



CAMBRIDGESHIRE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGY

2008-2011

Produced by the Domestic Violence Steering Group

Contents

Background	3
Common Vision	4
Definition of Domestic Violence	4
Key Achievements	4
Priorities for 2008 – 2011	6
Prevention & Early Intervention	6
Protection and Justice	7
Support	7
Performance Targets and Monitoring	8
Implementation of the Strategy	9
Resources	9
Communications	10
Managing Diversity and Difference	10
Legal Framework	11

Background

Whilst there is now a better understanding of Domestic Violence (DV), some misconceptions remain. National evidence suggests that domestic violence accounts for 16% of total violent crime.¹ Analysis of Cambridgeshire Constabulary violent crime data found that domestic violence is the most common form of reported violent crime in rural areas.² During 2007/08 the police recorded 5,227 domestic violence incidents in Cambridgeshire.

One in four women and one in six men will be affected in their lifetimes, with women suffering higher rates of repeated victimisation and serious injuries. Domestic Abuse is known to be significantly under-reported, with some victims finding it hard to access services. It is crucial that services are available to all victims of DV and that agencies recognise it in all its forms.

- It is estimated that over a third of vulnerable adults referred to Cambridgeshire Adult Services were victims of DV, with the largest proportion of these being 'older people'.
- Accurately calculating the prevalence of DV in Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities has proven difficult. Early research has indicated that 1 in 4 individuals in same sex relationships experience DV at some time, similar to the levels of female victimisation in the heterosexual population.³ However LGBT victims reported being less likely to seek help from the police than those responding to the British Crime Survey and showed differences in their choices by seeking help from health care professionals.⁴
- Whilst the prevalence of DV experienced by men is predicted to be far lower than females, male victims find it particularly hard to access services and gain the support they need.
- The issues of so-called honour-based violence and forced marriage have become more prominent in recent years. New ways of multi-agency working and raising public awareness are needed if a true reduction in this form of violence is to be seen.

National research has shown that the impact on children and young people experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse can be wide ranging. It can include effects such as alterations in their behaviour, to limiting their achievement at school to becoming victims themselves; the lasting affects can be devastating.⁵ It is estimated that domestic violence was recorded for just under a quarter of children (1,325 children) referred to Social Care in Cambridgeshire in 2007/08.

Within Cambridgeshire domestic violence has again been identified as a priority for each of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). The Steering Group will take a strategic overview of the provision of services and ensure that policies and practices are developed to meet the needs of victims across the county of Cambridgeshire. At a local level, the forums/task groups will continue to deliver multi-agency working through their action plans.

¹ Crime in England & Wales 2006/07 – Home Office Report

² Cambridgeshire County Partnership Strategic Assessment – Oct 2007 Cambridgeshire Research Group & Cambridgeshire Constabulary

³ Henderson, L. (2003) Prevalence of Domestic Violence among Lesbians and Gay Men: Data report to Flame TV. London: Sigma Research.

⁴ Comparing Domestic Abuse in Same Sex and Heterosexual Relationships – Nov 2006 University of Sunderland & University of Bristol

⁵ Behind Closed Doors – The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children – UNICEF

The Common Vision

To achieve coordinated multi-agency good practice in supporting victims of domestic violence, including children, young people and vulnerable adults who experience or witness domestic violence, by taking protective and preventative measures, dealing appropriately with perpetrators, and raising public awareness about domestic violence.

Definition of Domestic Violence

It is recognised that there are currently a number of definitions of domestic violence. The agencies involved have agreed to adopt the following definition for the purposes of this strategy:

Domestic violence is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

(Home Office, 2005)

The Cambridgeshire Domestic Violence Partnership also recognises that:

Domestic violence can also include violence perpetrated by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim and be violence inflicted on, or witnessed by children.

Within this document, the terms domestic abuse and domestic violence will be used interchangeably.

Key Achievements (2005 – 2008)

During the period of the last strategy, the Steering Group has coordinated and supported the following projects:

Services for Victims:

- The introduction of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment (MARAC) process across Cambridgeshire, helping to prevent repeat offences in the most high risk DV cases;
- The consolidation of Cambridgeshire's Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVAS) and the introduction of the specialist MODUS database to support their work;
- The set up of a supervised contact centre in Cambridge;
- Funding a 'jackpot alarm' scheme for victims of DV to enable rapid police response to reports of DV;
- Securing a Specialist Domestic Violence Court for Peterborough and parts of Fenland/Huntingdonshire, thus improving conviction rates for DV perpetrators;
- The roll-out across Cambridgeshire of the Freedom Programme – a group therapy programme for female victims of DV;
- Pilot Freedom for Young People (F4YP) programmes in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire for teenage victims of DV;
- The implementation of the Sanctuary Scheme across Cambridgeshire, enabling victims of DV to remain in their own homes, where it is safe to do so.

Partnership Working:

- A coordinated, multi-agency training programme, available free of charge to all agencies;
- An updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the IDVA Service;
- Consolidating and supporting the four local DV taskgroups;
- Funding for digital cameras to aid police detection and prosecution of DV crimes;
- New DV policies and protocols for information sharing between Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Local Authority schools.

The previous strategy outlined the targets, relating to police recorded incidents, that each of the five Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) or Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) had set. Each CSP/CDRP set two targets, one to obtain an increase in reporting of DV incidents, the second to achieve a decrease in the proportion of repeat incidents.

Three CSPs/CDRPs, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire exceeded their target to increase reporting. South Cambridgeshire almost achieved the most stretched target in the county. Cambridge City CSP fell just short of achieving their target. Unfortunately, due to data collection difficulties the data has not been available to monitor the second target of a reduction in repeat incidents at CSP/CDRP area level. The tables below provide the figures for each CDRP in relation to each target.

1. Increase in police recorded incidents

CDRP area	Total Incidence 2003/04	Total Incidence 2007/08	Target % increase	% Increase achieved
Cambridge	1,074	1,405	40%	30.8
East Cambridgeshire	344	453	10%	31.7
Fenland	805	1,221	20%	51.7
Huntingdonshire	1,146	1,367	10%	19.3
South Cambridgeshire	530	781	50%	47.4

2. Decrease in proportion of incidents that are repeats

Due to changes in information collection, this data is not available.

PRIORITIES FOR 2008 - 2011

The overriding aim of this strategy is to protect and support victims of DV in Cambridgeshire and to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults through a co-ordinated multi-agency approach. We also aim to increase reporting and reduce repeat incidents to those victims at greatest risk, whilst ensuring all victims have access to appropriate advice and

services. We will achieve this through consolidating existing services and further developing those services which are proved to be most effective.

There will be three strands to our strategy:

- PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION
- PROTECTION & JUSTICE
- SUPPORT

PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION:

The Partnership believes that changing the attitudes of the next generation so that domestic violence is never seen as acceptable is vital to reducing the victims and perpetrators of the future and to ensuring the future well being of our young people.

The Partnership is also committed to ensuring that when a victim, their family member, or friend, seeks advice and support that the early intervention they receive will be effective, coordinated, and of consistent quality across the county. To do this, we will:

- Establish common and consistent methods of screening, identifying, and risk assessing cases of domestic violence across all relevant agencies;
- Ensure that a range of services are available from voluntary and statutory agencies county wide which offer a consistent model of best practice, advice, and support;
- Make sure that information-sharing protocols are in place and monitored to improve appropriate information sharing between agencies to reduce risk to victims;
- Establish consistent and robust multi agency data collection methods to establish the extent of DV in the county to assist in the planning and development of services;
- Develop programmes of intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence, particularly interventions that involve multi-agency working, including the implementation of accredited perpetrator programmes as they become available;
- Ensure that all perpetrator programmes are run in parallel with support services for victims;
- Provide core multi-agency training for professionals and specialist modules of particular relevance to groups such as child protection, protection of vulnerable adults, and young people;
- Ensure the provision of educational and therapeutic programmes in schools and out-of-school settings to safeguard future generations;
- Support the work of the DV Task Groups to raise awareness of DV in their local communities;
- Enable universal and specialist services to promote awareness and information, and take part in prevention campaigns.

PROTECTION & JUSTICE:

Effective safety planning, risk assessment, and protective measures rely on coordination, sharing information, and above all sound partnership working. The Cambridgeshire Domestic Violence Partnership is dedicated to achieving the safety and protection of victims and children affected by domestic violence by:

- Ensuring that DV cases are risk assessed and referred appropriately using CAADA risk assessment processes;

- Robustly support and commit to the work of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences;
- Ensure close working between MARAC, MAPPA, POVA and Child Protection processes to protect high risk victims;
- Explore ways to reduce domestic violence where drug and alcohol misuse presents an added risk factor by securing closer links with Cambridgeshire's alcohol strategy and services, including training and targeted treatment;
- Increase the number of offenders brought to justice;
- Provide support for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses;
- Develop specialist courts for domestic violence to reduce delay and increase confidence in the criminal justice system;
- Develop links between criminal, civil, family courts, and CAFCASS to achieve timely cross court information sharing to increase the safety of victims and children;
- Ensure Sanctuary Scheme is working effectively and resourced across the county;
- Support the provision of safe accommodation for victims of domestic violence, including Refuges, moving on accommodation, and provision to enable a victim to remain in their own home where it is safe to do so (however, it is acknowledged that there will always be a need for safe accommodation for victims of DV outside of their own home);
- To develop protocols and procedures for Homicide Reviews to ensure lessons are learned and future victims are protected as far as possible.

SUPPORT:

It is acknowledged that most domestic violence is gender specific and concerns violence and abuse perpetrated by men against women and this is borne out by the proportion of victims reporting to the police and other agencies in Cambridgeshire. However, the Partnership is committed to continuing its work with the voluntary and statutory sector to ensure that all victims including men, and men and women in same sex relationships, have access to the most appropriate services for their needs.

The British Crime Survey 2006⁶ found that 51% of rapes and serious sexual assault were committed by a current or former partner bringing this serious crime into the definition of domestic violence. The Partnership will work with others to improve the accessibility of rape support services for victims in Cambridgeshire.

The Partnership is aware of the extra problems faced by those living in our rural areas that may have difficulty in readily accessing support and they will be mindful of this when planning services. We are also conscious of the challenge faced by victims in the travelling community and other minority communities when seeking services, and we will continue to strive to ensure that services are as accessible as possible. To this end we will:

- Ensure that services also recognise the needs of minority ethnic groups, male victims and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender communities;
- Develop personnel policies for responding to staff who are either victims or perpetrators of domestic violence;
- Ensure Advocacy and support services are made available to all victims;
- Make sure that there are appropriate services available to support children and young people;
- Work with others to improve access to rape and sexual crime support services;
- Support the work of evaluated and agreed initiatives;

⁶ British Crime Survey 2006 Inter-Personal Violence module

- Provide public information through agreed agencies about services available, including safe accommodation, outreach support, legal, social and financial help available;
- Develop a needs-analysis approach to services and partnership working;
- Develop a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to DV through the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Unit within the county.

Performance Targets and Monitoring

This strategy will be pivotal in delivering an effective multi-agency coordinated community response to ensure victims' and children's safety. It will also contribute to the reduction of violent crime in Cambridgeshire, the reduction in repeat victimisation of those experiencing domestic violence, and increase the number of offenders brought to justice.

Domestic violence remains difficult to monitor. This is partly due to the range of behaviours that could be related to DV. However a fundamental reason for this monitoring difficulty is the inconsistent reporting of DV within and across agencies.

The Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) has adopted a domestic violence national indicator for inclusion in its improvement targets for 2008-2011. This indicator is:

NI 32 Repeat incidents of domestic violence

Definition: Percentage reduction in repeat victimisation for those domestic violence cases being managed by a MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

2008-09 is a baseline setting year for this indicator, therefore robust data collection will be essential to ensure accurate monitoring of this target.

This indicator also supports the achievement of other related indicators, notably NI 34 the reduction of domestic violence murders.

NI 32 also contributes to Public Service Agreement (PSA) 23 Making Communities Safer. PSA 23 has the priority action:

Reduce the most serious violence, including tackling serious sexual offences and domestic violence

This action is supported by one or more performance indicators, but primarily NI 15: *Reduction in the level of most serious violent crimes*. The Cambridgeshire LAA improvement targets include NI 15. This Partnership strategy also contributes to the achievement of NI 15.

2008/09 remains a baseline-setting year and as a living document this strategy will be updated to include numerical targets as they are agreed

Implementation of the Strategy

The implementation of this strategy will be the responsibility of the multi-agency County Domestic Violence Strategy and Implementation Groups. The Groups, which meet quarterly, will monitor and evaluate initiatives and outcomes, and where appropriate take action to ensure performance meets targets (see appendices).

The diagram attached to the appendices shows the reporting structure for LAA indicators and how the Cambridgeshire Domestic Violence Steering Group aligns with other partnerships.

Communications

The purpose of the communications strategy (see attached) is to raise public, media and professional awareness of the work of Cambridgeshire's County Domestic Violence Partnership and to identify opportunities to generate positive media coverage and involvement in this group by encouraging senior officers, front line staff and appropriate Elected Members to identify suitable story opportunities.

Managing Diversity and Difference

We believe that understanding diversity and difference is essential to the successful delivery of this strategy. The strategy aims to reflect that domestic violence affects all sections of the community, whilst acknowledging that the majority of domestic abuse is experienced by women and perpetrated by men. Accordingly, we aim to serve all of our communities well, making sure services are accessible to all and fairly allocated. This includes addressing the specific needs of all victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, gender, disability, age, class, socio/economic group or education attainment level.

An equal opportunities and impact assessment has been completed with the County DV Strategy and Implementation Groups and is attached to this document as an appendix.

Legal Framework

This strategy will be implemented within the following legal framework:

The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004

The Act is intended to introduce reform to the civil and criminal law in these areas by criminalising the breach of non-molestation orders under the Family Law Act 1996; by extending the availability of restraining orders under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; and by making common assault an arrestable offence.

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Act builds on existing legislation and reinforces powers available to practitioners. The provisions include powers to social landlords to take action against anti-social tenants, courts to consider the impact of anti-social behaviour on the wider community in all housing possession cases and improving the operation of Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

Children Act 2004

The Act provides a legislative spine on which to build reforms of children's services. It establishes a duty on key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, requires local authorities to set up Local Safeguarding Children Boards and that key partners

take part, as well as making provision about services provided to and for children and young people.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002)

The Act introduced a number of provisions for dealing with crime and disorder. This included the introduction of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, a new power for public bodies to disclose information for the purposes of the Act, as well as reforms to the youth justice system.

Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)

The Act gives local housing authorities a duty to secure suitable accommodation for households experiencing domestic violence who are unable to remain in the family home and who are assessed as being unintentionally homeless and in priority need. It also created a new ground for possession in relation to domestic violence.

Contact Details

Domestic Abuse Partnership Manager
Amundsen House
Compass Point Business Park
Stocks Bridge Way
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 5JL

Tel. 07789920401

Email: Simon.Kerss@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk