

For Consideration	
Public/Non Public*	Public
Report to:	Police and Crime Panel
Date of Meeting:	April 2014
Report of:	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Chris Cutland
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Agenda Item:	7

Domestic Violence Update: "Protect, support and respond to repeat female victims of medium risk domestic abuse"

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents the Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) with an overview of progress to date on one of the key workstreams of the Police and Crime Plan, Domestic Violence, which is being led by the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (Deputy Commissioner), Chris Cutland.
- 1.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner has made a commitment within the Police and Crime Plan to prioritise budgets to protecting, supporting and responding to repeat female victims of domestic abuse, especially medium risk.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Panel note the Deputy Commissioner's Report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Panel of the 24 June 2013 meeting requested an update on Domestic Violence from the Deputy Commissioner to be presented every six months, the last report was presented to the September 2013 Panel meeting and will form part of the Forward Plan.

4. Summary of Key Points (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)

4.1 National Overview:

A core part of the policing mission is to prevent crime and disorder. Domestic abuse causes both serious harm and constitutes a considerable proportion of overall crime. It costs society an estimated £15.7 billion a year.¹ 77 women

¹ Walby, S. (2009). *The cost of domestic violence*. Retrieved from: www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/doc.../Cost_of_domestic_violence_update.doc

were killed by their partners or ex-partners in 2012/13.² In the UK, one in four young people aged 10 to 24 reported that they experienced domestic violence and abuse during their childhood.³ Forces have highlighted that crime relating to domestic abuse constitutes some 8 percent of all recorded crime in their area, and one third of their recorded assaults with injury. On average the police receive an emergency call relating to domestic abuse every 30 seconds.

4.2 People may experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, age or disability. Domestic abuse may also occur in a range of different relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender, as well as within families.

4.3 While both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, women are much more likely to be victims than men.

4.4 HMIC Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic violence and abuse

This HMIC Thematic⁴ identified that the police response to domestic abuse is not good enough and must be improved. The report identifies that police forces need to take decisive action to improve, following an inspection of all 43 police forces in England and Wales.

4.5 In September 2013, HMIC was commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect the police response to domestic violence and abuse. The report, **Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse**, found that while most forces and police and crime commissioners have said that domestic abuse is a priority for their areas, this isn't being translated into an operational reality. HMIC is concerned to find that, despite the progress made in this area over the last decade, not all police leaders are ensuring that domestic abuse is a priority in their forces – it is often a poor relation to other policing activity.

4.6 HMIC found alarming and unacceptable weaknesses in some core policing activity, in particular the quality of initial investigation undertaken by responding officers when they are called to a scene. The report also identifies that officers may lack the necessary supervision, knowledge and skills effectively to tackle domestic abuse, and some have poor attitudes.

4.7 The inspection also found that:

- The victim's first contact with the police is the most positive part of their experience and that most call handlers understand domestic abuse and can identify it, and send an officer to the scene.

² Office for National Statistics (2013). *Focus on violent crime and sexual offences 2012/13* – Chapter 4: Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse. Retrieved from:

http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_352362.pdf

³ Radford L, Corral S, Bradley C et al (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. London: NSPCC.

⁴ [HMIC Everyone's business](#): Improving the police response to domestic abuse

- Victims' experiences of attending officers are mixed. Nearly four out of five victims HMIC surveyed were satisfied with the initial police response, but a third said they felt no safer. Victims told us that they didn't always feel they were being taken seriously, or believed.
- The issue of risk assessment requires urgent attention – HMIC found inconsistent approaches to this. There is a confused approach to arrest, and the term 'positive action' is poorly understood.
- Victims who are assessed as at high-risk of serious harm or murder generally attracted a high level of multi-agency support.
- Specialist domestic abuse units have been centralised and restructured as a response to austerity. In some forces there are risky gaps in capability and capacity of specialist units with unsustainable workloads, and lack of specialist support and supervision.
- There is an inconsistent approach to how criminal justice sanctions are pursued, and how perpetrators are targeted is underdeveloped in most forces.

HMIC has developed a set of recommendations for the police service, Home Office and College of Policing. These recommendations aim to make a long term difference to the way the service prioritises and responds to domestic abuse, and implementing these recommendations requires concerted effort at the local and national levels.

4.8 Nottinghamshire Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse

The Thematic Inspection has been supported by individual Force reports, with Nottinghamshire's Deputy Commissioner welcoming the findings of this independent inspection into the county's approach to domestic violence which has highlighted the progress made in responding to victims.⁵

- 4.9 The report identified that domestic abuse accounts for 11% of calls to the police for assistance in Nottinghamshire and 10% of all recorded crime. Of these calls, 39% are from repeat victims.
- 4.10 The inspection report identified that tackling abuse is a priority for the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable and that staff are committed to supporting victims and making them feel safe. The Force's control room-based customer service advisers are described as "competent, confident and empathetic" in dealing with domestic abuse victims and are trained to gather as much relevant information as possible through the caller themselves and background checks to enable them to risk assess and deliver the appropriate police response. It also described supervision in the control room of the calls and response as 'good' due to the presence of intelligence officers who routinely searched police databases to help customer service advisers to build a picture of the threat of harm to a victim and their children.
- 4.11 However, the HMIC report identified room for improvement and said victims assessed as high risk received a better standard of service than those of medium or standard risk which resulted in inconsistencies. The Report has

⁵ [Nottinghamshire Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse](#)

set out a series of recommendations designed to mitigate the risks identified in its inspection which include better systems for identifying repeat victims of domestic abuse including a question on their initial contact with customer service advisors asking about their domestic abuse history and prioritising training for officers within the domestic abuse investigation teams to ensure robust management of investigations.

- 4.12 This issue had been previously identified by Nottinghamshire Police Authority and the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner, who last year commissioned a three-year project aimed at identifying 'what works' in reducing the risk to repeat victims and improving the support available. The project covers both the city and the county and has allowed for 3 workers to be employed to work specifically with survivors assessed as medium risk, 2 of these work in the County, north and south. They work closely with the police to minimise the risks.
- 4.13 The associated academic project has numerous objectives. In particular it aims to identify triggers for repeat victims and opportunities for associated support and prevention with an emphasis on methods used for identifying what has happened in relationships and how future relationships can be built without domestic violence. It will also explore the repeat victims of medium risk domestic abuse case management within the voluntary sector groups providing support, identifying what improves the victim's journey to recovery.⁶ The current work of the Medium Risk Research Advisory Group is ensuring that the delivery of the project remains on track and information sharing is progressed.
- 4.14 There are several 'medium risk worker' pilots running across the county where specialist domestic abuse advisors are working jointly with the police to provide a safeguarding package, which was described by inspectors as "good practice".
- 4.15 The report also highlighted inconsistent approaches between the three multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) that run across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire but said that the Force had developed strong links with partner agencies and were working together to share information to protect high risk victims. A working group is already in place within the county to address the issues and align the processes of the MARACs.
- 4.16 There has been a Review of Nottinghamshire Funding and Commissioning Arrangements for domestic abuse specialist services, which was supported by the Safer Nottinghamshire Board on 30 October 2013.

There were three aims to the Review:

- Review the current level, allocation and effectiveness of public expenditure to address domestic abuse within Nottinghamshire.

⁶ <http://www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk/Document-Library/About-Us/Tenders/Final-Consultants-Tendering-Brief-2---Domestic-Violence-vs-5.pdf>

- Make recommendations to improve and expand joint commissioning arrangements.
 - Inform budget decision making for 2014/15 and commissioning and tendering arrangements for 2015/16.
- 4.17 The Review has included detailed consultation with service users from the specialist domestic abuse service providers and has identified key recommendations for future commissioning of services in Nottinghamshire.
- 4.18 Progress Assurance**
- The Commissioner's Office will be monitoring the recommendations from the Commissioned Review, HMIC recommendations together with ongoing monitoring of the Scrutiny recommendations to provide assurance of continuing improvement to tackling domestic abuse.
- 4.19 The definition of domestic abuse has recently been extended to include those between the ages of 16 and 18. Some of the grant funding has been distributed to the specialist organisations to identify what works in this area with the aim of including this in the future commissioning of services. In addition a Task and Finish Group has been established to "join up" a number of streams of work both within the City and County which are looking at teen abuse. This will also assist with reduction in gaps and sharing good practice.
- 4.20 The Deputy Commissioner has also set out a Domestic Violence Conference to be held on 13th May, to build a forum for discussion on understanding to complexities of domestic abuse and relationships

4 Financial Implications and Budget Provision
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- 5.1 As reported at previous Police and Crime panel meetings following engagement with providers, partner agencies and service users the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire has identified £130k per annum for the provision of 'protecting, supporting and responding to repeat female victims of domestic abuse' - medium risks.
- 5.2 The Service Specification identifies a contract value of: £130k (approximately £43k for each area) for 3 Workers: Medium Risk Intervention Workers.
- x1 for the City (provided by Women's Aid Integrated Services (WAIS))
 - x1 for the County South (provided by WAIS)
 - x1 for the County North (provided by Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Ltd (NWA))
- 4.3 There is also an Academic Research Tender Brief which outlined work which started on the 1 October 2013 and the final report (consulted on) will be presented by August 2015 to align to the budgets for 2016/17.

5 Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 There is a small number of staff being resourced to deliver case loads.

6 Equality Implications

- 7.1 There has been a requirement through the Service Specification that the delivery of commissioned services around 'protecting, supporting and responding to repeat victims of domestic abuse' must be able to meet and reflect the needs of a diverse range of service users to ensure that there is no one disadvantaged due to their cultural background, linguistic ability, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, marital status, pregnancy or age.

7 Risk Management

- 8.1 Risks are identified in the Integrated Partnership Strategic Assessment and outlined for prioritisation in the Police and Crime Plan.

8 Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 In September 2012, the Home Office announced that the definition of [domestic violence](#) (DV) and abuse would be widened to include those aged 16 to 17 and wording to reflect coercive control. The decision followed a consultation which saw respondents call overwhelmingly for this change.

9 Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

- 9.3 In November 2012 the Home Office made clear their ambition to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) by introducing two new criminal offences for stalking. Additionally, in March 2013 the definition of DV changed to include under 18s and a full review of the VAWG action plan was published by the Home Office.

10 Details of outcome of consultation

- 11.1 Through the Integrated Partnership Strategic Assessment, Domestic Violence was identified as a priority action under the strategic theme of: Protect, support and respond to victims, witnesses and vulnerable people.

12 Appendices

- 12.1 None

13. Background Papers (relevant for Police and Crime Panel Only)

[Ending violence against women and girls in the UK](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

Tackling Violence against Women and Girls: [The Government's New Approach](#):

[World Health Organisation: Violence against women](#): Global Picture Health Response