

## ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BRIEFING

### INTRODUCTION

Within Southwark there has been a history of tackling domestic violence as part of a broader programme of activity focused on hate crime. The Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002-2005 identifies Hate Crime as one of the key priorities and has a target to reduce repeat victimisation from Domestic Violence by 5%.

The introduction of the London-wide Domestic Strategy (Mayor's Strategy 2001), the government's proposals in the consultation paper Safety and Justice (summer 2003), and taking into account the sheer volume of domestic violence incidents, there is an increasing need to separate some aspects of dealing with domestic violence from the wider hate crime agenda.

### BACKGROUND

#### Definition of Domestic Violence

*Domestic violence is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person, usually a man, over another, usually a woman, within the context of an intimate relationship. It can be manifested in a variety of ways, including but not restricted to, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and the imposition of social isolation and is most commonly a combination of them all.*  
(GLA/ALG London Domestic Violence Strategy Nov 2001)

#### Extent of Domestic Violence

Southwark has high levels of domestic violence compared to other London boroughs. In the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2003, Southwark Police flagged 3165 incidents as domestic violence a reduction since the previous year of 1430. The high levels of domestic violence in Southwark contribute to overall crime rates. In the last financial year there were over 45,000 incidents of crime reported to the police, the total number reported as a domestic incidents, represents about 7% of the total compared with 10% in the previous year. Repeat victimisation levels cannot satisfactorily be determined from the police data. However research by Goldsmith University for the Southwark Campaign Against Hate Crime suggests that on average between 15-20% are repeat victims.

So far in this current year the downward trend continues as compared with the same period (April –August) in the previous two financial years. However there are still high levels of under-reporting and the true level of domestic violence is much higher. The accepted baseline is that:

- one in four women will experience at least one incident of domestic assault and/or threats of domestic abuse from a partner or ex-partner at some point in their lives.
- The British Crime Survey (BCS) found that nearly 6% (one in 17) of women would experience an incident during the last twelve months. Surveys in inner London increase this figure to one in ten.
- An average of two women per week are killed by a male partner or former partner
- Nearly half of all female murder victims are killed by a partner or ex-partner, compared with men – 8% in a domestic context (note some of these may be in self-defence following a history of domestic abuse).
- People in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) communities experience domestic violence in a similar proportion to the rest of the population (one in four)<sup>1</sup>

#### The Impact of Domestic Violence<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Safety and Justice, HMSO, June 2003

<sup>2</sup> Source Safety and Justice, *ibid*

Domestic violence has quite a wide ranging impact on victims of domestic violence and their children. Domestic violence:

- causes lasting damage to the victim's physical and mental health;
- accounts for about 16% of homelessness acceptances every year.
- Growing up in a household with domestic violence can have a negative impact on among other things, school attainment, and the likelihood of school exclusion.

## **GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Safety and Justice, was sent out for consultation between June and September this year. It sets out the Government's proposals for Domestic Violence issues that will be included in the new Domestic Violence Bill (to be announced in the Queens Speech)

The Government's strategy for tackling domestic violence is based on three elements:

1. Prevention – working to prevent it happening in the first place and working with victims and offenders to prevent it recurring through:
  - Changing public attitudes, general public education, tackling risk factors
  - Providing help for victims as early as possible to prevent violence recurring
  - Providing advice and information to victims on how to get access to support services and legal protection
  - Preventing offender re-offending
2. Protection and Justice – increased legal protection for victims and their families by:
  - Ensuring an effective police response when victims report Domestic Violence
  - Improving the prosecution of domestic violence cases and making sure that sentences reflect the crime
  - Ensuring that victims are not deterred by the way they will be treated in the justice process
  - Making sure that the civil and criminal law offers the maximum protection to all victims to stop the violence recurring
  - Improving the way the law on homicide works on domestic violence cases
  - Making sure that child contact arrangements in domestic violence cases guarantee the safety of all parties
3. Support for victims to re-build their lives.
  - Increasing the full range of accommodation options
  - Helping victims who have ended or left a violent relationship to rebuild their lives
  - Giving support to children and young people affected by domestic violence

The response to the paper was co-ordinated through the Domestic Violence Forum and included input from council departments, PCT, voluntary organisations and Crown Prosecution Service.

It is likely that CDRPs will be tasked with leading on Domestic Violence by developing local strategies to tackle Domestic Violence through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies. The £14m (over three years) that was announced by David Blunkett earlier this year will go to CDRPs to support their work on Domestic Violence Issues.

## **LONDON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGY**

Published in 2001 the London Strategy sets out the vision for effectively addressing the issue of Domestic Violence. The work programme focuses on achieving four key aims:

- Increasing safe choices for women and children experiencing domestic violence so that they might plan safer futures without compromising their quality of life.
- Holding individual abuser accountable for their behaviour in such a way that not only acts as a future deterrent for them, but also as a deterrent to potential abusers
- Actions, which undermine social tolerance/approval of domestic violence or actions, which challenge inaction by either individuals or organisations. This includes exposing the many stereotypes and myths so that assessments are accurate
- Providing children and young people with the necessary knowledge and skills required to build relationships based on respect and mutual understanding, with shared power and a commitment to non-violence.

The strategy goes on to recommend minimum standards for agencies at local, regional and national levels. The local minimum standards are reflected in those agreed by the Association of London Government (ALG). Progress across London is monitored through the Domestic Violence Co-ordinators group.

We are currently carrying out an audit of the current position across the Council against those minimum standards and the Southwark Domestic Violence Strategy will be modelled along the lines of the London Strategy. This will be done in consultation with the Domestic Violence Forum

## **TACKLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SOUTHWARK**

Cutting crime and the fear of crime is one of the Council's top priorities.

As mentioned above Domestic Violence work is part of a wider hate crime agenda. Southwark operates a multi-agency approach through:

- The Safer Southwark Partnership (CDRP) – Hate Crime is one of the five key priorities for the partnership with a specific objective to reduce repeat victimisation by 5%
- The Campaign Against Hate Crime<sup>3</sup>, A key objective of this programme is to ensure much better co-ordination of services and improve services; a significant gap locally is services that work with perpetrators and potential perpetrators.

A Programme Manager and Community Safety Officer support the work through the Community Safety Division.

- The Domestic Violence Forum is a network of over 100 organisations in Southwark that deal directly and indirectly with Domestic Violence. It meets bi-monthly and until recently was felt by members to be ineffective. In April this year the Campaign Against Hate Crime funded a development worker for a year that is supporting the forum to review its membership and Terms of Reference. The main outcome will be recommendations for the best model for a Southwark Domestic Violence Forum. A development worker has meant the Forum has been able to respond to the Safety and Justice Paper and the Homelessness Review/ Strategy that was developed by Southwark Housing.

There are currently no formal links between the partnerships.

One of the main recommendations of the London Strategy was to employ a local Domestic Violence Co-ordinator. The Campaign Against Hate Crime Programme Manager covers this role at present. It is envisaged that a co-ordinator will be recruited toward the end of this financial year. The Safety and Justice paper indicates that the Co-ordinator will need to be linked to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

## **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY** (taken from report to Executive 7/10/03 full report in appendix)

The terms of reference for the Best Value Review of Community Safety focused on:

- a) a strategic look at how to improve the work of the SSP in achieving and delivering the strategic outcomes and actions provided in the Crime and Disorder Strategy.
- b) A specific focus on how the Council and its partners manage and deliver on the issues of:
  - Hate Crime
  - Anti-social Behaviour
  - Serious and Violent Crime
  - Drug related crime
  - Fear of crime associated with these areas

The Best Value process also included a review of the role of the Community Safety Unit

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<sup>3</sup> a Single Regeneration Budget programme funded by the London Development Agency that aims to support and develop the community-based response to dealing with Hate Crime.

## **Key Findings – Hate Crime**

### Strategic Issues

- There is currently no hate crime strategy to drive the work.
- There is a lack of clarity around the definition of the work and the responsibilities for key stake holders, particularly the voluntary sector
- The action plan was viewed by members of the sub group as unrealistic with unattainable targets

### Collection and Analysis of Hate Crime Data

- There is no coherent picture of the nature of hate crime based on multi-agency data recording and no system in place to properly collect, analyse and disseminate existing data. This means there is no solid basis for the allocation of resources and addressing priorities.
- There is no system in place to collect and monitor data on hate crime from agencies other than the police.

### Service Delivery Issues

- There is differential treatment of hate crime victims; access to service will vary depending on the point of reporting and type of hate crime
- There is a lack of capacity within Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual groups to lead on key projects.
- There is a lack of initiatives addressing the attitudes of potential and actual perpetrators
- There are numerous voluntary sector groups tackling aspects of hate crime. The CDRP needs to be clear about what services these groups provide and identify boundaries and responsibilities for key hate crime projects. The voluntary sector involvement has so far been limited to fragmented projects

### Hate Crime Sub Group

There is no overall strategy and policy priorities to focus activities. There is also weak engagement from some stakeholders and poor levels of communication between key agencies. The lack of a strategy means:

- Communication is ineffective
- There is no identification of responsibility
- There are no systems of monitoring and accountability
- There are no protocols for the inclusion of external bodies

### **Action (relevant to Domestic Violence)**

1. A detailed action plan has been written up into a work plan for the Hate Crime sub- group. Key points include:
  - Produce a hate crime strategy, agreed by all key partners, by December 2003, including specific strategies for the three areas of hate crime.
  - Agree a Public Service Agreement for hate crime by 2006.
  - Produce a map of activity around hate crime by summer 2003 including a mapping exercise to identify perpetrator projects across Southwark and a needs analysis for perpetrators to identify gaps in provision.
2. Improve the effectiveness of the Hate Crime sub-group through implementing the actions from the Partnership Breakthrough session. The Sub group is seeking a chair from the PCT to better engage the Health sector, however the Head of Social Inclusion is chairing the sub group in the interim. The sub group will also need to consider the way it organises itself to take on board the increased profile of Domestic Violence issues. The Hate Crime Sub group is due to meet next in mid November.
3. Improve the capacity and engagement of the voluntary sector.

- Mainstream the work of the Campaign Against Hate Crime
- Support development of Domestic Violence forum.
- Raise profile and awareness of hate crime issues within community and key agencies and ensure Hate Hurts branding is used by all agencies.
- Implement rolling hate crime training plan.

4. Increase support to victims by tackling inconsistencies in victim support through the Equality Impact assessment. Raise the profile of male and same sex domestic violence victims.

## **SOUTHWARK'S SERVICE PROVISION**

There are many extremely valuable support projects for victims of domestic violence in Southwark.

Appended are two tables that outline the current resources going into domestic violence work in Southwark (core provision)

### **Cross Cutting Initiatives**

The projects below cover all three areas of hate crime and are aimed at increasing awareness, better coordination and increasing the quality of evidence presented to the Crown Prosecution Service.

- Hate Hurts – is the slogan being used in Southwark to raise awareness of Hate Crime across the borough. The Hate Hurts brand was launched at the Tate Modern in April this year. The first of the poster campaigns is due to begin in mid November. The aim at this stage is to raise general awareness of Hate Crime and its impact on victims. The publicity campaign supports the Safer Southwark Partnership's Communications Plan.
- Assisted Reporting - An Assisted Reporting Initiative, developed by the Police and the Anti-Homophobic Forum, is being rolled out across the borough to help support victims of Hate Crime to report their experiences in the community. This can then be passed on to the Police in order for them to pursue the prosecution of perpetrators of Hate Crime. In Organisations that are based in the community are trained on the correct use of the forms and can then become Assisted Reporting sites. By December 2003 we will have around 30.
- Hate Crime Training Programme – a multi agency training programme that is aimed at increasing organisations' capacity to deal with Hate Crime. The Assisted Reporting training is included in this programme and includes training on the use of ICEFLO (Immediate Capture of Evidence by Front Line Officers) cameras and a section by the CPS and Witness Service. A training and information officer will recruited to implement the training programme
- Data Collection and Case Management – Sentinel system is an information and intelligence gathering and dissemination system to support community safety and crime reduction work at the neighbourhood level. Some specific activity areas to which the system relates would include environmental crime, anti-social behaviour and hate crime. The system will be piloted before the end of this year.

### **Dedicated Services**

- **Police Community Safety Unit**, based at Walworth Police Station, one of the largest in London provides specialist support to victims of hate crime seven days a week between 8am and 8pm. The CSU is a dedicated investigation unit with police officers especially trained in victim care. The unit includes male and female officers and adopts a victim-orientated approach, with the wishes of the victim a priority throughout the investigation. The CSU has recently adopted a victim risk assessment model, which in conjunction with Southwark Housing acts as an assessment tool for access to emergency accommodation.
- The CSU is also piloting a new risk assessment model for the Metropolitan Police Service

- **Victim Support Southwark**, specialist staff and dedicated team of volunteers to follow up on all domestic violence referrals from the police, this is about 1500 per month. Victim Support provides a range of support the minimum being leaflets/information through to in depth casework support and advocacy.
- **Bede House Domestic Violence Project**, service provision to the Bermondsey, Rotherhithe area of the borough and outreach service to East Peckham Sure Start
- **Southwark Women's Aid** has 24 units for women and up to 35 children. (This is below the recommended level and additional refuge space is a priority within the Supporting People Strategy). SWA is currently merging with Refuge. A floating support scheme has been developed with Southwark Housing to provide short-term support women being re-housed because of domestic violence.

Gaps in service provision include:

- A lack of services for women without recourse to public funds
- Services that support same sex domestic violence. Apart from the Broken Rainbow Forum (a national forum that provides a helpline) there is no dedicated service provision - Earlier this year Southwark Council agreed a motion to give same sex domestic violence equal attention.
- There is a lack of services that are aimed at perpetrator and potential perpetrators

These areas will be addressed in the local Domestic Violence Strategy.

## SUMMARY

There is a lot of activity in Southwark that is aimed at supporting victims of Domestic Violence but there are a number of gaps too.

Although the number of reported incidents of Domestic Violence appear to be coming down in Southwark, national baseline data indicates that there are high levels of under-reporting. There are a number of initiatives underway aimed at encouraging reporting of all types of hate crime, which should result in an increase in the short term. The Government's three-pronged approach; prevention, protection and justice and support for victims, will take a victim-centred approach that ensures that when a Domestic Violence incidence is reported the needs of victims and their families are not comprised by the criminal justice process.

The Community Safety Division is in the process of auditing the Council's progress against the minimum standards recommended in the London Strategy. The findings will form the basis of a local domestic Violence strategy, which will be developed in collaboration with the Hate Crime Sub Group and the Domestic Violence Forum.

Following the Best Value Review the Community Safety Division is in the process of moving forward the main recommendations that were agreed by the Executive in October. For Hate Crime this will mean ensuring the sub group is:

- clear about its roles and responsibilities;
- adequately supported and resourced to drive the Hate Crime Agenda in Southwark.

## Appendices

1. Funding available 2003/4 for borough domestic violence posts e.g. co-ordinator's				
Title of post	Where the post is located	Source/s of funding for post	Amount received source/s of funding	Length of funding
No dedicated post: Programme Manager	Strategic Services	Mainstream	24,000	On-going
		SRB Match funding	12,000	Mar 04 then mainstreamed
Hate Crime officer x 1 Appx 20%		Mainstream	7000	Ongoing

Funding Available for Domestic Violence Services		Financial Year 2003-2004
Name of organisation	Funding source	Amount
Victim Support DV post	Lottery	27808
Bede House DV Support and Education Project	Sure Start	35,908
Bede House Hate Crime Project (DV and Race Crime)	Council grant aid	37735
Southwark Womens Aid	Supporting People	378739
Social Services/Victim Support	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund/Social Services	111400
Evidence Gathering	Campaign Against Hate Crime	7728
DV Forum Development	Camapign Against Hate Crime	43992
DV Community Alarm	Campaign Against Hate Crime	5500
Alcohol and Domestic Violence Project	Home Office Partnership Development Fund (PDF)	10000
<b>Total</b>		<b>658810</b>