

	<b><u>Agenda Item: 7</u></b>
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Birmingham Health &amp; Wellbeing Board</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2015</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Review of Birmingham Domestic Violence Strategy</b>
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Birmingham City Council</b>
<b>Presenting Officer</b>	<b>Paula Harding - Senior Service Manager Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion, Birmingham City Council</b>

<b>Report Type:</b>	<b>Information</b>
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<b>1. Purpose:</b>
<p>This report seeks to alert the Health &amp; Well Being Board to the forthcoming review of the domestic violence strategy, summarise the background to the review and seek engagement with the process.</p>

2. Implications:		
BHWB Strategy Priorities	Child Health	Y
	Vulnerable People	Y
	Systems Resilience	Y
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment		Y
Joint Commissioning and Service Integration		Y
Maximising transfer of Public Health functions		
Financial		
Patient and Public Involvement		
Early Intervention		Y
Prevention		Y

<b>3. Recommendation</b>
<p>The Health &amp; Wellbeing Board is asked to note the report and to consider how members may be engaged in the review.</p>

## 4. Background

### 4.1 Governance arrangements for domestic violence

In recent years, tackling domestic violence has been, and remains, a declared priority for each of the strategic and safeguarding boards in the city. During 2014, informal agreement was reached between the Safeguarding Boards and Birmingham Community Safety Police and Crime Board (BCSPCB) that BCSPCB should lead the strategic and operational response to domestic violence on their behalf. Within BCSPCB, the Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group (VAWCSG) has senior representation from a range of statutory and specialist voluntary sector service providers. Chairing of the group has recently been handed over from Councillor Jess Phillips (MP) to Councillor James McKay, Cabinet Member for Inclusion and Community Safety.

### 4.2 Domestic Violence Strategy and Delivery Planning

4.2.1 Birmingham's overarching strategic response to domestic violence is articulated by the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, Violence Against Women Strategy 2013-15. The Strategy was endorsed by the Community Safety Partnership in 2013 and seeks to protect women and children from the harm of domestic violence by:

- Identifying domestic violence early and preventing its escalation.
- Increasing public awareness and reducing public acceptability of domestic violence
- Enabling women and children to access specialist domestic violence advice, advocacy, support and protection where services are commensurate with need
- Holding domestic violence perpetrators to account in such a way as reduces risk and which acts as a future deterrent for them and a deterrent to other potential abusers

4.2.2 The strategy is implemented through annual delivery plans reporting through the BCSPCB. As a dynamic document, the delivery plan also reflects the strategic actions arising from domestic homicide reviews and the domestic violence related actions required of Birmingham Victim Charter, although each of these has a separate delivery vehicle.

### 4.3 Responding to the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment (2013)

The last needs assessment identified that the commitment of organisations to tackle domestic violence, individually and in partnership in Birmingham was evident but much still needed to be done to promote access to services and ensure the most efficient use of resources. The following issues and gaps emerged from arrangements known at the time:

4.3.1 **'Many victims do not know where to go for help. When victims do seek help, the pathways through services are complex and many points where victims gain access are not aware of the range of options available. The city lacks a sustainable specialist triage function to make sure that victims and children get the right services at the right time.'**

*Since this assessment, the VAWCSG has commissioned a domestic violence helpline for victims and professionals. The City Council has taken internal management of access to Supporting People funded provision, including refuge and domestic violence floating support through its Gateway. Analysis is needed of how these services integrate and dovetail with safeguarding children.*

- 4.3.2 'Most victims are faced with a broad range of needs which need to be addressed for victims and families to be safe. There are particular gaps in pathways for victims with more complex needs, including mental health and substance misuse. A complex needs programme to address these gaps made good headway but was short-lived.'**

*Recent safeguarding and domestic violence reviews have provided further narrative of the vulnerability faced by victims with complex needs. Whilst VAWCSG has signed up to a national initiative with recommendations emerging, local analysis is needed of the impact of commissioning in substance misuse and mental health on addressing these overlapping issues, particularly as these factors contribute the greatest risk for children.*

- 4.3.3 'The prospect of the criminal justice system holding perpetrators to account in less than 10 per cent of cases offers little protection to their victims whilst at the same time opportunities for managing offenders and strengthening the criminal and civil justice response are being missed.'**

*Since this assessment, West Midlands Police has restructured and introduced dedicated domestic violence offender managers across the force and is re-launching the Offender Management Board. The City Council is in negotiations over extending its use of civil orders and, through Public Health, considering commissioning domestic violence offender management programmes in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner.*

- 4.3.4 'Service responses are often fragmented and un-coordinated despite the best efforts of individual agencies involved. The links between the operational partnerships of MARAC, Joint Screening, Domestic Violence Tasking, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub need to be strengthened as there is little cross-over between them.'**

*Since the assessment, the City Council has commissioned domestic violence workers into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and commissioned the only specialist domestic violence Think Family workers nationally.*

- 4.3.5 Primary care is well placed to identify victims early but needs training and support to achieve this; recognising that the city has no viable domestic violence pathway from which to access services should early identification be promoted.**

*Since the assessment, domestic homicide reviews have amplified the potential for early identification and early help with domestic violence in primary care. Birmingham South Central CCG is now piloting the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety Programme (IRIS): a general practice-based domestic violence and abuse training support and referral programme with 25 general practices.*

*In the acute Trusts, Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG have invested in co-location of independent domestic violence advisors at Accident & Emergency Departments, including City Hospital. Heart of England Foundation Hospital Trust has sought funding through Solihull CCG to do the same but has been unsuccessful to date.*

- 4.3.6 A growing demand for specialist domestic violence services arising, in part, from increased identification and referral from statutory services.**

*Since this assessment, Birmingham City Council, through its Supporting People programme, has both maintained and marginally increased its funding of refuge and outreach (floating support) provision, bucking the national trend. VAWCSG has increased the high risk provision;*

*invested in domestic violence group work and an LGBT independent domestic violence advisor responding to identified gaps in provision. Sexual health commissioning has recognised the overlap between sexual and domestic violence and is investing further in this area. Each of these have been seen as welcome developments but further analysis is required about the scale of the responses needed*

#### 4.4 Rapid SWOT Assessment

##### 4.4.1 Strengths of the current arrangements

- **The Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group** has demonstrated political commitment and ownership and strengthened external partnership relationships, particularly with health and police. The City Council rightly identifies that it has a leadership role in domestic violence.
- **Evidence based commissioning:** Commissioners across the areas have demonstrated a determination to maintain the levels of existing support for domestic violence services for both adults and children.

##### 4.4.2 Weaknesses of the Current Arrangements

- **Evolving Landscape:** In a rapidly changing landscape, few decisions made in the City which affect domestic violence victims and their children have been directed through the Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group for impact assessment, consultation or co-ordination. The Police have been the most engaged, sharing and consulting on their plans for their service transformation and business planning. However, despite political commitment and ownership, whilst commissioning responsibilities are disparate, reporting lines also vary resulting in lack of clarity over leadership of the agenda.
- **Investment by Government and Third Sector** is not always incorporated into commissioning plans across the city.<sup>1</sup>
- **Incoherent Pathways for Victims and Children:** victims and professionals continue to report not being able to understand how to access services. Pathways for victims with complex needs of mental health and substance misuse remain particularly underdeveloped. Significant investment has been made in multi-agency screening of children experiencing domestic violence, which has faced significant backlogs with little outcome based analysis or investment in managing the interventions needed to address the risks and needs identified.
- **Opportunities for early help are systematically missed** through health settings, universal and targeted children's services; as diversion from refuge and in criminal justice responses. Much now needs to be done to create coherent service pathways in both safeguarding and early help across children's services, criminal justice, health, housing and third sector pathways.
- **Culture of organisations:** domestic homicide reviews are now consistently showing that there are manifest shortcomings in our statutory agencies' understanding of domestic

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<sup>1</sup> This misalignment of intentions with commissioning outcomes was also picked up in the Kerslake Review.

violence. Whilst a new cross-governmental definition of domestic violence and abuse signalled the need for agencies to appreciate the impact of coercion in abusive relationships, everyday practice remains focussed on an incident based approach which ultimately fails to identify the risks an abuser poses to victims and children and skews the responses that follow. Victims and children consequently make repeated demands of statutory services, often in an earlier point in the abuse: demands which are not addressed until crisis is reached.

- Recurrent themes in **domestic homicide reviews** have been: the failure to integrate risk assessment of adult and child victims of domestic violence and integrate the pathways which identify high risk; the failure to identify an abuser as the source of the risk and offender manage; an over-reliance upon victims to keep themselves and their children safe without agency intervention. There are both structural and workforce development and management requirements arising from these shortcomings to be addressed across our agencies.
- **Ambition:** The current strategy broadly articulates the city's approach, principles and priorities well but has had insufficient buy-in to realise the aims and deliver on its ambitions.

#### 4.4.3 Threats

- Un-coordinated service development across the statutory sector: for example, domestic violence service transformation in the police led to better recording and resulted in 14,000 referrals for joint screening last year.
- Should funding cuts be made in an un-coordinated or piecemeal way, there is a threat to the infrastructure of the domestic violence sector and risk losing the advantage that social value and charitable funding into the city brings.
- The Kerslake, Le Grand and Warner reviews of the city each provide challenge to the way our services are governed and delivered.
- The impact of domestic homicide reviews on public confidence.

#### 4.4.4 Opportunities

- Learning from domestic homicide reviews as a catalyst for change and raising the profile of domestic violence across the statutory sector
- The wider development of Early Help and Think Family programmes
- The implementation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the drive to integrate domestic violence joint screening and pathways thereafter
- The development of Commissioning Centres of Excellence within the City Council and the development of the Third Sector Commissioning Strategy
- Strengthened police responses arising from West Midlands Police service transformation of domestic violence response
- The development of a regional strategic approach through the Preventing Violence

#### Against Vulnerable People Board

- City Council Overview and Scrutiny inquiries into Preventing of Relationship Violence and Council Commissioning and Third Sector Organisations.
- Victims funding being devolved from government to the Police and Crime Commissioner

## **5. Terms of Reference for the Review**

### **5.1 Aims**

- To review the strategic, commissioning and operational arrangements for addressing domestic violence in the city.
- To provide recommendations for the City Council in providing, or enabling, a comprehensive and sustainable approach to keeping victims and children safe from domestic violence.

### **5.2 Scope**

In respect of operational pathways, commissioning and strategic intentions, the review will consider:

- The contribution of each of the City Council's Directorates.
- The contribution of statutory and non-statutory partner agencies, including the specialist domestic violence sector
- Specific initiatives which have developed since the Domestic Violence Needs Assessment (2013) was undertaken such as: Improving Children's Services, Early Help, Right Service Right Time and Think Family programmes; commissioning centres of excellence; devolved victim funding to the Police and Crime Commissioner; the Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People Programme; learning from the domestic homicide reviews and the impact of West Midlands Police domestic violence service transformation.
- Broader inquiries, reviews and initiatives which may impact upon the operational services and pathways for domestic violence.

### **5.3 Key Lines of Enquiry**

- What are the existing pathways to protect and support adult and child victims of domestic violence and how can these pathways be strengthened with particular reference to:
  - Safeguarding and protection (adults and children)
  - Early Identification and Early Help
  - Mental health, substance misuse and complex needs?
- How can the culture of organisations change and adapt to meet the recommendations from domestic homicide reviews? How can we develop a multi-agency workforce development strategy for domestic violence and abuse?



- How can we achieve a balance between prevention, early help and the management of risk and need?
- How can offender management be strengthened? Has the evidence base on non-mandatory approaches to offenders developed in recent times and could new approaches be trialled and tested safely?
- How can City Council commissioning of domestic violence services be integrated more robustly across Directorates, better involve the specialist sector in co-design and maximise the third sector contribution of charitable resources?
- How can leadership of the domestic violence agenda be strengthened to incorporate the domestic violence priority of each of the city's strategic boards?

## **5.4 Method**

- 5.4.1 The review will be managed by the Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group, with officer support from the Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion Service.
- 5.4.2 As part of the evidence gathering for the review, the Steering Group will engage a broad range of identified stakeholders and local and national expertise in a series of evidence hearings framed around the key lines of enquiry. Each evidence hearing will take presentations on current practice, emerging evidence, the learning from DHRs and seek collective views from key stakeholders on ways to overcome the challenges.

### **Themes for Evidence Hearings**

- Strengthening domestic violence services and pathways for safeguarding children and their non-abusing parent.
- Strengthening domestic violence services and pathways for early identification and early help.
- Strengthening services and pathways for domestic violence victims with mental health, substance misuse and complex needs
- Offender management and perpetrator programmes: what does the evidence tell us now?
- Integrated commissioning and social value
- Strengthening governance

### **Timeframe**

Jan 2015	Terms of reference agreed at Violence Against Women and Children Steering Group
March 2015	Terms of reference and timeframe agreed at Birmingham City Council EMT
April - May 2015	Desk top research: review of evidence base post-needs assessment; amalgamation of DHR learning; preparation for summits
June - September 2015	Evidence gathering: summits

October 2015	Draft recommendations agreed at Violence Against Women & Children Steering Group
November 2015	Recommendations considered/endorsed by Birmingham City Council (EMT)

<b>Signatures</b>	
<b>Chair of Health &amp; Wellbeing Board</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

The following people have been involved in the preparation of this board paper:

Paula Harding | Senior Service Manager  
Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion  
Birmingham City Council

Tel: 0121 464 8696

Email: [paula.harding@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:paula.harding@birmingham.gov.uk)