

Committee Safer City Partnership	Date: 2 March 2016
Subject: Domestic Abuse Forum - Six-month Review	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services Report authors: Chris Pelham - Director of People, Department of Children & Community Services Robin Newman Abuse Co-ordinator & Community Safety Officer:	For Information

Summary

This report details a six-month review of the activities of the Domestic Abuse Forum in delivering the two-year Domestic Abuse Strategic Action Plan.

For this Safer City Partnership Committee, this paper replaces the Domestic Abuse Forum Quarterly Report.

Main Report

1. In December 2014, the City of London Domestic Abuse Review was published after being commissioned by the Department for Children and Community Services.
2. The Review looked at the City of London's response to domestic abuse and detailed 83 recommendations for change to achieve a stronger, multi-agency response.
3. The City of London Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF) was given the task of developing and delivering an action plan to fulfil the recommendations.
4. This report details what has happened since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator role in June 2015, tasked with overseeing the implementation of the recommendations.

Initial development

5. Reviewing the membership of the DAF, brought in more community and voluntary sector services and their specialist expertise in areas such as responding to Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence and working with under-represented communities, in particular women from BAME communities.

6. Developing an appropriate and robust action plan was a key priority for the DAF. As well as the recommendations from the 2014 Domestic Abuse Review, the City of London MARAC underwent an assessment by Safe Lives in April 2015, providing recommendations for change.
7. With these added in to the list of priorities, the decision was made to have a two-year action plan, overseen by Chair of the DAF and the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator.
8. The Action Plan went to consultation with all DAF members and workshops were delivered with members for them to prioritise the recommendations from the Safe Lives assessment and the 2014 Domestic Abuse Review.
9. Subgroups were identified as a helpful way to deliver work. These focus on: MARAC development, Engagement, Commissioning and Training – all are priority areas identified in the 2014 Domestic Abuse Review.
10. At the present time, the engagement subgroup and MARAC development subgroup are established with the other two planned for later this year.

Achievements

Engagement

11. Over the last six months, the DAF has been involved in the delivery of key public engagement activities, starting with Behind Closed Doors in October 2015.
12. Additionally in November, City victim services joined the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator for 16 Days of Action (<http://16daysofaction.co.uk>) raising awareness of domestic abuse at a public interaction event at St Barts.
13. The Christmas Campaign was a multi-agency prevention campaign involving London Ambulance Service, London Fire Brigade, the police and the Safer City Partnership and focused on keeping people safe over the Festive season. 'Party bags' were given out with a range of health and welfare information including what they can do if they experience, or witness, domestic abuse.
14. In January, the No Blurred Lines Conference brought together a range of specialist speakers delivering their expertise on sexual violence, its impacts and the support on offer in the City.
15. After the success of Behind Closed Doors in October last year, the DAF engagement subgroup will be looking at how it embeds its expertise in the business community. To begin this, the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator and the new Vulnerable Victim Advocate (Ayesha Fordham) will be giving a presentation to 60-70 HR managers at Addleshaw Goddard, in March, organised by City HR Association.

16. Outreach surgeries are in the process of being established across the City. We will utilise Corporation spaces in the East, West and in the central parts of the Square Mile.
17. Spaces will be used for 1-2-1 support, practical help and counselling sessions with people who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence as well as group education and confidence training. The spaces will be shared between Victim Support, the Iranian & Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, Latin American Women's Rights Services, Solace Women's Aid, Imece Women's Centre, Toynbee Hall and the Nia Project.
18. The outcome will be more engagement with under-represented communities experiencing violence and provide a confidential space for people to get specialist help.

MARAC development

19. The City of London MARAC action plan is the responsibility of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator and the MARAC Chair (Head of the City of London Public Protection Unit).
20. Meetings were fixed to occur monthly throughout the year and members are sent a reminder 15 days beforehand with a copy of the referral form. Each agency is now given 6-8 working days to research information on their systems relating to the victim, children and the perpetrator making sure all information is brought to the MARAC enabling the clearest picture of risk for effective action planning.
21. Administration templates have been re-developed to include more information relating to impacts on children on the referral form along with what support children have had prior to coming to MARAC. The form also requests information on the school the children attend, so the safeguarding lead can be invited to attend the MARAC.
22. The MARAC co-ordinator will monitor school representation and where no school is found for a child of school age, information of the child will be sent to the Education and Early Years Manager to make sure the child is not missing from education.
23. The MARAC minute template has also changed. Separate sections to address impact and actions for victims *and their children* were added. Another section now details the actions for perpetrators and makes reference to any children or vulnerable adults that live with the perpetrator, if they live in a separate house to the victim. MARAC also seeks to identify if the perpetrator works with children or vulnerable adults to ascertain whether a LADO referral is required.

24. To increase the efficiency of MARAC, the MARAC co-ordinator and the Chair are developing a tactical options list, to detail every safety-enhanced service or practice available. This will be separated into three sections: Victims, Children and Perpetrators. It will detail the service or product available alongside the contact details of the provider, for a swifter referral.
25. The City of London MARAC protocol was re-developed, introducing quality assurance mechanisms notably governance for completion of actions from the risk management plan and clearer instructions on the criteria for referring cases.
26. To help embed these changes, the City of London MARAC will hold a development session run by Safe Lives looking at improvements to our service delivery to maximise the safety of a person or family experiencing domestic abuse and reduce the risk of homicide.
27. MARAC cases for the last six months (September - February) total at 6 cases, with four children involved in these cases. Numbers referred to MARAC remain very low.

Commissioning

28. City of London Police and Victim Support, with the assistance of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, have put in an application for the continuation of the Vulnerable Victim Advocate to support high risk victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence and hate crime. The outcome of this should be known by the SCP committee in March.
29. The delivery of the DAF Action Plan has identified a key number of requirements that need to be commissioned, particularly around children's therapeutic services and the Corporation's response to perpetrators of domestic abuse. Other key areas may emerge as awareness amongst professionals and agencies develops and trust in the Corporation from communities.
30. A budget for this work has been requested from the Director of the Department of Children and Community Services and we are awaiting the outcome.

Training

31. In partnership with Hackney Council, the City of London have been successful in a bid to the Department of Communities & Local Government to deliver training for staff working with people experiencing domestic abuse in how to apply for a 'Do it yourself' injunction. For those who are in employment or not eligible for Legal Aid, an injunction to protect yourself (and your children) from an abusive perpetrator can cost thousands of pounds. A DIY injunction costs £110.

32. The training will allow staff to help people obtaining DIY injunctions and navigate their way through the paper work needed by courts explaining, in plain English, the processes.
33. City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board will be delivering domestic abuse awareness training, and half day training on coercion and control, in line with the new legislation on Coercion that came into being on 29 December 2015. All service managers have been made aware of the training for staff.

Strategic development

34. Referral pathways are in the process of being finalised. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator met with the City's victim's services to develop referral pathways and link these with Corporation's safeguarding pathways.
35. At the March DAF, the pathways were reviewed and agencies added their expertise. The comments have been added and the pathways will be signed off at the March DAF before being circulated to staff to be used. A review of their use will be conducted six months after they have been implemented to quality assure their use.
36. City & Hackney Health & Wellbeing Board have signed off a policy detailing the response to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) outlining the prevalence, guiding principles and the action plan setting out work that will prevent FGM and offer support to the women and girls who have experienced it.
37. The Corporation HR have created Domestic Abuse Policy for staff and managers. It defines what domestic abuse is and how the Corporation will respond to best support an individual who is experiencing, or perpetrating, domestic abuse including specialist services who can offer independent support.
38. The Community Safety Team are currently researching and compiling a Violence Against the Person strategy, which will include the SCPs response to domestic abuse and sexual violence. The strategy is under development ready to go to partners for consultation in March before being brought to SCP committee for sign off.

Key areas of work over the next six months

Night time economy and violence against the person

39. Over the last year we have seen an increase in violence against the person linked to the night time economy (NTE). The increased investment in the City becoming a strong and lively night time space will mean partners in the Safer City Partnership will need to work together strategically: sharing information, knowledge and expertise; and operationally: combining resources and intelligence.

40. The Community Safety Team will be doing work on violence against the person and the NTE as a priority defined in the Safer City Partnership strategic plan. Focus will be on the extent of the problem, how as partnership we can respond and whether appropriate services exist to support victims, witnesses and offenders.
41. A wider look at commissioning violence against the person services is needed. Monies should be centrally ring-fenced for this work from all partners from the Safer City Partnership and Health & Wellbeing Board for prevention, awareness raising and the delivery of effective, person-centred responses for victims, children and offenders. A paper on this will come to the Safer City Partnership on 14 November 2016 for a decision for the financial year of 2017/18.

Engagement subgroup

42. The first engagement subgroup meets on 24 February and is made up of community & voluntary sector specialists, Police and Corporation staff.
43. The group will look at how we engage with residents, businesses, licensed premises and Corporation staff. It will also produce promotional resources to be used in prevention and making victims and offenders aware of how to access resources for support and what happens when they do.
44. The engagement group looking at a variety of ideas including a campaign to raise awareness. This will allow partners to work together, sharing resources and knowledge. It will provide the opportunity to strengthen partnerships with communities, in particular victims and families under-represented in our services for example, BAME communities, people of affluence, rough sleepers and sex workers in the City.
45. Promotion will detail the role of services, how they work together to help victims, their children and perpetrators – all detailed with an accessible dictionary and involving visuals.
46. The engagement subgroup will report to the DAF and subsequently, through the quarterly report, to the SCP with all plans, their progress and outcomes.

International Women's Day

47. International Women's Day (8 March) will be held at the Corporation with a celebratory breakfast and this year will focus on violence against women and girls.
48. Key speakers will be journalist and presenter from Good Morning Britain Susanna Reid and a panel including Liberty Director Shami Chakrabarti, Speaker's Chaplain at the House of Commons Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, HSBC Chief Operating Office of Risk for EMEA Sonya Swallow and City of London Director of the Built Environment Carolyn Dwyer.

49. The money raised from the event will go to Refuge, supporting women and children fleeing domestic abuse.
50. Our victims services working with women in the City will attend as an opportunity to network and share their expertise with City businesses.

Domestic Homicide Review

51. In November 2015, the Chair of the SCP decided a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) would be undertaken to understand if there are any lessons the Safer City Partnership can learn from a tragic death of a Corporation of London employee and City resident.
52. An Independent Chair (and administration team) has been commissioned. This will be Althea Cribb, an Associate from Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, with the role of:
- a. Chairing and leading the review
 - b. Co-ordinating Individual Management Reviews
 - c. Completing the Overview Report
53. Individual Management Reviews will be completed by all agencies to detail their engagement and these will be discussed at the DHR Panel, culminating in the Overview Report, which will be sent to the Home Office, and an Action Plan for embedding the learning. The implementation of the action plan will be the responsibility of the Safer City Partnership.

Training

54. Over the next six months, staff that require training in domestic abuse awareness will be offered this learning opportunity. We will also begin embedding our referral pathways so all those working with people experiencing domestic abuse can help people access support from external victims services and likewise, those services have a full understanding and interaction with safeguarding and emergency support within the Corporation.

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