

9th January 2014		ITEM 8
Health and Wellbeing Board		
VAWG progress report 2013-2014		
Report of: Barbara Foster, Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes – Childrens services		
Wards and communities affected: ALL	Key Decision: N/A	
Accountable Head of Service: Barbara Foster, Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton Director of Childrens Services		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an overview of the progress of the Local Strategy to Combat VAWG and the associated actions. • To enable the Board to have the opportunity to make comment 		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 The Board note progress made on the VAWG strategy and action plan.
- 1.2 That the Board provide comment on the report.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) affects individuals of all ages, cultures, genders, economic situation and religions. Incidents of VAWG occur every day in the homes and streets across Thurrock.
- 2.2 The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy (VAWG) evolved from initial work conducted in 2011.
- 2.3 The strategy provides a five year framework from 2012 – 2017 which creates a joined up approach taking into account the national picture.
- 2.4 The strategy provides a broad overarching response and is intended to be a constructive contribution towards the enhancing, strengthening and development of a number of existing and future work streams within a wider strategic framework of safeguarding Thurrocks adults and children.

2.5 This paper provides an overview of the very complex web of interventions that take place in support of reducing VAWG in Thurrock. Each area has very unique elements and not all aspects have been possible to include in detail within the scale of this report.

3.0 Information

3.1 The VAWG Strategy was officially launched in November 2012 as part of a comprehensive 16 Days of Action programme raising awareness and understanding of the impact of VAWG.

3.2 The strategy is underpinned through six main principles (the six P's) from which all actions and activity is delivered upon.

These principles are:

- **Perspective**

Aim: to provide a measured and objective assessment of VAWG, giving all aspects their comparative importance.

How: Adopting a shared definition and understanding of what VAWG means in Thurrock

- **Policy**

Aim: Develop an integrated response to VAWG through co-ordinated action across all agencies,

How: Based on consistent and well informed policies, systems, resource sharing and leadership

- **Prevention**

Aim: to change attitudes and prevent violence:

How: Raising awareness through campaigns; safeguarding and educating children and young people; early identification, intervention and training

- **Provision**

Aim: to assist victims to get on with their lives:

How: Provide effective provision of services, advice and support; emergency and acute services; refuge and safe accommodation

- **Protection**

Aim: Provide high quality protection and support to survivors of VAWG and their children so that their safety, family life and protection from violence are upheld

How: Through the provision of early help services, clear pathways and support mechanisms.

- **Prosecution**

Aim: Deliver an effective criminal justice service

How: Ensuring perpetrators are held accountable for their actions in a way that maximises safety of survivors and their children and reduces repeat victimisation

3.3 The VAWG strategy aims to focus upon a shared common understanding of both the terminology of what VAWG means in Thurrock and the components we intend to progress and establish. VAWG in Thurrock refers to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✚ Domestic violence | ✚ Intimate partner violence |
| ✚ Forced marriage | ✚ Honour based violence |
| ✚ Female genital mutilation | ✚ Sexual violence |
| ✚ Sexual harassment | ✚ Sexual exploitation |
| ✚ Trafficking for sexual exploitation | ✚ Stalking. |

4.0 Governance and scrutiny

4.1 The VAWG strategy is everyone's business and to ensure momentum is sustained a VAWG Governance Group co-chaired by the Lead Members for Childrens Service and Public Protection ensure oversight and delivery of the action plans across the Community Safety Partnership, Adult and Childrens Services and Childrens Partnership.

4.2 The VAWG agenda is also acknowledged by a specific objective of the Children and Young People Plan (objective 10.3) with a focus on child sexual exploitation.

5.0 Challenges

5.1 It has been very difficult to accurately ascertain the full extent of the impact of VAWG in Thurrock. The problems relate to the often hidden and private nature of VAWG and the inconsistent approaches to data collection.

5.2 The statistics that are available can therefore only partially contribute to providing an accurate picture of the extent of VAWG in the borough.

5.3 Work is being undertaken to improve the flow of information and better inform the extent of the issues we face.

6.0 Impact

6.1 Each and every resident in Thurrock has a role to play in tackling VAWG by sending out a clear message that VAWG is unacceptable.

6.2 Measuring VAWG is not just about the hard statistics and league tables but whether the interventions have made a difference to peoples lives.

6.3 One of the measures of our achievements is if survivors are more confident in coming forward to deal with the abuse they have suffered. This will indicate

that the strategy has been successful in sending out a clear message to everyone that VAWG is not acceptable.

6.4 Below are some of the quotes from victims and survivors that capture some of those elements.

- “I have never been through any thing like this before and so it was helpful having someone to call and check if I was ok. Thanks for all of your advice”.
- “Just want to say thank you very much. It was so good having somebody there to guide me through, to be there for me.”
- “The help and support I received was A* excellent, the people who contacted me were very friendly, easy to talk to and very encouraging and supporting and kind. I will be sending a card of thanks to all the people whom I received help kindness and support you all do a excellent most fantastic job. Many thanks; words cannot describe how happy and grateful I am. Many thanks again”

7.0 Progress so far

7.1 The first 12 months has focused on embedding the strategy across Thurrock, understanding the complexities of the VAWG agenda and focusing on having the right structure, policies and procedures in place that allow the building blocks of the six P’s to evolve.

7.2 Thurrock has implemented a number of initiatives to tackle VAWG the list is not exhaustive but includes outreach projects, counselling services, community based group work for children and their mothers who have been affected by domestic violence, interventions for perpetrators, interventions for young people who use violence in close relationships, support for female and male victims of domestic/sexual violence,

7.3 Numerous other activities have also taken place during this initial period with focus on:
E-safety
Honour based abuse
Schools projects
Sexual violence and learning differences
Development of the Essex, Southend and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Strategy

The following information highlights some of the activities that have taken place

7.3.1 E safety

There is an e-safety group in place under the scrutiny of the Children and Young People Partnership. This multi agency group has so far:-

- ✚ Established a network forum for schools

- ✚ Conducted e safety workshops with education safeguarding leads
- ✚ Planning a Thurrock wide school initiative on e-saftey
- ✚ Linked in with young people to seek there involvement in future planning and activity

7.3.2 Honour based abuse

- ✚ A short documentary film “Banaz a love story” has been shown on a rolling programme at the Thameside theatre for front line staff and managers. This thought provoking film has received very positive feedback highlighting the reality of honour based abuse.
- ✚ An honour based protocol is being developed to support awareness and understanding.

7.3.3 School projects

In May 2013, a questionnaire about school practices and policies on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) went to all secondary schools in Thurrock. Thurrock was approached to participate in the project because of the recognition of the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy,

The aim of the survey, developed by the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit at the London Metropolitan University, was to highlight good practice in schools, as well as identify gaps in the information and support that young people receive and to highlight what further resources and development are needed.

We received responses from all schools (including the Pupil Referral Unit)

The outcomes from this survey have been received and will inform the next phase on engagement with schools.

8.0 Early Offer of Help Provision

8.1 Supporting the VAWG strategy is a comprehensive early offer of help provision which referrals can now be made to. They include:

8.1.1 Domestic Violence Intervention Project (Perpetrators Programme)

This programme is delivered by the **Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP)** to men who are perpetrating domestic abuse. The 25 week group programme aims to address and change perpetrators behaviours by exploring childhood experiences and other life factors that influenced their behavior. The programme will use a variety of brief intervention therapies.

8.1.2 Domestic Abuse support for women (drop in)

This is delivered by the Thurrock Early Offer of Help Consortium (TEC) consisting of Open Door; Thurrock Women's Aid; Thurrock MIND and Thurrock Play Network.

A drop in service is available in four localities within Thurrock offering safety and support planning at the centre of the intervention. Practical advice will be offered around: health; welfare benefits; financial advice; criminal and civil law; access to training and employment.

8.1.3 **Sexual Violence support for women**

This is delivered by South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC). Service users will be referred where they have been raped, sexually assaulted, are survivors of childhood sexual abuse or any other form of sexual violence.

The provider will develop a peer support group in addition to a 121 support programme. And service users' children, where age appropriate, will be educated in sexual grooming and on-line safety.

8.1.4 **Parenting Programmes**

This programme will be delivered by **Coram**.

Three parenting programmes will be offered: Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC); Triple P and Mellow Parenting.

SFSC is an evidenced based intensive parenting programme that has been used extensively to reach marginalised communities. Specific elements focus on domestic abuse and substance misuse, areas which are key challenges for Thurrock.

Triple P is an evidenced based intensive parenting programme that aims to prevent severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. One element of the programme focuses on parents with teenage children.

Mellow Parenting is an intensive evidenced based parenting programme that focuses on attachment through: mother child interaction; child behaviour problems; mothers well being and mothers effectiveness and confidence in parenting.

Links are made between mothers own parental experiences and their current parenting experiences.

The programmes not only address parenting technique but also: understanding of the effect of parental behaviours on children; improving

children's development, improving attendance and attainment at school; seeks to improve parental engagement with their children's school; improve parental and child aspiration; ensuring families are in suitable secure accommodation and improving links with their own communities.

8.15 Family Intervention Project (FIP)

This is delivered by Catch 22. The programme offers an intensive programme of support to families who have multiple and complex issues, for example:

- Involved in crime and Anti Social Behaviour.
- Have children who are not in school, are frequently excluded or have persistent absence.
- Have an adult on out of work benefits.
- Have children on the edge of care / safeguarding concerns.
- Where there is child neglect, poor parenting and family dysfunction.
- Where there is alcohol and substance misuse.
- Member(s) of family have mental health issues.
- Member(s) of family have learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Unplanned teenage pregnancy.
- Family are in unsuitable housing / at risk of losing home.

Families will have a key worker who engages with the family on an intensive basis to ensure the issues are 'gripped' and families are supported to make changes that are sustainable. Practical support is offered in the home to address family routines.

8.16 Alcohol and Substance Misuse Programme

This is delivered by Thurrock Early Offer of Help Consortium (TEC) consisting of Open Door; Thurrock Women's Aid; Thurrock MIND and Thurrock Play Network.

The programme aims to ensure that families address their alcohol and substance misuse problems. This will be achieved by ensuring that the family is coordinated to: attend treatment programmes; address emotional well being issues; understand the impact of their behaviors on their children; improve family dynamics and routines; address anti social behavior and domestic abuse and parents are helped back into work or training.

Service users will have intensive support over several months, for up to 18 hours a week, to ensure changes are embedded and sustained once the intervention ceases. An early intervention and crisis intervention service will be available.

Parents' children, where age appropriate, will also be educated in the risks of alcohol and substance misuse, in order to avoid an intergenerational cycle of abuse.

8.17 Domestic Abuse support for women (121)

This is delivered by the Thurrock Early Offer of Help Consortium-a 121 support service will offer a therapeutic programme for up to 8 weeks to rebuild confidence and parenting skills and understand the impact of the abuse on dependent children. Emotional wellbeing issues will be addressed as well as safety planning; practical support; advice and guidance and advocacy.

8.2 We are now building on this initial work and moving into the next stage of development which incorporates:-

- + The establishment of a Child sexual exploitation group
- + A task and finish group looking at trafficking for sexual exploitation
- + Integrating VAWG into the MASH model of safeguarding in Thurrock

9. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS: N/A

10. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable) N/A

11. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

11.1 The progress made within the plan supports of the Health and Wellbeing vision of "every child has the best possible start in life"

12. IMPLICATIONS

12.1 FINANCIAL

Verified by

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Funding of the work of the VAWG and its activities is conducted through partner's contributions.

12.2 LEGAL

Implications verified by

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There are no direct Legal implications.

12.3 DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

Implications verified by

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There are no direct diversity or equality implications. The VAWG strategy aims to improve services for all Adults, children and young people in Thurrock.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USE IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

VAWG strategy
CYPP plan 2013-2014

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Nil

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