



**REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING**

**DATE: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6 – HMIC Crime Inspection**

**SUBJECT: b) Domestic Abuse Action Plan**

## **Background**

The HMIC Inspection Report, *Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*, required every force to establish and publish an action plan by September 2014 that specifies in detail the steps it will take to improve its approach to domestic abuse.

All HMIC force reports were analysed and it was identified that all force action plans should include actions relevant to improving:

- Leadership and Governance
- Performance Management
- Initial Contact
- Investigation
- Managing Victims and Offenders
- Organisational Learning

Following our domestic abuse HMIC Inspection, ACC Tim Jacques chaired a Partnership Meeting to consider the first draft Constabulary Action Plan which encompasses the recommendations received. The meeting considered the development of a forum for the production of a Pan Lancashire Domestic Abuse Strategy, agreed the 5 work streams of the Strategy and identified the individuals who will oversee the work streams, as given below:-

- Initial Investigation (DCI Jon Holmes now DI George Binns)
- Victim Safety (Helene Cooper)
- Risk Assessment (Peter Yates)
- Data and Performance Management (DI Paul Burnside)
- Management of Perpetrators (Insp Jo Keay)

It was agreed that this was an ideal opportunity to align our Domestic Abuse Strategy with existing plans in Lancashire, whilst at the same time addressing the recommendations from the HMIC Inspection

## **Current position**

The outline and submission of the Lancashire Plan was completed on time. Discussions with ACC Rolfe and her team have been held in which it was identified that all forces have adopted one of 3 processes regarding the submission of plans. Some forces have created an action plan based solely on their HMIC recommendations, some forces have adopted all of the 127 HMIC recommendations and created a plan around these whilst others have created a plan around their HMIC recommendations as well as a number of the other recommendations. Lancashire were commended for taking the opportunity to create a 'partnership' plan whilst including the 9 HMIC recommendations and capturing the areas for improvement under the 5 broad headings.

All 5 work streams have held focus groups and an overview of their progress is provided below.

### **1. Initial Investigation**

There has been plenty of discussion in the group and the next step will be to agree which elements are worthy of pursuing further and formalising within the Constabulary's Action Plan.

The points discussed included the following:

- Witness issues - lack of physical attendance at court, with subsequent requirement for witness summons/warrant. Also, witnesses disputing their initial account in the courtroom.
- Challenges for CPS around convincing the Court of the witness' original account when that witness later goes against it in court.
- 999 recording as essential for file submission.
- The rollout of bodycam across the Constabulary area.
- Requirements for the attending officer to submit a statement describing the demeanour of the victim at the time that they made their original complaint statement. This would provide material for CPS to rebuff a victim changing their own account at trial. The officer's statement should record levels of intoxication and the officer's view of that witness. This statement should be part of the initial file submission although this would require further discussion with CJS.
- Contact Management to amend protocols to ensure officers attending DA incidents are reminded to activate bodycam.
- Mandating first-line supervision to QA all DA handover packages. (Appreciate that this already occurs in many cases).
- Victim safety planning to be captured on the incident log using NDM as the format.
- Dip sampling of 10 DA logs per BCU to review inclusion of safety planning.
- Existing question sets on DA logs to be reviewed to ensure a question on pregnancy is now included, accepting that this is a key risk factor that may not be included currently.

- Consideration to be given to establishing procedures for obtaining photography from A&E
- Consideration to be given to establishing a procedure that mandates a joint visit between PPU and Children's Services for all High Risk victims. This would need to be included in MASH operating procedures.
- Consideration should be given to creating a standardised process for seeking/arresting outstanding DA offenders countywide. Operation Catalyst at West Division may already have existing good practice in this area.
- Establishment of the MASH schools process for rapid notification of high-risk domestic abuse incidents. This proposal was drafted over 18 months ago and is sat with LCC Children's Services currently (who apparently have reservations about the potential for schools to circumvent CP processes if they are made aware of HR DA incidents at very short notice).
- Review current officer awareness of processes for appeal/escalation to CPS.
- Consideration to be given to how multi-agency meetings could be incorporated into HR DA investigations to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

## **2. Victim Safety**

The victim safety work-stream group has a varied core membership of 15 which includes specialist DA providers, children's centre staff, safeguarding leads and local authority officers with a lead on domestic abuse.

As the group is so varied, the work started on developing an understanding a common language of the indicators across the agencies to ensure the subsequent actions are appropriate.

Using their collaborative knowledge of victim's responses to the variety of services they have received, the group started work on the current format of the HMIC action plan.

Issues and actions so far have focused on:

- Impact of the MASH on victim safety
- The use of language (e.g. In Lancashire, IDVAs are only one aspect of the service available that protects victims)
- Outcomes as opposed to targets
- What a 'good outcome' is
- MARAC effectiveness
- Training of DA – not just police training
- OPCC victim work – and how it links
- Relationship and trust links between agencies, especially during funding cuts (e.g. central govt austerity measures /commissioning approaches)
- information sharing pathways with the troubled families cohort/lead professionals/CAFs

## **3. Risk Assessment**

Robust processes are in place through MASH to ensure that all information is shared with appropriate partners where children are present at DA incidents.

Training has been provided to all frontline staff likely to act as the first response to DA incidents to enable them to more effectively identify domestic abuse, coercive control, HBV and forced marriage. This training will be built on to ensure that officers understand the importance of speaking with the child to record their views/concerns re welfare.

Dip sampling and auditing of DASH assessments are taking place by the PPU Compliance manager to ensure that the assessments are being carried out correctly.

#### **4. Data & Performance Management**

The meeting provided an opportunity for an open discussion in which a number of issues were raised for further consideration. The group considered how far the review of the MARAC could be captured in the monitoring of performance.

The availability of data amongst partner agencies was considered and various suggestions made about where information for a core data could be obtained. Suggested sources included agencies represented on the DA Strategic Group, TIIG, Citizen Panel Surveys, schools, research by UCLAN, consultation with service users, commissioners and the refreshed JSNA.

Other matters discussed for inclusion in performance measurement included information from Domestic Homicide Reviews, the Getting it Right Campaign, information on elder abuse and work force policies.

#### **5. Management of Perpetrators**

The pan-Lancashire approach has been agreed and adopted across the IOM teams. Not all perpetrators can be added to cohorts due to capacity and risk considerations. They are selected by multi-agency selection processes and those not selected will be managed by other divisional departments depending upon risk.

A meeting has been held with corporate development to establish a scoring matrix with weighting for DA offenders. This can be pulled together to reflect repeat and serial. Corporate development do not have the capacity to do this at the moment although it will be straightforward piece of work to do in due course.

LCC Perpetrator tender process is underway and also a pilot perpetrator programme is being planned for trial alongside the family intervention work being done at Blackpool

#### **Conclusion**

The whole plan is now moving forward with the latest relevant recommendations incorporated as SMART actions for delivery. By keeping the plan as a living document, throughout the period 2014-2016, we will both review progress on a regular basis but also make adjustments which are informed by national and regional guidance and recommendations and local learning.

The plan is fit for purpose in the current climate and it is essential to ensure that we continue to work collaboratively with partners to plan and deliver services which meet the needs of both victims and perpetrators.