

Date of issue: 17 January 2012

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL</b> (Councillors O'Connor (Chair), Abe, Dar, Davis, Minhas, Sharif, Smith and S P Wright)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	TUESDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2012 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	FLEXI HALL, THE CENTRE, FARNHAM ROAD, SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE SL1 4UT
<b>SCRUTINY OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	SARAH FORSYTH 01753 875657

### SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

Item 8 was not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

#### PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
8.	<b>The Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People</b> To consider information regarding the incidence of domestic abuse in the town and its impact on children <i>(10 minutes presentation – 20 minutes questions)</i>	1 - 30	All

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Education and Children's Services      **DATE:** 24.01.12

**CONTACT OFFICER:** James Priestman, Head of Drugs & Community Safety  
(01753 875 556)

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Sophie Wing-King, East Berkshire Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, Thames Valley Police (01753 835503)

**WARD(S):** *All*

**COMMISSIONER:** Cllr Natasha Pantelic, Education and Children's Services

**PART I**

**FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

**THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ON CHILDREN**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Panel with information regarding the incidence of domestic abuse in the town and its impact on children. The report contains comparative data with other local authorities; it outlines the support services currently available and makes recommendations to help further improve service provision.

**2. Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to;

- a. note the content of the report which highlights the comparatively high level of domestic abuse in the town.
- b. consider the impact and implications for children and vulnerable adults
- c. support the re-commissioning of a new coordinated approach to service provision.

**3. Community Strategy Priorities**

- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**

#### 4. **Other Implications**

##### **(a) Financial**

The planned 'One Council approach to re-commissioning of domestic abuse services will lead to the pooling of resources and some financial savings.

##### **(b) Risk Management**

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i></b>	<b><i>Mitigation(s)</i></b>
Re-commissioning of a single, comprehensive domestic abuse service to deliver against SBC priorities	Opportunity: Services that are more appropriate to the needs of Slough Risk: Disruption of services during transition	Multi-agency working group set up to ensure proposals are delivered in the most practical way

##### **(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

Under Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998, it is unlawful for the Council to act in a way which is incompatible with human rights or it could result in the Council being subject to judicial review. The actions outlined in this report are designed to comply with the Human Rights considerations of children and vulnerable adults specifically Article 3 (duty to protect individuals who are at a real and immediate risk of ill treatment) and Article 8 Human Rights Act 1998 (the right to respect for private and family life).

There are no legal implications immediately arising from the report. However, in considering the re-commissioning of services the Council should have regard to their duties under Equalities Act 2010.

##### **(d) Equalities Impact Assessment**

Any re-commissioning of services would include an Equalities Impact Assessment.

#### 5. **Supporting Information**

##### 5.1 **Background Information – National Research into the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people**

Children and young people exposed or experiencing domestic abuse can also be at risk of neglect, sexual and physical abuse. Witnessing domestic abuse can have profound long term effects on their self esteem and mental health and may be a cause of behavioural problems and criminality. This is damaging for the child and costly for local services. This overview is supported by the following national statistics:

##### **The number of children affected by domestic abuse**

- At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence (Department of Health, 2002).
- A study by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC, 2008) estimated that one child in twenty witnesses frequent physical violence between parents.

- 1 in 5 girls under sixteen years have been physically hurt by someone they were dating (*online survey by Bliss magazine/Women's Aid, 2008*)

### **The affect of domestic abuse on children**

- School attendance and academic achievement can be affected by domestic abuse.
- Domestic abuse is a central issue in child protection: it is a factor in the family backgrounds of two-thirds of the serious case reviews (SCRs) where a child has died (Hester et al 2006 and Brandon et al 2010).
- 28% of those in prison have witnessed domestic abuse (Jacobson et al., Prison Reform Trust, Punishing Disadvantage 2010).  
Humphreys, C and Houghton, C (2008) found that babies experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to suffer from ill health, display insecure attachments, have poor sleeping habits and show a high tendency to screaming fits.
- Exposure to high levels of violence during between the ages of 0-4 can alter a child's neurobiological development. (Howarth, Simpson, Barren & Robinson, Safety in Numbers, 2009)
- One child in four who has witnessed domestic violence will experience serious social and behavioural problems" (NSPCC, 2008).
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists describes the long-term impact of domestic abuse on children as follows (2004):
  - They may become anxious or depressed or have a lowered sense of self-worth
  - They may have difficulty sleeping and have nightmares or flashbacks
  - They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches
  - They may start to wet their bed
  - They may have temper tantrums
  - They may behave as though they are much younger than they are
  - They may have problems with school
  - They may become aggressive or internalise their distress and withdraw from others
  - Older children may begin to play truant or start to use alcohol or drugs  
They may begin to self-harm by taking overdoses
  - They may have an eating disorder

## **5.2 Overview of domestic abuse in Slough**

There were almost 3,500 incidents being reported in 2010/11. During this period it was found that approximately 40% of victims had suffered domestic abuse previously and many had witnessed domestic abuse as a child.

Slough has significantly higher levels of reported domestic abuse when compared to other local authorities in the Thames Valley. The only other local authority in Thames Valley with levels of domestic abuse that are comparable to Slough's is Reading. In 2010/11 Thames Valley Police recorded 3023 incidents of domestic abuse in the Reading area, equating to approx. 8 reports every day. In Reading, there was one domestic related murder in June 2010. During the same period Slough had 3451 incidents and no domestic murders.

The majority of incidents involve parents and or carers and 50% of incidents take place in families with a young child (0-5 years). Many victims of domestic abuse are pregnant. Drugs and alcohol are often associated factors.

Domestic abuse affects individuals and families and puts significant demands on the resources of both Thames Valley Police and the local authority as illustrated below:

- Thames Valley Police recorded 3451 incidents of domestic abuse in the Slough area, equating to approximately 9 reports every day (April 2010- March 2011).
- 42% of victims were repeat victims – they had been a victim of domestic abuse in the previous 12 months.
- 80% of residents at Berkshire East and South Bucks Women’s Aid refuge say they witnessed domestic abuse as children (August 2011).
- Analysis of the domestic abuse contacts received by Education and Children’s Services Early Response Hub shows that:
  - The number of domestic abuse related contacts to the Hub average 2 a day.
  - 65.8% of Domestic Abuse contacts were received from the Police.
  - 50% of all Domestic Abuse related contacts were for families with at least one child aged 0-5 year olds.
  - 89% of the Domestic Abuse contacts were related to issues between parents/carers.
  - An analysis in June 2011 of the 95 families, including 166 children aged between 0-17 years involved with Child Protection procedures showed that 38 families had substance misusing parents with the added issue of domestic abuse and that domestic abuse was an issue for 13 families. Three further children were currently dealing with issues stemming from domestic abuse that had happened in their family in the past.
  - An analysis in August 2011 of the 182 children and young people who were
  - Looked After Children in Slough showed that 28 (15%) were from families with a known victim of domestic abuse.

### **5.3 Slough’s domestic abuse strategy**

Reducing the incidence of domestic abuse remains one of the key priorities of the Safer Slough Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The local authority has a Domestic Abuse Action Plan which contains activities designed to raise awareness with local GPs, schools and local businesses. It also includes support for children who have witnessed domestic abuse, adult victims and the provision of perpetrator programmes.

A Domestic Abuse Network of partner agencies meets quarterly and delivers against tasks outlined in the DA Action Plan, the Safer Slough Partnership Strategic Action Plan, the Alcohol Harm Reduction Plan and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan.

### **5.4 The response by children social care to children affected by domestic abuse.**

#### **Referral Pathway**

All agencies working in Slough are bound by the Local Safeguarding Board’s Child Protection Procedures which states that any agency assessment must consider the possibility of domestic abuse and ensure organisational responses safeguard both the child and the non-abusing parent.

Practitioners must share information with Children's Social Care if:

- There has been one serious or several lesser incidents of domestic abuse with a child in the household regardless of whether or not the child(ren) is present at the time. (see also Working Together to Safeguard children, 2010)
- An alleged victim is a child her/himself
- A parent is fleeing domestic abuse, leaving a child(ren) with the allegedly violent partner
- The alleged victim is pregnant
- There is a baby in the household
- There have been any previous serious incidents
- There is a history of aggressive abuse or 'stalking' by the perpetrator
- There are/ have been allegations of sexual assault
- The children have witnessed or been distressed through hearing incident(s) of domestic abuse

Referrals can be made by email, telephone or in writing and are processed initially by experienced Customer Services Officers in Children's Social Care. Referrals are assessed to determine whether they meet the threshold for intervention from Children's Social Care or whether concerns would more appropriately be responded to via the Early Response Hub.

### **Early Response Hub**

The multi-agency team in the hub may respond in a number of ways:

- Supporting the referrer in completing an assessment (using the Common Assessment Framework) and in calling a Team Around the Child/ Family to ensure that services are coordinated.
- Identifying and signposting for appropriate community services, including the services provided at the Children's Centres.

### **Assessment and Planning**

Should there be concern that the children are at risk of significant harm, the Children's Social Care Duty Team will conduct an assessment and proceed with appropriate planning. This may be via a Child in Need meeting or via the Child Protection Process.

Child in Need and Child Protection Plans are child focused but draw on resources to improve parents' and carers' capacity to care for their child(ren) and to protect them from harm.

Team Around the Child, Child in Need and Child Protection meetings aim to be multi-agency in nature to ensure that assessments and plans take into account multi-professional expertise and knowledge.

It is noted that the Ofsted Announced Inspection in April 2011 raised concerns about aspects of practice relating to the assessment of children and young people who were experiencing domestic abuse in their families. As a result of this, Children's Social Care has responded in the following ways:

- A new Risk Assessment Framework has been issued which has been shared with multi-agency partners. All referrals into Children's Social Care are now risk assessed according to this framework.
- Management reviews were undertaken of all cases for children aged 0 – 5 with Child Protection Plans where domestic abuse was a factor.

- All child protection plans are now outcome focused plans and aim to mitigate risks including risks from domestic abuse
- A new training and development plan is being developed to increase knowledge and skills for front line practitioners, managers and Reviewing Officers.

## **5.5 Other Domestic Abuse Services in Slough**

### **Children's Centres**

A significant number of services have been provided through Slough's Children's Centres, in recognition of the comparatively high exposure to domestic abuse amongst the 0 to 5 age group. As well as a range of support groups, workshops for victims, legal advice services and training for the workforce, the Children's Centres provide a safe, confidential haven for organisations working with victims of domestic abuse to meet with their clients and for potential new clients to make discreet contact with the agencies that can provide help. A range of sensitive leaflets and business cards have been produced to enable information to be passed to clients attending the Centres in a subtle way.

### **Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid**

BESBWA provide the following services:

#### **Refuge**

In 2009/10, 62 clients were supported through the Berkshire East & South Bucks refuge (of which 22 were supported through resettlement). However, only 3 (5%) were from the Slough area originally. Whilst only 3 of the 62 refuge clients in 2010 came from Slough, 128 Slough residents and their 176 children were given safe refuge out-of-area, which actually shows that more Slough residents are being moved out-of-area than out-of-area clients are coming in. It should also be noted that of the 62 clients, 16 (24%) moved into the local area.

#### **IDVA Service**

Between April 2010 and March 2011, 245 Slough clients (227 female and 18 male) were referred into Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid's IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service (working with high risk clients). 235 children were indirectly supported.

#### **Outreach Service**

Between April 2010 and March 2011, 128 Slough clients (126 females and 2 males) were referred into Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid Outreach service. 149 children were indirectly supported. This service includes individual consultations with clients at the Children's Centres, arranged on an ad hoc basis to suit the clients' needs. Typical attendance is 20 clients per quarter, each of whom has at least one child under 5.

#### **BESBWA Children and Young People's Service**

Support for children and young people includes: support groups, play work, art therapy and creative workshops, one to one work with children and young people, fun activities, working in the community, outreach in schools and colleges. More detail on these services is given below:

- One ante-natal and one post-natal group per week on 2 separate Children's Centres, providing support for women during and after pregnancy, when they and their babies are most vulnerable. The objective of the service is to help mothers to develop protective strategies for themselves and their babies and



to recognise the risk to their children. This helps clients to find the confidence and the support to 'break the cycle',

- Two Rainbow parent and toddler groups, run at 2 separate Children's Centres, targeted at families who have experienced abusive relationships and have at least one child under 5. The groups enable the children to experience safe play, promotes healthy attachment between the children and their mothers and helps the mothers to understand the affects of domestic abuse on the children.
- An After School group for 5 to 11 year olds at the Wexham Road Children's Centre, which has supported an average 12 children per term,

### **Domestic Awareness Training for Children's Centre Multi-agency Partners**

6 workshops have been run in the period from July to December 2011, with a minimum of 50 attendees per quarter from a wide range of agencies working front line with parents and children. A further 3 workshops are planned for January to March 2011. The objective of the workshops is to ensure that practitioners, in whatever context they work with families and / or children, are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse and know how to inform clients about the services available and how to refer clients directly where appropriate.

### **Kinara Asian Women's Service**

Kinara provide the following services:

#### **Refuge**

Kinara provide refuge accommodation to Asian women (over the age of 18) and their children who are victims of abuse, whether sexual, emotional or physical. Kinara provide refuge, a link worker in order to empower women to build confidence and self awareness and take-up help and support.

During 09/10, Kinara supported 24 clients through refuge – all but one client was originally from out of area. Of the 24 clients, 8 (33%) moved out of the area (returned to family home or secured private tenancy), 5 (21%) moved into private accommodation in Slough, 4 (17%) moved into Slough owned housing stock, a further 4 (17%) were waiting to be re-housed in Slough, 3 (13%) were not ready to be moved out of supported accommodation.

#### **Outreach**

Kinara provide a drop-in and outreach service with staff speaking Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

### **Kinara Children and Young People's Service**

Children are supported with one on one play counselling by Mothers 4 Mothers, who support children who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. Kinara provide art workshops to help children come to terms with their experiences

The refuge provides Homework Club for children and healthy eating classes. Other recreational activities include swimming, baking days, cinema trips and mother and child family workshops.

### **Services run by BESBWA and Kinara**

#### **Freedom Programme and Sanctuary Scheme**

The Freedom Programme is a 12 week rolling programme for women to learn more about the reality of domestic abuse including understanding the beliefs held by

abusive men and gaining self esteem and confidence. Groups are currently run by Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid and by Kinara (who are running a group in Urdu). The Freedom Programme is sometimes used as part of a child protection plan. Three Freedom programmes, with crèche, are being run on 3 different Children's Centre sites. In quarters 1 and 2 of 2010/11, 52 adults have attended the programmes, each of whom have at least one child under 5.

The Sanctuary Scheme provides extra security in the homes of victims of domestic abuse (where the offender is no longer living). In 2010/11, there were 13 referrals to the Scheme with 8 of the referrals being carried out at a cost of £2,100. The estimated costs of treating these 8 cases as homeless, if Sanctuary had not been carried out would have cost £69,256, therefore demonstrating a huge cost savings. Feedback from one of the clients 6 months following installation of the security was also favourable.

### **MARAC**

Between April 2010 and March 2011, 210 'high risk' cases were managed through the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) with 22% being identified as repeat victims. 272 children were identified to be living in these households (including repeat cases).

### **Men's Programme**

The men's programme is run by Slough Borough Council, Children's Social Care staff. This is a 8 week programme for up to 10 men which supports clients to understand the impact of their behaviour on their partners and child(ren). The feedback from attendees and professionals about the programme has been very positive.

### **PICADA (Positive Intervention for Children Affected by Domestic Abuse)**

PICADA is a 12 week support group for children running alongside a parallel group for their mothers, following domestic abuse. The main purpose of the group is to give children an opportunity to move beyond what has happened in their family in a safe and therapeutic way. Facilitators of the group are currently all SBC employees and each group is planned according to what resources (crucially staff) are available. The most recent group ran from September – December 2010 with six children attending. Positive feed-back on the impact of this programme has been received from schools.

### **East Berkshire Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator**

The Safer Slough Partnership part-funds an East Berkshire Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator. The post is managed by Thames Valley Police and the main purpose of the post is, "To reduce domestic violence in East Berkshire by co-ordinating a multi-agency approach to the problem, including preventative work that addresses both victims and offenders." The post-holder is responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the Slough Domestic Abuse Strategy. The post-holder reports to both the Safer Slough Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

## **5.6 Outcomes from local domestic abuse services**

During 2011.12 outcomes data for 46 clients were received from the refuge and resettlement services, this is shown below:

### **Economic Well being**

- **100%** (50 out of 50 clients) clients maximised their **income opportunity** (inc benefits)
- **88%** (15 out of 17 clients) have **reduced debt** levels

### **Education**

- **76%** (19 out of 25 clients) participated in **training**
- **52%** (10 out of the 19) achieving a **qualification**
- **89%** (34 out of 38 clients) **established contact with external services/groups**

### **Health**

- **73%** (17 out of 23 clients) manage their **physical health better**
- **55%** (12 out of 22 clients) manage their **mental health better**
- **33%** (1 out of 3 clients) manage their substance **misuse issues better**

### **Staying Safe**

- **80%** (29 out of 36 clients) has **maintained their accommodation**
- **70%** (33 out of 47 clients) has secured/obtained **settled accommodation**
- **83%** (36 out of 43 clients) minimising the **harm/risk of harm from others**

### **Making a positive contribution**

- **85%** (41 out of 48 clients) has **more confidence** and choice and/or involvement and/or control

## **5.7 Recommendations for the commissioning of a new integrated service**

Led by the Joint Commissioning Team, the local authority has been working with partners on a strategic review of domestic abuse services. This review has recommended the commissioning of a new coordinated approach to service provision, which will include the following elements:

### **Crisis Intervention**

- Intensive Family Support Service: This element of the service will support families with children to live safely in their own home, ensuring parents care for their children appropriately and effectively. This service will be available to all children who are considered Children in Need or have Child Protection Plans, and will include reunification work to enable children to return home.
- Specialist Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates; This element will provide short term intensive support to high risk individuals and their families as defined by CAADA DASH risk Indicator
- Refuge Accommodation to support high risk women and their children experiencing domestic abuse when the option of staying at home is no longer safe/viable.

### **Early Intervention and prevention**

- Targeted psychological interventions for children and young people who have been involved in or witnessed domestic abuse, including one to one and group work.
- Individual consultations / appointments on a flexible basis at Children's Centres, supported by crèche services where required
- Parenting programmes and small group work for parents and young children at Children's Centres supported by crèche services where required.

- Staff training and development to enable them to identify signs of domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and know how to refer children and young people to support.
- Staff training and development to enable work with perpetrators.
- Floating Outreach and Resettlement Support Service: This service should provide floating outreach and resettlement support for Slough residents currently or recently experiencing domestic abuse, and who are considered to be at medium level of risk
- Clear referral routes so that all agencies working with children and young people understand how to refer cases appropriately

#### 5.8 **Case studies**

See attached.

#### 6. **Comments of Other Committees**

Nil

#### 7. **Conclusion**

Slough has comparatively high levels of domestic abuse and this abuse is having a significant and detrimental impact on the well-being of children in Slough. The re-commissioning of domestic abuse services should lead to better service provision and enhanced protection for children and vulnerable adults.

#### 8. **Appendices Attached**

Appendix 1: Case Studies  
 Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse Strategy  
 Appendix 3: Domestic Abuse Plan

#### 9. **Background Papers**

None. Data was provided by Thames Valley Police, Education and Children Services, SBC, Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid and Kinara Asian Women's Service.

**Red Nose Day 2011**

**Story: MAN JAILED AFTER BEATING UP HIS STUDENT BOYFRIEND**

**Dean, 22, of Berkshire**

**A year ago Dean, just 21, was left for dead by his ex-partner who had beaten him up for over six hours. After cleaning his own blood off the walls, the browbeaten victim, wrapped himself in a duvet and waited to die. The next day he was found and taken to hospital having suffered fractures to his eye sockets, his skull, his arms and hands. Doctors told him he had lost so much blood he had only hours to live.**

Dean could not believe his luck when he met a charismatic and enthralling man at a party. So mesmerised was he by this new man in his life, that Dean lost no time in moving in with his new love. But, Dean now realises, the warning signs were there that this relationship was not going to be normal. "It became clear to me that he was taking cannabis and growing it. Now I'm no angel but his involvement became deeper and deeper, soon we'd moved somewhere which basically became a cannabis factory". Dean's partner also began, after a period of time, taking crystal meth.

The violence started on Christmas Day in 2008 when Dean announced he was going to see his mum. "He hit me once and then tried to make it up to me but that was the start. By March the next year, the abuse was happening every day".

His partner became increasingly paranoid believing all sorts of crazy things were true. He tried to control Dean dictating what clothes he could wear and what food he could eat. He even persuaded Dean to abandon his university course and he wasn't not allowed any money. This was so bad, that Dean even had to steal food from a shop on at least one occasion. The violence came to head one day when the couple had an argument over a DVD. Dean's partner said he was going away and was going to get a taxi. Dean saw him off, but when he got home, his partner was waiting for him and the attack began. Dean didn't fight back. The following week his partner was arrested, while partying with friends.

The project, with workers funded by Comic Relief, helped Dean cope with the trauma of what had happened to him. Workers also supported him through the court case after which is former partner was jailed for five years. He's due to be released next year. Now Dean is hoping to return to university to finish his degree and is working hard to form a new relationship with Michae (not his real name). But it's not easy, Dean has lost his self-confidence, has panic attacks and struggles with his anxiety.

Michael, 33, said: "It just makes my blood boil that someone could hurt someone as small as Dean. There's no excuse for violence. I saw domestic violence during my childhood and I always swore I would never raise my hand to a partner and I never have."

"I just want to be happy," Dean said "and now with Michael, I'm really trying hard to rebuild my life."

## Story: TEENAGER REBUILDS HER LIFE AFTER FLEEING VIOLENT DAD

### 'Rebecca' 13, of Berkshire

**Rebecca first became aware that her parents' marriage was unhappy about two years ago. But she did not dream that it would become so bad that she would be forced with her mum and siblings to flee the family home and seek sanctuary in a refuge. Now she is re-building her life and planning a future without the fear of violence. But she still has to cope with the fact that her dad lives in the area and, although he cannot come close to her legally, she will bump into him now and then. Just seeing him terrifies her.**

Rebecca was about 11 when she began to accept that her parents' relationship was not normal. She realised that her dad didn't speak nicely to her mum and she became aware that her mum was being hit, often with objects including the tv remote control. Her mum was forced to obey her dad's rules which even included having her hair cut short and dyed red – so no one else would look at her. But the abuse didn't stop there. Rebecca's dad was verbally abusive to her, often calling her fat, saying she was just like her mum and meting out the same treatment to her brother and sisters. If she was naughty, her dad would pick her up and throw her up the stairs. If her brother was naughty he'd be hooked up to the door handle by his top.

She doesn't remember what single incident led to her mum deciding it was time to go. She just remembers packing bags, going to her nan's home and waiting for help. And help did come, from the East Berks & South Bucks Women's Aid project who took the family into one of their refuges where they lived for months while sorting out a future. During that time, this defensive and quiet teenager came out of her shell and began to trust the staff and learn that others had experienced the same violence in their lives and come out of it.

All the time, this was happening her father would try to make contact, including sending abusive birthday cards to her at school and through a social networking site on the internet. Once she was shopping with her sister and saw her dad in town watching her.

"I am scared of my dad. He came close and I just screamed and screamed and screamed." The shop owner sought help and security guards removed her dad from the shopping centre. But this is one of several incidents where she's spotted her father and had to hide or seek help. In spite of this fear, Rebecca is a bubbly down-to-earth teenager who openly talks about her experiences of domestic violence. She is now enjoying thinking about her future career.

“I’m thinking of maybe training to be a social worker or a teacher. Even I’m able to I might even try to be a vet. I love children and animals and I love riding horses. I feel I’ve got something to offer.”



## Story: YOUNG MUM BREAKS FREE FROM ABUSIVE BOYFRIEND

### **‘Sarah’ 19, from Berkshire**

**Sarah’s inability to leave the abusive partner who pushed her around, called her nasty names, chose what she wore, when she went out and who she saw, has cost her dear. Her need to return to her abuser because she believed she couldn’t function without him meant she almost lost custody of her daughter. When social services took her child away, Sarah decided to take charge of her own destiny and she sought refuge from the man who had made her life such a misery.**

“I first realised that this man might not be what he first seemed when he started talking to me in a nasty tone, he just stopped speaking time civilly and was routinely calling me a fxxxing bitch or a stupid cow. But as soon as he found out I was pregnant the physical abuse began,” Sarah said.

She was told that she had to obey his rules which included allowing him to choose who she saw, when and if she went out, even what she had to eat. Increasingly Sarah was told she couldn’t go to work and he would beg her to stay at home. When she refused he’d put his fist through the door, or a wall. Gradually Sarah became increasingly isolated from friends and family – none of whom liked the man in her life. If she disobeyed the rules she was locked in the house, or locked out of the house for hours at a time.

“One incident that sticks in my mind was when I was washing up in the kitchen and he came into the kitchen and I heard him taking a knife from the block. He was angry about something and I thought that knife is for me, He’s going to stick it into me and I waited. But he stabbed it into the work surface.”

In spite of the fear in her life, Sarah couldn’t break away from this man. She reported every incident of violence but always withdrew her statement as the case progressed. It was only when, after having her baby, that she returned to him and her baby was taken from her that she broke free. “I just thought, this is it, I’m gone, I packed my bags and I left”.

With the help of the East Berks & South Bucks Women’s Aid, Sarah has found sanctuary in a refuge where she has slowly regained her self-confidence. After a few months, she’d made so much progress that her daughter was returned to her. She’s now preparing to move into her own home and preparing to return to college.

“Domestic violence gets worse the longer you stay in a relationship. My life is so much better now, I’ve got my daughter, I’m now supported by my family and I could not wish for anything.”

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# DOMESTIC ABUSE: A STRATEGY FOR SLOUGH

2011 - 2014



## FOREWORD

Welcome to Slough's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2011-14, which has been produced by the Domestic Abuse Network. Our work is directed by the vision of the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP). The three year aim for the Safer Slough Partnership 2011-14 is 'To reduce the harm that results from crime and disorder'. Our work also contributes to the Slough Local Safeguarding Children Board's Strategic Business Plan 2011-14 where one of the priorities is 'To raise awareness in Slough of the impact of domestic abuse and work to reduce its incidence and protect children at risk of harm from its effects'.

The Slough Domestic Abuse Network is committed to tackling domestic abuse. The Network is a multi agency sub-group of the Safer Slough Partnership and is responsible for delivering the tasks outlined in this action plan and relevant tasks outlined in the Drugs and Community Safety Service Plan and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Strategic Business Plan. Members of the Domestic Abuse Network and other local partnerships have all been consulted with regarding this strategy and plan.

The purpose of the plan that accompanies this strategy is to outline how we are going to carry out our work and responsibilities from 2011-14. It will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date and reflects the work being undertaken.

## **1. WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?**

Domestic abuse is primarily a gender based crime with research showing that it is predominately experienced by women and perpetrated by men. This strategy acknowledges however that there are male victims of domestic abuse and female perpetrators, and that domestic abuse also occurs within same sex relationships.

Home Office figures suggest that one in four women and one in six men will be affected during their lifetime.

Domestic abuse can include behaviour which is not only physical, but emotional, psychological, sexual and/or financial. Domestic abuse covers a range of circumstances where power and control is exerted by one person over another, and perpetrators will use behaviours to isolate, exhaust and degrade their victims. Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on victims and their families with considerable financial, emotional and human costs.

Many forms of domestic abuse are crimes and there can never be an excuse for them to take place. Factors such as mental health, substance misuse, culture and upbringing may influence and compound the situation or behaviour but they should never be seen as the main reason that the abuse takes place.

Domestic abuse is rarely a one off incident but rather a pattern or abusive and controlling behaviour that tends to get worse over time.

The Slough Domestic Abuse Network uses the following definition of domestic abuse, in line with the Home Office and Thames Valley Police:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.” (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

## **2. THE PROFILE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN SLOUGH**

- Thames Valley Police responded to 3451 incidents of domestic abuse in 2010/11, equating to 9.5 reports every day.
- Reports of ‘domestic abuse recorded crime’ in Slough reduced by 10.8% and ‘domestic abuse non recordable crime’ increased by 21.3% in 2010/11, in comparison to the previous year.
- The repeat rate of victims who have been a victim of domestic abuse in the previous 12 months (reported to police) was 41.7% 2010/11, a decrease from 41.9% the previous year.
- 210 ‘high risk’ cases were managed through the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) 2010/11, with 22% being identified as repeats.
- Vulnerable months for domestic abuse reports are July, December, August and March (according to 2010/11 reports)
- In 2009/10 Berkshire East & South Bucks Women’s Aid (BESBWA) IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor), Outreach and Women’s Safety Worker’s department received 470 new clients from the Slough area.
- The cost of domestic abuse in Slough has been estimated at £11,372,566 per year for agencies (Criminal Justice, Health Care, Social Services, Housing, Civil Legal Costs and Economic output losses) or £36,310,291 if you include the cost to the individual for human and emotional costs<sup>1</sup>.

## **3. VISION STATEMENT**

In Slough there is a commitment to address all forms of domestic abuse through partnership working, where all agencies work together to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families. Overall, there is an aim to provide a co-ordinated response to reduce the impact of domestic abuse and increase the safety of those experiencing domestic abuse through the following three priorities:

- Prevention: by challenging attitudes and behaviours that foster domestic abuse, intervening early where possible to prevent it and ensuring an effective and consistent response by trained and informed staff;
- Provision: by providing adequate levels of support for survivors including children where domestic abuse does occur;

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office ready reckoner tool, estimating the local cost of domestic and sexual violence.

- Risk Reduction and Justice Outcomes: by taking action to reduce the risk to victims and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice for their actions.

Our Domestic Abuse Action plan aims to build on the previous good work already done (see section 5), reinforces the commitment from the local partners in Slough to tackling domestic abuse and ensures that domestic abuse is seen as a local priority.

#### **4. NATIONAL CONTEXT**

The coalition government has an ambition to end violence against women and girls. The government has committed to £28million of Home Office funding for specialist services over the next four years, improving the response to rape, more training and early intervention programmes, new powers and better support for victims.

The government's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) action plan focuses on prevention, awareness raising, early identification and early intervention. The action plan was launched on 8 March 2011 to mark International Women's Day.

To view further information on the government's plans for the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda and to download the action plan, visit:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/>

#### **5. LOCAL CONTEXT**

Domestic abuse cuts across all social, geographical and cultural groups and effects individuals, families and the community as a whole. Research has shown that domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men during their lifetime. Slough has a population of 119,067 people and is a culturally diverse town with a range of communities. More than a third of Slough's population are from black and minority ethnic communities and since May 2004, Slough has seen an increase in numbers in some of the communities from Central and Eastern Europe (notably Poland). Slough also has the highest percentage of Sikh residents (9.1%) in the country, according to Census (2001) figures, and the highest percentage of Muslim (13.4%) and Hindu residents (4.5%) in the South East region.

Since the 2007-11 Domestic Abuse Strategy there have been a number of successful actions completed, including:

- Various awareness raising opportunities and materials to raise awareness of domestic abuse and signpost to services, including leaflets, posters, newspaper articles, commencement of a quarterly newsletter, domestic abuse web-pages.
- Many one day training events to increase the knowledge of professionals to ensure victims are provided with adequate support and referred to appropriate services. These sessions include an introduction course, Children and Domestic Abuse, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Risk Identification.
- Developing the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). A MARAC has been established in Slough since 2007 which has become embedded with local partners.

- Sustaining delivery of the Freedom Programme, offering a 12 week support group for women affected by domestic abuse, run by Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid.
- Sustaining the Sanctuary Scheme, offering a range of security devices to enable a victim to remain in their own home rather than move. 8 clients provided with additional security 2010/11.
- Delivery of a community based perpetrator programme called Changing Ways, in partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest Council and Wokingham Borough Council. 37 men from Slough were referred (self and agency referrals) with 10 men starting the programme, 4 of which completed the full 30 week programme.
- Running therapeutic groups for children who have witnessed domestic abuse (12 week programme), called PICADA – Positive Intervention for Children Affected by Domestic Abuse. 9 children attended the first two groups.
- Home Office accreditation for the Berkshire Specialist Domestic Violence Courts in 2008. The court enables police, prosecutors, courts and specialist services to work together to improve outcomes for victims in the criminal justice system.
- Development of the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) and Outreach service at Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid. BESBWA were one of the first organisations in the country to receive Leading Lights accreditation from CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) in 2008.
- Thames Valley Police started using the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence) risk indicator checklist in 2009. DASH is also used by Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid, and training for partner agencies commenced in 2010 to encourage further use.
- Recruitment of a male IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) with Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid. Since August 2009, the Male project has supported 68 high risk male victims of domestic abuse across East Berkshire and 63 young males from RBWM and Slough schools have been supported through workshops and providing 1:1 direct work.
- Implementation of a Domestic Abuse policy for Slough Borough Council staff in September 2010.

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**SLOUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE PLAN 2011-14**

The overall target for all our work is to contribute towards Reducing violent crime. The Safer Slough Partnership target is a 12% reduction in assaults without injury, wounding and serious violence and increase the detection rate to 42%

Throughout all this work, we will work in partnership to obtain the best outcomes for victims and their families.

1. **PREVENTION:** by challenging attitudes and behaviours which foster domestic abuse and intervening early where possible to prevent it.

Through our work to **prevent** domestic abuse, we will work to:

- change the attitudes, behaviours and practices which contribute to domestic abuse by means of appropriate and targeted challenge;
- increase public understanding of domestic abuse by putting in place focussed awareness-raising initiatives which include looking at its root causes, hidden nature and economic cost to society;
- strengthen understanding of the unacceptability of domestic abuse by ensuring our frontline partners can intervene early to challenge acceptability; and
- protect vulnerable children by working with frontline partners to make them aware of the tools and systems available to them to ensure the right first response.

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Maintain levels of communications regarding domestic abuse issues to both members of the public and local practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver communications plan.</li> <li>• At least 4 Domestic Abuse press releases/articles in Citizen per year.</li> <li>• Minimum of 1 public event per year.</li> </ul>	Sophie Wing-King (DA Co-ordinator) and SBC Comms Officer	Timetable of events maintained and quarterly update at DA Network.		<p>Communications plan in place – Summer 2011.</p> <p>Citizen article – June 2011.</p> <p>DA Newsletter – August 2011.</p> <p>Karma Nirvana Roadshow 25/11/2011 – White Ribbon Day with 65 practitioners attending.</p> <p>Citizen article – December 2011</p>

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Maintaining a programme of training around domestic abuse available to local practitioners so practitioners are better informed in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Introduction to Domestic Abuse training sessions delivered with minimum of 40 delegates attending.</li> <li>3 MARAC and DASH training sessions delivered with min. 45 delegates attending.</li> <li>2 Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage training sessions with minimum 30 delegates attending.</li> </ul>	<p>Sophie Wing-King (DA Co-ordinator)</p> <p>Berkshire East and SB Women's Aid</p> <p>Jatinder Matharu (Children &amp; Young People Training Officer)</p>	Feedback forms from delegates with satisfaction levels/comments to Training Team.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro to DA dates: 13/05/11 – 11 delegates 05/08/11 07/11/11 07/02/12</li> <li>MARAC and DASH dates: 22/06/11 – 16 attended 26/10/11 – 13 attended 15/11/11 – 17 attended 10/01/12 – 9 attended</li> <li>HBV and FM dates: 12/08/11 06/02/12 -</li> </ul>
Encourage education and awareness raising campaigns on domestic abuse in school/youth settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of 'healthy relationships' workshop in schools</li> </ul>	Berks East & South Bucks Women's Aid	Quarterly update at DA Network		2010/11 – 629 children and young people supported in Slough by the 'healthy relationships' workshop.
Work with local businesses regarding issues of domestic abuse and encourage them to adopt HR policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify local businesses to approach</li> <li>Meet with businesses to encourage development of HR policy</li> </ul>	DA Co-ordinator Berks East & SB Women's Aid	Number of businesses engaged with. DAC updates at Network meeting		No work currently done on this.

2. **PROVISION:** by providing adequate levels of support where domestic abuse does occur.

Through our work to **provide** adequate levels of support where violence does occur, we will work to:

- send a clear signal that the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse is a priority;
- improve local domestic abuse support to meet local needs;

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Ensure provision for children who have witnessed domestic abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run at least 1 PICADA (Positive Intervention for Children Affected by Domestic Abuse) group per year.</li> <li>• Children provided with support through refuge, outreach and resettlement.</li> </ul>	<p>Sophie Wing-King (DA Co-ordinator)</p> <p>Berks East &amp; SB Women's Aid</p>	Quarterly update at DA Network.		<p>May 2011 PICADA group cancelled due to lack of funding. Funding identified for December 2011 start.</p> <p>2010/2011 – 209 referrals for individual case work within Berks East &amp; SB Women's Aid Children's Services department.</p>
Maintain provision of a support group for victims of domestic abuse to raise self esteem.	Run at least two 12 week Freedom Programmes in Slough	<p>Berks East &amp; South Bucks Women's Aid</p> <p>Kinara Women's Refuge</p>	Quarterly update at DA Network		<p>Kinara have developed Freedom Programme in Urdu which is run regularly.</p> <p>Berks East &amp; South Bucks Women's Aid run 3 Freedom Programme's (with crèche facilities) across Slough. 2010-11, Q's 1&amp;2, 52 adults attended, each have at least one child under 5 years old.</p>

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Raise awareness of the impact of domestic abuse and work to reduce the incidence and protect children at risk of harm from its effects	Agree methodology and develop audit process Undertake thematic audit of the impact of domestic abuse	Quality and Performance Sub Group of LSCB	Report to LSCB. LSCB Strategic Priority 2.		Domestic Abuse audit carried out summer 2011 through Quality and Performance Sub Group of LSCB but methodology did not work. Revised methodology with audit planned for 2012. Thames Valley probation carrying out single agency DA audit 2012 also.
Promote the Sanctuary Scheme to enable victims of domestic abuse to remain in their homes with additional security.	Agree process for referrals following staff changes. Promote scheme amongst local partners.	Sophie Wing-King (DA Co-ordinator) Brian Daly (SBC Housing) Maju Dhar (SBC Home Improvement Agency)	Yearly report on number of Sanctuary Scheme's referred/carried out. Client satisfaction follow up 6 months after Sanctuary scheme security work carried out.		One Sanctuary referral September 2011 but no work carried out. TVP crime reduction officers withdrawing from Sanctuary process, training due to be delivered to DAU staff Jan – March 2012 regarding security assessments.

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Ensure an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) and Outreach service available to support Slough victims of domestic abuse.	Slough IDVA (s) in post through BESBWA  Outreach services available for victims of domestic abuse through BESBWA  Monitor number of local residents accessing services	Berkshire East & SB Women's Aid  Kinara Asian Women's Service	Quarterly report to DA Network meeting.		IDVA's in post including Eastern European and Male. Funding not mainstreamed. A&E IDVA external grant funding successful January 2012.  2010-11: 245 clients from Slough area referred to BESBWA IDVA service - 227 female / 18 male - 212 supported 128 clients from Slough area referred to Outreach service - 126 female / 2 male
Ensure adequate refuge accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.	Monitor number of local residents accessing services	Berkshire East & SB Women's Aid  Kinara Asian Women's Service	Quarterly report to DA Network meeting.		BESBWA provide 3 refuge houses with 13 units. Kinara provide 2 houses with 14 units. 2010-11: 15 women provided with refuge accommodation by Kinara (none from Slough area)

3. **RISK REDUCTION AND JUSTICE OUTCOMES:** Take action to reduce the risk victims of domestic abuse and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.
- Through our work to **reduce the risk** to victims of domestic abuse and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice, we will work to:
- Increase the number of victims who have the confidence to access the criminal justice system by seeking continued improvement of the effectiveness of its response to them;
  - Strengthen the framework to protect victims by ensuring the application of current legislative powers and risk management processes are both understood and effective;
  - Ensuring provision for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Increase the number of reports of domestic abuse to police and local services.	See communications plan	DA Network members	Quarterly updates on number of reports (recorded crime and non recordable crime) and repeat rates to Berks East DA Steering Group.		<p><b>2010/11 data:</b>            Number of reports – 3451            Recorded crime – 1239            Non recordable crime – 2212            Repeat rate – 41.7%</p> <p><b>2011/12 data April – December 2011</b>            Number of reports – 2698            Recorded crime – 919 (-5.1%)            Non recordable crime – 1779 (+5.7%)            Repeat rate – 41.4%</p>

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
Implement section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), putting in place statutory domestic violence homicide reviews so the CSP can respond effectively to any notification of a domestic homicide.	Carry out domestic homicide review (DHR) when required.	Safer Slough Partnership (SSP)	Review and recommendations published when required.		Presentation to SSP 31/05/11.  Local protocol written and agreed by SSP members August 2011.
Work with partners to ensure effectiveness of the Slough MARAC to support high risk victims of domestic abuse.	Increase the number of non-TVP referrals to MARAC  Roll out of MODUS system.	DA Network members  Thames Valley Police	Monitor MARAC performance through Berkshire East DA Steering Group		2010/11 data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 210 MARAC referrals</li> <li>• 22.0% repeat rate</li> <li>• 71% referrals from TVP</li> </ul>
Provision for perpetrators in place to enhance women and children's safety.	Investigate development of a community based perpetrator programme with parallel women's support service.	SBC Children's Social Care  Slough DA Network members	TBA		Investigation into options currently being done. Children's Social Care run a men's group (8 week programme for up to 10 men which supports client's to understand the impact of their behaviour on partners/children.  Training for internal staff to develop groupwork currently being planned for.  August 2011 - 61 RBWM and Slough cases being managed with a CDVP requirement (meaning men are waiting to start, currently completing or have completed but still on their order/licence)

TARGETS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	KEY ACTIONS	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	MONITORING AND EVALUATION (OR RELEVANT ACTION PLANS):	RAG STATUS	PROGRESS
<p>Increase in the number of offenders brought to justice through links with the Specialist DV Court</p> <p>Thames Valley attrition rate target = 26%            – the %age of unsuccessful cases including discontinuances and acquittal after trial.</p>	<p>Berkshire SDVC Self / Peer Review carried out.</p>	<p>Berkshire SDVC Steering Group</p>	<p>Quarterly reports at Berkshire SDVC Steering Group / TV DA Strategy Group</p>		<p>Berkshire East attrition rate data:            Apr – Jun 2010 = 32%            Jul – Sep 2010 = 33%            Oct – Dec 2010 = 33%            Jan – March 2011 = 42%</p>