



Work Plan Study
into the Victims of Domestic Abuse

**Report by the
Crime and Disorder Committee**

August 2014 - August 2015

Chair's Commentary

In August 2014, the Crime and Disorder Committee commenced a study into the victims of domestic abuse.

The Committee carried out interviews with officers and outside organisations and this provided essential background information.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee, officers and outside bodies that contributed to the study.

Councillor Saksena
Chair of the Crime and Disorder Committee



Summary

This report gives details of the investigations which have been made on the Crime and Disorder Committee's Work Plan Study into the victims of domestic abuse. The Committee agreed to look at this together with domestic burglary which is the subject of a separate short study.

Members carried out interviews and research, details of which are attached.

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Victims of Domestic Abuse.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12 August 2014, the Crime and Disorder Committee considered topics for future work plan studies. Members agreed to undertake a study into the victims of domestic abuse. The Committee undertook a series of interviews with representatives from partner organisations in accordance with the agreed scope of the study (Appendix A).
- 1.2 The scoping document was provided to the interviewees to inform them of the nature and purpose of the study the role of the Committee, which is to provide the external scrutiny of the multi-agency work on domestic abuse in Preston. . Members were also provided with recent statistics and other supporting information. Opportunity was also given for the collation of recent statistics and other information to be presented to the Committee.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The Task Group was chaired by Councillor Saksena, the full membership being:-



Councillor Saksena
(Chair)



Councillor Crowe
(Vice Chair)



Councillor Mrs Brown



Councillor N Cartwright



Councillor Coupland



Councillor B Patel



Councillor Rollo



Councillor Thompson



Councillor Yates

3. Deliberations

3.1 The Committee met on a number of occasions to gather information/evidence, interview witnesses and discuss findings. The following paragraphs give outline summaries of the key points/information gathered and discussed at each meeting together with links to the minutes of that meeting.

3.2 24 June 2014

3.2.1 The Committee considered suggested topics and resolved to undertake a work plan study into victims of domestic abuse.

[Minutes 24 June 2014](#)

3.3 12 August 2014

3.3.1 The Committee considered a draft scoping document relating to the Committee's work plan studies on victims of domestic abuse and domestic burglary. The Community Safety Manager reported that, whilst the studies were separate, there would be overlap and common ground.

Members discussed the areas on which they wished to focus the studies and agreed on the persons they wished to interview to assist them.

3.3.2 The following person attended the meeting for interview:-

- Ms Helene Cooper, Lancashire County Council

[Minutes 12 August 2014](#)

3.4 October 2014

3.4.1 The Committee again considered the draft scoping document for the study (Appendix A). Members suggested additional areas to be looked at including the effect of a domestic abuse environment on children and issues relating to cultural perceptions of domestic abuse.

3.4.2 The following persons attended the meeting for interview:-

- Detective Chief Inspector T Baxter- Lancashire Constabulary
- Mr Graham Sandham – Victim Support

[Minutes 7 October 2014](#)

3.5 25 November 2014

3.5.1 Mr Robert Ruston, representing the Police and Crime Commissioners Office, attended the meeting for interview. Members raised various issues which are discussed in the summary of findings.



4. Summary of Findings

- 4.1 Ms Helene Cooper, Lead on Gender Based Abuse, Lancashire County Council attended the meeting. She explained her role and referred to a document entitled Lancashire Domestic Abuse Joint Commission, A Summary of the Partnership Response to Domestic Abuse. A copy of the report is provided as Appendix B of the Work Plan Study. During her presentation, Ms Cooper referred to five forms of domestic abuse identified as causing harm to victims: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. These are encompassed in the Government's definition of domestic violence and abuse which is provided in Appendix B.
- 4.2 Ms Cooper spoke about children being influenced by what they see and the importance of providing early support to children and young people who may be affected by domestic violence and abuse. She also referred to the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, which is often referred to as Claire's Law and which is covered in more detail in Appendix B. Ms Cooper explained that the scheme enables information about a person's history as a perpetrator of domestic abuse to be disclosed and also for support to be provided to victims. Mrs Cooper referred to the Joint Commission which was informed by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, including the health needs of people affected by domestic abuse. The joint commission provided a pooled approach to funding and commissioning and applied national best practice models to the specification for services. Ms Cooper explained that there are eight work streams but that not all are funded from the pooled budget. The work streams are outlined in Appendix B and include 'Support for Medium and High Risk Victims', 'Early Support (children and young people)' and 'Challenging the Behaviour of Perpetrators'.
- 4.3 Ms Cooper also spoke about the commissioning programme for the services and said that she recognised that there are concerns about valuable expertise within smaller organisations being lost. She acknowledged that some local providers had lost funding through the commissioning in some of the work streams but had continued to be funded in other areas of work. Community expertise and quality had been crucial areas for the scoring of the bids, together with the ability to work in the area. Some providers had been unsuccessful in securing a contract and the TUPE arrangements for the staff in the service had

been considered as a priority. Ms Cooper identified to the Committee that there has been difficulty in commissioning in this service area.

4.4 During her presentation, Ms Cooper referred to the effects of domestic abuse upon the younger generation. The role of teachers in identifying children and young people affected by domestic abuse was identified to the Committee, together with the importance of increasing the understanding of respectful relationships through personal, social and health education (PHSE) in schools and parenting skills. She explained that the Early Support programme had been commissioned for three years and was the first programme to be rolled out in the new service model. Ms Cooper's presentation also covered the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) which were described as being central to the workforce development and co-ordination work stream, providing a multi-agency responses to reduce the risk of harm to high risk domestic abuse victims.

4.5 Ms Cooper explained the scoring methods used to assess risk for victims and how high and medium risk is defined. She explained that 96% of high risk victims are women and that in Preston there is a much greater need for services than in some other districts. The funding has been allocated to ensure that Preston receives its full share of the commissioned resource. Preston is densely populated with more calls to the Police than other districts, although there are also areas of under reporting. The Committee discussed reasons why victims of domestic abuse do not report and questioned whether there is a possible lack of confidence about what would be done. Ms Cooper explained that victims in BME communities tend not to report nor be aware of what help is available. Some issues are dealt with in the community and in some communities victims tolerate abuse for longer before seeking help. In rural communities, abuse may be tolerated for longer because the community is tight knit and there are concerns about the implications of reporting. Partner abuse in same gender relationships is under reported and disability gives rise to greater vulnerability. Ms Cooper identified that it is also important to place services where there is under reporting of domestic violence and abuse.

4.6 A question was raised about whether the 27 questions in the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Assessment Tool 2009 were effective in identifying and challenging the behaviour of high risk perpetrators. In her response, Ms Cooper referred to the value of the Lancashire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) identifying serial perpetrators who would move on to victimise others unless convicted of offences.

Ms Cooper also referred to questions in the assessment which relate to the risk of homicide to the victim, including the question about whether the perpetrator had ever attempted to strangle, choke, suffocate or drown the victim. Questions about the seriousness of the abuse are relevant to the risk assessment for the victim. The behaviour and risk associated with the perpetrator is also assessed by criminal justice services, such as the National Probation Service, which supervises high risk perpetrators. Reference was made to cases where the perpetrators present themselves as the victim and Ms Cooper advised the Committee that there are screening tools being used to help to address this situation and vigilance needs to be maintained.

- 4.7 Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) Tony Baxter, Lancashire Constabulary attended the meeting for interview. The Committee was informed that tackling domestic abuse is a strategic priority for the Constabulary and there are positive actions being taken to deal with the crime. He acknowledged that historically the problem had not been taken as seriously and this had changed considerably over the years. The culture of dealing with domestic abuse had also changed. The fears which victims have are better understood and the approach used by the Constabulary is conscious of the effect of domestic abuse on the victims and any children involved.
- 4.8 It was reported that often victims change their mind and withdraw their complaints but there has been a shift towards prosecution with or without the victim, using original 999 calls, forensic and photographic evidence. It was pointed out that without the victim seeing the case through to court it is very difficult to get a positive result in terms of a successful prosecution. Non-custodial sentences given to perpetrators make victims reluctant to proceed with their complaint; there are sometimes also pressures from other people such as family members which influence the victim in not proceeding. The Committee was informed that the Constabulary works closely with a number of agencies when dealing with domestic abuse.
- 4.9 The Multi-Agency Safe-Guarding Hub (MASH) is an approach used to identify higher risk cases. This involves the use of the ACPO DASH risk assessment which looks at various aspects of the abuse, including risks or actual occurrence of sexual assaults, concerns for children involved, threats to animals, whether the victim has been strangled. There are 27 questions in the assessment and any victim who had said yes to 14 questions would meet the high risk threshold. There is also a professional judgement applied by the police and other agencies which could place some victims in the high risk category, even if they answered no to all the questions. In cases where victims were not classed as high risk they are given safeguarding advice at the initial contact point. It was stressed that many agencies are involved in dealing with domestic abuse victims and all of them play an important role. DCI Baxter informed the Committee that, for low risk victims, sanctuary schemes are in place, which involves changing locks, installing alarms and providing safeguarding advice. For higher risk victims, the options available are GPS trackers, injunctions through the courts and, in extreme cases, a move to another part of the country with a new identity.
- 4.10 DCI Baxter advised that all cases are dealt with seriously, even if on a previous complaint it was proven that the complaint had been made out of malice. The police are duty bound to investigate each complaint of domestic abuse. On average, a victim undergoes domestic abuse up to 35 times before they report the matter to the police. It is acknowledged that there are issues relating to emotional abuse which are very difficult to detect and impossible to prosecute without physical abuse. It is important for multi-agencies to provide support for victims of domestic abuse. In relation to prevention, it was suggested that if police get involved before a complaint is made this could make matters worse for the victims.
- 4.11 Providing education in schools about behaviour in a domestic environment and in relationships was identified as being beneficial. Working closely with schools

may encourage youngsters to report domestic abuse. DCI Baxter advised that the age profile of domestic abuse perpetrators is getting younger. However there are considerable numbers of elderly victims encountered who see domestic abuse as a way of life. Similarly, there are vulnerable adults cared for by family members and these situations are difficult to address as they take place behind closed doors. Domestic abuse is perceived to be a private matter and in some cultures victims are reluctant to come forward.

- 4.12 Mr Graham Sandham, Area Manager, Victim Support attended for interview. Mr Sandham advised the Committee that Victim Support works closely with the police and other partners to provide support to victims of crime. It is a co-ordinated effort to provide the necessary support and assistance that victims require. Domestic abuse (32%) accounts for a significant part of the workload of Victim Support. It was reported that domestic abuse is increasing and this was not due to higher levels of abuse but more victims reporting to the police. Those cases that are assessed to be high risk do not come to Victim Support but lower risk victims are referred. After the initial contact, a visit is made 2 or 3 days later and a second DASH risk assessment is carried out. In some cases situations have changed and by the time of the second assessment the victim has increased to high risk.
- 4.13 Victim Support offers a range of services including emotional support and, during visits to victims, additional information and evidence is gathered. Visual assessment of the surroundings and the social setting is carried out and children are referred to the relevant agency for support. Victim Support does not offer counselling but signposts victims to the services which may be able to assist them. Mr Sandham answered questions raised by the Committee and advised that he had no statistical records of families who had overcome domestic abuse and turned things around as a family. He advised that often in these cases the objective was to remove the victim from the perpetrator. He also advised that the focus on victims has been driven forward by Police and Crime Commissioners and there is greater recognition for victims.
- 4.14 Mr Robert Ruston, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner attended for interview. Mr Ruston advised that there is a clear commitment to address domestic abuse by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire (PCC) and it is a key priority. £600k of funding has been provided across Lancashire by the PCC and there is additional funding in excess of £1m from the Ministry of Justice. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has supported several campaigns, including one which ran during the World Cup in 2014. There are other campaigns which are well embedded in the work of the OPCC including the awareness raising White Ribbon Campaign, which is being promoted as a pan-Lancashire programme to reach a broader male audience through sports clubs. Principles are applied by the OPCC in supporting domestic abuse programmes, including support for organisations working with different cultures to look at how they impact around domestic abuse and looking at the impact domestic abuse has on children, the wider family and friends.
- 4.15 Councillor Coupland asked about extent of support being offered by different groups in Preston and advised that a lot of the work in faith groups is not high profile. Mr Ruston advised that services are being commissioned to address some of the aspects of domestic abuse and he would enquire about the profile of local providers and the ethnicity of the communities they serve to inform

future commissioning. Councillor Neil Cartwright asked how the funds referred to related to other local funding sources and Mr Ruston referred to the Joint Commission for the Lancashire County Council areas but also advised that the two unitary authorities were being taken into consideration. Mr Ruston was asked how Lancashire Constabulary compares with the rest of England and Wales in addressing domestic abuse to which he responded by advising the Committee that in a recent HMIC inspection the Constabulary was identified as one of the top five forces in the country, with good practice identified in a number of areas.

- 4.16 Councillor Hammond asked about the cost of increased reporting of domestic abuse between partners and how these compared with other offences. He expressed concern that deployment to domestic incidents could draw resources away from more serious offences. Mr Ruston advised that the cost and impact of offending would be substantial if the domestic abuse resulted in homicide and incidents of abuse could result in a fatality. Councillor Mrs Brown raised the matter of psychological abuse and the effect this could have upon children. She asked about how difficult it is to get the message over and to get help for those victims who report abuse. Mr Ruston replied by advising that there is a role for health workers in providing direct support and work is taking place in Lancashire involving GPs and health workers, although coercive behaviour can be difficult to recognise. Councillor Mrs Brown referred to the national teenage abuse campaign which she believed had had a positive impact but felt that the element of the campaign which covered psychological abuse should be delivered across all age groups. Robert Ruston referred to work in schools which promoted positive relationships.

The Committee heard that although there is a great deal of work taking place it is not as co-ordinated as it should be. There is a concern that there may be young people slipping through the gaps in service provision and Mr Ruston said that he would take this matter back to the OPCC to inform commissioning.

- 4.17 Rachel Haslam, Independent Domestic Abuse Adviser (IDVA), Safer Preston spoke to a group of representatives of the Committee comprising Councillors Saksena, Cartwright and Coupland about her role and experience as an IDVA working in Preston. Initially, the arrangement had been to invite a service user with Safer Preston to meet with the group but due to illness Ms Haslam was the only attendee. Ms Haslam advised the Councillors that Safer Preston had taken over services for medium and high risk victims of domestic abuse in Preston and described the service provided, which involves risk assessment and risk management for the victim. She also spoke about the advice, support and help which is offered and how she works with the other agencies including the Police Public Protection Unit, Children's Social Care and health visitors in the interests of the safety of her clients and their children.
- 4.18 Ms Haslam informed the Councillors that she also attends the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) where she can speak openly to other agencies about the risks posed to her clients. A Risk Assessment check list, developed by Safelives (formerly Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) is used by Ms Haslam to assess the risks to which her clients have been subjected and helps them to plan for their future safety. Her role involves working with other service providers to provide emotional support and advocates collaborative working with other agencies, including Lancashire

County Council's Adult Safeguarding Team, to achieve safer outcomes for victims of domestic abuse. The Councillors heard how the Safer Preston Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy Advice supports a victim through the court when they are a witness in the prosecution of a perpetrator. Ms Haslam advised them of how she liaises with the Crown Prosecution Service in the criminal court and may be asked by a Judge to give advice on an application for a change in bail conditions. Other aspects of her role include supporting her client in obtaining an injunction or a Non-Molestation Order. She also advises victims of the outcomes of the criminal prosecution of the perpetrator.

- 4.19 Ms Haslam advised that she works with both male and female victims of domestic abuse and receives notification for medium and high risk victims from the MASH within 24 hours of the incident being recorded on the Police Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) database. Support is available from workers able to communicate in a number of different languages and language services are used when required. A question was raised about referrals to the women's refuge when the premises may be known to the perpetrator. Ms Haslam responded that referral would be made to the refuge and it is known that a perpetrator will try to find the victim. She went on to say that the risk to the victim escalates when they leave the perpetrator and a great deal of work is done with the victim around their personal safety so that they cannot be easily traced. When asked whether the victim could be assisted by relocating to another part of the country, Ms Haslam responded that there is a secure database for MARACs across the country and information would be sent to the MARAC in the area to which the victim relocates. Data is not held on who resides in a refuge and the precise location is not known.
- 4.20 Ms Haslam advised the Councillors that that it is very common for victims not to report domestic abuse because of a fear that their children will be removed from their care. They are reassured that the children's interests are paramount and they would be removed only in extreme circumstances. The appointed IDVA attends Child Protection conferences and Child in Need meetings and works with the social workers who have responsibility for protecting the children in families affected by domestic abuse. It is intimidating for the victim and important that they are shown how moving to a safe environment will help them to get assistance for their children.
- 4.21 The group discussed a number of factors which deter victims from reporting abuse and seeking help, including a fear of appearing on 'the radar'. This may mean that if social workers are informed, the victim will not return to seek help from a service. Ms Haslam advised that for those cases referred to the IDVA from the MASH, a referral will already have been made to Children's Social Care. The group considered the concerns of a person's private life entering the public domain and the increased risk of being harmed if it was known that they had asked for help. Councillor Neil Cartwright asked about continuity of service when an IDVA leaves the service and was advised that records are kept on an electronic database. This is available to the team so that another IDVA could pick up the records when taking over the case. An enquiry was made about circumstances in which a client may wish to continue working with someone they know, as the matters involved are very personal. Ms Haslam responded to say that IDVAs are highly dedicated and have a passion for their cause. There is not a high turnover of staff in the role of IDVA and they are able to access independent help for trauma which may affect them due to their role.

- 4.22 Councillor Coupland advised that cultural beliefs may mean that Asian women do not want to leave the perpetrator and asked about support which is available for them if they wish to remain in their relationship. Ms Haslam advised that the Safer Preston service works with women who wish to remain in their relationship and will talk to them about safety and how to protect themselves and their children. The Hope Centre, run by Preston Domestic Violence Services, holds dedicated sessions for Asian women and there are direct services available to help to manage risk, including putting markers against residential addresses to identify levels of risk to services attending the property. Ms Haslam referred to her experience of working with victims who had been in an abusive relationship for a long time and did not want to leave, refused help or advice and would not tell family or friends about the abuse. In these circumstances, the Police are contacted as a visible police presence can help to keep people safe if they do not want to leave the perpetrator. Councillor Coupland spoke about the value of drop-in centres where people can call in to talk, even if they do not want anything more. She also thought that safety alarms are being used more as a deterrent when the perpetrator knows that it will be used to alert the police. The Councillors were advised that an IDVA would liaise to obtain a safety alarm for a victim.
- 4.23 Councillor Neil Cartwright asked whether an IDVA would report abuse to the police without the victim's knowledge and was advised that there is a Confidentiality Policy about when information can be shared. If there is a risk of harm to the victim or another, the police will be notified and this is identified as a matter for professional judgement. If a case scores over 14 points using the Safelives risk assessment it is referred to MARAC. Lower risk cases are referred to other agencies. Ms Haslam explained that when an incident occurs, the police attending assess the level of risk as standard, medium or high. When cases are initially assessed as medium they will be re-assessed later, as it has been found that other agencies are assessing risks as being higher than the score applied by the police. It is thought that this is because victims do not say the same things to the police as they do to other agencies.

5. Key Findings

1. Children are influenced by what they see and therefore it is important to provide early support to children and young people who may be affected by domestic violence and abuse. There is a concern that there may be young people slipping through the gaps in service provision.
2. The role of teachers in identifying children and young people affected by domestic abuse is important, as is increasing the understanding of respectful relationships through personal, social and health education (PHSE) in schools and parenting skills.
3. There is a role for health workers in providing direct support and work is taking place in Lancashire involving GPs and health workers, although coercive behaviour can be difficult to recognise.
4. Children's interests are paramount and they are removed from the home only in extreme circumstances. The appointed IDVA attends Child Protection

conferences and Child in Need meetings and works with social workers who have responsibility for protecting the children in families affected by domestic abuse.

5. Preston is densely populated with more calls to the Police than other districts, although there are also areas of under reporting. Partner abuse in same gender relationships is under reported and disability gives rise to greater vulnerability.
6. On average, a victim undergoes domestic abuse up to 35 times before they report the matter to the police. Emotional abuse which is very difficult to detect and impossible to prosecute without physical abuse.
7. Victims in BME communities tend not to report nor be aware of what help is available. Some issues are dealt with in the community and in some communities victims tolerate abuse for longer before seeking help.
8. Factors which deter victims from reporting abuse and seeking help include a fear of appearing on 'the radar'. Victims may be concerned about their private life entering the public domain and the increased risk of being harmed if it was known that they had asked for help.
9. Safer Preston has taken over services for medium and high risk victims of domestic abuse in Preston and the service involves risk assessment and risk management for the victim.
10. The risk to the victim escalates when they leave the perpetrator and a great deal of work is done with the victim around their personal safety so that they can not be easily traced.
11. Support is available if a victim wishes to remain in their relationship. Safer Preston's IDVAs work with women who wish to remain in their relationship and advise them about safety and how to protect themselves and their children. If there is a risk of harm to the victim or other, the police will be notified and this is identified as a matter for professional judgement by the IDVA.
12. The Hope Centre, run by Preston Domestic Violence Services, holds dedicated sessions for Asian women and there are direct services available to help to manage risk, including putting markers against residential addresses to identify levels of risk to services attending the property.
13. Domestic abuse (32%) accounts for a significant part of the workload of Victim Support. Domestic abuse is increasing and this was not due to higher levels of abuse but more victims reporting to the police. The focus on victims has been driven forward by Police and Crime Commissioners and there is now greater recognition for victims.
14. Victims may withdraw their complaint but there has been a shift towards

prosecution with or without the victim. Without the victim seeing the case through to court it is very difficult to get a positive result in terms of a successful prosecution.

15. Non-custodial sentences given to perpetrators make victims reluctant to proceed with their complaint; there are sometimes also pressures from other people such as family members which influence the victim in not proceeding.
16. Lancashire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) identifies serial perpetrators who would move on to victimise others unless convicted of offences.
17. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, often referred to as Claire's Law, enables information about a person's history as a perpetrator of domestic abuse to be disclosed and support to be provided to victims.
18. The age profile of domestic abuse perpetrators is getting younger however there are considerable numbers of elderly victims encountered who see domestic abuse as a way of life. Similarly, there are vulnerable adults cared for by family members and these situations are difficult to address as they take place behind closed doors.
19. The cost and impact of offending is substantial if the domestic abuse results in homicide and incidents of abuse can result in a fatality.
20. Principles are applied by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in supporting domestic abuse programmes, including support for organisations working with different cultures to look at how they impact around domestic abuse and looking at the impact domestic abuse has on children, the wider family and friends.
21. Valuable expertise within smaller organisations could be lost when services are recommissioned and the Joint Commissioning in this service area had been difficult.
22. For continuity of service, the IDVA's records are kept on an electronic database, which is available to the team. There is not a high turnover of staff in the role of IDVA and they are able to access independent help for trauma which may affect them due to their role.

6. Recommendations to Cabinet

1. The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member for Community and Environment be requested to provide a copy of its Work Plan Study findings to Preston Community Safety Partnership with a recommendation that they take into consideration its findings in planning and delivering multi-agency interventions, including :
 - a. To promote information about healthy relationships to reach wider audience with information about psychological and emotional abuse;
 - b. To consult representatives of minority communities on the most effective ways of raising awareness for their members and incorporate their recommendations when developing work to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how to get help;
 - c. To promote information about local service providers and the services which they offer, including drop-in centres where victims can access information and support in a safe reassuring and readily accessible environment;
 - d. To work collaboratively with Preston Children's Partnership Board to raise awareness of the harm caused to children who experience domestic abuse and involve local providers of services for children and the community to deliver more education about psychological as well as physical harm and where to seek help.
2. The Cabinet Member for Community and Environment is also recommended to ask commissioners and providers of domestic abuse services to collate information on the ethnicity and language of service users to inform decisions meeting needs of victims from minority ethnic communities.

7. Corporate Management Team Commentary

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

At this point there are no financial implications. However there may be implications from the outcome of the recommendations, which would require further investigations.

Corporate Management team had no comments to make on the study.

Victims of Crime SUGGESTED SCOPING

The study will consider the implications of domestic abuse for Preston's residents:

Scope

The risks and consequences for victims and families;
 Vulnerability;
 Whether services are accessible, effective and sustainable;
 Awareness;
 What more could be done to protect victims and families.

1a.	<u>Scrutiny Chair:</u> Councillor Jonathan Saksena	<u>Contact Details</u>
1b.	<u>Scrutiny Support Manager:</u> Jacqui Pollock	Ext: 6305
1c.	<u>Departmental Link Officer:</u> Angela Harrison, Governance Director	Ext 6603
2.	<p><u>Which of our Corporate Priorities does this topic address?</u></p> <p>The Council's priority of "Your Neighbourhoods" includes "Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Building the confidence and capacity of communities to improve neighbourhoods and their environment."</p> <p>The priorities for Preston Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in 2014-2015 include Domestic Abuse within the wider context of Violent Crime.</p> <p><u>What are the overall aims and objectives in doing this work?</u></p>	
3.	<p>The work plan study will consider the implications for community safety in Preston from domestic abuse and the significantly traumatic effect upon victims and families.</p>	

	<p><u>Part A Domestic Abuse</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the profile of victims in the city and identify factors influencing their vulnerability. • To identify whether the services providing support for victims and witnesses are suitable and sufficient for their needs and sustainable. • To review whether there are gaps in services/ inequalities of access and is there more which could be done to help address these? • To consider the effectiveness of multi-agency approaches in reducing harm from domestic abuse in Preston and whether there is more which needs to be done to safeguard victims and help them to rebuild their lives. • To review what is known about the effects on children subject to or witnessing domestic abuse and whether the local service provision is sufficient to meet their needs. • To consider the effectiveness of domestic abuse awareness campaigns and whether there is more which the Council and Community Safety Partnership could do to promote domestic abuse awareness. • To identify whether there more which the Council could do to promote staff awareness of domestic abuse and measures to help victims and their families. • To consider how victim support services are changing in the current economic climate and the how the Council could inform commissioning decisions; • To make recommendations improvements required locally to address issues identified during the review.
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Possible outputs/outcomes to this review are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater understanding of domestic abuse crimes and their effect upon victims and witnesses.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the current situation in relation to strategic developments and commissioning of services for victims and witnesses of domestic abuse living in Preston. • A greater understanding of community perspectives in relation to the effects of domestic abuse and what can be done to achieve benefits from raising awareness/providing services. • Recommendations for local measures which could be introduced to reduce the harm arising from domestic abuse. 	
5.	<p><u>What specific value can Scrutiny add to this work area?</u></p> <p>To provide an opportunity for the Members to discuss the issues with stakeholders and in doing so consider the implications arising for community safety from Domestic Abuse</p>	
6.	<p><u>Duration of the Review?</u></p> <p>9 months approximately</p>	
7.	<p><u>What category does the review fall into</u></p> <p>Policy Review yes Policy Development yes External Partnership yes Performance Management no Holding Executive to account no</p>	
8.	<p><u>What information do we need to undertake the Scrutiny Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preston City Council Corporate Priorities and Projects 2012 to 2015 • The Safer Preston Partnership’s Strategic Assessment (2014) • The Safer Preston Partnership Plan (2011 to 2014) • Lancashire and Preston crime data for domestic abuse • Findings of local analysis, research studies and need assessments. 	
9.	<p><u>Who can provide us with relevant evidence?</u></p> <p>Members of the Crime and</p>	<p><u>What areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence</u></p> <p>Experience of the effects upon the</p>

	<p>Disorder Committee/ Members of the Council / officers</p>	<p>local communities/individuals affected by domestic abuse.</p>
		<p>Experience relating to the effectiveness of measures being implemented and what more could potentially be done.</p>
	<p>Representative of Lancashire Constabulary</p>	<p>The measures used by the Police, in conjunction with other organisations, to address the crimes, challenges which arise and how these are addressed.</p>
	<p>Representative of Lancashire Constabulary</p>	<p>Experience of work with victims of domestic abuse.</p>
	<p>Representative of Lancashire County Council</p>	<p>Experience of the effect upon victims of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Commissioning of domestic abuse services</p>
	<p>Representative of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire</p>	<p>Victim and Witnesses Strategy</p> <p>Commissioning of services for victims and witnesses</p>
	<p>Representatives from Preston City Council</p>	<p>Experience of the consequences of domestic abuse for victims and measures and services providing support.</p> <p>Experience relating to measures being implemented to help victims and what more could be done.</p>
	<p>Representatives from organisations providing help and support to victims and witnesses.</p>	<p>Experience of the effect upon victims of domestic abuse</p> <p>Experience relating to the services for victims and future developments.</p>

10.	<p><u>What processes can we use to feed into the review (site visits/observations, face to face questioning, telephone surveys, written questionnaires etc?)</u></p> <p>Face to face interviews with the parties identified to provide evidence.</p> <p>Crime data</p> <p>Published reports and interim findings</p>	
11.	<p><u>Diversity – How will we address the diversity standards in order to uphold the Council’s Single Equality Scheme?</u></p> <p>The scope of the review will take into account the extent to which domestic abuse impacts upon individuals and may differ according to age, gender and ethnicity. The draft recommendations will have an equality impact assessment.</p>	

Lancashire Domestic Abuse Joint Commission
Summary of the Partnership Response to Domestic Abuse

1. Executive Summary

We have a strong history of partnership working in Lancashire and are committed to continuing to make it a safe place to live, work and visit. Key partners include:

- Lancashire County Council, District and Unitary Local Authorities;
- Lancashire Constabulary;
- Clinical Commissioning Groups, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service;
- Lancashire Probation Services and wider criminal justice partners;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire

Lancashire Community Safety Strategy Group (LCSSG) brings together representatives of these organisations to set the strategic direction for coordinating partnership activity under a range of statutory duties, to reduce crime and re-offending, tackle anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse is a key priority for LCSSG and is aligned across a range of strategic partnerships including the Lancashire Children and Young People's Trust and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board.

This report provides an overview of the partnership response to tackling domestic abuse highlighting areas of delivery and development.

The joint response to domestic abuse has been informed by evidence, based on needs, and builds upon the support already available. This is set out in the Domestic Abuse Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which details the prevalence of domestic abuse in the county, service mapping; evidence based good practice and service user consultation.

2. Background and Advice

Domestic Abuse is a priority for the Lancashire Community Safety Strategy Group, the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board, Lancashire Children and Young People's Trust and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board. This has been identified by the strategic assessment of crime and disorder and the JSNA, which have been produced in order to create a better understanding of the impact on children and young people, victims and perpetrators in the Lancashire-14 area.

There is a clear drive in Lancashire to ensure a robust approach to the provision of specialist domestic abuse services and so to reduce the harm caused. The commission focuses on the Lancashire 12 districts for specialist services but also takes into account the pan-Lancashire multi-agency approach to developing resources and creating new and effective pathways into support and care.

Actions being taken are in response to the findings of an Ofsted inspection in 2012 recommending provision be put in place to support children and young people living in households with domestic abuse present, and that partners explore provision of support for perpetrators not subject to criminal justice sanctions.

There were 17.6 per thousand population (number = 20,750) calls to the police about domestic abuse in the Lancashire 12 area, between April 2013 and March 2014. This is lower than the equivalent rates in Blackpool (38/1000) and Blackburn (19/1000). The number of calls is on a slight downward trend (-1.4%). Our long term aim is for a reduction in calls, although, as there is substantial under reporting of domestic abuse, a rise in the short-term is desirable. Domestic abuse recorded crimes are also down (-5.3%) compared with the three year average. This is in contrast to violence against the person, which has increased by 9% but is in line with the aim to reduce domestic abuse crime. 47% of calls came from households where at least one child resides.

Responding to domestic abuse is not the responsibility of any single agency and so there must be wide spread recognition of how the repercussions reach beyond the individual and throughout the community, including social welfare, the criminal justice system, refuges, health care, education, employment, childcare and housing.

Developments in the last decade have shown that taking a more pro-active, preventative approach not only saves lives but also saves public money. There is a vast amount of evidence of the impact of intervention in domestic abuse cases, and statutory services have fully acknowledged their role in prevention and reducing harm. This commissioning approach will provide a core offer of specialist services and sets out the aspiration to provide support and interventions for children and young people, victims and perpetrators living with domestic abuse through a coordinated approach to commissioned services, partnership activity and developing pathways. Ultimately, this programme of work aims to reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse and improve outcomes for children and young people, victims and perpetrators.

At a time when public sector is facing extreme challenges in terms of resources, domestic abuse services have relied on grant funding for many years, which has resulted in instability and inequity of access to services. This report sets out the developments taking place in Lancashire as partners recognise the importance of providing core services to Lancashire's citizens.

3. Draft Lancashire (12) Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy

In developing this new response to domestic abuse, we have followed the commissioning cycle which incorporates the principles of 'understand'; 'plan'; 'do'; 'review'. The resulting draft Lancashire (12) Domestic Abuse Strategy highlights the approach being taken by partners in order to secure effective provision for vulnerable victims, children and young people and to change the behaviour of perpetrators, with a focus on securing the services for those in crisis, and investing in earlier intervention and support. Each stage of this partnership response to domestic abuse has involved close collaboration with key stakeholders (Voluntary, Community Faith Sector providers, statutory services, partner organisations and service users) to create and design a new service, building on the expertise and knowledge of the professionals in the field and service users dealing with the issue.

This collective partnership approach is underpinned by secure funding for three years, will reduce reliance on short-term grant funding and enable the development of an effective and

equitable commissioned service to support some extremely vulnerable members of our community.

The joint commission funding will form the 'core offer' of specialist services that underpins the wider partnership response. The Strategy was created in line with the development of additional domestic abuse provision such as Early Support, Criminal Justice responses and refuge provision. It also identifies areas and the remaining gaps that cannot be addressed by any other means.

4. The New Domestic Abuse Service Model

This new model will reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse in Lancashire by taking an integrated, holistic approach to preventing further abuse. The model was created through a co-design process with current VCFS specialist providers, statutory services, partner organisations and service users. There is a robust commissioning plan for each of the three strands which are divided into victims, children and young people and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Each strand fits together to create support at all levels of the continuum of need or risk. This ranges from protecting victims including children and young people who may witness behaviour, to challenging the behaviour of perpetrators and enhancing partnership working and practice to deliver positive outcomes.

The service is intended to demonstrate both an improvement in outcomes and a shift in the focus of resource which is currently concentrated at providing support for high risk victims. By balancing resource, the new service will deliver an earlier response for medium risk victims of domestic abuse.

The joint funding does not intend to replace any of the current funding commitments of partners, rather it will complement existing provision such as Sanctuary Schemes and other specialist provision currently funded locally. The core offer will also complement refuge provision funded through Supporting People.

This new holistic approach is being co-ordinated and delivered through the work streams outlined below. Each work stream will be evaluated using robust outcome based evaluation tools relevant to that particular work stream, for example the support for medium and high risk victims is being evaluated by CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) 'Insights' programme. This outcomes measurement service is designed specifically for the domestic abuse services and will benchmark Lancashire practice against national data. The 'Insights' programme evidences the outcomes that domestic abuse services have on victim safety, enabling services and commissioners to make a stronger case for future funding.

Public Health Lancashire is exploring options for an independent evaluation to be conducted which will enable effective measurement of the impact made by the new service and identify areas for development. This will build a local evidence base of effective practice with which to build a business case for future partnership investment.

5. Support for Medium and High Risk Victims

The aim of the service is to improve the safety and wellbeing of victims and children and young people who have been exposed to domestic abuse to ensure that they are enabled to

lead healthy and safe lives now and in the future. It is expected that interventions offered will include:

- Independent advocacy;
- One-to-one support and outreach;
- Accredited group work including recovery and parenting programmes;
- Therapeutic support;
- Peer support groups;
- Drop in sessions;
- Helpline (24 hours, 7 days per week).

In addition, the service will also include co-ordination of support on wider issues such as housing, substance misuse, health, welfare benefits and debt management.

Service outcomes:

- Reduced risk of harm from domestic abuse;
- Increased confidence in safety and wellbeing;
- Achieve and sustain healthy relationships;
- Individuals and families are empowered to access support and feel safe;
- Effective and timely access to appropriate domestic abuse services to meet service users' needs.

Supporting People services assist people to live as independently as possible. The range of services include supported and sheltered housing, refuges for women experiencing domestic violence, alarm services for elderly people, home improvement agencies for older people and 'floating support' where workers visit people in their own homes.

Whilst refuge provision and floating support services are funded from the Supporting People budget, the commissioning decisions will be taken by the Domestic Violence Commissioning Reference Group. The Supporting People Partnership, which comprises representatives from the strategic housing function of District Councils, LCC Adult and Community Services, LCC Children and Young People's Services and Community Safety, will be consulted prior to any decisions being taken.

- 813 people at risk of domestic violence were supported in 2012/13 in all types of Supporting People funded services and 1050 in 2013/14.
- 77 refuge spaces are commissioned from 6 providers in 9 refuges.
- 366 households were supported in refuges during 2012/13 and 347 during 13/14.
- Floating support services are delivered through three generic floating support contracts. Under two of the contracts, services are sub contracted to specialist

providers, whilst the third contract is delivered by an organisation which has a specialist domestic organisation as part of its group structure. 354 households were supported in 2012/13 and 406 in 2013/14.

6. Early Support - Children and Young People

Early Support services have been commissioned to provide support for children and young people and their primary carers, in parallel where possible, and will comprise of a mixture of one-to-one and group work. The aim is to reduce harm, develop resilience, and to change attitudes towards violence and unacceptable behaviours in order to break the cycle of abusive relationships which may include therapeutic, one-to-one and group work interventions. Examples of interventions being delivered include 'Helping Hands', 'Freedom Programme', 'CYP Recovery Toolkit' and 'You and Me, Mum'.

Service Outcomes:

- Parents are equipped to develop protective factors which enable them to manage risks appropriately and their families to thrive.
- Children and young people affected by domestic abuse are equipped with protective factors to enable them to thrive now and in the future

Early Support contracts have been awarded to providers within the Greater Together consortium and service delivery commenced on 1st January 2014 with funding currently committed to 31st March 2015. The successful providers within the consortia are:

- SafeNet (Burnley and Lancaster)
- Preston Domestic Violence Services (Chorley and Preston)
- Fylde Coast Women's Aid (Fylde and Wyre)
- HARV (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley)
- Star Centre (Rossendale)
- Progress Care (South Ribble)
- Liberty Centre (West Lancashire)

These services are newly in place and already show encouraging signs of delivery. Quarter 1 data tells us that there were 85 requests for service and a total of 145 children and young people across Lancashire that accessed support. Robust data collection tools have been shared with the providers to ensure that commissioners receive the information necessary to measure the impact of the services both the short-term, immediate impact and the long term sustainability of the support packages. Additionally an outcomes framework has been developed across all the early support services outlining the outcomes that are to be achieved and the measures that will demonstrate progress towards achieving the outcomes.

This new early support service offer demonstrates consistent additional support across the whole of Lancashire. Regular monitoring of numbers and outcomes of referrals will ensure

that any issues around capacity and efficiency are successfully managed as and when they emerge.

7. Challenging the Behaviour of Perpetrators

In line with many areas nationally, delivering services to challenge and change the behaviour of domestic abuse perpetrators, other than by statutory interventions, is a new area of development in Lancashire.

Whilst there are nationally accredited programmes provided for those subject to criminal justice orders on conviction, there is little available which perpetrators can access voluntarily or be referred to where their behaviour is identified and acknowledged as problematic, before it becomes a criminal matter. Lancashire criminal justice partners have worked collectively with experts from domestic abuse perpetrator services such as 'Respect' to develop and co-design a new service that addresses the harm and detrimental impact their behaviour has on their families.

This builds on evidenced based packages of support such as Probation Trusts' 'Building Better Relationships' and the 'Specific Activity Requirement'. As this is an emerging area of development for Lancashire, it is imperative that we commission services that are safe and effective for service users.

Expected Service Outcomes:

- Perpetrators of domestic abuse receive effective interventions and support which enables them to recognise the impact of their behaviour and to change, in order to have healthy relationships in the future.
- Parents are enabled to be positive role models and parent effectively.
- Perpetrators acknowledge and are prepared to address the impact their behaviour has on their children.

Lancashire is also working alongside the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) service called the 'Revolution' approach to perpetrators. 'Revolution' is an umbrella under which partner agencies work together to make best use of their resources to reduce re-offending. The approach is built on the success of the Prolific and other Priority Offender, Multi-Agency Assessment Public Protection Arrangements, Youth Offending models and the Drug Intervention Programme. The IOM partnership identifies and works with serious domestic abuse offenders to prevent them from reoffending in the future. There is a reliance on the Probation Service and IOM teams to keep police divisions informed when perpetrators are released from prison.

8. Workforce Development and Coordination

Workforce development focuses on achieving continuous and sustainable improvement through both engaging with the workforce and in the development of a range of interventions. It includes everybody in Lancashire who works or volunteers in the field of domestic abuse, regardless of which sector or organisation they belong to. Collectively, we need to ensure the workforce have the correct skills and knowledge required to provide the

highest quality services, to review and enhance their response to domestic abuse and to make changes that result in working together better across sectors to continually improve.

Central to this is the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which is a multi-agency response to reduce the risk and harm to high risk domestic abuse victims. In order to improve and deliver a more effective response, the commission will provide additional resource to enhance the MARAC process which ensures each appropriate agency shares information, is appropriately trained and provides support to high risk victims and their families where possible.

Aligned to existing multi-agency training within the Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), there will be developmental and specialist training delivered through existing and new training opportunities e.g. Research in Practice workforce development training and the development of an e-learning package specifically focused on domestic abuse.

Specialist service providers are contracted to deliver awareness-raising sessions with all partner agencies, especially health services on a rolling basis. Between September 2013 to March 2014, contract monitoring returns show that just under 500 professionals received domestic abuse awareness, identification and referral training.

Every time a service user makes contact with an agency, especially in health and social care settings, there is an opportunity to ask, assess and advise (Every Contact Counts Principles) to identify where domestic abuse may be the root cause of presenting symptoms and issues. This is known as 'routine enquiry' and has been identified as good practice and is acknowledged as a key tactic for earlier identification of domestic abuse and allows for appropriate referrals to support. This was a key point made by the Lancashire service users interviewed for the JSNA research. In addition, the recently published NICE Guidance (2014) has reinforced the understanding established by Lancashire's Domestic Abuse JSNA. This NICE guidance provides a clear strategic framework on which to engage and work with the health economy, including the routine enquiry/case management and pathways and gives us an opportunity to work with the Health economy going forward.

Partnership Outcomes:

- Better able to identify victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Greater emphasis on tracking cases, problem solving and development of positive outcomes for cases heard at MARAC
- Effective training and development for front-line agencies working with those living with domestic abuse

9. Awareness, Identification and Referral

In order to reduce the risk faced by victims, risk factors must be understood by all agencies for the safety of the victim. Therefore improved training of professionals and frontline staff is needed to ensure that guidance; legislative powers and risk management processes are understood and properly applied. Service users need to have access to the right support (based on their level of need) at the right time.

The partnership response will develop a shared understanding of available pathways and thresholds for accessing support and facilitate referral to the range of services and interventions most appropriate to service users.

MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) brings together staff from social care, police, health, schools and other partner agencies to work from the same location, sharing information and ensuring a timely and joined-up response to protect children and young people and vulnerable adults. The major driver for the creation of the MASH approach was the lesson learned through a domestic homicide review that there was a need for a single point for information exchange between agencies. From January to December 2013, taking into consideration all the referrals to MASH of children in need of support (Levels 4a/b/c on the Continuum of Need), around 16% were in need primarily due to domestic violence.

Targeted Communications

Targeted communications with key messages to challenge attitudes, thinking and behaviours which contribute to abuse are constantly being developed to engage with all victims of domestic abuse. These will promote access to support services and encourage the reporting of abuse.

All targeted communications will also incorporate support for the White Ribbon Campaign, which aims to empower men to speak out against abuse towards women. The White Ribbon Campaign helps to address gender norms and attitudes towards violence before they become deeply ingrained. Raising awareness and understanding of the unacceptability of domestic violence can also act as a way of enabling greater support for survivors as they are more likely to disclose to family, friends or neighbours. Increasing the general public's knowledge and understanding therefore will enhance the ability of these people to guide those experiencing domestic abuse to safe and appropriate support.

Without encouraging men to challenge beliefs and attitudes and enlisting men and boys as partners against gender-based violence, we are only addressing half the solution. The aims of the White Ribbon Campaign are to:

- Promote respectful relationships and non-violence in all aspects of life
- By mobilising men the anti-violence against women & girls (VAWG) message increases in effectiveness and reach into Lancashire's communities.
- Addressing and altering social norms that lead to violent behaviour against women and increasing awareness on the issue

Lancashire County Council, together with Lancashire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner, has pledged to achieve White Ribbon Campaign status as organisations within 2014.

Partnership Outcomes:

- A greater proportion of our community believes domestic abuse is unacceptable and is empowered to challenge abusive behaviour

- Frontline practitioners across all agencies are equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify and respond appropriately to domestic abuse which enables families to receive timely support and reduces harm.
- Better support available for victims and their families with statutory, voluntary and community sectors working together to share information and agree practical action

10. Prevention

The Lancashire Schools Forum has funded the development of a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Healthy Relationships resource for schools which will provide both learning packages and in-house support across Key Stages One to Four. This support will address not only domestic abuse but a range of issues and risk taking behaviours which in turn will enable children and young people to develop both healthy relationships and personal resilience.

Partnership Outcomes:

- Children and young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable them to negotiate healthy relationships;
- Schools feel confident and adequately supported in their role in supporting their pupils to negotiate healthy relationships.

11. Criminal Justice Response

Recognition of the importance of justice being obtained is a key priority for victims and their families. Criminal Justice partners are working together to address areas for improvement across the system including:

- Appropriate sanction and rehabilitation of perpetrators to prevent re-offending and enable them to have healthy relationships;
- Increased confidence of victims that the response provided by the criminal justice system will ensure that they remain safe;
- Review of the protocol governing Specialist Domestic Violence Courts and maximising the role of Independent Domestic Violence Advisers;
- Identifying earlier opportunities for the identification of perpetrators through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub.

In November 2013, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) completed a full inspection of Lancashire Police in respect of the service delivery to victims of domestic abuse. The inspection highlighted Lancashire as the best performing Constabulary in the country when dealing with this area of business. Several partnership working recommendations were highlighted as areas for improvement, which will be factored into the wider partnership aspects of on-going work. In addition, central government are recognising other areas of support to be addressed by introducing new tools and powers nationally.

Two recent changes have been the introduction of Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders (DVPN/O's) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS).

Under the Domestic Violence Protection Notices/Orders scheme, the police and magistrates can protect a victim when they are at their most vulnerable (in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident), by preventing the perpetrator from contacting the victim or returning to their home for up to 28 days. This helps victims who may have had to flee their home, and gives them the space and time to access support they need and consider their options.

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, often called 'Claire's Law', enables the disclosure of people's history of domestic violence and can be triggered in two ways:

- Right-to-Ask: The law allows people to apply to police forces in England and Wales for information on a partner's history of domestic violence.
- Right-to-Know: Police can proactively disclose information in prescribed circumstances.

A panel of representatives from the police, probation services and other agencies check every request meets the criteria of the scheme. Trained police officers and advisers then provide support to victims. Since the introduction in March 2014, there have been a total of 38 requests of which 32 have been disclosed on.

12. Domestic Homicide Reviews

Home Office statistics have shown that in domestic homicide cases, only 30% of victims had been identified as victims of domestic abuse. Therefore, in order to improve identification and protection of victims, all organisations now have a statutory requirement to undertake a multi-agency Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) following all domestic homicides. The purpose being to establish what lessons can be learnt, and to apply the learning to improve service responses, policies and procedures, especially where there has been no identified service involvement. The responsibility for conducting a DHR is with the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Although the task of completing a DHR is considerable, there has been no dedicated resource given to the CSPs for this additional responsibility. In Lancashire since the legislation was introduced, there have been:

- 10 qualifying reviews
- 8 female victims and 2 male victims
- 7 of 10 victims were aged over 50
- 5 occurred within intimate personal relationships
- 5 were familial homicides (2 of which were patricide)

Work is ongoing to identify what lessons there are across Lancashire to identify common links and themes, and comparing them to the national DHR work and lessons learned. Mental health needs, substance misuse and former violent behaviours are the 3 common factors emerging from the Lancashire cases.

13. Consultations

Consultation has taken place with statutory partners, current providers and service users on:

- The development and quality of appropriate specialist domestic abuse services;
- The provision and partner interventions for medium and high risk victims, children and young people;
- How continuous workforce development and co-ordination will enhance partnership responses and collaboration;
- How to ensure a cost effective multi-agency approach to domestic abuse service delivery via voluntary, community and faith sector and specialist providers (e.g. Children Centres, Housing), and mainstream agencies working in partnership;
- How perpetrators can best be supported to recognise and address the impact of their behaviours.

14. Implications

The draft Lancashire (12) Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy sets out the commitment of partners and the range of activities to address domestic abuse. Where partners identify additional available resource, they are asked to support the aims of the strategy in developing additional services, as moving forward it would be apposite to bring together funding and commissions under one set of arrangements.

15. Risk management

Legal and Procurement

Where commissioning of specialist services takes place, the services which form the subject of this report will be tendered in accordance with the usual County Council processes.

Finance

Taking into account the level of need and resource required to ensure a core offer of services in each area, funding is allocated for 2014-5 and 2015-6 as per the table below:

Work Stream	Area of Work	%	£ Amount per annum
Prevention	healthy relationships as part of a life skills programme in schools	n/a	n/a
Early Support	for children, young people and victims	17	255,416
Medium & High Risk	support for victims including therapeutic services	68	1,021,665
Perpetrators	voluntary community programmes	10	150,245
Workforce Development	understanding signs, impact and pathways	5	75,122
In Kind and Added Value	routine enquiry, pathways and referral	n/a	n/a
Total			1,502,448

The resources identified above represent the use of previously agreed and allocated reserves and confirmed contributions from partners.

16. Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on the commissioning of the core offer of specialist domestic abuse services. The core service offer will be provided to users with all protected characteristics it is additional to any current service provision and so particular groups will not be disadvantaged.

17. Crime and Disorder

This strategy supports the priorities of the Lancashire Community Safety Strategy

Date: June 2014

Contact for further information:

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Victims of Domestic Abuse

Work Plan Study by the Crime and Disorder Task Group

Response from Cabinet - Minute CA110 - 20.04.16

Cabinet discussed the work plan study by the Crime and Disorder Committee on Victims of Domestic Abuse, which was presented for consideration.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Environment reported that Recommendation 2 - "...to ask commissioners and providers of domestic abuse services to collate information on the ethnicity and language of service users to inform decisions meeting needs of victims from minority ethnic communities" - had already been actioned. He suggested that a progress update from officers would be required in relation to Recommendation 1 concerning the Preston Community Safety Partnership.

Decision Taken

That the findings and recommendations of the work plan study on Victims of Domestic Abuse be approved.

Reason for Decision

The Cabinet supported the findings and recommendations of the Committee.

Alternatives Considered and Rejected

None, for the reason given above.