



**Metropolitan Police Authority**

**Domestic Violence Board – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

**PROGRESS REPORT TO THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BOARD**

**Report by Havering Borough on behalf of the Commissioner**

**Summary**

This progress report seeks to address the outstanding issues and actions given to the borough to progress at the meeting of the MPA Domestic Violence Board held on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006. The report details any progress made as well as the planned work to be undertaken by the BOCU to address these outstanding issues. The report also seeks to request further assistance from TP Crime Directorate or the MPA Domestic Violence Board to progress actions where the BOCU feels this is needed.

**A. EQUALITIES MONITORING**

**1. How does data broken down according to ethnicity, age and gender shape services locally?**

Information is available from Havering BOCU that breaks down the data of victims of domestic violence according to ethnicity, age and gender. See explanation at Annex A. This covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006. This data is now provided by the Management Information Unit on a monthly basis and analysis of the data ensures that the service given by the Community Safety Unit reflects the needs of those persons reporting Domestic Violence.

The primary driver behind the services provided fall within the Territorial Policing Crime Standard Operating Procedures for Domestic Violence. It is the adherence to this policy and the intrusive supervision and scrutiny of offences committed that has seen the performance of the Borough as of 16/08/06 improve to a 70.3% Sanction Detection Rate, which remains to date the best detection rate of any Borough in relation to Domestic Violence. At this current time Havering charge the suspect in 29% of all offences. This is also the highest rate of charge per offence out of all the Boroughs in the Metropolitan Police area. Of Domestic Violence offences committed since 01/04/06 Havering Borough has achieved 60% Sanction Detection Rate (this does not include offences of Domestic Violence which were committed prior to 01/04/006 and detected after 01/04/06, hence the overall 70.3% Detection Rate). Of the victims who are black and minority ethnic Havering Borough has achieved a Sanction Detection Rate of 56% as opposed to a Sanction Detection Rate of 60% for victims who are white. This demonstrates the performance of the Borough and the proportionality of offences detected.

Havering Community Safety Unit endeavour to treat each victim of Domestic Violence as an individual and their views are sought from the outset of an investigation to ascertain their needs. The needs of the victim are accordingly adopted within the Investigation Strategy of the crime reported. As to the nature of how the victims individual's needs are met see answer 4.

In the wider context of the question the Borough of Havering held a Black and Minority Ethnic Conference recently in an effort to reach out to minority groups who represent residents within the Borough. For a list of organisations that took part in the Conference see Annex B. This list of organisations will be utilised when the needs of the victims are assessed and require referring to a third party.

## **2. Is there any data available in relation to sexual orientation, disability and religion and how does this shape services locally?**

Information is available from Havering Borough, which breaks down the data according to disability of the victim. Currently there is no flagging system within the Cris database, which can be searched for a person's sexual orientation. The only flags available concerning sexual orientation are where the person is a victim of a Homophobic offence. Whilst there is a flag available on the Cris database for religion of the victim, this is not mandatory for the crime report to be completed. Of the 430 Domestic Violence crimes recorded to date no flags have been recorded for religion of the victim.

Similarly as in Question 1 Havering BOCU do not have a separate policy in dealing with victims of Domestic Violence who are disabled, from a specific faith group or those who state their sexual orientation.

It is vital that the needs of the individual are ascertained and the Community Safety Unit, whom after consulting with the victim can then implement those needs through the Investigation Strategy. Havering Borough has a number of organisations that work together to meet these needs and with the consent of the victim they can then be referred to the partner agencies. See Annex C.

## **3. How does Havering engage with the range of community members in the borough, particularly minority groups such as disabled people?**

In response to victims of Domestic Violence from minority groups such as disabled people we engage with these victims personally. Where communication is difficult the use of an interpreter, family member or appropriate adult is utilised. Where these persons are vulnerable statements are taken in the format of "Achieving Best Evidence" and are videoed so that if their case is brought to trial their evidence in chief can be given in that format. Support services are utilised wherever necessary.

Havering BOCU personnel attend the Havering Multi Agency Adult Protection Committee, which supports the needs of vulnerable persons. The policies of the Borough are formulated at this group as well as individual cases discussed. A list of partner organisations that attend this Committee can be found at Annex C. A

number of advertising campaigns have been undertaken by the MPS encouraging victims of domestic violence to report the offences and highlighting the importance of holding perpetrators to account. In addition to this Havering Community Safety Partnership in conjunction with Havering Victim Support have embarked on a third party reporting scheme whereby self completing forms are displayed at appropriate venues across the Borough. These include venues accessible to all communities.

**4. What does 'every crime is given its own personal strategy' actually entail and which organisations does Havering liaise with outside the police service to tackle individual cases?**

All Domestic Violence crimes are screened in to the Community Safety Unit by the Crime Management Unit for further investigation. They are screened in to one Detective Sergeant who is responsible for allocating the crime to an Officer for further investigation. When that Detective Sergeant is not on duty it is the responsibility of the other Detective Sergeants to look at the work file of the allocating Sergeant to ensure prompt allocation. Every crime is given a bespoke Investigation Strategy prior to allocation. This is based on the offence that is being investigated and the needs of the victim. The strategy will direct the Investigating Officer as to what evidence should be obtained to afford the best possible chance of detection. In addition to this the strategy is focussed on the needs of the victim. This varies from needs for an interpreter, housing requirements, advocacy, alcohol and drug referrals, social services, medical services, support groups, cultural support groups. Prior to any crime being completed it is referred to a Detective Sergeant who reviews the investigation and ensures the Investigation Strategy set from the outset has been complied with. Below at Annex C is a list of the organisations Havering Community Safety Unit liaise with to tackle individual cases.

**5. A significant proportion of Havering's ethnicity data of victims reporting domestic violence was recorded as 'unknown'. Can this be explained?**

Havering Borough from data obtained has a breakdown of all victims of Domestic Violence by ethnicity. Currently there are shown to be thirteen victims of Domestic Violence where the ethnicity is unknown. On certain crimes such as criminal damage where the victim has suffered Domestic Violence and the damage has been to a house where the house is owned by the local authority or housing association, the local authority or housing association are shown as a victim as well as the occupant of the house. For obvious reasons these corporate victims cannot be classified by ethnicity. Further crimes such as deception where the victim of theft is deemed to have suffered financial abuse by a partner/ex partner and a credit card of the victim has been stolen by a partner/ex partner and then used to obtain goods, each franchise where goods have been bought by the stolen card will be shown as a victim. All thirteen victims where the ethnicity of the victim is shown as unknown, fall into either of the above categories.

In relation to Self Defined Ethnicity there is a gap in the recording process. This is not confined to any racial group but is across the whole spectrum. From the data obtained approximately one third of all victims Self Defined Ethnicity is not recorded. The reason for this is that in the crime reporting system (Cris) it is mandatory for the victims ethnicity to be recorded (a report cannot be completed until the data has been entered) whilst this is not mandatory for the Self Defined Ethnicity. This matter has been raised with the Racial and Violent Crime Task Force to ascertain whether this is a Service issue and one that can be addressed by updating the Cris package.

## **B. DISPROPORTIONALITY**

- 1. From the ethnicity data, which is available, black and minority ethnic victims are disproportionately reporting domestic violence incidents. Can this be explained? If not, what work is the BOCU engaged in to understand this pattern?**

From data supplied by the local authority black and minority ethnic persons make up approximately 4.5% of the population of the Borough of Havering. From the data obtained within April 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> 50 of the Domestic Violence crimes reported have a black or minority ethnic victim. This is from a total of some 430 Domestic Violence crimes and represents 11% of the total. A review of the Domestic Violence crimes reported by black and minority ethnic victims on Havering Borough reveal that almost 50% of either the victim or suspect do not reside on the Borough of Havering. It does not also take in to account the number of persons who were repeat victims of crime within the timeframe under consideration. The data provided also does not specify the suspect according to their ethnicity. A number of allegations were from partners who were from different ethnic backgrounds. Once these findings are taken into consideration the disproportionality of black and minority ethnic victims reporting Domestic Violence is not so apparent.

## **C. UPDATE ON THE LOCAL JOINT ACTION GROUP SPECIFICALLY ENGAGING MINORITY COMMUNITIES**

The local authority has held a conference for Black and Asian Minority Ethnic groups; the purpose was to capacity build and builds a supportive network to reach out to groups. The Chief Inspector for partnership is involved in the development of the group, which will enhance engagement with our community. The Local Joint Action Group has now operated for 6 months, it provides a forum whereby the local authority and police managers can jointly direct resources to problem solve issues that are of concern to local residents.

#### **D. AN OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR TRACKING PROGRESS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES**

Havering Community Safety Unit is represented locally on a number of Forums/Committees with partner agencies that respond/combat Domestic Violence. One such group the Domestic Violence Inter Agency Group monitors the process of Domestic Violence cases through Havering Magistrates Court at Romford. Meetings are bi-monthly and a spreadsheet is maintained that covers all cases of Domestic Violence. Data includes, names of the defendant and victim, trial dates and times, amount of time the victim is waiting before giving evidence, whether referral was made to the Domestic Violence Advocate, whether Special Measures were applied for, whether Special Measures were granted, whether the defendant pleaded guilty or not, whether the defendant was found guilty or not, what sentence the defendant received and whether a restraining order was granted. It was from the Domestic Violence Inter Agency Group that the need for a Domestic Violence Advocate was discovered. Scrutiny of this data revealed that a number of victims were failing to attend Court. An application for funding was made for a Domestic Violence Advocate to support victims. This was supported by Havering BOCU Chief Superintendent Taylor, which has subsequently led to great success in securing the attendance of victims at Court. Recent analysis of the Data showed an unacceptable number of cases being found not guilty at the Magistrates Court. This resulted in a request to the Crown Prosecution Service for a Specialist Domestic Violence lawyer to prosecute offences. A response has yet to be received.

#### **E. FURTHER INFORMATION ON FUNDING FOR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY FOR SURVIVORS**

The local police and partners have secured funding for the advocacy worker until the end of the financial year. The future funding of this posts remains a concern for the future as the MPS and partners at this stage cannot commit funds, that there is no guarantee of future funding and indeed MPA and Home office funding prohibit the funding of posts. However, VSS are trying to apply for funding from other sources.

#### **F. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THOSE CASES INVOLVING WITNESS SUMMONSES**

Records have been maintained since 2004 of the number of Witness Summons obtained from Havering Magistrates Court. In 2004 there were fifteen Witness Summons obtained of which eleven were served. In 2005 there were sixty-four Witness Summons applied for and fifty-six served. In 2006 to date there have been fifty Witness Summons applied for and forty-seven served. As can be seen there has been a sharp increase of Witness Summons since 2004. The rationale for this is the change in policy of the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, Witness Summoning victims of Domestic Violence in attempting to safeguard the victim from future abuse and holding the perpetrator to account.

Generally this is very successful in securing the attendance of the victim at the Court, however there are still occasions where the victim does attend and will not give evidence.

#### **G. SUCCESSION PLANNING AROUND DV WORK**

The Borough continues its positive approach to succession planning, with the individual developmental needs balanced with continued operational effectiveness. The succession planning for the Community Safety Unit is ongoing and planning has taken place for the long term.

#### **H. IMPACT OF THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM ON DV INCIDENTS**

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams on Havering BOCU have had a limited impact on Domestic Violence incidents. Domestic Violence incidents are flagged to the Ward Officer through the Cris system. The Ward Officers do not always have the capability to make follow up visits when such incidents are reported. Safer Neighbourhood Teams also become aware of repeat victims where a premises is identified as a Hot Spot through the Borough Intelligence Unit. Ward Officers are also made aware of repeat perpetrators of Domestic Violence and those persons wanted for such matters via Daily Intelligence Briefings. Safer Neighbourhood Teams do not as a matter of course attend the initial investigation of a Domestic Incident and all such incidents are screened into the Community Safety Unit for secondary investigation.

#### **I. FOLLOW-UP ON THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS DEVELOPING A HOUSING POLICY BY THE WORKING POLICY GROUP**

Currently Havering Housing Service does not have a specific policy for Domestic Violence. Victims of Domestic Violence wishing to flee their home are catered for within other strands of the policy e.g. Emergency Reasons, which is given the highest priority in the Lettings Policy, whilst not explicitly referring to Domestic Violence. Havering Housing Service are rewriting the Housing Strategy this year. With the assistance of Havering Domestic Violence Forum a policy will be created which draws together all the parts of the current policy that relates to Domestic Violence and be accessible as a separate document. Later in 2006 a Housing Strategy Conference is being held to assist in the rewriting of the strategy, this is scheduled to be completed and published in 2007.

#### **J. UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE HOUSING VULNERABLE PERSON'S PANEL SET UP TO DISCUSS CASES THAT ARE IN DISPUTE**

A multi-agency Vulnerable Persons Panel has been in place since May 2006. The Panel concerns itself with people who could be at risk of losing their accommodation owing to vulnerability. Most typically, this vulnerability is a mental

health problem or substance abuse. Domestic Violence is not explicitly referred to in the Vulnerable Persons Protocol, however Domestic Violence cases are able to come to the Panel. The Panel concerns itself with developing joined up housing and support packages for the most complex cases. The majority of Domestic Violence cases that require housing assistance are those fleeing domestic violence and require urgent attention and so fall out of the remit of the Panel.

**K. UPDATE ON WHETHER THE DV POLICY DEVELOPED BY THE DV FORUM FOR THE MAGISTRATES' COURT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE HAVERING COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The Domestic Violence Policy being developed by the Domestic Violence Inter Agency Group for the Magistrates Court at Havering has yet to be completed. It is set to be completed and adopted at the Havering Domestic Violence Conference that takes place on Friday the 24th of November 2006 at the CEME Centre, Marsh Way, Rainham, Essex.

**Report author:** Detective Inspector Chris Krelle  
Chief Superintendent Sultan Taylor  
Havering BOCU

**Background Papers**

Annex A  
Annex B  
Annex C

## **Annex A**

Havering Borough since the Domestic Violence Board in 5<sup>TH</sup> April 2006 have undertaken to ascertain the background of all victims of Domestic Violence. This is completed by retrieving the data from all crime reports. The Management Information Unit on a monthly basis now provides this data and analysis of the data ensures that the service given by the Community Safety Unit reflects the needs of those persons reporting Domestic Violence. Currently the crime reports are searched under the current criteria

Victim ethnicity

Self Defined Ethnicity

Gender

Age

Religion

Disability

Occupation

Classification of crime

Date of offence

All the above data is contained within an excel spreadsheet and can be searched for any multiple of the above. For example a search could be undertaken of all female victims between the ages of 20 –30 who had suffered actual bodily harm. Whilst not included in the report the excel spreadsheet is available to be scrutinised.



## **Annex B**

- Asian Women's Association of Havering
- Universal Brotherhood (independent faith group)
- Havering Hindu Cultural Society
- Essex Islamic Educational Trust
- Elm Park Synagogue
- Bahai Faith Group
- Havering Islamic Cultural Centre
- Essex Hindu Society
- Brentwood Hindu Cultural Association
- Association of Jewish Ex-Service men and women
- Brentwood Hindu Cultural Association
- Association of Jewish Ex-Service men and women
- Dallaway Steel Band
- Afro-Caribbean Arts in Education
- Havering Asian & Social Welfare
- Asian Welfare Society of Havering
- Havering Sickle Cell/Thalassaemia Support Group (African)
- Mas-O-Rama Arts (Caribbean)
- Barking & Dagenham Bangladesh Welfare Association
- Jewish Community
- African Culture Arts & Sports Network
- Francophone African Women Together (FAWT)

## **Annex C**

- Havering Women's Aid
- First Stop Drug Services
- Victim Support
- North East London Mental Health Team
- Havering Education
- Community Safety Team (local authority)
- Victim Support
- The Women's Trust
- Supporting People
- HAVCO
- Surestart
- Primary Care Trust
- London Borough of Havering Housing
- Safe Partnership
- Homestart
- Social Services
- Teenage Pregnancy Unit
- Havering Magistrates Court
- North Romford Consortium
- Ashiana
- National Probation Service
- Older Peoples Forum
- Age Concern
- Race Equality Council
- London Fire Brigade
- Youth Service
- Help The Aged
- Havering Association For People With Disabilities
- Sheltered Housing