

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Purpose of report:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Safer Stockton Partnership of activities that are contributing to the development of a Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy for Stockton. The new Strategy will be effective from 1 April 2014.

Background Information

Stockton's current Domestic Violence Strategy is in place until 31 March 2014. Various relevant documents have emerged since the production of the current Strategy and the definition of DV has been revised. In addition, two independent reviews in Stockton have suggested ways in which the strategic approach to DV in Stockton can be strengthened. A discussion within the DV Strategy group confirmed that the Group wished to maintain a DV Strategy rather than include DV into an overall violence reduction Strategy.

Government Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.**

*This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Activities contributing to the development of a refreshed DV Strategy:

Education and Training – following consultation a task and finish group will be established to review education and training relating to domestic abuse.

GP involvement/awareness raising – contact made with GP Tutors in Health Education North East responsible for graduate and post-graduate education. Further meetings taking place to discuss potential educational developments/collaborative working. Dr Jonathon Berry identified as CCG contact for DV.

Workplace Health – DV is to be a strand of the workplace health agenda within Public Health.

Assura Tees-wide Sexual Health Service – is now represented on the Domestic Abuse Forum and the identification and response to DV has been included in the quality indicators for the Assura contract in 13/14.

North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust – An Independent Domestic Violence Advocate post is to be located in the Trust for a one year trial period.

Commissioning – meeting with Tees-wide commissioners to discuss contract specifications, performance, sharing of good practice, etc. Stockton Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group established and functioning well. A commissioning process is to take place for a new Domestic Abuse service with the aim that the new service will be in place for 1 April 2014.

External DV Strategy review – following the Standing Together review, the author, Laura Croom, researched DV strategies that she believed were of a good standard. These strategies have been reviewed by Public Health and contact made with the authors for shared learning on process, content, consultation, etc.

Protection – discussions have taken place with Mike Cane and Lynn Beeston from Cleveland Police regarding how the low, medium and high risk cases within the Vulnerability Unit can be more supported by partners.

Research – a meeting has taken place with Dr Nicole Westmarland, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Durham. Dr Westmarland has a particular interest in research relating to Domestic Violence and is co-director of a new research centre – the Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (Durham CRiVA). Emma Champley is now a member of this research group. On-going discussions/developments will be taking place with Dr Westmarland.

Public Campaigns – Harry Wearing, the Public Health Officer in the Communications Department, is reviewing the public campaigns that have occurred in the past regarding DV. He is considering potential options for a future DV campaign in Stockton that is based on a ‘social norms’ approach.

Domestic Violence Forum – Terms of Reference have been reviewed and increased representation has occurred.

‘Honour’ Based Violence, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation – following meetings with Satnam Singh, SBC’s Senior Cohesion & Diversity Officer, around these aspects of DV. It has been agreed that this will be a comprehensive theme within the new DV Strategy.

Public and service user consultations – consultations involving adults and young people will take place from July 2013 to January 2014 relating to DV. Consultation has already taken place with stakeholders, victims of domestic abuse, perpetrators of domestic abuse and social care staff. Consultation in the coming months will include children affected by domestic abuse and the Viewpoint questionnaire. Additional consultation is being planned.

Recommendation

That SSP notes the content of this report.

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