



REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

FINAL REPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

MAY 2011

CABINET
23 May 2011



Report of: Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the findings of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into ‘Services Available to Male Victims of Domestic Abuse’.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 At the meeting of this Forum on 8 July 2010, Members determined their work programme for the 2010/11 Municipal Year. The issue of ‘Domestic Abuse Services available to Male Victims’ was selected as the second Scrutiny topic for consideration during the current Municipal Year.

2.2 The Home Office definition of Domestic Violence is “any threatening behaviour, abuse or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality. The abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional.”

2.3 According to Home Office Statistics for 2008/09 more than one in four women (28%) and around one in six men (16%) had experienced domestic abuse (any emotional, financial or physical abuse, sexual assault or stalking by a partner or family member) since the age of 16. These figures are equivalent to an estimated 4.5 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.6 million male victims. Women were significantly more likely to tell someone about the abuse than men (81% of women compared with 59% of men), including telling the police.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to assess the availability, ease of access and effectiveness of services provided to male victims of domestic abuse in Hartlepool.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the overall aim of services provided to male victims of domestic abuse and what positive outcomes look like;
- (b) To examine how domestic abuse services for male victims are currently provided in Hartlepool, including the input of partner organisations;
- (c) To assess the effectiveness of the delivery of services provided to male victims of domestic abuse in Hartlepool in comparison to local and national baselines;
- (d) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which male domestic abuse services are provided in Hartlepool;
- (e) To explore how male domestic abuse services could be provided in the future, giving due regard to:
 - (i) Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which the service is currently provided; and
 - (ii) If / how the service could be provided at a reduced financial cost (within the resources available in the current economic climate).

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

- 5.1 The membership of the Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below/overleaf:-

Councillors Barclay, Cranney, Cook, Gibbon, James, A E Lilley, London, Rogan and Wells.

Resident Representatives:

Ted Jackson, John Maxwell and Angie Wilcox.

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- 6.1 Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from 20 January 2011 to 31 March 2011 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.
- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-
- (a) Detailed Officer presentations and reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
 - (b) Presentations and verbal evidence from representatives of Cleveland Police, Harbour, Housing Hartlepool and Victim Support;
 - (c) Written evidence received from the Probation Service, Social Services and the Youth Offending Service;
 - (d) Information from Durham County Council Scrutiny Sub-committee for Strong Healthy and Safe Communities' investigation entitled 'A Hidden Truth... A Scrutiny Report about Domestic Abuse in County Durham';
 - (e) Statistics and case studies from the Mankind Initiative;
 - (f) Details of Brighton and Hove's Citywide Strategy for Men and Boys, provided by The Men's Network;
 - (g) Case studies received from local residents.

For help and assistance with domestic abuse issues please contact:

Cleveland Police

Tel: 01642 302168
web: www.cleveland.police.uk

Safer Hartlepool Partnership

Tel: 01429 270110 (24 Hour)
web: www.saferhartlepool.co.uk

Harbour

Tel: 01429 277508 (24 Hour)
e-mail: hartlepoolrefuge@myharbour.org.uk
web: www.myharbour.org.uk

Victim Support

Tel: 01429 221920
web: www.victimsupport.org.uk

The ManKind Initiative

Tel: 01823 334244 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm & 7pm-9pm)
web: www.mankind.org.uk

The Men's Advice Line

Tel: 0808 8010327 (Mon-Fri 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm)
e-mail: info@mensadviceline.org.uk
web: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Broken Rainbow (LGBT)

Tel: 0300 9995428 (Mon & Thur 2-8pm Wed 10-5pm)
web: www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

IN AN EMERGENCY RING 999

FINDINGS

7 OVERALL AIM OF THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND WHAT POSITIVE OUTCOMES LOOK LIKE

7.1 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum gathered evidence regarding the aim of the provision of services to male victims of domestic abuse and what positive outcomes look like. Information considered by Members is as follows:-

British Crime Survey Statistics

7.2 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011 Members considered a report by The ManKind Initiative entitled 'Male Victims – Domestic and Partner Abuse Statistics'. This report utilised data from the British Crime Survey (2008/09) which is based on anonymous large scale surveys to address under reporting issues, it also details Ministry of Justice figures in relation to convictions.

7.3 The report detailed the following statistics:-

- 1 in 6 men between 16 and 59 would suffer domestic abuse in their lifetime;
- In 2008/09 31 males were murdered by a partner or ex/partner. This equates to 1 man every 12 days;
- The percentage of gay or bi-sexual men who suffer domestic abuse is 8.9% double that of heterosexual men (4.1%);
- The number of women convicted of perpetrating domestic abuse has trebled in the 5 years between 2004/5 (806 cases) and 2008/9 (2,968 cases).

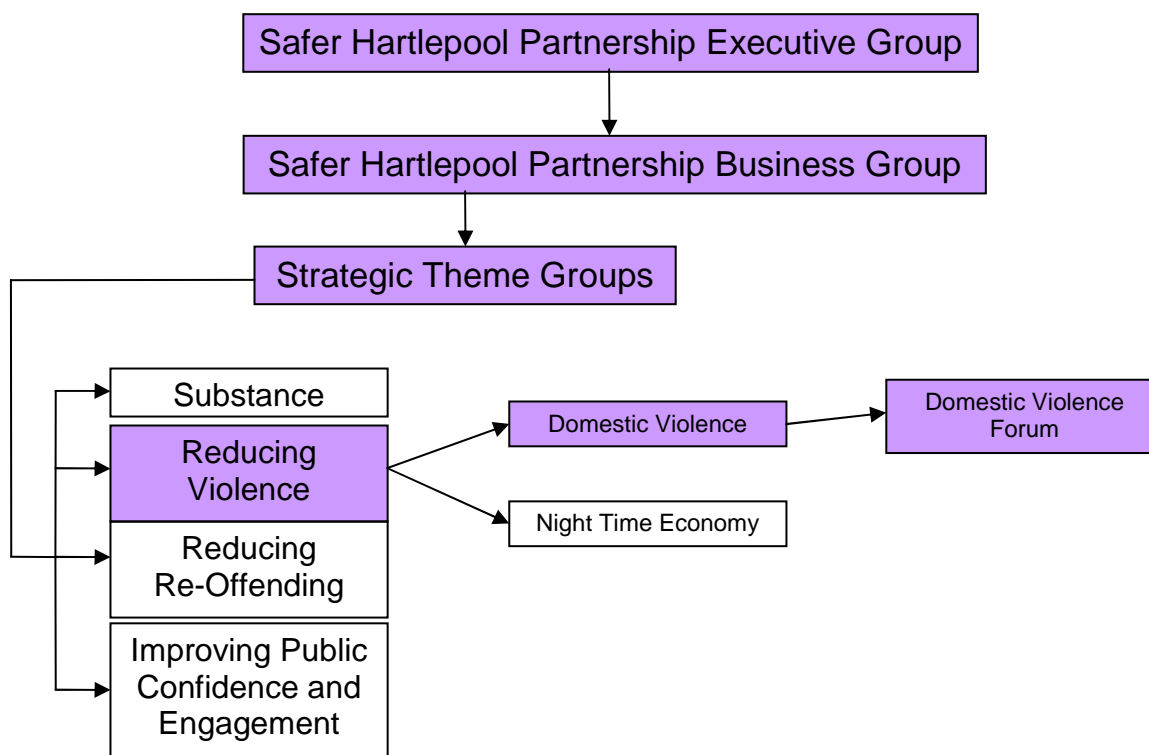
Evidence from the Community Safety Team

7.4 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum met on 3 February 2011 where Members received detailed evidence from the Community Safety Manager regarding the Safer Hartlepool Partnership, details of domestic related incidents and crimes reported to Cleveland Police, broken down by gender and age where possible. The Forum also received details of a recent mapping exercise undertaken to determine how domestic abuse services link together.

7.5 During the presentation by the Community Safety Manager, Members learned that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership has a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator shared with Stockton, plus an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. The Forum was also advised that Hartlepool has a Specialist Domestic Violence Court and that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership has strong links with Harbour (an organisation offering services addressing domestic abuse) and criminal justice agencies.

7.6 Members were advised of the partnership structure in place and that reducing violence was one of the strategic themes for the partnership. There were also strong links to the night time economy and alcohol streams.

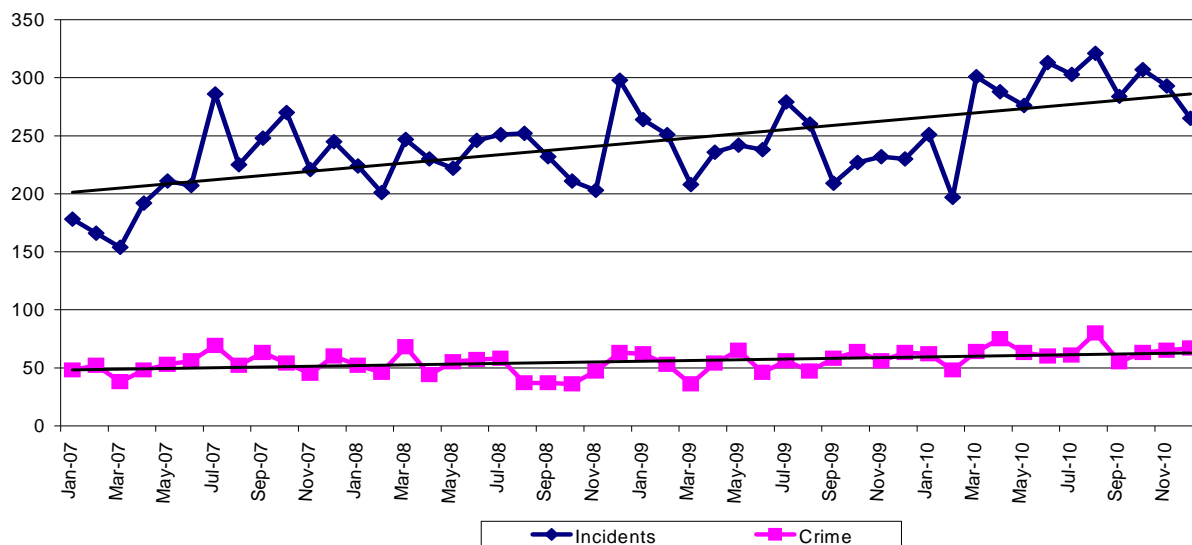
Safer Hartlepool Partnership Structure



7.7 Members learned of the numbers of domestic related incidents and crimes reported to Cleveland Police (see table 1 overleaf) and were advised that whilst the trends were increasing, that this may be due to an increased confidence in reporting such issues. Members also heard that there was a four year domestic violence strategy in place which may also have encouraged an increase in reporting.

Table 1

**DOMESTIC RELATED INCIDENTS AND CRIMES REPORTED TO CLEVELAND POLICE
IN HARTLEPOOL
JANUARY 2007 - DECEMBER 2010**

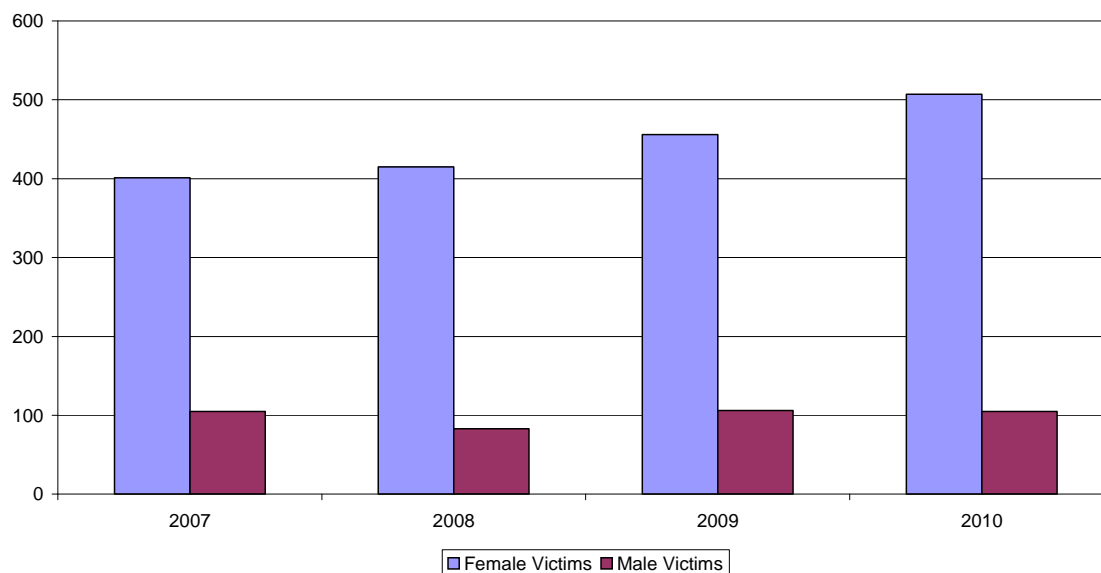


7.8 The Forum was very interested to learn of the gender split of victims of domestic related crime in Hartlepool between the periods of January 2007 and December 2010 (see table 2 overleaf). Members also noted that current incident recording mechanisms do not detail the gender of the caller, or of those involved irrespective of the incident type, e.g. anti-social behaviour incidents, domestic incidents, road traffic incidents. They learned that gender analysis of victims of domestic violence/abuse makes use of recorded crime data which provides detailed information in regard to the victim and perpetrator.

7.9 Members also noted that this data analysis excludes those offences against the state (Regina) and those domestic related crimes involving Police Officers, for example crime type assault on constable. Members also learned that in approximately 25 percent of cases an incident reported to the Police actually turns out to be a criminal offence and is therefore classified as a crime.

Table 2

GENDER OF DOMESTIC RELATED CRIME VICTIMS IN HARTLEPOOL
JANUARY 2007 - DECEMBER 2010



7.10 The Forum was informed of the victim profile in Hartlepool and noted the following:-

- Over the past four years nearly 2 in 10 victims of domestic related crime were male;
- The majority of male victims were aged between 17-24 years and 38-45 years;
- Domestic abuse is a factor in 49% of Youth Offending Service clients' lives;
- Over the last four years there have been 455 individuals subject to two or more domestic related crimes, of this total 44 (9.6%) were male.

Domestic Violence Victim Profile in Hartlepool

VICTIM GENDER	YEAR				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Female Victims	401	415	456	507	1779
Male Victims	105	83	106	105	399
Victim Total	506	498	562	612	2178
% Proportion Male Victims	21%	17%	19%	17%	18%

7.11 Members were advised by the Community Safety Manager that the proportion of male victims in Hartlepool was below the national average of 26% suggested by the British Crime Survey which includes unrecorded crimes, but expressed surprise at how high the figures for male victims in Hartlepool were. Members noted that victims still felt that there was as

stigma attached to reporting domestic abuse incidents. Members of the Forum also felt that there was likely to be under reporting in all areas, but that this could be a significant problem with male victims.

- 7.12 The Forum was interested to learn that when looking at domestic incidents as a whole in Hartlepool the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator was not always a partner or husband or wife, but could also be a sibling, parent, child or another family member (as detailed in table 3 below). Members also noted that the acquaintance category could mean ex-partners or other family members.

Table 3 - Victim/Perpetrator Relationship in Hartlepool

Relationship to Perpetrator	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total	% Total
Acquaintance	13	17	21	16	67	22%
Spouse/co-habitee	12	5	17	11	45	15%
Other family member	7	9	7	12	35	12%
Ex Partner	8	5	8	13	34	11%
Parent of offender	8	3	8	10	29	10%
Boyfriend/girlfriend	8	3	5	12	28	9%
Sibling of offender	3	5	5	8	21	7%
Child of offender	2	4	9	5	20	7%

- 7.13 Members were interested to hear that a Domestic Violence Development Group was currently meeting, chaired by the Chief Executive of Hartlepool Council and including representatives from the Council, the local Primary Care Trust, Cleveland Police, the Probation Service and Harbour. This group has mapped out service provision and potential drop out points where victims disengage from services. The group were looking at ways these drop out rates could be reduced and will also be contributing to the development of the next Safer Hartlepool Partnership Domestic Violence Strategy to run from 2011.

Positive Outcomes

- 7.14 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members were please to hear a case study from Harbour highlighting the positive outcomes that can be achieved when male victims of domestic abuse engage with the services available to them.
- 7.15 The male in question had been forced to live in a caravan in the garden of the family home, eventually he was referred to Harbour and was overcome with emotion that someone had listen to his story and had believed him. As a result of working with Harbour the man is now back in the family home and has parenting rights with his children.

8 HOW SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY PROVIDED TO MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN HARTLEPOOL

- 8.1 The Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum gathered evidence from a number of different sources in relation to the services available to male victims of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. Information considered by Members is detailed below:-

Evidence from Cleveland Police

- 8.2 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum met on 3 February 2011 and received evidence from a representative from Cleveland Police with responsibility for the North Tees Vulnerability Unit.
- 8.3 The Detective Inspector advised the Forum that in July 2009 two vulnerability units had been set up by Cleveland Police, one north and one south of the Tees. The north unit covered Hartlepool and Stockton, has 24 staff and is based at Billingham. The units remit includes issues of child and adult safeguarding, child abuse and domestic violence. Officers who serve with the unit receive training to national guidelines.
- 8.4 Members learned that in the first instance local uniformed officers respond to domestic violence calls. All domestic violence calls are treated as a high priority and must have attendance.
- 8.5 The Forum noted that Hartlepool Police received approximately 200-250 reports of domestic violence per month in Hartlepool and about 2500 calls every year, these figures include a repeat rate which can mean multiple calls to the same address. Each police response team (i.e. a shift) has a champion who is trained on domestic violence and officers are encouraged to take action to ensure both a sensitive and positive response, but they can only make an arrest when there are sufficient grounds to do so.
- 8.6 Following an incident, officers complete a G166 (Domestic Violence Report) which records all evidence gathered. Following the completion of this report a risk assessment is performed. The risk assessments are done in 'hot' time and officers spend time with victim and run through series of questions linked to a domestic abuse stalking and harassment (DASH) model.
- 8.7 Members learned that within the vulnerability unit there are 3 risk assessment and safety planning officers who work 7 days a week and risk assess all forms received in the previous 24 hrs. These officers look at records for previous attendances at the address and risk assess the incident as standard, medium or high. If the incident is assessed as high risk it is passed to the Detective Inspector and would be taken to a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) should it be felt that there was a risk of serious harm to the victim.
- 8.8 MARACs deal with the highest risk cases and the group contains representatives from the Police, Harbour, Housing, Probation, Children's

services and Health. Normally about 10 cases are discussed each meeting. In 2010 155 cases passed through the North Tees MARAC which meets every 3 weeks, of these 3 were male victims. The vast majority of victims at risk of serious harm are female, however in 2011 there have already been 2 cases involving male victims before the MARAC, both of whom have been the victim of stabbings. The MARAC has met twice in 2011.

- 8.9 Issues dealt with by the MARACs often involve chaotic families, therefore, requiring a multi-agency approach to solve numerous contributory issues, including violence, alcohol and drugs. Actions are set with regard to each case which must be completed within 2 weeks. The completion of these actions is monitored through an independent organisation sponsored by the Home Office called CAADA (Co-ordinate Action Against Domestic Abuse) and the MARAC is held accountable by CAADA.
- 8.10 The Forum heard that from an analysis of the past weeks' G166 domestic violence forms received in Hartlepool, approximately 15 percent of cases involve male victims. The Detective Inspector advised the Forum that whilst the cases include heterosexual and homosexual partner abuse, the vast majority recorded as male victims of domestic abuse were parent on child and sibling cases. Where males are recorded as the victim during an incident the biggest single defining category is over child access concerns.
- 8.11 When Police Officers attend a domestic violence incident the gender of the victim is not an issue, the officers must deal with the risk levels of the case and are sensitive to embarrassment factors that can be felt by both sexes. Record are kept of how many same sex relationship incidents there are but it is not recorded whether this is a male or female only relationship.
- 8.12 Repeat rates for domestic violence in Hartlepool are reducing; a year ago approximately 50% of domestic violence reports were to addresses which had been attended by Police Officers on one or more previous occasion, this has reduced to 23% currently. The Detective Inspector advised Members that it was unlikely repeat figures will reduce much lower than this level.
- 8.13 Members were keen to discuss the use of 'head cams' for officers attending domestic violence crime scenes, to enable greater detail of the incident to be recorded. Members were advised that head cameras were brought in but there were issues with the reliability. Support for limited funding has been agreed once the reliability issues have been overcome. The Forum was informed that at the moment rather than relying on head cams, officers take a lot of digital photographs at the scene, before the scene of crime officers attend. Officers are also trained to gain as much information and detail as possible at the initial attendance, as this is vital in bringing unsupported prosecutions against perpetrators.
- 8.14 Members were advised that the Police have no powers to breathalyse or drug test at incidents but drugs and alcohol are suspected to be a contributory factor in approximately 35 to 40 percent of cases.

Evidence from Harbour

- 8.15 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members were delighted to receive evidence from the Director of Harbour, who provided Members with an overview of the support services provided to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Members were advised that the services provided are available to both males and females. The organisation changed its name from Women's Aid to reflect that its services are not gender specific.
- 8.16 Members of the Forum learned that Harbour employed a domestic violence advocate to support victims' cases at the MARAC and the special domestic violence court in Hartlepool; this was often the first point of contact for the victim and was not gender specific.
- 8.17 The Forum was advised that in 2007 a male worker was appointed by Harbour in an attempt to encourage more male victims to come forward. The post was funded for 2 years, during which time the take up of services by male victims did not increase. An analysis of the information provided by males who did come forward pointed to shame and embarrassment as some of the reasons for not engaging with support services, additionally men did not feel that they would be believed and were often of the impression that services available were only for women.
- 8.18 Members learned that Harbour carry out a lot of work with young male victims, where the perpetrator is often their father or their mother's partner. Young men react to the abuse their mother is suffering and become subject to the violence themselves. Members acknowledged issues surrounding male victims of domestic violence could be very complex.
- 8.19 The Forum was advised that there were difficulties in retaining male victims in programmes once they had engaged, females tended to like to engage into a process and have support in a one to one or group setting, where as men were less keen to engage initially and often disengage not having completed a programme as they felt that they were 'alright now'.
- 8.20 Members were informed that there are five male refuges in the country (one of which is in Wales) and that the nearest to Hartlepool is in Yorkshire. Harbour work with male victims to provide support to find accommodation, though this is generally bed and breakfast accommodation, which can cause child access problems.
- 8.21 The Forum were pleased to note that Harbour is working with Housing Hartlepool to ensure there is as much support as possible for male victims with housing problems. The Forum was also informed that Harbour has plans in place to be able to offer accommodation to men and their children in the near future, at no extra cost. Members also noted that there was insufficient demand for a male refuge in the area so the creation of one was not financially justifiable.

Evidence from Housing Hartlepool

- 8.22 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 the Director of Housing Services at Housing Hartlepool provided members with an overview of the services Housing Hartlepool offers to its tenants who are suffering domestic violence.
- 8.23 The Forum was advised that Housing Hartlepool is part of a multi-agency response to domestic violence and its response is not gender specific, though the implications around housing can be different with male and female victims. Housing Hartlepool had not dealt with any male victims in the past year; there had been 2 cases in the previous 3 years.
- 8.24 Members heard that Housing Hartlepool recommends that tenancies are let in both parties' names as a joint tenancy, then if there are any issues with domestic violence a female can terminate her half of the agreement which effectively ends the tenancy and removes the interest of the male perpetrator. If the victim is male the issue is more complicated, the organisation would work with the male victim if he could no longer remain at the property and have a duty to find them suitable accommodation as a responsible landlord, Members noted that there was no statutory duty to do so.
- 8.25 Members learned that complexities arise when there are children at the property as the family home is seen as key to the children's welfare. Members were advised that male on male abuse such as father on son and siblings were not reported unless it was as a noise or disturbance problem.
- 8.26 Housing Hartlepool has a domestic abuse policy (see overleaf) that ensures tenants are aware of the behaviour expected of them; this also details Housing Hartlepool's response. Housing Hartlepool tenancy agreements also reiterate that 'a tenant or anyone living with them or visiting them must not inflict domestic violence, threaten violence or use mental, emotional or sexual abuse against their partner, ex-partner or any other member of the family'.

Housing Hartlepool Domestic Abuse Policy

Domestic Abuse Policy

Housing Hartlepool believes that no one should live in fear of violence from a spouse or partner, or any member of their household. Domestic violence is criminal, unacceptable and should not be tolerated. It's rarely a one-off event.

Violence often gets worse over time and may even result in death. Breaking this chain of violence matters to everyone, it doesn't just affect the people who are directly involved. Domestic violence can also affect neighbours and the wider community

Housing Hartlepool will offer help and support to any person suffering from or threatened with violence, whether this is physical, emotional or psychological.

8.27 The Forum heard that Housing Hartlepool will:-

- Treat all reports of domestic violence seriously;
- Ensure safety and privacy of victims is a top priority;
- Offer confidential advice over the telephone, at Housing Hartlepool's offices or via a home visit;
- Respond to all domestic violence incidents within 12 working hours;
- Offer an appointment if required within 24 hours of receiving the complaint;
- Provide advice and support to the victim/ witness throughout the case, during court hearings and post closure if required;
- Advise if other agencies need to be notified in order to protect others e.g. children;
- Agree actions on how to proceed with the case;
- Contact victims/ witnesses on a weekly basis to give updates of the case.
- Investigate thoroughly all reports of domestic violence;
- Carry out interviews in a sympathetic and supportive manner where confidentiality is guaranteed;
- Liaise with external agencies such as the police and domestic violence support groups if required;
- Discuss all the options available in regard to housing, obtaining legal advice, specialist support and advice about the victims safety;
- Consider additional security measures e.g. additional locks;
- Give priority to emergency repairs that are a result of domestic violence; and
- Take legal action against those who commit domestic violence.

8.28 Members were advised by the Director of Housing Hartlepool that the following measures are available as a course of action:-

Action which can be taken for victims of Domestic Abuse:

- Weekly support from tenancy relations and enforcement team (TRET) support officers;
- Referral to specialist support services such as Harbour;
- Anti Social Behaviour Injunction (ASBI) against perpetrator to prevent them from returning to property;
- Housing Advice to either remain in property or find suitable alternative accommodation;
- Target Hardening;
- Partnership working – MARAC referral for serious incidents.

Action which can be taken against those who commit domestic violence:

- Referral to Support Agencies e.g. Harbour, FIP to change behaviour;
- Warnings;
- Injunctions;
- Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO);
- Demotion of Tenancy;
- Evictions.

8.29 The Forum was advised that ASBOs and ASBIs are very effective as they are specific to the victim and the property and there is a risk of arrest attached to them.

8.30 Members learned that there were 152 referrals to Housing Hartlepool during 2010 of which 99 were referred by the Police. As mentioned under paragraph 8.23 no referrals were received relating to male victims in 2010. To date Housing Hartlepool has obtained 15 ASBIs and a number of perpetrators have served custodial sentences, the longest being 112 days. Housing Hartlepool have also delivered numerous training sessions to both Neighbourhood and Response Police departments to ensure there is a full understanding of the ASBIs and to ensure that those who breach them are brought before the courts.

Evidence from Victim Support

8.31 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011 Members were advised of the support and services offered to male victims of domestic abuse and their families by Victim Support.

8.32 The Forum was informed that Victim Support is a national charity but has local office in Hartlepool. The charity uses volunteers to engage with victims and whilst the charity do not specialise in domestic abuse, it does support people who have suffered whether directly or as a result of a family members being a victim.

- 8.33 Representatives from Victim Support advised the Forum that they found males don't always want to go to a specialist agency to help them with the abuse, as they do not recognise they are at a point where they need help. Victim Support provides the help and guidance victims often need to encourage them to engage in the services of Harbour, or to go to the Police.
- 8.34 Victim Support advised Members that, in their experience, one of the most important factors for victims is to have non judgemental, confidential support behind them. Victim Support signpost victims to agencies and supports them through the court process, acting as advocates.
- 8.35 Members of the Forum commented that there was a lack of awareness that Victim Support carried out this type of work and acknowledged that more needed to be done to provide members of the public with information on the services available to male victims of domestic abuse.
- 8.36 The Forum heard that the majority of referrals to Victim Support come from the Police, but the charity also receives 'drop ins' at it's office in Park Road and received referrals from other agencies, but acknowledged that not enough was known about the services Victim Support can provide. One of the issues that affects the work of Victim Support is that they must have permission to contact the victim and this is often not ticked on a crime report.

Evidence from the Probation Service

- 8.37 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011 Members considered evidence from the Probation Service.
- 8.38 The Forum was advised that the Probation Service supports offenders convicted of sentences greater than 12 months once released from prison on licence; it also supports offenders in the community on community sentences ordered by the court. The service works to reduce re-offending and challenge offender behaviour.
- 8.39 Members noted that Hartlepool Probation Service is not currently working with any offenders convicted of domestic abuse against men.
- 8.40 The Forum learned that prior to working with each offender an assessment process is completed, this includes questions exploring the offender's relationships. Should domestic violence issues be raised during this process (which offenders indicate may have had an impact on their own behaviour) offenders are signposted to Harbour or Hart Gables.
- 8.41 When men have been convicted of a serious domestic violence crime against women there are group programmes in place aimed at reducing the cycle of abuse e.g. the Community Domestic Violence Programme this is an accredited national programme which lasts for 26 weeks. It would not be appropriate to place a woman perpetrator or a male on male perpetrator in the same programme as males convicted of serious domestic violence

against women. The success of these programmes is monitored by re-offending rates within a 2 year period.

- 8.42 Although there are no specific accredited national programmes to deal with female and male on male perpetrators, the Probation Service would work with the individual on a one to one basis. Depending on the nature of the conviction it may be appropriate to use other offender programmes such as the CALM anger management programme.
- 8.43 Members noted that the Probation Service felt that it was likely that there is an issue around the awareness of males becoming victims of domestic violence and the Probation Service would support greater awareness raising in this area, though in the current economic climate the response to this would need to be assessed in proportion to the number of incidents.

9 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO MALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN HARTLEPOOL

- 9.1 The Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum were keen to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the delivery of services available to male victims of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. Information considered by Members is detailed below:-

Local Case Studies

- 9.2 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members considered two cases studies which had been received as a result of publicity surrounding the investigation.

Case Study 1

As a result of a press article in the Northern Echo regarding the investigation a call was received from the mother of a victim of domestic abuse. The lady in question does not have access to the internet and does not know who to approach for assistance.

Her son is married with three children under 14, two are step children from his wife's previous relationship. He is classed as the guardian of the step children.

His mother is very concerned about him and the children due to his wife's behaviour, she has encouraged him to contact a solicitor but he feels he must accept this situation as it is, for the sake of the children.

His wife is mentally and verbally abusive and violent towards her husband. She attempts to get him to hit her (which he has not done) by screaming in his face and goading him, she also monitors his phone calls.

The man in question must get up at 3 am to go to work and therefore goes to bed very early. His wife then goes out for the evening drinking and brings males home with her, often all are drunk. Her son often finds these people still at the house drunk in the morning.

The majority of the family's money is spent on the wife's drinking habit and the man's mother thinks the children are only getting a minimal amount of food.

The female threatened to leave the family home at one point but was persuaded not to by her own mother for fear of losing the house. The man does not want to leave as he fears for the children.

The lady in question would like assistance for her son and does not know who to turn to.

Case Study 2

As a result of press coverage received on the BBC Tees website a call was received from a male who would like to Forum to hear his experience.

The male was a victim of domestic abuse a number of years ago at the hand of his former partner. He suffered physical and mental abuse for approximately 6 years, which once took place in front of his children.

The male believes a friend told the Police about the abuse on his behalf, he did not approach any agencies himself and no action was taken.

Following the breakdown in his relationship the children stayed with his partner, he once encountered them in the street and his children expressed their surprise as they had been told that he was dead.

The man in question would like to thank the Forum for looking into the issue and expressed his gratitude that male victims of domestic abuse were being considered.

- 9.3 Members commented that despite the efforts of the agencies attending the meeting and the availability of services, there was still work to do to get information out to people as to who they can contact for help with domestic abuse issues.
- 9.4 Members of the Forum questioned whether there were any patterns to domestic abuse in Hartlepool and were advised by the Detective Inspector responsible for the North Tees Vulnerability Unit that whilst there were generally no patterns to domestic abuse in Hartlepool, there were peaks around certain times of the year and events, such as the recent football World Cup.

- 9.5 Members commented that previous campaign posters were generally aimed at female victims and raised concerns that this may contribute to the reluctance of male victims to report domestic abuse incidents.

2010 Campaign Poster



- 9.6 The Forum was advised by the Director of Harbour that the poster discussed (see above) was gender neutral, but it was acknowledged that this may have been too subtle.
- 9.7 Members felt that a more broad campaign could be undertaken at a local level to encourage and promote the services available to male victims of

domestic abuse and encourage more male victims to come forward. Members also felt the use of male images would be unusual and may reignite the debate about domestic abuse, encouraging victims from both sexes and all backgrounds to come forward. Cleveland Police agreed that there was no reason not to undertake such a campaign, but that this was a matter which must be supported by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

- 9.8 The Community Safety Manager agreed that the use of different images may demonstrate the impact of domestic violence in a new way and that there was a need to look at future campaigns to ensure messages were drip fed throughout the year, building on previous campaigns and reinforcing messages that had already been conveyed, whilst reaching groups who may previously not have engaged with campaigns.

Evidence from Harbour

- 9.9 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members heard evidence from Harbour. Members were keen to explore how effective partnership working arrangements were to provide services to male victims of domestic violence and questioned whether the provision of services was fragmented.
- 9.10 The Forum was advised by the Director of Harbour that there are comprehensive partnership working arrangements in place, but as illustrated by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership structure (see paragraph 7.6), there is a lot of work taking place across a number of areas.
- 9.11 The Forum heard that joint working arrangements are in place and work well, but the challenge to those involved was to promote the work they do. An example of the joint working arrangements in place include the partnership work between Housing Hartlepool and Harbour to bring in the ASBI which has been a very effective tool to deal with domestic violence in Housing Hartlepool's housing stock.
- 9.12 The Director of Harbour noted that the challenge going forward was for all organisations to understand they have a role to play in the domestic abuse agenda.

10 IMPACT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE BUDGET PRESSURES ON THE WAY IN WHICH MALE DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED IN HARTLEPOOL

- 10.1 Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum were keen to gain an understanding of the impact current and future budget pressures may have on the way services are provided to male victims of domestic abuse in Hartlepool. Evidence gathered on the potential impact of such budget reductions is detailed overleaf:-

Evidence from Harbour

- 10.2 During evidence received by the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members were advised that all agencies were unaware of the true extent of domestic abuse due to unreported incidents. As the extent of female violence was unknown under reporting amongst male victims may be particularly high. The Forum were advised by the director of Harbour that there were plans in place to carry out more work in this area but there were issues around funding, which needed to be addressed before this could be moved forward.
- 10.3 Members were keen to hear how Harbour was going to deal with the current funding issues affecting all areas of society. The Director of Harbour informed the Forum that the issue of funding was put aside when determining targets and areas that need to be addressed. Harbour would tender for all work commissioned by the local authority.

Evidence from the Community Safety Team

- 10.4 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members were advised by the Community Safe Manager that violence against women and girls was a priority for the Coalition Government and this should result in funding opportunities being available for domestic violence work. Domestic violence is also a priority for Hartlepool Council, as highlighted by the creation of the Domestic Violence Development Group chaired by the Chief Executive of Hartlepool Council.

Evidence from Victim Support

- 10.5 Members received evidence from Victim Support in relation to the current financial pressures on the organisation at their meeting of 3 February 2011. Victim Support advised the Forum that the services of Victim Support were reliant on central government funding which was hopefully still in place. Members were advised that the organisation had relied heavily on the work of volunteers for the last 30 years and were confident that this would continue. They were also confident that the Victim Support office in Hartlepool would be retained as this was an important part of publicising the work Victim Support carry out and engaging more people into the process.

11 HOW MALE DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES COULD BE PROVIDED IN THE FUTURE

- 11.1 Members of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum examined how services available to male victims of domestic abuse could be provided in the future, giving particular regard to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of provision and the potential budget pressures which may exist. The Forum considered evidence as follows:-

Evidence from Harbour

- 11.2 At the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011 Members were delighted to hear that Harbour were planning to offer supported housing to male victims of domestic violence which was considered more appropriate for children than the current arrangements of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 11.3 Members were advised that Harbour had designed a range of leaflets for men and women, but also that there was a greater need to understand the issues behind domestic violence and Harbour was looking to carry out some work targeted at males and young men living at home, who have struggled with someone being abusive to their mother or father for a long period of time.
- 11.4 Harbour will continue to work with the Domestic Violence Forum and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership, who are very supportive of Harbour's aims. Members heard that there are a whole range of areas being developed, for example working with the Police to reduce the drop off rate after the first incident. Harbour also highlighted to the Forum that it can offer a male worker to work with male victims when requested.
- 11.5 The Forum was encouraged to hear that Harbour is very keen to look at providing a helpline for male victims, though the hours it would be available would be subject to funding. Harbour are also keen to take another look at publicity material produced to promote the services available to domestic violence victims, to determine how this can be used to encourage greater engagement in programmes by all victims.
- 11.6 The Director of Harbour felt that the partnership involved in the promotion of services and help for victims needed to plan how to promote a consistent, regular message and look strategically at the messages that were put across. Members were advised that partnership working was key at a time of reduced funding and the buy in of the local authority was a significant factor in this, as it enabled the third sector to gain matched funding.
- 11.7 The Director of Harbour also advised the Forum that preventative work with children is key to breaking the cycle of abuse which may pass through generations. Harbour has undertaken work with Middlesbrough Council, where a programme was delivered to children as young as 8 and 9 to encourage self esteem and promote the fact that bullying is wrong and has consequences. Children should be equipped with safe coping strategies rather than turning to drink or drugs as a result of domestic abuse and bullying.

Information from other Local Authorities

- 11.8 At the meeting of the Forum on 3 February 2011 Members considered recommendation and action plan extracts from a report completed by

Durham County Council's Scrutiny Sub Committee for Strong, Healthy and Safer Communities in 2007 entitled 'A Hidden Truth....? A Scrutiny Report about Domestic Abuse in County Durham'.

- 11.9 Members of the Forum commented that there had been a lot of work on domestic abuse agenda, as highlighted by the Durham Council report, yet victims still did not know where to get advice and information, as demonstrated by the case studies received as a result of the investigation.
- 11.10 When discussing the actions contained within the Durham Council report the Forum was advised by the Community Safety Manager that the Safer Hartlepool Partnership website was in the process of being re-launched. The new website would contain links and signposts to agencies and services available to all victims of domestic abuse, but would have specific reference to help available to male victims.
- 11.11 The Forum also noted that mirroring discussion under paragraph 11.7, the Durham Council report also identified the important role of schools and early intervention programmes in reinforcing the message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

12 CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-
- (a) That although there are identified male victims of domestic abuse in Hartlepool and the Tees Valley, these figures were likely to be an under representation of the actual numbers, due to a reluctance for male victims to report incidents;
 - (b) That services provided by organisations to aid victims of domestic violence and abuse are not gender specific, although female victims are of a higher profile nationally;
 - (c) That male victims of domestic abuse and their families are not always aware of how to access services;
 - (d) That male victims of domestic abuse need greater encouragement to engage with agencies that provide assistance;
 - (e) That bed and breakfast accommodation offered to male victims of domestic abuse was not suitable for maintaining contact with children;
 - (f) That there was not sufficient demand to financially justify a male refuge in Hartlepool;
 - (g) That local domestic violence posters containing gender neutral images may be considered too subtle to convey the message that services were also available to male victims;

- (h) That all partners whose work includes responding to or supporting those who experience domestic abuse may benefit from training specific to dealing with male victims.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) That promotion of support and assistance available to male victims of domestic abuse is undertaken to encourage more male victims to engage with services, including:-
 - (i) Utilisation of appropriate promotional and awareness raising activities, highlighting services available to male victims of domestic abuse;
 - (ii) Ensuring that additional to recommendation (a)(i) information is made available to members of the public who are not able to access the internet.
- (b) That the provision of a helpline specifically for male victims of domestic abuse is investigated with the Safer Hartlepool Partnership;
- (c) That following the refresh of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership website a review of the Hartlepool Borough Council website is undertaken to assess whether:-
 - (i) The website contains sufficient information and signposts to enable male victims of domestic abuse to access services and contact appropriate support agencies;
 - (ii) Information can be accessed with limited searching.
- (d) That work is undertaken in conjunction with the Child and Adult Services Department to investigate the potential to deliver non gender specific domestic abuse prevention programmes at a school level.
- (e) That a work is undertaken with other local authorities in the northern region to consider:-
 - (i) Support for a cross authority male domestic abuse worker to develop and promote services available throughout the northern region;

- (ii) Undertaking a cross authority review to determine the demand for a male refuge.

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Hartlepool Borough Council:

Dave Stubbs - Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Alison Mawson – Assistant Director Community Safety and Protection
Denise Ogden – Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services
Brian Neale – Community Safety Manager
Lisa Oldroyd – Anti Social Behaviour Research Officer

External Representatives:

Detective Inspector Mike Cane – Cleveland Police
Christine Fergus – Victim Support
Lesley Gibson – Harbour
Christine Goodman – Victim Support
Andy Powell – Housing Hartlepool
Mandy Twidale – Victim Support

COUNCILLOR KEVIN CRANNEY CHAIR OF THE REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MAY 2011

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Domestic Violence Services for Male Victims – Scoping Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 20 January 2011.
- (ii) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Domestic Violence Services for Male Victims – Setting the Scene – Covering Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (iii) Presentation by the Community Safety Manager entitled 'Male Victims of Domestic Violence' delivered at the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (iv) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Services Available to Male Victims of Domestic Violence – Key Stakeholders - Covering Report' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (v) Presentation by the Director of Housing Hartlepool entitled 'Domestic Violence Service for Male Victims' delivered at the meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (vi) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Durham County Council Scrutiny Investigation into Domestic Violence' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (vii) Extracts of the recommendations and actions from the Durham County Council Scrutiny investigation entitled 'A Hidden Truth....? A Scrutiny Report about Domestic Abuse in County Durham' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (viii) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Services Available to Male Victims of Domestic Violence – Information from Regional and National Organisations' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (ix) The ManKind Initiative (April 2010) *Male Victims – Domestic and Partner Abuse Statistics*.
- (x) The ManKind Initiative (December 2009) *Partner abuse in England, Wales and Scotland*.
- (xi) Extracts from The Men's Network - 'A City That Works for Everyone – Men and Boys Included' presented to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 February 2011.
- (xii) Minutes of the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum of 20 January 2011, 3 February 2011 and 31 March 2011.