



WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT TITLE:	Update on Progress of the Wirral Pledge – Zero Tolerance Towards Domestic Abuse
REPORT OF:	Strategic Commissioner for the Environment

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made implementing the Wirral pledge – Zero Tolerance towards Domestic Abuse.

It provides an opportunity to highlight the tremendous amount of work that has been undertaken across all statutory agencies and the voluntary and third sector in the 18 months since the launch of the Pledge. In addition the report will also describe the future steps in the bid to eradicate domestic abuse and harmful practices.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress made in the first stages of the delivery against the Zero Tolerance towards Domestic Abuse pledge.
- 2) Endorse the next steps in the Pledge Action Plan 2017/18.
- 3) Pledge their support of the Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance and the Zero Tolerance campaign.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Members are asked to support the recommendations as this will further demonstrate that Wirral is a place which has a zero tolerance approach to domestic violence and abuse, where individuals, families and communities are supported to reach their potential and lead safer, healthier and happier lives.
- 1.2 We want to stop violence and improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and families who experience domestic abuse and harmful practices in all its different guises. We want to see local residents and communities free from violence by decreasing the social tolerance and acceptance of domestic abuse. To do this requires all statutory agencies and those partner organisations from the faith and voluntary and third sector to come together in a true partnership.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 It is imperative that all the Wirral pledges undergo scrutiny to ensure that the direction of travel and the performance of all agencies is satisfactory. This is especially important for a pledge such as Zero Tolerance towards Domestic Abuse because there are a plethora of organisations and volunteers who must work together to achieve the desired outcomes.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The pledge and its accompanying action plan are truly multi-agency having been written and delivered via a number of workshops. In common with all the 20 pledges it lays out the 5 year strategy to eradicate domestic abuse and harmful practices across Wirral.
- 3.2 The approaches and actions in the Pledge and its accompanying action plan reflect the very high priority given to Domestic Violence and Harmful Practices across the Wirral Partnerships. It contributes to the overall Wirral Plan, the Health & Wellbeing Strategy the local safeguarding boards for adults and children respectively and more.
- 3.3 To support delivery of the pledge and its accompanying action plan there is an extremely well attended multi-agency group which meets every two months to oversee progress of the agreed actions and also to discuss new initiatives or issues.

4.0 SCOPE & DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC ABUSE & HARMFUL PRACTICES

4.1 The cross-governmental definition of domestic abuse is “any incidence or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercing, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.” This is not a legal definition. Domestic violence or abuse is not of itself a specified crime, but behaviours or incidents such as harassment and assault within a Domestic Violence or abuse context are crimes.

4.2 For the purposes of the Wirral pledge and any operational responses, Domestic Violence and Abuse is:

- The misuse of physical, emotional, sexual or psychological and/or financial control by one person over another, who is or has been in a relationship. This includes family members, for example older children abusing a parent.
- Domestic Violence or Abuse covers a wide range of behaviour and may be actual or threatened physical or psychological harm.
- It can include Forced Marriage, so called “Honour-Based Violence”, Sexual Violence and Stalking.
- Domestic Violence and Abuse can significantly impact on children and is recognised in the multi-agency safe guarding hub and their associated threshold documents, as well as LSC Board policy as a specific child protection and safeguarding risk.
- Domestic Violence and Abuse is a continuous pattern of events and behaviours with exceptionally high recidivism (repeated incidents of abuse). It includes coercive and controlling behaviour which is defined as acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent, by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and/or regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten a victim.

5.0 WHO EXPERIENCES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE?

5.1 Domestic Violence and Abuse is usually perpetrated by men against women but not exclusively. Nationally the Office of National Statistics estimates around 1.2m woman and 784,000 men experience Domestic Violence and Abuse a year. However, evidence shows women are significantly disproportionately affected by Domestic Violence and Abuse at high risk

levels and are more likely to experience serious physical harm or death from a partner, as well as serious coercive and controlling behaviour. In Wirral 97% of high risk cases engaged with an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) are females.

- 5.2 Underpinning the action plan is the recognition that both genders, as well as the wider communities we live in, are part of the solution to preventing and reducing violence and abuse. Domestic Violence and Abuse is non-discriminate: it occurs in all groups and sections of society, but domestic violence and abuse may be experienced differently due to, and compounded by race, sexuality, disability, age, religion, culture, class or mental health.
- 5.3 The table at **Appendix 1** captures the high risk MARAC Quarter 2 position (of 2016/2017) against the national statistics. It highlights some grave situations:
- 51 per 10,000 population high risk MARAC cases – Safer lives recommend that Wirral should only be experiencing 40 cases.
 - 1,267 children were present in the house where a high risk Domestic Violence or Abuse case is reported.

6.0 ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- 6.1 The Zero Tolerance towards Domestic Abuse pledge methodology is based around the 4 P's approach which was familiar to many of the partners. The 4 P's are:
- Prevention – and Early Intervention
 - Provision
 - Partnership
 - Perpetrators
- 6.2 The first year of the Pledge concentrated on the forming of the Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance and the raising of the profile of domestic abuse across Wirral communities with some major marketing and branding projects. These included:
- Development of a Wirral pledge logo for 'Zero Tolerance to Domestic Abuse'
 - Tranmere Rovers pledge support Zero Tolerance and dedicate 3 matches to raising awareness and also taking part in Women's Aid campaign – 'Tackling Domestic Abuse'.
 - Promotion of Leapfrog, Tomorrows Women's Wirral and Peer mentoring scheme

- Participation in the CHAMPS ‘Be a Lover not A Fighter’ campaign and the sponsorship of advertisements on side of local fire engines.
- Local launch of Home Office campaign ‘Disrespect NoBody’ – a campaign to prevent young people – both boys and girls, particularly aged 12 to 18 years old from becoming perpetrators and victims of abusive relationships, encouraging them to re-think their views of abuse, controlling behaviour, and what consent and sexting means within relationships.

As a result of these campaigns and marketing initiatives there has been a greater number of referrals over the last 12 months as captured in the q2 Pledge performance.

- 6.3 In addition to the marketing and advertisement of the first year it has also been necessary to pursue greater integration of statutory services. This has recently been delivered with the opening of the Safer Wirral Hub. The hub is a collocated integrated unit, led by a Merseyside Police Officer and includes a range of services including the IDVA service, Youth Offending Service and Early Help Provision. In addition to these council services there is also a number of dedicated PCSPO’s and representatives from a number of third sector organisations including the Domestic Abuse Peer mentors and the Community Connectors. All these agencies work on a daily basis reviewing referral forms and risk assessing and assigning cases either directly to services in their delivery unit or escalating them to Early Help or the Integrated Front Door.
- 6.4 It has also been imperative to work closer with the plethora of third sector and voluntary organisations who strive on a day to day basis to tackle domestic abuse here on Wirral. We are extremely fortunate to have organisations like Tomorrows Women Wirral, Involve North West, RASA and the Women’s Refuge operating here. These third sector organisations provide a range of services which the statutory undertakers either do not or who actually commission.

To increase the support services to victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse, the Alliance commissioned the setting up of a Domestic Abuse Peer Mentor scheme with Tomorrows Women’s Wirral and Wirral Connect. 29 survivors completed the Peer Mentoring course and a number of them have become Domestic Abuse Champions. This Champions service operates as an Outreach service from 4 Children’s centres. Again this provides victims and survivors of domestic abuse with a non-statutory service to discuss their situation with and received some first-hand advice on what they can do.

- 6.5 The Alliance has also worked with National Probation Service and Merseyside Police to identify a cohort of Domestic Abuse perpetrators within the clients of

the Integrated Offender Management. This pilot scheme on Wirral is tracking and intensively managing 16 of the highest risk Domestic Abuse perpetrators on Wirral. This reduces the risk to the victims of these perpetrators but it is also hoped that this intensive management will bring about real behaviour change in these individuals.

- 6.6 A host of empirical evidence identifies domestic abuse perpetrators lacking in the skills of building a respectful relationship. As a result of this evidence the Alliance was keen to undertake an evaluation of perpetrator programmes. It commissioned the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Service to deliver some Help courses for specific cohorts to understand how successful they are in changing behaviours. The evaluation was extremely useful and the video from the younger males cohort was especially powerful.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 The Updated Pledge Action Plan is attached at **Appendix 2** to this report. This highlights the current actions and priorities.

- 7.2 In addition to the action plan we are seeking to raise awareness of:

- DfE child abuse campaign 'If you think it Report it'.
- Elder Abuse
- Child on Parent and/or Carer abuse
- Online and cyber abuse
- Child Criminal exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation.

- 7.3 The Alliance wishes to complete the strategic needs analysis and drill down for further Insight into harder to reach groups – BAME and LBGT.

- 7.4 Finally the Alliance will be seeking other partner agencies to join it in trying to support the Zero Tolerance campaign. This includes a business pledge scheme where local businesses can sign up to a pledge. Early indication is that many organisations wish to join and it is hoped that many of these will agree to support any of their staff or customers who experience any forms of domestic violence or abuse.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

10.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

11.0 RELEVANT RISKS

11.1 There are no relevant risks arising directly from this report.

12.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

12.1 Full engagement with all members of Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance to ensure the most up to date position statement could be provided to elected members.

13.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 An equality impact assessment has not been completed due to the nature of this report.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - SafeLives MARAC data Q2- 01/07/2016 to 30/06/2017

APPENDIX 2 – Zero Tolerance to Domestic Abuse Updated Action Plan 2017/18

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Wirral Pledge – Zero Tolerance to Domestic Abuse

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet: Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision – Underpinning Strategies: Domestic Abuse	21 March 2016