

CROYDON SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD (SNB)

NOTES OF THE 18 JANUARY 2017 MEETING

Marion Burchell	IAG
David Palmer	Aurora LGBT Police Consultative Group
Councillor Hamida Ali	Croydon Council
Councillor Steve O'Connell	Croydon Council and GLA
Ashtaq Arain	Faiths Together in Croydon
Jay Patel	ARCC
Jean Pikett	CDF
Yvonne Traynor	RASASC Rape Crisis
Brian Udell	Croydon Neighbourhood Watch
Paula Doherty	Croydon Council
Andi Opie	Director of Safety
Chief Supt. Jeff Boothe	Croydon Police
Gary Castle	Met Police
Ilona Kytomaa	SNB administrator

Also in attendance:

Nicola and Julie Hughes (the Lily Trust), Graham Lyon (The Exchange), Rosa Latham (Croydon College), Kirsty Pearce (New Addington Pathfinders), Kesi Dos Santos and Selbira John (Seven Pillars), Shaquir Gibson (Capel Manor), Karen Stott (Off the Record), Lou Moultrie (Freedom Together), Jacquie Duffus (Croydon Council), Angela Benarie and Sharon Seaborne (Croydon Drop-In),

1 Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed all present.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were given by. Cllr David Wood, Tina Salter (North Neighbourhood Panel) and Chuks Etuka (Victim Support).

3 Minutes of the AGM held on 21 September 2016

The minutes were approved by all present.

4 Focus on Domestic Abuse

The Chair asked all present to get into groups and share their experiences of dealing with Domestic Abuse (D.A.) and what measures they felt should be explored or implemented to tackle D.A.

The points put forward by four groups are set out in Appendix 1, with responses provided by Paula Doherty (Early Intervention and Family Support).

After group discussions, a presentation was given by A/DI Gary Castle on the work of Croydon Police to tackle D.A. He emphasized from the beginning the importance of partnership work with Croydon's FJC and MARAC to support the victim(s)' and apprehend perpetrators. A/DI Gary Castle highlighted the fact that Croydon was leading the way with a high sanction detection rate, which currently stood at 40%, in contrast with the capital's second best performing borough, Lambeth, with a sanction detection rate of 35.70% and a lower case load.

A/DI Gary Castle explained that the police were moving towards carrying out victimless prosecutions which do not require the participation of those who have been harmed, who are often too weak to engage with a court case which makes them relive the horror of their experiences. He outlined the work of the community safety unit in dealing with D.A. It comprises four working teams and one High Risk team, with each team providing 24/7 coverage 365 days a year. While the High Risk Team proactively responds to high risk cases and works closely with the FJC, all five teams work together to provide a flexible response to incidents in the borough.

A/DI Gary Castle gave an overview of the training given to police officers on how to tackle D.A. It was observed that this training as very good practice and was due to be rolled out nationwide.

A/DI Gary Castle highlighted the use of the 124D form by police officers to record details of D.A. incidents. The form includes a body map on which the officer could note details of injuries sustained by the victim(s). It also contains contact numbers of agencies which can provide support to victims.

Information was provided on Croydon-specific measures to tackle D.A. which include:

- Particular attention to high risk days such as sporting tournaments (most recently Euro 2016) where the mixture of heavy drinking and poor sporting results can in many cases result in men taking out their frustration on their partners. At such times, police work particularly closely with licensing authorities and pubs to minimize the likelihood of excessive drinking and alcohol fuelled violence.
- The use of body worn video (BWV), which can provide useful evidence in support of prosecutions as situations on arrival at the scene are captured on camera. It was observed that the use of BWV could also have a powerful impact on perpetrators and could be used by the Crown Prosecution Service and played in court.
- The support of dedicated Independent domestic Violence Advisors, one of whom is embedded in the CSU team at the Windmill Road police station. It was stressed that supporting and encouraging a victim from very early on significantly increases the likelihood of a successful prosecution.
- Joint police and FJC training to be made available to all partners

The police highlighted an initiative developed by the Sapphire Team, which investigates rapes and other serious sexual violence, to launch a website,

www.mydecision.co.uk. This website aims to help D.A. victims to decide what action to take, e.g. whether to take up counselling, go to a women's haven, or self-refer to relevant services. The website also contains information on a wide range of services available to victims of D.A. It was observed that a list of contact details should be clear and easy to use for it to fulfill its purpose. If the perpetrator arrives while the D.A. victim is searching on this website, pressing Escape will delete the history of viewing this website on the device used. This is to be rolled out in Croydon then nationwide.

Chf Supt Jeff Booth, Croydon's new Borough Commander, stated that he held daily PACE meetings to review the handing of all offences committed in the previous 24 hours, with a particular focus on D.A. offences. He also highlighted the new police and crime plan, which was currently under consultation. He explained that D.A. was a particularly high priority within this plan. A particular focus is given to tackling vulnerability, with provision for a special department to address risks faced by families as a whole.

The police was asked whether evidence drawn from BWV footage might be enough to build a case for prosecution if a victim did not feel confident enough to prosecute the perpetrator themselves. The Borough Commander answered that such footage could be used to support a case but would not in all probability stand on its own. He added that even if a victim was not ready to prosecute, the police could still use her words and evidence presented by her to build an "unsupported" case with the CPS.

It was pointed out that some victims of D.A. could not afford to take a perpetrator to court. Council officers stated that in some cases, the council paid to obtain a non-molestation order, as had happened to an elderly lady. This success changed her life.

Officers were asked whether all necessary partners were currently engaged in working together to tackle D.A. in Croydon. The Borough Commander undertook to investigate this further. He added that partnership structures varied from borough to borough.

The importance of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) was highlighted. Officers agreed that they played a critical role in supporting victims through prosecutions of perpetrators. It was pointed out that there were IDVAs based in Croydon University Hospital, the Windmill Road police station and the FJC.

Paula Doherty (Early Intervention and Family Support), gave a presentation on the council's work to tackle D.A. She explained that it was based on the following key elements:

- Prevention through education
- Provision of services to tackle D.A.
- Partnership work – it was acknowledged that Croydon was doing particularly well in this regard
- Dealing with Perpetrators – Paula Doherty conceded, however, that there was a lack of empirical evidence that perpetrator programmes had any significant impact or sustained outcomes

Paula Doherty highlighted the rise in referrals of D.A. cases to the FJC, from 1822 (April – December 2015) to 1872 (April – December 2016), and in referrals to the MARAC, from 326 (April – December 2015) to 402 (April – December 2016).

Asked about provision to tackle the impact of D.A. on children, Paula Doherty stated that 80% of Croydon's schools now had a named officer responsible for dealing with

the impact of D.A., making it much easier for all relevant agencies to liaise smoothly and swiftly. It was also noted that since 2015, OFSTED inspections had included an assessment of schools' effectiveness at addressing the impact of D.A. among their pupils.

Paula Doherty explained that community support officers were being trained to provide support to very isolated victims. In addition, she highlighted the effectiveness of the MARAC in obtaining effective outcomes for victims of D.A., such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

The role of the community in challenging D.A. was raised. Officers pointed to the recently conducted white ribbon campaign to raise awareness of the unacceptability of such offences. Further initiatives are being planned to raise awareness of D.A. among local residents, including joint work with local hairdressers and barbers. It is hoped that this approach may help to create entry points into communities where D.A. is going unchallenged.

Officers were thanked for their presentations and contributions to discussions

APPENDIX 1:

Transcript of notes drawn up at each of four table with responses from Paula Doherty (Early Intervention and Family Support).

GROUP 1

Key issues

- Moving from Borough to Borough for services, this can be a challenge as often people fleeing have to leave all they know behind, their communities, families, homes, belongings, we should never underestimate the impact this has.
- Clients get lost in the system
 - Disengaged
 - Less links to services if no children, there are some issues where an individual may not for instance reach the priority housing threshold, we have to think creatively to help people find solutions where there are additional barriers.
- Enforcement orders on perpetrators, we active encourage this form of action, they are at times hard to enforce and never assure absolute safety, so can be mistrusted or considered ineffective, we work hard with enforcement partners to help these be as effective as possible
- Women are blamed all the time, this again is about working across communities and challenging the social norms that exist
- Focus is on the victim rather than perpetrator, this is an unfortunate truth, this is a crime where we often hold the victim responsible. We encourage professionals and family/friends to use non-judgmental language, avoid using phrases such as uncooperative, collusive and think of victims as often being emotionally paralysed.
- Increase in young generation we are bidding for a whole schools approach as we recognise that to really prevent DASV we need to concentrate on young people
- Education and awareness
 - Translation and interpreter service, we have good access to interpreting services
 - knowledge of English, this is an issue for people especially in navigating services to access support
 - Reluctance to talk to ethnic minorities, we operate in a way that means we have multiple access points to reduce this likelihood, community advisors are a good example

Solutions

- Education and awareness, we are looking for funding to support this area of work
 - Schools (mandatory) although PSHE is mandatory we cannot influence the content, although this is now an area that Ofsted look at, and it's in the 2015 Ofsted framework

- Colleges we are working with Croydon College to develop champions who can lead on this area within the college in terms of peer support.
- Set up a forum for survivors / workers for their views, I think we can do more here, I have asked the DASV Coordinator to re-visit this
- Best practice re social workers working with DV families: ensure good practice is highlighted , we have an ongoing training programme for Social Workers, we also have a specialist based within social care

GROUP 2

Key issues

- Fear of reporting to the police, we have an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate based within the Police station to build confidence and increase the safety of vulnerable people
- Fear of reporting repercussions, no guaranteed safety previously answered
- Lack of confidence across the CJS, this is subject to ongoing dialogue, and is an area of challenge
- Breakdown of relationships between agencies e.g. police and social services and within organisations
- Inconsistent attitudes and practice in response to incidents, an extensive training programme is in place to address this
- Impact of existing mistrust of the police and differential experience of survivors from different backgrounds, we could address this by joining up the voice of victims and Police through a user form, I will look at this
- Need more awareness of what constitutes DV, we will continue to raise awareness
- Lack of advice from the grassroots and upwards, hopefully the community champions approach will remedy this
- Insufficient education in schools about safety e.g. healthy relationships previously answered

Solutions

- Age appropriate Education on healthy relationships from primary schools upwards to 18+ previously answered
- Importance of follow-up work to keep people safe, we are looking to develop a volunteers programme to support this
- Lack of solutions e.g. housing options, suitable housing is always a challenge as is victims being displaced, we endeavour to do our best
- Survivor engagement and capturing their experiences, previously answered

GROUP 3

Key issues

- DV by Young People to parents ongoing marketing of the signs of abuse is in place
- Young people observing DV
- Sibling on sibling DV
- Forms of control
 - Woman on man
 - man on woman
- Cultural nuances
- Cross-over to safeguarding, we have a specialist domestic abuse social worker based within Social Care to assist with this issue
- Forced marriage, previously answered
- Different types of DV: physical, emotional, financial previously answered
- Grooming
- Separation from family and friends to keep safe previously answered
- DV and the elderly, disabled and LGBT, we need to do more as a partnership to raise the profile for groups who have protected characteristics

Solutions

- FJC
- Multi-agency work, this is an area of strength, but as ever can always be improved
- Community volunteering, we hope to expand the champions programme and develop a volunteers programme
- Early intervention previously answered,
- Before, during, after
- Service visibility
- multi-agency training for professionals, this is well established, but I will look at how it is advertised
- Legal support, we have free legal advice at the FJC, but legal aid limits what we can do, we have developed some expertise internally

GROUP 4

What do we know?

- Aggression towards another person, family, partner
- Physical, mental, emotional, financial, putting someone down
- Isolation of victim
- Can happen to anyone
- Hidden within communities

- Cultural issues

Solutions

- Who are the agents of change – community champions? [previously answered](#)
- How do we challenge the “norm” within some communities? [previously answered](#)
- What are the signs and how to recognise them? [DASV toolkit has been developed](#)
- Role of community leaders, [we have a community champions programme , but will look at prioritising upscaling this](#)
- Publicity in GP surgeries, hospitals, etc. [we have GP leads but we will take forward having a targeted marketing programme in GP’s surgeries](#)
- Reassurance is key, [previously answered](#)
- Sustained support after key risk has been addressed, [previously answered](#)