



Combating Domestic Violence in Woking

**Local Committee for Woking
12 June 2003**

KEY ISSUE:

Domestic violence is a significant element of crime in Surrey. The Local Committee for Woking is contributing to a domestic violence outreach project.

SUMMARY:

Research nationally and locally shows that domestic violence causes distress and costs money. More often than not, it is repeated. This reports on the domestic violence outreach project which has been set up to address this serious problem.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to note the report.

Introduction: the background to the domestic violence outreach project

1. As Members will know, in each borough, Surrey County Council, the police and the borough or district council form a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and must develop a Community Safety Strategy.
2. *Safer Woking* (the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for Woking) aims to reduce crime and reduce the fear of crime.
3. Reflecting the importance of domestic violence as a crime in Woking, the first Community Safety Strategy for Woking highlighted "the need to reduce incidents of alcohol-related crime and disorder, focusing on ... domestic violence and hate crime". The partnership considered how best to reduce the incidence of domestic violence altogether, and in particular, how to reduce the number of domestic violence incidents that involved victims who had reported such an incident in the previous 12 months, and how to make it easier for victims of domestic violence to access help and report incidents.
4. This was based on national and local research which highlights the prevalence of domestic violence.

Research findings

5. Domestic violence, as a recorded crime, is defined as "A couple in an intimate relationship, past or present, with an element of violence" (*Source: Surrey Police*). It can happen to people of any social background, sex, race or religion. It can take the form of physical, psychological, sexual and financial abuse.
6. The British Crime Survey 1998 shows the widespread nature of domestic violence and confirms that women and children are the main victims. It demonstrates that one woman in four experiences domestic violence at some stage in her life (*BCI, 1998*). Between 1 in 8 and 1 in 10 women had experienced domestic violence in the past year.
7. The findings show that the number of domestic violence victims is far higher than the actual reported rate owing to the victim's reluctance to report incidents.
8. Domestic violence accounts for one quarter of all violent crime and 57% of people who experience domestic violence experience repeat victimisation. No other crime has a rate of repeat victimisation as high as that for domestic violence (*BCI, 2000*)

9. Locally, Dominy and Radford researched prevalence of domestic violence within Surrey in 1996. The study aimed to gain an indication of the extent of domestic violence among women in Surrey, explore the needs of women and children with regard to service provision, evaluate the responses of key agencies and look at future inter-agency strategies to protect victims and prevent crimes. Of the 484 women who took part in the study, 31% had experienced domestic violence.
10. From April 2001 to March 2002 the following number of cases were reported in Woking:

Month	Number of reported domestic violence cases in Woking	
	2000*	2001**
April	25	42
May	57	41
June	41	29
July	47	25
August	66	29
September	56	44
October	58	25
November	39	29
December	43	27
January	61	31
February	51	25
March	72	23

* figures collated from a range of organisations in Woking including the Police, Social Services, Women's Aid, Fulchers Solicitors, Victim Support and Woking Borough Council

** figures from Surrey Police

11. Only a quarter of the women in Dominy and Radford's study reported the crime to the police. This means that local statistics from the Surrey Community Safety Unit and Surrey Police may underestimate the rate of domestic violence incidents. Other research suggests that a woman will be assaulted by her partner or ex-partner 35 times before she reports it to the police (*Yeamshire, 1997*).
12. Annex 1 gives more statistics.

Costs of domestic violence

13. The financial costs of domestic violence have been published in 'Counting the Costs' by Stanko et al. (1998). Although these relate specifically to London, the costs of police intervention can be extrapolated to other parts of the country. In 1996, police attendance at domestic violence incidents cost the Metropolitan Police £61.00 per incident. In London, at least £278m per annum of public money is spent on responding to domestic violence. This figure does not include some expensive items such as any hospitalisation costs, the costs of murder trials and many others.
14. The Surrey Community Safety Unit produced an overview of domestic violence in Surrey from April 2000 to July 2002. This study details the estimated costs of domestic violence for a variety of agencies within Surrey. Domestic violence incidents are classified under a number of offence types including homicide, violence against the person, sexual offences and so on. The estimated cost of dealing with a homicide for Surrey's agencies was £1,100,000 per incident. The estimated cost of dealing with violence against the person for more serious offences was £130,000 per incident and the estimated costs for less serious offences £2000 per incident (Brand and Price, 2000).
15. From April 2000, Child Protection Conferences started to record underlying or 'major factors' in each case. These factors include parental mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse. Some cases may involve a number of these factors.
16. Domestic violence was considered to be a primary factor in 22.9% of Area Child Protection cases in 2000-01 and 21% of cases in 2001-02. Not only therefore does domestic violence cause suffering to the immediate victim, it also affects children, and often results in child protection proceedings. Apart from the distress, there is a cost in staff time to Surrey County Council Children's Services. These costs would be cut if the number of repeat offences could be reduced.

Domestic Violence Outreach Project

17. An outreach project to people experiencing domestic violence was chosen as the best intervention. It should be more effective than existing services, and less costly than the statutory support. Specialist workers would reach out to adults and children who experience domestic violence and those agencies who currently offer support to them.
18. The project is funded by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in the three boroughs of Runnymede, Surrey Heath and Woking, with the Surrey County Council element coming from the Community Safety funding through the Local Committees.

19. The objectives of the Domestic Violence Outreach Project were set as:
- a. To provide direct support to victims of domestic violence in order that their safety and quality of life may be improved
 - b. To provide advice on a variety of different issues including legal, housing and benefit advice
 - c. To prevent re-victimisation offering women support during resettlement and separation
 - d. To intervene at the earliest opportunity to prevent the risk of violence escalating
 - e. To encourage multi-agency and joint working in response to domestic violence
 - f. To educate and raise awareness of the issue of domestic violence within the areas covered.

Benefits of the Domestic Violence Outreach Project

20. The outreach project will offer women access to:
- a. a service which will give them the information and support necessary to make their own decisions about their future
 - b. an advocacy service which helps support the women when approaching other agencies for support and advice
 - c. advice on legal, housing and benefit entitlement
 - d. specialist workers with relevant skills
 - e. practical support and advice when seeking to prosecute a perpetrator
 - f. a service that is acutely aware of safety and confidentiality issues
 - g. a flexible service that could respond quickly to the diverse range of domestic violence situations women find themselves in when they are living in, leaving or re-settling
 - h. services that could respond to the complexity of abuse issues that women experience
 - i. specialist services designed for women who may have difficulty accessing domestic violence services i.e. minority ethnic women, rural women, disabled women and lesbian and bi-sexual women
 - j. a well-publicised and accessible service.
21. Research indicates that a victim may go to up to ten different agencies before she gets the help she needs (*Dominy and Radford, 1996*). This is not satisfactory for the victim and may also have a direct effect on her safety and leave her vulnerable to more abuse. The outreach project addresses this issue by being the first point of contact and a " one stop shop " gateway for advice and support.

22. Repeat incidents (where the same victim has been assaulted by the same partner) are the particular target of the outreach worker. The prevention of these repeat incidents would greatly reduce the suffering of women involved and the cost of repeated interventions to agencies including the Health Service, Surrey County Council and Surrey Police.
23. The Domestic Violence Outreach Project offers these benefits to organisations:
- a. access to a competent outreach service,
 - b. provision of specialist advice and support about Domestic Violence, to victims and agencies
 - c. the opportunity to save staff resources especially for the Police, by being able to refer women to this specialist service,
 - d. a means of meeting national and local performance indicators on domestic violence

Monitoring and evaluation

24. The essential outcomes that the Community Safety Partnerships are seeking to achieve are:
- a. soundly based figures of the number of women seeking domestic violence support and advice
 - b. a reduction in repeat victimisation, as defined by Police figures initially
 - c. an increase in prosecution of offenders
 - d. evidence from a client survey that victims feel that the advice they have received from the service has been helpful, supportive, personalised, confidential, and beneficial in enabling them to make choices.
25. The monitoring and evaluation process will be geared to these outcomes, and focus on a borough basis to provide the following:
- a. number of women supported
 - b. the area of their address (subject to maintaining confidentiality)
 - c. referral agency, or self referral
 - d. type of advice given
 - e. number of support plans written for individual long term support
 - f. number of cases in which the victim was supported in making a prosecution
 - g. incidence of repeat victimisation
 - h. equal opportunities monitoring
 - i. degree of client satisfaction with the service
 - j. the number of presentations, and advisory consultations given to agencies.

26. Surrey Women's Aid will keep all the three partnerships closely involved, and to this end will:
- a. produce a quarterly monitoring report to each partnership
 - b. attend each partnership as invited, and/or other Member meetings as requested
 - c. establish a Management Board comprising the principal stakeholders, to which it will report on a quarterly basis
 - d. contribute to the Countywide Domestic Violence Forum and Strategy, so that a shared approach and standards are developed across the County.

Progress to date

27. Plans for the project took a long time to implement. One reason for its slow start was that it needed to cover all three boroughs of Runnymede, Surrey Heath and Woking, to match the police division. This meant that funding had to be secured from all three boroughs/districts and from Surrey County Council funding for community safety work in each of the three areas. In Woking, Surrey County Council agreed its funding early in the planning stage of the project. Because funding was transferred to the partnership, it could be carried forward into the next financial year and was not lost despite delays in getting the project started.
28. It was also some time before the funders decided how the project should be managed. By autumn 2002, an agreement was made with Surrey Women's Aid to run the project from offices in the Woking depot. Funding agencies are involved in advising on the project, while staff and financial management are the responsibility of Surrey Women's Aid as an independent charity. The Local Director for Runnymede will represent Surrey County Council in the project management. The Local Committee for Woking will receive a yearly report on the project, with exception reporting in between if anything serious occurs.
29. Three part-time workers were to be appointed covering the three boroughs. It was hoped that one would speak languages spoken by the ethnic minority communities in Woking. Further delays resulted from the failure, in two rounds of recruitment, to attract a candidate with the necessary skills and abilities. At present, two workers are covering three boroughs, while we consider whether the Woking post could be made fulltime.
30. Despite these delays, *Safer Woking* remains confident that this is the best approach, and no money has been wasted or lost even though the project started later than planned.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: The 1998 British Crime Survey.
The 2000 British Crime Survey.
Brand and Price (2000) Home Office Research Study on Social and Economic Costs of Crime.
Stanko et al - Counting the Costs: Estimating the Impact of Domestic Violence in the London Borough of Hackney (1998).
Dominy and Radford – Domestic Violence in Surrey: Developing an Effective Inter-agency Response (1996).
Community Safety Unit – An Overview of Domestic Violence in Surrey (2002)

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OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

April 2000 to July 02

Extrapolation of National Research to Surrey

Taking the findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey that between 1 in 8 and 1 in 10 has experience domestic violence in the past year and applying this to the female population in Surrey, there have been approximately 35,000 victims of domestic violence in the county, 3,000 in Woking:

District	Female population 16-59	1 in 10	1 in 8
Elmbridge	40,612	4,061	5,077
Epsom & Ewell	20,233	2,023	2,529
Guildford	37,497	3,750	4,687
Mole Valley	21,806	2,181	2,726
Reigate & Banstead	35,099	3,510	4,387
Runnymede	21,931	2,193	2,741
Spelthorne	25,258	2,526	3,157
Surrey Heath	25,933	2,593	3,242
Tandridge	23,426	2,343	2,928
Waverley	32,115	3,212	4,014
Woking	27,521	2,752	3,440
Surrey	311,431	31,143	38,929

Potential number of female victims of domestic violence based on the findings from the 1998 BCS and applied to 1999 mid year population estimates

Costs of Crime

A research study from the Home Office (Brand & Price 2000) has attempted to place an average cost on different types or categories of crime. The costs are based on 1999 prices and are averages. They do not represent the cost of specific incidents. Even within the 108 Home Office offence categories, the severity and nature of the offence can vary. The costs also do not distinguish between different victims based on their age or gender. 'Much of the cost of property crime will involve the loss of or damage to property. The majority of costs arising from personal crimes involve physical and emotional pain and suffering, lost output and health costs' (Brand & Price 2000).

Offence type	Average cost £ (From Brand & Price 2000)	Total number of offences in Surrey April 2000 – March 2001	Total number of offences in Surrey April 2001 – March 2002	Total number of offences in Surrey April 2002 – July 2002	Total April 2000- July 2002	Total cost (£) April 2000 – July 2002
Homicide	1,100,000	0	0	0	0	0
Violence against the person more serious offences *	130,000	5	3	3	11	£1,430,000
Violence against the person less serious offences * (Includes common assault)	2,000 (540)	133 (114)	126	45	304	£608,000 (£61,560)
Sexual offences	19,000	7	3	0	10	£190,000
Robbery/mugging	4,700	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary dwelling	2,300	2	1	3	6	£13,800
Theft (not vehicle)	340	0	1	0	1	£340
Theft from vehicle	580	0	0	1	1	£580
Theft of Vehicle	4,800	0	1	1	1	£4,800
Criminal damage	510	23	33	11	67	£34,170
Total						£2,343,250

Table summarising the estimated costs of domestic violence based on Surrey Police Crime figures from table 4 and Home Office Research (Brand, S. and Price, R. (2000) The Economic and Social Costs of Crime, Home Office Research Study 217, Home Office, London)

Item 16

Category of cost	Best estimate (£ per incident)						
	Homicide	All VAP excluding homicide	More serious VAP	Less serious VAP	Sexual offences	Common assault	Robbery/ mugging
Defensive expenditure	-	2	10	0	2	0	0
Insurance admin	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
Total In anticipation of crime	0	2	10	0	2	0	40
Physical & emotional impact	700,000	12,000	97,000	120	12,000	240	2,400
Value of property stolen	-	-	-	-	-	-	330
Property damaged/ destroyed	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Property recovered	-	-	-	-	-	-	-50
Victim services	4,700	6	6	6	20	6	6
Lost output	370,000	2,000	14,000	400	2,000	20	420
Health services	630	1,200	8,500	200	1,200	-	190
Total as a consequence of crime	1,100,000	15,000	120,000	730	15,000	270	3,300
Police activity	11,000	1,400	6,700	620	1,900	130	680
Prosecution	410	50	250	20	60	5	20
Magistrates court	100	10	60	6	7	1	4
Crown court	720	90	440	40	180	9	40
Jury service	90	10	60	5	20	1	7
Legal aid	1,100	130	650	60	200	10	60
Non-legal aid defence	250	30	150	10	50	4	20
Probation service	430	50	260	20	60	5	20
Prison service	4,200	520	2,600	240	1,200	50	450
Other CJS costs	1,700	220	1,100	100	160	20	70
Criminal injuries compensation admin	2,000	250	1,200	110	-	20	-
Total In response to crime	22,000	2,700	13,000	1,300	3,900	270	1,400
Total cost per incident	1,100,000	18,000	130,000	2,000	19,000	540	470

Average Cost of Personal Crime (taken from Brand & Price 2000)