

**Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore,
Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection**

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| Report to: | Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: | 13 July 2016 |
| Subject: | Domestic Abuse Update |

Summary:

This report provides the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee with an update of the Domestic Abuse work undertaken by the Safer Communities Service-County Domestic Abuse Team.

Actions Required:

Members of the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the report and highlight any recommendations or further actions required.

1. Background

Domestic abuse remains a priority issue for Lincolnshire. In 2015-2016, over 10,000 incidents of domestic abuse were reported to Lincolnshire Police and it is estimated that only one quarter of domestic abuse is reported to the Police.

Lincolnshire County Council initiates, facilitates and/or supports much of the partnership domestic abuse activity in Lincolnshire. This includes coordination and administration of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which is a partnership response to high risk cases of domestic abuse, administration and support for the Domestic Abuse Strategic Management Board and its sub groups, multi-agency and in house domestic abuse training, publicity campaigns, development of policies and protocols, data analysis, commissioning of domestic abuse services and coordination of domestic homicide reviews.

Lincolnshire County Council currently funds the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service for high risk victims of domestic abuse, the DA outreach services for all non-high risk victims who need support across the 7 districts and supported accommodation for victims fleeing domestic abuse.

The County Domestic Abuse Team is part of the Safer Communities Service, at Lincolnshire County Council. The Domestic Abuse Team consists of a Domestic Abuse Manager and a Domestic Abuse Project Officer plus some business support. The team is managed by the Safer Communities Manager.

2. Achievements in 2015-2016

In May 2015 Lincolnshire County Council's Domestic Abuse Manager was asked to speak at a national conference due to the interest in the School Link Project set up in Lincolnshire in October 2013. The project was a big success with the following outcomes:

- Total Number of Schools Seen: 42
- Total number of schools that have had training: 26
- Total Number of Teachers Trained: 569
- Total Number of schools now delivering healthy relationships workshops to young people: 22
- Total Number of schools agreed to deliver workshops to young people: 13
- Number of schools with a DA Policy in place: 16
- Number of young people have received the workshop so far: 8,672 (from October 2013-March 2016)

Unfortunately the funding for this project ended in March 2016. However, the County Domestic Abuse Team will continue to work with schools to help them address domestic abuse.

In September 2015 a Joint Domestic Abuse Protocol to provide support and guidance to practitioners across all agencies in Lincolnshire was launched. This will help to ensure consistency and safe and effective responses to domestic abuse. The protocol was produced by the County Domestic Abuse Team and members of both Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards, with support from Lincolnshire Police.

In 2015-16 LCC Safer Communities, Adult Social Care and Children Services pooled together resources to fund 16 sessions of Multi agency Domestic Abuse training. This resulted in a total of 366 Lincolnshire practitioners receiving the enhanced face to face training.

Also in 2015-16, 843 professionals completed the domestic abuse E-Learning package available on the LSCB/LSAB website, some of which have completed it as a pre-requisite of the face to face training mentioned above.

In 2014 a new guidance document for LCC employees and managers was launched. In 2015-2016, 4 briefing sessions were delivered to managers to help them recognise domestic abuse in employees and give them the confidence to respond appropriately. The County Domestic Abuse Team continues to promote this guidance across the Authority.

Despite pressure on budgets Lincolnshire County Council Safer Communities and Public Health were able to extend the current contracts for the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service for high risk victims and the outreach services for non-high risk victims.

3. Concerns in 2015-2016

Tragically there were 3 deaths linked to domestic abuse in 2015-2016. These 3 deaths, from 2 cases, are now subject to a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR). Already since April 2016 there has been a further 3 deaths that will require a multi-agency DHR. Since the Home Office Statutory Guidance was introduced in April 2011 there have been 9 people in Lincolnshire who have died in circumstances that meet the criteria for a DHR. The Domestic Abuse Team manages these multi agency reviews and they are putting increasing pressure on an already overstretched and small team. They are often very complex, involve liaison with family, friends and the perpetrator and sometimes agencies in other parts of the country. There is also a significant impact on Lincolnshire County Council budgets as the Authority is currently funding all DHRs.

Commissioning of domestic abuse outreach services remains a major risk and concern. Lincolnshire County Council Safer Communities has been able to secure ongoing funding for the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service to continue until the end of March 2018. Public Health and Safer Communities were also able to extend the contract for domestic abuse outreach services until March 2017. However the future of these services remains uncertain.

The latest contract to provide DA Outreach services started in October 2013. Over the past 2.5 years the following outcomes have been achieved across Lincolnshire:

- 3849 victims have been supported since the new configuration of service started in October 2013.

These figures are broken down as follows and represent an increase in demand year on year:

- 501 in 2013-14
- 1346 in 2014-15
- 2002 in 2015-16

Possible funding options are currently being explored by Safer Communities and Public Health in consultation with partners.

4. Planned activity for 2016-2017 by the County Domestic Abuse Team, Safer Communities

- Support the partnership to conduct domestic homicide reviews.
- Participation in trying to support a solution to the provision of domestic abuse services.
- Produce and support the implementation a domestic abuse policy for Lincolnshire County Council.
- Introduce a Domestic Abuse Group within Lincolnshire County Council that will drive improvements within the Authority and ensure that lessons from domestic homicide reviews are learned.
- Deliver domestic abuse training to over 400 adult social care employees (with funding from the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board).

- Deliver a new domestic abuse training programme that is accessible to all agencies (also with funding from the LSAB).
- Support the domestic abuse partnership in the production of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy and delivery plans.
- Support the partnership with quality assurance and evidencing outcomes.
- Ensure that domestic abuse is an integral part of offender management.
- Continue to operate the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.
- Ensure that domestic abuse is recognised by the Suicide Prevention Group as a key risk factor for mental health and suicide.

5. Conclusion

The increase in domestic homicide reviews is saddening, sickening and worrying. If domestic abuse is not taken seriously victims can and do die or can suffer long term physical, financial and emotional effects. The management of Domestic Homicide Reviews is also having an impact on the domestic abuse team and its capacity to undertake more preventative and progressive work.

Lincolnshire County Council remains a key agency in the domestic abuse partnership and provides both funding and resources in terms of strategic planning and oversight, coordination and administration.

Since the last update to the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Panel it is reassuring that Lincolnshire County Council has made considerable improvements in relation to tackling domestic abuse, including the production of a draft domestic abuse policy, mandatory training for adult care staff and plans to ensure that services commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council also have systems, policies and procedures in place relating to Domestic Abuse.

However there are increasingly challenging times ahead given the uncertainties around funding and the demands placed on the Council to support the partnership and manage Domestic Homicide Reviews. The ongoing support and scrutiny of the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Panel is therefore necessary and appreciated.

6. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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