

Report for: Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board
Date: 19 March 2009

Agenda Item No: 27
Safer Stockton Partnership
12 May 2009

Forced Marriage Progress Report 2008 / 09

1. Purpose of the Report

Board Members may recall receiving a report in January 2008 to raise awareness regarding Forced Marriage as a safeguarding issue. This report advises on progress to date and the appointment of a Forced Marriage Support Worker (black and minority ethnic health).

2. Background

All schools in Stockton have received information from Stockton LSCB, regarding the CHOICE initiative; posters and advice on what to do if they think a child may be the subject of a potential Forced Marriage. They should also have received the revised national guidance from the DCSF.

Awareness sessions relating to Forced Marriage will also be included in the Children's Workforce / Safeguarding Training Programme for 2009/10.

Forced marriage is a gross violation of women's human rights. It is a form of domestic violence and/or child abuse and it is known that Asian women are 2 to 3 times more likely to commit suicide and self harm as a result of forced marriage. According to the Home Office Forced Marriage Support Unit, 65% of the cases they deal with are from the South Asian community.

North Tees PCT (Local Delivery Plan) allocated £29,000 for 2008/09 and £29,000 for 2009/10 to provide forced marriage support work with the BME community regarding forced marriage issues.

This has been used to fund the appointment of a Forced Marriage Support Worker. A contract and service specification for which is in place between the Joint Commissioning Unit and Cleveland Police. The details of the service specification are shown below. Regular meetings will take place with the Forced Marriage Support Worker and the Joint Commissioning Unit to monitor the contact. The SLSCB Business Manager will attend at least one of the meetings each year to discuss and support the safeguarding children agenda.

The Forced Marriage Support Worker will work with the Forced Marriage Unit (Home Office) and Cleveland Police Forced Marriage Helpline (CHOICE).

3. Service Specification

Aims and Objectives

- To provide emotional and practical support to victims who have been through or may go through forced marriage.
- To educate the community regarding forced marriage issues, particularly South Asian, Middle East and African communities.
- To work closely with the Cleveland Police CHOICE helpline staff and honour based lead.
- To recruit volunteers to support the victims and provide specific training on forced marriage issues to volunteers.
- To map support services for honour based violence and develop local support mechanisms.
- To create and maintain links with relevant agencies and organisations.

Service Delivery

- To appoint a Forced Marriage Support Worker to work under Home Office Guidance on dealing with cases of forced marriage.
- To provide emotional and practical support to victims.
- To signpost victims to appropriate services and provide information where appropriate.
- To provide 40 forced marriage awareness sessions during the contract lifetime to community groups, schools, professionals working with BME groups (both statutory and voluntary) and

the police where applicable.

- To train 20 volunteers during the lifetime of the contract to work alongside the Forced Marriage Support Worker.
- To undertake an evaluation of support services offered and outcomes achieved from those receiving support.

Performance, Monitoring and Review

- A quarterly monitoring pro-forma will be submitted to the Joint Commissioning Unit, followed up by quarterly meetings.

Standards and Procedures

- The Provider works under Home Office Guidance, Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures and has a current Safeguarding Children Statement.

4. **Recommendation**

Board members are asked to:

- i. Note the Forced Marriages Progress Report 2008 / 2009
- ii. Share the Forced Marriages report with the Community Safety Partnership
- iii. Receive further updates regarding the work of the Forced Marriages Support Worker during 2009/10

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