
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 13
DATE OF MEETING:	3 RD FEBRUARY 2005	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KAREN TALBOT COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICER (EXT 5858)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTOCOL	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members approve adoption of Derbyshire Domestic Abuse County Forum's joint protocol for domestic abuse, shown at Annexe One

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To obtain Members' authorisation to implement the domestic abuse protocol across the local authority.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 On a national scale, the Home Office states that domestic violence accounts for a quarter of all violent crime and costs in excess of £5 billion every year to deal with.
- 3.2 There are more repeat victims of domestic violence than any other crime. The Home Office findings indicate that a victim suffers an average of 35 assaults before calling the police.
- 3.3 It is also known that domestic violence claims 150 lives every year.
- 3.4 Police authorities have stated that in the United Kingdom they receive a call from the public for assistance for domestic violence every minute. Yet the British Crime Survey (BCS) estimates that only 31% of victims report incidents to the police.
- 3.5 Locally, the crime audit has indicated that throughout 2003/04 240 incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police.
- 3.6 Considering BCS estimates that only 31% of incidents are reported to the police we can project that there were approximately 774 incidents of domestic violence in South Derbyshire during 2003/04.
- 3.7 The audit revealed that 4 out of 5 victims are female. That equates to 619 attacks on women in South Derbyshire, by someone they were in a close relationship with.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 Derbyshire Domestic Abuse County Forum's definition identifies that domestic abuse is not only violence from men to women. The County definition also acknowledges the range of physical, sexual or emotional abuse that can occur between people in a close relationship, whether that relationship is marital or across generations.
- 4.2 To comply with the domestic abuse protocol an appropriate level of training should be given to all staff across the local authority departments.
- 4.3 An overview of domestic abuse will form the body of the briefing to raise awareness of the subject and to promote a zero tolerance perspective. The brief will be delivered to front line staff and team leaders, across the authority, by the Community Safety Officer. A copy of the brief will be provided to service and unit managers. (Annexe Two) The brief will remain concise and will be delivered to staff at their team meetings or directly after core brief to suit the operations of each department.
- 4.4 During the briefing session all staff who have direct contact with the general public will be given a pocket-sized card. (Illustrated at Annexe Three) The card lists the national help line number for domestic abuse, telephone numbers for appropriate agencies to assist and advise victims and telephone numbers for local service providers. This will ensure that all front line staff are able to provide appropriate help line numbers to any member of the public who asks. In a situation where front line staff suspect that someone is a victim of abuse they will have the telephone number of the Community Safety Officer to report their concerns
- 4.5 The brief will be amended for Tenant Liaison Officers in Housing Services to raise awareness of section 145 of The Housing Act 1996 which included acts of domestic violence as grounds for possession of the perpetrator's home where a partner has had to flee.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs for production of cards will be borne by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as part of the ongoing work towards crime reduction and increased community safety for residents of South Derbyshire.
- 5.2 Training for staff will be provided and delivered by the Community Safety Officer.
- 5.3 Implementation of the domestic abuse protocol does not affect the job descriptions that already exist within departments as it does not impose further duties.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Adoption of Derbyshire Domestic Abuse County Forum's protocol will contribute to the Corporate Plan by promoting best use of our resources to reduce crime and the fear of crime across South Derbyshire.
- 6.2 By engaging in a countywide protocol we increase the opportunities for our residents to engage with a wider range of services that tackle social exclusion.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 Section 17 of The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states that it is the duty of the local authority to exercise all its function with due regard to the likely effect upon, and to do all we reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder within our district.
- 7.2 By incorporating the domestic abuse protocol our front line staff will be able to assist anyone who discloses domestic abuse or anyone they suspect of being a victim within South Derbyshire. This small level of assistance could prevent a victim suffering further incidents of abuse.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 Adoption of Derbyshire Domestic Abuse County Forum protocol will raise awareness of domestic violence within the local authority and improve access to services for the residents of South Derbyshire.

