



## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10<sup>th</sup> February 2011

### Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement

For Action

Wards Affected:

ALL

## Domestic violence in Brent and the impact on young people

### 1. Background

- 1.1 This brief overview report supports the presentation that will be given to the committee. This will be followed by a question and answer session that will flesh out in detail any matters not covered.
- 1.2 The vast majority of the victims of domestic violence are women and children, and women are also considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence, and sexual abuse. Women may experience domestic violence regardless of ethnicity, religion, class, age, sexuality, disability or lifestyle. Domestic abuse can also occur in a range of relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender relationships, and extended families.
- 1.3 While both men and women may experience incidents of inter-personal violence, women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence. 32% of women who had ever experienced domestic violence did so four or five (or more) times, compared with 11% of the (smaller number) of men who had ever experienced domestic violence; and women constituted 89% of all those who had experienced 4 or more incidents of domestic violence. (Walby and Allen, 2004) These points are not always evident in statistical summaries (for example those produced by the Home Office) as they focus on single incidents, rather than on the complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.
- 1.4 Brent does provide services to male victims, and talks continue with partner boroughs to expand this service as required. As this paper looks at existing services the main focus is women and girls.
- 1.5 The remit is expanding. Current service provision in Brent for domestic violence is, by default, addressing many areas of other forms of violence against women and girls

(VAWG) within their client support. This includes on street prostitution and to a lesser existent trafficking.

- 1.6 Many areas of violence against women will often be occurring at the same time for many victims. Subsequently the very nature of what the client presents with means that frontline services strive to address the clients support needs in a holistic way.
- 1.7 However, this does not correlate that existing service provision is set up, funded or has the specialist expertise to be addressing this broader agenda of VAWG.

## **2. Brent's Perspective**

- 2.1 Brent's Crime Prevention Strategy Group (CPSG), this partnership carries out the statutory functions of required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, can be justifiably proud of its record of regarding Domestic Violence.
- 2.2 This investment in time and resources has resulted in the Community Safety Partnership Unit (BCSPU) setting the benchmark in training and partnership working within the West London Partnership. Brent, because of this commitment, is one of only six areas nationally to have a specialist Domestic Violence Court. The professional support staff and magistrates who are regularly trained and constantly supported the number of cases where the victim is too frightened to proceed continues to fall.
- 2.3 Over the last eighteen months BCSPU have focused on reaching victims via their doctors, maternity services and housing providers. In 2010 an independent study showed victims had felt confident about coming forward because of the services offered and their knowledge of those. Victim's first contact with the Police was predominantly positive and the independent advisory service commissioned by the BCSPU also received excellent feedback.

## **3. Current Services**

- 3.1 There are a number of voluntary sector organisations in Brent supporting victims and many focus their service on particular groups such as ethnic and cultural groups. Some of these are part funded through the Supporting People Budget. Their input is extremely valuable but their capacity is limited.
- 3.2 For the last three years Advance (a charity) has been commissioned to deliver the bulk of the support services for victims.
- 3.3 The project annually has the capacity to received 600 referrals. The project is currently working with over 100 'high risk' survivors.
- 3.4 They also provide a 24 hour referral pathway to the service for the police in Brent.
- 3.5 Last year in Brent there were 4030 domestic violence incidents reported to the police. This year, to the end of July 2010, 1384 reports have been made. *The Way Forward 2010 – 2013: The Mayor of London Office strategy to taking action to end violence*

against women and girls.<sup>1</sup> Highlights that the police are unaware of 81% of domestic abuse.

- 3.6 The various providers work extremely cooperatively together and have excellent working relationships with BCSP and other Council and agencies departments. Forums, training and informal networking are maintained.
- 3.7 In 2009/10 114 children (52%) who were subject to a child protection plan in Brent were registered under the risk factor of domestic abuse.
- 3.8 A snap shot of the position on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010 showed that 271 were subject to a child protection plan in Brent. 154 children (57%) are registered under 'emotional abuse' which is used as a proxy indicator for registration due to domestic abuse.

**4. Managing the Risks - Brent MARAC (Multi agency risk assessment conference)**

- 4.1 The aim of MARAC 's is to offer a specialist multi agency response to the top 10% of victims at the highest level of risk of serious injury or death due to domestic abuse.
- 4.2 In Brent this forum was restarted some eighteen months ago. The Brent MARAC last year reviewed 249 cases of very high risk victims last year. It has been evaluated that Brent's MARAC should aim to review 450 cases per year based on population and crime reporting figures. Progress continues on the gap in services evidently means services, skills and capacity was lost a recent inspection found that progress was "excellent" (Quality Assurance Assessment).

**5. Cost of Domestic Violence**

- 5.1 The Home Office published figures last year for each borough, which calculates the human and societal cost for domestic abuse.
- 5.2 The calculations for **Brent** based on population size of 271,000:

No. Of women who have been a victim of Domestic Violence	No. Of women who have been sexually assaulted	No. Of women who have been a victim of stalking	<b>Total cost** to Sectors</b>	
6,369*	5,691*	11,270*	Physical & Mental health care	£11,155,397.00
*data comes from BCS figures who only sample 16-59 year old age group. Figures do not include repeats			Criminal Justice	£7,026,401.00
			Social	£1,323,208.00

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/crime-community-safety/tackling-priority-crimes/violence-against-women/way-forward>

\*\*costs estimated from Home office research 2009/10

Services	
Other- Housing, civil legal, employment	£32,263,584.00
<b>TOTAL cost:</b>	<b>£ 51,768,589.00</b>
Additional <b>TOTAL</b> Human & emotional cost	<b>£165,286,584.00</b>

## 6. Looking to the Future

- 6.1 Currently, as in the rest of the public sector resources are under pressure however, whilst every effort to cut waste and greater prioritisation is being explored as far as practicable services will be maintained.
- 6.2 At the time of writing this report it is not possible to outline the future funding for Domestic Violence work.
- 6.3 A number of options are being pursued including cross multi- borough commissioning.
- 6.4 In addition a number of funding bids have been submitted with BCSU working in partnership with Voluntary sector agencies to access charitable, lottery and trust funding.
- 6.5 Brent has also been short-listed for a European Funding grant that will provide supplementary funding for a period of three years.

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