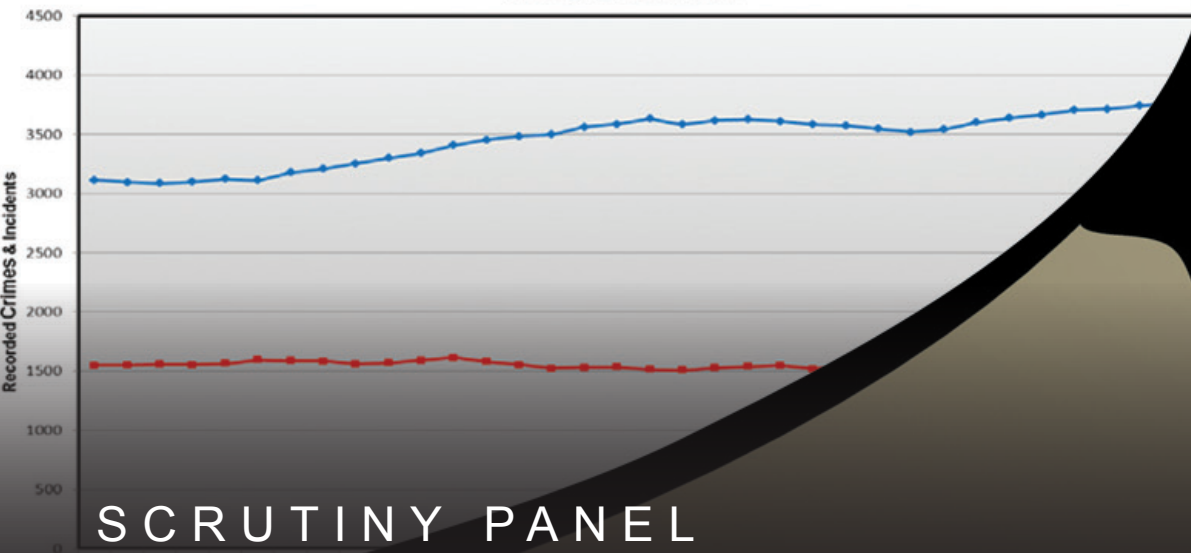


# Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Crimes	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14
	Volume	Annual % Change	Volume	Annual % Change	Volume	Annual % Change	
Domestic Incidents	3113		3407	9.4%	3576	5.0%	3880
Domestic Crime	1561		1616	3.5%	1537	-4.9%	1397
Total	4674		5023	7.5%	5113	1.8%	5277

**Domestic Abuse Related Crime & Incidents**  
Rolling 12 Month Total



SCRUTINY PANEL

## Interpersonal Violence

March 2015

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## Foreword

The objective of this Scrutiny Panel was to review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse.

The Scrutiny Panel was made up from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: myself, Councillors Brendan Glynane, Anna King, and Sivaramen Subbarayan together with other non-Executive Councillors Sally Beardsworth (Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Panel) and Danielle Stone. The review benefitted from the expertise of two co-optees – Matt Chester, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Detective Superintendent Steve Lingley, Northants Police.

The review took place between May 2014 and March 2015.

It was a very interesting and informative review; with clear evidence received. A wealth of data was received and the Scrutiny Panel undertook a number of site visits. Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel attended conferences regarding preventative models for domestic violence.

I, and also a couple of witnesses to this review, met with the Rt. Hon. Theresa May, MP, Home Secretary, on the issue that this Scrutiny Panel investigated. She suggested that the Scrutiny Panel looked at literature that was available to educate people; the Scrutiny Panel has investigated this. Mrs May showed a keen interest in the work that this Scrutiny Panel did.

Domestic Abuse Awareness Week took place week commencing 24 November 2014. 25 November 2014 was International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. I was delighted that the Scrutiny Panel was able to host, together with officers from Community Safety, an information stand at the Guildhall on this day. Representatives from Northampton Women's Aid also provided information at the stand.

I also took the opportunity to disseminate information about Domestic Abuse Awareness week to all ward Councillors who promoted the information at their surgeries.

The Scrutiny Panel held interviews with Cabinet Members, Senior Staff at Northampton Borough Council and various external expert witnesses. Desktop research was carried out by the Scrutiny Officer.

The result is a comprehensive piece of work, which recommends to Cabinet a number of improvements in addressing domestic abuse issues.

I would like to thank all those who gave up their time to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel to provide this information and all those who provided comprehensive written evidence.



**Councillor Jamie Lane**

Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Interpersonal Violence

## **Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review: -**

- Councillors who sat with me on this review - Councillors Sally Beardsworth (Deputy Chair); Brendan Glynane, Anna King, Danielle Stone and Sivaramen Subbarayan Matt Chester, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Detective Superintendent Steve Lingley, Northants Police, co-optees to the review.
- Andrea Leadsom, MP, Councillor David Mackintosh, Leader of the Council, Councillor Mary Markham, Cabinet Member for Housing , NBC, Julie Seddon, Chair, Community Safety Partnership, Ann Bodsworth, Northampton Women's Aid, Lucy Westley Northampton Sunflower Centre, Detective Inspector Richard Tompkins, Northants Police, Suzanne Binley, Relate, Dawn Thomas, Rape and Incest Crisis Centre, Julie Coles and Christine Morgan, Nene Valley Christian Refuge (NVCR), Nisha Meeja, Chair, Northampton Inter-Faith Forum, Andrew Jepps, Assistant Director, Integrated Wellbeing Services, Northamptonshire County Council, Northampton Women's Forum, Northampton Red Cross, Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club for providing a response to the core questions of the Scrutiny Panel to inform the review
- BME SRP and Women's Aid for providing various anonymised case studies to inform the review
- Inspector Kevin Byrne, PC Markham and PC Meacham for giving an informative presentation on Domestic Violence awareness
- Lucy Westley, Sunflower Centre, and Ann Bodsworth, Northampton Women's Aid, for hosting site visits for the Scrutiny Panel
- Debbie Ferguson, Community Safety Manager for her support to this review.
- Sophie Morgan, Data Analyst, and Nicky McKenzie, Housing Choice and Resettlement Team Leader, NBC, for providing information to this review

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse.
- 1.2 The required outcomes being:
  - To clearly identify existing domestic abuse services and partnerships covering Northampton
  - To consider and assess the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved in addressing domestic violence including the Police.
  - To identify any gaps in service provision in order assess the adequacy for supporting victims of domestic abuse
  - To make recommendations for future development of services
  - To identify the underlying causes of domestic violence and preventative measures
  - To identify the responsibilities of the Local Authority, for example strategic housing
  - To identify funding mechanisms and how this could be used to alleviate the problem
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in March 2014, agreed to include a review of interpersonal violence. This was an issue that had been suggested by Scrutiny Panel 1 (Serious Acquisitive Crime, violent crime and community safety) recommended that a review of inter-personal violence be undertaken by a future Scrutiny Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2014 and concluded in March 2015.
- 1.4 A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillor Sally Beardsworth (Vice Chair); Councillors Brendan Glynane, Anna King, Danielle Stone and Sivaramen Subbarayan. Matt Chester, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and Steve Lingley, Northants Police, were co-opted to the review.
- 1.5 An in-depth review commenced in May 2014, concluding in March 2015.

## CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Scrutiny Panel established that: -

### **Preventative Strategies and Models – Northampton**

- 9.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that front line staff, Northampton Borough Council (NBC), had undertaken awareness training for domestic abuse in the last 18 months.
- 9.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that Northampton benefits from a good range of Agencies dealing with domestic abuse.
- 9.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the Sunflower Centre and Serenity (sexual assault referral centre), Northampton are both recognised nationally as models of excellence. The Scrutiny Panel further realised that there are organisations within Northampton that delivers similar services to those highlighted within the results of the desktop research exercise.
- 9.1.4 The MARAC process within Northampton deals with high risk cases and has recently been further developed by merging with the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF) meetings. The DAF's focus was on low to medium risk cases, and similar to the MARAC brought agencies together to review cases and identify appropriate support and intervention for the victim. The Scrutiny Panel realised that by bringing all Agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. It further noted that the merging of the two processes has created a more joined up approach with a broader range of agencies attending and contributing. It has also provided the opportunity to pull together all available support and intervention programmes that are available within the domestic abuse 'tool box' to enable a joined up response and avoid duplication.
- 9.1.5 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the MARAC has received praise from CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) which oversees MARAC meetings nationally.
- 9.1.6 Underpinning the work of MARAC is the role of the IDVA's (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor) that sit within the Sunflower Centre. An IDVA is

a named, trained professional case worker for domestic abuse victims whose primary purpose is to address the safety of 'high risk' victims and their children. IDVA's serve as a victim's main point of contact, and normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options, developing and implementing coordinated safety plans.

- 9.1.7 Evidence received highlighted that there is a need for service providers to work in collaboration. All Agencies are working to the same agenda but there are gaps in strategic thinking. There needs to be joined up thinking and working across the seven Local Authorities in the county. The sharing of resources, protocols and policies would be advantageous. The lack of strategic overview and cohesive thinking can create client frustration.
- 9.1.8 It was recognised that there is a wealth of experience and knowledge within Agencies and that there are mechanisms in place for cross-referral to other Agencies. This is further supported by the close working relationships that the Agencies have developed.
- 9.1.9 The evidence received highlighted that there is a need for sustainable funding and wider strategic thinking to ensure services can develop and thrive.
- 9.1.10 The good practice undertaken by Northampton Borough Council in funding domestic abuse support agencies was noted. It was felt that there is a need for there to be dialogue with other funding bodies so that the good practice undertaken by NBC can be replicated.
- 9.1.11 The Scrutiny Panel conveyed its concerns regarding the reduction in services meaning that there is a growing issue about pathways to support such as reduction in refuge spaces, loss of legal aid.
- 9.1.12 The Scrutiny Panel was concerned regarding the cost of interpreter services which can be very high. For example, in some cases £100 per session has been charged to Relate. It was felt that this highlights a gap in service provision.
- 9.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that two Awareness Raising Sessions on the work of Relate Northamptonshire (in particular Choosing to Change) for staff in Children's Services and Social Workers had been scheduled for December 2014.

- 9.1.14 The Scrutiny Panel emphasised the need to do more for victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- 9.1.15 The Scrutiny Panel raised concerns regarding the inconsistencies around referrals and advice from Children's Services. It felt that there is a need for an awareness raising training programme for Councillors in Northamptonshire.
- 9.1.16 The refuge visited by the Scrutiny Panel was perceived as well run, nicely decorated, welcoming and containing good facilities for children.
- 9.1.17 It was recognised that there is a need to address both male and female perpetrators so that they change their behaviour. Evidence received highlighted that additional research needs to be undertaken in order to facilitate the evidence base for female and same sex perpetrators. Funding would be required to do this.
- 9.1.18 The Scrutiny Panel noted that a victim of domestic violence is categorised as priority by the Borough Council. It was pleased that the system is very robust with a clause in the Tenancy Agreement that if a perpetrator is convicted they will lose the right to the tenancy; i.e. the victim would have the right to remain in the property. The Tenancy Agreement has been reviewed and updated. However, the Scrutiny Panel felt that there is a need to explain the Tenancy Agreement process to new and prospective tenants.
- 9.1.19 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the need for a Transition Strategy as when moving from a refuge to a permanent address; women often have no furniture or equipment.
- 9.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has recently allocated £10million of funding for domestic abuse preventative services. Local Authorities can bid for £100,000 of this funding. One of the criterion for funding is that services are not ring-fenced specifically to a county and must be available to individuals from anywhere in the UK. The bid has been submitted and the outcome is awaited.
- 9.1.21 Approximately 50% of referrals to the Sunflower Centre are from the borough of Northampton.
- 9.1.22 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the good work of the Sunflower Centre realising the need for accommodation for drop in sessions at the Guildhall,



when they move to their new location at Riverside House.

### **Domestic Abuse Awareness**

- 9.1.23 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to take part in Domestic Abuse Awareness Week that took place week commencing 24 November 2014. 25 November 2014 was International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The Scrutiny Panel hosted, together with officers from Community Safety, an information stand at the Guildhall on this day. Representatives from Northampton Women's Aid also provided information at the stand. Various ward Councillors visited the information stand and also promoted the information at their surgeries. Information packs were disseminated to all borough Councillors. It was felt that this information would be of tremendous value to various BME groups. It was further agreed that the education information packs would be of benefit to various organisations such as, schools, universities, churches and community groups.
- 9.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel noted that an anti-abuse campaign in cinemas has been very successful. Following the campaign, comments on the Webpage of the cinema had been posted detailing that people had not been aware that they were being abused until they had had sight of the campaign. The Scrutiny Panel further noted the advice of the Home Secretary that schools have a role to play in educating children about relationships; this had also been highlighted in evidence provided to the Scrutiny Panel by expert advisors.
- 9.1.25 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the need for a standard definition of vulnerable adults that could be shared with all Agencies.
- 9.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel felt that advice on healthy relationships is omitted from education PSHE lessons, and this would be a valuable part of the school curriculum.
- 9.1.27 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that there appears to be low level reporting in BME communities, highlighting the need for cultural training and shifts in understanding. There is a need to work with communities to ensure that services and language assistance is available to them but it was recognised that this would be a further piece of scrutiny work.
- 9.1.28 80% of domestic abuse relates to women. It was felt that it would be useful for Northamptonshire County Council's Adult and Social Care Scrutiny Committee to investigate the reason for this; signposting to relevant academic research.

## **Best Practice Elsewhere**

- 9.1.29 The Scrutiny Panel found the document produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – 10 questions to ask when scrutinising domestic violence – a guide for Local Authority Scrutiny Officers and Councillors useful when putting supplementary questions to expert advisors.
- 9.1.30 Desktop research highlighted that the Blackpool Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is noted as a beacon of excellence. Blackpool is one of the few areas to have children’s independent domestic violence advisors who take individual cases and oversee the MARAC process. Safer Peterborough has the provision of a Men’s Advice Line for men experiencing domestic abuse.
- 9.1.31 The Scrutiny Panel commended the Australian and New Zealand Preventative Model and Strategies for domestic abuse; acknowledging that a number of these processes are replicated in Northamptonshire.
- 9.1.32 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the domestic abuse services in Northampton link in with male victims.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations: -

The purpose of this Scrutiny Panel was to review Northampton Borough Council’s response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse.

Scrutiny Panel 1 recommends to Cabinet:

- 10.1.1 In recognising the success of the information stand hosted by the Scrutiny Panel as part of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, a similar event is held annually in the town centre in a location with a consulting room should attendees need advice and support.
- 10.1.2 Education Information Packs on domestic abuse preventative services are disseminated to BME Groups, schools, universities, faith groups and community groups in Northampton prior to Domestic Violence Awareness Raising Week 2015.
- 10.1.3 In recognising the good practice undertaken by Northampton Borough Council in funding domestic abuse services; Northampton Borough Council (NBC) should take this into consideration when allocating funding in future years and share best practice with other funding bodies.
- 10.1.4 The countywide definition of vulnerable adults is adopted by Northampton Borough Council.
- 10.1.5 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for education at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is contacted and asked whether education, advice, information and support regarding healthy relationships and personal safety can be included in the school curriculum.
- 10.1.6 Public awareness of domestic abuse is increased and services that are available to tackle the issue and support victims:
- Review and update contents of relevant pages of NBC website to ensure it is informative and 'user friendly'
  - Provide effective and updated publicity throughout the Borough via poster, leaflets and contact cards
  - Support NADA awareness raising campaigns for the county
  - Training for all Councillors on Interpersonal Violence is delivered and an information booklet or webpage is produced
- 10.1.7 NBC's Domestic Abuse Policy is revised and updated to reflect the new countywide Interpersonal Violence Strategy; which is currently out to consultation.
- 10.1.8 The statistical data collected in respect of domestic abuse is reviewed to ensure that it is robust and meaningful. NBC considers the effectiveness of current data collection in relation to domestic abuse and encourages all relevant departments to review and contribute by the end of December 2015.

## **Funding**

- 10.1.9 It is established whether NBC has central funding to access interpreter services, to aid communication with victims who's first language is not English.
- 10.1.10 Due to the relocation of the Sunflower Centre, Northampton Borough Council provides them with accommodation in the One Stop Shop for drop in sessions.
- 10.1.11 A central budget to support the Sanctuary Scheme and the target hardening for victims properties is identified to enable victims to remain in their own home.

## **Training Programme**

- 10.1.12 NBC develops a sustainable domestic abuse awareness raising training programme for Councillors, managers and all staff. This programme is also offered to neighbouring Local Authorities.

## **Housing Services, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH)**

- 10.1.13 It is recommended that the conditions of Tenancy Agreements are fully explained to new and prospective tenants to ensure their understanding and compliance.
- 10.1.14 Dual Tenancies are encouraged and staff trained to recognise the implications of cultural differences.
- 10.1.15 In recognising that when moving from a crisis and safe accommodation to a permanent address; women often have no furniture or equipment; a Transition Strategy is introduced. Information is provided detailing where household items can be obtained, for example Charity Link and Spencer Contact.

## **Housing Solutions, Northampton Borough Council**

- 10.1.16 In recognising that new people to the area; and individuals with no recourse to public funds, are offered advice, support and given information.
- 10.1.17 Housing Solutions, NBC, takes responsibility for reports of domestic abuse and ensure all staff are trained and able to respond.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 10.1.18 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.
- 10.1.19 A copy of the final report is sent to the Home Secretary, the relevant Cabinet Member at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), the Chair of the Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, NCC, Assistant Director, Integrated Wellbeing Services, NCC, Corporate Parenting, NCC, the Safeguarding Board, NCC, the Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- 10.1.20 It is recommended to Northamptonshire County Council's Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee that it investigate the reasons why 80% of domestic abuse relates to women ; signposting to relevant academic research.
- 10.1.21 In recognising that there is a need to work with communities and the voluntary sector to ensure that services and language assistance is available to them, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers including a piece of work in a future Work Programme around the need for cultural training and shifts in understanding.

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Overview and Scrutiny

### Report of Scrutiny Panel 1 - Interpersonal Violence

#### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse.
- 1.2 A copy of the scope of the review is attached at Appendix A.

#### 2 Context and Background

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in March 2014, agreed to include a review of interpersonal violence. This was an issue that had been suggested by Scrutiny Panel 1 (Serious Acquisitive Crime, violent crime and community safety) recommending that a review of inter-personal violence be undertaken by a future Scrutiny Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2014 and concluded in March 2015.
- 2.2 A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair); Councillor Sally Beardsworth (Vice Chair); Councillors Brendan Glynane, Anna King, Danielle Stone and Sivaramen Subbarayan. Matt Chester, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and Steve Lingley, Northants Police, were co-opted to the review.
- 2.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 2 – Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:
- Background data, including:
    - Presentation to set the scene: To identify the prevalence of the problem locally
    - Relevant national and local background research papers

- Best practice external to Northampton
- Internal expert advisors:
  - Leader of the Council, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
  - Cabinet Member for Housing, NBC
  - Gateway Support Officer, Housing Solutions, NBC
  - Interim Head of Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
  - Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team
- External expert advisors:
  - Head of Protecting Vulnerable Persons, Northamptonshire Police
  - Assistant Chief Executive, Women's Aid
  - Service Manager, Sunflower Centre
  - Chief Executive, Relate
  - Chief Officer, Nene Valley Christian Refuge (NVCR)
  - Chief Officer, Rape and Crisis
  - Representation from the Northampton Women's Forum
  - MPs for Northampton
- Site visit to the Domestic Abuse Refuge, the Sunflower Centre
- Two members of the Scrutiny Panel to potentially observe a meeting of MARAC
- The Scrutiny Panel to attend relevant conferences on Domestic Abuse
- Examples of honour based abuse

2.5 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.

2.6 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:

- **Physical** (Pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, choking and using weapons)
- **Sexual** (Forcing or pressuring someone to have sex (rape), unwanted sexual activity, touching, groping someone or making them watch pornography.)

- **Financial** (taking money, controlling finances, not letting someone work)
- **Emotional/Psychological** (Making someone feel bad or scared, stalking, blackmailing, constantly checking up on someone, playing mind games)

2.7 National action is centred on domestic and sexual abuse of women and girls it fails to take account of the domestic abuse of men which has also been growing steadily.

2.8 Emphasis in national and local Delivery Plans tends to be on supporting victims and punishing offenders. Less is said or done about helping perpetrators who want to reform.

2.9 Inter-Personal Violence (IPV) covers Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault/Rape, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage.

### **3 Evidence Collection**

3.1 Evidence was collected from a variety of sources:

#### **3.2 Background reports**

3.2.1 Northamptonshire County Council report: Crime and Antisocial Behaviour: Improving Northamptonshire Strategies and Institutions (2006) - The report included statistics in relation to incidents of domestic violence per 1,000 population. From September 2004 - August 2005 there were 1,347 incidents of domestic abuse reported in the Northern Police Area, of which 507 involved drugs and/or alcohol. The Sunflower Centre saw 280 clients in its first year of opening. The overall repeat rate for victims in the Northern police Area was 44.8% for September 2003 to August 2004. This compared with a repeat rate for those victims receiving a Sunflower intervention of 22.2%, in the first year of opening. 134 men reported incidents of domestic abuse to the Police and 15 visited the Centre. 50 clients went into the refuge and 77 had panic alarms fitted.

3.2.2 [Presentation](#) that set the scene, identifying the prevalence of the problem, locally.

#### **3.3 [Background statistics](#)**

3.3.1 In England the estimated total costs of domestic abuse are £5.5bn which comprises:



- £1.6bn for physical and mental health costs
- £1.2bn in criminal justice costs
- £268m in social services costs
- £185.7m in housing and refuge costs
- £366.7m in civil legal costs
- £1.8bn in lost economic output

- 3.3.2 **Target hardening** - of victims' properties (168 victims received target hardening in 2013/14). Referrals usually from IDVA's, assessed by Police Crime Prevention Officers, work undertaken by Care and Repair or NBC Housing Maintenance if NBC property.
- 3.3.3 **Sanctuary Scheme** - creating a safe room, enables victims to remain within their home. There were approximately five cases of domestic abuse in the last 3 years that used the Sanctuary Scheme. The scheme involves tight governance. The cost of implementing the scheme is around £2,000 - £4,000 per property.
- 3.3.4 **Freedom Programme** - A 12 week programme designed to help victims gain confidence, provide opportunities to develop ways of thinking and behaving to protect themselves, their children and others from harm and increase their ability to take control of their lives.
- 3.3.5 **Stay Free Programme** - Stay Free, follows on from the Freedom Programme and aims to assist women survivors of domestic abuse maintain freedom from abusive relationships.
- 3.3.6 **Choose to Change Programme** - Group work designed for young people between the ages of 13-16 years, who have witnessed and subsequently display abusive behaviour. The purpose of the group is for young people to learn and identify ways to enable positive change.
- 3.3.7 **Counselling for perpetrators and couples** – Currently being piloted as recognised that there are options open to victims, but very little to address perpetrators behaviour

3.3.8 **Domestic Abuse Awareness for youth** - In addition to targeted intervention for young people, an 8 week programme is run in schools, which aims to educate teenagers on healthy relationships and acceptable behaviours.

3.3.9 **Gateway** – was set up approximately six years ago to look at failing tenancies, particularly for those under 25. There is often a link between mental health and domestic abuse.

### 3.4 [Cases of Male Reported Abuse](#)

### 3.5 [Presentation – How Domestic Abuse is addressed in Northamptonshire](#)

### 3.6 [Published reports](#)

- House of Commons Briefing: Domestic Violence (May 2014)
- Summary: HM Government “Call to End Violence against Women and Girls (2010).
- Home Office: Information for Local Areas on the change to the definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse (March 2013)
- Conclusions and Recommendations: Zoe Garratt: Domestic Violence Against Men – Is it a forgotten crime (2012).
- University of Durham (School of Applied Social Sciences) – Protecting Women’s Safety
- Executive Summary: AVA: Promising practices: Mental Health Trust responses to domestic violence (2012)
- [CfPS - Policy Brief 27 \(October 2014\) – Domestic Violence](#)
- [CfPs – 10 questions to ask when you are scrutinising domestic violence](#)

### 3.7 **Site Visits**

3.7.1 The Scrutiny Panel undertook a variety of site visit:

- Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre
- Northampton Women’s Aid and a Refuge
- Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel to observe a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- 3.7.2 Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre (NSC) is unique as it is one of the few Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services nationally that has access to Police systems which allows the service to input information regarding safety and risk to enable officers to respond appropriately. It also allows NSC to contact victims very quickly.
- 3.7.3 The majority of clients to the NSC are female, around 8% being male. This includes child to parent abuse. 60% of referrals are from the Police, other types of referrals include self-referrals and referrals from other Agencies. A number of young people, 16-18 year olds, access the services of the NSC.
- 3.7.4 The Police work very closely with NSC. Public Protection training is currently being rolled out force-wide. Student Police Officers often make visits to the Sunflower Centre. Feedback from the Student Police Officers is very positive.
- 3.7.5 NSC comes across some complex cases which usually involve substances or mental health and involves many repeat incidents. These can include cases where both parties are seen as victims/perpetrators at different times.
- 3.7.6 There is a growing issue about available pathways to support for victims due to the decline in refuges, loss of legal aid.
- 3.7.7 MARACs are attended by all Agencies, working on the set Action/Support Plans for each case.
- 3.7.8 There are 34 refuges spaces in Northampton. The cost per unit is £800 per month. Women from Northampton can be housed in the refuges.
- 3.7.9 When moving from a refuge to a permanent address; women often have no furniture or equipment.
- 3.7.10 Women's Aid offers a number programmes such as Freedom Groups which are very well received; attracting a high demand.
- 3.7.11 Attached at Appendix F are the findings from the site visit.

### **3.8 Core questions**

3.8.1 The Scrutiny Panel devised a series of core questions that it put to key witnesses over a cycle of meetings (Copy at Appendix B).

3.8.2 Key witnesses provided a response to these core questions at the meetings of the Scrutiny Panel held on 23 November 2014, 1 December 2014 and 22 January 2015.

3.8.3 Salient points of evidence:

#### **Leader of the Council, Northampton Borough Council (NBC), Cabinet Member for Housing, NBC, and the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)**

- Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northampton Community Safety Partnership (CSP) are committed to working with victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse to reduce the harm and risk to individuals and their families.
- The organisations are committed to working at a local and county level to provide services which support and enable people in vulnerable situations to take the actions required to safeguard themselves and their families, including addressing issues of under-reporting, bringing offenders to justice, empowering and supporting victims, and improving efforts in particular communities.
- NBC and the CSP have always taken the issue of domestic abuse very seriously and provide a variety of responses through a number of channels, co-ordinated through Community Safety and Housing Options. Key areas that NBC/CSP have been involved in are as follows:
  - Community Safety chaired and hosted the Northampton Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF) for five years
  - NBC/CSP jointly led on the implementation and co-chairing of the revised multiagency DAF in 2013 for the first 12 months
  - Ensure relevant officer attendance at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)/DAF meetings
  - Led on the establishment of the Sanctuary Scheme for Northampton, an approach which was later adopted across the county
  - Part fund and currently
  - host the Sunflower Centre for the county

- Provide information on the NBC website to advise and support victims
  - Provide support through NBC Community Grants to voluntary organisations that provide services to victims
  - Have reviewed the Housing tenancy agreement to provide protection to victims who are not the registered tenant, enabling them to remain within the family home
  - Allocated two Gateway Officers to deal specifically with domestic abuse victims and their families and provided funding so they are trained to Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) level
  - Undertake awareness raising and training for front line staff
  - Provision of target hardening for victims in NBC properties
  - Awareness raising and promotion of support services at community events
- One of the key factors in supporting victims of domestic abuse has been the excellent working relationships that have been developed with local voluntary organisations such as Sunflower, Women's Aid, Nene Valley Christian Refuge and NRICC. This has resulted in good joint working, and NBC/CSP providing funding to support work and projects for victims, perpetrators and families as follows:
    - Target hardening of victims properties
    - Sanctuary Scheme
    - Freedom Programme
    - Stay Free Programme
    - Choose to Change Programme
    - Counselling for perpetrators and couples
    - Domestic Abuse Awareness for youth
- Reducing domestic abuse and minimising its impact on families and children remains a priority. Therefore, NBC and the CSP continue to work with, and support agencies in ensuring there are effective services and support packages in place to meet the needs of victims. Targets have been set with our partners to achieve a reduction the number of repeat Domestic Violence victims, increase the number of victims of Domestic Abuse reporting for first time, and reduce the number of repeat cases heard at MARAC.
  - The budget for community grants for 2015/2016 was being looked at but there would not be a reduction.
  - There is a big demand for community grants. The Council also has other funding mechanisms that organisations, such as charity organisations or

voluntary organisations, can apply through. The funding mechanism will be looked at to ensure that it is more joined up.

- A victim of domestic violence is categorised as priority. The system is very robust. There is a clause in the Tenancy that if a perpetrator is convicted they will lose the right to the Tenancy; i.e. the victim would have the right to remain in the property. The Tenancy Agreement has been reviewed and updated.
- Northampton has led the way on the Sanctuary Scheme; where a safe room is built into a property. The Police flag the property as a Sanctuary Scheme on their system and any incidents receive a grade 1 response. This system works very well, and is seen as an example of best practice, and there have been incidents within Northampton to highlight this. The scheme has been rolled out to the whole of Northamptonshire.
- The Council supports Relate through a community grant. The funding is matched funded by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and CEFAP (Community grant) for a counselling programme for perpetrators and young couples. The success of the scheme will be evaluated in June 2015.

### **Head of Protecting Vulnerable Persons, Northamptonshire Police**

- Northamptonshire Police is the lead Agency responsible for responding to, investigating, and prosecuting offences of domestic abuse. Northamptonshire Police seeks to raise awareness of domestic abuse, reduce escalation of risk caused by repeat incidents, and reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse within the county.
- Tackling domestic abuse is a priority for Northamptonshire Police. The strategic priorities (2014/16) for the Force which set out how resources are directed include:
  - Reducing violent crime
  - Reducing all crime
  - Increasing resolved rate
  - Identifying and protecting the vulnerable
- Domestic abuse is linked to all of the above. The Force has a specific policy on tackling domestic abuse which sets out that positive action will be taken to address it. There is also a specific policy on tackling Honour Based Violence (HBV) that also comes under the remit of domestic abuse.

- Northamptonshire Police seeks to take robust, positive action in tackling domestic abuse. The Force has a dedicated Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU) which comprises of 12 constables, 2 sergeants, and 7 support staff. These team members are managed by a Detective Inspector who also manages another unit within the protecting vulnerable persons command. The remit of the DAU is to investigate and manage the highest risk domestic abuse cases within the county, manage all honour based violence investigations, and deal with sensitive/confidential domestic situations. The team also comprise the two MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) staff. Four support staff within the DAU have responsibility for reviewing all standard and medium risk domestic abuse incidents/crimes in the county whilst the unit's police officers review and manage all high risk incidents. The unit adopts a twin approach of both investigation and safe-guarding to mitigate the risk to individuals and bring offenders to justice.
- Aside from the Force's specialist DAU, all police officers and staff are expected to tackle domestic abuse and a number of measures are in place to facilitate this. This includes:
  - all outstanding high risk domestic abuse perpetrators being tasked out for arrest at the Force's morning tasking meetings
  - Safer Community Teams having dedicated domestic abuse single points of contact (spocs) or dedicated teams of officers to tackle domestic abuse (operation DART North East sector, Northampton)
  - The county operates a MARAC meeting that comprises partners from key Agencies to share information and action plan to tackle individual cases. Partners include social services, the voluntary sector, health, police, and probation
  - The MARAC has received praise from CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) which oversees MARAC meetings nationally. This year (2014/15) just under 1000 cases will be heard across 5 localised (CSP) meetings
- The specialist domestic abuse unit has its own budget but as so much of the Force's resources are utilised to address domestic abuse the overall policing budget needs to be considered.
- There is pressure on MARAC as the number of cases being heard has doubled in the last two years. The Force has received praise for this, although pressures on staffing is now prevalent as a result of this increase.

The Force currently manages two MARAC staff (1 coordinator and 1 administrator). Given the increased number of cases, the Force is now recommended to have two administrators, in addition to the coordinator (this has been raised with the IPV board).

- The Domestic Abuse Unit works closely with partner agencies across the county and is aware of the pressures faced by some organisations, particularly domestic abuse groups in running domestic abuse victim courses and having refuge provision.
- The Force has invested additional resources to tackle DA as the number of reported incidents across the county grows. This year, reported domestic abuse has grown by a further 15% and the Force now experiences in the region of 1000 incidents per month.
- Adequate coordination does exist between agencies via the IPV board as well as NADASA. The commissioning of services have to this point been ad-hoc and the Victims Voice and local evidence suggests this can be confusing for victims and officers seeking to sign post support services, with different contracts given to different charities in various areas of the county. As such, there is scope for improvement.
- With the launch of the MASH, and the greater emphasis placed on safeguarding children both by police and social services, improvements have been made. Information between statutory agencies is shared more effectively with 1500 police officers and police staff being given training in domestic abuse and the importance of safeguarding children. Joint strategy meetings are held and visits between police, social workers, and support agencies are regularly conducted. There areas for partnership improvement in relation to CAF and this is being addressed by the LSCB.
- The county has very limited preventative programs for perpetrators. Northants Police are again scoping a voluntary scheme but are mindful of ACPO guidance. In early 2014, a working party considered a program which was not supported after a previous pilot failed to provide a sufficient evidence base for the model proposed. There is a male perpetrator group based at Daventry where perpetrators wishing to address their behaviour are sign posted, but this has limited scope and resources. This is an area where further development would be beneficial. From a police perspective, court ordered rehabilitation does incur greater benefits in terms of enforcement opportunities to protect victims.
- A co-ordinated approach would be key to the commissioning of services within the borough and beyond.



- Refuge provision within the county has recently been changed and this has led to some cases where obtaining safe accommodation for victims has been an issue. It is now not uncommon for police to utilise its own budget to pay for victims to be accommodated in hotels for short periods until a more suitable arrangement can be made.
- The Police provides services for all residents in the county, irrespective of ethnicity, background, religion, gender, or race. The Force operates a strict equality and diversity policy and monitors the number of BME victims. The Force has two community engagement officers who seek to engage all communities, for example, they sit on the HBV working group chaired by the Detective Inspector DAU.
- Northants Police provides service for all. The percentage of male victims of domestic abuse has increased and now comprises over 20%.
- Standardising/simplifying services for victims is key. Feedback is frequently received that victims are confused by the sheer number and variety of Agencies involved in domestic abuse support (this was a key finding of the victim's voice research).
- Northants Police has taken proactive steps to raise awareness of domestic abuse both to the wider public and to its own officers to ensure victim safety is prioritised and that all staff are aware of the serious nature with which it should be treated. The domestic abuse unit has received praise from HMIC for how it investigates high risk domestic abuse. It is accepted that improvements can always be made and the Force has an action plan on domestic abuse to improve its response.
- The Sunflower centre has an IDVA who provides specialist support to victims from minority communities

### **Chief Executive, Women's Aid**

- Northampton Women's Aid is a charity. The organisation is compliant with the Charities Commission, and has all relevant policies in respect of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children as required by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN).
- The organisation has other policies such as homeless, housing, in-house HR policies and an advertising and marketing strategy.
- The Website of Women's Aid includes information regarding how to identify domestic abuse and how to access services; leaflets are distributed to locations where victims may access them such as A&E, GP surgeries,

Children's centres and nightclubs. Information events are organised with Community Safety Partnerships (CPSs) and the Police; talks are given to specific groups.

- Staff from Women's Aid are represented on the local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSGCB), MARAC Steering Group and Interpersonal Violence (IPV) Working Group.
- Current provider services have very robust partner relations, identify what each service offers, do not duplicate work, such as Northampton Women's Aid, Nene Valley Christian Family Refuse (NVCFR), the Sunflower Centre, within Northampton.
- Strategic arrangements in respect of funding are not equitable. There is no long-term funding strategy for refuge.
- Northampton Women's Aid has a robust assessment procedure to ensure the victims most in need, can access the service. The organisation offers support through the Early Help and Prevent commissioned services. It also raises awareness, how to identify abuse, undertakes campaigns with the Police NADASA (Northampton Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse).
- Agencies, who provide direct services, have a very comprehensive referral process, to ensure all victims can access services; the co-ordination should be with the strategic funders, who duplicate, or spot purchase, without scoping out the real need.
- The time frame for the awarding of grants is not co-ordinated. Early Help and Prevent services are targeted at the most vulnerable children and adults.
- The referral process is not being used effectively, CAF is required to access the service, and professionals are saying they do not have time to complete the process; people are not accessing the service.
- Northampton Women's Aid and Relate have been running a group for perpetrators, also group work with perpetrators has been commissioned through Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Early Help and Prevent strategy, throughout the county.
- Northampton Women's Aid supports victims presenting at NBC, with issues relating to domestic abuse. Strong working relationships exist between the homeless/Gateway staff and Northampton Women's Aid, all victims presenting can access immediate support.
- A written service agreement pathway is not in place, Women's Aid could produce a protocol, written Service Level Agreement.
- Proposed delivery within the Health and Wellbeing Tender would ensure a seamless service for all vulnerable people requiring support.

- The gap in service delivery perceived by the Chief Executive, Women's Aid is the lack of co-ordinated funding between Borough, District, County councils, the Police and Health.
- Specific measures are taken to ensure any victim can access the services of Women's Aid, use of interpreters, links with community groups to ensure victims do not feel isolated. Specific support is given to victims of honour based violence.
- Male victims can access support via the Advice Centre in Hazelwood Road by telephone or face to face session. Group-work can be accessed through the referral pathway for NCC Supporting Services contracts.
- Positive interventions are already in place:
  - NBC – Community Safety Partnership have data to identify Hotspots.
  - MARAC meetings identify specific families, NBC housing is always represented, and repeat victim work is undertaken through this process.
  - Joint awareness raising CSP/Police/Agencies, is very robust, days in specific wards, do raise awareness.
- Awareness raising in nightclubs, licensed premises, could be developed further.
- Specific route to housing for victims leaving refuge should be identified.
- Rent reduction to the refuges owned by NBC.
- Domestic violence is a gendered crime which is often intrinsically connected to the physical, cultural and social power imbalance between men and women, for this scrutiny it needs to be seen in the context of a criminal justice and social system. Domestic Abuse is not solely a set of circumstances involving men as perpetrators and women as victims, Women's Aid deals with violence perpetrated by women against men and abuse in same sex relationships; it sets the context as "situational couple abuse."
- Domestic abuse demands a multi-Agency response, which is why it is important that a successful service requires it to be a prominent feature of cross partnership strategic documents, the county requires joint commissioning for support services.
- Commissioning will have to recognise the needs of victims with complex support needs, the concurrence of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health issues, requiring services that go beyond the traditional boundaries that support the needs of BMER communities. Victims whose immigration status is subject to ongoing investigations, Invisible victims who

choose not to pursue a solution to their abuse, through the criminal justice route.

- There are national standards that domestic abuse services can be quality marked against, this will evidence the throughput, the outcomes the service can attain, to ensure all families receive the required level of support, and are adequately supported to keep safe, become survivors of abuse, not repeat victims.
- Funding issues emphasise the importance of being able to accurately assess need as a commissioning exercise, Local Authorities are having to absorb the funding cuts with central Government support grants significantly reduced, having a single point of contact for assessment, will not only reduce cost, will also save victims having to repeat their story, which can be very traumatic. Service level agreement with one Agency to assess on domestic abuse would be ideal.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has recently allocated £10million of funding for domestic abuse preventative services. Local Authorities can bid for £100,000 of this funding. However, one of the criterion for funding is that services are not ring-fenced specifically to a county and must be available to individuals from anywhere in the UK. The bid has to be in by 16 January 2015, each borough can bid for £100,000, potentially £700,000 could receive for the county.
- Local councils should identify exactly what other strategic bodies are commissioning:
- Within the county:-
  - NCC has commissioned a four year contract to provide support to families under the Early Help and Prevent Strategy; this will ensure all families with children receive an intervention.
  - PCC has developed a new service “Voice” which encompasses work that many services existing in the borough, already provide, duplication.
- There is a need for service providers to work in collaboration. All Agencies are working to the same agenda but there are gaps in strategic thinking. There needs to be joined up thinking and working across the seven Local Authorities in the county. The sharing of resources, protocols and policies would be advantageous.

- There is a need also for Northampton Borough Council (NBC) to have dialogue with other funding bodies so that the good practice undertaken by NBC can be replicated.
- The underlying cause of domestic abuse is an imbalance of power, lack of mutual respect within relationships. NADASA (Northamptonshire Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse) multi agency group, can provide training and awareness:
  - Primary prevention can be delivered at an early age, through education, delivering PSHE within schools, youth groups.
  - Awareness raising within the identified hotspots of domestic abuse in the borough, CSP currently holds awareness days, which are very successful, these days give victims the knowledge they require to get support, or even identify they are in an abusive relationship.
  - Secondary prevention training front-line staff NBC who deal with the referrals around issues of domestic abuse, who to signpost to.
  - Train leaders of BME communities about domestic, highlight services.
- Commissioning has to take into account cross Authority nature of domestic abuse services.
- Victims are often required to move outside their local area, for safety, Local Authorities are placing caps on the numbers of victims “out of area” or are applying a local connection.
- Within contract variations, NCC have put on refuge, Women’s Aid is required to take only victims from Northamptonshire, reduce the time spent in refuge, this may pose a problem, with limited numbers of social housing available and tenants that are not eligible for social housing.
- Moving into social housing, from supported housing, the timeframe that is given to victims, leaving social housing, if they are on benefits, doesn’t give them sufficient time, to adequately furnish their house, dual benefits are not available, victims cannot apply to Supported Independent Living Scheme (SILS) for a grant to furnish their home, until they have an address, this is a major issue for those leaving refuge.
- Women’s Aid is looking at other ways of supporting families.

### **Centre Director, Relate**

- Relate offers a countywide service to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and to children and young people who have witnessed domestic violence and abuse.

- Counselling is available at the main counselling centre located at St. Giles House, 76 St. Giles Street, Northampton. Counselling provided by highly experienced, fully qualified counsellors, not trainees. Counselling is available from 9am to 9.30pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm on Fridays and 09:30 to 1:30 on Saturdays. Assessment for counselling is readily available within 2-5 working days of first contact and ongoing counselling usually available with 5-10 working days. For those in desperate and immediate need, appointments will be found within 24 hours.
- 'Choosing to Change' is an intervention for male perpetrators of domestic abuse and is delivered on a one to one basis, not in a group setting. Aims of the programme:
  - To enable men to explore and accept responsibility for their behaviour
  - Enhance motivation and engagement in men wanting to change their behaviour
  - Enhance levels of importance and confidence around changing behaviour
  - Reduce escalation of controlling/abuse behaviour
  - Begin the process of change and create healthy, respectful relationships
  - Provide a safe transition to enter couple counselling to further strengthen couple / family relationship
- Services are available countywide.
- There is a need for a strategic approach by all Agencies in providing support and assistance to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Relate Northamptonshire have a number of relevant policies in place in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as well as policies for HR, domestic abuse, data protection, confidentiality, client records etc. It has a training and development policy for all practitioners which ensures core training is undertaken (includes four programmes for domestic abuse and surviving sexual abuse), this is in addition to the minimum standards required to achieve continuous professional development (CPD) of 30 hours in each year in order to practice.
- Service information is available on the [website](#). Marketing information and leaflet distribution. Representatives of Relate attend relevant forums including NADASA (Northamptonshire Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual

Abuse) (formally NorIPV). Awareness raising throughout the county both via radio, mail, email and exhibitions.

- Northamptonshire County Council commissioned a Choosing to Change pilot project in October 2013.
- Clients, where able to do so, are asked to contribute towards the cost of service delivery and this enables Relate to provide a bursary to those unable to pay.
- Until the recent Northampton County Council re-tender for Children's Centres, Relate had delivered counselling for over 10 years to victims of domestic abuse in a number of Children's Centres in Northampton, Kettering and Wellingborough (c. 15 hours per week). Since August 2014 this service has not been re-commissioned due to changes in the tender specification.
- There are a number of local provider organisations working together to tackle domestic abuse and ensure there are complementary services available to those most in need.
- In addition to the Relate Responsive Model for assessment, Relate has implemented the CAADA Dash risk assessment for victims to ensure it provides a robust mechanism for assessing risk and one that meets the needs of the county.
- There is continued engagement at NADASA (formally NorIPV).
- Continuing to offer counselling and Choosing to Change to Relate clients, Children's Services, the voluntary sector and the Early Help and Prevention Strategy Partners and to those most in need.
- There is a vast amount of experience and knowledge within Agencies due to the length of time key personnel have been working in the county. There are mechanisms in place for cross-referral to other Agencies which is further supported by the close working relationships these Agencies have developed over a number of years.
- Referrals received via Children's Services has decreased somewhat since August 2014. The Centre Director understands that this is due to the additional processes required via the Early Help and Prevention Strategy in respect of CAF etc. This relates to services delivered via other stakeholders too, not just Choosing to Change. In addition, the cessation of the victims' counselling service in Children's Centres is also a worrying trend.
- Relate Northamptonshire has delivered Choosing to Change to male perpetrators since 2013. In relations to referrals received via Children's Services, this intervention is voluntary and whilst there is a requirement for

the perpetrator to attend the programme there are some that don't engage fully or at all because of lack of sanctions for non-engagement.

- Until 2013, Relate worked in partnership with Northampton Probation Trust for several years co-facilitating the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP), now Building Better Relationships where perpetrators were mandated by the criminal justice system to participate or expect consequences for non-engagement.
- It is unclear whether there is sufficient emphasis placed on the perpetrator to undertake motivational change programmes and what consequences can be attached to non-engagement. Relate would welcome the opportunity to help develop a countywide strategy.
- A joined up approach to domestic abuse from all statutory Agencies is needed to ensure effective strategic and operational links are made to tackle domestic violence or improve on a borough scale. The lack of strategic overview and cohesive thinking creates client frustration.
- Choosing to Change is an evidenced based intervention that is currently only available to male perpetrators. In order for us to provide the same service to female and same sex perpetrators additional research needs to be undertaken for which we don't currently have funding.
- Counselling via qualified, experienced counsellors should be made available to all victims of domestic abuse to ensure their wellbeing; awareness and self-esteem are improved to avoid the often never-ending circle of abuse. Relate Northamptonshire is an Agency providing services to all and. Choosing to Change is currently only available to male perpetrators and there is scope to further develop this offer to females, same sex and young people.
- Where interpreting services are needed, Relate sources interpreters but with limited or no funding available, the cost is often excessive and Relate seeks additional funds from the referring agency to further support their clients, so this can be a barrier. The cost of interpreter services can be very high. For example in some cases £100 per session has been charged. This highlights a gap in service provision.
- Counselling services are available to male victims, as are group work programmes such as building confidence and self-esteem, Moving Forward (moving on after relationship breakdown).
- The key domestic abuse and sexual abuse Agencies in Northampton used to meet on a regular basis with the Community Safety Partnership Team as Northampton Domestic Abuse Forum (NDAF). The Forum is an excellent opportunity to share updates on services, best practice and safeguarding issues but these meetings have not been in place for some time now.



- Regular awareness raising sessions for the public are needed, not just Agencies.
- The DAF and MARAC are fundamental to safeguarding victims and identifying perpetrators.
- Two Awareness Raising Sessions on the work of Relate Northamptonshire (in particular Choosing to Change) for staff in Children's Services and Social Workers has been scheduled for December 2014
- Relate Northamptonshire provides their practitioners with rigorous training, for example Relate's Counsellors have to undertake additional 30+ hours specific training before working with domestic abuse. Practitioners are trained so that they can identify domestic violence in its most subtle form:

#### Domestic Abuse - Comparison Statistics - April to October - 2013 and 2014

##### Countywide

MONTH	CLIENTS	2013	2014	% INCREASE
April	No. of Clients	236	254	
	No. presenting with DA	13	33	
	% DA Clients	5.50%	13.00%	136%
May	No. of Clients	266	244	
	No. presenting with DA	12	33	
	% DA Clients	4.50%	13.50%	200%
June	No. of Clients	271	260	
	No. presenting with DA	19	30	
	% DA Clients	7.00%	11.50%	64%
Total Q1	Average	6.00%	13.00%	
July	No. of Clients	293	252	
	No. presenting with DA	22	29	
	% DA Clients	7.50%	11.50%	53%
August	No. of Clients	237	200	
	No. presenting with DA	19	25	
	% DA Clients	8.00%	12.50%	56%
September	No. of Clients	225	220	
	No. presenting with DA	18	22	
	% DA Clients	8.00%	10.00%	25%
Total Q2	Average	8.00%	11.00%	
October	No. of Clients	225	200	
	No. presenting with DA	18	17	
	% DA Clients	8.00%	8.50%	6%
Total	No. of DA Clients	121	189	
% CLIENTS PRESENTING WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE		7.00%	11.50%	

- In 2013 the overall number of client hours delivered was slightly higher due to work across several SureStart Children's Centres and the majority of clients referred needing support with domestic abuse in either current or previous relationships. Relate's contracts with Children's Centres ceased from 31st July 2014 and despite the cessation from 1st August 2014, Relate's work with domestic abuse work has steadily increased.
- During 2013 Relate delivered 3,134 hours of counselling for the borough of Northampton. Of these hours 219 were specifically for domestic abuse – 7% of of Relate's client hours. For the same period 2014 the number of hours delivered were 2,927 but 337 hours were specifically for domestic abuse – 11.5% of Relate's client hours – an increase of 4.5% on previous year.

### **Service Manager, Sunflower Centre**

- The Sunflower Centre offers the provision of a high risk IDVA service to male and female victims through nationally trained and experienced staff. Reports of domestic violence are increasing and to respond to this, the Sunflower Centre will be back to full establishment of 10.8 FTE employees very shortly. This is the recommended staffing level.
- Activity includes:
  - Risk assessment, safety planning and signposting
  - Support offered to victims during and after abusive relationships
  - Referrals to safeguarding Agencies
  - Support through court – both civil and criminal
  - Operational process - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Domestic Violence Disclosure scheme
  - Partner support link for building better relationships
  - Training and awareness
- Funding for 2015/2016 has not yet been confirmed by all partners. There is a need for sustainable funding and wider strategic thinking to ensure services can develop and thrive.
- Agencies are committed to, and do, work well together. Communication and referral pathways could be further developed for a smooth transition for victims. Concerns were raised about the new NCC contracts and the fact they have been complicated and victims face blockages. Also, despite the VOICE process, victims are still either receiving multiple notifications or being missed.

- The definition of vulnerable still excludes some of the Sunflower Centre's most vulnerable victims. This is concerning as in many cases domestic abuse is not the predominant concern for the victim.
- There is no consistency in Children's Services response to domestic abuse and further training needs are required. Cases are closed too quickly, for example, if the individual is engaged with the Sunflower Centre, a case might be closed but there is the need for further assessment to ensure that it is working and that the client remains engaged.
- The emphasis still remains on the victim to change their life. Greater focus is needed on the perpetrator especially around group work, bad character and other criminality.
- To effectively tackle domestic abuse the service has the following strategies in place:
  - Multi-Agency Policy
  - Business Plan and Operational Plan
  - Safe Referral Policy
  - Service Agreements with key Agencies
  - All safeguarding and human resource policies
- Approximately 50% of referrals to the Sunflower Centre are from the borough of Northampton
- Poole Council is looking to replicate the good practice that takes place at Northampton Sunflower Centre with its IDVA service
- The Sunflower Centre is hoping to replicate the current good practice of an IDVA being based within KGH setting in Northampton General Hospital
- An Officer of the Sunflower Centre has been trained ISAC (Independent Stalking Case Worker)
- Stalking is now being reported more. This includes issues such as cyber stalking and virtual stalking; particularly with apps. such as "Follow my iPhone" being available. There is a need to keep victims of cyber abuse and stalking safe. The Sunflower Centre is working with the Cyber team at Northamptonshire Police to develop a safety plan
- To further engage BMER Communities, the Sunflower Centre links with various Agencies and Teams
- The MARAC process and SDVC process in Northampton Borough works very well
- To improve the response for victims NBC needs to treat each case individually and explore all options; continue to support and fund target hardening; housing move on could be quicker to ensure refuge space and housing needs to consider the "whole picture".

- The Sunflower Centre has been accredited to Leading Lights since 2011, a three year accreditation by Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (caada). The Sunflower Centre is currently going through the accreditation process again.

### **Northampton Women's Forum**

- There are barriers to reporting
- The issue of Interpersonal violence is wider than just domestic abuse
- There are gaps in service provision such as:
  - A need to educate and invest in early prevention
  - Outreach to communities
  - Services such as the Sunflower Centre, Women's Aid and Victim Support offer cultural awareness training
  - Need for clear reporting mechanisms
- Outcomes such as: earlier intervention to support the whole family (not just focus on women, men and children separately, improved education and awareness of what interpersonal violence is through existing community organisations, Improved engagement to raise awareness amongst communities, particularly BME communities through outreach/community ambassadors
- There is a need to know more about communities such as culture, practice and religion. There is a need for community groups to be aware of what services and support is available to them
- Often individuals are unable to clarify whether they are in an abusive relationship
- Children do not have a voice in some families.
- There appears to be low level reporting in BME communities, highlighting the need for cultural training and shifts in understanding.

### **Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club**

- The Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club (SCCYC) provides support service information and referrals to victims of domestic abuse;
- Annual activities: Professionals display literature on a congregation day to raise awareness; Informal talks to young people within the supplementary school to raise awareness and to talk about any issues as a group. Discussion groups are facilitated annually by Sikh external speakers at our Sikh Camp events. External speaker addresses the congregation once a year at the Sikhi Camp, promoting Equality using Sikh values to educate against all forms of abuse.

- SCCYC has a confidentiality policy and Vulnerable Adults & Child Protection policy
- SCCYC provides a victim with external contact details for support; accompany a victim, follow up support; involve in community activities to build confidence
- The support organisations that SCCYC refers to are generally good.
- SCCYC plans to increase the domestic abuse activities. It also plans to introduce ‘ Interpersonal Abuse’ awareness workshops so that women can identify this type of abuse, realise it is not acceptable and what support is available to them.
- SCCYC has not been offered adequate support, it has identified service providers and booked them via Community Engagements Officers, Northants Police.
- There is the need for more partnership working with organisations at the organisations with service users. Regular electronic contacts directory of service providers, training; also the need for more awareness and support from professionals at community organisations
- SCCYC provides Raising Awareness Workshops for BME communities
- SCCYC refers to the support services display and annual Police information display stand that can be accessed by men as well as women/young people.
- Consultation with community groups and provide basic support to assist organisations to help people and directly help to the communities via awareness talks, presentations, support literature.
- Professional training for volunteers of SCCYC to support victims is needed.
- Most of SCCYC’s community do not report domestic abuse as they are scared of family/community reaction and how they would cope alone. It is possible that women within this community do not recognise interpersonal abuse or feel that this is not recognised abuse that they can access support for.

**Assistant Director, Integrated Wellbeing Services, Northamptonshire County Council**

- The Assistant Director is also the lead on the Interpersonal Violence Strategy (IPV) Group in the county and has been since June 2014. This Group was tasked by the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Chief Officers’ Group to refresh the Interpersonal Violence Strategy. Work took place over the summer 2014, such as the production of Needs Assessment which will support the IPV Strategy. The Needs Assessment will be disseminated for consultation shortly, as will be the IPV Strategy. The overall proposed outcome of the IPV Strategy is to stop IPV taking place and where it does to stop repeat victimisation.
- Pathways and toolboxes have been developed that have been built on current best practice and best practice elsewhere.

- All Housing Authorities in Northamptonshire have worked together on a bid for £400,000 for refuges in the county. The bid was submitted by Northampton Borough Council for the county.
- The key messages:
  - Positive feedback from those receiving support from Agencies
  - There is massive under-reporting
  - Many are not aware of the pathways and support available
  - There is a significant theme within the IPV Strategy – to support harder to access groups, for example those with complex needs; this includes male victims and those with no recourse to public funds
  - Reduction in funding has resulted in uncertainty to the way some Agencies operate. There is therefore a need to understand the financial challenges of partnerships, work together and all to be clear of the objectives of the IPV Strategy
  - Communication is key, such as public awareness campaigns, improved information sharing and joined up working
  - The focus is also on the younger generation, highlighting that domestic abuse is unacceptable
- There is under-reporting. There has been an increase of 15% in reports of domestic abuse to the Police. The aim is for there to be confidence to report. However, confidence is increasing. This year's reporting statistics will be used as a baseline for future years' reporting. There has been an increase in first time reporting also.
- Women from BME Groups often find it hard to access support. Support services need to meet the needs of the community giving consideration to diverse groups.

### **Northamptonshire Red Cross**

- Northamptonshire Red Cross do not currently have any existing domestic abuse services or partnerships.
- Should Northamptonshire Red Cross identify domestic abuse while delivering its services, its staff and volunteers are trained in our safeguarding policies and procedures and will seek advice from designated Red Cross safeguarding officers.
- Where any domestic abuse issues were identified Officers would signpost to other specialist organisations. Staff and volunteers could provide emotional and practical support through the signposting process.
- Northamptonshire Red Cross does not currently have any specific funding in relation to addressing domestic abuse.

- Northamptonshire Red Cross is not currently involved in any partnerships relating to domestic abuse but the organisation would welcome the opportunity to discuss any partnership opportunities.
- There is the need for the development of partnerships, scoping of existing service provision, needs assessment and gap analysis; if it has not already taken place

**Andrea Leadsom, MP**

- Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is associated with a range of negative outcomes for children, for adult victims, for adult perpetrators and for society at large. Families that experience domestic violence are vulnerable to psychosocial and economic hardship, which can have negative consequences for all family members, and in particular long term implications for children. Despite this, domestic violence services for children are generally poorly resourced and poorly articulated, both within the county and nationwide.

**The impact of domestic violence and abuse**

- It is important to remember that domestic violence and abuse impacts whole families – it is a family systemic problem that impacts all family members, and the quality of relating within the family as a whole, and that all members of a household can experience negative outcomes as a consequence of domestic violence and abuse. Being an adult victim of domestic violence is associated with a range of psychosocial difficulties, including:
  - Mental health difficulties: the most common mental health difficulties include post traumatic and complex traumatic stress reactions, depression, anxiety, and elevated risk of suicide (Caldwell, Swan, & Woodbrown, 2012; Devries et al., 2011).
  - Particular vulnerability to postnatal difficulties, including postnatal depression (Beydoun, Beydoun, Kaufman, Lo, & Zonderman, 2012). Beydoun et al (2012) estimate that 9-28% of all experiences of major depression and postnatal depression is attributable to interpersonal violence
  - Social isolation and loss of connectedness or a sense of belonging (Maume, Lanier, Hosfield, & Wehman, 2014).
  - Economic hardship, loss of income, homelessness and housing difficulties (Abramsky et al., 2011).
- Perpetrators also experience negative impacts, including criminalisation, negative mental health outcomes and homelessness (Brown & Hampson, 2009).

- Children are often overlooked as victims of domestic violence and abuse, but the impact of DVA on children is considerable. A third of all domestic violence either begins or escalates during pregnancy (DoH, 2004) and risks to babies include a raised incidence of miscarriage, low birth weight, prematurity, and foetal injury and death (Aizer, 2011). Children who grow up in circumstances of DVA are at risk a range of psychosocial difficulties, including:
  - Risk of mental health difficulties across the lifespan (Meltzer et al., 2009; Mezey et al., 2005)
  - educational challenges, and early withdrawal or exclusion from education (Byrne & Taylor, 2007)
  - Risk of both bullying and being bullied (Baldry, 2003; Lepistö et al., 2011).
  - Interpersonal difficulties in their own future intimate relationships and friendships (Black et al., 2010; Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Siegel, 2010)
  - Vulnerability to a range of other possible abuses across their lifespan (Finkelhor et al., 2007; Turner et al., 2010).
  - Recent research suggests that the lasting traumatic impact of witnessing violence can raise children's risk of neurological difficulties as a consequence of the severe stress associated with these incidents (Anda et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2012; Koenen et al., 2003).



## **The importance of supporting parents who experience domestic violence and abuse**

- Parenting is a form of emotional labour, and as such is vulnerable to psychosocial stressors. It is therefore unsurprising that domestic violence and abuse presents specific challenges to parenting. The quality of the couple relationship and co-parental functioning impacts children's overall development and mental health (Favez et al., 2012; Gordon & Feldman, 2008; Feinberg et al., 2010; Cooper & Vetere, 2008). Attachment relationships are vulnerable to parental stress (Barrows, 2009), with both dyadic (e.g. mother-infant or father-infant) and triadic (mother-infant-father) relationships being particularly vulnerable to DVA (Rodrigues, 2012) and often become strained as a consequence of violence in the home (Levendosky, Leahy, Bogat, Davidson, & von Eye, 2006).
- Maternal coping is a powerful protective factor for children, facilitating greater resilience (Johnson & Lieberman, 2007; Whitaker et al., 2006). Antenatal interventions to help mothers cope better and to support them in the transition to parenting are effective in reducing impact on infants and children (Flach et al., 2011). Interventions to improve attachment, facilitating parental responsiveness and synchrony have been shown to be particularly effective in helping families recover from DVA (Dollberg et al. 2013), as have supportive parenting skills interventions in the first two years (Macmillan et al., 2009; Olds 2006),
- In addition to the positive impact of such intervention on infants' and young children's mental health, enhancing the quality of parenting interaction and supporting satisfying and positive family relationships also has a positive impact on adults' wellbeing (Cooper & Vetere, 2008; Stover et al., 2009; Stover, 2005). Family assessment and support during pregnancy and early infancy reduces the 'spill over' of abusive interactions in later family life (Favez et al., 2013).

## **What have Northamptonshire children who have experienced domestic violence and abuse told us?**

- As part of the European Commission funded project 'Understanding Agency and Resistance Strategies', the authors of this briefing have conducted interviews with twenty young people from Northamptonshire (as well as a further 80 young people from Greece, Italy and Spain) about their experiences of domestic violence and abuse. We also conducted focus groups with carers about their perceptions of their children's needs. We have extracted from these interviews some quotes that illustrate what young

people and their carers have suggested is important in planning services for young people.

### **The importance of feeling heard**

- Children and their carers frequently told us that services focused on the adult victim of domestic violence and abuse (typically the mother), but that children were not the focus of concern or intervention.

*“They didn’t ask me anything, nor reassure me...only my mum” (a child, talking about her interactions with police)*

*“They forget about the others ((i.e. the children)) and that is a mistake” (a child talking about her general experiences of professionals, suggesting that they focus on the adult victim and forget about other possible victims)*

*“I felt, I felt alone, I have always felt alone, I always felt alone even by being here I felt alone”*

- It is crucial that professionals recognise the impact of domestic violence and abuse on all members of the family. Too often domestic violence appears to be framed as a housing and policing issue, with insufficient attention being paid to its emotional and relational impact on the whole family.

### **Sensitive responses to disclosure**

- Several young people noted that professional responses to disclosures about domestic violence could produce more difficulties than they resolved.

***Paul:** Yeah, cause we stopped talking to ((social worker)) because she told our dad stuff we’d said. And he got very mad.*

***Int:** why is it important to you to keep things private?*

***George:** Well, cause then other people won’t know and they won’t get angry about things that you said about them.*

- Appropriate management of disclosure by professionals must take into account how challenging children’s family life is, and that passing on information from children to families can be endangering. Children who live with domestic violence are often wary about talking about their family circumstances, and when they feel their disclosures are inappropriately handled, this undermines trust and further militates against young people asking for help and support they need.
- In some cases professionals might benefit from further training in managing disclosures around domestic violence.

*I talked to a teacher thinking I'd be able to trust her and she went straight to the headmaster and all the stuff started going on where the headmaster like threatened my mum saying, "If you don't sort this out, we'll ring child services," and all that stuff, my mum could have had us taken off her 'cause of that.*

- Ultimately, this response undermined the child's faith in professional adults, making future disclosures less likely
- These issues highlight the importance of training for staff in universal and specialist services to ensure sensitive and appropriate responses to young people who experience domestic violence and abuse.

### **The importance of places of safety**

- Children and carers were often ambivalent about refuge, expressing concern about the conditions, and especially about overcrowding. But, particularly retrospectively, most felt it was an important space for them, and one in which they were offered integrated and holistic support:

*I'm gonna admit to you, I did not wanna come to refuge, but coming to refuge was the best thing I've ever done, because now I'm getting help, my kids are getting help, I'm feeling settled and I know there's gonna be help put in place for Ben that should have been put in place before, so everything for me seems to be coming together... (Carer)*

*Looking back, I'd say the best time of my life was when I was in refuge. Sharing with people who understand what you've been through. (Young person)*

- Children need safe, secure places in which they can regroup and recover, after domestic violence. These spaces need to be secure and safe, well resourced, and not overcrowded:

*"We went into a really nice refuge and then, because other people needed to go in there, because it was originally a druggies and alcoholics refuge and obviously no other refuges had enough room for me and my brothers and my mum to go into, so we had to go into that one and we'd have all these people coming in, wasted and just out of their heads, there was even a, ((erm)) this lady that was there, who was on heroin that got, had her kids taken off her and you see the kids being dragged off crying, it was horrible... mum's*

*still putting all her bids in the houses and stuff like that, and it took a little while..." (12 year old girl)*

- Children who have lived with domestic violence have already experienced significant life stressors. With cuts to domestic violence services in the area, children find themselves in inappropriate environments where their ability to recover is further challenged.

### **The importance of appropriate support for families**

- Domestic violence impacts whole families, and often results in significant loss of support networks. The impact of this is immense. This carer notes how the disintegration of her family life destabilised her, and broke her sense of family apart. She reports with frustration that, instead of supporting her, professionals used her circumstances to further shame her into action, by threatening the removal of her children:

*it felt like my family were being pulled apart all the time, and instead of having like respect, "oh your kids are gonna get taken off you, if you don't do this, your kids are gonna get taken off you, if you don't do this" do y'know what I mean? For me personally, I wanted to know what it was like to be a family again, so that support should have been about how to be a family. When you've been torn apart like that, and you've got your dad, your mum, everyone is gone, I don't know what, and I'll be honest with you, I'm like*

*36 and sometimes I feel so embarrassed or I feel a bit ashamed because I sometimes struggle with how to cope with things and how to be that family unit...*

- Carers and children emphasised the importance of supportive services that heard families' distress and provided support in 'how to be a family unit.'

### **The impact of Domestic Violence and Abuse: Summary of key points**

- Children who experience domestic violence can be very negatively impacted by these experiences, which can have consequences for their emotional functioning, their social relationships, their attachments and their mid to long term developmental outcomes.
- As emotional labour, parenting is vulnerable to stress, and parents who experience domestic violence have greater difficulty responding sensitively to their young children's attachment needs

- Support for families that enhances parenting, builds attachments, and supports children and young people, is essential for good outcomes for children who live with domestic violence.
- Children need services to support their recovery, and need to feel validated and listened to by professionals who work with them.
- Children and families need stability in the aftermath of domestic violence, to enable them to regroup. Good quality services cannot be provided without good quality shelter and safe and secure housing. These offer a safe base from which family life can be rebuilt.

### **What do children who experience domestic violence and abuse need?**

#### **A considered and integrated response**

- Service delivery for children in Northamptonshire is patchy, and lacks overarching integration. Better communication is needed on what services are available and how they can be accessed.

#### **Responsibility**

- Children who experience domestic violence are amongst the most vulnerable in our society, and the impact of domestic violence can be severe for their long term outcomes. They have complex health and social care needs. It is important that both sets of needs are met appropriately by professional services.

#### **Early intervention**

- Services for children in Northamptonshire are quite limited generally, but there is particularly little specialist support for very young children and families. Systemic interventions that support parenting and other family relationships in the early years are key to reducing long term negative health, educational and social outcomes for children who experience domestic violence and abuse.

## **Services for primary age and older children**

- Young people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse need support to process the difficult experiences they have had, and to enable them to make positive life choices for themselves. This includes services that support communication with carers, therapeutic services that help young people to articulate and understand their experiences of violence and abuse, and services that facilitate young people's construction of positive and healthy future relationships.

## **Services for children who experience domestic violence in Northamptonshire**

- We do have some excellent services for children in the county, but they are somewhat fragmented, limited in terms of available funding and resource, and do not necessarily target the range of infants, children and young people who experience violence at home, across the county. (Appendix G details a list of services as mapped by NCC.) The following are services we are aware of in the county – these are unlikely to be exhaustive. Particularly missing are specialist DVA services in the early years of children's life, and more sustained therapeutic work for school age children and young people. (This is a pattern typical not just of Northamptonshire, but is a national pattern.)
- Family Nurse Partnership: This service targets young parents, providing early parenting support. It is not domestic violence specific, but the FNP remit will include some support for young families where DVA is an issue.
- NORPIP offers parent-infant psychotherapy for families experiencing challenges with early attachment. The service is not domestic violence specific, but the remit includes support for families affected by domestic violence and abuse. The service targets families with infants and toddlers under 2 years.
- Nene Valley Christian Refuge offers three programmes. The 'Help Me To Stay Safe' is for children aged 7-11 years who have witnessed Domestic Abuse focuses on helping children to understand their experience of domestic abuse and its impact on them and others, and to articulate their experiences. The programme facilitates mother-child communication. DAY is for young people aged 14-18 years (but can be adapted for use with 11-14 year olds) builds an understanding of domestic abuse, its causes and its effect. Its focus is to facilitate the development of non-abusive patterns of relating. The DART group is a 10-week programme helping mothers and children aged seven to 11 strengthen their relationship following domestic abuse.

- Northampton Women's Aid offer 'Choose to Change', a programme aimed at helping young people not use violence and abuse in their relationships. WENWA offer the CRUSH programme for 13-19 year olds.
- Educational Psychology and Briar Hill offer Theraplay for primary age children affected by DVA in the county. The 'Moving on Through Play' programme is offered to preschool children in Kettering.

### **Chief Officer, Nene Valley Christian Refuge (NVCR)**

- Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge (NVCFR) is a registered charity, which has been in operation for over 30 years; it is based in central Northampton. NVCR works with victims who are from Northampton borough, plus referrals from Northamptonshire and nationally.
- NVCR supports vulnerable women, children and young people to find refuge from domestic abuse, find compassionate support to break free and non-judgmental help to restore their lives so that they can become strong, united families that are equipped to break the generational cycle that often creates new victims and perpetrators.
- NVCFR has a full range of strategies, policies and procedures that focus on addressing DVA and supporting women and children who are survivors of its effects. NVCFR has all relevant policies in respect of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children – as required by LSCBN. It also has homeless/Housing policies to provide adequate accommodation, and compliant with Enable guidelines. NVCFR is a managing agent for Enable. HR policies ensure all staff receive adequate training, support, and provide quality standards that are compliant with tender requirements.
- NVCFR uses Paloma software programme, to record and monitor outputs and outcomes for women and children who are survivors of DVA.
- NVCFR offers:
  - An intensive rehabilitation programme that enables women to identify their needs and work towards achieving safety and a range of outcomes that support them to build interpersonal skills, self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing to develop a safe and healthy lifestyle for them and their children.
  - Safe refuge accommodation in the centre of Northampton
  - Specialist Domestic Abuse Women's/Family Centre in the middle of Northampton
  - Support within the community
  - Educational and therapeutic group work for women, children, young people and families.
  - A range of group work provision offered at our centre in Northampton

- A range of specialist training to professionals, including police, to improve the local response to DVA
  - 1:1 support from a key worker whilst participating in the programme
  - Single point of referral, face to face or by telephone
  - Support to professionals/victims looking for information, advice and guidance re DVA
  - The Restored Programme, an intensive rehabilitation programme that uses women centred working practices and Key Workers to support women through safety planning, housing and financial issues, legal issues, support to access relevant agencies, support to meet children/young people's needs, support to implement healthy routines, group work, activities, counselling and other talking and creative therapies, education aimed at changing behaviours, values and mind sets
  - Out of hours support to women in refuge
  - Support to women in Northampton Borough to access The Restored Programme, whilst living in their own home.
  - Information and awareness raising sessions to various groups across Northampton
  - Leaflets for Agencies and GP surgeries etc.
  - Commissioned an improved website that includes information about DA, how to access support services etc.
- Until 2012, NVCFR was funded by Supporting People, NBC, NCC CYPS, National Government grants, and additional funding from grant making trusts, individual and organisational donations. From 2012 – 2014 there was a gradual loss of national and Local Government grants due to strategic changes. NCC currently fund 3 intensive refuge Restored places until March 2015. No funding is received from police, health or NBC. Current shortfall is untenable, NVCFR is using reserves to provide the service
  - The service providers across the county have very good and robust partnership arrangements, sharing information and working to fill gaps and not duplicate services except where there is a need to provide more of the same thing
  - Currently there are two partnership groups that strategically and operationally plan and implement the county's approach to domestic abuse - NADASA and IPV Strategy Group
  - NVCFR believes that there should be greater communication between the two groups including two representatives from NADASA on the IPV Strategy group
  - Partnerships are strained and less effective than pre 2014



## **Suggested Gaps:**

- Seamless provision of DVA educational groups for victims and survivors
  - Sufficient safe refuge provision that meets the needs of the Borough (1 place in refuge per 10,000 head of population – but growing. National average 1 in 4 women affected by DVA, Northamptonshire 1 in 3)
  - Therapeutic interventions of sufficient depth (and length of time) to be effective in addressing generational issues, therefore preventing re-offending and re-victimisation
  - Support for children and families outside limited commissioned services
  - Support for women with no children
  - Support for BAMER groups
  - Support for tier 4 families
  - Support for women with no recourse to public funds
  - Provision of proactive, innovative preventative work with children and young people
  - Provision of specialist programmes for male and female perpetrators of DV/A
  - Direct access to services available for anyone outside the commissioned limitations
- NVCFR has 13 refuge units available at any one time, it is seeking funding to keep these (currently only 3 places funded until Mar 2015)
  - Restored intensive programme for 13 residential and as many community based as can be funded, up to 50. Time focussed, evidence based and for those with complex needs and also tier 4.
  - Stay Free facilitator training to extend delivery countywide.
  - Training Police for improved frontline response
  - Specialist Training for frontline professionals
  - Experienced specialist staff and volunteers trained to offer excellent level of service to meet identified needs, especially in Northampton borough
  - Plans to meet with BAMER groups to improve provision for ethnic minority victims
  - Training and awareness raising to faith groups, designed to relate to belief system. ( 2016+)
  - Willingness to provide specialist help for No Recourse victims and families (funding required)
  - Continued specialist groups for DA survivors in Northampton (needs funding to avoid current spot purchasing which delays and increases work in referral).
  - Constant development of new interventions to better meet needs of victims of all ages and perpetrators who are parents

- NVCFR has a funding strategy which avoids future total dependence on statutory funding using a varied funding source base. However, a base of statutory funding enables massive value to be added by additional funds raised. Without statutory funding, grant making trusts are unwilling to commit
- Currently, NVCFR has £300,000 of funding bids in place to a variety of organisations including the Department for Communities and Local Government to pay for places for women and children in crisis, as well as those requiring intensive intervention. NVCFR's specialist trainer also generates income
- NVCFR aims to build and maintain positive and productive relationships with other Agencies to ensure a co-ordinated response to DVA
- Through partnership working and training some excellent partnerships exist
- These have been severely tested by commissioning, many changes to personnel in statutory services and by gaps in service provision during recent months
- Local DVA fora have ceased to exist mainly due to demands of NCC restructuring and commissioning phase
- Community Safety arrangements and MARAC have power to help partnerships
- NADASA has lost its strategic role, thus devaluing those organisations providing targeted services, who are experienced in the field and in strategic thinking.
- Strategic thinking and funding is not coordinated however, leading to the need for spot purchasing to meet gaps, duplication and lost services.
- Suggested Improvements:
  - Clarity of thinking and joined up strategic planning
  - Training - Co-ordinated responses can also be improved through training, up skilling staff and volunteers across agencies
  - Recognition of the need for a national approach towards DA
  - Funding which enables free access to essential services at point of delivery for all victims and survivors, enabling joint working to be possible again without incurring impossible costs for some Agencies
- Services targeted at adults and children are not effectively co-ordinated now and are far less co-ordinated than prior to 2014. Availability of services, other than police, are determined, for example, if:
  - Victims have children
  - Victims have children aged 5-19 or under 5
  - Families in Tier 2-3 ( no service for tier 4)
  - They are male or female victims

- Groups are funded or not (otherwise each referral has to find funding)
  - Victims are from within the county
  - Victims have recourse to public funds
- Within Northampton borough, Police may identify other perpetrator interventions
  - NWA runs a group for non- mandated Perpetrators
  - Probation run BBR for mandated perpetrators
  - Behaviour change of perpetrators is essential to help address ongoing change in our society and prevent serial perpetration
  - Behaviour change is best achieved through recognition of a problem and a desire for change, instigated by the perpetrator. Therefore required attendance may have limited effect.
  - Nationally/locally need for DVA to become unacceptable (like smoking) so possibly requirement may be part of a campaign nationally.
  - Awareness raising done in local sports clubs by NADA ( and NVCFR currently)
  - Different motivations for perpetration require different responses and research
  - Specialist parenting for perpetrators having contact with their children important. NVCFR in discussion with CC Providers for Caring Dads
  - National and international research should evidence any new groups
  - The major gap in provision that NVCFR is currently trying to fill is the need for funded, holistic intervention for survivors, victims and their families to recover, rehabilitate and maintain change, breaking generational cycles rather than short term interventions under different funding streams, which may only address immediate concerns
  - Stay Free countywide - to help maintain change in victim behaviour
  - DART /Theraplay - for therapeutic family recovery work
  - Training to improve understanding in new research around DA
  - All of NVCFR's services are regularly accessed by women and children from BAMER. During 2013/14 NVCFR took a total of 22 women and 48 children from BAMER communities into refuge accommodation. During 2014/15 NVCFR took a total of 17 women and 23 children from BAMER communities into refuge accommodation. There are plans to meet with different BAMER groups to improve NVCFR's offer. Services for NRPF can be provided if funding can be found to support
  - NVCFR will provide information for male victims on its new website
  - NVCFR is planning to partner and work with a national organisation to develop a Christian male perpetrator programme longer term
  - NVCFR is hoping to partner with CC Provider national organisations to introduce a programme for perpetrator parents who have contact with their children

- NBC could further develop its services to address/tackle domestic abuse in order to achieve positive outcomes by assisting experienced voluntary sector specialist Agencies to respond to evidenced needs by securing funding streams

### **Chief Officer, Rape and Crisis Centre**

- Northamptonshire Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (NRICC) supports survivors of sexual violence and or interpersonal violence, whether the sexual abuse is committed within relationships.
- All NRICC's strategies and policies focuses on addressing Interpersonal violence in all its form.
- NRICC measures all its outcomes on a Rape Crisis England and Wales Data Performance Monitoring System (DPMS)
- NRICC offers counselling, emotional support, peer group support, mindfulness, Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and helpline (from February2015).
- NRICC receives no funds for domestic abuse or clients referred via DA organisations.
- NRICC has long felt there has been little to no arrangements between itself and other partnership organisation to tackle domestic abuse.
- Sexual violence often features as an afterthought on the domestic abuse agenda.
- NRICC continues to work very closely with the national organisation Rape Crisis England and Wales to respond to the increasing reporting of Rape and childhood sexual abuse and recent rapes.
- NRICC feels there is little or no co-ordination between agencies and its self as sexual abuse is often missed in the discussion of domestic abuse.
- NRICC service is targeted to clients 14 years and above as well as vulnerable adults.
- NRICC's interventions are around counselling, emotional support provided key counsellors. Information and advice on the criminal justice system is provided by our ISVA (independent sexual violence advisor) provision.
- NRICC feels that an effective strategy should include all forms of interpersonal violence and name each one the borough includes in its strategy.
- There continues to be a gap in funding for victims of sexual violence, who choose not to report to the Police and a lack of exploration as to why these clients choose not to report.
- NRICC's service provision is accessible to all community groups.
- NRICC's full range of service provision is available to male clients too

## **Northants Police – Domestic Abuse Awareness Team**

The Domestic Abuse Awareness Team gave the Scrutiny Panel a presentation. Key points:

- Aim of the Team is to offer support and help to medium and standard risk victims of Domestic Abuse (DA)
- The Team completes follow up visits to victims across our sector and work to safeguard them and their children
- The Team visits repeat victims, reduce calls, offer support and advice
- There is no other service available currently that offer this service
- The Team acts as Family Liaison Officers and support the family through all sorts of situations
- The Team attends Multi Agency meetings, formulates / completes action plans and provides enhanced support to Investigating Officers
- The Team will attend court, remove them to refuge, take statements, interview offenders and generally be a one stop shop for the family, by liaising with other Agencies
- In the future, the Team will be working with schools and other services in reducing incidents of domestic abuse. Discussions will include the social factors that can influence DA, and linking in with the Community Alcohol Partnership
- The Team also runs a One stop shop for DA, whereby victims can visit all Agencies and get advice and support around DA
- The Team has worked with many families over the past six months and has suggested ideas and improvements for officers when dealing with DA
- Options are being developed to work alongside the University of Northampton and other Agencies to develop a perpetrator programme and also offer better safeguarding measures for victims of DA

## **Domestic Abuse Awareness Week**

- Domestic Abuse Awareness Week took place week commencing 24 November 2014. 25 November 2014 was International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The Scrutiny Panel hosted, together with officers from Community Safety, an information stand at the Guildhall on this day. Representatives from Northampton Women's Aid also provided information at the stand. Information about Domestic Abuse Awareness Week was disseminated information to all ward Councillors who promoted the information at their surgeries.

## **DVA in Faith Communities Conference**

A representative of the Scrutiny Panel attended the DVA in Faith Communities Conference in November 2014. Key facts and data were provided:

- The conference looked at the experience of victims of domestic violence in faith communities. The experience of, the mostly female victims, was that when they plucked up courage to disclose they were not listened to and /or advised to stay within the marriage.
- A Christian woman told her story of ten years of horrendous abuse. She finally called the Police and was encouraged to attend for her own welfare and that of her children. She went into a refuge and from there re-built her life. In order to do that she had separated herself from her faith community and extended family for four years. She did this to avoid the pressures to reconcile with her abusive husband. Once she felt strong enough she renewed her contacts. The points she made were:
  - Faith communities should be offering understanding safety and support.
  - Faith communities need to acknowledge the terrible impact domestic violence can have on children.
  - Children, as well as the adult victims, need help to recover and be restored to experience well-being and the fullness of life.
- Other contributors made the following points:-
  - Gender based violence is a world-wide phenomena and occurs in all walks of life.
  - There is a need to support the victims and confront the perpetrators.

- FGM in the UK - the age of the girls being abused in this way is getting ever younger as families seek to cover up what they are doing. There is a need to work to ensure female representation at all levels in Faith communities to ensure that patriarchal structures and misogynistic practices are challenged.
- Migrant women and girls are very vulnerable to abuse especially if they are illegal, trafficked or somehow living in the 'shadows'.
- Much more needs to be done so there is growing awareness of the extent of the issue and support mechanisms are in place.

### **Case Studies**

A sample of anonymised case studies was provided by Northampton Women's Aid to the Scrutiny Panel:

#### *Case Study (Refuge/No Recourse to Public Funds)*

*Bee was referred to Northampton Women's Aid from a Children's Centre. Since Bee had come to the UK to join her husband, 2 years ago, she had been suffering severe physical, emotional, financial and sexual abuse from him. Bee had a son, born in the UK. Since attending the Children's Centre, staff had noticed signs that she had been suffering domestic abuse and had encouraged her to ring Northampton Women's Aid. She had been told by her husband that as she has no right to be in the UK without him; if she left him, she would be sent home to Africa without her son. This was a fear that had kept her from accessing help before. However, she had now noticed the detrimental effect the domestic abuse was having on her son and was determined to improve their situation.*

*Bee had come to this country on a spousal visa from outside of the EEU. She was months away from being able to qualify for indefinite leave to remain (ILR) if she stayed with her husband. However the abuse was so severe at this point that she felt she could not remain with her husband any longer for her own safety, even to secure her future in the UK.*

*Upon ringing Northampton Women's Aid and completing the assessment, it became clear that Bee met the criteria for admission into refuge. However she had no recourse to public funds so would not be able to financially support herself or be eligible for housing benefit. Once Bee was housed safely in refuge, the Resident Support Worker at the refuge was able to apply for a Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC). This gave Bee 13 weeks access to public funds meaning she would be able to claim benefits such as income support, child tax credits and child benefit for her to support herself and her child.*

*Whilst the application for the DDVC was pending, the Resident Support Worker made an appointment for advice at Community Law Service with a professional who had a working agreement with Northampton Women's Aid to support women who had suffered domestic violence and had no recourse to public funds.*

Community Law Service then assisted in making Bee's application for indefinite leave to remain.

In order for the application for ILR to be successful, under the Domestic Violence clause, certain types of evidence was needed that domestic violence had taken place. The Resident Support Worker then contacted all the professionals who had been in contact with Bee to gather as much evidence as possible to support her application.

As well as the practical support Bee needed whilst living in refuge, she also required a large amount of emotional support in order for her to begin to deal with the trauma she had suffered. This came from the Resident Support Worker who provided daily support sessions, moving to weekly as required. It also came from the peer support of living in refuge with others who had experienced similar situations.



After a few weeks, Bee accessed the Freedom Programme through Northampton Women's Aid which gave her a good insight into the tactics and beliefs of an abuser, giving her tools for future healthy relationships.

After just 12 weeks, Bee's indefinite leave to remain was granted, giving her the freedom to move on with her life without fear that she would be deported. Bee is now planning a future for herself and her son and applications have already been made, with support, for her to start college in September with the long term goal of qualifying with a degree in Nursing.



## Case Study (You & Me, Mum)

Carol attended You & Me, Mum, she has 4 children – 2 boys who are adults and 2 girls, one who is 18yrs old and the other is 8yrs old. Carol has experienced domestic abuse from her husband who she has now separated from.

Whilst Carol attended You & Me, Mum she was able to understand how the domestic abuse had effected all the children, she was able to talk about the different behaviours and coping strategies each child used. This gave Carol a better understanding as to why they acted the way they did.

Carol is now able to talk and listen to her children confidently about their thoughts and feelings and how they felt growing up as children living with domestic abuse, which has resulted in one of her son's now writing down poems and songs about his experience growing up with domestic abuse, his feelings towards his Mum, Dad and about himself.

Carol has been able to build up a relationship with her 18yr old daughter over the weeks attending You & Me, Mum, their relationship before the group was volatile at times and Carol would often get frustrated with her daughter's attitude. Since attending the group Carol is now more patient with her daughter and is aware of her own feelings and thoughts and is able to be more positive towards her daughter.

Before attending You & Me, Mum Carol didn't think that her 8yr old had been affected by the domestic abuse because she is younger and Carol had left the relationship when the youngest daughter was very young. Having attended the group Carol became aware that actually her daughter has been affected and is able to help her daughter deal with what she has witnessed.

Carol said You & Me, Mum was a great group to attend and valuable to her as a mother, she said she feels every mum should attend the programme who has gone through domestic abuse.

## Case Study (Advice)

NWA was contacted by the sister of Rufia, the mother of two boys aged 6 and 11. Rufia had been experiencing emotional, physical and financial abuse from her husband for a number of years and was kept isolated from family and friends. Rufia was made to account for all the money she was given by providing receipts, when she used the car the mileage was checked, when leaving the house with the children she was locked in. Her husband threatened to kill her if she stepped out of line. If she attempted to run away he told her he would track her down and inform Social Services that she had taken the children.

Rufia was in a constant state of anxiety over the threats and abuse and had made the decision to leave but required advice and support in doing this. In particular she required legal advice on how to deal with property which she had been forced to put in her name. Contact with NWA was only possible when her husband was away from the home.

The planned move from her family home to her sister in Northampton was to be during the half term school holiday. Support was given to make arrangements for schools for the two boys. Unfortunately the school places had not been confirmed by the half term holiday and Rufia decided to wait until she had confirmation. When places were confirmed Rufia was not contactable due to disconnection of the phone.

When contact was re-established Rufia had been experiencing heightened aggression from her husband and further threats to her life. At the point at which her husband's behaviour led her to believe he was going to harm her physically she took action by locking her husband out of the house and calling the police, he was arrested and shortly after released on bail. The police moved her and the children to her family in Northampton with instructions to get civil orders in place.

Legal advice was sought and Rufia was advised of her options, obtain an occupation order and return to the family home or relocate in Northampton. The years of abuse and threats, the trauma which led Rufia to flee the family home to stay with her family had left Rufia nervous and anxious. Emotionally and mentally Rufia was not able to make decisions about her future and required a lot of support in allaying irrational fears brought about by her experiences.



Rufia was fortunate in that she had family support in providing a safe place to stay when leaving an extremely abusive situation and did not require refuge accommodation.

A sample of anonymised case studies was provided by BME SRP to the Scrutiny Panel:

**Case 1:** Mrs X had been physically abused and mentally abused for several years by her visually impaired husband. She stayed with him as he had no other dependants. One day when she'd been beaten by her husband she called the police who came to the house. However her husband managed to persuade the Police that it was he that was the victim and that as he was visually impaired there was no way he would hit his wife. Unfortunately the Police believed him so she got in touch with us and we referred her to the refuge services who unfortunately were not able to help her, so she got in touch with us and as she had nowhere else to go, she came to stay with us for a few days. She returned home a few days later and not long afterwards called the Police and us to say that she'd been physically abused by her husband. Our communication with the Police enabled them to arrest him and

she then received the help of the public service bodies which resulted in her leaving the home and moving to a new place where her then convicted husband would be unable to trace her once he was released.

**Case 2:** A lady called us to say she had been physically abused several years, she'd finally decided to leave her husband but wanted emergency accommodation, we referred her to the refuge services, however they either didn't help her or were unable to help her. She called us back very upset and angry that we'd referred her to an agency that she felt had insulted her and made her feel as though she was lying. She refused any further offers of help from us and cut off contact as she thought we were somehow connected to the agency.

On occasions where statutory services have been able to accommodate battered women we sometimes provide emergency accommodation in our personal residences as the women would otherwise have nowhere to go.

**Case Study 3 (marital):**

A middle-aged woman reported domestic abuse from her husband and teenage son. The woman had been suffering in silence for 1 years. The woman found out that her husband was having an affair and wanted to leave therefore the husband started to physically abuse (hitting). The son started to hit the mother too as he felt she was breaking up the family unit.

She did not have the confidence to tell anyone due to fear of her husband and son.

She attended a Sikh Grooming Conference, facilitated by a professional Sikh Society organised by the Sikh Temple. She sorted support from this group, this gave her the confidence to speak to external specialists as she realised that there was support out there and eventually spoke to local volunteers too. The case was reported to Northamptonshire police, victim support and Sikh helpline. The woman felt that the community and family were judging her. She was isolated from the community. She was further isolated due to have no family support in this country.

However with extensive volunteer persuasion and support, she left the family home.

She lives alone now and is able to access befriending scheme from local volunteers, engages in SCCYC activities and volunteers in the Sikh Temple. The teenage son is living with a religious family from the community who have

kindly offered to house and provide essential provisions for him until he is ready to live independently. The abuser was arrested and charged, we have not followed up the outcome and cannot question the victim as she does not wish to discuss further.

#### **Case Study 4:**

A young woman newly married from India to a UK born young man, married through consented arranged marriage, believing that she is going to UK to a better life. When she arrived in the UK she was not allowed to go out, but only allowed to leave the home to attend ESOL classes at SCCYC as it were a requirement for UK stay.

Whilst she was attending the classes, there were discussion amongst the women within the ESOL class members, also immigrant brides highlighted issues of Interpersonal abuse.

The break times in ESOL classes were used as an opportunity to speak and let off steam to others in the same situation and to make friendships. As a result of the discussions, one of the women became confident to speak to the development officer and one-to-one sessions the officer highlighted that what she was experiencing was a form of abuse.

Discussions identified very controlled environments where the women were house bound, where the in-laws told them that, "they were princesses' therefore they did not need to leave the house to work or volunteer", although they were expected to do home duties similar to being housemaids. Their husbands, who have total freedom to work, go out with friends etc., tend to abide by parents rules and do not assist the wives to have freedom.

The young woman refused referral for professional help and decided to take action herself by leaving the marriage to live with relatives in another town. The mother in law informed the development officer that she was sentenced to court for hiding her daughter in laws passport and requested that the officer be a favourable character witness for the family and unfavourable towards the daughter in law stating that she was a "bad" woman and treated her family badly. The officer refused as she knew that the young lady was the victim and the mother in law the abuser. The outcome of the legal case are unknown, the young lady left the marriage, we do not know but we think the young lady was sent back to India as she had not been married long enough for UK stay.

Many young women feel compelled to stay in abusive circumstances due to lack of family in the UK for support, no finances and the fact that traditionally

parents do not accept their daughters back after marriage no matter what the circumstances, particularly in India.

### **Case Study 5:**

A middle aged woman reported domestic violence to a community volunteer. The volunteer was told that the emotional abuse started when her mother-in-law came from India to live with the couple in UK. Problems started to escalate when the mother in law who instigated unfavourable information of the woman to her husband which resulted in daily arguments. The arguments resulted in excessive alcohol consumption by the husband which resulted in him hitting the woman. She reported the case to the volunteer. She was taken to the women's refuge in the evening; however the refuges were closed at that time, therefore she was taken to an elderly couple's home for overnight shelter.

The next day, the volunteer took the woman to GP surgery for medical examination, due to bruise on her cheek. The volunteer, due to lack of experience, the worker contacted a police officer from the community and SCCYC, of support service available with consent from the person. The person was encouraged to make a statement to the police domestic violence unit. She became scared and requested that no action be taken against her husband.

The volunteer was told that this was not the first incident, she had been hit by her husband, and this was a regular occurrence in previous years. She reported the incident to external services, following this he stopped hitting her.

As a result of reporting in previous years, their application to America was declined due to her husband's criminal record. She asked for the police not to take any action as she was scared the next application would once again be declined. The experience made her confident in to trying to overcome the issues by persisting that the mother in law no longer lived with them. She succeeded with her request. The last time the volunteer spoke to her, she said things had improved, although still not ideal as arguments are still frequent.

## Case Study - Information

The main reasons why people do not report domestic violence are:

- Financial dependence on partner very often people depend on their partners financially, thus they have a fear to lose stability
- Children women with children are afraid to stay alone without help and support
- Some people distrust police People do not understand what “police by consent” means. Based on their personal experience, people believe that police do not will be consider the cases of domestic violence as a serious crime. In some Eastern European countries the police do not intervene in cases of domestic violence as they consider this to be a private family matter. Victim will have no guarantee that he/she will stay safe.
- women afraid persecution by their partners
- Language barriers Due to language barriers people do not have enough information about their rights and services which provide help and support for people suffering from domestic abuse
- People consider domestic violence as a private family matter  
In order to find out why people refuse to report the cases of domestic violence it is necessary to consider the following factors: religion beliefs, culture, and people’s background.

## 4 Desktop Research

- 4.1 As part of the evidence gathering process for this review, desktop research was undertaken regarding best practice initiatives regarding preventative models for domestic abuse.
- 4.1.2 A lot of resources are available electronically such as [www.safetotalk.org.uk](http://www.safetotalk.org.uk) in Coventry and the [Peterborough Domestic Abuse Network](#)
- 4.1.3 Coventry has the provision of a multi-Agency Forum – The Coventry Domestic Violence and Abuse Partnership that works together against domestic violence and abuse.
- 4.1.4 Coventry Haven is a small, community based, registered charity which is run for women by women.

- 4.1.5 Stonham Housing (Slough Domestic Abuse Services) offers support and advice to local residents who have suffered abuse or are still within an abusive relationship, at risk of stalking, harassment or threats, or at risk of honour based violence or forced marriage. It runs the Freedom Programme where women explore the realities of domestic abuse.
- 4.1.6 Slough Domestic Abuse Service runs the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) that offers to help people using violence or abuse in their relationships and who want to make changes to their behaviour.
- 4.1.7 The Blackpool Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is noted as a beacon of excellence.
- 4.1.8 Blackpool is one of the few areas to have children's independent domestic violence advisors who take individual cases and oversee the MARAC process.
- 4.1.9 The Peterborough Domestic Abuse Network (PDNA) has the provision of a Survivors Advisory Group that is reported to play a vital role in informing and guiding the actions of PDAN.
- 4.1.10 Safer Peterborough has the provision of a Men's Advice Line for men experiencing domestic abuse.
- 4.1.11 Clare's Law was launched on 8 March 2014. The aim of the scheme is to give individuals a formal mechanism to make enquiries about their partner or if they have concerns about someone they know who may be in a violent relationship.
- 4.1.12 Two organisations in Northampton that offer support and information to victims of domestic abuse – the Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre and Serenity are recognised as examples of best practice nationally.
- 4.1.13 Northampton already has organisations that deliver a number of the services similar to those detailed above within its most similar groups (MSG) family group examples.
- 4.1.14 Results of the desktop research exercise are detailed at Appendix C.

## **5 Australian and New Zealand Preventative Model and Strategies for Domestic Abuse**

- 5.1 As part of the evidence gathering process, desktop research was undertaken regarding the Australian and New Zealand preventative model.
- 5.2 In Australia, domestic abuse includes:



- emotional abuse—blaming the victim for all problems in the relationship, undermining the victim’s self-esteem and self-worth through comparisons with others, withdrawing interest and engagement and emotional blackmail
- verbal abuse—swearing and humiliation in private and public, focusing on intelligence, sexuality, body image or the victim’s capacity as a parent or spouse
- social abuse—systematic isolation from family and friends, instigating and controlling relocations to a place where the victim has no social circle or employment opportunities and preventing the victim from going out to meet people
- economic abuse—controlling all money, forbidding access to bank accounts, providing an inadequate ‘allowance’, preventing the victim seeking or holding employment and taking wages earned by the victim
- psychological abuse—making threats regarding custody of children, asserting the justice system will not believe or support the victim, destroying property, abusing pets and driving dangerously
- spiritual abuse—denial and/or misuse of religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles and misusing religious or spiritual traditions to justify physical violence or other abuse
- physical abuse—direct assaults on the body, use of weapons (including objects), assault of children, locking the victim out of the house, sleep and food deprivation, and
- sexual abuse—any form of pressured/unwanted sex or sexual degradation, causing pain during sex, coercive sex without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, making the victim perform sexual acts unwillingly and criticising or using degrading insults.

5.3 Family violence is a broader term referring to violence between family members as well as violence between intimate partners. This term also covers a complexity of behaviours beyond that of direct physical violence. The Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commission’s review of family violence law in Australia recommended that state and territory legislation ‘should provide that family violence is violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour, that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful.’

5.4 The Australian Government’s response to domestic violence takes a number of different preventative measures and strategies, support for victims and survivors, their families and law enforcement. There are a variety of organisations and Agencies that are also involved in the production, delivery and evaluation of the success of the programs.

5.5 In Australia, domestic abuse includes:

- emotional abuse
- verbal abuse
- social abuse
- economic abuse
- psychological abuse
- spiritual abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

5.6 National Programs in operation include:

- Perpetrator programs
- Engaging men and boys
- Violence prevention education for children and young people
- Safe at home programs

5.7 The Australian and Family Abuse Clearing House publishes details of news and events concerning domestic and family abuse. Details of legislation, best practice, forthcoming conferences are also published on its website. Good practice recognises the diversity of communities and women's needs and good practice responses are alter to hidden discrimination and prioritise universal, equitable access and design. The Clearinghouse highlights that the good practice programs and initiatives that it publishes have the potential to be adopted or used by other services.

5.8 Evaluation of the programs is a key exercise as it allows organisations to decide whether the programme is meeting its objectives. Publicly available evaluations help make programmes accountable to their communities.

5.9 The Clearinghouse highlights the need for multi-Agency service collaboration.

5.10 The Domestic Violence Service (DVCS) includes the provision of a Men's-Line Service which is telephone support to men experiencing or using violence against a partner.

5.11 The White Ribbon campaign is a global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women.

5.12 The “No Way! Project” was one of the first youth projects in Australia to engage:

- Young men as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young men at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
- Young women as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young women at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
- A team of young people who have experienced abuse in their families who have used single and mixed-sex methodologies in a wide range of settings to prevent abuse and violence in relationships.

5.13 A Schools and Community Education program has been developed. Early interventions with children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future.

5.14 Safe at home programs work as part of an integrated, multi-Agency approach.

5.15 The National Plan – “Safe and Free from Violence” has the aim of reducing violence against women and their children. It comprises six main objectives, all of which have tangible measures.

5.16 The National Council to Reduce Violence against women and their children produced a report in 2009 that detailed all Domestic Violence Laws in Australia and New Zealand.

5.17 Attached at Appendix D are the results of the desktop research regarding the Australian and New Zealand preventative model.

## **6 White Ribbon Campaign and No Way Project**

6.1 As part of the evidence gathering process, desktop research was undertaken regarding the White Ribbon Campaign and No Way Project.

6.2 The White Ribbon campaign is a global male-led movement to stop men’s violence against women. The Campaign is noted as an example of good practice in Australia.

- 6.3 The Campaign is reported to be a means for men to speak out against violence against women
- 5.4 In swearing and wearing a white ribbon, men and boys can act as positive role models and advocates for change by challenging behaviours and attitudes that have allowed of violence against women to occur.
- 6.5 White Ribbon Australia believes in the capacity of the individual to change and to encourage change in others.
- 6.6 The “No Way! Project” was one of the first youth projects in Australia to engage:
- Young men as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young men at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
  - Young women as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young women at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
  - A team of young people who have experienced abuse in their families who have used single and mixed-sex methodologies in a wide range of settings to prevent abuse and violence in relationships.
- 6.7 The Project is noted as an example of good practice in Australia.
- 6.8 Detailed at Appendix E are the results of the desktop research – White Ribbon Campaign and No Way Project.

## **7 Honour Based Abuse**

- 7.1 As part of the evidence gathering process, desktop research was undertaken regarding honour based abuse.
- 7.2 The Police definition of Honour Based Violence (HBV) is "a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community".
- 7.3 HBV includes issues such as Forced Marriages (FM), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Killings and Dowry Related Abuse.

7.4 The Northamptonshire Honour Based Violence Group is a countywide group whose reported aim is to raise awareness around HBV and how it affects families and communities within our county. It also provides HBV training for professionals.

7.5 It is reported that it is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based abuse might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- want to get out of an arranged marriage
- want to get out of a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

7.6 It is further reported that women and girls are the most common victims of honour based abuse however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- domestic abuse
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being taken and held against your will
- assault

7.7 A forced marriage is one that is carried out without the consent of both people. This is very different to an arranged marriage, which both people will have agreed to.

7.8 The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) was established in 2005 and has three main areas of work:

1. Developing of policies
2. Raising awareness
3. Case work (domestic and consular)

- 7.9 The Unit has two Heads of Unit (one for the Foreign Office group set up in 1999 and which deals with cases abroad, and one for the Home Office group formed in 2000 which deals with cases in the UK).
- 7.10 Their lines are open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm (020 7008 0151). They also have an out-of-hours emergency number (020 7008 1500). In addition to this emails and text messages can be used to communicate directly with victims. Callers are generally the victims themselves or their friends but professionals can also call for advice or on behalf of a victim if this is requested.
- 7.11 The FMU works with Agencies to support them and to help develop safety plans for the victim. If the victim decides to leave for safety, it is recommended that she/he is relocated as far as possible from their original location and that they immediately inform the Police of their situation in case the victim's family reports her/him missing.
- 7.12 It is reported that between January 2009 and September 2010 the FMU received 1,241 calls. 87% of callers were female and 13% were male. In 2009 the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) gave support to a total of 1,682 cases (86% of these involved females, 14% involved males).
- 7.13 The majority of cases reported to the FMU come from Pakistan Bangladesh and India. However, cases have also been reported from Cyprus, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Somalia and several European countries.
- 7.14 The FMU has received a total of 94 calls from the East Midlands between January 2009 and September 2010.
- 7.15 The Metropolitan Police Service reports that it records and investigates all instances of honour based violence, even in cases where there is only a small amount of information or when a victim has not reported it themselves. It does this so that it can provide more protection that could prevent further abuse or violence or in some cases, forced marriage.
- 7.16 Every London borough where the Metropolitan Police Service operates has a team of specially trained officers, in local specialist Community Safety Units, whose responsibility it is to investigate hate crimes and instances of honour based violence and give you the support you need. They work together with the Child Abuse Investigation Command, Safer Schools officers and Safer neighbourhood Teams to tackle all honour based violence incidents.
- 7.17 The Halo Project ((Honour based violence and forced marriage project) is a new and innovative project based in the North East of England, which will support victims of honour based violence and forced marriages by providing

appropriate advice and support to victims. The programme works with key partners who also provide required interventions and advice necessary for the protection and safety of victims. It is reported by Halo that, nationally there are approximately 12 reported honour killings per year in the United Kingdom. This does not take into account people who are taken abroad and do not return and their whereabouts are unknown. This also does not take into account the local school children who are taken abroad for the purpose of marriage and those suffering serious abuse at the hands of their closest family.

- 7.18 National statistics show that South Asian females under the age of 24 are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than their Caucasian counterparts. In the Cleveland area there have been a number of female suicides normally by fire and also murders of South Asian women and children as they have brought “shame” or “dishonour” to the family by not conforming to what the family believes is the correct code of behaviour.
- 7.19 In December 2011 it was reported that UK police recorded at least 2,823 honour attacks last year, figures from 39 out of 52 forces show. Almost 500 of these were in London. Among the 12 forces also able to provide figures from 2009, there was an overall 47% rise in such incidents.
- 7.20 Eight Police Forces recorded more than 100 honour-based attacks each in 2009. The Metropolitan Police had the most at 495, followed by West Midlands (378), West Yorkshire (350), Lancashire (227), Greater Manchester (189), Cleveland (153), Suffolk (118) and Bedfordshire (117). Of the 12 Police Forces able to provide 2009 comparison figures, nine recorded a rise in attacks and three saw totals fall. The biggest rise was in Northumbria, which saw figures leap by 305% from 17 in 2009 to 69 in 2010, followed by a 154% jump in Cambridgeshire from 11 to 28.
- 7.21 The GLA/IMKAAN report on harmful practices (May 2011) reports that Police data indicates – 414 incidents and 228 offences of HBA and 336 incidents and 110 offences of forced marriages (between December 2008 and April 2010).
- 7.22 The Northamptonshire Honour Based Violence Group (NHBVG) is a countywide partnership with the reported aim of raising awareness around HBA and how it affects families and communities within the county. The Group also provides training for professionals and awareness raising workshops for schools and communities.
- 7.23 NHBVG is one of the strands of NADASA (Northamptonshire Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse), formerly Northamptonshire Interpersonal Violence Forum. NADASA is a countywide partnership made up of partners

from both voluntary and statutory organisations. The main reported aim of NADASA is to provide a co-ordinated response to interpersonal violence with Northamptonshire, reducing domestic abuse, sexual violence and repeat victimisation.

7.24 In April 2012, NHBVG organised the first countywide conference on HBA. Around 150 delegates were in attendance.

7.25 NHBVG's current action plan covers the following:

### **Raising awareness within statutory and voluntary sector agencies**

NHBVG achieves this by cascading relevant information within organisations on a regular basis, distributing promotional material and by publishing articles for newsletters (for example the Children Centres bulletin and schools newsletter).

### **Community Engagement**

NHBVG delivers this objective through raising awareness within community groups via events and supporting the work of community projects such as Northamptonshire Flower (countywide services that specialises in FGM.)

### **Training on FGM and FM for Practitioners**

NHBVG does this in partnership with NADASA training strand, delivering half day HBA training courses to professionals countywide

### **Sharing good practice**

NHBVG achieves this by sharing national and local news and informative materials to ensure it follows the Government direction in this specific area of work.

7.26 NHBVG reports that its recent achievements include

- In March 2014, NHBVG devised a countywide survey to ascertain professionals' understanding of HBA and whether there was a need for further training. The results of the survey are attached at Appendix B.
- In June 2014 a member of NHBVG was tasked with updating the Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Children Board. Guidelines on Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. Information is attached at Appendix C.



- The Karma Nirvana NBA roadshow was held at Police Force headquarters in July 2014. 150 professionals attended from a variety of organisations, including the Police, Education, Social Services and Health. The focus was on the new Forced Marriage Legislation.
- Northamptonshire Policy publicity campaign in June 2014 to raise awareness of FGM (ahead of the identified risk period of the school holidays), as well as public messages, training was delivered to officers in the Force by one of the volunteer group from the HBA group.

7.27 The University of Wolverhampton conducted research in 2011 – “Boys as hidden, silent victims of honour based violence”. It found that approximately 7% of the victims were male and its research suggested that this could rising.

7.28 The research paper detailed some case studies:

*“15-year old Muslim schoolgirl Tulay Goren from the Kurdish region of Turkey was drugged, tortured and then killed by her father Mehmet Goren because of her relationship with an older man”*

*“Canzeze Riaz and her daughters Sayrah, Sophia Riaz, Alicia and Hannah died after their father started a fire at the family home because he refused to accept their westernised ways”.*

*“Azhar Nazir, 30, and his cousin, used four knives to slit Samaira Nazir’s throat, repeatedly stabbing because she had fallen in love with an asylum-seeker who they considered to be from an unsuitable caste.”*

## **8 Community Impact Assessment**

8.1 Overview and Scrutiny ensures that it adheres to the Council’s statutory duty to provide the public with access to Scrutiny reports, briefing notes, agendas, minutes and other such documentation. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Panels are widely publicised, i.e. on the Council’s website, copies issued to the local media and paper copies are made available in the Council’s One Stop Shop and local libraries.

8.2 The Scrutiny Panel was mindful of the eight protected characteristics when undertaking this scrutiny activity so that any recommendations that it made could identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. This was borne in mind as the Scrutiny Panel progressed with the review and evidence gathered.

- 8.3 In order that the Scrutiny Panel obtained a wide range of views, a number of key witnesses provided evidence as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 8.4 Details of the Community Impact Assessment undertaken can be located on the Overview and Scrutiny [webpage](#).

## 9 Conclusions and Key Findings

- 9.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

### **Preventative Strategies and Models – Northampton**

- 9.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that front line staff, Northampton Borough Council (NBC), had undertaken awareness training for domestic abuse in the last 18 months.
- 9.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that Northampton benefits from a good range of Agencies dealing with domestic abuse.
- 9.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the Sunflower Centre and Serenity (sexual assault referral centre), Northampton are both recognised nationally as models of excellence. The Scrutiny Panel further realised that there are organisations within Northampton that delivers similar services to those highlighted within the results of the desktop research exercise.
- 9.1.4 The MARAC process within Northampton deals with high risk cases and has recently been further developed by merging with the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF) meetings. The DAF's focus was on low to medium risk cases, and similar to the MARAC brought agencies together to review cases and identify appropriate support and intervention for the victim. The Scrutiny Panel realised that by bringing all Agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. It further noted that the merging of the two processes has created a more joined up approach with a broader range of agencies attending and contributing. It has also provided the opportunity to pull together all available support and intervention programmes that are available within the domestic abuse 'tool box' to enable a joined up response and avoid duplication.

- 9.1.5 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the MARAC has received praise from CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) which oversees MARAC meetings nationally.
- 9.1.6 Underpinning the work of MARAC is the role of the IDVA's (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor) that sit within the Sunflower Centre. An IDVA is a named, trained professional case worker for domestic abuse victims whose primary purpose is to address the safety of 'high risk' victims and their children. IDVA's serve as a victim's main point of contact, and normally work with their clients from the point of crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options, developing and implementing coordinated safety plans.
- 9.1.7 Evidence received highlighted that there is a need for service providers to work in collaboration. All Agencies are working to the same agenda but there are gaps in strategic thinking. There needs to be joined up thinking and working across the seven Local Authorities in the county. The sharing of resources, protocols and policies would be advantageous. The lack of strategic overview and cohesive thinking can create client frustration.
- 9.1.8 It was recognised that there is a wealth of experience and knowledge within Agencies and that there are mechanisms in place for cross-referral to other Agencies. This is further supported by the close working relationships that the Agencies have developed.
- 9.1.9 The evidence received highlighted that there is a need for sustainable funding and wider strategic thinking to ensure services can develop and thrive.
- 9.1.10 The good practice undertaken by Northampton Borough Council in funding domestic abuse support agencies was noted. It was felt that there is a need for there to be dialogue with other funding bodies so that the good practice undertaken by NBC can be replicated.
- 9.1.11 The Scrutiny Panel conveyed its concerns regarding the reduction in services meaning that there is a growing issue about pathways to support such as reduction in refuge spaces, loss of legal aid.

- 9.1.12 The Scrutiny Panel was concerned regarding the cost of interpreter services which can be very high. For example, in some cases £100 per session has been charged to Relate. It was felt that this highlights a gap in service provision.
- 9.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that two Awareness Raising Sessions on the work of Relate Northamptonshire (in particular Choosing to Change) for staff in Children's Services and Social Workers had been scheduled for December 2014.
- 9.1.14 The Scrutiny Panel emphasised the need to do more for victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- 9.1.15 The Scrutiny Panel raised concerns regarding the inconsistencies around referrals and advice from Children's Services. It felt that there is a need for an awareness raising training programme for Councillors in Northamptonshire.
- 9.1.16 The refuge visited by the Scrutiny Panel was perceived as well run, nicely decorated, welcoming and containing good facilities for children.
- 9.1.17 It was recognised that there is a need to address both male and female perpetrators so that they change their behaviour. Evidence received highlighted that additional research needs to be undertaken in order to facilitate the evidence base for female and same sex perpetrators. Funding would be required to do this.
- 9.1.18 The Scrutiny Panel noted that a victim of domestic violence is categorised as priority by the Borough Council. It was pleased that the system is very robust with a clause in the Tenancy Agreement that if a perpetrator is convicted they will lose the right to the tenancy; i.e. the victim would have the right to remain in the property. The Tenancy Agreement has been reviewed and updated. However, the Scrutiny Panel felt that there is a need to explain the Tenancy Agreement process to new and prospective tenants.
- 9.1.19 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the need for a Transition Strategy as when moving from a refuge to a permanent address; women often have no furniture or equipment.

- 9.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has recently allocated £10million of funding for domestic abuse preventative services. Local Authorities can bid for £100,000 of this funding. One of the criterion for funding is that services are not ring-fenced specifically to a county and must be available to individuals from anywhere in the UK. The bid has been submitted and the outcome is awaited.
- 9.1.21 Approximately 50% of referrals to the Sunflower Centre are from the borough of Northampton.
- 9.1.22 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged the good work of the Sunflower Centre realising the need for accommodation for drop in sessions at the Guildhall, when they move to their new location at Riverside House.

### **Domestic Abuse Awareness**

- 9.1.23 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to take part in Domestic Abuse Awareness Week that took place week commencing 24 November 2014. 25 November 2014 was International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The Scrutiny Panel hosted, together with officers from Community Safety, an information stand at the Guildhall on this day. Representatives from Northampton Women's Aid also provided information at the stand. Various ward Councillors visited the information stand and also promoted the information at their surgeries. Information packs were disseminated to all borough Councillors. It was felt that this information would be of tremendous value to various BME groups. It was further agreed that the education information packs would be of benefit to various organisations such as, schools, universities, churches and community groups.
- 9.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel noted that an anti-abuse campaign in cinemas has been very successful. Following the campaign, comments on the Webpage of the cinema had been posted detailing that people had not been aware that they were being abused until they had had sight of the campaign. The Scrutiny Panel further noted the advice of the Home Secretary that schools have a role to play in educating children about relationships; this had also been highlighted in evidence provided to the Scrutiny Panel by expert advisors.

- 9.1.25 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the need for a standard definition of vulnerable adults that could be shared with all Agencies.
- 9.1.26 The Scrutiny Panel felt that advice on healthy relationships is omitted from education PSHE lessons, and this would be a valuable part of the school curriculum.
- 9.1.27 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that there appears to be low level reporting in BME communities, highlighting the need for cultural training and shifts in understanding. There is a need to work with communities to ensure that services and language assistance is available to them but it was recognised that this would be a further piece of scrutiny work.
- 9.1.28 80% of domestic abuse relates to women. It was felt that it would be useful for Northamptonshire County Council's Adult and Social Care Scrutiny Committee to investigate the reason for this; signposting to relevant academic research.

### **Best Practice Elsewhere**

- 9.1.29 The Scrutiny Panel found the document produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) – 10 questions to ask when scrutinising domestic violence – a guide for Local Authority Scrutiny Officers and Councillors useful when putting supplementary questions to expert advisors.
- 9.1.30 Desktop research highlighted that the Blackpool Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is noted as a beacon of excellence. Blackpool is one of the few areas to have children's independent domestic violence advisors who take individual cases and oversee the MARAC process. Safer Peterborough has the provision of a Men's Advice Line for men experiencing domestic abuse.
- 9.1.31 The Scrutiny Panel commended the Australian and New Zealand Preventative Model and Strategies for domestic abuse; acknowledging that a number of these processes are replicated in Northamptonshire.
- 9.1.32 The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that the domestic abuse services in Northampton link in with male victims.

10.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse.

Scrutiny Panel 1 recommends to Cabinet that:

10.1.1 In recognising the success of the information stand hosted by the Scrutiny Panel as part of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, a similar event is held annually in the town centre in a location with a consulting room should attendees need advice and support.

10.1.2 Education Information Packs on domestic abuse preventative services are disseminated to BME Groups, schools, universities, faith groups and community groups in Northampton prior to Domestic Violence Awareness Raising Week 2015.

10.1.3 In recognising the good practice undertaken by Northampton Borough Council in funding domestic abuse services; Northampton Borough Council (NBC) should take this into consideration when allocating funding in future years and share best practice with other funding bodies.

10.1.4 The countywide definition of vulnerable adults is adopted by Northampton Borough Council.

10.1.5 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for education at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is contacted and asked whether education, advice, information and support regarding healthy relationships and personal safety can be included in the school curriculum.

10.1.6 Public awareness of domestic abuse is increased and services that are available to tackle the issue and support victims:

- Review and update contents of relevant pages of NBC website to ensure it is informative and 'user friendly'
- Provide effective and updated publicity throughout the Borough via poster, leaflets and contact cards
- Support NADA awareness raising campaigns for the county
- Training for all Councillors on Interpersonal Violence is delivered and an information booklet or webpage is produced

- 10.1.7 NBC's Domestic Abuse Policy is revised and updated to reflect the new countywide Interpersonal Violence Strategy; which is currently out to consultation.
- 10.1.8 The statistical data collected in respect of domestic abuse is reviewed to ensure that it is robust and meaningful. NBC considers the effectiveness of current data collection in relation to domestic abuse and encourages all relevant departments to review and contribute by the end of December 2015.

### **Funding**

- 10.1.9 It is established whether NBC has central funding to access interpreter services, to aid communication with victims who's first language is not English.
- 10.1.10 Due to the relocation of the Sunflower Centre, Northampton Borough Council provides them with accommodation in the One Stop Shop for drop in sessions.
- 10.1.11 A central budget to support the Sanctuary Scheme and the target hardening for victims properties is identified to enable victims to remain in their own home.

### **Training Programme**

- 10.1.12 NBC develops a sustainable domestic abuse awareness raising training programme for Councillors, managers and all staff. This programme is also offered to neighbouring Local Authorities.

### **Housing Services, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH)**

- 10.1.13 It is recommended that the conditions of Tenancy Agreements are fully explained to new and prospective tenants to ensure their understanding and compliance.
- 10.1.14 Dual Tenancies are encouraged and staff trained to recognise the implications of cultural differences.
- 10.1.15 In recognising that when moving from a crisis and safe accommodation to a permanent address; women often have no furniture or equipment; a Transition Strategy is introduced. Information is provided detailing where household items can be obtained, for example Charity Link and Spencer Contact.



## **Housing Solutions, Northampton Borough Council**

- 10.1.16 In recognising that new people to the area; and individuals with no recourse to public funds, are offered advice, support and given information.
- 10.1.17 Housing Solutions, NBC, takes responsibility for reports of domestic abuse and ensure all staff are trained and able to respond.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 10.1.18 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.
- 10.1.19 A copy of the final report is sent to the Home Secretary, the relevant Cabinet Member at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), the Chair of the Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, NCC, Assistant Director, Integrated Wellbeing Services, NCC, Corporate Parenting, NCC, the Safeguarding Board, NCC, the Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- 10.1.20 It is recommended to Northamptonshire County Council's Health, Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee that it investigate the reasons why 80% of domestic abuse relates to women ; signposting to relevant academic research.
- 10.1.21 In recognising that there is a need to work with communities and the voluntary sector to ensure that services and language assistance is available to them, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers including a piece of work in a future Work Programme around the need for cultural training and shifts in understanding.

## **Appendices**



## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

### **SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

#### **1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review**

- To review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse

#### **2. Outcomes Required**

- To clearly identify existing domestic abuse services and partnerships covering Northampton
- To consider and assess the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved in addressing domestic violence including the Police.
- To identify any gaps in service provision in order to assess the adequacy for supporting victims of domestic abuse
- To make recommendations for future development of services
- To identify the underlying causes of domestic violence and preventative measures
- To identify the responsibilities of the Local Authority, for example strategic housing
- To identify funding mechanisms and how this could be used to alleviate the problem

#### **3. Information Required**

- Background data
- Background reports
- Best practice data
- Desktop research
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Site visits (if applicable)

## 4. Format of Information

- Background data, including:
  - Presentation to set the scene: To identify the prevalence of the problem locally
  - Relevant national and local background research papers
- Best practice external to Northampton
- Internal expert advisors:
  - Leader of the Council, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
  - Cabinet Member for Housing, NBC
  - Gateway Support Officer, Housing Solutions, NBC
  - Interim Head of Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
  - Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team
- External expert advisors:
  - Head of Protecting Vulnerable Persons, Northamptonshire Police
  - Assistant Chief Executive, Women's Aid
  - Service Manager, Sunflower Centre
  - Chief Executive, Relate
  - Chief Officer, Nene Valley Christian Refuge (NVCR)
  - Chief Officer, Rape and Crisis
  - Representation from the Northampton Women's Forum
  - MPs for Northampton
- Site visit to the Domestic Abuse Refuge, the Sunflower Centre and the Corby Sunflower Centre
- Two members of the Scrutiny Panel to potentially observe a meeting of MARAC
- The Scrutiny Panel to attend relevant conferences on Domestic Abuse
- Examples of honour based abuse

## **5. Methods Used to Gather Information**

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site visits
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-

➤ Key witnesses as detailed in section 4 of this scope

## **6. Co-Options to the Review**

Police Officer with responsibility for the Sunflower Centre to be approached to be co-opted to this Scrutiny review.

## **7 Community Impact Screening Assessment**

- A Community Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

## **8 Evidence gathering Timetable**

May 2014 – March 2015

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| • 19 May 2014     | - Scoping meeting       |
| • 21 July         | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 18 September    | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 23 October      | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 4 December      | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 22 January 2015 | - Evidence gathering    |
| • 5 March         | - Approval final report |

Various site visits will be programmed during this period, if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

## **9. Responsible Officers**

Lead Officers            Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities  
Co-ordinator            Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

## **10. Resources and Budgets**

Julie Seddon, Director of Customers and Communities, to provide internal advice.

## **11. Final report presented by:**

Completed by March 2015. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

## **12. Monitoring procedure:**

Review the impact of the report after six months (December 2015/January 2016 )

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**



**SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

**CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS**

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review to review Northampton Borough Council's response in addressing issues around interpersonal violence (domestic abuse, sexual abuse and child exploitation), centring on domestic abuse

The expected outcomes of this Scrutiny Review are:

- To clearly identify existing domestic abuse services and partnerships covering Northampton
- To consider and assess the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved in addressing domestic violence including the Police.
- To identify any gaps in service provision in order to assess the adequacy for supporting victims of domestic abuse
- To make recommendations for future development of services
- To identify the underlying causes of domestic abuse and preventative measures
- To identify the responsibilities of the Local Authority, for example strategic housing
- To identify funding mechanisms and how this could be used to alleviate the problem

**CORE QUESTIONS:**

A series of key questions have been put together to inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Panel:

1. Please provide details of your organisation and its role in addressing domestic abuse.
2. What Strategies and Policies do you have in place for addressing domestic abuse?
3. What specific practices and measures do you currently undertake to address/tackle domestic abuse?
4. Do you have specific budget/resources/funding in relation to addressing domestic abuse, if so please provide further details.
5. Are the current partnership arrangements for tackling domestic abuse sufficient, and if not where are the gaps?
6. What plans does your organisation have in place in order to respond to the increased reporting of domestic abuse?
7. Do you feel there is adequate co-ordination between Agencies who are supporting victims? If not how could it be improved?
8. Are the services targeted at adults and children effectively co-ordinated to meet the needs of children and vulnerable adults who are living with domestic abuse, and what specific interventions are there?
9. Is there sufficient emphasis on requiring perpetrators to undertake behaviour change programmes (outside of court orders) and how might these be developed?
10. What do you think could be done to ensure effective strategic and operational links are made to tackle domestic violence, or improve, on a borough scale?
11. Do you feel there are any gaps in service provision and what do you feel could be developed in the future?
12. Do you provide any specific services in addressing domestic abuse around BME communities?



13. Do you provide a service for male victims, if so please provide details?

14. How can Northampton Borough Council further develop its services to address/tackle domestic abuse in order to achieve positive outcomes?

15. Do you have further information regarding the impact of domestic abuse which you would like to inform the Scrutiny Panel?



## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **SCRUTINY PANEL 1 INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

**22 JANUARY 2015**

#### **BRIEFING NOTE: DESKTOP RESEARCH**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At its inaugural meeting, Scrutiny Panel 1 (Interpersonal Violence) agreed that it would receive the findings of desktop research detailing best practices and procedures regarding preventative measures for domestic violence. Details of a number of towns and cities in the community safety partnership family group for Northampton have also been included to provide a comparison of the types of services offered elsewhere.
- 1.2 Information regarding Claire's Law is also provided.

#### **2 PREVENTATIVE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES – FAMILY TREE**

- 2.1 Northampton's 'Most Similar Group' (MSG) towns include Coventry, Slough, Blackpool, Peterborough, Torbay and Ipswich. These being towns or cities with similar demographics.

##### **COVENTRY**

- 2.1 The Coventry Domestic Violence and Abuse Partnership is a multi-Agency Forum in the city working together against domestic violence and abuse. Members of the partnership include a number of specialist third sector providers working in the Domestic Violence and Abuse field, Coventry City Council, West Midlands Police, Coventry Primary Care Trust, Probation, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust, Crown Prosecution Service, Housing, and Magistrates Court.
- 2.2 A website, [www.safetotalk.org.uk](http://www.safetotalk.org.uk) was launched in July 2011 and it is reported that it is being supported by a marketing campaign across the city, which will see compelling images appear on buses, public buildings and in male and female washrooms across pubs and clubs, signposting the new site. Some of the reported aims of the website are:

To raise the issue of domestic violence and abuse within Coventry and make it a high profile issue.

To have a single place where members of the public and professionals can access advice, support and information on domestic violence and abuse that is accessible 24/7

To explain why domestic violence and abuse happens and challenge assumptions and myths about domestic violence and abuse

To enable victims to question whether they are experiencing domestic violence and abuse and identify with other victim's situations.

To give positive messages that it is possible to leave an abusive relationship or stop being abusive

To encourage victims, perpetrators and children to access help and support at an earlier stage

To signpost to domestic violence and abuse services so people have information on the full range of options available to them and can make informed choices to contact services when they are ready.

- 2.3 It is reported that the website has a number of built-in safety features, including a quick exit button and lots of advice for victims in how to cover their tracks with their browsing history.

### **Coventry Haven**

- 2.4 Coventry Haven began in the early seventies as a women's group and has grown to become a small, community-based, registered charity which is run for women by women. Its reported aim is to help women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence to free themselves from the situation they are in. It does this by providing safe housing and a number of support services. These services are run by staff and volunteers and are free of charge.
- 2.5 Coventry Haven is governed by a board of trustees who are members of the local community and whose responsibility it is to employ staff to deliver services.
- 2.6 Coventry Haven raises funds from a variety of sources, including the local authority, trust funds and fundraising events. We also receive donations from the public and local businesses.
- 2.7 It is a member of Women's Aid, which provides safe accommodation to women fleeing domestic violence throughout the UK and which campaigns nationally against domestic violence.

- 2.8 Coventry Haven regularly set up informal groups in different areas of Coventry, for women who have used its services and who want to meet new people, build up confidence and find new friends and interests.
- 2.9 One of its group programmes is called “Just4Me”. It is usually held once a week over a period of six weeks, and at each meeting they provide a speaker or an activity. Activities vary, but previous sessions have included:
- Hand and nail care
  - Advice from a dietician who can advise on healthy recipes
  - A cooking session
  - Relaxation techniques
  - Recognising the initial signs of domestic violence
  - Confidence and assertiveness training
- 2.10 Every Thursday, a qualified family law solicitor is available to give free initial legal advice on matters relating to family law and domestic violence. The solicitor can then take the victim’s case forward.

Issues dealt with include:

- Divorce and related financial and property issues
- Children’s residency (often called custody)
- Child contact (where the party not living with the child seeks access through the courts)
- Protective orders, such as an order not to hurt the client or go near them, or an order to leave and stay away from the family home. The client can also apply for a Prohibitive Steps Order if they are worried that he might abduct the children or has threatened to do so
- Children’s Act matters in case social services are involved and the client is worried that the children may be removed from their care

### **Visual Evidence for Victims (VEV)**

- 2.11 If a victim has been assaulted but does not want to tell the Police, Coventry Haven can keep a photographic record of any injuries for the victims, in case they ever need evidence of the abuse they had experienced. This service is aimed to help victims deal with things at their own pace.
- 2.12 Staff at Coventry Haven have been trained and are certificated to take a brief statement from victims and to take photographs of any bruises or marks made by their partner. These documents are the victim’s property but they are kept by Coventry Haven in a secure locked cabinet for up to six years. Coventry Haven cannot release these documents without the victim’s consent.

## **Refuge - Safe Accommodation**

- 2.13 Coventry Haven has a number of safe houses dotted around different parts of the city. These houses provide refuge to women and children who are not safe in their own homes, and their location is kept secret. A key worker will also help victims to sort out their longer term needs. For example, she can help the victim to access Coventry Haven's outreach services.

## **SLOUGH**

### **Stonham Housing (Slough Domestic Abuse Services)**

- 2.14 Slough Domestic Abuse Services offers support and advice to local residents who have suffered domestic abuse or are still within an abusive relationship, at risk of stalking, harassment or threats, or at risk of honour based violence or forced marriage. It runs the Freedom Programme, where women explore the realities of domestic abuse. It offers emotional, practical and resettlement support to clients moving from a refuge and runs the Picada group for children affected by domestic abuse in their family.

### **Domestic abuse refuge accommodation and resettlement support**

- 2.15 It is reported that the Domestic Abuse Refuge Accommodation and Resettlement Support provides safe temporary refuge accommodation and resettlement support to women and their dependent children where there is a high risk of danger. It supports women to re-establish and maintain their independence either by returning to their own home or by moving somewhere more suitable and aims to prevent further violence by supporting individuals to understand abusive relationships and how they can avoid or manage these relationships in future.

### **DVIP (Domestic violence intervention project)**

- 2.16 The reported aim of DVIP is to offer help to people using violence or abuse in their relationships and who want to make changes to their behaviour. People can refer themselves to the service, but Agencies can also make referrals if the abuser consents. It offers a 26 session group work programme for men to explore their use of abuse within relationships, its effect on partners and children, and how to make changes to improve the safety and quality of life for those victims. The DVIP women's support worker will contact partners and ex-partners of referred men to offer support, safety planning when needed, and will direct them to other relevant services. The DVIP also offers individual work with men or women who are using violence within same sex relationships.

## **Slough Domestic Abuse Forum**

- 2.16 The Slough Domestic Abuse Forum is a multi-agency sub-group of the Safer Slough Partnership (Slough's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership). It delivers the tasks outlined in the Berkshire East Domestic Abuse Strategy and contributes to the Safer Slo.

## **BLACKPOOL**

- 2.17 Around seven years ago, Blackpool had twice the English national average of domestic violence-related assaults and a 34% “repeat rate” of people experiencing multiple incidents of domestic violence. After introducing multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) in April 2007, that repeat rate figure halved to 17%. The Blackpool MARAC is noted as a beacon of excellence.
- 2.18 The MARAC concept was created by charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (Caada), which produced national guidance. There were fears that some agencies would lack enthusiasm but these proved unfounded: “It took us so long to get feedback from so many people, we had to turn some away,” Thorley-Baines says. “In the end we formed cluster groups of agencies with one representative from each as the point of contact on a specific issue.”
- 2.19 Blackpool is one of the few areas to have children’s independent domestic violence advisers who take individual cases and oversee the MARAC process.
- 2.20 Blackpool Council adopted its [“Blackpool Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Partnership Strategy 2010 – 2015”](#) in 2010. The reported aims of the Strategy:

## **PETERBOROUGH**

- 2.21 Safer Peterborough offers support to victims of domestic abuse. It acknowledges that not only women are victims of domestic abuse and therefore offers advice for male victims of domestic abuse
- 2.22 The [Men’s Advice Line](#) is a confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse. Men can call for emotional support, practical advice and other services including legal advice centres, mental health, counselling services and housing advice. Contact can be made via a free phone number or by email.
- 2.23 Safer Peterborough offers advice how to keep safe, such as ensuring abusers are not able to see which internet sites victims have visited. It

also gives guidance on how to plan safety such as:

- Identify a room where the individual is able to make the entrance secure and where they will be away from harm
- Make sure that the 'safe room' has another exit (a window or door) in case the individual needs to get out quickly (e.g. fire or other emergency)
- Call 999 in an emergency
- The individual should keep a mobile telephone on at all times or try to keep another phone charged up and in credit in the 'safe room'. Keep a list of essential contacts to hand
- Keep any domestic abuse information cards or leaflets hidden
- If there is a risk of being attacked advice suggests the individual should go somewhere where there are no potential weapons if they cannot access the safe room.
- Teach children where they can go if they are frightened by the partner's behaviour or if they need to leave the house
- Teach children how to make calls to the emergency services

### **Peterborough Domestic Abuse Network (PDNA)**

2.24 The [Peterborough Domestic Abuse Network](#) is a collaborative of local and regional organisations working together to promote healthy relationships and prevent domestic and relationship abuse in Peterborough City and County. It is emphasised that the Network is committed to providing coordinated, consistent and compassionate services and support to victims/survivors of abuse. It is reported that the [website](#) has been created to provide information and support to anyone experiencing abuse or to anyone wishing to help others living with or at risk of domestic or relationship abuse.

2.25 PDNA hosts a number of events, such as:

#### **Week without Violence**

PDAN participates in the YWCA's annual Week without Violence during October. Past events have included workshops, speakers and mall displays.

#### **Recognition Awards & Luncheon**

PDAN hosts an annual Recognition Luncheon, the reported aim being to honour and recognise individuals and/or organisations within the Peterborough area that have shown kindness, courage and initiative in helping to keep someone safe in a situation of domestic violence.

## **Education/Training Event**

PDAN presents various education/training events relating to domestic violence or relationship abuse. Past events have targeted service providers, victims/survivors of abuse, as well as the general public and youth.

- 2.26 PDNA details where [help](#) is available for women, children and men who are dealing with domestic or relationship abuse in Peterborough City and County.

## **Survivor Advisory Group**

- 2.27 PDNA has set up a Survivor Advisory Group. It reports that members of the Survivor Advisory Group will play a vital role in informing and guiding the actions of PDAN. The reported aim is to recruit a diverse group of women survivors from throughout Peterborough City and County. Members of the advisory group will have past lived experience with domestic or relationship abuse.
- 2.28 The group helps to define its Terms of Reference (mandate, goals, objectives). Members attend regular meetings to discuss and review the work of PDAN. The group provides input into the planning and provision of local services for victims of domestic abuse. It also identifies projects and activities that it wishes to undertake.
- 2.29 Members of the group receive training, skills development and ongoing moral support to enable them to work confidently in this capacity. Administrative support is provided.
- 2.30 It is highlighted that depending on the level of interest; there may also be opportunities for men survivors to develop their own advisory group.

## **TORBAY**

- 2.31 Torbay Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS). DASS provides support to men, women and transgender individuals who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.
- 2.32 The service aims to be both flexible and responsive to individual needs and can offer support with:
- practical and emotional issues
  - access to other services
  - resettlement and housing issues
  - education, training and employment



- access to health and wellbeing services

2.33 Multi-Agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) take place in Torbay.

## **IPSWICH**

### **Ipswich Women's Centre against Domestic Violence**

2.34 It is reported that the Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence (IWCADV) is dedicated to work towards the abolition of all forms of violence against women and children through the provision of services.

2.35 The IWCADV acknowledges that domestic violence is a serious social issue that affects many women and children and that is reinforced by the power imbalances inherent in a patriarchal society. It emphasises, from a feminist perspective it believes that women's personal experiences of domestic violence are connected to the broader social and political forces that oppress and marginalise many groups in society, particularly women and children. We also recognise each individual's responsibility for their own actions and the need to be accountable for these actions and their consequences. IWCADV is committed to challenging these inequities on both social and personal levels as well as ensuring a centre free of discrimination, violence and misuse of power.

2.36 It is reported that IWCADV provides an extensive range of services on both an individual and community level. In its work with women, children and young people IWCADV states that it will at all times provide services that are safe, accountable and confidential ensuring that the rights of women, children and young people are respected. It is reported that IWCADV ensures that the safety of women, children and young people is of paramount concern and will balance this with a respect for the rights of women to make informed decisions over their lives. The [website](#) can be used for individuals to get information, talk anonymously about the issues they are facing, or contact IWCADV directly.

2.37 IWCADV also offers advice about:

- Internet Safety
- Legal Issues
- Counselling

### **Lighthouse**

2.38 Lighthouse (formerly Women's Aid) is a charitable organisation based in Suffolk, UK providing emotional support to women and their children experiencing domestic abuse in their personal or family relationships.

2.39 It offers temporary accommodation in safe and supportive refuges where

women and their children can recover from the traumatic effects of domestic violence and make informed choices. It also offers a range of community services, courses and counselling to support women to rebuild their lives after abuse.

#### 2.40 Case studies are detailed on the website of Lighthouse:

##### **Sheila**

*When I came into the refuge I was scared, frightened, I had no confidence in myself, I didn't want to be near to other people. He always said I wasn't allowed to talk; I just shut everything up inside myself.*

*It was my first ever relationship. I thought he loved me. He was abusive from the start but I agreed to get married. I thought I could change him. But that way he got even more power over me. He controlled everything. He even told me what to have for tea.*

*When I was in hospital he didn't come to see me and I realised how relaxed I felt. When he came to collect me he was abusive to the consultant. When we got home he made me cook tea and then threw it over me. Next day he called me a lazy bitch because I was resting. The following weekend was hell. He tried to strangle me.*

*In ASDA I phoned the Help Line. They advised me to start moving my things out gradually. Then I came to the Drop In Centre and they got me a room in the refuge. I signed up for the Freedom Programme and the Art Group. I began to understand what sort of man he was. I saw the different sorts of dominator in him. I realised it wasn't me and I felt a lot better. I know I was not the bad person.*

*I want to have a new relationship but now, when I meet men, I have a sort of checklist. I see if they tick the boxes and, if they don't, I just don't see them again. I say, "We're not going anywhere; we don't want the same things." I'm not afraid to say what I feel now. I've got the strength to speak.*

*I look forward to Thursday mornings. Chatting with the group makes me feel that somebody wants to know me. It's a safe way of expressing what happened, releasing all the bad stuff. I'm getting it out of my system. I was never able to tell anyone. I've shown my Mum. She'd thought she knew what was going on but she realised she*

*hadn't any idea when she saw what I was writing and drawing.*

*It took courage to break away. I didn't know if I could cope on my own; he said I couldn't. Now I'm learning to be myself. One day recently I saw his car in the supermarket car park. Then he saw me and he was the one who ran away. I realise that I am worthwhile, I'm worth something. You can't change the past but you can change the future.*

### **Gemma**

*Before I ran away from home in London I didn't know places like this existed. I went to the Domestic Violence Unit and they said, 'Do you want to go to Ipswich?' When I got on the train I just went, 'What a relief. I'm out of there.' It was like being born again – into the unknown but I wasn't scared.*

*When I got here I was bullied in the hostel but then I went to Women's Aid and that's better. My whole world has turned round. I've got new friends and that's hard. I'm not used to having friends and I can't always handle it. I push them away. But you've got to make that effort. I've had such a hard life that the littlest things are a reward.*

*I'm enjoying just sewing today – sending out messages to other people. It stops you from feeling lonely. I'm not alone any more. In my previous situation I felt there was nobody out there for me. But LIFE DOES GET BETTER.*

*I've had a knife at my throat, water thrown over me: he tried to strangle me. I'd get the wrong bread, cut the potatoes wrong. I'd try to get things right, I thought if I was consistent he would change one day. But he just kept changing the rules, changing direction. There was no pleasing him. I wasn't good enough.*

*I stayed for my children but if I'd known what I know now I would have left and found somewhere with them. In the end I realised I would end up dead. So I ran away one day when I had a dental appointment. It was my chance to escape but I went with nothing. I had to leave my children behind. It was better to stay alive and wait for them to come to me.*

*That's what I live for now they are growing up. The kids are my life but we haven't been in touch for nearly a year. It's the Bad Father syndrome. He told them, 'Mum's*

*bad'. I think I understood what was going on but I was relieved when I did the Freedom Programme because I could talk it through.*

*But when we meet again I want them to find me strong and happy. I am not going to be a victim any more. I'm still going through the divorce, When it's over I will get my own name back. It's a way of getting rid of him. I'll be free.*

*Now and again it still comes back. There are some good days but I know I'm still not well. I have to take care of myself. I'm a bit in limbo at the moment. I'm quite a routine person but I haven't got anything that I've got to do. That's why I come here every week. I have settled but I can't get too settled. I know I must move on in my life. Next year I must find a job and get somewhere to live. I know my goals, I always have done. I don't yet know how I will get them.*

### **3 Clare's Law**

- 3.1 The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVPS), or Clare's Law, launched on Saturday 8 March 2014.
- 3.2 The reported aim of this scheme is to give individuals a formal mechanism to make enquiries about their partner or if they have concerns about someone they know who maybe in a violent relationship.
- 3.3 Should Police checks show that the individual has a record of violent behaviour, or there is other information to indicate that individuals may be at risk, the Police will consider sharing this information. If an individual is seeking advice from the Police about someone they know who maybe in a violent relationship, they will consider sharing this information with the person(s) best placed to protect the potential victim.
- 3.4 The scheme aims to help individuals make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship, and provide further help and support to assist them when making that choice. The Police will also consider any concerns individuals may have about someone they know and will decide whether it is appropriate for them to be given more information to help protect the person who is in the relationship with the individual you are concerned about.

### **4 BEST PRACTICE INITIATIVES – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- 4.1 Two organisations in Northampton that offer support and information to victims of domestic abuse, the Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre and Serenity, are recognised as examples of best practice nationally.

## **Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre**

4.1.1 The reported aim of the work of the Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre is to:

- Identify those most at risk of harm from domestic abuse
- Safety plan to minimise the risk faced
- Provide practical support, advice and signposting
- Support high risk victims through civil and criminal court processes
- Refer to and support Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

4.1.2 This is done by:

- Providing crisis intervention and support
- Prioritising the client's safety
- Giving the client a voice and enabling them to be heard
- Providing the client with options

4.1.3 The Sunflower Centre offers a free service which provides advice and support that includes:

- Crisis intervention, risk assessment and individual safety planning
- Advice and support on civil and criminal court proceedings
- Signposting to other services such as crime prevention, immigration advice, legal advice, group work and counsellors.
- Advocacy with other Agencies on the client's behalf

4.1.4 It is reported that Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre employs qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's) who have specialist knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse including the effects it has on individuals, their family, local community and society as a whole.

4.1.5 IDVA's are trained in risk management and safety planning and have a wide understanding of the support services both locally and nationally, which can help keep individuals safe.

4.1.6 Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre has an office base in Northampton and also offers outreach appointments throughout the county at venues including Towcester, Daventry, Brackley, Kettering, Wellingborough, Raunds, Rushden and Irthlingborough.

4.1.7 Should a professional Agency want to signpost an individual to the Sunflower Centre they will need to complete a MARAC referral.

4.1.8 It is reported that Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre is a client led service and understands the importance of recognising its clients' needs and valuing their input to both the risk assessment and safety planning of their specific case. The risk assessment is completed with client which will then guide the IDVAs to offer the most appropriate advice and course of action to ensure that the client is safe. Following completion of the risk assessment the IDVAs could:

- Develop an individual safety plan for the client and their family
- Refer the client to a multi -Agency meeting to talk about their safety
- Liaise with other Agencies to ensure the client's safety
- Signpost the client to other specialist Agencies
- Refer the client on to the most appropriate support
- Help the client to understand the impact of domestic abuse on them and those indirectly affected

### **Serenity Northants**

4.2.1 It is reported that Serenity Northants can help clients deal with what has happened. Serenity specialises in providing a one-stop-shop approach to for men, women and children who have experienced sexual violence or abuse. It is stressed that clients do not have to tell the Police if they do not wish to.

4.2.2 Serenity Northants is located within an NHS building but is entirely self-contained, with separate discreet entrances. Within the centre individuals can access immediate services to protect their health and save evidence. There are longer- term services that provide ongoing help, information and support.

4.2.3 Serenity provides:

- Someone to talk to
- Medical examination by specially trained doctors
- Pregnancy testing; morning after pill
- initial medication re possible sexual infections
- Direct Referral to sexual health clinics
- Collection of forensic evidence
- Support in reporting to the police – if that's what the client want to do

- Anonymous reporting
- Support through the criminal justice system – if this is a step individuals wish to take
- Follow up support & information services
- Referrals to other services
- Family/child rooms

### **Child ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors)**

#### 4.2.4 Child ISVA provides:

- Face to face, telephone, text and email support to children from 8 -18 years, families and carers – the service is primarily aimed at those referrals where a criminal investigation/prosecution is taking place, but Serenity Northants will see and assess other children and young people and signpost or refer them on to other Agencies that can best meet their needs.
- Support the client through the criminal justice system, explaining the procedures and their role and rights within the system.
- Subject to local arrangements and the views of the client, support the client in the witness statement and during the trial phase in conjunction with Witness Services.
- Liaise with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on behalf of the client and with the client's consent; keep the client informed about case progress on behalf of the police (Witness Care Unit) in line with the requirements of the Victims Code of Practice.
- Participate in case conferences with the police, CPS and prosecuting barrister
- Understand the need for some clients accessing special measures and advocate on their behalf where necessary in relation to their provision.
- Explain and advise on criminal legal, and if relevant, civil remedies and housing options to clients.
- Provide information and support in relation to Criminal Injuries Compensation.

- Where relevant, keep other agencies informed about important changes in client's situation.
- To consider Safeguarding Issues (children and vulnerable adults) and liaise with SARC manager in accordance with safeguarding policies.
- Help client develop own support network and refer on to other agencies for long term support needs
- 'Serenity can accept self-referrals from the age of 15 years; under that age Serenity Northants will help the young person access the person or service that can help them. At all times we will consider safeguarding requirements and whether a disclosure is needed to protect that young person or other young or vulnerable people'.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The main conclusions from this desktop research exercise:

5.1.1 A lot of resources are available electronically such as [www.safetotalk.org.uk](http://www.safetotalk.org.uk) in Coventry and the [Peterborough Domestic Abuse Network](#)

5.1.2 Coventry has the provision of a multi-Agency Forum – The Coventry Domestic Violence and Abuse Partnership that works together against domestic violence and abuse.

5.1.3 Coventry Haven is a small, community based, registered charity which is run for women by women

5.1.4 Stonham Housing (Slough Domestic Abuse Services) offers support and advice to local residents who have suffered abuse or are still within an abusive relationship, at risk of stalking, harassment or threats, or at risk of honour based violence or forced marriage. It runs the Freedom Programme where women explore the realities of domestic abuse.

5.1.5 Slough Domestic Abuse Service runs the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) that offers to help people using violence or abuse in their relationships and who want to make changes to their behaviour.

5.1.6 The Blackpool Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is noted as a beacon of excellence.



- 5.1.7 Blackpool is one of the few areas to have children's independent domestic violence advisors who take individual cases and oversee the MARAC process.
- 5.1.8 The Peterborough Domestic Abuse Network (PDNA) has the provision of a Survivors Advisory Group that is reported to play a vital role in informing and guiding the actions of PDAN.
- 5.1.9 Safer Peterborough has the provision of a Men's Advice Line for men experiencing domestic abuse.
- 5.1.10 Clare's Law was launched on 8 March 2014. The aim of the scheme is to give individuals a formal mechanism to make enquiries about their partner or if they have concerns about someone they know who may be in a violent relationship.
- 5.1.11 Two organisations in Northampton that offer support and information to victims of domestic abuse – the Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre and Serenity are recognised as examples of best practice nationally.
- 5.1.12 Northampton already has organisations that deliver a number of the services detailed within its most similar groups (MSG) family group examples.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Interpersonal Violence

11 August 2014



**NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

**BRIEFING NOTE:**

**AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PREVENTATION MODEL AND STRATEGIES FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At its inaugural meeting, Scrutiny Panel 1 (Interpersonal Violence) agreed that it would be useful to its evidence base to receive details of the Australian and New Zealand prevention model and strategies for domestic abuse.
- 1.2 A wealth of information is available and this briefing note provides examples of key programmes, policies and legislation in Australia and New Zealand that will inform the evidence of the Scrutiny review.

**2 PREVENTATIVE MODELS AND STRATEGIES**

- 2.1 In Australia, domestic abuse includes:
- emotional abuse—blaming the victim for all problems in the relationship, undermining the victim’s self-esteem and self-worth through comparisons with others, withdrawing interest and engagement and emotional blackmail
  - verbal abuse—swearing and humiliation in private and public, focusing on intelligence, sexuality, body image or the victim’s capacity as a parent or spouse
  - social abuse—systematic isolation from family and friends, instigating and controlling relocations to a place where the victim has no social circle or employment opportunities and preventing the victim from going out to meet people
  - economic abuse—controlling all money, forbidding access to bank accounts, providing an inadequate ‘allowance’, preventing the victim seeking or holding employment and taking wages earned by the victim
  - psychological abuse—making threats regarding custody of children, asserting the justice system will not believe or support the victim, destroying property, abusing pets and driving dangerously
  - spiritual abuse—denial and/or misuse of religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles and misusing

religious or spiritual traditions to justify physical violence or other abuse

- physical abuse—direct assaults on the body, use of weapons (including objects), assault of children, locking the victim out of the house, sleep and food deprivation, and
- sexual abuse—any form of pressured/unwanted sex or sexual degradation, causing pain during sex, coercive sex without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, making the victim perform sexual acts unwillingly and criticising or using degrading insults.

2.2 Family violence is a broader term referring to violence between family members as well as violence between intimate partners. This term also covers a complexity of behaviours beyond that of direct physical violence. The Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commission's review of family violence law in Australia recommended that state and territory legislation 'should provide that family violence is violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour, that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful.'

2.3 The Australian Government's responses to domestic violence take different forms including preventive programs, support for victims/survivors and their families and law enforcement. Each jurisdiction in Australia has in place a variety of laws, programs and policies responding to, and attempting to prevent domestic violence. Each jurisdiction funds its own programs and systems, but there are also some Australian Government funded programs operating in the states and territories, particularly supported accommodation, safe houses and the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Most programs and services aimed at preventing domestic violence and supporting the victims/survivors are administered by States and Territories through their community service/human services and health departments along with the Police, attorney general and other Agencies.

2.4 In May 2008, the Australian Government established the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Council) to advise on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and their children. In a background paper the National Council concluded that there was considerable scope for greater cooperation and collaboration between the Australian Government and the states and territories in developing a unified, national approach to one of Australia's most pressing social issues. The key challenges it identified were:

- existing systems to deal with domestic violence are fragmented
- gaps between policy intent and implementation
- failure to invest in primary prevention

- inadequate funding of services
- responses are not tailored and accessible
- lack of evidence regarding what works in prevention, services, legal responses and early intervention and
- inadequate monitoring and reporting.

2.5 In 2011, the Australian Government committed to an expansion of primary care projects, a national register for domestic and family violence orders, funding for fighting alcohol and drug abuse in Indigenous communities and a family violence project through the Child Support Program in the Human Services portfolio. The various programs that have been developed:

### **Perpetrator programs**

2.6 Perpetrator programs aim to reduce the risk of known perpetrators committing further offences. The reported aim is to prevent violence by changing attitudes and behaviour. A range of different approaches are employed in perpetrator programs including goal setting, solution focused approaches, counselling, behaviour change, narrative therapy, and anger management.

2.7 Early Australian work in this area, such as the Gold Coast Domestic Violence Integrated Response (GCDVIR), has been heavily influenced by development work in Minnesota in the United States, commonly referred to as the Duluth Model. This model emphasises the importance of interagency cooperation, victim safety and offender accountability. The Australian Attorney-General's Department asserts that approaches must be multi-pronged, integrated and collaborative and outlines the following factors as essential for the effectiveness of perpetrator programs:

- systemic, integrated responses which are co-ordinated, appropriate and consistent and aimed at victim safety, reducing secondary victimisation and holding abusers accountable
- therapeutic alliances between client and therapist that are collaborative and have agreement on goals
- trust, respect and confidentiality
- acceptance of responsibility and accountability to the needs of victims
- adequate measurement of outcomes
- acknowledgment of diversity and individuality of participants and
- cross cultural competency and ability to work with interpreters.

2.8 There is limited research into perpetrators of domestic violence in Australia. While perpetrator programs may be part of the prevention picture, the research evidence in this area is inconclusive. Without studying larger populations, comparing programs and following the

respondents and their families over time, we lack evidence for the development of sound preventive programs.

- 2.9 It is reported that the NSW Domestic Abuse Program (DAP), which won a 2011 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award, is showing promising results. It is a 20 session rehabilitative group intervention program for offenders serving community-based orders or custodial sentences for domestic and family violence related offences which is run by the Department of Corrective Services. At the end of June 2011 more than 2,500 offenders throughout New South Wales had commenced a DAP. The program has a relatively low attrition rate, with around 80 percent of participants completing treatment. The evaluation of the program has shown significant reductions in re-offending rates in the DAP treatment group and a longer time to reoffend, compared with a matched control group. It is also effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

### **Engaging men and boys**

- 2.10 It is reported that while men have a long history of involvement in public action against men's violence, the White Ribbon campaign has become a global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women. The increasing focus on men as targets of prevention efforts represents a significant shift; while men have long been seen as perpetrators, they are now also being seen as 'partners' in prevention. The White Ribbon Foundation asserts:

*It is a men's issue because a minority of men treat women and girls with contempt and violence, and it is up to the majority of men to create a culture in which this is unacceptable.*

- 2.11 It is highlighted that this approach is based on the premise that men can play a positive role in helping to stop violence against women and builds on the fact that most men are not violent. It is noted that some advocate a role for men in educating other men. When conducting violence prevention work with all-male audiences, there are a number of good reasons to use men as facilitators and peer educators, including:

- men's attitudes and behaviour are shaped by their male peers
- all-male groups can provide the space and the safety for men to talk
- male educators act as role models for other men by practising non-violent expressions of masculinity and demonstrating respect for women
- men are likely to be perceived by other men as more credible and persuasive, and

- when men work with men, they are demonstrating responsibility for action against men's violence against women.

### **Violence prevention education for children and young people**

- 2.12 It is reported that many children and young people are exposed to, and influenced by violence in relationships and families, and violence-supportive attitudes, norms, and relations are already visible among young people. Respectful relationships education can prevent violence and reduce harm. Early interventions with children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future.
- 2.13 Australian researchers have produced guidelines on best practice in violence and sexual assault prevention through education, stressing the importance of a coherent conceptual framework; relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice; comprehensive development and delivery and effective evaluation.
- 2.14 The Australian Government is funding Respectful Relationships education projects nationally. The primary focus of the program is to develop the skills young people need to treat their partners with respect through the provision of education to young people aged 12-24 years. Project outcomes are to work with young people to raise their awareness of ethical behaviour, develop protective behaviours and develop their skills in conducting respectful relationships. The Government is also working through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to support the inclusion of respectful relationships education in Phase Three of the Australian Curriculum.

### **Safe at home programs**

- 2.15 Safe at home programs are a relatively new model that works as part of an integrated, multi-agency approach. This model assumes that the perpetrators of violence should be held accountable for their actions and removed from the family home, allowing women and children to stay. All Australian jurisdictions now have laws which provide for exclusion orders as a condition of domestic violence orders, allowing the person seeking protection from domestic violence to remain in the family home, while the perpetrator is required to seek other accommodation. When women are supported to remain in their homes and communities they are better able to maintain social support networks, employment and educational opportunities and stability of care for their children, all of which support them in their recovery.
- 2.16 It is reported that safe at home programs are unsuitable for women and children at extreme risk of violence from their partner or family member. For those who are able to remain in their homes, risk management

options that employ an integrated, multi-agency response to family violence are essential. For example, the recently completed Victorian Bsafe pilot provided a risk management option for victims of family violence where they had obtained an intervention order and where there was a risk of the order being breached. Bsafe is a personal alarm system; when pressed an alarm is sent to a VitalCall response centre and an alert is sent for the police to respond. The service applied to 72 women and more than 140 of their children over the past three years. Bsafe was effective in reducing the incidence and severity of family violence. The enhanced police response served as a deterrent for some perpetrators and increased the likelihood of detection and prosecution. As a result of Bsafe, women and their children experienced increased feelings of safety; the additional level of support enabled them to remain in their homes and communities.

## **AUSTRALIAN DOMESTIC AND FAMILY ABUSE CLEARING HOUSE**

3.1 The Clearinghouse is a national Australian program that reviews and disseminates evidence-based research on the causes, effects and ongoing impacts of domestic and family violence (DFV). The Clearinghouse is part of the University of New South Wales and is funded by the National Centre of Excellence (NCE) to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

3.2 Its reported aim is to contribute to the prevention of DFV and effective responses to victims through the provision of accurate, up-to-date information and resources for evidence-based policy and good practice. In particular we assist specialist and generalist service providers, government agencies, researchers, advocates and activists in their work, through the promotion of informed debate and the translation of research to practice.

### **3.3 Services of the Clearinghouse**

- The Clearinghouse publishes current news and events concerning domestic violence and family violence, including new initiatives, research, legislation, policy, news of conferences, awards and international issues.

#### **Publications**

- Clearinghouse publications are available [online](#).
- Clearinghouse newsletters, issue papers, stakeholder papers, fact sheets and topic papers are published quarterly.
- Thematic reviews and research and practice briefs are published online three times a year

- The Clearinghouse hosts papers presented at some Australian conferences, seminars and workshops.

### **Research**

- The Clearinghouse identifies gaps in available information and has the capacity to undertake original research.

### **Databases**

- The Clearinghouse provides an online research and resource database focusing on domestic and family violence
- The Clearinghouse provides an online Good Practice database containing details of programs, projects and services around Australia

### **Legislation and policies**

- The Clearinghouse provides a guide to state and national legislation and policies.

## **3.4 Models of Good Practice**

3.4.1 The good practice [database](#) is a publicly accessible collection of examples of Australian domestic violence related programs, services or responses which reflect elements of good practice.

3.4.2 It is reported that the database helps to promote high standards across the sector, by enabling Agencies and service providers to keep up-to-date with service models, new initiatives and current standards of practice and to assist planning and development in a field where resources are often limited. In addition, the database can help ensure cash-strapped services are not “re-inventing the wheel”, and is reported to be testimony to the collaborative and cooperative ethic embraced by professionals working to reduce violence or support victims.

3.4.3 The Clearinghouse advised that principles definitions which reflect good practice should comprise:

Definitions of domestic violence which address the processes of abuse, minimise victim-blaming and enable effective support and prevention.

Programs and services representing good practice include:

Principles and policies which:

- (a) reflect the primacy of women’s and children’s safety,
- (b) define domestic violence as:

- physical
- sexual



- psychological
- emotional
- verbal
- social and/or
- financial

abuse, in an existing or former intimate-partner relationship, which causes ongoing fear. The definition acknowledges the experience of children who witness or live with domestic violence,

(c) hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour and aim to reduce incidents of violence committed by perpetrators,

(d) acknowledge that abuse is used to gain and maintain power and control,

(e) recognise that domestic violence is a gender issue,

(f) recognise that acts of violence are criminal acts, irrespective of class, culture, race, religion, age or disability or the private location of the acts of violence, and

(g) are ethical.

- 3.4.5 The Clearinghouse comments that good practice recognises the diversity of communities and of women's needs. Good Practice responses are alert to hidden discrimination and prioritise universal, equitable access and design. Women's diverse abilities, responsibilities, income levels, ages, sexualities, cultural or religious frameworks, and the complexities of their trauma are acknowledged in program development and provision.
- 3.4.6 It is reported that programs, guidelines and initiatives on the Good Practice database have the potential to be adopted or used by other services.
- 3.4.7 Programs built on a clearly defined theoretical or conceptual framework are better able to identify whether they meet the accepted good practice principles noted above.
- 3.4.8 Programs based on research and theories which have provided evidence of their effectiveness or appropriateness reflect good practice. Many of the entries on the database relate to research which can be accessed through the Clearinghouse research and Resources database.
- 3.4.9 The Clearinghouse identifies that clearly defined aims allow organisations to work out whether their programs are working and whether they help to enhance the safety of victims and reduce perpetrator violence.
- 3.4.10 The Clearinghouse highlights that listening to the needs or the feedback of diverse stakeholders or community members can be important in making sure the program is accessible and relevant and that any potential victimisation or discrimination is identified. Consultation gives voice to the community in program development and can provide feedback for

continuous improvement. Good consultative processes are the cornerstone of good partnerships in practice.

3.4.11 The Clearinghouse emphasises that a skilled workforce is an important component of the service infrastructure necessary for good practice. Organisations demonstrating good practice provide appropriate support structures and supervision, including clinical supervision, where appropriate, as well as training and policies to help staff respond most effectively.

3.4.12 It is highlighted that good practice is supported by good infrastructure. Organisations demonstrating good practice are well-managed and accountable. They develop good internal systems and processes and engage in strategic thinking, community development, research and policy development, such as OH&S, Access and Equity and client rights policies.

3.4.13 The Clearinghouse comments on the importance of evaluating programmes. It states that evaluation allows organisations to work out whether the program is doing what it was set up to do. Effective evaluation enables organisations to demonstrate results or outcomes which reflect program aims or goals. Evaluation is also used to troubleshoot and assist in ongoing program or service improvement. Organisations which monitor or evaluate their work are more likely to be committed to developing and fine-tuning their work to achieve the best possible outcomes. When evaluations are publicly available, they also help make programs accountable to their communities.

3.4.14 Collecting data which relates to program goals provides the raw materials for ongoing monitoring, so organisations can keep check on their achievements, even where there may not be funding for larger scale evaluations.

3.4.15 The Clearinghouse stresses the need for multi-Agency service collaboration. Good practice in service provision addresses the silos and territorial problems across agencies, as these can be a second source of abuse for victims. Multi-Agency service collaboration can range from a loose alignment achieved through participation within local networks campaigning against domestic violence, to fully integrated systems.

3.4.16 The need for high level support and co-ordinated management is recognised. Leadership is vital to good practice. Top level support ensures that problems can be ironed out, funding levels are realistic and policies, cross-agency memoranda and protocols are implemented.

3.4.17 Organisations are invited to inform the Clearinghouse of any innovative programmes and practices. The Clearinghouse will then publish examples of good practice.

### **Examples of Good Practice**

#### **Domestic Violence Service (DVCS)**

3.4.18 An example of a good practice programme cited by the Clearinghouse is the programme produced by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) regarding perpetrators. The DVCS embraces a holistic and inclusive model of service delivery within a framework that emphasises human rights and social justice and gives priority to personal safety. DVCS maintains a feminist analysis of domestic violence while working with narrative based ideas. The Service works with all people affected by domestic violence. The priority of the Service is for people who have been subjected to domestic violence, recognising that the majority are women and children. DVCS also works with people who use violence in their relationships, recognising that the majority of these are men. Their work with people who use violence in their relationships addresses issues of responsibility and accountability for their use of violence. DVCS aims to work respectfully with all people who access their service.

#### **24 hour crisis service**

The 24 hour crisis service provides direct and telephone crisis intervention services 24 hours/ 7 seven days a week. Protocols with the Australian Federal Police ensure that the DVCS is notified of all police callouts involving domestic violence incidents. Workers are able to provide crisis support immediately following the incident attended by police. Priority in access to services is given to people who have been subjected to violence and are in need of safety, protection and support. Workers provide follow-up assistance with housing, income support, childcare, safety planning and court support in civil and criminal proceedings. It is reported that a more proactive approach to follow-up with telephone and personal contact with women has resulted in women feeling more affirmed and empowered in their lives.

#### **Men's-Line Service**

A Men's-Line service was initially set up as a pilot programme, provides telephone support to men experiencing or using violence against a partner. It aims to invite men to consider the impact of their violence, particularly on their partner and children and take steps to accept responsibility for their violence, including a commitment to women's and children's ongoing safety. Men's-Line is now fully incorporated into the existing range of services offered by DVCS.

## **School and Community education**

The School and Community education component of the service provides the opportunity for prevention work to be undertaken with children, young people including youth in the community and more broadly, the Family Violence Intervention Programme (ACT) community including a broad range of government and community agencies.

3.4.19 The Family Violence Intervention Programme (ACT) has developed a programme centred on rehabilitating the perpetrator. The Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) seeks to improve the interagency case management of criminal domestic violence matters. Its inception was largely a response to concerns that domestic and family violence issues were not being taken seriously by criminal justice agencies and a recognition that relatively low prosecution rates of domestic violence offenders in the ACT may be a reflection of fragmented and inadequate policy and service responses to the issue. The main objectives of the programme are to improve co-operation between Agencies, maximise safety and protection for victims of family violence and provide opportunities for offender accountability and rehabilitation.

The Program includes:

- Encouraging the collection of evidence and the active pursuit of charges where prima facie evidence of an offence exists;
- Victim support throughout the criminal justice process;
- Ensuring appropriate charges are prosecuted in the public interest with appropriate regard for the wishes of the victim;
- Active case tracking of criminal family violence matters;
- Hearings in a specialised court list to 'fast track' cases; and,
- A new sentencing option of a Perpetrator Education Program for certain offenders.

## **Co-ordinating Committee**

A Co-ordinating Committee convenes and is chaired by the Victims of Crime Co-ordinator, an independent statutory position, oversees implementation, management and strategic direction for the programme. This committee comprises representatives of the key agencies identified above. It is reported that the programme also relies on effective communication and cooperation at an operational between agencies to realise a co-ordinated response. This has been achieved by the development of protocols and practice principles for all agencies involved, weekly meetings to discuss and track cases, the establishment of data systems to track matters, and the commitment of key agencies both to the programme and to being involved in periodic critical review and evaluation.

## Reported key achievements

- Creation of a 'Family Violence Investigators Kit' to aid evidence gathering at the Commitment to evidence-led rather than victim-led prosecutions;
- Joint training initiatives between the DPP and Police;
- Creation of a specialist prosecutor position to prosecute tagged 'family violence' cases; and,
- Establishment of a Family Violence Magistrate to preside over Case Management Hearings and all family violence-related matters listed before the court.

## Data monitoring indicates:

- 2,670 incidents of family violence are reported to the Police on average per annum. In the spouse/ex-spouse category that constitutes 'domestic violence', over one third of incidents are described as being 'verbal and physical'. Criminal action arose from approximately 30% of domestic violence incidents per year. Of these, arrest was the most common action arising being 75.5%.
- Whereas for all family violence approximately 40% incidents involve allegations of physical abuse and/or property damage, and 16% give rise to criminal action. Of this, 82% involves an arrest.
- 23% increase in reported incidents to police from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001, then by 74% from 2000/01 to 2001/02 (using a different counting method).
- Slight increase (21 to 24%) in reporting incidents to Woden Patrol (Phase II pilot patrol)
- The distribution of Incident reporting across Canberra is consistent with pattern of distribution of calls to Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Increased volume – 464% increase in the number of family violence matters handled by the DPP over eight years (1998/1999=168 to 2005/2006=947)
- Increase in completions – three quarters of family violence matters commence and complete within a 12 month period.
- Improved efficiency and effectiveness – increase from 24% to 46% of matters finalised by plea of guilty
- Increased volume – 163% increase in family violence defendants coming before the Court over 8 years (1998-1999 – 163 persons to 2005-2006 – 428 persons) representing an increase of 54% over the period.
- Increased efficiency – nearly 300 court hours saved in 2003-2004 by Family Violence Case Management Hearings, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of family violence matters finalised within 4 months.
- Male/Female Balance – an average 90% of defendants were male

- Adult/Juvenile Balance – average of 5% of charges related to juveniles.
- Guilt – For 2004-05, 53% of family violence charges result in guilty being entered (1998-1999 34%). The number of defendants convicted of a family violence offence has more than trebled since 1998 (from 68 to 217 in 2005/2006).
- 69% of victims felt that the prosecution was beneficial to them and 74% felt that their views were taken into account (2004/2005).
- 12 months after finalisation 75% said that they felt very safe or fairly safe since that time and only one person (of 16) reported being physically assaulted since (2001)
- 25% had, nonetheless, been verbally threatened and 44% had experienced harassing behaviour
- 56% had been determined to see case through no matter what
- 50% satisfied and that justice done at earlier case (same percentage with that feeling now)
- 18% of offenders under Corrective Services supervision in 2003-2004 were identified as family violence.
- 153 offenders were referred for assessment to the Learning to Relate Without Violence and Abuse Program, and of these, 148 were assessed as suitable.
- 27% (40) of those assessed as suitable completed the course in 2003-2004

#### **“Violence Through our Eyes Project”**

3.4.20 “The violence through our eyes project” of the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) has the reported aim to enhance service provision for women with disabilities from non-English speaking (NESB) backgrounds and non-Anglo CALD communities who have disabilities and have lived with domestic or family violence. The project involved research into the needs of NESB women with disabilities facing domestic abuse, as well as investigation of the barriers to effective service provision. It also included development of information materials for agency training, community and worker education events and the publication and launching of a project report. The project assists services wishing to develop good practice in working with clients from CALD communities who have disabilities.

The project developed several strategies, all of which were designed to enable the voice of NESB women with disabilities to be heard, and to therefore enhance service provision. The MDAA held a Forum in 2002, ‘NESB Women with Disability and Violence’. This Forum led to the development of practice suggestions for service providers working to support women living with domestic violence. These included:

Listen Actively.

- Develop open ongoing communication and have complaint/grievance structures
- Do Home Visits
- Respect Feelings
- Reassure women about their rights as women
- Do not blame, or discriminate
- Be honest about what is available
- Enable representation and advocacy in court
- Be culturally sensitive
- Appropriate training about disability and particular forms of violence and abuse used where victims have a disability.

The MDAA formed working partnerships with Immigrant Women's Speakout NSW and the NSW Government regional Violence Against Women (VAW) specialists. This led to a further one day Forum for workers. With additional funding, regional forums were then held in Wollongong, Griffith and Newcastle. The project also funded the training of seven women as consultants to provide information and presentations at the regional forums and at a national forum in Melbourne and to provide a public voice for women with disability from non-English speaking backgrounds. The discussions arising from these events led to the development of a series of recommendations for service providers, which were published, along with literature reviews, in the Project Report. These recommendations covered four areas:

- policy development
- improving service delivery
- training and workforce development, and
- networking and information exchange.

The report of the project was launched in Sydney in 2010.

#### **“The Relationship Violence – No Way! Project”**

3.4.21 “The Relationship Violence- No Way! Project” is reported to have built on the experience, knowledge and skills of five young women and six young men who have been subjected to domestic/relationship violence who became peer educators and mentors working with other young people at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their relationships. The peer educators have conducted numerous activities that are reported to have reached thousands of young people mainly in the Inner Southern Adelaide region.

The “No Way! Project” was one of the first youth projects in Australia to engage:

- Young men as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young men at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families. (Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the project).
- Young women as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young women at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families. (Stage 2 of the Project).
- A team of young people who have experienced abuse in their families who have used single- and mixed-sex methodologies in a wide range of settings to prevent abuse and violence in relationships. (Stage 2 of the project). The Project has encouraged young people who have been subjected to domestic and relationship abuse to examine the relationship between gender, abusive behaviour and self-harm; examine how they have made sense of their experience and to discover new meanings; and to meet other young people who have gone through similar experiences and who can offer education and support.

Members of the Peer Education Team have conducted project activities for: secondary students identified to be at risk from their experience of abuse in families and relationships; mentoring/one-to-one peer support work with young people at risk from their experience of abuse in families and relationships; whole class and year levels in secondary schools examining domestic and relationship violence; and youth service providers and school staff professional development work. The peer education team also developed a series of post cards and posters about young people and relationship violence, which have been released nationally by the Partnerships against Domestic Violence initiative.

3.4.22 Further examples of good practice projects are contained within the [database](#).

### **3.5 Policies and Strategies**

#### **National Plan – Safe and free from violence**

- 3.5.1 An initiative of the Council of Australian Government was the production of the National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children – “Safe and free from violence”.
- 3.5.2 It is reported that the Commonwealth established the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Council) in May 2008 to advise on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and their children. Australia’s Governments have been working in their respective areas of responsibility to be more effective in reducing violence against women



and their children. Law reform and greater community awareness have made a difference.

- 3.5.3 The Commonwealth Government delivers support and services through family law, including legal assistance and the social security system. State and territory governments deliver a range of services including justice, policing and legal assistance for victims and perpetrators. They also fund and coordinate many services provided by the non-government sector.
- 3.5.4 It is recognised that all Governments have services and programs to respond to violence against women and their children and many of them are highly effective. It is reported that these responses could be improved by a co-ordinated approach. The reported aim of the National Plan is to provide a co-ordinated framework that improves the scope, focus and effectiveness of Governments' actions, ensuring women and their children receive the support and information they need.
- 3.5.5 The reported central goals of the National Plan are to reduce violence against women and their children and to improve how governments work together, increase support for women and their children, and create innovative and targeted ways to bring about change.
- 3.5.6 It is reported that the National Plan is unprecedented in the way it focuses on preventing violence by raising awareness and building respectful relationships in the next generation. The aim is to bring attitudinal and behavioural change at the cultural, institutional and individual levels, with a particular focus on young people. In addition, to focusing on prevention measures, the National Plan will allow women who have experienced violence to rebuild their lives as quickly as possible as part of a community-wide response. This will enable mainstream and specialist services to work together to improve their responses so that women return to full social and economic participation as soon as possible.
- 3.5.7 The National Plan also recognises and acknowledges the diverse experiences of women and their children, and the need to ensure responses meet their specific circumstances.
- 3.5.8 The National Plan sets out six national outcomes for all governments to deliver during the next 12 years. The outcomes will be delivered through four three-year action plans, the first of which ran from 2010 to 2013.
- 3.5.9 The vision of the National Plan is that:

*'Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities.'*

3.5.10 To measure the success of this vision, Australian Governments have set the following target for: 'a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children,' during the next 12 years, from 2010 to 2022. To know whether this target is being achieved, the following four high-level indicators of change are used to show progress:

- Reduced prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities
- Reduced deaths related to domestic violence and sexual assault
- Reduced proportion of children exposed to their mother's or carer's experience of domestic violence.

3.5.11 The National Plan recognises that policy solutions to address domestic violence and sexual assault must take into account the diverse backgrounds and needs of women and their children. The outcomes and strategies are relevant to all Australians irrespective of their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, culture, disability, religious belief, faith, linguistic background or location.

3.5.12 It is stated in the Policy that all systems need to work together to make a major difference to the prevalence and impact of violence against women. The National Plan will build on the current work of all Australian Governments and non-Government organisations. Government departments and Agencies will need to partner with relevant community and business organisations to achieve this change.

3.5.13 The National Plan is driven by a series of four three-year Action Plans. They support Australian Governments to work together to develop, implement and report progress within a coordinated national framework. This National Plan includes the first three-year Action Plan. The Action Plans have been designed in three-year cycles so Governments can review the strategies and actions once they are implemented and design future Government efforts to be as effective as possible. Governments will respond to emerging priorities as new evidence becomes available and circumstances change. It is reported that each action addresses all national outcomes, while allowing states and territories to act in locally relevant and responsive ways. Action Plans draw on existing evidence and aid national consistency, such as through developing national benchmarks. Each Action Plan helps to build the skills, systems and data for Governments to improve policy making and service delivery. It is highlighted that this is essential to Governments having the capacity to work together and to support lasting change.

Each Action Plan is supported by the following 'foundations for change':

- Strengthen the workforce
- Integrate systems and share information
- Improve the evidence base
- Track performance

3.5.14 Monitoring and reporting progress against the National Plan is vital to ensure there is real progress towards reducing violence against women and their children. The National Plan introduces high level performance indicators as well as indicators for each outcome. These reflect baseline data which is currently available or readily collectible. As work progresses, new measures of success may be identified and measured to improve understanding of progress. In addition to annual reporting of progress against implementation plans, an evaluation will be conducted for ministers at the conclusion of each three year Action Plan. As part of this evaluation, generic indicators and measures of success will be analysed, as well as progress against each of the actions. At the end of the 12 years (2022) there will be a final report which reviews achievements over the life of the National Plan and sets future policy directions as required.

3.5.15 Action Plan evaluations will also monitor the success of the National Plan in achieving the six specific national outcomes (as detailed below). These measures of success will initially be monitored using national surveys, such as the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes Survey. As data collection improves and is more consistent new sources of data will become available.

### **Six National Outcomes**

#### **National Outcome 1 – Communities are safe and free from violence**

3.5.16 Positive and respectful community attitudes are critical to Australian women and their children living free from violence in safe communities.

3.5.17 It is highlighted that evidence shows that key predictors of violence against women relate to how individuals, communities and society as a whole view the roles of men and women.

#### **Measure of success**

3.5.18 The success of Outcome 1 is measured by an increase in the community's intolerance of violence against women.

## **National Outcome 2 – Relationships are respectful**

3.5.19 It is reported that changing and shaping attitudes and behaviours of young people is critical to preventing domestic violence and sexual assault in the future. While prevention at the community level is essential, governments will also support individuals to develop healthy respectful relationships. It is emphasised that education can help in encouraging young people to develop more equal and positive relationships. Seeing adults exhibiting respectful behaviours, between partners, friends, parents and their children, is also important for young people. Positive parenting practices and violence-free home environments are crucial to the development of healthy social behaviour skills and healthy relationships.

### **Measure of success**

3.5.20 The success of Outcome 2 will be measured by improved knowledge of, and the skills and behaviour for, respectful relationships by young people.

## **National Outcome 3 – Indigenous communities are strengthened**

3.5.21 The National Plan is focused on supporting Indigenous communities to develop local solutions to preventing violence. This includes encouraging Indigenous women to have a stronger voice as community leaders and supporting Indigenous men to reject violence. Improving economic outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous women are critical to reducing violence.

3.5.22 It is reported that statistics indicate that Indigenous women experience much higher levels of family violence than non-Indigenous women. In 2006-07, Indigenous women and girls were 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to assaults related to family violence than non-Indigenous women and girls.

3.5.23 This outcome is designed to work in parallel with other government efforts to strengthen Indigenous communities.

### **Measure of success**

3.5.24 The success of Outcome 3 will be measured by reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods; and increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence.

#### **National Outcome 4 – Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence**

- 3.5.25 The National Plan highlights that specialist and mainstream services are critical to helping women rebuild their lives following violence.
- 3.5.26 It is stressed that services supporting victims of violence must be flexible in meeting the diverse needs of their clients, including Indigenous women, older women, young women, women with disabilities, same-sex attracted women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- 3.5.27 Of those women who reported experiencing partner violence in the 2005 Personal Safety Survey, 34 per cent said their children had witnessed the violence. Children need services to meet their needs in their own right.

##### **Measure of success**

- 3.5.28 The success of Outcome 4 will be measured by an increase in the access to, and responsiveness of, services for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

#### **National Outcome 5 – Justice responses are effective**

- 3.5.29 A range of civil and criminal measures exist to protect women and children in Australia who have experienced violence and prevent further violence. While aiming to reduce violence, the First Action Plan will drive more effective justice responses where violence has occurred. Under the National Plan work will be undertaken to improve the legal response to domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and to promote responses from criminal justice agencies.

##### **Measure of success**

- 3.5.30 The success of Outcome 5 will be measured by an increase in the rate of women reporting domestic violence and sexual assault.

#### **National Outcome 6 – Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account**

- 3.5.31 Preventing and reducing violence against women requires strong laws that are effectively administered and hold perpetrators to account. This outcome promotes a zero tolerance approach to violence, supported by stronger policing leading to arrest, consistent sentencing of perpetrators, and serious consequences for perpetrators if they breach orders.

‘Perpetrator interventions’ include a broad range of responses for perpetrators, including legal responses and rehabilitation programs. The primary objective of perpetrator interventions is to ensure the safety of women and their children. This outcome is supported by research that shows the likelihood of recidivism may be reduced by addressing the underlining causes of offending behaviour. Focusing just on punishing perpetrators will not bring about behaviour change. Perpetrators need assistance to end their violence. All Governments recognise the evidence base for perpetrator interventions requires strengthening. This requires a staged, systematic approach. Lessons can be shared between those who work with perpetrators of domestic violence and those who work with perpetrators of sexual violence.

3.5.32 Governments are currently working to expand the range of perpetrator interventions in their jurisdictions. Perpetrator interventions are now recognised as an essential part of an effective plan to reduce violence against women and their children. Research into effective perpetrator interventions is crucial and will guide work in future action plans.

#### **Measure of success**

3.5.33 The success of Outcome 6 will be measured by a decrease in repeated partner victimisation.

### **3.6 Other Preventative Policies**

3.6.1 [Various states and Territories of Australia](#) have produced a number of preventative Policies and Strategies in respect of domestic violence, an example being the strategy produced in Queensland – “for our sons and daughters”.

#### **“For our sons and daughters”**

3.6.2 “For our sons and daughters” – A Queensland Government Strategy (2009-2014) was produced with the reported aim of reducing domestic and family violence. It is commented that the Queensland Government invested an estimated \$147 m in 2008–09. A further \$177.75 m was spent in 2009–10 on a diverse range of services from criminal justice services (policing and courts) to counselling and support and universal services which help to prevent domestic and family violence, including:

- housing support such as crisis accommodation
- regional domestic violence services
- community services such as support groups and counselling programs
- counselling for children who experience domestic and family violence

- legal support and advice, and court support workers to assist people through the court process
- family support and education programs
- behaviour change programs
- maternal and child health initiatives
- early childhood programs
- crime prevention and health promotion initiatives
- legal and support services for seniors who may experience, or be at risk of elder abuse
- specialised interventions and support services in Indigenous communities and families

3.6.3 A new Program of Action will be released each year, following consultation with Government and non-Government partners. Each Program of Action will build on the successes and learnings of the previous year, acknowledging the work that still needs to be done.

3.6.4 Each Program of Action over the five-year term of the strategy will focus on the five reform areas — prevention, early identification and intervention, connected victim support services, perpetrator accountability and system planning and coordination.

3.6.5 Key initiatives for the first Program of Action are:

#### **Prevention**

Launching the Guide to Social and Emotional Learning in Queensland State Schools to support children to develop positive behaviour and constructive social relationships.

#### **Early identification and intervention**

Expanding domestic violence screening across the ante-natal and post-natal period to identify women who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing domestic and family violence and provide a referral service.

#### **Connected victim support services**

Testing an enhanced, integrated service model in Rockhampton to improve the safety and wellbeing of people affected by domestic and family violence, achieve higher levels of accountability for perpetrators and reduce demand on the statutory, court and human service system.

Establishing a safety upgrades program in the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Townsville to assist victims to stay in their homes.

## **Perpetrator accountability**

Examining risk assessment tools and evidence kits to strengthen evidence collection which will support vulnerable witnesses in the justice system.

## **System planning and coordination**

Establishing an expert Death Review Panel to oversee a review of current coronial processes and practices, including a review of de-identified information from relevant closed coronial files which will make practical recommendations and consider options for future reviews, with a view to preventing deaths in similar circumstances occurring in the future.

Reviewing the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 to ensure legislation is in line with new policies arising from the strategy. “Our sons and daughters “

## **3.7 Domestic Violence Laws in Australia and New Zealand**

3.7.1 The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children produced a [report](#) in 2009, detailing Domestic Violence Laws in Australia and New Zealand.

3.7.2 The report provides:

- an overview of all State and Territory and New Zealand domestic
- violence- specific laws providing for the making of protection orders;
- a comparative analysis of what behaviours constitute domestic violence for the purposes of those laws, and what relationship must exist between the persons concerned in order for the legislation to apply;
- a comparative analysis of the laws of each of the examined jurisdictions for the registration and enforcement of domestic violence protection
- orders made in other jurisdictions (‘portability’ of orders);
- a comparative analysis of the laws of the examined jurisdictions in relation to orders which operate to exclude a perpetrator of domestic violence from that person’s home (where the perpetrator and the victim would normally cohabit);
- a comparative analysis of the laws of the examined jurisdictions providing for counselling (both mandatory and voluntary) for perpetrators of domestic violence;



- an overview of the laws of the examined jurisdictions that make stalking an offence;
- an overview of the provisions in the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) that have particular significance in relation to domestic violence; and
- an analysis of areas where there is overlap and potential for conflict between orders or injunctions made under the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) and orders made under the State and Territory domestic violence protection orders legislation.

3.7.3 It is stated within the report that *“there is legislation in force in all Australian States and Territories, and in New Zealand, that empowers courts to make apprehended violence orders specifically to protect victims of domestic violence, or persons at risk of domestic violence.*

*The precise provision made by the legislation in these jurisdictions differs in myriad ways. Further, there is variation across jurisdictions in the basic approach taken to some important issues.*

*However, in very broad terms, from our examination of the legislation it appears to us that the provision made in all jurisdictions is of largely similar effect in terms of almost all central features of the legislative schemes. Broadly, it can be said that, in the majority of jurisdictions, the domestic violence-specific legislation is of similar scope in terms of the relationships covered.<sup>5</sup> In terms of its effect, the legislation does not appear to be substantially different across jurisdictions in respect of crucial matters such as:*

- *the types of conduct that may constitute domestic violence, and the grounds on which protection orders may be made;*
- *the types of orders that may be made in the domestic violence context and the kinds of prohibitions, restraints and conditions that an order may*
- *impose on the person against whom it is made;*
- *the capacity for temporary orders to be made or obtained quickly by police in emergency situations, without the need for an appearance before a court; and*
- *the (criminal) effect of contravening a domestic violence protection order.*

*Further, purely in terms of a consideration of the legislation at face value, it appears to us that, in respect of these central elements, the laws are generally clear, comprehensive and robust.*

### ***Specific areas where the legislation differs across jurisdictions***

*There are some areas in which there are differences between the various legislative regimes to which we think it is worth drawing particular attention.*

*First, there are significant differences across jurisdictions in relation to the maximum penalties that may be imposed for a contravention of a domestic*

violence protection order. For a number of reasons, it is not possible to make any straightforward comparison in this regard.<sup>6</sup> However, broadly, it can be said that there is very significant variation between the maximum penalties, in terms of both fines and imprisonment, applying in the different jurisdictions.

Another point of difference relates to whether the legislation imposes on police any obligation to take particular action in cases of suspected domestic violence. Legislation in only two jurisdictions – Queensland and Western Australia – requires a police officer to investigate, on reasonable suspicion, whether acts of domestic violence have occurred or are likely to occur. In only one jurisdiction – Western Australia – are police required to take particular action (such as making an application for a protection order) following investigation of suspected domestic violence.

There is significant variation across jurisdictions in relation to the approach taken to the issue of counselling and rehabilitation programs for perpetrators of domestic violence. The domestic violence-specific legislation in some jurisdictions makes no express provision for such counselling (although, in some cases, sentencing-related or other legislation may do so). In other jurisdictions, relatively specific and comprehensive provision is made, including provision empowering a court to direct a person against whom a domestic violence protection order has been made to attend counselling, and attaching criminal penalties to a failure to comply.

### **What constitutes domestic violence?**

In all Australian jurisdictions, the grounds on which a court can make a domestic violence protection order relate to the commission, or potential commission, by the respondent of a particular type of conduct against a person with whom the respondent is in a relevant type of relationship.

### **Types of conduct that constitute domestic violence**

While there are some differences, the types of conduct that constitute domestic violence, and so provide the grounds for making a protection order, are generally similar across the various jurisdictions.

In all jurisdictions, domestic violence includes assault/personal injury (including sexual assault) and intentional damage to the protected person's property, and threats of such behaviour. Domestic violence also expressly encompasses intimidation in all jurisdictions other than the ACT (although certain types of behaviour amounting to intimidation may constitute domestic violence in that jurisdiction).

In some jurisdictions, specific provision is made for the making of orders to protect a child from exposure to domestic violence. Some jurisdictions go further, so that exposing a child to domestic violence against another person is itself domestic violence perpetrated against the child.

The legislation in several jurisdictions expressly includes 'economic abuse' as a form of domestic violence. Each of those jurisdictions deals with this issue

*differently but, in very broad terms, 'economic abuse' relates to conduct such as coercing a person to relinquish control over assets or income, disposing of a person's property without his or her consent, preventing a person from accessing joint financial assets for the purpose of meeting normal household expenses, or withholding financial support necessary for the maintenance of the person or the person's children.*

*In some jurisdictions, such conduct can only constitute 'economic abuse' if it is done with a particular intention such as, for example, an intention to cause mental harm, apprehension or fear. In other jurisdictions, conduct can amount to economic abuse whether or not it was carried out with a specific intention of this kind.*

*The legislation in all States and Territories, and New Zealand, provides for the making of domestic violence protection orders on the basis of at least some of the behaviours that would normally be described as stalking. The legislation in some, but not all, jurisdictions expressly provide that 'stalking' constitutes domestic violence.*

*Some jurisdictions' legislation expressly includes 'emotional abuse' or 'psychological abuse' as a form of domestic violence. Broadly, these terms relate to behaviour by a person towards another person such as tormenting, intimidating or harassing the other person, for example by making repeated derogatory taunts. The legislation in some jurisdictions where 'emotional abuse' or 'psychological abuse' are not expressly dealt with nevertheless covers at least some kinds of conduct that could be described by those terms.*

*The legislation in the majority of jurisdictions provides that harming or killing a pet animal of a person can constitute domestic violence.*

### **Which relationships are covered?**

*In all jurisdictions, the domestic violence-specific legislation only applies where the victim of violence or threatened violence is or has been in a particular kind of relationship with the perpetrator. In most jurisdictions, a wide range of relationships is comprehended by the legislation including, at least, spouses and de facto partners (including same sex partners), children and step-children, the child of a person's de facto partner and other persons who are generally regarded as 'relatives'.*

*The Tasmanian and South Australian legislation are exceptions to this, however. Broadly speaking, a protection order can only be made under the Tasmanian legislation in respect of conduct directed towards a current or former spouse or (same sex or opposite sex) de facto partner. An order can only be made under the South Australian legislation in respect of conduct directed towards a current or former spouse, a 'domestic partner' who resides with the perpetrator, or certain children.*

*However, this does not mean that, in Tasmania and South Australia, a person subjected to domestic violence at the hands of, say, a sibling or a relative of the person's de facto partner cannot obtain an apprehended violence order. A person in this situation could seek a restraining order under other (nondomestic violence specific) Tasmanian or South Australian legislation.*

*Domestic violence-related legislation in every State and Territory allows courts to include in a domestic violence protection order a condition excluding the*

person against whom the order is made from a residence shared with the protected person. In New Zealand, a court can make an exclusion order independently of a protection order. In some jurisdictions, a court considering the imposition of an exclusion condition must take into account certain special considerations (for example, in Victoria, a court must consider the desirability of minimising disruption to the protected person and any child living with that person). In other jurisdictions, no such special considerations are specified in the legislation.

The legislation across jurisdictions varies in terms of the impact of an exclusion condition on parties' legal position in relation to residential tenancies. For example, in some but not all jurisdictions there is a specific mechanism for adjusting or transferring tenancies where exclusion conditions are in force.

### **Portability of orders**

The capacity for protection orders to be enforced across jurisdictions is an important issue for victims of domestic violence. The domestic violence related legislation across Australia recognises the need for such 'portability' of orders. A person protected by a domestic violence protection order made in one State or Territory (or New Zealand) may apply, in any of the other States and Territories, for the order to be registered. Such registration is essentially an administrative process. Upon registration, in effect the order has the same legal status and becomes enforceable in the registering jurisdiction as if it were an order made under that jurisdiction's legislation.

However, this manual, jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction approach to registration appears to be a less than satisfactory answer to the need for portability of domestic violence protection orders. With cooperative action by the Commonwealth, States and Territories (including legislative amendment at the State and Territory level), it should be possible to achieve an efficient, comprehensive and truly national registration scheme for such orders that could significantly enhance the protection offered to victims and provide needed assistance to law enforcement authorities dealing with domestic violence.

### **Part 4: Stalking offences**

Legislation in every State and Territory, and in New Zealand, makes stalking an offence.

Although there is some variation between jurisdictions as to what constitutes stalking, in all jurisdictions the act in question must be intended to arouse apprehension or fear in the person being stalked, or to cause that person physical or mental harm. Under the legislation in jurisdictions other than New South Wales and Victoria, the act must occur on more than one occasion.

In all jurisdictions, stalking includes following a person or loitering near a person's house, place of work or any other place frequented by the person. In most jurisdictions, it also includes communicating with a person (whether by mail, telephone or over the internet), interfering with a person's property, giving a person offensive material or keeping a person under surveillance.

There is significant variation across jurisdictions in relation to penalties. In terms of imprisonment, the offence carries the lightest maximum penalty in New Zealand and the Northern Territory (2 years) and the heaviest in Victoria (10 years). In other jurisdictions, maximum penalties range between 3 and 5

years, and up to 8 years in certain aggravating circumstances. In some jurisdictions, the legislation making stalking an offence also specifically provides for a fine as well as, or in lieu of, a term of imprisonment.

## **Parts 5 and 6: domestic violence and the Family Law Act 1975**

The Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) (the FL Act) deals with a range of issues associated with marriage, de facto relationships, divorce and separation. Most importantly for the purposes of this Report, the FL Act covers arrangements and orders relating to the care and maintenance of children. Courts exercising jurisdiction under the FL Act can make a range of orders with respect to children, including determining where a child is to live, with whom the child is to spend time, and who is responsible for making decisions about the child's welfare.

### **Part 5: Family Law Act responses to domestic violence**

A family's experience of 'family violence' (the term used in the FL Act) is of critical importance when decisions are being made about children under that Act. One of the objects of the FL Act is to protect children from physical or psychological harm from being subjected to, or exposed to, abuse, neglect or family violence. In addition, the FL Act recognises the significance of family violence in a number of other ways. These include:

- directing courts to have regard to the need to ensure protection from family violence;
- requiring courts to take prompt action in response to allegations of child abuse and family violence;
- directing courts that the need to protect the child from physical or psychological harm from being subjected to, or exposed to, abuse, neglect or family violence is a primary consideration when determining
- what is in a child's best interests;
  - providing that the presumption in favour of equal shared parental responsibility does not apply if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a parent of a child has engaged in family violence or child abuse; and
  - empowering courts to make orders or injunctions for a person's protection, including for the personal protection of a child, a parent of a child and a party to a marriage. Families who have experienced family violence may also be exempt from the normal requirement of participation in Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) before parenting orders are sought from a court. FDR practitioners are directed to 'screen' clients for issues of family violence and not to proceed with FDR where a person's experience of family violence makes it inappropriate to do so.

### **Part 6: overlap and conflict between the Family Law Act and State and Territory domestic violence laws**

In some cases, orders made under State or Territory domestic violence laws and orders made under the FL Act in relation to the same family may overlap or conflict. The greatest potential for conflict probably arises when a parenting order under the FL Act and a State or Territory domestic violence

*protection order are in force at the same time. In part, this potential for conflict derives from an inherent tension in the FL Act between, on the one hand, facilitating children’s meaningful contact with both parents and, on the other, protecting children and their parents from family violence.*

*The FL Act and the State and Territory domestic violence laws contain mechanisms that are designed to avoid or overcome conflicts between such orders. These include:*

- requiring applicants to tell courts about other relevant orders that are in force when they seek an FL Act order or a State or Territory protection order;*
- giving courts that are making protection orders under State or Territory legislation power to revive, vary, discharge or suspend existing FL Act orders that relate to contact with children; and*
- providing that FL Act orders relating to care of and contact with children override pre-existing State or Territory protection orders to the extent of any inconsistency between them.*

*However, as we discuss in Part 6 of this Report, these measures do not entirely resolve the difficulties faced by parents and courts when attempting to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and their families after separation, in cases involving domestic violence.*

*A separate issue arises from the fact that orders or injunctions for a person’s personal protection can be made under the FL Act. This would seem to give rise to the possibility of conflict between such an order or injunction and a State or Territory domestic violence protection order. For a number of reasons, however, it appears that this may not pose a substantial problem in practice. The FL Act prevents people from applying for an order or injunction for personal protection under that Act if a State or Territory domestic violence protection order is in force in relation to the same matter. Requirements to inform a court about other relevant orders should also go some way to preventing orders being made in relation to the same individuals that are identical to or inconsistent with each other.”*

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 The main conclusions from this desktop research exercise are:

4.2 The Australian Government’s response to domestic violence takes a number of different preventative measures and strategies, support for victims and survivors, their families and law enforcement. There are a variety of organisations and Agencies that are also involved in the production, delivery and evaluation of the success of the programs.

4.3 In Australia, domestic abuse includes:

- emotional abuse
- verbal abuse
- social abuse
- economic abuse
- psychological abuse
- spiritual abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

4.4 National Programs in operation include:

- Perpetrator programs
- Engaging men and boys
- Violence prevention education for children and young people
- Safe at home programs

4.5 The Australian and Family Abuse Clearing House publishes details of news and events concerning domestic and family abuse. Details of legislation, best practice, forthcoming conferences are also published on its website. Good practice recognises the diversity of communities and women's needs and good practice responses are alter to hidden discrimination and prioritise universal, equitable access and design. The Clearinghouse highlights that the good practice programs and initiatives that it publishes have the potential to be adopted or used by other services.

4.6 Evaluation of the programs is a key exercise as it allows organisations to decide whether the programme is meeting its objectives. Publicly available evaluations help make programmes accountable to their communities.

4.7 The Clearinghouse highlights the need for multi-Agency service collaboration.

4.8 The Domestic Violence Service (DVCS) includes the provision of a Men's-Line Service which is telephone support to men experiencing or using violence against a partner.

4.9 The White Ribbon campaign is a global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women.

4.10 The “No Way! Project” was one of the first youth projects in Australia to engage:

- Young men as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young men at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
- Young women as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young women at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
- A team of young people who have experienced abuse in their families who have used single and mixed-sex methodologies in a wide range of settings to prevent abuse and violence in relationships.

4.11 A Schools and Community Education program has been developed. Early interventions with children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future.

4.12 Safe at home programs work as part of an integrated, multi-Agency approach.

4.13 The National Plan – “Safe and Free from Violence” has the aim of reducing violence against women and their children. It comprises six main objectives, all of which have tangible measures.

4.14 The National Council to Reduce Violence against women and their children produced a report in 2009 that detailed all Domestic Violence Laws in Australia and New Zealand.

Author:

Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Interpersonal Violence

6 June 2014





**NORTHAMPTON**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

**BRIEFING NOTE:**

**AUSTRALIAN WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN AND THE NO WAY PROJECT**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The briefing note provides comprehensive details about the White Ribbon Campaign and the No Way Project.

**2 WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN**

- 2.1 It is reported that White Ribbon is Australia's only national, male led campaign to end men's violence against women.
- 2.2 The campaign works through primary prevention initiatives involving awareness raising and education, and programs with youth, schools, workplaces and across the broader community.
- 2.3 Globally, White Ribbon is the world's largest male-led movement to end men's violence against women. Originating in Canada in 1991, White Ribbon is now active in more than 60 countries.
- 2.4 White Ribbon began in Australia in 2003 as part of UNIFEM (now UN Women), formally becoming a Foundation in 2007.
- 2.5 White Ribbon Australia observes the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women, also known as White Ribbon Day, annually on November 25. White Ribbon Day signals the start of the 16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence against Women, which ends on Human Rights Day (December 10).
- 2.6 However, the campaign runs all year and is evident across the community through, for example, advertising and marketing campaigns such as Uncover secrets, social media, community events and White Ribbon night in July.

**Background to the Campaign**

- 2.7 It is reported that on the afternoon of 6 December 1989, a man walked into the École Polytechnique University in Montreal and massacred 14 of

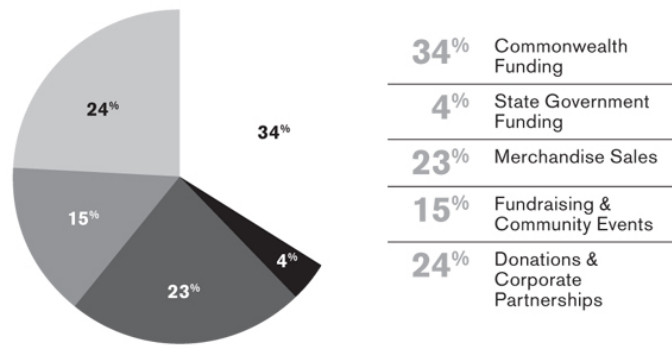
his female classmates. His actions traumatised a nation and brought the issue of violence against women to the forefront of our collective consciousness.

- 2.8 Two years later, a handful of men in Toronto decided they had a responsibility to speak out about and work to stop men's violence against women. As a result, the White Ribbon Campaign in Canada became an annual awareness-raising event, held between 25 November and 6 December.
- 2.9 In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, with a white ribbon as its iconic symbol.
- 2.10 White Ribbon began in Australia in 2003 as part of UNIFEM (now UN Women), formally becoming a Foundation in 2007.
- 2.11 It is reported that The White Ribbon Campaign is about recognising the positive role that men play in preventing violence against women. It fosters and encourages male leadership in the prevention of violence against women, based on the understanding that most men are not violent.
- 2.12 The Campaign is reported to be a means for men to speak out against violence against women, and to safely and effectively challenge the attitudes and behaviours of a minority of men who use or condone violence against women.
- 2.13 It is reported that White Ribbon Australia believes in the capacity of the individual to change and to encourage change in others.
- 2.14 It is highlighted that White Ribbon's existence in Australia relies on the support and generosity of individuals, corporate and community partners and governments – as well as the community at large.

### **Funding for the Campaign**

- 2.15 All funding raised supports best practice primary intervention activities and research aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours that result in violence against women.

### How is the White Ribbon Campaign Funded



## Governance

2.16 The reported governance for the White Ribbon Campaign consists of:

### Vision

All women live in safety free from all forms of men's violence.

### Mission

Making women's safety a man's issue too.

### Goal

To encourage and enable men to take a leadership role in ending men's violence against women.

### Strategic Priorities

1. Primarily engage men's leadership in the White Ribbon Campaign.
2. Continue to grow a strong and sustainable organisation

2.17 A number of fact sheets are published about the White Ribbon Campaign and can be [located](#):

- Origins of the Campaign
- The positive roles men can play
- What you can do
- What can men do
- Family and domestic violence
- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Other forms of violence
- Myths and misconceptions
- Responding to disclosures of violence
- Responding to challenging or difficult statements
- What is primary prevention
- Offering support and taking action

## **2.18 White Ribbon Day**

2.18.1 In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW) and the White Ribbon has become the symbol for the day.

2.18.2 It is reported that in swearing and wearing a white ribbon, men and boys can act as positive role models and advocates for change by challenging behaviours and attitudes that have allowed violence against women to occur.

## **3 The Relationship Violence- No Way! Project**

3.1 It was reported to the Scrutiny Panel on 21 July 2014 that the Relationship Violence- No Way! Project has built on the experience, knowledge and skills of five young women and six young men who have been subjected to domestic/relationship violence who became peer educators and mentors working with other young people at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their relationships. The peer educators have conducted numerous activities that are reported to have reached thousands of young people mainly in the Inner Southern Adelaide region.

3.2 The “No Way! Project” was one of the first youth projects in Australia to engage:

- Young men as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young men at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families. (Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the project).
- Young women as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young women at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families. (Stage 2 of the Project).
- A team of young people who have experienced abuse in their families who have used single- and mixed-sex methodologies in a wide range of settings to prevent abuse and violence in relationships. (Stage 2 of the project). The Project has encouraged young people who have been subjected to domestic and relationship abuse to examine the relationship between gender, abusive behaviour and self-harm; examine how they have made sense of their experience and to discover new meanings; and to meet other young people who have gone through similar experiences and who can offer education and support.

3.3 Members of the Peer Education Team have conducted project activities for: secondary students identified to be at risk from their experience of abuse in families and relationships; mentoring/one-to-one peer support work with young people at risk from their experience of abuse in families and relationships; whole class and year levels in secondary schools examining domestic and relationship violence; and youth service providers and school staff professional development work. The peer education team also developed a series of post cards and posters about young people and relationship violence, which have been released nationally by the Partnerships against Domestic Violence initiative.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 The main conclusions from this desktop research exercise are:

4.2 The White Ribbon campaign is a global male-led movement to stop men's violence against women. The Campaign is noted as an example of good practice in Australia.

4.3 The Campaign is reported to be a means for men to speak out against violence against women

4.4 In swearing and wearing a white ribbon, men and boys can act as positive role models and advocates for change by challenging behaviours and attitudes that have allowed of violence against women to occur.

4.5 White Ribbon Australia believes in the capacity of the individual to change and to encourage change in others.

4.6 The "No Way! Project" was one of the first youth projects in Australia to engage:

- Young men as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young men at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
- Young women as peer educators/mentors who have experienced abuse in their families to support other young women at risk from their experience of violence and abuse in their families.
- A team of young people who have experienced abuse in their families who have used single and mixed-sex methodologies in a wide range of settings to prevent abuse and violence in relationships.

4.4 The Project is noted as an example of good practice in Australia.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 –  
Interpersonal Violence  
25 July 2014



## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **SCRUTINY PANEL 1**

#### **INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

#### **BRIEFING NOTE: REPORT BACK FROM VARIOUS SITE VISITS**

##### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 At its inaugural meeting, Scrutiny Panel 1 (Interpersonal Violence) agreed that it would undertake a variety of a site visits to inform its evidence base.

1.2 Site visits were scheduled :

- Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre
- Northampton Women's Aid and a Refuge
- Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel to observe a multi-Agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)

##### **2 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SUNFLOWER CENTRE**

2.1 A representative of the Scrutiny Panel visited the Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre (NSC) on Monday, 6 October 2014.

2.2 It is highlighted that the Scrutiny Panel will receive further information regarding the NSC within a briefing note detailing examples of best practice that will be presented to the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel on 22 January 2015.

2.3 NSC opened in 2000 and is hosted by Northamptonshire Police. It is funded by Inter-Personal Funding (IPV) from:

- All borough and district Councils within Northamptonshire
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Northants Police
- Health

- 2.4 The NSC is accountable to all funders through the IPV Board. The Board comprises representatives from all funding Agencies and is chaired by the Northamptonshire County Council representative.
- 2.5 Office space for the NSC is provided in kind by Northampton Borough Council.
- 2.6 Serenity Northants is also funded through Inter-Personal Violence Funding. Further details regarding Serenity Northants will be provided in the briefing note detailing examples of best practice that will be presented to the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel scheduled for 22 January 2015.
- 2.7 NSC is unique as it is one of the few Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services nationally that has access to Police systems which allows the service to input information regarding safety and risk to enable officers to respond appropriately. It also allows NSC to contact victims very quickly.
- 2.8 NSC will have full capacity of Officers from November 2014 (10.2 FTEs). A duty system is in operation with two Duty IDVAs working at any one time. Once a referral has been made to the NSC timely first contact is attempted (within 24 hours). Initially, this is made via telephone (should it be safe to use this method of contact); three attempts are made over three days at different times of the day. If the victim is happy to meet with an Officer of the NSC they can meet at various locations including:
- Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre
  - Guildhall, Northampton
  - Police Station
  - Children's Centres
- 2.9 The majority of clients to the NSC are female, around 8% being male. This includes child to parent abuse. 60% of referrals are from the Police, other types of referrals include self-referrals and referrals from other Agencies. A number of young people, 16-18 year olds, access the services of the NSC.
- 2.10 A risk assessment comprising 27 questions is completed with the victim. Completion of this document provides the Duty Officer with an indication of the level of risk and current risks that the victim is facing and to look at the options available. A safety plan is then completed taking into account the risks. The IDVA will then work with the various relevant partners such as the Police, Housing Services at the Local Authority, Women's Aid. A translator service is available to victims should this be required.
- 2.11 Should a victim score 14 or higher from the 27 questions asked in the risk assessment, they are deemed as high risk and meet the criteria for



assistance. Scoring can also include professional judgment. A high risk assessment is then referred to MARAC, which comprises all Agencies – Local Authority Housing Services, Police, Schools, and Social Services. MARAC is chaired by the Senior Police Officer responsible for the Domestic Abuse Unit. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) work towards to a victim’s safety and are able to advocate on their behalf with other Agencies by acting as a critical friend.

- 2.12 Should a victim score below 14 on the risk assessment they would be signposted to Agencies such as Women’s Aid or VOICE (previously known as Victim Support). NSC IDVAs are able to screen victims using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) assessment and then refer on if the case does not meet the threshold. However, this is done so that the victim feels they are receiving a smooth pathway of support.
- 2.13 The willingness and views of the victim are taken into consideration regarding bringing about charges on the perpetrator. The Police has the power to bring about victimless prosecutions. The Police also has a number of new powers in respect of the Domestic Violence Protection Order.
- 2.14 NSC comes across some complex cases which usually involve substances or mental health and involves many repeat incidents. These can include cases where both parties are seen as victims/perpetrators at different times.
- 2.15 The Police works very closely with NSC. Public Protection training is currently being rolled out force-wide. Student Police Officers often make visits to the Sunflower Centre. Feedback from the Student Police Officers is very positive.
- 2.16 Should the perpetrator be charged the first hearing takes place at the specialist Domestic Violence Court. Should the perpetrator be found guilty or plead guilty, the Court has the power to remand them in custody to await trial. The perpetrator has the right of appeal to the remand. Officers of NSC will attend the Court hearing and ensure that the wishes of the victim are taken into account, such as privacy screens, restraining orders. Officers of the NSC can provide additional information on behalf of the victim to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to help inform the prosecution.
- 2.17 A number of victims chose to use the “DIY Injunction process “due to the legal costs. This is due to reductions in legal aid. This along with funding restrictions around refuge and other measures for victims has increased

the level of vulnerability of victims and makes it harder to keep victims safe.

- 2.18 The Service Manager, NSC, confirmed that NSC would be willing to take part in Wellbeing events, hosted by Wellbeing Officers.

### **3 MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)**

- 3.1 Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel observed two separate MARACs, key observations:

- The MARAC was chaired by a senior Police Officer
- Seven cases were observed by the Councillors at one MARAC (14 cases were scheduled but the Councillors observed part of the MARAC and observed 7 cases). Full case history of each was provided
- All Agencies work together within the timescales set for each case
- Action Plans are set and actions are brought back to subsequent MARACs
- Representatives from the Agencies present at the MARAC included:

- Northants Police – Domestic Abuse Advisor and Safer Community Team
- Social Services
- Safeguarding
- NBC - Housing Services (Gateway) (Housing Solutions) and (Housing Options)
- Probation Service
- BeNCH CRC
- Substance 2 Solution (S2S)
- Relate
- Northampton General Hospital - A&E and Safeguarding children
- Health – Adult Services and Children’s Services
- NCC, CF&E – Senior Practitioner (Social Work)
- NCC – Troubled families
- Women’s Aid
- Sunflower Centre

- Each case is allocated around 15-20 minutes at the MARAC
- It was noted that a number of repeat victims attend MARACs

## 4 NORTHAMPTON'S WOMEN'S AID AND A REFUGE

4.1 Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel visited Women's Aid and a refuge on 5 November 2014. A representative from Women's Aid will be in attendance at the meeting and will provide a response the core questions of the Scrutiny Panel (agenda item 5(e) refers). Key observations:

- There are 34 refuge units in Northampton. The cost of living in a refuge is £800 per calendar month. The cost is often problematic to working women; women that do not work have the costs covered through housing benefit.
- A woman, and her children, can live in a refuge for up to four months
- Women's Aid works closely with DAT and the Police. A high priority flag is put against high risk cases. Such cases will be identified at MARACs as being high risk; officers from the Sunflower Centre will make contact with the victim also.
- Current conditions on funding means that only women from Northampton can only be housed in refuges in the borough.
- Hand knitted "worry bears" are given to children living in the refuges
- A perpetrator has to be arrested to enable the Police to remove him/her from the property
- When moving from a refuge to a permanent property, women often have no belongings or furniture and they are required to sign the Tenancy on a Friday and move in by the Monday. There is a need for a Transition Strategy.
- Women's Aid is currently working with the Chamber of Commerce regarding the production of a Policy that enables businesses to acknowledge domestic violence. An example was provided detailing a victim of domestic abuse that was not given any assistance from her employer; she works out of town and her children go to school in Northampton
- A common assessment for families (CAF) must be completed for every referral but is not applicable for emergency cases. Referrals to Women's Aid are through CAFs. Women's Aid has an allocated CAF Co-Ordinator.

- Women who are referred to Women's Aid are assessed regarding their needs.
- Women's Aid offers a number of programmes, events and groups:
  - Freedom Groups. The demand for a Freedom Group is high
  - You and Me, Mum
  - Choose to Change (a programme for young people)
  - Your power to change (an education programme for male perpetrators). The University of Northampton is currently evaluating the programme. The Police feels it would not be useful for this to be a mandatory course.
- Women's Aid works closely with named officers at Northampton Borough Council, which is perceived as an example of best practice.
- Representatives of the Scrutiny Panel visited a refuge. It is a NBC owned property, managed by Orbit Housing. It comprises six bedrooms; one with disabled access. The house has been refurbished and areas such as the lounge, dining area and conservatory were welcoming. The garden is very suitable for children, with play equipment.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 The main conclusions from the site visits:

5.1.1 Northamptonshire Sunflower Centre (NSC) is unique as it is one of the few Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services nationally that has access to Police systems which allows the service to input information regarding safety and risk to enable officers to respond appropriately. It also allows NSC to contact victims very quickly.

5.1.2 The majority of clients to the NSC are female, around 8% being male. This includes child to parent abuse. 60% of referrals are from the Police, other types of referrals include self-referrals and referrals from other Agencies. A number of young people, 16-18 year olds, access the services of the NSC.

5.1.3 The Police works very closely with NSC. Public Protection training is currently being rolled out force-wide. Student Police Officers often make

visits to the Sunflower Centre. Feedback from the Student Police Officers is very positive.

5.1.4 NSC comes across some complex cases which usually involve substances or mental health and involves many repeat incidents. These can include cases where both parties are seen as victims/perpetrators at different times.

5.1.5 The Councillor attending the site visit to NSC had concerns about the reduction in services meaning that there is a growing issue about pathways to support such as decline in refuges, loss of legal aid.

5.1.6 MARACs are attended by all Agencies, working on the set Action/Support Plans for each case.

5.1.7 It was noted that a number of repeat victims attend MARAC conferences.

5.1.8 There are 34 refuges spaces in Northampton. The cost per unit is £800 per month. Women from Northampton can be housed in the refuges.

5.1.9 When moving from a refuge to a permanent address; women often have no furniture or equipment; it was felt that there is a need for a Transition Strategy.

5.1.10 Women's Aid offers a number programmes such as Freedom Groups which has been very well received; attracting a high demand.

5.1.11 The refuge visited was perceived as nicely decorated, welcoming and containing good facilities for children.

**IPV Group work – children and young people (June 2014) – Northampton County Council Service Mapping**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>Northampton</b>	<b>Wellingborough</b>	<b>East Northants</b>	<b>South Northants</b>	<b>Daventry</b>	<b>Corby</b>	<b>Kettering</b>
Pre-school							<b>MOVING ON THROUGH PLAY</b>
7-11	<b>DART</b> (NVCFR)	<b>HELP ME STAY SAFE</b> (WENWA)				<b>HELP ME STAY SAFE</b> (WENWA)	
11-14						<b>DAY</b> (NWA)	<b>DAY</b> (WENWA)
11-16	<b>UNARS</b> (UON) **accepts referrals countywide** Starting 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2014						
13-18	<b>CHOOSE TO CHANGE</b> (NWA)			<b>CHOOSE TO CHANGE</b> (NWA)	<b>CHOOSE TO CHANGE</b> (NWA)		
13-19		<b>CRUSH</b> (WENWA)				<b>CRUSH</b> (WENWA)	
14-19						<b>SEXUAL VIOLENCE</b>	

**IPV Group work – children and young people (June 2014) – Northampton County Council Service Mapping**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>Northampton</b>	<b>Wellingborough</b>	<b>East Northants</b>	<b>South Northants</b>	<b>Daventry</b>	<b>Corby</b>	<b>Kettering</b>
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13-19		<b>CRUSH</b> (WENWA)				<b>CRUSH</b> (WENWA)	
14-19						<b>SEXUAL VIOLENCE</b>	