

Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board

A committee of Suffolk County Council

Report Title:	Domestic Abuse
Meeting Date:	8 September 2016
Chairman:	Councillor Tony Goldson
Board Member Lead(s):	Ian Gallin, Chief Executive West Suffolk and Suffolk Chief Officers Leadership Team lead for Community Safety
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What is the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to this paper?

1. To share with the Board the interim findings from the deep dive into Domestic Abuse and seek support for the recommendations contained in the report.

Key questions for discussion:

2. The key questions for discussion are:
 - a) Are the findings in the report an accurate reflection of the current status of services to reduce, enforce and prevent incidents of Domestic Abuse?
 - b) What more can and should organisations and services be doing to reduce the incidents of domestic abuse through effective prevention, and to support victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse.
 - c) How can we take a system wide response to Domestic Abuse?

What actions or decisions is the Board being asked to take?

3. The Board is asked to agree to:
 - a) support the recommendations in the report (Appendix C), as summarised in paragraph 31 below;
 - b) the governance arrangements proposed within the covering report;
 - c) a principle of co-funding the implementation of the recommendations, subject to a further report to the Board once the costs are established.
 - d) That the Suffolk Commissioners Group is asked to 'broker' the funding discussions;
 - e) align existing resources in the short term to ensure more effective commissioning.

Brief summary of report

4. The Safe and Stronger Communities Group on behalf of the Board commissioned a deep dive into Domestic abuse. This report introduces the findings of the deep dive and outlines a number of recommendations for consideration by the Suffolk System.

Main body of report

Background

Context

5. In 2015, the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) requested that a Safer and Stronger Communities Group (SSCG) be established in light of the decision made the previous year to discontinue the Safer Suffolk Board. The SSCG was asked to focus on the community safety related issues which cut across a number of organisations and forums.
6. The SSCG identified four themes for further investigations: Domestic Abuse; Cyber Crime; Sexual Exploitation; and Young Gang Violence. The deep dive into Domestic Abuse is the first to be completed.
7. The terms of reference for the deep dive are attached at Appendix A. It is worth noting that the terms of reference focussed on services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse rather than perpetrators. It is acknowledged, however, that this will be an important element in terms of prevention and further work will need to be undertaken in this regard.

Methodology

8. The deep dive has been completed using resources from within the Localities and Partnerships team in Public Health and Protection at Suffolk County Council. It has been overseen by a small steering group which includes partners from the Police Crime Commissioner's Office and Suffolk Constabulary.
9. The deep dive has been completed using the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership, a forum of public and voluntary sector partners concerned with matters relating to Domestic Abuse. A series of workshops and one to one interviews have been used to inform the report, alongside some victim testimony.
10. The interim report has been subject to Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee as part of their forward programme. The emerging recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee are attached at Appendix B.
11. The report has also been considered by the Local Safeguarding Children Board at its meeting in July 2016 and has been welcomed and endorsed.

Findings

12. The report attached at Appendix C outlines the findings of the deep dive and the recommendations which are intended to form a multi agency action plan.
13. A number of the recommendations require further investigation and therefore the report is titled 'interim'. However partners on the SSCG felt that a commitment to the interim findings from the HWB was important at this juncture and that delivery of those recommendations that could be undertaken in the

short term should not be delayed whilst the more complex detailed work is completed.

14. The recommendations are grouped into four interlinked themes:
 - Commissioning;
 - Data and Information;
 - Prevention and Education; and
 - Co-ordination and Communication.

Commissioning

15. Currently services for Domestic Abuse are commissioned from multiple partners across Suffolk with little or no reference to what is commissioned elsewhere. This is a reflection on the complex nature of Domestic Abuse in that it is the responsibility of many organisations without clear governance. In anticipation of the report Commissioners have already started to come together to explore how they can align resources and a recommendation from Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee is that resources within the Council should be pooled into a single place in preparation for pooling or alignment with partners.

Data and Information

16. The review confirmed the deficit in data and information across Suffolk in relation to Domestic Abuse. Suffolk Constabulary regular attends the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership and present crime statistics. However it is widely acknowledged that Domestic Abuse is largely hidden and under-reported to police and other agencies. Data is collated by third sector providers of support and information services, however the way in which it is recorded varies considerably and there is currently no unique identifier to reduce the risk of double or triple counting.

Prevention and Education

17. Like many areas of work the focus is increasingly on prevention and education. Historically this has been the focus of much of the partnership work with the provision of training packages for front line practitioners and programmes which promote healthy relationships. Much of the activity in this space is delivered or co-ordinated by locality based Domestic Abuse partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and as a result the picture is mixed across the county with some areas being far more active than others. Much focus has been on the role of schools in working with children and young people. However, the perceived reduction in capacity and focus around PHSE and Academisation means that this is often a difficult route to pursue. The recommendations suggest that the issue of domestic abuse should be incorporated into a package that is designed with schools to ensure greater take up and that other avenues to engage children and young people and the wider community be explored.

Co-ordination and Communication

18. The Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership (SDAP) has operated previously as a formal board chaired by the Cabinet Member at Suffolk County Council for Community Safety. It has benefited from wide engagement from public and third sector providers. During the review the SDAP meetings have been used for workshops, and feedback has suggested that this is a preferred method of

engagement and that the SDAP operate as a network on an ongoing basis to share good practice and make connections.

19. The review also makes a suggestion that the recommendations in the report are collated and used to form one single multi agency action plan which would replace the many plans which reference Domestic Abuse. This would provide a focus for partnership activity.
20. There has been a reasonable track record of training and development for staff in recent years, although there is currently no training being commissioned pending the outcome of the deep dive review. The report recommends that this work is reinvigorated and that a joint approach to training and development of staff to enable effective interventions is put in place.
21. Currently victims or survivors of domestic abuse have no single route into support services. If a victim were to search for support services in Suffolk they would be faced with a number of options depending on their geographical location and circumstance. This is also a significant contributory factor of our current inability to establish the prevalence of domestic abuse in Suffolk. The report recommends that partners develop a hub (both online and physical) that all victims would use to access services and that this hub would then signpost to the relevant service, much like the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which currently operates in Suffolk. The report recommends that further work is undertaken to design the hub, drawing on the expertise of a national domestic abuse organisation SafeLives which is already engaged with Suffolk around proposals to improve the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and incorporate with the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

Governance

22. The report highlights the gap in clear governance for Domestic Abuse and this has been a significant concern of forums such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for some time.
23. A number of options have been explored. Whilst the LCSB has a role, not all cases of Domestic Abuse involve children and therefore it has been deemed not appropriate for the LSCB to hold the responsibility. The Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board feels that it has an assurance role but not the responsibility. It is therefore proposed that the HWB, with its broad membership, would be the most appropriate forum to be accountable for domestic abuse and that the Safe and Stronger Communities Group would, on behalf of the Board, oversee the development and delivery of the multi agency action informed by the recommendations in the report.
24. Should this be agreed, the SSCG may look to create a sub group to ensure effective implementation and potentially combine this with other areas such as sexual exploitation, which is shortly to be subject to a deep dive review.

Resources

25. The community safety resources of Suffolk County Council will shortly be combined with those of the Suffolk Constabulary and the Fire and Rescue Service to form a Joint Community Safety Unit. This will be a community safety resource to support front line practitioners from across the public sector on community safety related matters, facilitate partnership working and provide policy expertise and capacity to support improvement projects. It is proposed to

create a full time post within this team to support the co-ordination and implementation of the recommendations within the Domestic Abuse report.

26. Adult Community Services provide financial support for refuge places through Housing Related Support programme and the proposal is to transfer this responsibility to the community safety function within the Localities and Partnership team within Public Health. Children and Young People's Services currently commission services from Anglia Care Trust and programmes such as Caring Dads through Suffolk Family Focus. The PCC office commissions the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser service and some of the activity undertaken by local forums, for example Waveney Domestic Abuse Partnerships.
27. A number of the third sector providers are funded by charitable organisations and further work is already underway to map the funding for current services in order to improve the effectiveness of commissioning.
28. The cost of implementing all the recommendations in the interim report has not yet been established. However the resources currently identified in the system to support the implementation of the recommendations in the report are thought to be insufficient and there is a concern that existing funding is under threat because of budget pressures.
29. It is proposed that as part of developing the multi agency action plan, the costs of implementation are established and form the basis of a conversation with the HWB at a later date, with a principle of co-funding services and activity for domestic abuse across the public sector. The Suffolk Commissioners Group may present the most appropriate forum to pursue this on behalf of the HWB.

Key Questions

30. The key questions for discussion are:
 - a) Are the findings in the report an accurate reflection of the current status of services to reduce, enforce and prevent incidents of Domestic Abuse?
 - b) What more can and should organisations and services be doing to reduce the incidents of domestic abuse through effective prevention, and to support victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse.
 - c) How can we take a system wide response to Domestic Abuse?

Actions/decisions recommended

31. The HWB is asked to agree to:
 - a) support the recommendations in the report (Appendix C), summarised as follows:

Commissioning Recommendation 1

Facilitate a discussion between the statutory commissioners across the county to achieve a common goal for commissioning Domestic Abuse services

Commissioning Recommendation 2

Create a medium term plan for coordination of non-statutory funding bids to help support the Suffolk Domestic Abuse System and make the most of the envelope of resources available in Suffolk.

Commissioning Recommendation 3

Develop common minimum dataset for all commissioners to use as a baseline point for the collection of data and information about Domestic Abuse in Suffolk.

Commissioning Recommendation 4

Create a comprehensive guidance package to support all organisations to make the application process as equitable as possible to statutory commissioners in Suffolk. Sign-post organisations to training courses running in Suffolk that provide advice and support for writing bids to commissioners.

Commissioning Recommendation 5

Build training for frontline practitioners and professionals into commissioning bids to create a more sustainable training model for Domestic Abuse support functions in Suffolk.

Data and Information Recommendation 1

Start a discussion between all partners about how we can work toward a joint /shared case working system that will eliminate duplication, double counting, enhance practitioner's knowledge about the client, increasing confidence with victims that enter the system.

Data and Information Recommendation 2

Develop a minimum data set based on current recording practises within the system. Use the minimum data set to start a baseline of useable data to inform commissioners, practitioners and decision makers on the best course of action to improve services and direct training and development needs.

Education and Prevention Recommendation 1

Coordinate a long-term plan for Suffolk with local delivery. Focusing on the education of young people and communities about abuse. Specifically, what it is, how to identify it and how to report it and get help.

Education and Prevention Recommendation 2

Coordinate the identification of employers within Suffolk that could adopt an enhanced Domestic Abuse Policy for their organisation. Using successful policies as a guideline. Produce a countywide employer policy, clearly detailing the aspects of support required for victims of Domestic Abuse at work.

Coordination and Communication Recommendation 1

Re-launch the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership as a forum for professionals and practitioners to exchange information, contribute to the delivery of the recommendations in this report and co-design solutions.

Coordination and Communication Recommendation 2

Identify an executive group which will be responsible for developing and co-ordinating the implementation of a multi agency action plan for domestic abuse. Ideally this would be an existing forum.

Coordinate a comprehensive review of all action plans across Suffolk collating countywide actions relating to Domestic Abuse. Identify a sustainable way to coordinate this work and keep the countywide action plan up-to-date.

Coordination and Communication Recommendation 3

Utilise the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership to develop the requirements of the practitioner support system (website) fully. Create a plan of action of how this will be achieved, considering resources, timings and all the features of the system required.

Coordination and Communication Recommendation 4

Coordinate a countywide training survey/review supported by the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership. This will in part, determine future training needs for the Suffolk System.

Professional support training to be embedded as part of Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership, such as the learning from Suffolk Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Continued coordination of training and staff development in Suffolk, keeping up-to-date records of those trained, in what disciplines and their area of operation in Suffolk.

Coordination and Communication Recommendation 5

Facilitate and coordinate discussions to progress the idea of a Suffolk Domestic Abuse Hub, connecting all stakeholders including the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership, local Forums and public, private and third sector.

Coordinate development of the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Hub with the One Front Door within the MASH, supporting and complimenting its operation.

The HWB is also asked to agree to:

- b) the governance arrangements proposed within the covering report
- c) a principle of co-funding the implementation of the recommendations, subject to a further report to the Board once the costs are established.
- d) That the Suffolk Commissioners Group is asked to 'broker' the funding discussions
- e) align existing resources in the short term to ensure more effective commissioning

Why this action/decision is recommended

32. In addition to the significant personal costs to victims and their families, the cost of domestic abuse is felt across the public sector. The recommendations in this report are designed to reduce the incidents of domestic abuse through effective preventative activity and ensure victims/survivors are effectively supported to ensure individuals and their families are able to live a safe and independent life.

Who will be affected by this action/decision?

33. Victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse, their families and the perpetrators.

Sources of further information

- a) Scrutiny Committee Report into Domestic Abuse - 28 July 2016
[Agenda Item 6 - Working with partners to tackle domestic abuse in Suffolk covering report](#)
[Agenda Item 6 Evidence Set 1 - Domestic Abuse Interim Report Feb-June 2016](#)
- b) "Understanding Domestic Abuse in Suffolk", Dr Emma Bond, UCS, March 2015