

# **Social Justice and Regeneration Committee**

**SJR(2)-05-07(p.2)**

**Date: Thursday 22 March 2007**

**Time: 9.30am-12.30pm**

**Venue: Senedd, Cardiff Bay**

## **Domestic Abuse Strategy - Progress on Delivery**

### **Purpose**

To provide the Committee with an update of progress with the delivery of the Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy – "Tackling Domestic Abuse: The All Wales National Strategy".

### **Background**

In March 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government launched the Strategy. It provides an important framework for the development of local action to combat domestic abuse and emphasises the need for joint agency working where information and best practices are shared. The Assembly Working Group on Domestic Abuse monitors the delivery of the Strategy. There is a clear need that all agencies dealing with domestic abuse work together to pool their expertise. Community Safety Partnerships have been made responsible for steering this collaboration.

### **Update on progress with Assembly initiatives**

The Strategy aims to facilitate the development and implementation of a 'joined-up' problem-solving approach, which addresses domestic abuse holistically – providing protection for individuals who suffer domestic abuse and simultaneously addressing the causes of domestic abuse. Over the past year the Committee has been regularly provided with a range of information that provides a clear indication that the delivery of the Strategy is making a difference across Wales. The Committee's attention has been drawn to the increasing levels of police incidents, increasing rates of calls to the National Helpline and increasing successful outcomes in court cases. To drive forward this delivery, during 2006-07, the Assembly Government has continued to develop and introduce new initiatives:

A full list of all projects in Wales currently supported has been previously supplied to the Committee. Without a doubt the most important development, at the local level, in 2006 was the news that from April 2006 every Community Safety Partnership, CSP, in Wales was to receive recurring funding for a domestic abuse co-ordinator. The CSPs have acknowledged how pleased they were with this essential development. Support for the All Wales network of domestic abuse co-ordinators is also on going and two seminars are held each year.

The All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group has met 4 times in 2006/07. This Group is comprised of representatives from relevant Assembly Divisions and from key outside organisations who come into contact with victims of domestic abuse on a day-to-day basis. The remit of the group is to monitor and evaluate progress with the Strategy, to provide advice to the Welsh Assembly Government and to share established good practice.

The new 24-hour National Helpline, based in Pen-y-Groes in North Wales, was formally launched in January 2007 and in that month alone 2031 calls were received.

The evaluation of Project Dyn, by Cardiff University, was completed in December 2006. This project provides a safety, planning and advocacy service for gay, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual men who have experienced domestic abuse.

Two training events for CSPs were held in South and North Wales on 28 November 2006 and 18 January 2007. The events focussed on delivery of the Strategy and what can be done to deal with sexual abuse. To assist victims of sexual abuse new funding was announced in January 2007 for projects in Caernarfon, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Colwyn Bay and Swansea.

In 2006 the Ante Natal Care Pathway continued to be rolled out across Wales. Funding has been provided to extend the Pathway into Accident and Emergency Services. A nurse secondee was appointed on 1 February 2007 to take this work forward.

The Domestic Abuse Working Group suggested that more needs to be done in relation to the issue of forced marriage. Taking account of this a secondee, Inspector Lian Penhale from South Wales Police, was appointed in February 2007. The focus of the work here will be mapping the extent of the problem in Wales, examining existing Whitehall guidance to see what needs to be published in Wales and developing an action plan for the future. This work is expected to take 9 months to complete.

Supporting people domestic abuse guidance was issued for consultation in July 2006. It is expected that the final guidance will be published on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

One of the Strategy's aims is to encourage greater awareness of domestic abuse issues amongst children and young people. To assist with this the All Wales Schools Programme now includes a module on domestic abuse. This programme is now operating in 97% of primary and secondary schools in Wales.

To ensure that domestic abuse projects are delivering against the aims of the Strategy and providing value for money a rolling evaluation programme is taking place. The Committee has already seen the report on the evaluation of the National Helpline. Projects currently being evaluated include the Ante Natal Care Pathway, Safer Merthyr Tydfil Project and the Blaenau Gwent Domestic Abuse Service. Later in 2007 the central service provided by Welsh Women's Aid will be evaluated.

## **Other Developments**

The Assembly Government has been working with the Home Office to encourage the development in

Wales of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, SDVCs, and Sexual Assault Referral Centres, SARCs. In 2006 new Courts were announced for Bridgend, Haverfordwest, Swansea and Wrexham. New SARCs are being established in Cardiff and Pembroke. These will build on the good work already going on in the SARCs operating in Gwent and Colwyn Bay. For the SARCs the plan is that by April 2007 there will be at least one operating in every police force area in Wales. In addition to this in December 2006 the Home Office Crime Director announced ?273k of funding to support the following domestic abuse projects:

Conwy/Denbighshire: Safer Home Project

Pan Gwent: Safer Relationship Project

Wrexham: Integrated Care Pathway Project

Welsh DA Co-ordinators: All Wales Gynaecology project

Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum: Move to change Project

New Pathways: Swansea SARC

## **Future Plans**

To increase the level of support for the delivery of the Strategy additional Assembly funding of ? 1.5m per annum is being made available from April 2007. It is envisaged that this funding will be used to develop some specialist refuge provision especially for women fleeing prostitution including trafficked women. Other gaps in service likely to be supported include a BME outreach service in North Wales, more support for children in refuges, services for men and more non-statutory perpetrator programmes. The Committee will be kept informed about these developments.

## **Recommendation**

Members are invited to note this paper

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