

Committee(s)	Dated:
Safer City Partnership Committee	23 September 2016
Subject: Domestic Abuse Forum Quarterly Report	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For information
Report Author: Chris Pelham Assistant Director (People)	

Summary

This report details the quarterly update of the activities of the Domestic Abuse Forum in delivering the two-year action Domestic Abuse Strategic Action Plan.

Main Report

Referral pathway

1. The pathway response for a domestic abuse was signed off by the Domestic Abuse Forum membership in June.
2. The pathway details the following steps needed to understand the course of action an officer or agency should take if they receive a disclosure from someone experiencing, or perpetrating, domestic abuse including:
 - a. If someone is in immediate danger?
 - b. Are children involved?
 - c. Risk assessment
 - d. Action planning including initial safety planning
 - e. Referral to specialist services and MARAC
3. The process is mapped out in an easy to use format and underwent consultation with agencies who regularly engage with service users.
4. This referral system has initially been sent to all services managers in Housing, Children's Social Care, Adult's Social Care, City of London Police – Public Protection Unit and Community Policing, Health representatives, Westminster Drug Project, local Community & Voluntary Sector victim services and community support services and pan-London services.
5. The only service that does not need to comply with the referral system is the GP surgery because they already have a disclosure referral system in place through the City & Hackney commissioned Iris Programmeⁱ delivered by the Nia Project.

6. Further communication work will be done with the referral pathway, notably in 2016 during 16 Days of Action, the Corporation HR domestic abuse awareness campaign and the Christmas Campaign. Here, officers and services will be made aware of the importance of access to support when people are experiencing and perpetrating domestic abuse.

Children and domestic abuse

7. Work has begun on producing a Children and Domestic Abuse Policy, detailing how the Corporation will respond effectively to safeguard and care for children experiencing domestic abuse.
8. The policy will detail the importance of understanding the needs of children and how to provide the most appropriate therapeutic care.
9. A whole-family approach will be used, whereby the Corporation works with all family members to support children and their parent experiencing domestic abuse alongside providing a responsive programme to perpetrators. Children's Social Care has identified a programme to spot-purchase from Tower Hamlets.
10. The programme, Positive Change, works with perpetrators, victims and children (separate workers for each) to help perpetrators understand the impact of their behaviour and take responsibility alongside supporting victims and their children.
11. Training has been identified to support staff in understanding how to talk through the positive outcomes of programmes with perpetrators. The Children's Social Care team, along with others, will receive this training.
12. A new social worker has been recruited with specialist knowledge and experience working with families who are experiencing domestic abuse. They will work alongside existing social workers in Children's, and Adult's, Social Care to support staff and up-skill them in their awareness of how to engage and support people experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse.
13. Additionally, the Vulnerable Victim Advocate now comes to the Children's Social Care Team every two weeks identify where she can offer independent support and advice for victims of domestic abuse alongside the social workers engagement with parents and children.

Violence against women and girls strategy

14. The consultation on the detail outlined in the City of London Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy went out for a second consultation during August due to a low number of responses from the initial consultation.
15. More detail was added to the second draft to emphasise the priorities for the Safer City Partnership in its response, for example its focus on the impact on children affected by domestic abuse.

16. A number of responses were received by the September deadline. The strategy will be updated ready for sign off later in the year.

Name of the strategic forum

17. The naming of the strategic Forum went out for a second consultation with Forum members being given the option of voting for their preferred choice. The options for the name being:

- a. Remain with the same name
- b. Domestic abuse and sexual violence forum
- c. Violence against women and girls forum

18. The deadline for the consultation was 1 September. There were nine responses to the consultation, as noted below:

Name option	Votes
Remain with the same name	3
Domestic abuse and sexual violence forum	5
Violence against women and girls forum	1

19. From this, the new name for the Forum will be the 'City of London Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forum'. The Terms of Reference will be amended accordingly.

MARAC update

20. There have been 8 MARAC cases, involving 11 children since the last Safer City Partnership Committee. Within these, four cases were repeat MARAC cases:

21. Two cases from previous MARAC's – one in the City in 2015 and the other from another borough in 2015. The other two cases had to be reheard due to complexity and the need for more information. All cases were risk managed and appropriate support allocated.

22. Members of the City of London MARAC will be invited to training in November, to be delivered by Safe Lives as part of our on-going commitment to a robust response to high risk victims of domestic abuse and their children.

Review of the strategic action plan

23. As the current action plan will be complete in April 2017, the Forum will be holding consultation workshops and reviewing data to understand the key focus areas to address in the coming two years.

24. Having the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy will steer the focus, widening the brief of the strategic action plan beyond a sole-focus on domestic abuse.
25. The plan will include the action plan from the Case Review Following a Serious Incident. The Forum will co-ordinate the delivery of the recommendations from the Review, reporting to the Safer City Partnership via the Forum quarterly report.

Awareness raising campaign

26. In November and December we will be seeking member support in 16 Days of Action to raise awareness of domestic abuse. The Community Safety Team and its partners in the Police, the Department for Community and Children's Services, Housing, Health and the Community and Voluntary Sector will be engaging with residents, workers and visitors so they will have more information on what to do if they are experiencing, or want help to stop perpetrating, domestic abuse.
27. The engagement programme will be used for a variety of activities:
- a. Internally to showcase the Corporation HR Domestic Abuse Policy and help staff to have more information
 - b. E-media such as Twitter and podcasts will be used to showcase services on offer to support victims and their children.
 - c. Workshops will be available for City businesses to help them to deliver internal campaigns and review their HR policies
 - d. Information in resident newsletters and community spaces
28. The campaign runs into December and will blend with the Christmas Campaign, highlighting the importance of staying safe during the festive season. Information will be made available to those celebrating on how to get support if they experience or perpetrate domestic abuse and sexual violence.

For more information on any matters in this paper contact Robin Newman, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator & Community Safety Officer:

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ⁱ The Iris Programme is run across the UK providing women access to specialist domestic abuse services. In the City, the commissioned support service is the Nia Project.