



## CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Domestic Abuse in Havering 2020
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Barry Francis Interim Director of Neighbourhoods
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<b>Policy context:</b>	The report sets out the progress against the work programme to support victims of domestic abuse in Havering in 2020.
<b>Financial summary:</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, adverse performance against some performance indicators may have financial implications for the Council.

### The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

### SUMMARY

The report provides in update against the delivery of the Havering Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2019 -2022.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

- note the contents of the report;
- consider the performance information required going forward; and
- Request information as set out in the report.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Definition of domestic violence**

The Havering Community Safety Partnership Plan 2018-19 identified violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a priority. The new strategy was approved by cabinet in March 2019.

The Havering Community Safety Partnership has adopted the cross government definition which states that domestic abuse and violence is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- ☐ Psychological
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Sexual
- ☐ Financial
- ☐ emotional

The definition of controlling behaviour includes a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim.

### **2. The level of domestic abuse in Havering**

From the 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020 there were 4546 domestic violence incidents reported to the police and 2610 domestic violence offences recorded by the police. When the police attend a domestic violence incident where a child is present a Merlin safeguarding alert will be sent to the MASH to alert children's services that domestic abuse is occurring in the household. In 2020, the MASH received 2923 contacts in relation to domestic abuse of which 1516 were from the police.

### **3. Domestic violence multi agency risk assessment conference**

A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a victim focused information sharing and risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where high risk cases are discussed. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. In a single meeting, MARAC combines up to date risk information with a timely assessment of a victim's needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in a domestic abuse case: victim, children and perpetrator.

In Havering, the MARAC was held every 3 weeks. However, since the commencement of the first lockdown in March 2020, it was decided that the MARAC would be held weekly to meet the demand of the increase in DV that was likely to occur. The MARAC is chaired by a detective inspector from the East Area BCU Safeguarding team. From the 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020, there were 446 cases referred to the MARAC. In 413 cases, the victim was female and in 33 cases, the victim was male. Nine of the victims were aged five or below. There were 665 children identified as being part of the 446 households. This has increased from 330 in the previous year and represents a 35% increase.

#### **4. Support services for victims of domestic abuse Havering Council commission a number of services to support victims of Domestic abuse.**

##### **4.1 Domestic abuse advocacy project**

Havering Women's aid provide advocacy support to victims of domestic abuse. Victims can contact the service directly to receive advice and support Monday to Friday. They offer floating support, group support and 1-2-1 counselling is available on 01708 728759. This service is funded to March 2022.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until 31/12/2020, 546 women assessed the service and completed an assessment of which 344 continued to have further support. 84 women accessed group support and 106 accessed 1-2-1 counselling.

##### **4.2 Men only service**

MENDAS are an organisation based in Havering that can offer support in regards to male victims of Domestic Violence. They offer floating support and 1-2-1 counselling. This service is funded to March 2022. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until 31/12/2020, 34 men assessed support.

##### **4.3 Young Person's IDVA**

The young person's IDVA is a new provision that commenced in November 2020. This provision is provided by Havering Women's Aid. The IDVA will offer support for victims aged 13-25 where they have been identified as a victim of domestic abuse. This includes safety planning, 1-2-1 support and advocacy.

##### **4.4 Pan London Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service**

The Mayor's office for policing and Crime (MOPAC) fund three IDVAs and one senior IDVA in the EA BCU. They are co-located in Romford Police Station and Freshwharf police station to provide ongoing support to high-risk victims of domestic abuse. However, since March 2020, the IDVA team has been working remotely. Data is held by MOPAC and is sent out quarterly but in arrears. Therefore, the year's data is not available. This service only takes referrals from the police.

##### **4.5 Council funded IDVAS**

There are two IDVA's based in the Community safety team. One is funded by MOPAC London Crime Prevention Funding and the other is funded by Children's services. The IDVA's are providing 1-2-1 support to victims who are at a point of crisis and require advocacy for court and general emotional support. The IDVA's also conduct safety planning and refer on to additional agencies that can offer a

long-term support package for victims when required. 366 referrals were made to the IDVA service, with 20 cases carried over from quarter 3 2019. The IDVA's managed 477 cases including 111 ongoing cases of which 57 were repeat referrals. Of the 477 cases, 200 were managed by the Children's services IDVA and the other 277 were managed by the MOPAC funded IDVA.

#### **4.6 Solace Women's Aid**

Funded through the London Councils grant scheme, Solace Women's Aid provide support groups and counselling through Havering Children's Centres. 25 victims living in Havering have accessed services from Solace. Nine of the referrals were made by professionals including GP's, social workers and the Police. The other 16 referrals were self-referrals for support from Solace.

#### **5. Refuge Provision**

The Refuge and Floating support provision were subject to a re-tender exercise during 2018. The contract was awarded for 3 years with the option to extend for a further year. The total contract value excluding the extension is £699,595.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, there have been 47 families that have been offered residency in the refuge. Some families had been there from the previous year, some had moved on and 12 new residents had moved in. During the pandemic, some changes had to be made to service provision to ensure the safety of the staff and the residents. In March 2020, it was decided that the support workers would work remotely. A staff member attended the refuge everyday to collect mail, check for voice messages and check that the health and safety of the refuge and its residents were met.

Funding was sought from Ministry of Housing to provide additional cleaning to the buildings and founded an additional staff member to support the increased demand of phone calls into the service. The funding was also used to provide each family with an iPad to aid communication with the team and support the children's education and home learning needs.

The counselling and group support provision was suspended from March to August 2020. Service re-commenced in September 2020 on Zoom. Since the sessions have been online, more victims can be offered this form of support. Therefore, waiting lists for the group programmes have significantly reduced.

Further funding was secured in October 2020 for a part time BAME IDVA post. The funding is secured for one year with a possible extension of a second year. Due to a limited number of applicants and the added complications of conducting interviews on line, this post will not commence until January 2021.

#### **6. Referrals in to Children Social Care through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

All contacts regarding possible safeguarding or child protection concerns regarding children are referred to the Havering Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The information is triaged by a Children Social Care MASH Team Manager to determine what action is required to respond to the concerns that have been referred. The image below sets out the three levels of concerns and threshold for each level.

In determining the level of concern the MASH Team Manager will also consider whether criteria for MASH checks are met. In relation to domestic abuse the following apply:

1. Domestic Violence. Barnardo's Risk Matrix Level of Risk: Serious Scale 3 and 4
2. All referrals where there are a combination of the Toxic Trio: Mental Health, drug/alcohol and domestic violence

The MASH service adheres to tight timeframes to ensure cases are responded to in a timely manner and allocated according to the level of need. The table below sets out the timeframe for MASH checks to be completed:

RED Due in 4 Hours (from time of request).

AMBER Due in 24 hours (from time of request)

If the case meets a threshold for a statutory service i.e. Children Act 1989 s 17: Child in Need; or Children Act 1989 s 47: a child has suffered significant harm or is at risk of suffering significant harm; the case will be referred to the Children Social Care Assessment service and allocated to a social worker on that day.

If the referral is identified to suggest significant concern, a strategy meeting is held and will include those partners that have involvement with the child in order to share information and to agree a plan to respond to the concerns to safeguard the child. This meeting will decide whether the matter should be responded to under S47 or s17 and if S47 whether the response is joint response with police or a single agency response. The case will usually be determined to be a joint investigation if the police believe that a crime has been or may have been committed.

Cases referred to the Assessment Service identified to meet a threshold for children social care will be assessed by a qualified social worker. The assessment will consider all aspects of the child's life and identify risks, strengths and protective factors. The assessment will conclude with an analysis and recommendations regarding what support is required to safeguard and protect the child.

### **6.1 Working with Perpetrators**

Following research within the department, looking at existing Child Protection plans and assessments, there was a clear identified gap in working with perpetrators with the intention to improve the wellbeing of families and their children. A business case has been approved. Children's services are working with partners and using the Safer Together model, to develop a localised plan to work with perpetrators and their families.

### **7. The role of children's services in supporting children affected by Domestic Abuse**

The level of risk identified through assessment will determine the service response. All service responses are required to be proportionate to the level of need to ensure that there is as little intrusion as possible into family life whilst also ensuring that children are safeguarded from the risk of further harm.

An assessment can conclude with the following:

- ☐ No further action
- ☐ Early Help support
- ☐ Child in Need (Statutory service under s17 CA 1989)

- ☐ Child Protection Conference
- ☐ Looked after Child.

If the concerns that are presenting require intervention and support, these will be identified by the social worker during the course of the assessment process and a plan will be developed with the family that will address the concerns to reduce the risks. Any statutory intervention will result in a multi-agency plan that will be agreed at a meeting attended with the family and those agencies identified to be required to work with the family to improve the child's situation.

All plans are reviewed regularly to determine whether the plan is impacting on achieving the outcomes identified and action is taken in order to respond to any issues identified.

The services available to families from Children Social Care perspective are:

☐ **Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)**

The IDVA based within Children Social Care provides advice and guidance to the social workers to support them when working with victims of domestic abuse. The IDVA provides face to face or telephone crisis intervention support on a case-by-case basis and includes assessing risk management and safety planning; advocating on clients behalf with other organisations such as police, housing and legal advice around benefits. The IDVA will work alongside the social worker to support the client with their criminal or civil matters by looking at particular safeguarding and protective orders such as Non Molestation or Prohibited Steps Orders. In addition, the IDVA will support and prepare clients for the criminal proceedings when they have agreed to give evidence against their perpetrator. The IDVA will also work with the social worker to identify the client and families individual needs and will be referring to the appropriate organisations for suitable interventions. This post is currently funded by the CYPS until March 2021 with a view to extend the contract for the next financial year.

☐ **Systemic Family Therapy**

Children Social Care Services has access to a Systemic Family Therapy Service and a Systemic Family Psychotherapist is placed within the Assessment Team. The Systemic Family Psychotherapist provides support to the social worker working with the family to provide a systemic intervention directly in to families in order to support the family to reduce violence and increase more helpful behaviours within the family home.

The Families Together Team (FTT) works systemically with families where children are at risk of being removed or require support prior to a child returning to the family home following a period of being looked after, to support parents and carers to develop more helpful and kinder communication strategies that reduces blame and increases hope within the family system.

☐ **Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA)**

There is currently no legal definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse. However, it is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse and, depending on the age of the child (i.e. is the child aged 16 or over), it may fall under the government's official definition of domestic violence and abuse.

It is important to recognise that APVA is likely to involve a pattern of behaviour. This can include physical violence from an adolescent towards a parent and a number of different types of abusive behaviours, including damage to property, emotional abuse, and economic/financial abuse. Violence and abuse can occur together or separately. Abusive behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating language and threats, belittling a parent, damage to property and stealing from a parent and heightened sexualised behaviours. Patterns of coercive control are often seen in cases of APVA, but some families might experience episodes of explosive physical violence from their adolescent with fewer controlling, abusive behaviours. Although practitioners may be required to respond to a single incident of APVA, it is important to gain an understanding of the pattern of behaviour behind an incident and the history of the relationship between the young person and the parent.

It is also important to understand the pattern of behaviour in the family unit; siblings may also be abused or be abusive. There may also be a history of domestic abuse, or current domestic abuse occurring between the parents of the young person. It is important to recognise the effects APVA may have on both the parent and the young person and to establish trust and support for both.

The first large scale study of adolescent to parent violence and abuse in the UK was conducted by the University of Oxford (see <http://apv.crim.ox.ac.uk/>) between 2010 and 2013. Practitioners and parents interviewed in this study described the abuse as often involving a pattern of aggressive, abusive and violent acts across a prolonged period of time. As well as physically assaulting their parents, those interviewed said their teenage children had smashed up property, kicked holes in doors, broken windows, had thrown things at their parents and made threats. Verbal abuse and other controlling behaviours were also commonly present. This pattern of behaviour creates an environment where a parent lives in fear of their child and often curtails their own behaviour in order to avoid conflict, contain or minimise violence. This study found that there was no single explanation for this problem. Families described a range of reasons which they saw to be the cause for APVA, including substance abuse, mental health problems, learning difficulties, or a family history of domestic violence or self-harm. Some families were at a loss to explain why their child was so aggressive towards them, having raised other children who did not display such behaviour.

#### **□ Reducing Parental Conflict:**

Havering were successful in securing funding in 2019 for the Reducing Parental Conflict initiative to support families identified as being in 'Parental Conflict'. The aim of the new service is to identify Parental Conflict at the earliest possible stage and to engage parents in conversations to identify discuss and resolve conflict whilst minimising the risks of future escalations.

A robust training programme has been delivered across Havering, to include train the trainers and also on line training. This training has been delivered across the partnership and included Early Help, Social Care, Community Safety, Youth Services, Youth Offending Services, Education, Police and Health,

Recent studies and evidence have sought to highlight the impact unresolved parental conflict has on children and young people, and how, if unresolved, this conflict can escalate to domestic abuse or violence within a parental relationship.

The Early Help Service, in partnership with Community Safety, have developed the Reducing Parental Conflict Continuum to support practitioners in identifying parental conflict, what impact the conflict may have and how practitioners can differentiate between conflict and domestic abuse and violence.

A telephone service has been developed and implemented which families can be referred to via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub [MASH] front door, partner agencies or self-referral. The premise of this workshop is for families to gain an understanding of what different forms of conflict could look like, focusing on positive communication skills and understanding the impact of conflict on the child. This is delivered by our Reducing Parental Conflict trained Family Practitioners. To support our colleagues delivering the service we also developed, in partnership with the Systemic Therapy Team, a guide to help structure the conversations and interventions, and to reflect the Systemic approach taken across Children's Services.'

### **8. The role of the police is tackling domestic abuse**

Every Basic Command Unit (BCU) now houses a team, known as the Predatory Offender Unit (POU). The POU focuses on finding and arresting "high harm" offenders wanted for crimes including domestic and child abuse, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. They prevent and disrupt offending by developing intelligence and using a range of tactics to bring offenders to justice. They also support local teams in enforcing breaches of restrictions placed on offenders by the courts.

In the East Area BCU (encompassing Havering), there have been 86 arrests for the POU, which is second highest performing in the Met. There 16 have been for failing to appear/breach of court bail/DVPN breaches/recalls to prison and 70 arrests for other offences, including 22 charges, 26 bail/return under investigation and 22 with no further action. Of the 22 with no further actions, three were served with DVPN's

- ☐ There have been two operations conducted encompassing Domestic Abuse. Operation Sun, a joint operation with the City of London police focusing on cross border offending and Child Criminal Exploitation.
- ☐ Operation Pahalivi focused on arrests of outstanding suspects Serious Sexual offences and DA.

The DA improvement plan, which is a focus on improving performance across response and Public Protection, continues with increased use of Body Worn Footage and higher arrest rates.

### **9. Housing**

The housing solutions team now have two workers dedicated to supporting Domestic Abuse cases when victims make a homeless approach. These workers also assist their colleagues as advisors where domestic abuse is identified From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, 172 individuals approached the housing solutions team as homeless fleeing DV. 156 of the total were women, 15 were men and one identified as transgender. Of the 172 that approached the borough for support in fleeing DV, 24 were housed in temporary accommodation.



There is also a dedicated ASB officer lead on cases where council tenants have been identified as victims of Domestic Abuse. This officer also attends MARAC to ensure are supported and assist with a move of location to keep them safe.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, 111 cases were identified and 13 progressed to need a special management transfer.

The housing departments in Havering have decided to progress and become a DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accredited. The housing department are working closely with internal and external partners to attain the accreditation process. The aim is to improve the experiences of victims when approaching the housing department fleeing domestic abuse.

## **10. Training**

The Safeguarding boards coordinate safeguarding training for both internal and external staff. Other outside providers deliver a number of the domestic abuse specific training sessions. Up until March 2020, Havering women's Aid were commissioned to deliver the RIC and DV awareness training. Due to the demands of COVID 19 and the increased workload in the day-to-day services of the organisation, they had to stand down from the training. It was decided to bring these two sessions in house and are now delivered by the Community Safety Team. In Nov 2020, 35 delegates attended to RIC training session.

In addition to the set training programme, the Community Safety Team has been asked to complete bespoke training for a number of agencies. This included a police away day where 40 officers took part in DV awareness sessions. 29 HR officers received DV awareness training following the launch of the new DV policy for staff in Nov 2020. A further 19 staff members attended an awareness session during Safeguarding week and 53 attended to DV service webinar that was delivered as a part of the 16 days of action against domestic abuse. Members of the Community Safety Team have also attend team meetings and met with new staff members as a part of their induction process.

## **11. Communications**

Throughout this past year, the Community Safety team engaged with the communications team to ensure regular messages were shared with the public so they were aware of support and provision in regards to DV. Due to the lockdown, most of this communication had been via social media. The Community Safety team also produce a monthly Bitesize newsletter. The topic of the newsletter can vary each month. The purpose is to raise awareness and increase knowledge of staff members. At times, these will update staff on changes in legislation, new measures to prevent DA, new services available for victims and more.

November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, also known as White Ribbon Day. From that day, until Human Rights Day on 10th December, is the 16 Days of Action. During this time, we ask everyone to stand up and recognise that there should be an end violence against women. .

We usually run events in the community, hold conferences and engage with others to raise awareness. However, due to the restrictions of COVID 19, all of our campaign this year was online using newsletters and social media.

The event was launched internally alongside the new Havering HR policy for staff that present as victims of DV. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that managers

are able to support staff appropriately and understand the signs of DV and the impact it can have on staff. On the day, we launched the policy, three individuals came forward seeking support and sharing their experiences. The hope is victims/survivors who work within the council will feel supported and safe whilst working.

A number of newsletters and articles were produced to try to reach out to as many people in the community as possible. These included, Safer Neighbourhoods Team Newsletters, the internal Bitesize, HART/residents newsletter, wellbeing team, trade unions and more.

There was a social media campaign created and used throughout the 16 days of action. Tweets and Facebook posts were sent out each day about support available to victims of DV and other key information such as Clare's Law. Cllr Persaud kindly participated in the event and made a short video to share with the public about DV and seeking out help.

A new poster was created for the hospitals and clinics to display. This poster was targeted at expectant mothers. The poster was to raise awareness that DV often increases during pregnancy and that support is available. During the pandemic pregnant women have had to attend appointments alone, therefore, this may have been a safe opportunity to seek help.

We held a free virtual conference during this time. The conference was held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and was open to internal and external members of staff. We had 74 delegates register for the event of which 53 attended. The event was supported by the following organisations:

- Community safety officer – DV lead – Chair of the meeting.
- Community Safety IDVA team
- Solace Women's Aid
- Havering Women's Aid / MENDAS / Young Person's IDVA service
- Metropolitan Police – Clare's Law
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust – National Stalking Helpline.
- Bal's Howard – survivor of Honour Based Abuse - sharing her survivor's

The overall feedback from the event was positive and as a result, a number of team awareness sessions have been requested.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report which is for information only.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

Whilst reporting on performance is not a statutory requirement, it is considered best practice to review the Council's progress against the Corporate Plan and Service Plans on a regular basis.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no specific Human Resource implications or risks arising directly from this report.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

This report relates to information requested by the committee rather than policy. There are no direct equalities implications or risks associated with this report.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.