

APPENDIX A

**LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CORPORATE
STRATEGY
2005-2008**

Helen Oliver
Senior Community Safety Officer
Community Safety Team
249 Willesden Lane
London
NW2 5JH
Direct Line 0208 937 1047
Email: Helen.oliver@brent.gov.uk

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“Domestic violence affects thousands of Londoners every year- in individual families, in our communities, in our workplaces and in public services. It shatters lives, crushes dreams and all too often, results in death.

I want London to be a truly 21st century world city- that means a city where all feel safe and secure, where children have happy childhoods unscarred by violence and where agencies provide safe and affective responses to domestic violence when it does occur.”

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London 2005

PREFACE

Society has many misconceptions around domestic violence. Due to this victims are sometimes not given the help that they deserve and need. Many of these attitudes are rooted in a “*blame the victim- they should just leave*” mentality¹.

Myth: “The victim must have done something to provoke the abuse”.

Fact: No form of violence is acceptable behaviour. Domestic violence is about the perpetrators use of violence and abuse, not a victim’s inability to avoid it.

Myth: “Drug and/or Alcohol abuse is the cause of domestic violence”

Fact: Excessive drinking or drug misuse is not the cause of domestic violence, or an excuse for it. The abuser may stop drug or alcohol use but not lose the abusive behaviour. It is also worth remembering that some victims may use drugs and alcohol in response to domestic abuse. Therefore it is often necessary to address an individual’s drug and alcohol issues when offering support.

Myth: “What goes on in the home should remain private”

Fact: Domestic violence is against the law. Therefore it is the responsibility of society to hold perpetrators to account for their abusive behaviour. If we choose to ignore it we collude with the perpetrator.

Myth: “Domestic violence is part of our culture”

Fact: No religion or culture condones violence. Anyone who uses religion as an excuse for abuse of this kind is misled.

Myth: “The victim must enjoy the violence or they would leave”

Fact: Many victims do eventually leave but the decision to do so is extremely difficult. Victims are likely to leave and then return many times before they finally get away. Practical considerations such as housing, children’s education and income can pose huge obstacles for individuals attempting to escape. Emotional considerations such as self esteem, fear, social pressure, and the nature of their relationship with the abuser can also keep some people involved in violent situations. In addition some people simply can’t see a way out, either they do not recognise their experience as abuse, they believe they have encouraged it, or they can’t understand the messages of help.

Myth: “Children who live with Domestic violence will be perpetrators or victims of the future as part of a cycle of violence”

Fact: Research indicates that 70% of boys who witness domestic violence as children did **not** grow up to become violent themselves. Research also indicates that women who witnessed domestic violence as children are no more likely to experience violence as adults than non abused individuals.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Defining Domestic Violence

For clarity and consistency, it has been agreed that Brent would adopt the Home Office definition of domestic abuse as released by the government in late 2004:

Domestic Abuse is:

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.

Research indicates that domestic abuse is predominantly perpetrated by men and the overwhelming majority of victims of domestic violence are women and children. However we also recognise that all strategies that seek to combat domestic abuse should approach the issue in an inclusive manner acknowledging that it affects both men and women, irrespective of sexuality, age, ethnicity, race, social background, and physical or mental ability.

National picture

The appalling reality is that every year, around one hundred and fifty people are murdered in England and Wales by their current or former partner. Domestic violence is a long-standing problem, for society with particular impact on women and children. The statistics speak for themselves:

- 45% of female murder victims die as a result of domestic violence
- one in four women will experience domestic violence during their lifetime
- one in six men will experience domestic violence as children or at another point during their lifetime
- abused women are eight times more likely to commit suicide
- in 90% of all domestic violence incidents involving families, a child/children are in the same room or in the next room,
- An association between 45-70% has been found between a father's violence to the mother and violence to the children.
- 30% of violence starts in pregnancy ⁱⁱ
- Domestic violence accounts for 16% of homelessness acceptances every year and in 2001/02 nearly 18,000 families lost their homes as a direct result of domestic violence ⁱⁱⁱ.

As these statistics demonstrate domestic violence has far reaching consequences on others in the family unit. In addition its indiscriminate nature means that anyone can become a victim, regardless of race, culture, age, disability, social background, educational ability, or geography.

It is estimated that there are three to four million domestic violent incidents in London each year and that it makes up over a quarter of all violent crime reported to the police. The actual prevalence of domestic violence in Brent is difficult to ascertain because of a significant level of under-reporting. However with just over

five thousand incidents reported to Brent police last year we can confidently assert that domestic violence affects the lives of tens of thousands of Brent residents each year.

Where are we in response to the Gill Hague report recommendations?

In 2001 the council's Community Safety Team commissioned Gill Hague from the University of Bristol's Domestic Violence Research Group to investigate the extent of domestic violence in the borough of Brent and the effectiveness of policy development and service provision. The report highlighted a number of shortfalls including:

1. A need for domestic violence to be fully recognised as a corporate responsibility, with the development of a strategic lead from Members and from the Corporate Management Team
2. A need for a strategic lead to assist in building a corporate approach and wider strategy across the authority and with other partners
3. A need for a domestic violence strategy which is embedded and integrated in partnership work and in all relevant strategic plans to enable joined-up work and co-ordination between them rather than piecemeal 'plan-by-plan', service development.
4. A need to develop Corporate policies to address the issues facing staff members who are experiencing domestic violence
5. A need to improve and coordinate data collection and monitoring across domestic violence agencies.
6. Increase in availability of Domestic violence training for both front-line officers and managers

In the years that have passed since this report some of these recommendations have been implemented, the production and implementation of this corporate policy aims to address the outstanding recommendations.

Consultation with the community of Brent

In accordance with Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Brent Council works in partnership with its other local responsible authorities in consulting the community to ensure that services are shaped to meet resident's requirements. The most recent consultation was carried out in late 2004 by the Brent CDRP with Brent Residents.

Respondents to the consultation questionnaire clearly identified violence as the most important priority. This evidence led us to develop violent crime priorities for the Partnership concentrating on domestic violence, gun enabled crime, public alcohol related crime, and sexual offences.

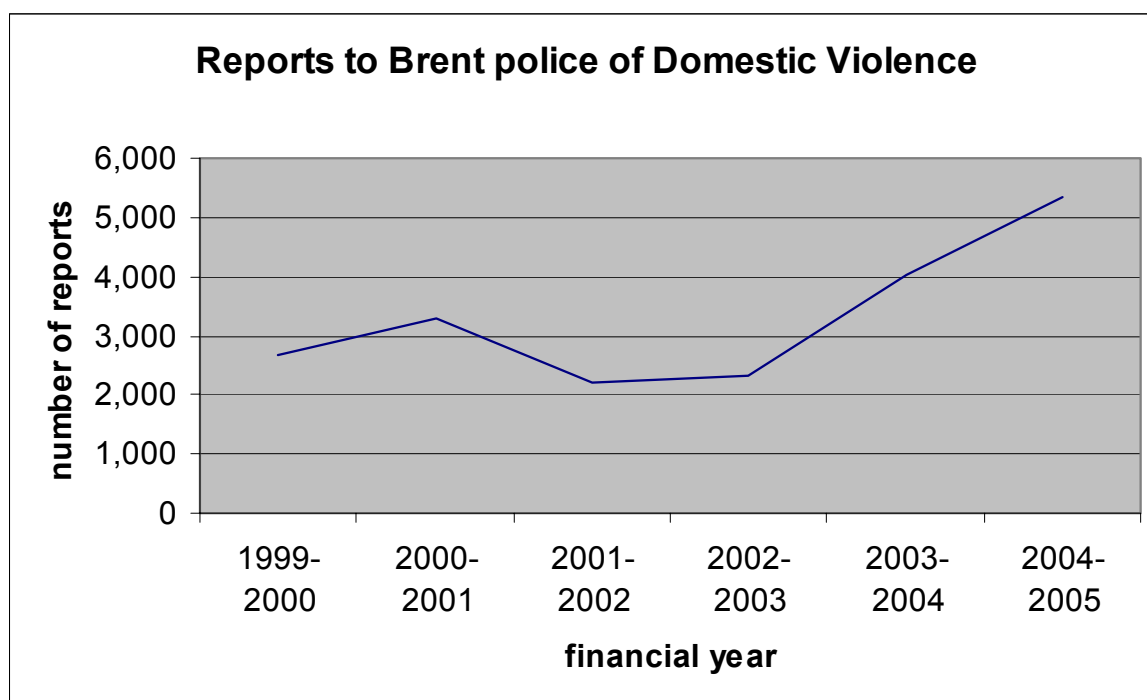
Recorded number of domestic homicides in Brent 2004-2005

Between April 2004 and March 2005 the police investigated the domestic violence related murders of four Brent residents, two of which were minors.

Reports to the Police

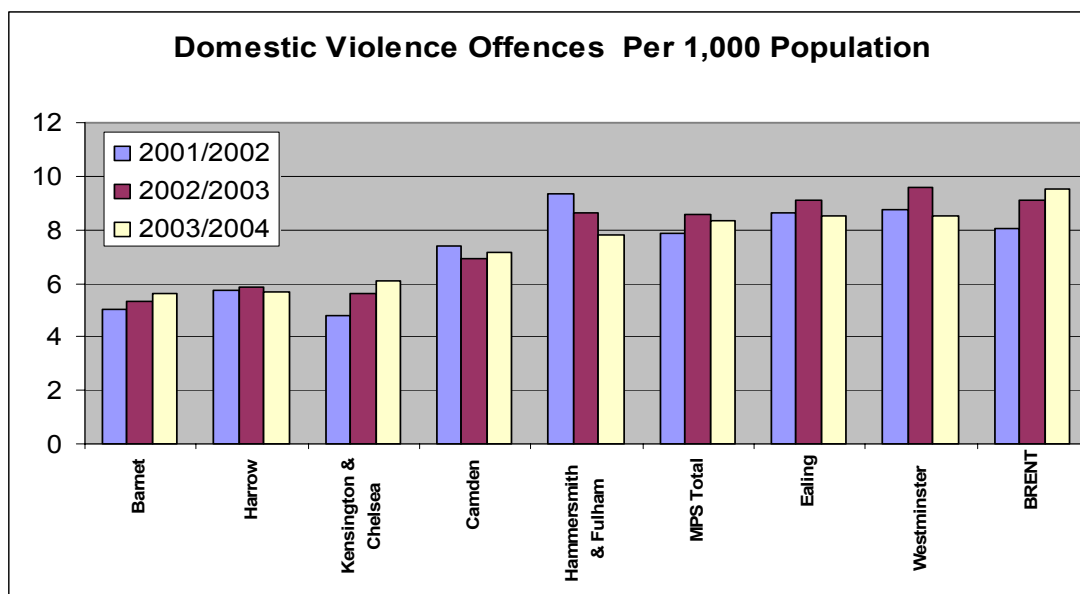
In the financial year 2004/05 Brent Police received approx 5357^{iv} reports of domestic violence, which demonstrates a 29%^v increase in reports to police from 2003/04 (4031). Three thousand and six of these reports were recorded as crimes. This is approximately 8.4%^{vi} of total crime recorded in Brent. To put these figures into context Brent currently has the highest reported level of DV in London with the exception of Croydon and Lambeth boroughs^{vii}.

| Financial Year | Number of DV Reports |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1999- 2000 | 2,655 |
| 2000- 2001 | 3,278 |
| 2001-2002 | 2,216 |
| 2002-2003 | 2,339 |
| 2003-2004 | 4,031 |
| 2004-2005 | 5,357 |



The dramatic increase in reports to the police is likely to be due to an increase in projects/publicity encouraging women to report together with improved police resources and policy around the issue.

Comparison with other boroughs



Brent now has the highest rate of recorded domestic violence per 1,000 population in London, some 14% higher than the MPS average.

Quarterly 'snap shot' of cases recorded through three referral channels

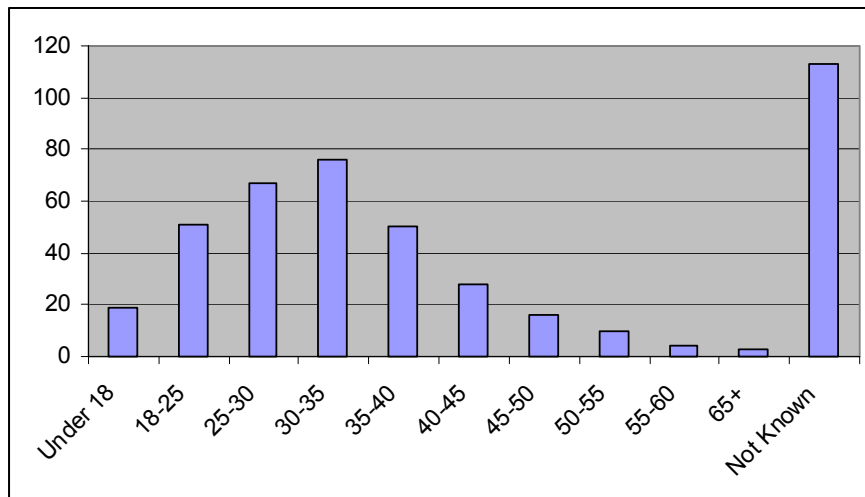
These Quarterly Statistics for October 2004 – December 2004 originating from three service providers have kindly been collated by Brent Domestic Violence Forum. They go some way to demonstrate the level of work going on across the specialist voluntary sector.

| October- December 2004 | Number of Adults supported | Number of Children Supported |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Brent Women's Aid | 336 | 428 |
| Asian Women's Resource Centre | 30 | 30 |
| Brent Victim Support | 9 | 6 |
| Total Women and Children supported | | 375:464 |

| Adult Ethnic Origin | | Adult Religion | |
|----------------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| Black African | 35 | Buddhist | 2 |
| Black Afro-Caribbean | 25 | Christian | 38 |
| Black Asian | 80 | Hindu | 29 |
| Black British | 37 | Jewish | |
| White Irish | 16 | Muslim | 78 |
| White British | 27 | Sikh | 2 |
| Irish Traveller | 10 | None/Atheist | 4 |
| Mixed race | 13 | Other | |
| Other (specify) | 27 | Not known | 232 |
| Not Known | 105 | | |

Here we see that the ethnicity of clients are disproportionate to the local ethnicity breakdown. In particular there appears to be a lower than average white Irish/ British client access rate which is something we need to evaluate in more depth. This may be due to a number of reasons including the specialist nature of the Asian Women's Resource Centre and the geographical origin of some clients who access Brent Women Aid service. However, the high proportion of clients whose ethnicity is unknown makes firm assertions difficult.

Age of client



Here we see that victims were predominantly aged between 18 and 40 during this snapshot in Brent. However, the high proportion of 'not known' means that this is subject to some variation.

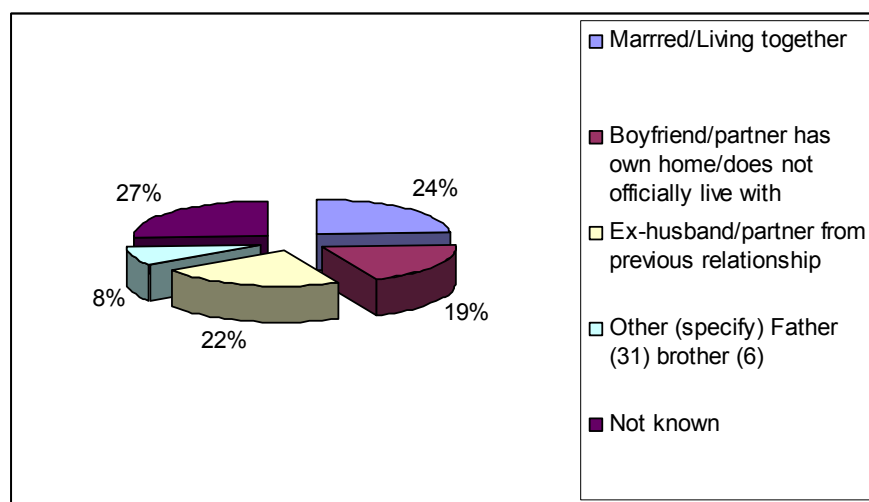
Source of Adult referrals

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Brent Social Services | 17 |
| Brent Homeless Persons Unit | 5 |
| Area Housing office (Council) | 8 |
| Area Housing office (Housing Assoc) | 3 |
| Police | 87 |
| Local based advice/voluntary agencies | 15 |
| Health Services | 19 |
| Hospital | 9 |
| Primary Health Care | 13 |
| Self-referrals | 77 |
| Schools | 2 |
| Solicitors | 6 |
| Family/friends | 11 |
| Other (please specify) | 5 |
| Not known | 80 |
| Refuge Helpline | 10 |
| Other borough social services | 8 |

Previous area of residence

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Harlesden | 46 |
| St Raphaels | 12 |
| Kingsbury | 24 |
| Wembley | 41 |
| Alperton | 12 |
| Chalkhill | 5 |
| South Kilburn | 15 |
| Cricklewood/N. Kilburn | 16 |
| Kensal Rise | 8 |
| Sudbury | 13 |
| Stonebridge | 15 |
| Willesden Green | 24 |
| Roundwood | 8 |
| Church End | 5 |
| Brondesbury/Mapesbury | 2 |
| Queens Park | 7 |
| Neasden | 22 |
| Gladstone | 2 |
| Kenton | 17 |
| Barnhill | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 40 |
| Not known | 99 |

Women's relationship with Abuser



Involvement of all individuals in other agencies

| Agency: | Yes |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Police | 127 |
| Social/Children's Services | 37 |
| Housing Department | 67 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Others: not specified (3) solicitors (9) child family clinic (4) health (11) refuge (3) | 30 |
| Not knowns | 37 |
| No dealing with above | 162 |

Estimates of Prevalence

Baseline data for domestic violence is extremely elusive, not only are there well-established issues around under reporting, but there are also problems around under recording of cases by professionals. Therefore we can only produce estimates around prevalence. These estimates have been achieved by extrapolating the findings of a variety of studies to create high, medium and low estimates of domestic violence for the borough of Brent.

High Estimate of Prevalence

Our High estimate has been based on the methodology used by Matrix in 2004. In which they used Mooney's 1993^{viii} study and the findings of the 1996 British Crime Survey Domestic Violence Self completion Questionnaire. Both of which found that just 11% of incidents were reported to the police.

| Financial Year | Actual Reported | Unreported | Total High estimate | Percentage of total Brent population 267,766 ^{ix} |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|--|
| 1999-2000 | 2,655 | 21,481 | 24,136 | 9% |
| 2000-2001 | 3,278 | 26,522 | 29,800 | 11% |
| 2001-2002 | 2,216 | 17,929 | 20,145 | 7% |
| 2002-2003 | 2,339 | 18,924 | 21,263 | 8% |
| 2003-2004 | 4,031 | 28,583 | 32,614 | 12% |
| 2004-2005 | 5,357 | 37,986 | 43,343 | 16% |

Medium Estimate of Prevalence

The British Crime Survey 2002 suggested that 34.7% of incidents were reported to the police. Using this finding we can estimate the following:

| Financial Year | Actual Reported | Unreported | Total Medium estimate | Percentage of total Brent population 267,766 ^x |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1999-2000 | 2,655 | 4,996 | 7,651 | 3% |
| 2000-2001 | 3,278 | 6,169 | 9,446 | 3.5% |
| 2001-2002 | 2,216 | 4,170 | 6,398 | 2% |
| 2002-2003 | 2,339 | 4,401 | 6,740 | 2.5% |
| 2003-2004 | 4,031 | 7,586 | 11,617 | 4% |
| 2004-2005 | 5,357 | 10,081 | 15,438 | 6% |

Low Estimate of Prevalence

The British Crime Survey 1999 found that 5.9% of the female population between 16-59yrs have received frightening threats or experienced physical assault in the last year. The current population of Brent is 267,800 (2003 Brent mye.xis) of which 87,600 are females aged 16-59. By applying this formula we can infer that 5168 women will experience frightening threats or physical assault this year.

Forecast for approaches to partnership agencies 2005-2006

The following forecast is based on the methodology adopted by Bradford's 2003-2005 Strategy. In which they cited Stanko et al Counting the Costs^{xi}. It is a useful piece of research because it gives us a forecast for clients to each sector.

Note: We have used our average estimate (average between our highest estimate of 43,343 and our lowest estimate of 5,168 is 24,255 cases).

| Contact by survivors | Proportion of Survivors | Forecast number of Brent survivors |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| An 'agency' in Brent | 50% | 12,128 |
| police: | 25% | 6,064 |
| A health service | 25% | 6,064 |
| Council Housing dept | 20% | 4,851 |
| Social Services | 12% | 2,911 |
| Women's Aid | 12% | 2,911 |
| Brent survivors assaulted fortnightly or monthly: | 10% | 2,426 |
| Brent survivors assaulted weekly or more | 13% | 3,153 |

Estimate of cost implications for Brent

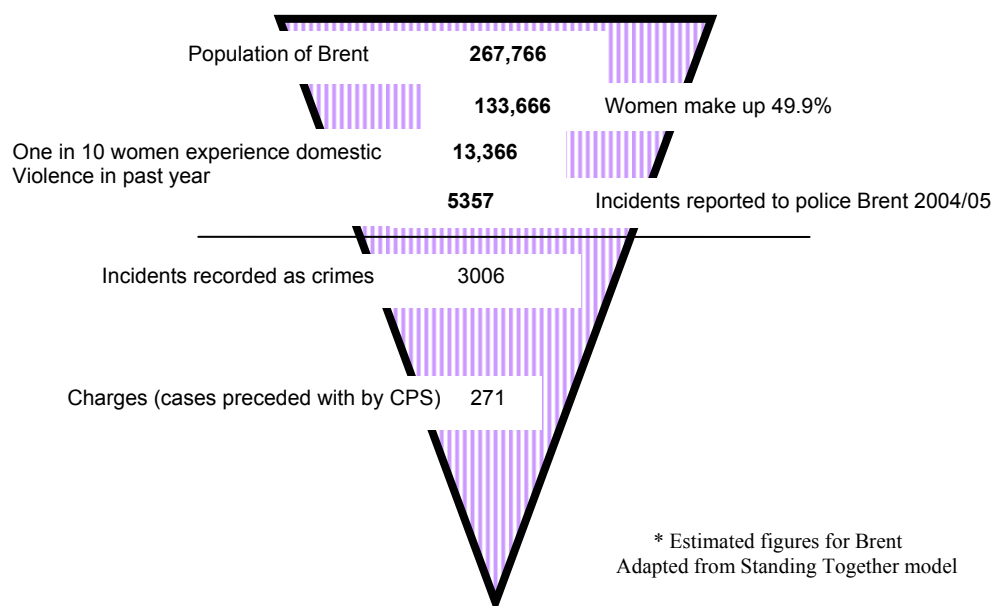
In reality, many service areas spend an enormous amount of their resources on domestic violence but because this is not always separately monitored, they remain unaware of how substantial their domestic violence work actually is. In 2004 Professor Sylvia Walby was funded to produce 'The Cost of Domestic Violence'^{xii} by the Department of Trade and Industry Women and Equality Unit. This report identifies that the economic cost manifests itself throughout the criminal justice system, healthcare, social services, housing, civil legal, loss of economic output and human and emotional cost. Findings suggested the cost of £440^{xiii}, is borne by individuals within the 16-59 yr old age bracket within an area. With approximately 180,000^{xiv} Brent residents fitting this profile we can again make a basic estimate that domestic violence costs the borough of Brent approximately £80 million per year.

The above figures are base on national averages and do not, therefore, take into account the additional costs of London, so the true figure is likely to be higher still^{xv}

The Attrition rate of Domestic Violence cases in Brent

Domestic violence has been identified as a particular issue for Brent. It makes up approximately 8.4% of all crime recorded in Brent and 35% of all our violent crime.

As this chart demonstrates the judicial disposal and clear up rates for domestic violence in Brent is disappointing as it is arguably nationally.



2

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Aim of the London Borough of Brent Corporate Domestic Violence Strategy

This strategy aims to promote good practice and consistency of approach across the council when dealing with domestic violence.

The Strategy will address two aims; firstly, it will set out the council's commitment to providing support, assistance and information for Brent residents who disclose domestic violence. Secondly it will provide recommendations to improve the response for members of staff who experience domestic violence.

The Government's commitment to tackling domestic violence

Domestic violence continues to be a key national and local priority reflected by the Domestic Violence: Crime and Victims Act 2004. More recently the National Domestic Violence Reduction Delivery Plan (March 2005) set out a number of government priorities, which this strategy seeks to support. The five key priorities are as follows:

- Reducing the prevalence of domestic violence
- Increasing the rate that domestic violence is reported
- Increasing the rate of domestic violence offences are brought to justice
- Ensuring victims of domestic violence are adequately protected and supported nationwide
- Reducing the number of domestic violence related homicides

In addition both the Greater London Domestic Violence Project and the Association of London Government have produced sets of minimum standards for agencies to adhere to, these standards have been considered when shaping our local response to domestic violence.

The following statutory requirements have been given due consideration:

- Association of Chief Police Officers Guidance on Investigating Domestic Abuse and The Policing Performance Assessment Framework for the police^{xvi}
- The Children's Act 2004^{xvii} impacting on a range of agencies plus Every Child Matters (White Paper) 2004^{xviii}
- The Children & Young People and Maternity Services Framework^{xix}
- Electronic Patient Record requirements within the NHS^{xx}
- Crown Prosecution Services updated policy and guidance (February 2005)^{xxi}
- Domestic Violence Policy and guidance Documents for Health agencies^{xxii}
- Home Office good practice guidance for working with survivors from BME Communities (February 2005)^{xxiii}

Brent Councils commitment to tackling domestic violence

Brent council has a key role to play in tackling domestic violence. As well as providing services and raising awareness, the council's role at the heart of the local

community means that we are well placed to lead local partnerships- bringing together agencies to tackle this issue.

In accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the council's Community Safety Team undertakes this role by advising, supporting, developing and leading crime reduction, crime prevention and regeneration partnerships. Section 17 places an unwavering duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard for the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. The recent introduction of a wide ranging suite of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI 225) on domestic violence, along with CPA Assessments means that accountability has increased further.

In addition the councils four year corporate strategy 2002-2006 sets out the strategic intent to achieve service excellence, raise the quality of life serve all of our communities and to develop and motivate our staff. This strategy is built on five cross cutting theme; to support children and young people, to promote quality of life and green agenda, regeneration and priority neighbourhoods, tackling crime and community safety and achieving excellence. Therefore this corporate domestic violence strategy incorporates these commitments.

Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership commitment to tackling domestic violence

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 called for the establishment of local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP's) between 'responsible authorities across England and Wales to "formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime, disorder and the misuse of drugs". Therefore the Brent Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have a central role to play in tackling domestic violence and has identified domestic violence as a key priority. The 'responsible authorities' who are legally required to undertake this work in Brent are:

- Brent Council
- Metropolitan Police Service
- Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust
- London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

The Brent Crime, Disorder and Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2005-2008^{xxiv}

The Brent Crime, Disorder and Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2005-2008 has two overarching and long term aims and targets for the next three years. These are:

1. To reduce crime in Brent
2. To reduce the fear of crime in Brent

These targets are aligned with the Home Office's Objectives to reassure the public and build confidence in the criminal justice system without compromising fairness.

We will aim to reduce crime by 20% in total across ten different crime types by March 2008, compared to 2003/04.

We will aim to reduce the number of people who feel threatened by crime in their area “a great deal” and “a fair amount” from 66% (in 2004) to 50% in 2007.

How will the partnership achieve this?

The Brent Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership will aim to achieve these aims by pursuing five objectives.

1. To tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour
2. To tackle and reduce acquisitive crime
3. To tackle and reduce violent crime.
4. To reduce the harm caused by alcohol and illegal drugs
5. To develop the Partnership and improve the way the Partnership functions

Domestic violence falls under the violent crime strand. Violent crime in Brent has increased over the last three years and is relatively high when viewed alongside our neighbouring boroughs. Only Camden and Westminster, with their substantial night time and visitor economy, have higher rates of violent crime offences.

Violence makes up 20% of all the crime recorded in Brent. Of this domestic violence makes up a staggering 35% of all our violent crime and 8.4% of all crime recorded. Brent also has the highest rate of recorded domestic violence per 1,000 population in London, some 14% higher than the MPS average. The judicial disposal and clear up rates for domestic violence in Brent were also low.

Cross cutting themes

The Brent Crime, Disorder and Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2005-2008 strategy identified; Victims, witnesses & vulnerable communities; Offenders; Fear of Crime and Youth as particular cross cutting themes for addressing the issue of domestic violence;

- Victims, witnesses & vulnerable communities

Domestic violence differs from other crime types, in that victimisation is often the prime motivation, rather than a by-product. Because of this, victim services and support are of paramount importance. Partnership initiatives in this area will include an advocacy project based in a police station, raising awareness of services amongst BME communities and the (hopeful) establishment of a specialist DV court.

- Offenders

Through the empowerment of victims and an increase in public awareness the CDRP effectively holds perpetrators to account. The anticipated introduction of the cluster court and advocacy unit will also have a huge impact on the amount of perpetrators successfully prosecuted. We also recognise a need to utilise our local perpetrator programme ARICAS to enable earlier intervention with abusers.

- Fear of crime

The relatively low fear of domestic violence amongst the general public is perversely disproportionate to the actual high prevalence of domestic violence (contrasting with many other offence types). Although one in four women are likely to experience domestic violence during their lifetime and two women die each week at the hands of a perpetrator it is an issue that remains fairly hidden and is unlikely to concern the public unless they, or a close associate, experience it. With this in mind the Partnership is committed to providing clear information to all in the hope that it can firstly educate the public around prevention and secondly empower victims to seek life saving support. Examples will include the dissemination of information in various community languages, a directory of services aimed at front line workers, enabling them to refer clients to specialist agencies with greater accuracy and ease, and a 'Sanctuary' Scheme; This initiative involves upgrading the security of a survivor's home together with the offer of outreach support from local specialist services.

- Youth

The effects of violence in the home impacts upon children's educational attainment, behaviour and mental and physical health. The Children and young peoples sub group of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum currently leads on this issue. The Partnership also recognises the huge impact of harmful cultural practices such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation on young women and works closely with local specialist BME Counselling groups such as Pukaar to address these risks in local schools. We also aim to roll out an education prevention initiative in Brent Schools, which hopes to empower young people to recognise the indicators of abuse and enable them to avoid such relationships. It discourages potential perpetrator and informs young people about the support networks available should they experience abuse. In addition the new Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project has a Children's Advocate who supports young people who live with domestic violence.

What are our CDRP desired outcomes around domestic violence and sexual offences?

The five outcomes that the Partnership are committed to achieving around domestic violence are to increase reporting of domestic violence, to increase the rate of successful prosecutions of domestic violence cases, to increase public understanding of domestic violence and to reduce the rate of repeat victimisation.

These outcomes will be achieved by: Further strengthening multi agency engagement, supporting and enabling survivors to report, developing current information sharing procedures, the provision of training to develop a consistent response in all sectors, and finally through enhancing the local community's understanding of domestic violence.

Performance Measures:

1. A increase based on 2004/05 baseline
2. Through establishing a baseline taken from sanctioned detection rate and successful prosecutions
3. Multi agency training, distribution of publicity

4. Through establishing a baseline of repeat victims 2004/05
5. Based on 2004/05 baseline

Targets:

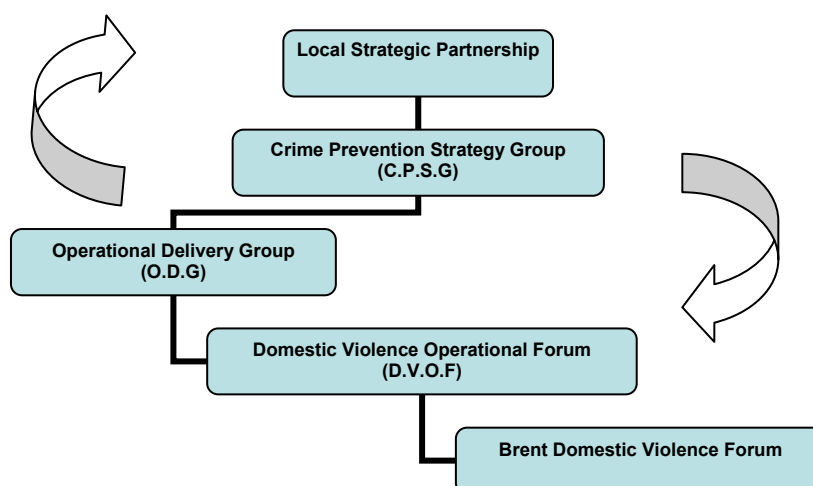
- To increase reporting of domestic violence
- To increase the sanctioned rape detection rate to 25%
- To increase the sanctioned detection rate for domestic violence to 27%
- To increase the total rape detection rate to 35%
- To increase the total domestic detection rate to 60%
- To reduce the rate of repeat victimisation

Governance

This domestic violence corporate strategy forms part of a holistic joint-agency approach. Its success is dependant upon the co-operation and action of all partner agencies- statutory, voluntary and private alike. Its implementation will be co-ordinated through the CDRP Domestic Violence Operational Forum in collaboration with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum. This two-tier mechanism ensures that the good work already going on in the borough is fully integrated and continues to develop.

The Domestic Violence Operational Forum

The Domestic Violence Operational Forum is a strategic task group which sits within the Brent Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Its core purpose is to bring together key strategic partners, identify resources and provide the strategic direction to ensure that the CDRP strategy around violent crime is delivered.



No one agency can adequately deal with domestic violence; it is a cross cutting issue that needs addressing by joint working and multi-agency governance. Therefore the multi agency Domestic Violence Operational Forum has been established to oversee development and implementation. The flow chart above demonstrates how this new group fits within the Local Strategic Partnership structure

The Brent Domestic Violence Forum

Brent is fortunate to have an active, energetic and highly skilled Domestic Violence Forum. The Forum was established in 1985 and is a second tier organisation with members from statutory, voluntary and private agencies. The main activities of the forum are professional development, networking, co-ordination, improving local service delivery, public education and training, lobbying for resources, as a local and national consultation body and service providers. We currently have around fifty active members and four hundred members who receive updates. Membership to the forum is open to anyone living or working in Brent with an interest in improving service delivery in the field.

Multi Agency Information Sharing

The sharing of information at a local level is crucial to effective multi agency working. The recent Home Office guidance on developing domestic violence strategies^{xxv} cites two reasons for this:

- for the purpose of performance monitoring and management
- the potential to increase victim's safety and hold perpetrators to account.

Currently in Brent we face the following difficulties when collecting data and sharing information on domestic violence.

- Some frontline staff not knowing what to look for
- Some frontline staff failing to ask about domestic violence when faced by a suspected survivor of abuse.
- Some staff not recording or returning data.
- Some Agencies failing or refusing to share data
- Consent and confidentiality issues
- Quality of data recording is poor

The existing overarching interagency sharing protocol June 2005 should be referred to. Where necessary specific information sharing agreements will be established between agencies.

3

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 3: Three year Strategic Recommendations

Housing recommendations

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Training: | <p>Commitment to frontline worker training ideally as part of induction</p> <p>Mainstream domestic violence awareness training across the department</p> <p>Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women</p> |
| Sanctuary | <p>Development and evaluation of the Brent Sanctuary Scheme: monitoring usage and actively targeting possible referral agencies</p> <p>In particular it must be ensured that support and independent advocacy is offered at same time as security improvements to help safeguard victims.</p> |
| Publicity | <p>provision of information about domestic violence related housing options and rights which reflects the diverse needs of the community</p> <p>Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence</p> |
| Eviction of Perpetrators | <p>Investigate and initiate possession proceedings against the perpetrator, assuming there is sufficient evidence to secure a successful outcome to the proceedings.</p> <p>Investigate its successful implementation in other boroughs</p> |
| Domestic Violence Housing Leads | <p>Appoint lead in each department with designated responsibility to advice on domestic violence case, this should be written into their job description.</p> <p>Ensure that by January 2006 each department designates a domestic violence lead to attend corporate 'Safety Planning' training.</p> <p>These designated Domestic Violence leads will also be available to advise staff if they experience domestic violence in their personal lives</p> |
| Information sharing | <p>Formalise information sharing in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> <p>Assist in producing a multi-agency domestic violence agreement.</p> |

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| Recording information and collecting evidence | <p>Greater monitoring of number of approaches to HRC</p> <p>Evidence Gathering: Improve potential evidence gathering methods with the introduction of initiatives such as 'Snap shot', through consistent training and integration into department Policy.</p> <p>Ensure that written evidence is available should the victim decide to report incidences to the police.</p> |
| Floating support for those with Complex needs | <p>Assess and respond to the specialist housing needs of those victims with complex needs: drug and alcohol misuse, mental health, faith groups, physical disability, LGBT individuals, travellers, sex trade workers and the elderly.</p> |
| Those who do not meet priority criteria | <p>Evaluation of housing need for those who do not meet priority criteria: In particular seek to examine the housing needs of abused women without children and those with no recourse to public funds. Establish recognition of their vulnerability. Seek alternatives.</p> |
| Proactive identification | <p>Develop clear methods of identifying abused individuals and perpetrators, including both reactive and proactive identification.</p> <p>Staff should be able to recognise the obvious signs of domestic violence when it presents, but also, where appropriate, the department should work towards developing a system for routine enquiry (in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Co-ordinator) in order to identify cases of domestic violence where there are no outward signs.</p> |
| Housing Stock | <p>Promote and foster joint working with Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords: in order to improve existing temporary accommodation and develop new alternative through a joint protocol.</p> <p>Seek to improve the quality of existing temporary accommodation: to include play provision for children, outreach services and adequate security measures.</p> |
| Local Refuge provision | <p>Ensure that refuge provisions are appropriate and accessible to all communities including ensuring access for people with disabilities.</p> |
| Signposting to specialist | <p>Support and advocacy needs to be offered to clients through referral to local specialist DV services.</p> |

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| services | <p>An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose</p> <p>Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296</p> |
| Those with no recourse to public funds | <p>No Recourse Crisis Fund: An acknowledgement that there is a local demand from this disadvantaged group and a contribution to a specific crisis fund. Work in partnership to respond to the local demand for assistance for victims of domestic violence who have no recourse to public funds through encouraging assistance from local Registered Social Landlord's and creative use of existing stock.</p> |
| Actively sharing information | <p>Departments are to record anonymous details of domestic violence related disclosures in a secure central department file and forward these statistics by email to the Brent domestic violence co-ordinator at the end of each month Helen.oliver@brent.gov.uk</p> |
| Multi Agency Domestic Violence work | <p>Actively participate in the DV Forum case review panel , housing subgroup and when necessary attend the Murder Review Panel</p> <p>Development of housing led DV Forum Task group: Establish designated Leads in all relevant agencies for DV and convene case panels for cases where cross agency assistance is required.</p> |
| Consultation | <p>Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives (Contact the Brent Domestic Violence co-ordinator for more information)</p> |
| Meet the following housing related indicators for BVP1 225 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there within the local authority area a minimum of 1 refuge place per ten thousand population? • Has the local authority developed, launched and promoted a 'sanctuary' type scheme to enable victims and their children to remain in their own home, where they choose to do so and where safety can be guaranteed? (For smaller district authorities, of fewer than 35,000 households this can be arranged in partnership with neighbouring authorities.) • Has there been a reduction in the percentage of cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence that had previously been re-housed in the last two years by that local authority as a result of domestic violence? • Does the council's tenancy agreement have a specific clause stating that perpetration of domestic violence by a tenant can be considered grounds for eviction? • Publicise local and national support services |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in multi-agency interventions focusing on early identification of those at most risk of experiencing repeat domestic violence • Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives |
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Supporting People recommendations taken from the 2005-2010 Strategy

Women at Risk of Domestic Violence Key Actions 2005-2006:

Contract review of current services

Expand the numbers of women escaping violence receiving a service to at least 26 women by April 2006

Women at Risk of Domestic Violence Key Actions 2006-2007:

Implement all action from contract reviews

Work with the domestic violence forum to establish need

Consider commissioning a cross West London service for women with high support needs

Ongoing Actions:

Consider specific needs of young women, trafficked women and prostitutes

Participate in a service user forum specifically for women escaping violence

Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women

Work with West London to expand services further

Customer Services Recommendations

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| Training | <p>Commitment to frontline worker training ideally as part of induction</p> <p>Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women</p> |
| Domestic Violence Customer Service Leads | <p>Appoint lead in each department with designated responsibility to advise on domestic violence case, this should be written into their job description.</p> <p>Ensure that by January 2006 each department designates a domestic violence lead to attend corporate 'Safety Planning' training.</p> <p>These designated Domestic Violence leads will also be available to advise staff if they experience domestic</p> |

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| | violence in their personal lives |
| Formalise referral route | Develop and publicise an up to date internal referral route policy for one stop shop staff An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296 |
| Publicity | Publicise local and national support services Ensure information meets the diverse needs of customers Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence |
| Recording information and collecting evidence | Evidence Gathering: Improve potential evidence gathering methods with the introduction of initiatives such as 'Snap shot', through consistent training and integration into department Policy. Ensure that written evidence is available should the victim decide to report incidences to the police. |
| Multi agency domestic violence work | Engage with and support the work of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum (Contact the Brent Domestic Violence co-ordinator for more information) |
| Consultation | Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives (Contact the Brent Domestic Violence co-ordinator for more information) |

Community Safety Team recommendations

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| Mainstream | Continue to mainstream the issue of domestic violence across the council departments Engage and advice relevant partners i.e NRF, NDC, cps, probation, police, health sector etc. |
| Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project | Support the development of the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project |
| Domestic Violence Operational Forum | Lead on the development of the Domestic Violence Operation Forum |
| Members Domestic Violence Overview Committee task group | Lead on the development of a member's overview committee for domestic violence |
| Strategy | Oversee and monitor the implementation of this |

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| implementation | strategy and action plan |
| Publicity | Publicise local and national support services Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence |
| Brent Domestic Violence Forum | Advise and support the work of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum |
| Early intervention | Engage in multi-agency interventions focusing on early identification of those at most risk of experiencing repeat domestic violence |
| Signposting to specialist services | Support and advocacy needs to be offered to clients through referral to local specialist DV services. An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296 |
| Information sharing | Formalise information sharing in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum Assist in producing a multi-agency domestic violence agreement. |
| Consultation | Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives |
| Oversee adherence to the following BVPI 225 indicators: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the local authority produced a directory of local services that can help victims of domestic violence? • Does the local authority employ directly or fund a voluntary sector based domestic violence co-ordinator? (<i>For District Councils of fewer than 35,000 households, the responsibility for co-ordinating domestic violence can be designated within the job description of an existing senior officer. For District Councils that contribute to a county-wide co-ordinator, see definition</i>) • The local authority produced and adopted a multi-agency strategy to tackle domestic violence developed in partnership with other agencies? • Does the local authority support and facilitate a local multi-agency domestic violence forum that |

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| | <p>meets at least 4 times a year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the local authority developed an information-sharing protocol and had it agreed between key statutory partners? • The local authority funded and developed a domestic violence education pack in consultation with the wider domestic violence forum? • Has the authority carried out a programme of multi-agency training in the last twelve months covering front line and managerial staff in at least two of the following groups: housing staff, social services staff providing services in the local authority area; education staff; health staff; and front line police officers? |
| Domestic Violence CST Leads | <p>Appoint lead in CST department with designated responsibility to advice on domestic violence cases, this should be written into their job description.</p> <p>Ensure that by January 2006 each department designates a domestic violence lead to attend corporate 'Safety Planning' training.</p> <p>These designated Domestic Violence leads will also be available to advise staff if they experience domestic violence in their personal lives</p> |

Children and Families Department recommendations

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| Training | <p>Commitment to frontline worker training ideally as part of induction</p> <p>Mainstream domestic violence awareness training across the department</p> <p>Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women, especially for child protection officers.</p> |
| Multi agency domestic violence work | <p>Participate in Brent domestic violence children and social care working group, case review board and when instructed the murder review panel</p> <p>Engage with and support the work of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> |
| Domestic | Appoint leads in each department with designated |

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| Violence Children and families Leads | <p>responsibility to advice on domestic violence case, this should be written into their job description.</p> <p>Ensure that by January 2006 each department designates a domestic violence lead to attend corporate 'Safety Planning' training.</p> <p>These designated Domestic Violence leads will also be available to advise staff if they experience domestic violence in their personal lives</p> |
| Proactive identification | <p>Develop clear methods of identifying abused individuals and perpetrators, including both reactive and proactive identification.</p> <p>Staff should be able to recognise the obvious signs of domestic violence when it presents, but also, where appropriate, the department should work towards developing a system for routine enquiry (in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Co-ordinator) in order to identify cases of domestic violence where there are no outward signs.</p> |
| Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project | <p>Work in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project to provide support for children experiencing domestic violence.</p> |
| Those with no recourse to public funds | <p>No Recourse Crisis Fund: An acknowledgement that there is a local demand from this disadvantaged group and a contribution to a specific crisis fund.</p> |
| Publicity | <p>Publicise local and national support services Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence</p> |
| Early intervention | <p>Engage in multi-agency interventions focusing on early identification of those at most risk of experiencing repeat domestic violence Including work with Children's centres, pyramid clubs, YIP and teenage pregnancy</p> |
| Signposting to specialist services | <p>Support and advocacy needs to be offered to clients through referral to local specialist DV services.</p> <p>An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296</p> |
| Group | <p>Develop a therapeutic programme for children 0-16yrs of</p> |

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| treatment for Children who witness Domestic Violence | Age |
| Young people education work | <p>Improve access to support and information for young people around abusive relationships through promoting and utilising the healthy relationship training of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> <p>Roll this education initiative across Brent Secondary Schools</p> |
| Information sharing | <p>Formalise information sharing in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> <p>Assist in producing a multi-agency domestic violence Agreement.</p> |
| Recording information and collecting evidence | <p>Evidence Gathering: Improve potential evidence gathering methods with the introduction of initiatives such as 'Snapshot', through consistent training and integration into department Policy.</p> <p>Ensure that written evidence is available should the victim decide to report incidences to the police.</p> |
| Those who do not meet eligibility criteria | <p>Seek alternatives supportive organisations for example the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Worker, The Children's workers at Brent Women's Aid and Asian Women's Resource Centre.</p> |
| Consultation | <p>Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives</p> |

Adult and Social Care Department recommendations

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| Training | <p>Commitment to frontline worker training ideally as part of induction</p> <p>Mainstream domestic violence awareness training across the department</p> <p>Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women</p> |
| Multi agency domestic violence | <p>Participate in Brent domestic violence adult and social care working group, case review board and when</p> |

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| work | <p>instructed the murder review panel</p> <p>Engage with and support the work of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> |
| Domestic Violence Adult and Social Care Leads | <p>Appoint leads in each department with designated responsibility to advice on domestic violence case, this should be written into their job description.</p> <p>Ensure that by January 2006 each department designates a domestic violence lead to attend corporate 'Safety Planning' training.</p> <p>These designated Domestic Violence leads will also be available to advise staff if they experience domestic violence in their personal lives</p> |
| Proactive identification | <p>Develop clear methods of identifying abused individuals and perpetrators, including both reactive and proactive identification.</p> <p>Staff should be able to recognise the obvious signs of domestic violence when it presents, but also, where appropriate, the department should work towards developing a system for routine enquiry (in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Co-ordinator) in order to identify cases of domestic violence where there are no outward signs.</p> |
| Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project | <p>Work in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project to provide support for adults experiencing domestic violence.</p> |
| Those with no recourse to public funds | <p>No Recourse Crisis Fund: An acknowledgement that there is a local demand from this disadvantaged group and a contribution to a specific crisis fund.</p> |
| Publicity | <p>Publicise local and national support services</p> <p>Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence</p> |
| Early intervention | <p>Engage in multi-agency interventions focusing on early identification of those at most risk of experiencing repeat domestic violence</p> |
| Targeted publicity | <p>Improve access to support and information for vulnerable adults</p> <p>Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence</p> |
| Information sharing | <p>Formalise information sharing in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> |

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| | Assist in producing a multi-agency domestic violence Agreement. |
| Recording information and collecting evidence | Evidence Gathering: Improve potential evidence gathering methods with the introduction of initiatives such as 'Snap shot', through consistent training and integration into department Policy. Ensure that written evidence is available should the victim decide to report incidences to the police. |
| Signposting to specialist services | Support and advocacy needs to be offered to clients through referral to local specialist DV services. An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296 |
| Those who do not meet eligibility criteria | Seek alternatives supportive organisations for example the Brent Domestic Violence Adult Advocacy Worker, |
| Consultation | Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives |

Environment and Culture recommendations

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| Signposting to specialist services | Support and advocacy needs to be offered to clients through referral to local specialist DV services. An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296 |
| Promotion | Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence Consider gender image through publicity |
| Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act | Consider the impact of violence when planning new initiatives |
| Training | Commitment to frontline worker training ideally as part of induction Mainstream domestic violence awareness training across the department |

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| | Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women |
| Multi agency domestic violence work | Participate in Brent domestic violence children and social care working group, case review board and when instructed the murder review panel Engage with and support the work of the Brent Domestic Violence Forum |
| Information sharing | Formalise information sharing in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum Assist in producing a multi-agency domestic violence Agreement. |
| Recording information and collecting evidence | Evidence Gathering: Improve potential evidence gathering methods with the introduction of initiatives such as 'Snap shot', through consistent training and integration into department Policy. Ensure that written evidence is available should the victim decide to report incidences to the police. |
| Publicity | Publicise local and national support services Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence |
| Consultation | Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives |

Central Human Resources & Diversity Services recommendations

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| Training | Mainstream domestic violence awareness training across the departments: ensure it is available for staff and managers to enable them to support individuals experiencing domestic violence- ideally as part of the corporate induction. Encourage provider training on domestic violence issues, for all providers working with women Access to training for employees overcoming violent tendencies service level agreement with local projects |
| Multi agency domestic violence work | Participate in Brent domestic violence forum |
| Domestic Violence | Oversee the appointment of leads in each department |

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| Leads | <p>with designated responsibility to advice on domestic violence case, this should be written into their job description.</p> <p>Ensure that by January 2006 each department designates a domestic violence lead to attend corporate 'Safety Planning' training.</p> <p>These designated Domestic Violence leads will also be available to advise staff if they experience domestic violence in their personal lives</p> |
| Proactive identification | <p>Ensure that staff are able to recognise the obvious signs of domestic violence when it presents, but also, where appropriate, the department should work towards developing a system for routine enquiry (in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Co-ordinator) in order to identify cases of domestic violence where there are no outward signs.</p> |
| Publicity | <p>Publicise local and national support services Promote a clear message of intolerance to violence</p> |
| Targeted publicity | <p>Improve access to support and information for employees</p> |
| Information sharing | <p>Formalise information sharing in partnership with the Brent Domestic Violence Forum</p> <p>Assist in producing a multi-agency domestic violence Agreement.</p> |
| Recording information and collecting evidence | <p>Evidence Gathering: Improve potential evidence gathering methods with the introduction of initiatives such as 'Snap shot', through consistent training and integration into department Policy.</p> <p>Ensure that written evidence is available should the victim decide to report incidences to the police.</p> |
| Signposting staff to help | <p>Use the Brent Domestic Violence Directory of services to familiarise yourself with local supportive organisations.</p> <p>Support and advocacy needs to be offered to clients through referral to local specialist DV services.</p> <p>An offer to refer to the Brent Domestic Violence Advocacy Project (DVAP) should be made when clients disclose</p> |

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| | Contact: 07785 331610 07785 331296 |
| Consultation | Consult with specialist domestic violence sector when developing initiatives |
| Safety Planning | Take reasonable steps to provide tailored safety plans for staff who are experiencing domestic violence |

Measurable priority targets

To be decided by service area

ⁱ Communications Workers Union, Domestic Violence

ⁱⁱ Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Death 2002 cited in Leeds Domestic Violence Strategy; Women and Children Experiencing Violence from men they know March 2004 p.10

ⁱⁱⁱ Interim findings from the Women's Equality Unit cited in Leeds Domestic Violence Strategy; Women and Children Experiencing Violence from men they know March 2004 p.10

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- ^{iv} <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/#>
- ^v <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/#> 2003/04: 4148 reported incidents of DV 2004/05: 5357
- ^{vi} Total crimes in Brent 2004-2005: 35'582. DV incidents recorded as crimes 2004-2005: 3006
<http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/#>
- ^{vii} www.met.police.uk/crimefigures
- ^{viii} Mooney, J. (1993) *The Hidden Figure: Domestic Violence in North London*, London: Islington Police and Crime Prevention Unit.
- ^{ix} based on 2003 mid year census estimate
- ^x based on 2003 mid year census estimate
- ^{xi} Stanko EA, Crisp D, Hale C and Lubcraft H, *Counting the Costs Estimating the impact of domestic violence in the London Borough of Hackney*, Crime Concern, 1998
- ^{xii} Walby, S. (2004) *The Cost of Domestic Violence*. London, Department of Trade and Industry Women and Equality Unit.
- ^{xiii} Cost www.leeds.ac.uk/sociology/people/swdocs/CostDomesticViolence.pdf
- ^{xiv} www.brent.gov.uk/demographics.nsf 2002 mid year population estimate
- ^{xv} Mayor of London, *Consultation on the second London Domestic Violence Strategy July 2005* p.8
- ^{xvi} copies available www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/Guidance%20on%20DV.pdf
- ^{xvii} www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrenactreport
- ^{xviii} <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>
- ^{xix} <http://www.dh.gov.uk>
- ^{xx} www.e-health-insider.com
- ^{xxi} www.hmcpso.gov.uk/reports/SC-CPSEExecSumAug05.pdf
- ^{xxii} www.dh.gov.uk
- ^{xxiii} <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence49.htm>
- ^{xxiv} extracted from Brent Crime, Disorder and Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2005-2008
- ^{xxv} www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence46.htm