

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

23 JANUARY 2020

**REPORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

Lead Cabinet Member – Children and Young People - Councillor Lisa Evans
Lead Cabinet Member – Domestic Abuse Champion – Councillor Jim Beall

**TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND ITS IMPACT ON
CHILDREN**

SUMMARY

The Children and Young People Select Committee Task and Finish Group has completed a review examining domestic abuse and its impact on children.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) / DECISION(S)

This topic was included in the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20. The Task and Finish Review is now complete and the recommendations have been endorsed by the Children and Young People Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the following areas be considered as part of the current training mapping exercise being led by the Domestic Abuse Steering Group:
 - (a) Harbour to train the Link Worker in Children's Services in the ALTER programme to assist Children's Services to work with those deeply entrenched perpetrators who will not complete the full perpetrators programme.
 - (b) Relevant Domestic Abuse training for social workers and other professionals, including identifying risk using the most appropriate tools as part of the ongoing training mapping process through the Domestic Abuse Steering Group.
 - (c) Domestic Abuse Awareness Sessions for all Councillors.
 - (d) Awareness raising with all key agencies on the need to make referrals into the Children's Hub.
 - (e) Education and awareness raising programmes in schools and that the ongoing work to prepare schools for the statutory duty to provide relationships education should ensure that there is an appropriate focus on coercive and controlling behaviour.
- (2) That, as part of the contract monitoring process for the domestic abuse service:
 - (a) There should be an ongoing analysis and reporting of the effectiveness of the early help and children's social care link workers and the impact of Domestic Abuse services.

- (b) Consideration should be given to the establishment of trigger points requiring Harbour to advise when they have a backlog of assessments and how this is to be managed and that any ongoing issues with unmet demand be addressed during the review of the contract.
- (3) That, where consent is not given and/or clients do not meet the criteria for early help or social care intervention, the referrals by professionals are to go back to the referrer to do some brief intervention/awareness and support work (this will require specific training across key agencies).
- (4) That clear communication pathways be established between adults' and children's services to ensure a joined up approach when working with families.
- (5) That the Domestic Abuse Steering Group be requested to seek further feedback on the effectiveness of Operation Encompass and specifically the length of time between the Police being made aware of a problem and the school being notified.
- (6) That, recognising that domestic abuse is not a recording category as part of the Child Protection Plan process, other recording systems be revised to facilitate more accurate recording of its prevalence which will, in turn, help to better understand the effectiveness of interventions.
- (7) That consideration be given to appropriate forms of collaboration and joint working across the relevant partnerships across the Tees Local Authority areas to identify areas of potential further collaboration.

DETAIL

1. The attached report outlines the outcomes of the Task and Finish Review of Domestic Abuse and its impact on children.
2. The main aim of the review was to better understand the impact of domestic abuse on children and the effectiveness of interventions to inform the Domestic Abuse Strategy and future commissioning decisions.
3. Given the potentially wide scope of the issues around domestic abuse and in recognition of the complexity of the issues and the limited time frame for a task and finish approach, the review has been focused on those areas which are of most direct relevance to the impact of domestic abuse on children and families, and especially the links to children's social care functions. Therefore a wholesale review of the DA strategy and how it was developed, for example, has not been undertaken in this review, to do so would be beyond the remit of this specific task and finish group. In agreeing this focus the Committee remained mindful of the need to ensure that the wider context of work with victims and perpetrators was taken into account.
4. The Committee took evidence from Children's Services, Harbour, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cleveland Police.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

5. The recommendations seek to raise awareness of domestic abuse and reduce the effects of harmful behaviour for victims and their families.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. Ongoing activities to tackle domestic abuse would need to be delivered within existing resources.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. Legal implications are set out in the Task and Finish Group report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

8. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

9. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. None.

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