

Avon and Somerset Constabulary Domestic Abuse Action Plan - September 2014

Background:

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) undertook a national inspection of the police's response to domestic abuse in 2014. The report - "*Everyone's Business: Improving the Response to Domestic Abuse*" - highlighted a series of both national and local recommendations for each force to progress and publish as part of a Domestic Abuse Action Plan.

Domestic abuse is core police business and we are committed to tackling this crime – from first response, to the investigation and the subsequent action to protect victims. We're working hard to ensure we provide the best possible service for victims, working with domestic abuse charities and a range of partner agencies from health, social care, probation, education and housing services.

One of the four key priorities outlined within the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan is to "tackle domestic and sexual abuse particularly towards women and children". Aims underpinning this priority place victims at the heart of our approach to domestic abuse by encouraging and enabling reporting, supporting early intervention and improving access to support services.

Our organisation:

In addition to the work detailed within this action plan, the constabulary is reshaping the way we do things through our Operating Model programme, transforming how we organise our people, processes and systems to give victims the best possible service. This includes the launch of 'Lighthouse - Integrated Victim and Witness Care', bringing together the police and partner agencies to provide vulnerable victims and witnesses with an enhanced service tailored to their needs, from first point of contact and throughout the criminal justice process.



Overarching Capabilities	
Key Criteria	Supporting areas
Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Leadership and Governance • Performance Management • Intelligence led approaches • Partnership scrutiny
Initial Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Handling • Supervision • Initial intelligence gathering and assessment • Risk assessment and call grading
First Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive initial response • Capturing intelligence and information effectively • Supervision
Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive initial investigation • Specialist capability • Effective and timely investigations • Effective supervision of investigations
Managing and supporting victims and Tackling offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and supervision • Victim follow up, support and referral managed effectively • Strong partnership working • Effective use of intelligence to tackle and manage offenders
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational learning • Individual learning opportunities

Leadership and Governance				
Ref.	Action	Response	Target	Lead
1	There is a named domestic abuse chief officer lead held to account by the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner through the Police and Crime Plan. The constabulary has a published domestic abuse plan.	Assistant Chief Constable Louisa Rolfe is the Avon and Somerset lead for domestic abuse as well as the National Policing Lead. Each local area and key department has a named Domestic Abuse Champion.	September 2014	Chief Constable
2	Evidence exists of the chief officer lead driving activity to address domestic abuse through force culture and processes to ensure it is prioritised and valued.	<p>There is a meeting structure and performance framework that scrutinises our response to domestic abuse at all levels of the organisation.</p> <p>This is underpinned by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reward and recognition procedures • selection and promotion processes include discussions on protecting the public and the PCC's priorities • Domestic abuse features as a priority across internal communications • Force policies and procedural guidance have been refreshed and publicised internally. 	September 2014	Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner
3	There are strong governance arrangements for domestic abuse across the force area subject to scrutiny and challenge; this includes safeguarding boards, domestic abuse forums and MARACs. Resources are aligned to threat/harm/risk/demand. The level of force representation is appropriate.	In addition to a dedicated domestic abuse forum, the Constabulary leads a Violence Against Women and Girls group which include membership from partner agencies, representatives from all local policing areas and other departments from the force. Established partnership arrangements	November 2014	Chief Constable

		are in place across the force with Local Authorities and through Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences Daily tasking meetings allows resources to be prioritised and allocated appropriately. A new scrutiny panel will be introduced from November 2014, supported by CAADA.		
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Initial Contact				
Ref.	Action	Response	Target	Lead
1	Call handling staff are clear about their responsibilities, complete comprehensive background and intelligence checks which are passed to attending officers to ensure they have sufficient information to assess the incident.	A quality assessment framework includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitoring of calls by supervisors• domestic abuse champion roles within the call handling department• monthly audit of calls.	Embedded practice, subject to continuous review.	Head of Managing People and Places
2	The force uses a standardised model for the initial assessment of risk in domestic abuse cases which is linked to the graded response of calls.	The force uses 'ProQA' risk assessment tool to assess the risk of all domestic abuse related calls which informs the grade of response.	Complete Next review March 2015	Head of Managing People and Places

First Response				
Ref.	Action	Response	Target	Lead
1	The force has assessed the understanding and completion of its current risk assessment model and quality assurance processes are in place to ensure initial risk assessments are completed properly.	A review of risk assessment completion and guidance has been undertaken. Internal communications have emphasised the importance of recognising risk indicators and using this to respond appropriately.	September 2014	Head of Managing People and Places

		A review process has been implemented to both assess compliance and quality. Guidance from the College of Policing will be adopted once finalised in 2015.		
2	Staff take action and complete referrals in respect of children and vulnerable adults within the household, whether or not they are present during incidents.	Safeguarding procedures exist to refer concerns to agencies regarding children and vulnerable adults. Operation Encompass has been adopted across the force area. Further training will be completed by April 2015.	Training of all staff in 2014/15	Head of Managing People and Places
3	Information and intelligence is captured by attending officers forming a comprehensive initial investigation.	Officers to wear Body Cams on attending domestic incidents wherever possible. Introduction of a series of operational tools and supervisory quality review process to ensure a consistent approach to the initial investigation.	Body Cam pilot (Feb 2015 for 12 months) Investigators toolkit launch Jan 2015	Area Commanders

Investigation				
Ref.	Action	Response	Target	Lead
1	Staff understand their roles and responsibility at every level of a domestic abuse investigation and there is clear ownership demonstrated at each stage. This includes action to be taken and updates to be made to the victim or other agencies.	Procedural guidance is in place setting out roles and responsibilities for different departments who respond to, investigate and support victims of domestic abuse. Internal communications have emphasised the actions to be taken by officer attending domestic incidents. A review process has been implemented to both assess performance, including management	'This is not an excuse campaigns' complete March 2014, next campaigns November 2014, March 2015 World cup internal and external	Head of Protect

		of outstanding named suspects and case progression.	communications, internal focussed on recognising risk and DVPOs/PNs June 2014	
2	There is clear allocation and prioritisation policy for high, medium and standard risk cases and this includes allocation for sexual assaults. High risk cases are dealt with by specialist staff.	Allocation of cases is based on risk; specialist staff are trained and accredited by the College of Policing in investigation. Procedural Guidance dictates that Public Protection staff deal with all high risk cases.	Training of all staff in 2014/15	Head of Protect
3	Investigators understand how to effectively support reluctant, intimidated victims and actively progress cases being cognisant of the risk to the victim.	Internal communications focus on the importance of supporting victims, capturing evidence and making referrals to specialist support services and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors. Specifically commissioned work has captured the views of victims of domestic abuse and this has been used to inform the police response. The Constabulary is launching a new Integrated Victim Care Programme, which will bring together key roles and organisations involved in providing services to victims, including crucial third sector partners, to create a more cohesive, end-to-end approach.	Training of all staff in 2014/15 Launch of Lighthouse Integrated Victim Care (October 2014)	Head of Protect and Head of Managing People and Places
4	Staff have an understanding of their responsibilities to update victims and are aware of the range of options to ensure victim safety.	The force has an embedded Victim Codes of Practice strategy and compliance is monitored on a daily basis. Training is in place covering the range of tools available to ensure	Lighthouse Integrated Victim Care (October 2014)	Head of Protect

		<p>victim safety.</p> <p>The force has clear policy, procedural guidance and monitoring process for the domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS) and domestic violence protection orders (DVPO's)</p>		
5	The force works closely with the Crown Prosecution Service to learn from cases and to appropriately pursue prosecutions of reluctant and intimidated witnesses.	<p>Regular meetings are held with the Crown Prosecution Service to scrutinise ongoing and completed cases to share issues and concerns. There are established Specialist Domestic Violence Courts which cover the force area, providing enhanced support to victims. The Crown Prosecution Service has conducted further training for magistrates.</p>	Embedded practice, subject to ongoing review	Head of Solve

Managing, supporting victims and Tackling offenders

Ref.	Action	Response	Target	Lead
1	Cases are effectively managed by the MARAC process and activity is generated within the multi-agency management of risk that leads to effective outcomes.	<p>There is effective oversight to ensure that staff can manage demand and support victims to ensure they stay safe, this includes support from Independent Domestic Violence Advocates</p>	<p>Embedded practice, subject to ongoing review</p> <p>Last CAADA review of Avon and Somerset MARACs in March 2013</p>	Head of Managing People and Places
2	The force has a problem profile for domestic abuse which influences the way in which staff deal with DA. Local staff are aware of victims and perpetrators on their areas and are tasked effectively.	<p>The force has a problem profile which is due for review in January 2015. Local briefing tools and tasking meetings include information on the identity of the top ten perpetrators in</p>	<p>The force DA problem profile was published in September 2013. Next update due in</p>	Head of Managing People and Places

		their locality. Information is also shared on vulnerable victims.	January 2015	
3	Perpetrators are referred to and part of integrated offender management. Those who pose a serious risk of harm are identified and steps are taken to address the risk they pose.	<p>Following a pilot initiative in Bristol, the IRIS programme will be rolled out force wide. This is Integrated response, integrated services to closely manage high risk violent offenders including those committing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Daily tasking meetings ensure that staff are allocated to manage those who pose a serious risk of harm.</p>	The Bristol IRIS pilot launched in July 2012. To be rolled out force wide in October 2014	Head of Managing People and Places

Learning				
Ref.	Action	Response	Target	Lead
1	The force has adopted the College of Policing's Public Protection Training Programme.	In February 2014 the College of Policing launched its new Public Protection Training Programme; this has been incorporated into the existing curriculum.	September 2014	Head of Corporate Learning
2	Ongoing bespoke training is delivered to all staff who respond to domestic abuse. This includes call takers, response officers and specialist staff.	Bespoke vulnerability training which includes domestic abuse will be delivered in line with changes to organisation structures. Access is available at all times to online training packages on domestic abuse; including specific tools for example Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.	Training of all staff in 2014/15	Head of Corporate Learning

3	The force conducts Domestic Violence/Homicide reviews and there is a clear process to influence organisation learning.	Effective processes exist to ensure that identified learning is embedded into day to day practice.	Embedded practice, subject to ongoing review	Head of Strategic Development
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Term	Definition
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
CAADA	Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse – a charity organisation
IRiS	Offender management programme run jointly by a team of professionals from different agencies
DA	Domestic Abuse
DVPO's	Domestic Violence Protection Orders
DVDS	Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme