

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

THURSDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT: Councillors: Hinkley (Chair), Foord, Knight, T. Malik and O'Callaghan

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Angela Fraser – Democracy & Scrutiny Officer
- Nikki Middleton – Community Safety Partnership Manager

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)	ACTION
	Resolved: That apologies for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Sharif	
2.	MINUTES (REF: 2)	
	Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 th August 2014 be agreed as a true record and the chair be authorised to sign them.	
3.	CHAIR'S UPDATE (REF: 3)	
	None noted.	
4.	Evidence Gathering	
	<u>Community Safety Partnership (CSP)</u> The following updates on the CSP were made by Nikki Middleton: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of the Community Safety Partnership has reduce from what is was a couple of years ago;• The post of the Domestic Abuse Coordinator no longer exists. The CSP manager's role is more strategic with line management responsibility for the MARAC Coordinator, and funding (£15,000) for that post ends next year. The post is fundamental for ensuring high risk domestic abuse victims receive support from the agencies that attend MARAC meetings and for information to be shared;• Nationally funding is directed towards high risk victims.• Luton's response to victims is good in terms of identifying high risk victims and referring them to MARAC• Gaps in service provision were identified in the HMIC report which was published in March this year and was critical of the Police response to victims. The Police have developed an action plan which addresses the concerns raised in the report.• The biggest risk faced by the CSP is the government ceasing to fund domestic violence posts.• The CSP is currently in the process of securing funding through other avenues such as grants received from London Luton Airport Limited (LLAL), Public Health and Housing for the continuation of domestic violence services.• CSP currently receive £20k grant for the MARAC coordinator post from the Home Office which also funds	

	<p>half an IDVA post which is situated in victim support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSP recognise there is a funding gap in terms of non-statutory provision for low to medium risk victims of domestic abuse and are reliant upon the voluntary sector to fill that gap. • A small amount of funding is received from LLAL with a vast amount of that money going towards domestic violence provision for high risk victims. • The CSP also funds some voluntary sector services such as: IDVAs and Victim Support to work with low, medium and high risk domestic abuse victims. • Service provision is good for high risk victims but not so good for low/medium risk victims, and can cause confusion and misunderstanding i.e. some DV services are not funded by Luton in Bedford which can cause which the Police assume they are assume that similar services are not funded in Luton. • Victim Support offer a gender natural service to domestic abuse victims • The CSP lead on the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for Luton and there is recognition that some areas are not serviced as well for some community groups. • The Partnership has no drive to develop new pieces of work due to capacity issues among staff. For example – developing a White Ribbon initiative in Luton and is similar to the old best value indicator/Green Flag initiative. Some local authorities have become White Ribbon Authorities - which is driven by men who support the campaign. Luton there is not the capacity or resources to drive such a campaign forward and the CSP is unable to get involved in prevention work and can only provide a reactive service. <p>Achievements of the CSP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful in driving down homicide rates to a low level in the Town e.g. none reported since 2011 • Good cooperation and coordination of services within the Partnership • Created a Domestic Violence website which is up and running and contains contact details information for agency support • In the process of developing a domestic violence helpline which should be up and running by Christmas and launched in the New Year. <p>What is not working so well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity within the Partnership to drive meetings e.g. HMIC report criticised the lack of engagement within the Partnership 	
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	<p>Resolved: (i) That Nikki Middleton be thanked for the oral update.</p> <p>(ii) That Nikki Middleton research the involvement needed for Luton to become a White Ribbon authority and to email the information to Task and Finish Group Members.</p>	
	<p><u>Feedback on Schools Evidence</u></p> <p>The Democracy and Scrutiny Officer gave an update on a meeting at River Bank Primary School, Bath Road Luton which took place on 15th September 2014 and advised that Councillors Hinkley and Sharif met with John Wrigglesworth (Head Teacher), Neghat (Family Worker) and Tara (School Health Education Coordinator).</p> <p>The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family workers role is to build trust with parents, which allows parents to open up and discuss personal issues that occur in the home. • Family workers maintain good communications with social services who provide advice to schools on steps to take when a referral are made. • Family workers maintain good communications with local agencies and refer parents where they can receive specialist support and advice. • Primary Schools have different strategies in place to support children with challenging behaviour. • Responses from social services are immediate when referrals are made and schools are kept updated on steps taken. • Responses from the Police is poor with very little feedback and updates and can become a barrier to a child's learning if the school is not made aware of developments. • Family workers maintain a good working relationship is with parents and teachers. • Teachers and teaching assistants are well placed in primary schools to identify changes in a child's behaviour and to relay concerns to family workers. • There are no formal family workers network in place for information sharing with other schools. However, some family workers in feeder schools do communicate on a regular basis and share information. • Family workers are integral in schools to achieve outcomes of children in schools. <p><u>Training in Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff that work with children in schools including midday supervisors are required to complete the Level 1 Safeguarding training which includes a domestic violence 	

	<p>module.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic violence is viewed as everyone's responsibility. <p><u>Health Education Coordinator (Tara)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health Education Coordinator is a new post funded by Public Health for 13 months and is located within the Children and Learning Department The post holder works mainly with the IDVAs at Victim Support and is developing a workshop for teaching staff in high schools to raise awareness in identifying dominating/controlling relationships in young people. The post holder is devising an accredited programme with Victim Support to be linked to the curriculum in high schools to raise awareness of healthy and unhealthy relationships. There will also be a requirement for Schools to have a designated lead person for domestic violence and high schools will also be required to demonstrate how they approach domestic violence in the curriculum An audit of PHSE and Health and Wellbeing lessons is to be carried out and so far only 4 schools have responded. This is a difficult area to monitor/challenge due to the limited powers of local authorities as more services are devolved to Maintained Schools. Much of the work of the locally authority to schools is through influence. <p>Primary Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic abuse is not included on the curriculum in primary schools but discussions on wellbeing and things that make child set are held. Primary schools use signing for emotional behaviour techniques which is easier for younger children to explain feelings such as: stress, under pressure or unhappy in a one to one setting. Signing is useful for children with behaviour problems and for those who are not good at articulating themselves. Other useful programmes used are: SEAL (social, emotional aspects of learning) which is linked to the curriculum Primary schools maintain good links with children centres. Statutory instruments which once applied to schools have been removed and the main focus for schools has shifted towards attainment and outcomes. Discussions are held around good/bad relationships which is normally covered in years 5 and 6 and expanded upon in more detail in high schools to include domestic violence. The Health Coordinator is working with social workers to assist with communicating domestic abuse with young children which will be in the form of observing the early year's practitioners at work and giving feedback. The 	
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	<p>object is to equip social workers with the skills to recognise signs of domestic abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary schools also carry out home visits to assess children in their home environment before starting the foundation level. • Health and Wellbeing Awards – schools to demonstrate how they deliver non-academic information to students • There is currently no educational representative at MARAC 	
5.	<p><u>Feedback on Agency Consultation</u></p> <p>The Democracy & Scrutiny Officer reported on feedback received from the agency consultation which had taken place during the month of August. She advised that 36 forms had been completed with the majority of respondents from LBC colleagues who provide services for domestic abuse victims. The report is attached as an Appendix to the minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report be noted and the main points be feed into the final report.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Young People and Service User Consultation</u></p> <p>The Democracy and Scrutiny Officer advised that ethical approval had been obtained and that both consultations would be start in October. There were slight teething problems with the young people's consultation and based on suggestions received the questionnaire would be shorter and carried out by staff in education, the youth service and youth offending service.</p> <p>The final report would be presented to the January OSB meeting.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Date of the next meeting</u></p> <p>Resolved: That the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group will be 20th November 2014 at 6pm where the results of the service user consultation with women and young people will be presented.</p>	

Meeting ended: 7.05pm