

1. Foreword



Councillor Gordon Baxendale – Chairman

- 1.1 Domestic Abuse is a serious cross cutting issue that harms children, adults, families and communities across Cheshire East. It affects all communities irrespective of demographic, environment or situation. It is often associated with mental ill health and substance misuse, all of which can have life long negative impacts on our population at great financial, social and economic cost.
- 1.2 The group would like to recognise the excellent work undertaken by the Council's Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit which deals with high risk victims and congratulate them on winning the outstanding team of the year award and the achievement of the national quality mark 'Leading Lights' in November 2015
- 1.3 I would like to thank personally all the officers and witnesses who gave up their valuable time to enhance this very thorough report. What started out as a group of councillors who showed concern for a service that is valued by the community, soon turned into a thorough look at all the partnerships established to try and alleviate some of the damage caused by domestic violence.
- 1.4 The main issue for the service turned out to be financial security. This has been tackled and the Task and Finish group has been pleased with the early funding from sparse resources. I do hope that this report will have a lasting effect on the cabinet in future funding decisions.
- 1.5 I would like to commend this report to Cabinet and the Safer Cheshire East Partnership, and remind them that the financial and human cost of domestic violence is high and impacts on not only victims but their families, imposing increasing pressure on limited resources. I would finally like to thank Katie Small without whose expertise this report would not have been published.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received evidence that the incidence of domestic abuse was under reported in Cheshire East compared with our neighbouring authorities, but this was likely to be reflected nationally also because of reasons associated with fear, loyalty and stigma by some sections of the community.
- 2.2 The Committee therefore decided to set up a task and finish group to investigate domestic abuse in Cheshire East to ascertain whether the under –reporting was indeed fact but also to investigate the impact of a recent decision by Her Majesty Court and Tribunals Service, not to have a single specialist court service for domestic violence.
- 2.3 The subsequent investigation revealed some interesting and startling facts about the extent of known domestic abuse in the borough and highlighted a number of issues connected with current arrangements that the Council and its partners have in place to deal with domestic abuse including funding arrangements, which has led the group to making twelve recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

3.0 What is domestic abuse? The new definition

3.1 The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

3.2 Controlling behaviour

3.3 Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

3.4 Coercive behaviour

3.5 Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. (Home Office 2002)

3.6 Domestic Violence – *The facts*

3.7 General

- An estimated 1.4 million women and 700,000 men have suffered domestic abuse in the last year, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 2 women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner (Office of National Statistics, 2015)
- 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes and 8% will suffer domestic violence in any given year (Crime Survey of England and Wales, 2013/14)
- Globally, 1 in 3 women will experience violence at the hands of a male partner (State of the World's Fathers Report, MenCare, 2015)
- Domestic violence has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other crime (Home Office, July 2002)
- Every minute police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call – yet only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police (Stanko, 2000 & Home Office, 2002)
- The 2001/02 British Crime Survey (BCS) found that there were an estimated 635,000 incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales. 81% of the victims were women and 19% were men. Domestic violence incidents also made up nearly 22% of all violent incidents reported by participants in the BCS (Home Office, July 2002)

- On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police (Jaffe, 1982)

3.8 Children

- 25% of children in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse (Radford et al. NSPCC, 2011)
- In 90% of domestic violence incidents in family households, children were in the same or the next room (Hughes, 1992)
- 62% of children in households where domestic violence is happening are also directly harmed (SafeLives, 2015)

3.9 Cost to society

- It has been estimated that domestic abuse costs the public £23 billion per annum. This includes the cost to the criminal justice system, to the health service, to social care and to housing. It is widely accepted however that this figure is an under-estimate as there are so many costs that can not be measured.
- The Home Office estimates that each domestic abuse murder costs the country just over £1 million and totals £112 million per annum.

4.0 Jargon buster

4.1 IDVA

IDVA stands for Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. An IDVA is a specialist domestic violence professional who supports victims at the highest risk of murder or serious injury. Their job is to make the victim and their family as safe as possible. They stand alongside victims and make sure they get whatever help they need and provide vital emotional and practical support to victims. They deal with everything from support through the criminal and civil justice system to sorting out money to having the locks changed. Their job is to make sure the victim is safe – and they do whatever it takes. Examples of the work carried out by Cheshire East IDVAs in attached at appendix 1.

4.2 MARAC

MARAC stands for Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference. Every area in England and Wales has one, and they are spreading throughout Scotland and Northern Ireland too.

MARAC meetings discuss how to help victims who are at high risk of murder or serious harm. In 2014, more than 74,052 cases, involving 93,759 children, were discussed at MARACs across the UK.

The IDVA, police, children's services, health and other relevant agencies all sit around the same table. They talk about the victim, the family and the perpetrator, and share information. The meeting is confidential.

Together they ensure any additional actions not already on a victim's action plan are agreed. Everyone present commits to take the actions they have agreed. The IDVA represents the victim and, after the meeting, makes sure they understand what was agreed.

4.3 Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub

Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub is a single point of information, advice assessment and support for anyone affected by domestic abuse – victim, perpetrator, young person, professional, concerned member of the public.

4.4 SafeLives (formerly CAADA)

Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA and now SafeLives) emerged from an urgent need to find better ways to help victims of domestic abuse. SafeLives receive government support to provide professional training, consultation and innovation in tackling domestic abuse and to ensure best practice is identified and replicated nationally

4.5 Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership CEDAP

Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership (CEDAP) oversees the implementation of an agreed Strategy to provide a Co-ordinated Community Response involving all key partners in protection, provision, prevention through a partnership approach and is accountable to Safer Cheshire East Partnership and reports to both Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards.

5.0 Recommendations

1. In order to facilitate longer term planning and retain skilled and experienced staff IDVAs Council funding should be mainstreamed rather than being 12 monthly *
2. The deficit in funding for the service (£50K) should be met from the MTFs on a recurrent basis to secure the service at its current level and the Council seeks to continue to influence partners to review their funding arrangements at local or sub regional level*
3. Domestic violence should be a priority for the Council and feature in the soon to be refreshed Community Strategy/Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
4. Due to funding only being secured for the next three years, the low risk domestic violence service be evaluated and consideration be given as to how the service will be funded from 2018.
5. The ambitions relating to the scale of interventions for perpetrators should be funded long term as part of the work on early intervention and prevention. A protocol between the various agencies should be developed to ensure an integrated approach was taken when dealing with perpetrators.
6. That the administration of MARAC be transferred to the Police, which would reduce the cost of the overall service by £20k and strengthen a sub regional approach to high risk work*
7. That the possibility of sharing resources, such as the Polish IDVA, with other authorities be investigated.
8. That the information sharing policy be reviewed to ensure all agencies are fully informed of domestic violence cases and where necessary awareness raised, to ensure that victims receive as much help as possible and are treated with respect and dignity.
9. That MP's and Police and Crime Commissioner be lobbied to provide funding for domestic violence, as it funds mental health and substance abuse.
- 10 That HMCTS be requested to improve the quality of the technology for providing remote evidence giving to such a standard that would allow the establishment of a single specialist court service.
- 11 In the event of IDVAs being commissioned sub regionally, every effort should be made ensure that this is not at the detriment of local service delivery.
- 12 That subject to Operation Encompass and Tandem Project producing the intended outcomes, the availability of resources be considered to sustain the projects.

***To fit in with budget setting timescales, this recommendation has already been approved.**

6.0 Background and Membership

- 6.1 On 16 June 2015, the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to a report on women's safety, which covered the work of partners in tackling the key priorities in relation to domestic and sexual violence in Cheshire East. It became clear to Members that some areas of joint working required more focus or collaboration. Therefore the Committee resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise in further detail how sexual and domestic violence are dealt with in Cheshire East. It was agreed that the following Councillors would sit on that Group:



Gordon Baxendale



Ellie Brooks



Mo Grant



Sarah Pochin



Mick Warren

7.0 Terms of reference

- To gain an understanding of why it was decided not to have a single specialist domestic violence court in Cheshire and how the court process will be improved without this in place.
- To gain an understanding of the sexual violence/abuse police incident reporting process.
- To investigate why domestic abuse reports from Cheshire East residents to the Police are the lowest in Cheshire in a context of extremely low levels of police reporting in Cheshire compared to similar forces nationally
- To review progress on sustaining funding for high risk domestic violence services (Council based)
- To review victims' journey through the system.

- 7.1 Members did not investigate honour based violence, forced marriages or people trafficking. During the Groups investigations, it became apparent that the original scope of the review was too broad, therefore the group decided to target the areas that would have the most impact and focus solely on domestic violence.

8.0 Methodology

8.1 Witnesses

Members met with the following people during the review:

- Judith Gibson – CE Domestic Abuse Partnership Co-ordinator
- Steph Cordon – Head of Communities and Chairman of the Safer Cheshire East Partnership
- Janet Clowes – Portfolio Holder – Adults, Health and Leisure
- Adam Ross – Detective Inspector, Cheshire Constabulary
- Kevin Bennett – Detective Inspector, Cheshire Constabulary
- Alan Lawson – Partnerships Manager

8.2 Timeline

16 June 2015	The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group
8 July 2015	The Task and Finish group met to receive a position paper and agree the scope of the review
16 September 2015	The Task and Finish Group met with Detective Inspectors Adam Ross and Kevin Bennett from Cheshire Constabulary to understand the reporting process and statistics
9 November 2015	The Task and Finish Group met with the Portfolio Holder for Adults, Health and Leisure to discuss funding for high risk domestic violence.
25 November 2015	Members attended a Celebrate, Challenge and Change event to understand the victim's journey and how the various agencies work together and operate.
3 December 2015	Members attended domestic violence Court hearings at Crewe Law Courts
15 December 2015	The Task and Finish Group met with Judith Gibson to discuss the 10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising domestic violence (Centre for Public Scrutiny publication)
11 January 2016	The Task and Finish Group met with the Chairman of the Safer Cheshire East Partnership.
21 January 2016	The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend to the Portfolio Holder that funding for the IDVA positions be provided by Cheshire East.
21 April 2016	The final report of the Task and Finish Group was approved by the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9.0 Findings

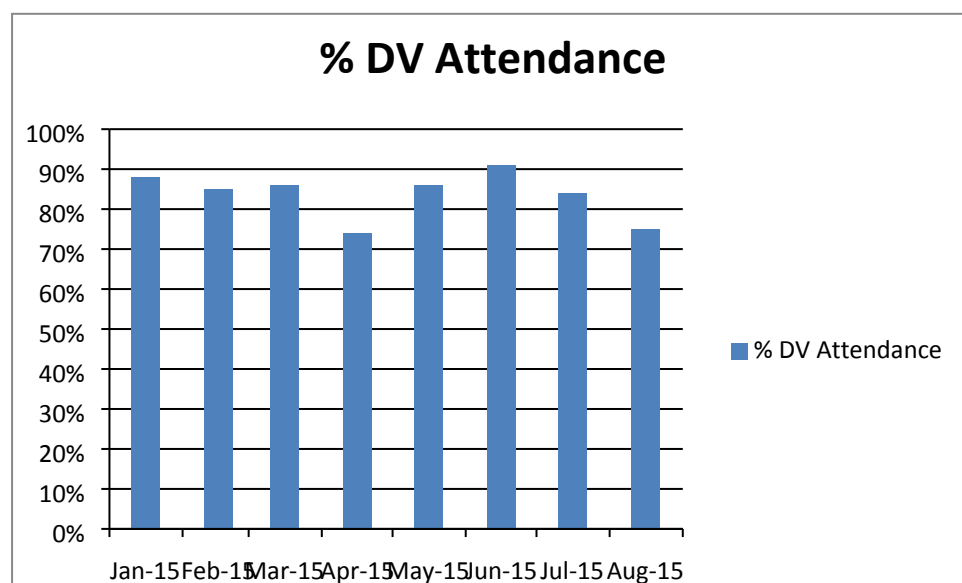
9.1 Domestic Violence in Cheshire East

- 9.2 It is likely that domestic abuse and sexual violence are as underreported in Cheshire East as in other parts of the country. The reasons for this range from fear, shame and barriers to accessing service through a feeling of responsibility to hold the relationship and/or family together.
- 9.3 The British Crime Survey estimates that only 25% of the worst incidents come to the attention of police so while we may ultimately seek a reduction in the harm caused by domestic abuse, an increase in reporting may actually reflect positively on confidence in and access to services.
- 9.4 The Council is committed to an ambitious partnership strategy to prevent harm and provide safety and recovery for those affected. This includes commissioning out provision for refuge, outreach, children's support and perpetrator work (as agreed at Cabinet in July 2015) and providing a dedicated high risk team in house - the Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit. The high risk service provides direct support and intervention for victims and their children who have experienced Domestic abuse. IDVAs are at the front line in managing and reducing those risks. They work alongside the victims and ensure a coordinated plan of support is in place based on assessed need. They respond as need arises or reduces; for many victims they are their lifeline.
- 9.5 The following is a summary of reported domestic abuse in Cheshire East:
- In April 15 to February 16 police attended 1706 domestic abuse incidents and 1887 domestic incidents
 - This represents an almost doubling of police domestic abuse incidents reflecting improved categorisation of incidents and bringing Cheshire East into line with referral rates in neighbouring authorities
 - 574 high risk victims with 782 children were subject to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC). These cases represent the top 10% of victims in terms of risk and remain on an upward trajectory
 - Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub received 1294 referrals and proactive contacting of victims to review risk and need enabled people to be referred to appropriate services including MARAC
 - Children under 4 form the largest group and are least able of all children to protect themselves and domestic abuse remains the single largest parental factor among families open to Children's Safeguarding
 - The MARAC repeat rate was 31% which is at the lower end of expected repeat rates for this high risk cohort
 - A significant proportion of victims and perpetrators known to specialist services have some form of mental health problem
 - Twice as many perpetrators as victims have problems with substance misuse
 - Demand for refuge services nationally remains high but locally we have taken significant steps towards improving the safety of people in their own homes by working with partners such as the Police to remove the source of the problem i.e. the perpetrator and increase the physical safety of victims' homes. We are thus able to use our local refuge provision for those cases where people must leave to be safe and have added refuge accommodation in Macclesfield to provision in Crewe

9.6 Single Specialist Domestic Violence Court

9.7 A single specialist Domestic Violence Court with satellite remote evidence giving for vulnerable witnesses is an agreed remedy to failures within the current court system, particularly slow processes, victim withdrawal and victim support.

9.8 From July to September 2015 attendance figures in domestic abuse cases stood at 79%. There were 421 witnesses required to attend with 338 actually attending during that month.



9.9 Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) had invited responses to a consultation on having one single court. Professionals, including Police and CPS as well as specialist domestic abuse services viewed this possibility very positively. However HMCTS decided not to have a single specialist court service in Chester with increased capacity for victims to give evidence via video link. The group had written to HMCTS several times to ascertain a reason for this, however had failed to receive a response.

9.10 Members attended domestic violence hearings at Crewe County Courts to gain an understanding of the victim's experience. It was felt that a single court would ease the victim's journey and ensure cases were progressed in a timely and well supported manner.

9.11 Councillor Baxendale and Grant attended the Strategic Courts Group and spoke to a representative of HMCTS who explained that a single specialist court would not be introduced until the technology for remote evidence giving had been improved.

9.12 Funding

- 9.13 Throughout the review it became apparent that the need for secured long term funding was crucial, the Group met with Judith Gibson and Steph Cordon on several occasions, who informed the group that in order to plan the provision and ensure an effective service the Council had sought to secure long term funding for the high risk service working for the last two years through the Joint Commissioning Leadership Team (JCLT) and Health and Wellbeing Board
- 9.14 Our Partners have now given their definitive position as outlined below which is essentially an agreement to sustain current contributions. Whilst this is to be welcomed, it does not meet the funding gap that we have in providing the current service which is assessed to meet needs effectively and efficiently.
- 9.15 As a result of this shortfall, the service has been reviewed, leaving a funding gap for the next year of £46k if the Home Office grant is not received and £26k if the Home Office grant is forthcoming.
- 9.16 As detailed in the table below, the budget deficit to the Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit is actually £100k but to manage this, the Council decided that £50k should be taken out of the Commissioned Service budget to meet the acute need. The rationale for this was that the alternative was to raise the threshold for those receiving high risk services. Those not eligible for the IDVA service would fall to the commissioned service effectively moving the provision further down the 'needs continuum'. There is however a tipping point to doing this beyond which taking too much money out of support services means that longer term support is withdrawn and changes are not sustained. therefore the 'whole family' does not receive help and repeat episodes increase. It was calculated that 50k was the optimum level. In effect this means that the Council has already increased its contribution to the high risk service by £50k through redistribution.
- 9.17 COSTS of SERVICE 2016-17:** High Risk work and shared functions of training and awareness raising, target hardening, communications, information, advice, referral and assessment work

STAFFING COSTS (potential increments included)	COST
1 IDVA manager	£48k
5 IDVAs (including 0.2 training capacity)	£175k
0.8 Business Support to IDVA service	£22k
1 Lead IDVA at the DA Hub (front door Children's Services)	£38k
1 Hub BSO	£23k
NON STAFFING COSTS	
IDVA service costs (travel, stationery, database licence etc)	£20k
Publicity, hub, white ribbon day, Board meetings	£3k
Target Hardening	£5k
TOTAL	£334

Seconded Hospital IDVA at Macc Hospital is funded separately and jointly by PCC and CCG and therefore not included in these costs

KNOWN INCOME 2016-17

Cheshire East Council	£166,637	(C&F 75k to core service, C&F 50k to Hub, Community safety 40k, Housing 5k)
East Cheshire CCG	£13,595	Also contribute £16k to hospital IDVA (not included in these costs)
South Cheshire CCG	£13,000	additional hospital funding directly paid to Leighton Hospital for hospital IDVA (as above)
Cheshire Constabulary	£9,750	
Police and Crime Commissioner	£35,000	Also contributes 16k for Macclesfield hospital services and 16k to Leighton Hospital (as above)
Cheshire East Council	£50k	Money taken from lower risk commission to prevent overload of new service with high risk cases (as set out previously)
Total	£287,982	
Home Office	£20,000	Received for last 5 years but not assured

GAP IS £334K - £287,982 = approx. £46K (£26K if Home Office money is received)

9.18 MARAC

9.19 MARAC is currently coordinated and administered by Cheshire East Council. Members agreed that this should be transferred to the Police saving Cheshire East Council £20,000 per annum. This approach already exists in other Local Authority areas of the force footprint who receive the same funding contributions from the Police.

9.20 Meeting with Police

- 9.21 Police reporting is known to be low when compared to similar force areas, which may indicate excellence in prevention, lack of consistency across force data recording or lack of victim confidence
The group met with DCI Kevin Beckett and DCI Adam Ross from the public protection unit to gain an understanding of the police reporting process and reasons as to why the reporting of abuse appeared to be the lowest in Cheshire.
- 9.22 It became apparent that the figures Members had initially received were out of date and that there had subsequently been an increase of 24% in domestic abuse reporting, which may be due to the roll out of a training programme for first responders and the investment of additional resources.
- 9.23 Work was also ongoing to improve the performance for solved cases in the category of domestic abuse with violence and domestic abuse. This is a priority for the Constabulary. An analyst had also been appointed to interpret data, which would allow the force to pinpoint where resources were required.

9.24 Reporting Statistics – Domestic Violence

September 2014 – September 2015

	Number Reported	Number solved	% solved
Force	6,830	2,901	42%
East	2,019	812	40%

July 2015 – September 2015

	Number Reported	Number solved	% solved
Force	1,595	765	47%
East	468	197	42%

September 2015

	Number Reported	Number solved	% solved
Force	470	252	54%
East	139	68	49%

9.25 Reporting Statistics - Domestic Violence with Injury

September 2014 – September 2015

	Number Reported	Number solved	% solved
Force	2,073	984	47%
East	566	276	48%

July 2015 – September 2015

	Number Reported	Number solved	% solved
Force	542	289	53%
East	168	79	47%

September 2015

	Number Reported	Number solved	% solved
Force	135	90	67%
East	42	25	60%

9.26 Celebrate, Challenge and Change Event

9.27 Members attended an event organised by Cheshire East Council, which gave them an insight into the victim's journey. The intention of the event was to:

- *Celebrate what works*
- *Recognise what doesn't*
- *Take responsibility for change*

9.28 The event planned and delivered jointly with service users who had much to tell about what had helped and hindered their journey to safety and recovery. They were clear that there was only value in sharing this experience if it helped bring about change. CEDAP Board was committed to that improvement and would take responsibility for agreed action. One area of concern for Members was that agencies and particularly departments within the Council could not share information; this had a significant detrimental impact on the victim and hindered the transition process to a place of safety.

9.29 10 Questions to ask if you are Scrutinising Domestic Violence – CfPS publication

9.30 The Centre for Public Scrutiny has produced a guide for councillors when scrutinising domestic violence, which was used to scrutinise the service provided by Cheshire East (questions and answers appendix 2)

9.31 From the answers received it became apparent that more work needed to be done when addressing perpetrators as Cheshire East could improve its offer and research demonstrates that, of perpetrators who complete a domestic abuse programme:

- some will stop their physical violence and significantly reduce their abusive and controlling behaviour
- the majority will stop their violence but maintain some level of abusive and controlling behaviour
- some will continue their violence

9.32 Although not all men will end their abuse, domestic abuse perpetrator programmes can reduce dangerousness.

9.33 Perpetrator Programme

9.34 Work with perpetrators of domestic violence aims to stop the violence and enhance the safety of victims of domestic violence. Last year, commissioned services responded to 86 referrals for perpetrator interventions and an additional small number received interventions via the probation system. Demand is increasing as the availability of these interventions is becoming known.

9.35 It is anticipated that the scale of need for perpetrators will be similar to the scale of need for victims. This would suggest between 530 (current MARAC cases) and 630 (Safe Live estimates) high risk perpetrators and between up to an additional 4,000 lower risk perpetrators. From 1 April 2016, there will also be:

- 2 police officers targeting perpetrators directly with a mix of challenge and support
- Provision within our commission to address the causes of harm on a one to one and group programme basis
- Training for engagement/referral workforce to have safe and productive conversations to promote accountability and change.

9.36 Work with Children

9.37 There are a number of pilot programmes that have been funded for the next year. If they are successful and produce the intended outcomes these should be commissioned on a sustainable basis. These include

- Operation Encompass – increased police capacity to enable schools to be contacted the next school day after a domestic abuse incident. This has been piloted across the Cheshire Constabulary including in Macclesfield. Schools have reported that facilitates a change in reaction to children's behaviour. This is being funded for one year (January to December 2016) as part of the Transforming Communities Programme. The cost of this is approximately £22k.
- Tandem Project – increased capacity to deliver a 10 week group work programme for parents and young people where there is child to parent violence.

9.38 Low risk domestic violence funding

9.39 The Council has recently commissioned the lower risk support for three years with the option to renew for another two years at a cost of £600,000 per annum.

9.40 The new contract will start on 1 April 2016 and includes:

- Co-delivery with the IDVA service of Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub (point of information and service access for all domestic abuse provision)
- Provision of an accessible support base in Crewe and Macclesfield

- Provision of refuge accommodation and housing support to victims of domestic abuse from within and outside the Borough
- Direct service provision to medium risk victims and historic victims, where appropriate, of all ages in the community (one to one and group support including recovery work) and providing support to partners of people on change programmes
- Support for those who harm others
- Direct service provision to any child or young person affected by domestic abuse including the children of adult service users and children and young people referred in their own right (one to one and group support according to need and extending to recovery)
- Participation in preventive measures such as campaigns, training and educational work
- Participation in the wider work of Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership

9.41 This is wholly funded by Cheshire East Council, Local Authority funding is reducing and as a result all non-mandatory services will be reviewed. This is a non-mandatory service and therefore in the longer term is at risk if it relies solely on Local Authority funding. Consideration should be given as to how this service will be funded long term.

9.42 Domestic Abuse, Mental ill Health and Substance Abuse

9.43 Domestic abuse, mental ill-health and substance misuse have been identified as common features of families where harm to women children has occurred. While there is national funding for mental ill health and substance abuse, there is no such long term funding for domestic violence or any guidance on how contributions ought to be established. The group agreed that MP's should be lobbied to provide funding.

9.44 Localised Services

9.45 It was highlighted that a strategic Domestic Abuse Board was being set up by the Chief Constable which will consider streamlining services for efficiencies and cost savings. Members raised concern that a sub regional approach could lead to Cheshire East having fewer resources as other areas were considered to have more significant problems. It was also felt that this approach may compromise the quality of the service because IDVAs would not be locally based and linked into local provision. The group felt that this should not be at the detriment to local service delivery.

10.0 Background Documents

- In Plain Sight: effective help for children exposed to domestic abuse. CAADA's 2nd national Policy Report.
- Domestic Abuse strategy – Cheshire East
- 10 questions to ask when scrutinising domestic violence – CfPS publication
- Evaluations of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts/Fast Track Systems

CASE EXAMPLES

Hub Assessment – high risk identified and case referred to the IDVA service

The Hub called Tracey following a live referral from the police officer who attended the incident the previous evening. Tracey explained that she had called the police because her partner, Richard, was being verbally abusive and intimidating, shouting in her face - calling her names - this was in front of both of the children. Their son, Toby, had started to mirror his father's behaviour also.

The Hub worker assessed the risk as high and agreed to refer Tracy for IDVA services while also undertaking essential safety planning. Her son's needs were also discussed and a referral made to a prevention programme to ensure Toby had every chance to address the behaviours that he had absorbed through living in an abusive household.

IDVA Client Miranda

On referral by police Miranda disclosed that she had tried to end the relationship with her abusive partner many times. As she had been unable to keep herself or her children safe, her children had been taken into care and she was extremely low. Her partner had been extremely controlling, threatening and self-harming over a long period of time and this increased when she attempted to leave. He had held her against her will and she only escaped having managed to text her sister who called the police.

A face to face meeting with the IDVA was set up where both emotional and practical support was given including identifying alternative accommodation and liaison with police over the criminal justice process. Longer term arrangements were put in place by the IDVA to allow Miranda safely to access her belongings and transfer them to a place of safety from where she could start rebuilding her life with guidance and support.

At case closure Miranda said that without the police referral to the IDVA service she would still be living in fear or worse.

REPORT TO TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY PANEL ON DOMESTIC ABUSE/SEXUAL VIOLENCE

10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising domestic violence

A guide for local authority overview and scrutiny officers and councillors – Centre for Public Scrutiny

Question 1

What sort of needs assessment underpins our action on domestic violence?

- A needs assessment was used to develop the specification for the domestic abuse commission approved by Cabinet in July 15. It is attached below
- The Centre for PS talks largely about victim needs and while this is important we aspire to addressing the needs of the whole family with services for adults and children and young people who are victims and those who harm others. This is increasingly recognised as a necessary focus for sustaining recovery and change
- **Question to others – how is the data provided by CEDAP used to inform action on domestic violence in other spheres? E.g. JSNA**

Question 2

Do we understand the impact that current services have on the lives of those affected by domestic violence?

- A wide range of data is provided quarterly and annually through a range of reporting
- The CEDAP Board has just instituted a new Quality and Finance Group to scrutinise this work in more detail and to join up data across sectors to provide a more integrated perspective e.g. criminal justice and children's data
- there is a strong focus on outcomes in the new commission
- more work is needed to establish a strong reporting framework that can be understood at headline level and provides more detail for those who need to scrutinise at a deeper level
- feedback from users of specialist services is regularly gathered and was presented in a range of ways at the recent 'Celebrate/Challenge/Change' event on Nov 25th. This will be collated and sent to respective agencies in January
- our IDVA service is benchmarked against national provision and quality standards
- we do not use the Women's Aid standards locally as they are not easily adapted to our 'whole family' response

Question 3

What is our provision for people once they are in a place of safety, and how are people supported in safety?

- Our focus is not to 'move people to a place of safety' but to use all strategies possible to remove the risk and threat from them by taking a robust approach

- MARAC is strong and effective and well chaired by the police and co-ordinated by the Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit
- The focus in all services is on establishing safety and then supporting people to recover through a bespoke support plan
- We provide an evidence based programme, Gateway, for women who identify or are identified by Children's Services as needing support to understand what has happened to them, consider the impact on their children and gain skills in identifying abusive behaviours in new partners

Question 4

How are perpetrators, and potential perpetrators, addressed in the system at present?

- Not well enough is the short answer
- MARAC is increasingly ensuring that there are strategies in place to hold perpetrators to account
- We provide a voluntary programme which has a good referral rate but sees significant attrition at assessment and completion stages
- We need a much more flexible approach and there is now sub regional movement in that direction with police promising some capacity and some funding for community interventions from the Complex Dependency stream
- We have built provision for YP and adults who harm others into the new commission but money is stretched
- We believe a systems model involves training and supporting all frontline workers to engage those who harm better and then providing a mix of support and challenge to change
- There is also preventive work in schools led by the SCIES team and we have just piloted a Child to Parent violence programme jointly with the Youth Engagement Service

Question 5

How do we provide specialist support for children and young people affected by domestic violence, whether as victims themselves or as witnesses?

- We provide 1 to 1 and group work with these children in refuges, in the community and in schools
- This is also a requirement of the new commission
- Cheshire East Family Service are a significant resource for children and young people identified via MARAC
- We have also launched a new website for young people and those who support them to help them understand the issue and access resources
- Operation Encompass is being launched across Cheshire in January – mechanism to involve schools in support for children the night after a police incident
- There is an increase in provision for children within the new commission

Question 6

How do we understand and act on the likelihood that victims of domestic violence are more likely to be prone to substance abuse, and more likely to suffer from mental health problems?

- We provide 'Toxic Trio' training as part of the LSCB offer. It is well evaluated but not enough 'Adults' staff attend. We need to improve integrated work in this area

- The 'Complex Dependency' work at sub regional level is focused on 'One Front Door' i.e. comprehensive assessment of all family needs and more integrated service delivery.

Question 7

How are individual victims, or likely victims, risk-assessed? How do we know when additional interventions are necessary? How can this be demonstrated, and how can we be sure that risk recognises what victims' needs are?

- Practitioners across all sectors are trained to use the national Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC) or the Young Person's equivalent (Young people in Teen Relationship Abuse)
- This results in practitioners' increased ability to recognise and address risk
- We are working on a parallel risk and needs assessment for affected children – there is no national model for this
- Our MARAC has a wide range of referring agencies demonstrating the wide implementation of risk tools

Question 8

How do we know that the MARAC in this area is working well?

- We have a strong and effective MARAC (see above) which is subject to self assessment using the national Safelives framework and is informed by SAfelines visits
- We contribute data to SafeLives nationally – we did use their Insights system but it is expensive and duplicated other forms of inputting for our IDVA team without significant advantage
- When SafeLives wanted to showcase a MARAC to Baroness Newlove, the Victims Commissioner, they chose Cheshire East

Question 9

To what extent has the use of civil orders changed the way that domestic abuse is dealt with operationally, and how it is commissioned?

- We believe that used appropriately civil orders along with Restraining Orders gained through court sanctions have a strong part to play in avoiding the need for refuge provision
- Victims tell us they do not want to move if it can be avoided so our strategy is to do all we can to keep victims safe in situ and instead address the behaviour of the perpetrator through disruption, diversion, management and criminal/civil justice mechanisms
- Safe emergency and temporary accommodation remains a requirement within the new commission

Question 10

Is there enough resilience in the domestic violence service in the area to withstand current budgetary pressures? What are the most appropriate future funding arrangements between commissioners and providers?

- There are budgetary pressures on DA provision, particularly on the high risk services. See previous report to the Health and Wellbeing Board and new risk report following November's inconclusive Joint Commissioning Leadership Team (JCLT) meeting