



Communities Select Committee
31st October 2013

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2013 - 2018

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

To have oversight of the final Domestic Abuse Strategy for Surrey as signed off by the multi-agency Community and Public Safety Board and to review the developing action plan.

Introduction:

1. Domestic Abuse (DA) causes harm to both adults and children, is of high cost to public agencies and employers and produces behaviours that can be replicated generation to generation. Domestic violence is the highest reported violent crime in Surrey; domestic abuse affects both emotional and psychological wellbeing and occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability.
2. Reported levels of domestic abuse, either as first time incidents or repeats, are not reducing in Surrey despite efforts to tackle the problem and based on national research, per head of population, reported incidents are lower than would be expected indicating a level of hidden harm.
3. A new strategy has been developed as a commitment by all involved in DA; public, voluntary, community and faith organisations to work together as one, to raise awareness, to address both the causes and effects of domestic abuse and to improve lives. This will require changes to current working practices around education, information sharing, referral, service delivery and a refocusing of the money spent. The aim is to make changes that lead to improved outcomes for those affected through focused interventions, and to reduce the total cost to the public sector through long term culture change and a reduced demand on services.

Strategy Development

4. The Community Safety Strategic Assessment highlighted Domestic Abuse as a key priority and the Community and Public Safety Board (CPSB) in Surrey committed to take action to reduce the harm that Domestic Abuse causes to the residents of Surrey and to make best use of the resources deployed by agencies on responding to DA.
5. A rapid improvement event (RIE) was held in June 2012 attended by representatives of all the key agencies in Surrey dealing with DA. From this, work streams were set up to test how we might improve our response to DA. The learning from these work streams has already resulted in more oversight of the awareness campaigns, adoption of the strap line and logo 'Surrey Against Domestic Abuse', and the launch of a Surrey Against Domestic Abuse website for signposting and information provision for staff and public alike. The RIE has also informed development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy (Appendix 1) and developed thinking on information sharing, joint response, best practice and training. This learning will form part of the Domestic Abuse Action plan (Appendix 2).
6. Strategy development consultation events were held from February 2013 to June 2013, and were attended by representatives of the police, probation, prisons, outreach, health, Surrey County Council, District and Boroughs, the military, other Counties, voluntary and faith organisations, and others with an interest in DA, over 100 people in all. From these events and discussions with Surrey County Council Directors, police and probation the strategy and action plan were developed. These were circulated over the Summer to all those who attended events and wider including all Members of the Communities Select Committee, portfolio holders for Community Safety, and the Community and Public Safety Board. All responses received prior to the CPSB on September 25th were reviewed and the strategy reworked to accommodate where appropriate.
7. The CPSB reviewed the strategy and action plan at their September meeting and adopted the strategy. The action plan will now be further developed through the DA Development Group (working group of the CPSB) and linking closely with other Boards and programmes of work such as Safeguarding, who have a key aim to reduce DA; Health and Wellbeing, who have adopted the strategy priorities; and Transforming Public Services, who we are working with to deliver DA services through the Family Support programme. The activities on the action plan will join up all agencies delivering change and utilise the most appropriate vehicle for delivering that change.

Conclusions:

8. The strategy outlines our wish to improve our joint response to DA to all those affected, to intervene earlier by acting on intelligence we hold across all the organisations and to focus on prevention through

education and raising awareness and long term to reduce DA in our society.

9. The strategy details our ambition for the next five years and is supported by an action plan that details the key work activities we will focus on up to the end of 2014 to help to achieve our ambition and will update and change as the actions are delivered.
10. All the actions will be delivered in conjunction with the aims of the wider Community Safety, Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing and Transforming Public Service agendas and will involve Children and Adults Services.

Recommendations:

That the Communities Select Committee:

- a) endorse the five year Domestic Abuse Strategy and developing action plan
- b) support the shared partnership vision 'to ensure all those affected by Domestic Abuse have the right information, services and support, at the earliest opportunity, to live lives free from domestic violence or abuse and gain the personal confidence to build healthy relationships for themselves and their dependants'

Next steps:

The development of the action plan and performance reporting and discussion with Select Committee regarding further updates

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Sources/background papers: N/A

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