendar of upcoming events

Over the coming months the DAF will be involved in the following events:

16 Days of Action – part of an international campaign (<http://16daysofaction.co.uk>) raising awareness of domestic abuse. City services will be joining the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator at St Barts to engage with people about services on offer.

Christmas Campaign – starting at the end of November, this is a multi-agency prevention campaign focusing on keeping people safe over the Festive season and giving them information on who can help if they need support.

Rape Awareness Conference – taking place on 22 January at The Livery Hall, the conference will have a range of speakers delivering a focus on sexual violence, its impacts and the support on offer in the City.

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