

## **Sutton Borough**

### **Response to the MPA Domestic Violence Board 12<sup>th</sup> June**

#### **Areas of concern and actions to Progress**

##### ***Cautions – concern re relatively high caution rate; process to ensure appropriateness of caution***

Sutton borough for the period June – August had a cautioning rate of 18.6%. The MPS average for that period was 32.3%.

Sutton Borough ensures that each individual decision on reaching a disposal decision in domestic violence cases is considered in the context of the needs of the survivor, the evidence available, the previous offending history of the suspect and the need to reassure survivors and communities that domestic violence is taken seriously.

Sutton Borough adopts a robust attitude towards domestic violence as evidenced in our response to the MPA Domestic Violence Board. The supervision of decisions is present through the Community Safety Unit's Detective Sergeant and Detective Inspector and at the point of disposal decision through the Custody Officer.

Rates of repeat victimisation are monitored. From July 2006 to August 2007, the percentage of repeat victims for Sutton Borough was 9.5%. This was the second lowest (and lowest in actual numbers) across the South East Cluster, which averaged 11.8%.

Sutton Borough had 46 second time repeat victims, 20 third time, 4 fourth time and 1 fifth time. (TPHQ CCSM data 06.09.07) It would not appear therefore that cautioning is in itself an inappropriate disposal and feeding into greater repeat victimisation. Bexley Borough has a higher cautioning rate of 65.4% but the lowest repeat victimisation as a percentage of their domestic violence crimes (65 second, 9 third, 6 fourth 1 fifth and 1 sixth). Repeat offences is an area where the borough will strive to make considerable improvement through adopting a greater partnership led solution and features prominently in LAA submissions and targets for the coming year.

In response to the opportunity Sutton had to present to the MPA Domestic Violence Board and the learning that has come from this and taking into account the MPA DV Board's Annual Report, Sutton Borough will undertake dip sampling of cautions led by the Detective Inspector in charge of Public Protection to ensure that disposal decisions are appropriate. Dip sampling will be undertaken weekly and involve 10% of cautioned cases. This will be a fully documented and audited process to ensure long term compliance.

##### ***Rape – concern at low numbers of domestic violence incidents of rape; process to ensure incidents correctly flagged***

Sutton Borough has a 'Public Protection' Command where Sapphire and Hate Crime are under the same Detective Inspector. The Crime Management Unit ensures that any relevant flags, including 'DV' are highlighted, and screen all sexual offences to the Sapphire unit.

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The Sapphire Detective Sergeant reviews all cases at the point of initially receiving the investigation and through ongoing supervision, where the incident can be flagged accordingly if information comes to light. The Detective Inspector when reporting on all hate crime matters in the preceding 24 hours at the daily management & tasking meeting again reviews the cases.

Centrally the MPS monitors hate crime and compliance with correctly flagging domestic violence sexual offences. Between April to June 2007, Sutton had 4 cases of rape involving domestic violence of which *all* were correctly flagged.

All calls to police entered on Cad are reviewed locally for compliance to ensure the appropriate flagging of domestic violence on Cad and then ensuring a crime report reference has been recorded.

### ***Redeveloped services – IDVA & MARAC progress; how are equality & diversity issues central to this***

A mapping exercise of survivors of domestic violence – their experience of referral by statutory and non-statutory agencies and the outcomes, has evidenced areas for improvement.

Improvements will be made in referral pathways. Currently survivors are being referred by agencies on the basis of differing needs assessments & based on the past experiences of agencies as to where they have referred survivors to. This means survivors have had different outcomes from referrals based on who they present to initially for assistance.

Improvements will be made in information exchange between agencies. Currently, to whom, in what format and what information is shared is not standardised. This leads to incomplete information being known about a survivor and their individual circumstances, which limits our ability to provide a comprehensive plan to assist them. It presents operational difficulties for agencies in trying to provide and then access information. The exchange of information has been greatly assisted by the 'Information Sharing Regulations' recently published in the Home Office, 'Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working' (the review of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships).

Improvements will be made in risk and needs assessment. Currently, assessments are not standardised leading to different assessments of risk and need, leading to potentially different referrals or plans to assist survivors. All the improvements referred to are contained in the Draft Sutton Borough Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plans for 2007/8 (currently circulated to partners for consultation).

Understanding the current position has enabled the Borough to map future services, which involves a common information sharing protocol and risk and needs assessment triage tool. A single point of referral for comprehensive risk and needs assessment is being developed, where in addition care planning and central monitoring of cases will be undertaken. Within this new central service there will be

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the IDVA and MARAC management functions. Multi agency training will also be undertaken.

The information sharing protocol, upon which survivors of domestic violence were consulted, has been agreed by the DV Strategy Group and is being piloted to ascertain its effectiveness. A common risk/need assessment triage tool has also been agreed by the DV Strategy Group and this too is being piloted. The Borough's DV Strategy is currently undergoing consultation with key partners and the voluntary sector.

The commissioning process for this new central domestic violence service will be undertaken shortly for the service to commence in April 2008.

This supports the Borough's recent high level commitment to domestic violence as a priority, where domestic violence & its impact on survivors and children has been included in the Local Area Agreement as a priority for Sutton's Local Strategic Partnership. It is a specific improvement area for the Local Authority and will be part of the funding process, which underpins the redevelopment of services outlined above.

Equality and diversity issues will be central to the service proposed and any agency bidding to deliver the service will need to demonstrate that they will deliver appropriate services and monitor that delivery for any adverse impact.

### ***Domestic violence training – current progress***

Whilst there is currently no integrated partnership training, the Women's Centre continues to run twice yearly domestic violence awareness training for partners and practitioners.

Multi agency partnership domestic violence training will be included as part of the re commissioning of a central domestic violence service due to commence April 2008. A new central service will be established prior to the commissioning of such training so that it can be tailored for trainees to understand the local services and how they can be accessed and delivered in Sutton. Awareness training will however be continued to be delivered as mentioned above.

Police domestic violence training continues as was reported to the Board (page 10 & 11 of the written submission).

### ***Safer Neighbourhood Teams – process for ensuring SNTs can direct community members to relevant services***

Sutton Borough holds a multi agency Problem Solving Meeting (PSM) weekly, which includes SNTs, and partners such as mediation services & the LBS Chief Executives Office who lead on DV issues for the borough.

Taskings & requests for assistance are passed to the relevant SNTs. SNTs also work closely with the CAIT to ensure children are protected from the results of DV. All SNTs, including PCSOs are included in borough DV training. Data from the PCT and local authority are used to create Ward Profiles of each SNT area with a focus on

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areas like social deprivation and single mothers. DV issues are flagged where appropriate to the local SNT via the CSU.

All SNT officers are to be provided with updated contact cards with details of local DV services, Citizen's Advice, mediation services, women's refugees and VSS as part of our ongoing partnership development.

### ***Community engagement – process for engagement with domestic violence specialists and how has this informed BOCU response to incidents***

In addition to the information provided to the Board (page 8 & 9 of the written submission), the previous 'LIT' or Local Implementation Team' will be reformed once the DV Strategy, Information sharing protocol, referral pathways and risk/needs assessment triage tool have been agreed. However, the DV Strategy Group brings together specialists from the voluntary sector and statutory agencies to resolve particular issues. The Voluntary Sector continues to be consulted on the DV Strategy itself.

Survivors are directly consulted and were so in developing the information sharing protocol, which is now being piloted. Survivors were supportive of the protocol, as they saw it as a positive step in assisting them in managing their case.

### ***Survivor satisfaction & continuous improvement – process for accessing feedback directly from survivors***

In addition to the information provided to the Board (page 8, 9, 10), the Borough undertook a survivor mapping exercise, so whilst not direct feedback, nevertheless mapped referral pathways and outcomes for survivors which has led to the redevelopment and re commissioning of services for survivors.

The Women's Centre currently offers a review service with feedback to inform future delivery of their services, but within the overall re commissioning described above a process of direct feedback from survivors will be included that will inform service delivery.

The current Quality Call Back process excludes cases of domestic violence.