

Report of Sam Millar- Chief Officer, Community Safety

Report to Neil Evans – Director, Environments and Neighbourhoods

Date: 2nd February 2015

Subject: Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Lead Officer (Caring Dads)

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| Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

1.0 Summary of main issues

Despite improvements in provision in recent years, domestic violence continues to pose a significant challenge to services in Leeds. This is in terms of prevalence and impact on individuals, families and communities. As well as significant lost economic output, human cost and wasted potential; it is estimated that domestic violence costs services in Leeds around £76 million every year. (Walby et al 2009)

The Safer Leeds Executive has identified domestic violence as a priority and highlighted key areas of work in need of urgent development. These include:

- Ensuring services and interventions are meeting service user needs and expectations.
- Establishing a consistent and better developed response to perpetrators.
- Developing robust and effective information sharing across all stakeholders in order to maximise opportunities for protection and improved service delivery.
- Increasing public awareness.

This report relates to progressing the second priority and, in particular, on increasing the capacity to respond to domestic violence perpetrators by expanding the Caring Dads perpetrator programme, and ensuring that, moving forward, we have a sustainable delivery model.

Caring Dads has been piloted across Leeds during 2014, with over 30 men having completed the 17 week groupwork programme. The programme has been evaluated by Leeds Beckett University, and shows promising results.

The programme has largely been driven by a Probation Officer who has been seconded into the Domestic Violence Team however, the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) are now wanting to recall this individual, as it is their policy to not agree secondment arrangements beyond 3 years in duration.

Caring Dads has all the ingredients of being a highly effective perpetrator programme for men who are fathers, however, its success has been highly reliant on an individual officer with a wealth of expertise and knowledge in engaging perpetrators, who has been the driving force behind the programme's success to date.

Following discussions with the CRC, it is evident that if Leeds wants to continue to roll out Caring Dads in 2015/16, we will need to end the secondment arrangement and look to having LCC employ the officer in question. As this officer is already with Safer Leeds on a secondment, funding is already in place for this post.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Safer Leeds seeks approval from the Director of Environment and Housing to create a new Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Lead Officer post to continue to lead on the delivery the Caring Dads programme.

3.0 Purpose of this report

- 3.1 To secure approval from the Director – Environment and Housing to create a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Lead Officer post.

4.0 Background information

- 4.1 Over the past three years, the Safer Leeds Domestic Violence Team has evolved from a team that has been largely involved in delivering second tier services and development of good practice, into one that now includes direct operational service delivery.
- 4.2 With the roll out of the Caring Dads programme, the team deliver direct work to domestic violence perpetrators and it is evident from the number of referrals received that there is a significant demand for this programme across the city. There are currently 3 groups running in Leeds (one in each locality) and there are in the region of 50 referrals for men pending, for the next round of groups which will run, post April.

4.3 The evaluation of Caring Dads undertaken by Leeds Beckett University shows that the programme has had quite a profound impact on the behaviour of men, who have completed the programme. Feedback both from the men who have undergone the programme and their partners has been incredibly positive, and it is evident that the changes in the men's behaviour has brought about significant improvements in the quality of life for the partners and the children.

5.0 Main Issues

5.1 Having explored models of work with perpetrators of domestic violence, Leeds appears to have identified a programme of work for male perpetrators who are also fathers, which has been effective in engaging them and bringing about significant changes in behaviours. Whilst this does not address the need of all perpetrators of domestic violence, it engages the cohort of men who are likely to pose the greatest risk, in terms of risks to children as well as partners. Additionally, from a cost/ benefit perspective, given these are the families where children are at a high risk of being placed on Child Protection Plans or becoming Looked After, it makes sense to have a programme of work that is effective in engaging these men to deliver behavioural and attitudinal changes.

5.2 The other key selling point for Caring Dads in Leeds is the delivery model that has been adopted. This has largely entailed professionals from a range of services such as Children's Social Work Service, Signpost, YOS and Probation putting themselves (with approval from their organisation) forward to become Caring Dads facilitators. These staff are then assessed to gauge their suitability to work with perpetrators, and then access the Caring Dads training. What this means is that, there has been no need to create a team of staff who deliver Caring Dads. Rather, it has relied on a range of services and organisations to committing staffing resources, which has allowed us to create a pool of facilitators, to run Caring Dads groups on a rolling programme across the 3 localities.

5.3 The evaluation of Caring Dads by Leeds Beckett University shows that the programme has had a profound impact on the behaviour of men, who have completed the programme, as is evidenced by some of the quotes by them and their partners:

"I was like an "always angry dad". Since attending the CD I have gradually stopped arguing with my partner in front of kids. I am able to control my impulsive reactions a lot and as a result the arguments have reduced."

"I can definitely say that he has changed. He is trying hard to improve things between us".

"The group was really positive on both our relationship and his anger management"

"When I see him calm, it has an effect on me as well. The result is that we have been fighting less. Now I don't dread stepping inside the house when he is in."

- 5.4 The Caring Dads programme has largely been driven by a qualified Probation Officer who has been seconded into the LCC Domestic Violence Team from the Probation Service. He has been instrumental in co-ordinating and overseeing the delivery of the programme and crucially in ensuring the integrity of the programme, and the quality of the delivery, all of which have been vital to its success.
- 5.5 In line with their policy, the CRC are now looking to recall this officer back into their service, and this potentially puts the Caring dads programme at risk, as the programme has largely been led by the seconded Probation Officer. Were he to return back to the CRC, he would not be in a position to continue his involvement in Caring Dads, and given much of the expertise around Caring Dads rests with him, there is a real danger that the programme would fold.
- 5.6 Delivering work with domestic violence perpetrators requires specialist skills and experience. It involves assessing the man's history of abuse, his motivation to change and the current risk he poses. It necessitates assisting him acknowledge the impact of his behaviour; support him explore the reasons he is abusive and help him understand and practice safe behaviours. Work needs to include exploring healthy relationships; impact of substance misuse and mental health; anger management; cultural expectations; attitudes to women; parenting skills; abuse of power; managing feelings and emotional attachment.
- 5.7 In order to continue and grow Caring Dads programme in Leeds, it is proposed that LCC create a new position which will allow the probation Officer in question to become part of the LCC Domestic Violence Team. He would be employed 3 days per week on a 12 month contract
- 5.8 In order to ensure that, moving forward the Caring Dads programme is put on a more sustainable footing, it is also proposed that members of staff from Signpost work with the Probation Officer to oversee the delivery of Caring Dads groups across the city and a lead practitioner from Signpost is identified to pick up the reins for Caring Dads in 12 months.
- 5.9 Given that domestic violence is a break through project, and there is recognition that limited work with perpetrators currently taking place in Leeds, Caring Dads offers the opportunity to deliver an evidence based perpetrator programme which is both effective and cost effective.

6.0 Corporate Considerations

7.0 Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1 Discussions have taken place with the partner agencies working with domestic violence victims and perpetrators and key stakeholders who support the expansion of Caring Dads.
- 7.2 The Safer Leeds SMT has agreed that this post is important to support the future development of the perpetrator programme. The post has been sent to the job evaluation team, and has score 694 which indicates the JD is performing at PO4 or PO5 level. (File Ref 142279).

8.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 8.1 Given the specialist nature of this post, and the specific skills set and expertise needed, it is proposed that this post be ring fenced for the Probation Officer who has lead on the Caring Dads programme.
- 8.2 The post will enhance the capacity of Safer Leeds to respond to equality, diversity and cohesion challenges across the city, as the Caring Dads programme aims to engage perpetrators from all backgrounds

9.0 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 9.1 The post supports the delivery of the councils break through project and helps deliver on the Safer Leeds priority around domestic violence and safeguarding vulnerable victims. It will also contribute towards council wide priorities such as protecting children at risk.
- 9.2 This post will also support the roll out of good practice and learning arising from DHRs.

10.0 Resources and value for money

- 10.1 The LCC Domestic Violence team has £60K allocated within its base budget specifically for perpetrator work. This currently covers the costs of the seconded Probation Officer (approx £25K) and a seconded Prison Officer (approx £15K). Therefore, the funding for this post is already in place, and the aim of this report is simply to move from a secondee arrangement to one where the officer is directly employed by LCC. Additionally, the Probation Officer will be employed on a 12 month fixed term contract therefore, there are no pressures around longer term funding for this post.
- 10.2 The post will improve the range of options available to domestic violence perpetrators which is a key priority area agreed by the Safer Leeds Executive.

11.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

None

12.0 Risk Management

- 12.1 There is a possibility that moving from a secondment arrangement to one where the Probation officer is directly employed by the council, means that any risk will transfer across to the council. Having said this, the officer in question will be employed on a 22 hours per week, on a 12 month fixed term contract therefore, the risks would seem to be manageable.

13.0 Conclusions

- 13.1 Given the lack of capacity to take on the specialist nature of this area of work, it would be logical to create a post which can support the delivery this activity.
- 13.2 Given the reasons outlined in this report, there is a strong case for the creation of the Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Lead Officer (Caring Dads) post to support Safer Leeds in this priority area.

14.0 Recommendations

- 14.1 The Director of Environment and Housing approve the creation of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Lead Officer (Caring Dads).

15.0 Background Documents

- 15.1 Job Description and Person Specification.