

Appendix 7 - Domestic Violence Briefing for GOSC 17 January 2017.

Aim: To provide a brief update on the current domestic violence and abuse work in Herefordshire.

Prevalence

Domestic violence is no more prevalent in Herefordshire than elsewhere. However, it is clear that the impact of domestic violence puts a high demand and cost on services in Herefordshire. Domestic violence accounts for 25% of all recorded crime in Herefordshire.

For the financial year 2015/16 referrals to West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) increased by 24% and the calls to and from the help line increased by 55%. The increase in the number of referrals and help line business has put significant pressure on the service. The reason for the increase is unknown, but may reflect an increased confidence in victims seeking help to escape abuse.

Recent data shows that these numbers have levelled off with no further significant increase.

Similarly, West Mercia Police domestic violence data suggests crimes and incidents in Herefordshire appear to have remained constant over the past 12 months.

We do know, however, that significant numbers of children witness or experience domestic violence.

Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP)

- DV is a key priority for HCSP; a delivery group has key multiagency stakeholders attending the meetings and co-ordinating activity across Herefordshire.
- The Delivery group also has a delegated responsibility to the CSP to address DV on behalf of the Herefordshire Adult and Childrens Safeguarding Boards.
- As part of the funding received from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) they currently fund 3 projects.
 - 1) Survivor network to help fund a post to co-ordinate the network and support volunteers.
 - 2) Funding has been put aside to help equip the new refuge which will be built early 2017.
 - 3) Funding for DV awareness activity including training on DVA issues to the workforce and stakeholders and also to promote healthy relationship education in schools. Recently the Delivery Group hosted the 'Silent Victim' conference, highlighting the hidden barriers Black, Asian and other minority ethnic group victims of domestic

violence face. Barriers such as language difficulties, no family or support group, a lack of access to money, poor awareness of specialist support services for victims and other cultural beliefs/ attitudes towards domestic violence. The conference heard speakers from Data Orchard (the organisation that carried out the research), a Gypsy, Traveller, Romany specialist, a Muslim woman and a survivor of domestic violence who located to Herefordshire from Central and Eastern Europe. The conference was attended by over 140 professionals.

- The Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership are currently completing the strategic needs assessment and this will have a specific focus on DV which will underpin the development of a new DV strategy for the county, this will be completed early in the new year.

Commissioned Services

Herefordshire Council Adults Wellbeing currently commission a domestic violence and abuse support service, and currently has a 3 year contract in place with West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) until the 31 March 2019. This includes 1-2-1 support, group work, refuge support and a helpline service.

Children services also contribute to this contract to have a specific Safeguarding post and support to children coming into service.

This contract includes support to high risk victims known as Independent Domestic Violence and Abuse Advisors (IDVA's). This is contributed to by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and is a shared agreement across West Mercia.

The council and WMWA are working closely together to shape and ensure the sustainability of the service now and in the future.

New refuge

A new refuge is being built and will be ready in the spring 2017. It will have self-contained units enabling Herefordshire to meet the needs of victims and their children in a supported environment.