

Domestic Abuse Steering Group

A meeting of Domestic Abuse Steering Group was held on Thursday, 13th June, 2019.

Present: Katie Needham (Chair),

Cllr Jim Beall (SBC), Paul Brodie (Cleveland Police) Danielle Chadwick (Harbour), Angela Corner (Thirteen Group), Sara Dalton (Catalyst), Cllr A. McCoy (SBC), Cllr Steve Nelson (SBC), Callum Titley (SBC), Dawn Tyreman (SBC),

Officers: Rachel Batey, Michael Henderson, Claire Sills, Dave Willingham (SBC)

Also in attendance: Melissa Morbeck (Everyone's Business)

Apologies: Cllr Lisa Evans ,

1 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal/ non prejudicial interest in the Domestic Abuse Action Plan item as he was a member of the Thirteen Board.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019

Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019.

3 Everyone's Business Presentation

The Steering Group was provided with a presentation, from Everyone's Business, relating to addressing Domestic Abuse at Work.

It was noted that 'Everyone's Business' worked with employers to tackle domestic abuse, by providing the necessary tools to recognize the signs and play an active role in prevention.

Members noted that:

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experience domestic abuse in their lifetime

3 in 4 of those victims of domestic abuse will be targeted whilst at work

58% of people enduring domestic abuse miss at least three days of work a month due to abuse

Nearly 90% of victims never tell their employer

70% of employers do not know how to respond to domestic abuse

Currently, only around 5% of businesses had a domestic abuse policy in place for staff to access and seek support from

Everyone's Business aimed to engage numerous employers throughout the United Kingdom by starting the conversation about domestic abuse.

It would provide employers with the tools they needed to strengthen the response and support available to employees experiencing and perpetrating abuse

It would increase the efforts to prevent domestic abuse by raising awareness in the workplace

The partnership would work with employers to actively think about their domestic abuse policies and procedures, working closely with HR, line managers, EAP's and anybody else as appropriate

The purpose was to create an overall change on how employers thought and dealt with domestic abuse.

The Everyone's Business portal was an online space, launched for businesses in England and Wales to provide support to their staff who may have experienced domestic abuse.

The portal included:

The company's HR policies around domestic abuse

Information about dedicated staff champions who were trained to listen and signpost to services

Tools such as self-assessments to help understand their situation

Contact information for nearby specialist support services

Dedicated sections for those concerned about a friend, family member or colleague as well as a specific page for those concerned about their own behaviour.

The portal was free for all businesses signed up to Everyone's Business.

Discussion

- The Steering Group considered that Everyone's Business was an important initiative and was something agencies would want to engage with. It was agreed that the initiative needed to be linked with the Council's Better Health at Work Programme.

- The Local Government Association had been contacted about working with Everyone's Business.

- One of the Steering Group's members indicated that she would highlight Everyone's Business at a meeting of the North East Regional Employers' Organization.

- it was noted that the initiative could assist Thirteen in obtaining Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation.

- members noted that this was a free offer, at the moment, though funding ended in March 2020

There was a discussion around what the next steps should be and the following was suggested.

- Each partner to be allocated 10 minutes, at each meeting, to present its policy document to the Steering Group and what it was doing to support its employees. This could assist with sharing best practice and identifying gaps.
- It was also suggested that any work needed to link in with the Better Health at work programme (BHAW). A meeting was to be arranged between BHAW coordinators and Melissa Morbeck. Melissa agreed to come back to the August steering group and would come to the area, a few days in advance of the meeting, to allow for time to meet with interested organisations. Representatives were asked to take the 'Everyone's Business' offer back to their organisations and decide if they wished to explore further.
- . Martin Gray would liaise with HR in terms of the Council's involvement.

RESOLVED that the presentation and discussion be noted and the next steps, as described above, be agreed.

4 Review of Terms of Reference

Members reviewed its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.

It was agreed that the membership would be amended to take account of recent changes to Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities and that a representative from Housing Option be added.

Members agreed that attempts should be made to identify a vice chair from an organization other than the Council. To this end it was suggested that the Chair write to relevant members for expressions of interest.

It was explained that the Operational Group was reviewing how it functioned, and an update on this would be provided to the Steering Group's meeting in August.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure be agreed, subject to the amendments detailed above.
2. the Chair write to non-Council members of the Steering Group to gauge those members' interest in taking up the vice Chair position.
3. an update report on the review of the Operational Group be presented to this

Group's next meeting.

5 Responding to Domestic Abuse within Early Help Services

The Steering Group considered a report relating to Responding to Domestic Abuse within Early Help Services.

Members were provided with details of the approach taken, to respond to domestic abuse, within all strands of Early Help Services.

Members noted that:

- all staff within Children's Services would be trained in Restorative Practice, by the end of summer 2019.
- systems improvements had been made to accurately record and recognize domestic abuse. Further work would be undertaken to progress a system that would allow intelligence to be extracted alongside other issues that families faced.
- there was an increased confidence in the recognition of, and response to, domestic abuse across all of Early Help services.
- The upskilling of the workforce continued.
- The role of a Harbour Worker, within Children's Services, had been, and remained, essential to the effective response to families.
- Members noted work being done around recognizing abuse via social media and building awareness in the family.
- members discussed financial dependence and Harbour indicated that it may be able to collate some statistics relating to people living in a home, where there was Domestic Abuse, but they were unable to leave for financial reasons.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and an update on Early Help Services be provided to a future meeting.

6 Developing the Relationship Approach within Early Help - Reducing Parental Conflict

Members considered a report that provide an update on reducing parental conflict through Early Help Services.

Members were advised of the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, designed to help local authorities across England to integrate services and approaches, which addressed parental conflict, into local services for families.

It was explained that funding had been secured to roll out Reducing Parental Conflict Training and details of planned workshops was provided.

When training had been completed practitioners would start to identify tailor made responses for relevant families.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7 Domestic Abuse Action Plan

Members received a report that presented the updated Domestic Abuse Action Plan 2019 - 20.

The report also provided specific updates relating to:

- Whole Housing Site Pilot
- Accommodation based Domestic Abuse Services - Consultation
- Roll out of Trauma Informed Training

Discussion:

- members requested that timescales be included in the Action Plan.
- priority 1.1 consideration be given to indicating a specific number of employers with DA Workplace policies and procedures, potentially in the context of engagement with Everyone's Business.
- there was discussion on DA data and it was agreed that the process was intended to be that data was predominantly discussed by the Operational Group, with any significant issues identified being referred to the Steering Group.
- It was noted that one of the areas of focus, for the Operational Group, would be repeats and it was indicated that the Group would provide a report, on this, to the Steering Group's December meeting.

Consultation on Accommodation

- it was noted that a draft Stockton response would be circulated to members of the Steering Group, for final comment, in mid-July.
- the LGA would be issuing a response.
- resources would be an issue, as proposals placed certain statutory duties on local authorities.
- it was highlighted that the consultation focused on accommodation but it was felt it should have included other issues, further upstream, to prevent problems occurring. The current proposals appeared piecemeal and not sufficiently strategic

Trauma (Navigator Project)

- Members were informed of an opportunity to access funding to roll out TIME training to organizations. TIME training raised awareness of the effects of DA trauma and how to identify and respond to it.

- Members requested a report on Navigator Programmes be provided to a future meeting of the Steering Group.

RESOLVED that the update and discussion be noted and actioned as appropriate.

8 Forward Plan and AOB

Members noted its Forward Plan.

Members were asked to support a Harbour fund raising night on 4 October 2019. Further details would be provided outside the meeting.

Concerns were raised about 'the Deliverance Project', which worked with perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. It was not a registered charity and it was unclear where its funding and referrals came from.