

Domestic Abuse Steering Group

A meeting of Domestic Abuse Steering Group was held on Tuesday 13 June 2017.

Present: Martin Gray (SBC) (Chair),

Robin Bonas (DTVCR) Lisa Lyons (sub for Steven Hume) (SBC), Callum Titley (SBC), Lesley Gibson (Harbour), Gordon Bentley (sub for Barbara Potter) (CCG), Sandra Clement (sub for Rosana Roy) (NPS), Dominic Gardner (TEWV); Deborah Newman (sub for David Brown) (TEWV), Jenny Collier (sub for Emma Champley) (SBC), Councillor Ann McCoy (SBC), Councillor Steve Nelson (SBC), Graham Riley (sub for DCI Helen Barker)(Cleveland Police), Trina Holcroft (sub for Barbara Potter) (Hartlepool and Stockton CCG)

Also in attendance: Kirsty Wannop, Jill Anderson, and Cllr Lauriane Povey (SBC), Sharon Caddell, (Minutes MH)

Apologies: Councillor Jim Beall (SBC), DCI Helen Barker (Cleveland Police), Rosana Roy (NPS), Barry Coppinger (PCP), Barbara Potter (Hartlepool and Stockton CCG), Stuart Harper-Reynolds (NTFT), Steven Hume (SBC), Steve Rose (Catalyst),

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

3 **Minutes of the Domestic Abuse Operational/Tactical Group Meeting – 31 May 2017**

Members received the minutes of the Domestic Abuse Operational/Tactical Group meeting held on 31 May 2017.

Data collection and cleaning was being considered by the Operational Group. Members asked for an update on how this was progressing.

4 **Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan**

The Steering Group was provided with the final Domestic Abuse Strategy Action Plan 2017-18.

Members noted that the Action Plan had been used to help populate the Forward Plan.

It was noted that progress update reports relating to the Action Plan would be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board and other relevant forums.

RESOLVED that the Strategy and Action Plan be noted.

5 **Operation Encompass**

The Steering Group considered a report and presentation that provided members with:

- A reminder of the history, rationale behind the development and roll out

of Operation Encompass.

- An overview of the process, including interactions between the various organisation and families involved.
- Data relating to incidents relevant to Operation Encompass April 2016 to March 2017.
- Recommendations from an evaluation of Operation Encompass and a related improvement plan.

Discussion covered the following areas:

- Operation Encompass was, originally, a notification system to schools to help them better understand the context of a child's behaviour. The Police still perused any Safeguarding issues coming from DA incidents, including referrals to appropriate agencies.
- It was suggested that there may be examples of best practice available nationally, and this should be looked at.
- It was noted that there was a range of responses from schools, to the notifications they received.
- Training for schools would include clear guidance regarding appropriate interventions and avenues of support and referral. Any training provided to schools, and other agencies, would need to reflect how the 'notification only' approach had shifted to more of a whole system approach.
- Members received assurances that processes for referral left little chance of a child not being referred appropriately.
- Wording in the improvement plan needed to be specific and non-ambiguous. Words like 'ideally' should be reconsidered.
- It was important that information shared with schools should also be shared with other services, such as midwives. This could be done via the information sharing protocol that was in place.
- Engagement with GPs was very important and work was ongoing in this regard.
- The improvement plan recognised the need for improved data collection and active monitoring.
- It was suggested school governor meetings should receive regular updates, from the head teacher, on Operation Encompass.
- It was noted that there were general objectives identified for the

improvement plan and no outcomes framework as yet, but one was under development.

It was noted that further updates on Operation Encompass would come to future meetings.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

MARAC Review and Remand Court

Members received a report relating to a review of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The rationale for conducting the review stemmed from an acknowledgement that the process had become ineffective in tackling repeat victimisation and supporting reduced reoffending. In addition, the partnership collaboration on risk reduction has declined and become disjointed, and over time, police and IDVAs had taken on the majority of this work, even though MARAC grants were no longer provided to the police, via Home Office grants.

The main reference points for the review were:

- Number/quality of referrals into MARAC
- Number/length of MARAC meetings across Tees
- MARAC Chairing arrangements
- Inconsistent attendance at meetings

A proposal for the aspiration of the future MARAC operation was reviewed and agreed within the initial meeting. This included nine key points that would provide the framework for how MARAC operates and was strategically governed in future, including the creation of a strategic group, trial of North Tees/ South Tees rolled up conferences, with more regular intervals, and exploration of appointing an independent chair to lead/ direct partnership activities as part of a whole system approach to risk reduction/ safety improvement.

Members discussed some of the issues associated with the current arrangements e.g. inconsistent attendance. Reference was also made to potential replacement arrangements that might be identified through the review.

The Steering Group was provided with details of Multi Agency Tasking and Coordinating (MATAC), which was a multi-agency approach to managing repeat perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.

Some members asked if they could 'sit in' on a MARAC meeting. This was unlikely to be a problem and would be looked into.

Members then received a report that provided details of interim findings coming from a remand court pilot. The pilot used a remote process allowing Court

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) to access remand information from the Police Witness Care Unit. It was felt that this would allow IDVAs to provide any relevant information to the Court, with the aim of ensuring informed decision making and safer outcomes.

Views relating to the pilot suggested that the IDVA had ensured the voice of the victim was properly represented in the court; members of the bench had stated that it had helped them to get a better understanding of victim response processes, such as MARAC; one defence lawyer stated that all domestic abuse remand cases should have IDVA representation within the court; and, comments from Probation are that the IDVA information on victim impact issues had assisted them to produce better informed pre-sentencing reports, sometimes in very short time frames.

It was noted that there were resource implication and these would need to be considered.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

Launch of Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan

Members considered arrangements for the launch of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan. The Health and Wellbeing Board had given its views in this regard and these were provided to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group agreed that the launch would be held in mid-July at Thornaby Pavilion. It was noted that case studies would be included showing the impact of DA.

RESOLVED that the launch be organised for mid-July at Thornaby Pavilion.

Domestic Abuse – Delivery and Funding of Strategy

There was a discussion centred on the delivery of the strategy and annual action plan. Members agreed that it was this group's responsibility to oversee delivery, and there would be regular challenge with regard to each partner's contribution, to achieving this. Partner organisations would need to consider, and identify to this group, what resources/investment they would be committing, and when.

It was noted that the action plan identified the need for the appointment of a co-ordinator to make sure that delivery work was being undertaken and any problems were resolved on a day to day, operational, basis. The recruitment process was ongoing and the Stockton on Tees Borough Council had committed the funding, for the post, for a two year period.

RESOLVED that the discussion be noted and Partners consider their role in the delivery of the strategy and any associated resources needed to achieve this.

Feedback from Health and Wellbeing Board

Members received a report that provided feedback from the Health and Wellbeing Board to concerns raised by this group, at previous meetings:

- Charges levied for letters of evidence of DA
- Low referral levels by GPs

Members noted that the view of the GP Federation was that charges for letters of this kind should not attract a levy and discussions with relevant practices would take place to dissuade them.

It was explained that there had been discussions about referrals to, and assessments by, Harbour, for victims/perpetrators presenting at GPs' surgeries. It was noted that processes had been reviewed and simplified and new arrangements were being communicated to surgeries.

Members also received feedback relating to the Adults' Safeguarding Domestic Abuse Conference held in May 2017.

The conference's objective was to increase the reporting of domestic abuse into adult safeguarding, particularly in minority groups, ensure that the principles of making safeguarding personal was embedded in practice, recognition of DA in different context.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

5 Forward Plan

Members noted the Forward Plan.

Members Updates

The Steering Group received an update relating to

- DCLG funding relating to the needs of victims who were particularly vulnerable, such as people with complex needs.
- Caring Dads – Pilots to be rolled out in Middlesbrough and Stockton