

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES)**

### **INQUIRY INTO TACKLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

#### **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Domestic violence and abuse directly impacts on a person's sense of safety: it affects the well-being and quality of life of individuals, families and communities and as a result has significant social and economic costs. It is an issue for every community and can affect individuals from any background or socio-economic demographic.

1.2 In 2004, the government introduced a single definition of domestic violence, replacing previous different definitions in use across government and the public sector. This defined domestic violence as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender sexuality.

1.3 However, this was extended in March 2013 to include 'coercive control', recognising that patterns of behaviour and separate instances of control can add up to abuse - including instances of intimidation, isolation, depriving victims of their financial independence or material possessions and regulating their everyday behaviour. The new definition also includes people aged 16 and 17 after it was found that excluding this age group from the definition had left young victims without the help they need to change their situation and escape abusive relationships.

1.4 The new definition of domestic violence and abuse, as issued by the Home Office, now states:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain,

depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

- 1.5 This definition also includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.
- 1.6 Within Leeds, there were 13,348 incidents of domestic violence and abuse recorded by the police during 2012/13, of which 4,816 were repeats. However, it is widely acknowledged that a true measure of these crimes is not available as victims often suffer in silence and the abuse goes un-reported.
- 1.7 Reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse is now a key priority nationally, regionally and locally. The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner set out his commitment to tackle domestic violence and abuse within the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2013-2018 and this is also reflected within the new Safer Leeds Strategy and Best Council Plan.
- 1.8 Whilst acknowledging that much progress has been made locally in improving and delivering service level and partnership interventions, there are still areas for improvement.
- 1.9 Safer Leeds is in the process of developing a new Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan and establishing appropriate governance and accountably arrangements to deliver the priority actions in the plan. Such actions will reflect the four work streams agreed by the Safer Leeds Executive:
  - Victims & Service Users – Customer Satisfaction & Service Improvement
  - Perpetrators – Deterrents & Sanctions
  - Public Awareness – Understanding & Signposting
  - Information Sharing & Knowledge Management
- 1.10 Significant work will be undertaken this year by Safer Leeds and its Domestic Abuse Strategic Group to map and review existing support provision across the city to identify gaps and explore opportunities to improve service delivery. This Scrutiny inquiry therefore aims to add value to this work by focusing more on improving the early detection and referral of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. This will involve identifying relevant key stakeholders across different sectors and exploring opportunities to ensure that they have the knowledge and capacity to detect victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse as well as the confidence to share

information to enable early intervention of appropriate support and advice services.

- 1.11 As part of this inquiry, it is also vital to gain insight into the experiences of the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse in order to understand where barriers to accessing support may still exist and areas for improvement. Linked to this, focus will also be given to how we challenge wider cultural attitudes that tolerate domestic violence and abuse and exploring opportunities for engaging communities, particularly BME communities, to be more pro-active in supporting victims.
- 1.12 Acknowledging the complexity and cross-cutting nature of this area of work, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board agreed to lead on this inquiry, with representation from the Children and Families Scrutiny Board and the Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board.

## **2.0 Scope of the inquiry**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
- The data sources currently used to measure the scale of domestic violence and abuse in Leeds and the potential use of other forms of intelligence to maximise local knowledge.
  - The key stakeholders across the different sectors that have a vital role in assisting to detect victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse and identifying potential gaps in commitment.
  - Existing funding streams available for tackling domestic violence and abuse and exploring potential opportunities for securing additional resources.
  - Gaining an insight into the experiences of the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse to understand where potential barriers to accessing support may still exist.
  - The involvement of the health and social care sector in terms of their knowledge and capacity to detect victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse as well as the capacity and confidence to share information to enable early intervention of appropriate support and advice services.
  - Existing provision in terms of raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse amongst young people and facilitating referral to appropriate support and advice services (for both victims and perpetrators).
  - The role of the Council and Trade Unions in raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse amongst employers across the city (including Council staff)
  - How the Council and partners are challenging wider cultural attitudes that tolerate domestic violence and abuse and exploring

opportunities for engaging communities, particularly BME communities, to be more pro-active in supporting victims.

- Identifying good practice models in other areas.

### **3.0 Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success**

- 3.1 The decision to undertake this Inquiry has been based on the need to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse as a key priority for the city.
- 3.2 It is also important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious and others may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 3.3 In conducting the Inquiry the Board wishes to add value to the work already being undertaken by Safer Leeds in achieving the priority actions set out within its Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan. However, particular focus is given to improving the early detection and referral of victims and perpetrators of Domestic violence and abuse by ensuring that relevant key stakeholders have the knowledge and capacity to detect victims and perpetrators as well as the confidence to share information to enable early intervention of appropriate support and advice.

### **4.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member**

- 4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

### **5.0 Timetable for the inquiry**

- 5.1 The Inquiry will take place over a number of sessions. These sessions will involve smaller working group meetings or visits with stakeholders, which will provide flexibility for the Board to gather and consider evidence.
- 5.2 The length of the Inquiry is subject to change. However it is anticipated that a final report will be produced in April 2014.

### **6.0 Submission of evidence**

#### **6.1 Session one – October 2013**

To consider evidence in relation to the following:

The data sources currently used to measure the scale of domestic violence and abuse in Leeds and the potential use of other forms of intelligence to maximise local knowledge.

An overview of the types of services that can be accessed in Leeds to tackle domestic violence and abuse.

The key stakeholders across the different sectors that have a vital role in assisting to detect victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse to identify any potential gaps in commitment.

The existing funding streams available for tackling domestic violence and abuse and exploring potential opportunities for securing additional resources.

## 6.2 **Session two – November 2013**

To consider evidence in relation to the involvement of the health and social care sector in terms of their knowledge and capacity to detect victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse as well as the capacity and confidence to share information to enable early intervention of appropriate support and advice services.

## 6.3 **Session three – November/December 2013**

To gain an insight into the experiences of the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse to understand where potential barriers to accessing support may still exist.

## 6.4 **Session four – December 2013**

To consider evidence in relation to existing provision for raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse amongst young people and facilitating referral to appropriate support and advice services (for both victims and perpetrators).

## 6.5 **Session five – January 2014**

To consider evidence in relation to the role of the Council and Trade Unions in raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse amongst employers across the city (including Council staff).

## 6.6 **Session six – February 2014**

To consider evidence on how the Council and partners are challenging wider cultural attitudes that tolerate domestic violence and abuse and

exploring opportunities for engaging communities, particularly BME communities, to be more pro-active in supporting victims.

#### 6.7 **Session seven – March 2014**

To consider the findings and potential recommendations arising from this inquiry.

#### 6.8 **Session eight – Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

- To agree final report

#### 7.0 **Witnesses**

7.1 As domestic violence and abuse cuts across a wide range of services, there are a number of potential participants to this inquiry.

7.2 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the inquiry, however others may be identified during the course of the inquiry:

- Chair of the Safer Leeds Partnership
- Representatives from the Safer Leeds Partnership's Domestic Abuse Strategic Group
- Representation from the Leeds Children's Safeguarding Board
- Representation from the Leeds Adult Safeguarding Board
- Representatives from local GP Consortia
- Director of Public Health
- Chief Officer Human Resources
- Teacher representation
- Representation from Trade Unions
- Representation from the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse
- Representation from Housing Options Service
- Representation from the third sector and community organisations, for example, Women's Aid.
- Representation from West Yorkshire Police
- Representation from Leeds Youth Offending Service
- Representation from other local authority areas (eg. Hull/Wakefield)

#### 8.0 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

8.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

- 8.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 8.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

## **9.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements**

- 9.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 9.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.