

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership

Bradford Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls: An Integrated Strategy for the Bradford District

2010-2013



Bradford Violence Against Women Forum (bVAWF)



We are pleased to present Bradford's strategy for tackling violence against women and girls. This strategy has been developed in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies directly involved in reducing all forms of violence against women and girls, either through direct service provision, commissioning of services, or through strategic planning.

A great deal of very good work has been carried out since the implementation of the Bradford Domestic Abuse Strategy 2007 – 2010 and Bradford has become an example of good practice in its delivery of services, multi-agency working and strategic planning.

In January 2009, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published *'Map of Gaps 2: The Postcode Lottery of Violence Against Women Support Services in Britain'*. Bradford was commended by the Commission as being the best local authority in England for violence against women service provision. This recognises the diversity of services for women across the district.

Bradford has continued to develop provision for those victims most at risk of serious assault through its Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and district-wide Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy services.

In April 2009 Bradford received accreditation for Specialist Domestic Violence Courts operating district-wide at both Bingley and Bradford Magistrates Courts. These courts offer a wrap-around service for victims, ensuring that they are supported throughout the criminal justice process.

In line with the publication in November 2009 of the cross-government *'Together we can end violence against women and girls: A Strategy'*, in which Bradford is highlighted as an example of

good practice, Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership has revised the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2007/10 and developed this Bradford Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2010 – 2013.

The complexity of the problem and its far-reaching effects demand a broad response. This strategy represents a partnership commitment to addressing the issue. It includes proposals from organisations dealing with health and education, housing, local government and transport, as well as criminal justice. It recognises the invaluable and pioneering role played in developing support services by specialists in the voluntary sector.

We want to continue to support agencies in the delivery of services and recognise that it is the responsibility of all agencies to work together to improve policies, procedures and working practice, to achieve consistent and co-ordinated responses and better outcomes for those women and girls affected by violence and abuse.

Sustaining and further developing voluntary sector service provision is essential if violence against women and girls is to be seriously addressed and eliminated.



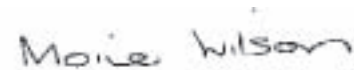
Moira Wilson
Chair Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership

Table of Contents

We pledge to support the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership in the delivery of this strategy, through our partnership working and our commitment to significantly reducing violence against women and girls across the whole of the Bradford district:



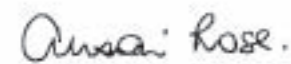
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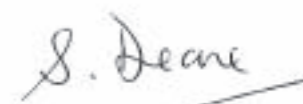
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Foreword 1

Executive summary 4

01 Section one

Overview 8

National policies 9

National indicators 10

Local context 11

02 Section two

Priorities: The 'Ps' 14

Perspective, policy and procedures 15

Prevention 16

Provision, protection and prosecution 17

03 Section three

Objectives 20

Objective 1: Reduce violence against women and girls in Bradford 21

Objective 2: Continue to improve access, provision and take up of services 23

Objective 3: Address the health, social and economic consequences
 of violence 27

Objective 4: Protect women and girls at risk 30

Objective 5: Ensure effective offender management 33

Summary 36

Appendix 1 Glossary 36

Since the implementation of the Bradford Domestic Abuse Strategy 2007 – 2010, first time reporting of domestic violence to the police has increased, repeat victimisation has decreased and the percentage of serious violent crimes identified as domestic violence related has decreased. This strategy aims to continue this positive trend towards reducing violence against women and girls across the whole of the Bradford district.

The Home Office has identified national indicators to measure the impact that local authorities and partner organisations are having on violence against women and girls within their areas. These will be used to measure the impact and success of this strategy.

This document provides both a strategic **perspective** and an overarching **policy/procedural** framework, and contains specific objectives with respect to the priority areas of **prevention, provision, protection and prosecution**.

The objectives identified are:

Objective 1:

Reduce violence against women and girls in Bradford

- 1a. Implement actions to prevent violence against women and girls
- 1b. Educate young people on positive relationships and protective behaviours

Objective 2:

Continue to improve access, provision and take up of services

- 2a. Ensure equitable access to high quality support services across the district
- 2b. Improve responses to rape and sexual assault in Bradford
- 2c. Enable agencies to respond to the needs of children and young people experiencing violence through better awareness of safeguarding issues and promotion of safeguarding procedures
- 2d. Provide training for relevant professionals across Bradford
- 2e. Ensure information is available and accessible for friends and family so they are better equipped to help women and girls experiencing violence
- 2f. Provide a range of services which meet the needs of Bradford's diverse and changing communities

Objective 3:

Address the health, social and economic consequences of violence against women and girls

- 3a. Work with partners in the health sector to ensure that policies incorporate all forms of violence against women and girls and measure their implementation
- 3b. Address the financial impacts of violence against women and girls
- 3c. Ensure that the Bradford Housing Strategy addresses violence against women and girls

Objective 4:

Protect women and girls at risk

- 4a. Respond to the needs of at risk and marginalised women and girls
- 4b. Improve support services and provision at a local level, working with partners in localities
- 4c. Increase public confidence, victim support and satisfaction

Objective 5:

Ensure effective offender management

- 5a. Address violence against women and girls through multi-agency meetings
- 5b. Reduce prostitution by focusing on those profiting from the sexual exploitation of women and girls and providing support services to help women and girls exit and recover from prostitution and sexual exploitation
- 5c. Enhance the effectiveness of community-based interventions with perpetrators
- 5d. Prevent young men and boys becoming perpetrators through early intervention and implementing existing safeguarding procedures

It should be noted that any incidents involving children or young people should always follow child protection procedures and that any incidents involving vulnerable adults should follow adult protection procedures.

A full delivery plan has been developed in order to ensure that this strategy is delivered and that actions are measured.

Section 01

Overview	8
National policies	9
Local context	11

Making Bradford safer for all of the district's citizens is one of the priorities of the Safer Communities Partnership. By providing strategic leadership in Bradford, the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership aims to make a real difference to women and girls who live with the fear and suffer the reality of violence.

Violence damages women and girls and has far-reaching consequences for families, children, communities and society as a whole. Violence against women and girls is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality and there are connections across all forms of violence against women and girls; among adult female victims of intimate violence, 33% experienced more than one type of abuse, most commonly partner abuse and sexual assault (British Crime Survey 2007/8). The only effective way to confront violence against women and girls is to work together in partnership.

Whilst this document covers violence against women and girls, it must be stressed that violence and abuse perpetrated against girls under 18 years of age is a child protection issue and all incidents of actual or suspected violence and abuse should be reported to the appropriate authorities and dealt with through the mechanisms already established by Bradford's Safeguarding Children's Board.

Similarly, Bradford's Safeguarding Adult's Board has developed protocols for dealing with violence and abuse perpetrated against older and vulnerable adults. These mechanisms should be used whenever a vulnerable adult is suspected of being a victim of abuse.

Protecting women from violence and enabling them to protect themselves, either through the criminal justice system or through increased safety measures, gives women greater capacity to protect their children. Therefore, the term 'women' is used in this document to include any children which the woman may have in her care.

Every year thousands of women and girls throughout the UK experience some form of violence including; rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, stalking, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking, or so called 'honour' based violence.

Violence against women and girls is taken very seriously in Bradford, and in 2009 the Equality and Human Rights Commission commended Bradford for providing the best level of service provision in England for women and girls experiencing violence (End Violence Against Women Coalition and the Equality and Human Rights 2009).

The second millennium saw a resurgence of Government interest in various aspects of violence against women and girls including but not restricted to:

- The Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service **Rape Action Plan 2002, with the Sexual Offences Act 2003** coming into force in May 2004
- **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004** and the Home Office **National Report for Domestic Violence** plan of action 2005/06
- The Home Office **A Coordinated Prostitution Strategy (2006)**
- a summary of responses to the consultation on the **possession of extreme pornographic material**
- The Home Office **Cross-government action plan on sexual violence and abuse 2007**
- **Forced Marriage Civil Protection Act 2007**
- The **Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC)** programme continued to expand and reached a total of 98 courts by April 2008
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 (revised issue March 2010)**
- **Child Protection, domestic violence and parental substance misuse 2008**
- **Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (July 2009)**

Following extensive consultation during 2009, the Government published '**Together we can end violence against women and girls: A Strategy**', bringing together all policy documents in to one strategic framework.

National indicators relevant to violent crime including perception indicators:

The following have been identified by the Home Office as national indicators to measure the impact that local authorities and partner organisations are having on violence against women and girls within their areas:

- NI 26 Specialist support to victims of a serious sexual offence
- NI 31 Re-offending rate of registered sex offenders
- NI 32 Repeat incidents of domestic violence
- NI 34 Domestic violence – murder

There are other national indicators which are monitored by other partnerships which interventions to reduce violence against women and girls will have some impact up on. For example those monitored by the Safer Communities Delivery Group include but are not limited to:

- NI 15 Serious violent crime rate
- NI 20 Assault with injury crime rate
- NI 30 Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders

Similarly, those monitored by Bradford Safeguarding Children Board include but are not limited to:

- NI 69 Children who have experienced bullying
- NI 70 Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children
- NI 71 Children who have run away from home/care overnight

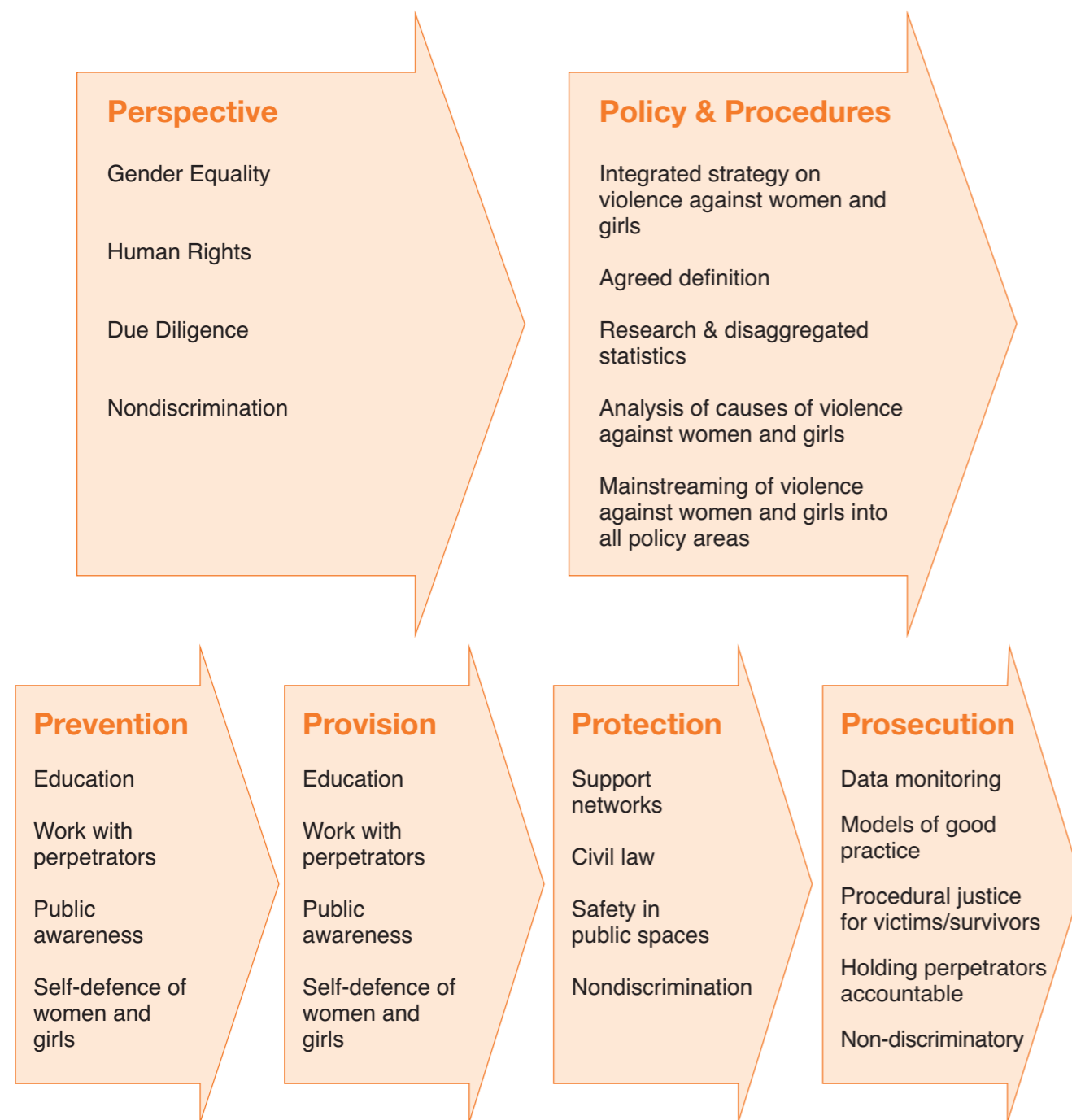
Providing services is only possible if women and girls report or disclose the violence they experience. During 2008/09 in Bradford:

- approximately 30% of all violent crime reported to the police was domestic violence related
- there were 7,426 incidents of domestic violence reported to the police, with 83% involving female victims. The remaining 17% includes incidents where, although the victim is identified as male, some of these men have also been identified as perpetrators in other incidents
- children were present at over 3,000 domestic violence incidents reported to the police
- there were 126 incidents of forced marriage (actual or threatened) reported to the police (72% of the West Yorkshire total)
- incidents of rape of females aged 16 and over reported to the police remained the same for 2008/09 as 2007/08 (105 incidents)
- sexual assault on females aged 13 years and over reported to the police increased from 122 in 2007/08 to 143 in 2008/09
- referrals to Surviving Trauma After Rape (STAR) West-Yorkshire from the Bradford area increased from 27 in 2008 to 44 in 2009
- Domestic homicide in Bradford reduced from 5 homicides in 2006/07 to 3 homicides in 2007/08 and 1 homicide in 2008/09

Section 02

Priorities: The 'Ps'	14
Perspective, policy and procedures	15
Prevention	16
Provision, protection and prosecution	17

This document provides both a strategic **perspective** and an overarching **policy/procedural** framework and contains specific objectives with respect to the priority areas of **prevention, provision, protection and prosecution.**



Violence against women and girls cuts across boundaries of culture, ethnicity, age, wealth and geography, affecting women and girls of all ages and all backgrounds.

Violence against women and girls encompasses, but is not limited to: rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse; domestic violence; forced and child marriage; crimes in the name of 'honour'; sexual harassment (in the workplace and in the public sphere); trafficking in women and girls and sexual exploitation (including prostitution).

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will fail to protect women and girls if action is not grounded in a coherent and solid perspective and policy framework. Locating perspective and policy as the necessary foundations and drivers of an integrated strategy places prevention at the centre rather than the margin of the approach to tackling violence against women and girls.

Bradford's Safeguarding Children's Board has protocols and procedures which outline actions to be taken when any child under the age of 18 is suspected of experiencing violence or abuse; emphasising that the protection of children is everyone's business. Better use of these protocols and procedures will increase the protection offered to girls across the district.

The General Recommendation 19 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1992) provides a definition of Violence Against Women and the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women provided further clarification of what a definition should include. Taking these two descriptions of violence against women, this strategy adopts the following definition:

Violence against women and girls is violence and abuse directed against a woman or girl because she is a woman or girl or that affects women and girls disproportionately and is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman or girl, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Violence against women and girls is rooted in negative attitudes that have been perpetuated over time allowing abusers to inflict violence against women and girls without consequence.

Local authorities have a responsibility to address violence against women and girls under the linked agendas of equalities and human rights. To act with due diligence requires that local authorities demonstrate they are exercising *active* attention to violations of human rights. This Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy demonstrates Bradford Council's commitment to fulfilling the obligations of due diligence. However, this strategy moves beyond a paper exercise and locates prevention at its core in an attempt to move towards the UN stated goal of eliminating violence against women and girls and creating a district where women and girls not only feel safe but are safe.

The principle of non-discrimination is inherent in all human rights. Recognising equality and diversity issues, this strategy recognises that not all women have access to fair and equal outcomes. Women and girls who are known to be especially vulnerable to violence and who are marginalised such as women involved prostitution, women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, lesbians, disabled women, women with mental health or substance abuse issues, and some young women in care will require specialised approaches. The principle of non-discrimination requires targeted measures including ensuring all women and girls have equal access to protection, justice and support. The Equality and Human Rights Commission, which polices the Gender Equality Act 2006, has stressed that women-only services are both legal

and valuable and are able to play a role in meeting the differing needs of men and women as required by the gender duty. Services specifically for different groups of black and minority ethnic (BME) women are legal and fulfil their role, under the Gender Duty, to address their specific needs. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed during the development of this strategy and is available on request.

Violence against women and girls impacts upon other social issues, including youth crime, poverty, unemployment and health inequalities. Tackling violence against women and girls more effectively will help achieve other priorities. Integrating violence against women and girls into other policy priorities will enhance violence prevention.

In addition to obligations to prevent violence, local authorities have a duty to 'take appropriate and effective action concerning acts of violence against women', including provision of redress and support services.

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will take steps to provide protection and support to those who bear the brunt of violence. Those with the power to transform the cultures that perpetuate violence against women and girls must work together. This strategy encourages partners to work together to achieve positive outcomes.

- Provision of services, especially in health and social care; and providing women and girls with a place of safety, and a fresh start protection through the criminal justice system that works, when it's needed.
- The provision of services needs to be coordinated within commissioning and funding streams. The main commissioners in Bradford are working together to move towards joint commissioning, which will ensure consistency and quality of service provision as well as opportunities for development work to be implemented.

Section 03

Objectives	20
Objective 1: Reduce violence against women and girls in Bradford	21
Objective 2: Continue to improve access, provision and take up of services	23
Objective 3: Address the health, social and economic consequences of violence against women and girls	27
Objective 4: Protect women and girls at risk	30
Objective 5: Ensure effective offender management	33

This document is based on five objectives building on the framework developed by the End Violence Against Women coalition and endorsed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Objective 1:

Reduce violence against women and girls in Bradford

- 1a. Implement actions to prevent violence against women and girls
- 1b. Educate young people on positive relationships and protective behaviours

Objective 2:

Continue to improve access, provision and take up of services

- 2a. Ensure equitable access to high quality support services across the district
- 2b. Improve responses to rape and sexual assault in Bradford
- 2c. Enable agencies to respond to the needs of children and young people experiencing violence through better awareness of safeguarding issues and promotion of safeguarding procedures
- 2d. Provide training for relevant professionals across Bradford
- 2e. Ensure information is available and accessible for friends and family so they are better equipped to help women and girls experiencing violence
- 2f. Provide a range of services which meet the needs of Bradford's diverse and changing communities

Objective 3:

Address the health, social and economic consequences of violence against women and girls

- 3a. Work with partners in the health sector to ensure that policies incorporate all forms of violence against women and girls and measure their implementation
- 3b. Address the financial impacts of violence against women and girls
- 3c. Ensure that the Bradford Housing Strategy addresses violence against women and girls

Objective 4:

Protect women and girls at risk

- 4a. Respond to the needs of at risk and marginalised women and girls
- 4b. Improve support services and provision at a local level, working with partners in localities
- 4c. Increase public confidence, victim support and satisfaction

Objective 5:

Ensure effective offender management

- 5a. Address violence against women and girls through multi-agency meetings
- 5b. Reduce prostitution by focusing on pimps and traffickers and providing support services to help women and girls exit and recover from prostitution and sexual exploitation
- 5c. Enhance the effectiveness of community-based interventions with perpetrators
- 5d. Prevent young men and boys becoming perpetrators through early intervention and implementing existing safeguarding procedures

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will develop a range of measures to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls with a strong emphasis on changing attitudes.

Our response will address violence against women and girls as a whole, with its roots in gender inequality. The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will promote an ambitious approach within which Bradford will continue to develop innovative policy and practice. Bradford will continue to develop services which have been acknowledged as providing the women and girls of Bradford with the best level of service provision in England (End Violence Against Women coalition and the Equality and Human Rights Commission 2009).

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will:

- prevent violence happening in the first place by changing attitudes and beliefs
- intervene at an early stage when violence does occur
- deal effectively with perpetrators to stop future violence
- support agencies to help women and girls rebuild their lives and reduce the risk of further violence

1a. Implement actions to prevent violence against women and girls

Changing the attitudes that underpin violence against women and girls is crucial. Attitudes condoning violence against women and girls or blaming women for being abused are wide spread. Many people are unaware of how common violence against women and girls is and uphold beliefs that excuse the perpetrators and blame the victims.

An opinion poll conducted on behalf of the Home Office in February 2009 found that 20% of

Bradford has already been recognised as a leader in **providing services** for women experiencing violence. It can become a beacon in **preventing** violence against women and girls, building on the elements for an effective approach that are already in place through collaboration, cooperation and facilitation.

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will maintain:

- a voluntary sector which is at the forefront of developing responses to violence against women and girls
- statutory sector responses, including facilitating Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, upholding safeguarding procedures and providing specialist teams investigating sexual crimes
- a highly performing local authority leading on violence against women and girls

respondents from all backgrounds and genders considered it acceptable in some circumstances for a man to hit or slap his wife or girlfriend in response to her being dressed in 'sexy' or revealing clothes in public; 41% of respondents who said that they would not take action if they knew or suspected that a female neighbour was a victim of violent abuse from their partner, would not take action because they considered 'it was not any of their business'.

NSPCC research 'Partner Exploitation and Violence in Teenage Intimate Relationships' (2009) found that "Girls, compared to boys, reported greater incidence rates for all forms of violence. Girls also experienced violence more frequently and described a greater level of negative impacts on their welfare". In addition "Boys minimised their own use of violence as "messaging around". Boys also reported the violence as mutual, although they often used disproportionate force compared to their female partners". The research also found that where there had been violence in a young person's relationship, "the majority of young people either told a friend or told no one about the violence; only a minority informed an adult".

Bradford has recognised how ongoing public awareness and education campaigns can directly help women and girls leave violent situations; however campaigns to date have not been strategically aimed at changing attitudes about violence towards women and girls. Therefore publicity aimed at ending the tolerance of violence against women and girls needs to be implemented at a local level, addressing issues within localities as well as those that affect women and girls.

1b. Educate young people on positive relationships and protective behaviours

National research has shown that a sizeable minority of young people hold views condoning violence against women and girls, particularly coercive sex. Prevention work should start early. Many young people feel that they do not have enough information or support to deal with issues of interpersonal violence, although the majority of secondary students and over half of those in primary schools (52 per cent) wanted lessons covering issues such as domestic violence (Mullender et al, 2002).

Bradford Safeguarding Children Board has produced protocols and procedures which have been implemented to reduce the harm to children at risk of sexual exploitation, including holding multi-agency meetings to help protect young people from being sexually exploited.

Reducing demand is fundamental to ending prostitution. The vast majority of men do not buy sex. The minority of men who do, need to be challenged, through the law, licensing and regulation, public awareness programmes and prevention work in schools. Making better use of the powers for regulating health establishments, saunas and lap dancing clubs will challenge attitudes which contribute to the acceptance and tolerance of prostitution and will complement the introduction of new legislation, making the purchasing of sex illegal in England (Enacted in November 2009, Section 53A of the Policing and Crime Act makes it illegal to 'pay for sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force').

Educating young people and changing attitudes is crucial to eradicating violence against women and girls in the long term. The voluntary sector in Bradford has been at the forefront of developing primary prevention initiatives. The Housing Trailblazer Project will supplement this work, but the commitment of the statutory sector is essential to properly implement them.

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will improve the safety, wellbeing and freedom of women and girls through access to better services that meet the needs of Bradford's diverse communities. Our goal is to build capacity across the voluntary sector and help family and friends of victims, to whom women and girls often turn first to provide informed support.

2a. Ensure equitable access to high quality support services across the district

Bradford has a high reporting rate of domestic violence to the police. However, most women and girls do not report violence to the police and rely on friends, family and the women's voluntary sector for support. Independent community based women's support services, including provision specifically for minority communities, are a vital part of our response to violence against women and girls.

Bradford already has a well resourced voluntary sector providing specialised provision for women and girls who experience violence. Ensuring that these services are maintained is essential if Bradford is to remain at the forefront of protecting women and girls.

2b. Improve response to rape and sexual assault in Bradford

Reported rapes, sexual assaults, and incidents of other serious sexual violence have all increased in Bradford over the last twelve months. Whilst nationally services available to victims are limited and threatened by a lack of long term sustainable funding, Bradford's Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Survivors Service have recently expanded its services. Maintaining this provision will be of greater importance as reporting of rape and sexual assault increases.

assaulted. West Yorkshire does not currently have a SARC. The development of a SARC which would serve Bradford is being considered at a West Yorkshire level and a county-wide partnership has been established. However, SARCs do not offer the same service as rape crisis centres and their work should be viewed as complementary to that of rape crisis centres, rather than a replacement.

In recent years the government has focused on developing Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). SARCs were set up to improve evidence gathering to assist police investigations and to provide support and medical care to people who have recently been raped or sexually

2c. Enable agencies to respond to the needs of children and young people experiencing violence through better awareness of safeguarding issues and promotion of safeguarding procedures

Research has established clear links between domestic violence and child abuse, for example detailed analysis of 40 Serious Case Reviews by Brandon et al (June 2009) found nearly three quarters of the children lived with past or present domestic violence.

The Action Plan produced by the government in response to Lord Laming's 'The Protection of Children in England: Progress Report' emphasises the need to find research-based best practice to respond effectively to children whose lives are affected by domestic violence.

The overall responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the safeguarding services offered to children rests with the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board. All agencies directly involved with ensuring the welfare of children are committed to the outcomes for children contained in the Every Child Matters Strategy. The Board's strategic plan for 2007-10 gives a clear and unequivocal commitment to ensuring that all agencies are clear about their responsibilities to protect all children whose development may be compromised by the parenting they receive. The Board's Statement of Intent is very clear on this point:

"The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board will work towards keeping children in Bradford under the age of 18 years, safe from harm. We will strive to make sure that every child feels secure, well cared for and able to reach their full potential. We will support all staff to help families and carers achieve this.

The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board will make sure all people who work with children, and their families and carers know how important it is to keep all children in Bradford safe.

The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board will help all staff and professionals to work together and know the rules about keeping children safe. They will understand the importance of listening to children, especially when children are worried about themselves or others."

The Bradford Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2012 sets clear priorities in respect of the Staying Safe Outcome for children in focussing on creating a " safe environment by minimising abuse and neglect" and sets the explicit goal of reducing the number of children and young people experiencing bullying."

2d. Provide training for relevant professionals across Bradford

The statutory sector supports and co-ordinates a number of useful specialist services, such as Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. These have led to magistrates and court staff receiving improved and enhanced training. Professionals in a wide range of other statutory services - such as GPs, midwives, social workers, employment advisers, police officers, teachers etc, also come into contact with women and girls who have experienced violence. Specialist domestic violence training is available for these professionals. The government has suggested that training for professionals should:

- increase understanding of violence against women and girls, its nature, scale and impact
- assist service providers in identifying violence against women and girls
- build skills and knowledge about preventative approaches, early interventions and reducing the long-term impacts of violence

2e. Ensure information is available and accessible for friends and family so that they are better equipped to help women and girls experiencing violence

Most women and girls turn to friends and family first for help and support. Whilst many friends will do their best to help, the lack of advice and information for the public can result in responses rooted in myths and stereotypes that tend to minimise the impact and seriousness of the violence, blame the victim and excuse the perpetrator. In situations of ongoing violence, friends and family can:

- become frustrated if the woman does not leave her violent partner

- cover the law and policy
- go beyond raising awareness to identifying desired service responses (Cabinet Office, 1999, Living Without Fear)

Improved training is a key element of improving statutory responses to violence against women and girls. Bradford already has mainstreamed multi-agency domestic violence training, as well as specific training on Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and Legal Remedies for Domestic Violence. Child protection and safeguarding adult training includes an exploration of the links with domestic violence.

Further training opportunities need to be identified appropriate to the needs of those who may come in to contact with women and girls who experience violence.

- believe that the woman should keep the family together; remaining in the marriage despite the violence

Similarly with respect to sexual violence there is a common tendency to hold women and girls responsible for what has happened through questioning their actions, clothing or trust of others.

For women dealing with legacies of previous abuse, friends may not understand the long-term impact that abuse can have and feel that she should 'get over it'. Even where friends are sympathetic, they may be unaware of the support that may be available.

A new Bradford Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Directory of Services, is being produced and work with voluntary and statutory agencies to improve the availability of information and resources to the public so that they are able to support women and girls more effectively, will continue.

2f. Provides a range of services which meet the needs of Bradford's diverse and changing communities

Women's experiences of violence may be influenced by other aspects of their identity and circumstances such as: ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, religion/belief, gender identity, poverty and social class. Understanding how these intersect with violence is crucial to developing appropriate responses. They create additional barriers to accessing services and achieving safety. For example:

- whilst one of the Bradford refuges can offer full wheelchair access, there is a lack of (physical) accessibility within the other refuges in the district
- lesbians may fear homophobia if they disclose their experiences of violence
- the availability of appropriate interpreting services can be inconsistent for women and girls
- women and girls may find it even more difficult to disclose sexual violence, particularly in cultures where concepts of family 'honour' are focused on the female role
- women with uncertain immigration status may be trapped in situations of violence, unable to access protection because they have no recourse to public funds
- recent migrants may be unaware of their rights and the services available to them

- older women may think it is too late for them to change anything
- agencies may be more reluctant to intervene in BME communities out of a mistaken approach to cultural sensitivity

Some groups of women and girls may be at greater risk of experiencing violence. For example:

- certain forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour' based violence are closely linked to particular ethnic/cultural/ religious groups
- many refugee women have experienced sexual violence in their countries of origin including being subjected to rape as a tactic of war/ conflict
- a disproportionate number of domestic homicides involve recent migrants as victims and/or perpetrators
- disabled women and girls are more likely to be sexually assaulted during their lifetime
- at least two thirds of victims of elder abuse are women
- rape, sexual assault and sexual bullying / harassment are more common among girls and young women

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will support measures that reduce the long-term consequences of violence for women and girls who experience it, improve their life chances and support them in rebuilding their lives. The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will champion integrated support services for the most marginalised and at risk women and girls and will give a voice to survivors in shaping policy and delivery.

3a. Work with partners in the health sector to ensure that policies incorporate all forms of violence against women and girls and effectively measure their implementation

Violence against women and girls is a significant health issue. As well as immediate impacts such as broken bones and bruising, violence against women and girls can also have long-term and even permanent impacts on mental and physical health.

NHS organisations are often the first point of contact for women and girls who have experienced violence, although they may not disclose the violence directly. Health organisations can play an important role in preventing violence against women and girls by intervening early, providing treatment and information and referring women and girls to other services. Violence against women and girls needs to be integrated into all areas of care including emergency services, mental health services, substance misuse services, health visiting and reproductive health and maternity services.

Health services should ensure that women and girls have access to information about the support available, for example Bradford & Airedale Community Health Service includes information within the pre-birth information packs for all new

births; Domestic violence training is delivered to midwives in the district and midwives and health visitors across the district have access to the Bradford Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Directory of Services.

Almost a third of domestic violence starts in pregnancy and existing violence often escalates during it (Women and Equality Unit). Department of Health guidance recommends routine inquiry about domestic violence in maternity services and although there is evidence that this is happening within some services in the district, this appears to be ad-hoc and needs to be addressed. Routine enquiry should be extended to cover a wider range of forms of violence in more of the health settings likely to be in contact with women and girls who have experienced violence.

Routine enquiry and all support and referral mechanisms must take account of the needs of women and girls who do not speak English. Informal interpreting arrangements by women's partners, children and friends can make it almost impossible for women to disclose violence.

Health agencies in Bradford have recognised the need to continue to improve the NHS response to women and girls experiencing violence and have produced a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for the Bradford Health

3b. Address the financial impacts of violence against women and girls

Violence against women can have a wide range of negative financial consequences. A violent partner may stop a woman from working, studying or training; making her more dependent on the abusive partner. Many women are denied access to economic resources because their abusive partners take control of their bank accounts and refuse to let them have money of their own. Many also face debts as a consequence of the abuse they had experienced with abusive partners forcing them to take out loans, credit cards and overdrafts in their name. Lack of financial alternatives can trap women in abusive relationships and may force them into prostitution and the wider sex industry.

Domestic violence can lead to women losing their jobs as they struggle to cope with the impact of injuries and anxiety. The mental health impacts of violence against women can make it difficult for women to work and limit their prospects for employment. Lack of employment can lead to women losing their homes, which in turn could result in repeated episodes of homelessness. Living in a refuge or hostel may make it harder for women to maintain existing jobs.

Sector. The NHS also has a role in commissioning specialist support services such as services for victims of rape or sexual exploitation. Health agencies in the district are active partners in the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership.

Civil protection orders are available in relation to domestic violence (non-molestation and occupation orders) and harassment and forced marriage (injunctions, restraining orders and Forced Marriage Protection Orders). However the costs can be prohibitive for women who are not eligible for legal aid and there are gaps in availability of community-based legal advice for those who are eligible. Working in partnership with the advice sector can offer better support to women who require financial and legal aid as a consequence of the violence and financial abuse.

3c. Ensure that the Bradford Housing Strategy addresses violence against women and girls

Many women who experience ongoing violence in and around where they live want the violence to stop, so they can remain in their homes safely. The development of sanctuary schemes, injunctions and interventions with perpetrators has enabled more women to achieve this. There remains a need for better access to outreach and floating support services that will assist women in the longer term, thereby breaking the cycle of violence and recovery. For some women there is still a need to flee and/or leave their local area in order to achieve safety and the chance to start again.

Violence against women is a significant cause of homelessness and the fear of losing one's home can become another barrier to women leaving violent situations. Nationally, 40 per cent of young homeless women cite sexual abuse and/or domestic violence as the direct reason for their homelessness. Violence from within the home and / or from a known person remains a leading cause of homelessness in Bradford. In 2008/09 by far the largest group of applicants accepted as being owed a duty under housing / homelessness legislation were single parents with dependant children (48%), many of whom will have experienced violence from within the family and / or at the hands of a partner; 33% of accepted cases cited violent relationship breakdown and / or violence from an associated person as the main cause of their homelessness.

In addition to the statutory service provision it is important to note that other homelessness amongst women can be hidden and they often have limited contact with services. Although

women are the minority of rough sleepers, 'sofa surfers' and excluded groups generally, they are subject to the threat of and actual physical and / or sexual violence whilst living on the streets and in unsettled accommodation. They therefore present with specific needs that are often not adequately met by existing hostel and day centre services.

Actions to improve women's access to housing include:

- maintain the Bradford domestic violence crisis intervention scheme so that victims of violence preferring to stay in their homes can do so safely
- encourage social landlords to ensure that timely moves are available for women escaping violence, making best use of tenure options, within both social and private sectors
- ensure rough sleeping services consider the specific needs of women and girls and foster better links with specialist women's support organisations
- encourage social landlords to ensure their housing policies recognise the need of women experiencing violence and monitoring performance in relation to their services
- ensure the statutory homelessness services recognise the specific needs of women experiencing violence and that greater use is made of specialist services to support their resettlement
- encourage refuges and other housing support schemes to provide structured re-settlement services for women moving in to the community

Objective 4: Protect women and girls at risk

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will work with the criminal justice system to deter crimes of violence against women and girls and provide full, effective and timely protection. The partnership will ensure that those most at risk of serious violence are given the extra support they need via Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

Children under the age of 18 who are at risk of significant harm due to domestic violence would be subject to assessment under section 47 of the Children Act. They will then be the subject of an Initial Child Protection Case Conference to determine the need for a Child Protection Plan to safeguard their welfare.

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will ensure that those marginalised women and girls who require specialist support are able to access it.

During 2008/09, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts were established across the district.

West Yorkshire Police have consistently implemented a positive arrest policy against suspects of domestic violence. A better approach to investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases has been put into practice.

Despite this progress, the vast majority of victims and perpetrators still have no contact with the criminal justice system and confidence in the system is undermined by low detection and conviction rates, particularly in the arrest, investigation and prosecution of rape and sexual violence.

The government has set a number of targets for the criminal justice system (CJS) for 2008-11 including to:

- improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the CJS in bringing offences to justice
- increase public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the CJS
- increase victim satisfaction with the police and with the CJS
- consistently collect, analyse and use good quality ethnicity data to identify and address race disproportionality in the CJS

The CPS has set targets nationally for its approach to violence against women and girls within this framework. The national CJS strategic plan for 2008-11 recognises importance of bringing serious offences including domestic violence and sexual offences to justice.

Across West Yorkshire the Local Criminal Justice Board is improving partnership working and will take on a stronger governance role for the SDVCs. In Bradford the strategic links with the Bradford Safer Communities Partnership (Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership) are being strengthened. This will enable better partnership working and will provide greater commitment to implementing new and existing initiatives.

Objectives

03

4a. Respond to the needs of at risk and marginalised women and girls

When a girl under the age of 18 years is identified as being at risk of violence or abuse linked with substance misuse, safeguarding children procedures should always be implemented.

Drugs and alcohol can be a means of coping with experiences of violence. Some abusers introduce women and girls to drugs as a means of controlling them. Many substance misuse agencies have failed to recognise the role of violence in women's substance misuse problems. The situation is changing in Bradford, particularly in relation to domestic violence. Substance misuse organisations consistently attend Bradford's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

Women's organisations, such as Bradford Working Women's Project and Bradford Rape Crisis & Sexual Survivors Service have a long history of working with the most vulnerable and marginalised women and girls, many of whom face multiple barriers to rebuilding their lives. These are often

the women and girls at greatest risk of repeat victimisation and many require intensive, long-term support in order to recover from the trauma they have experienced.

The Corston Report (2007) identified histories of victimisation as underpinning much of female offending. It called for "a radical new approach... a woman-centred approach", based around the development of specialised community-based women's centres as an alternative to prison for vulnerable women. Such centres would address the roots of offending and reduce exclusion and isolation through specialised and long-term interventions and gateways to mainstream services. The Together Women Project in Bradford is an example of such a centre; working in partnership with other specialist agencies to provide programmes for those women at risk of offending and who have experienced violence.

4b. Improve support services and provision at a local level, working with partners in localities

The national focus in recent years has been on providing support linked to the CJS process or to high risk victims, for example, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs). Many women and girls who have experienced violence have needs that go far beyond the CJS, such as health, housing, employment and debt issues. Support linked to improving CJS outcomes should be integrated with a wider range of support options for survivors.

Women and girls at risk of ongoing violence from the same perpetrator also need access to protection through the civil courts.

Working within communities so protection and support can be tailored to the specific needs of those communities is essential if violence against women and girls is to be reduced. A one size fits all approach will not work in a district as diverse as Bradford.

4c. Increase public confidence, victim support and satisfaction

Most women and girls do not report violence to the police and the majority of those who do, withdraw their complaints. For women and girls to have confidence in the CJS, reporting violence must increase their access to safety, support and justice and not expose them to further victimisation. Some rape victims have described the process, especially the trial, as a 'second assault'.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) and the work of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) has improved responses for victims of domestic violence. The work of the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor needs to be recognised and more fully integrated into the CJS process, so that victims of rape and sexual assault can receive the same support as victims of domestic violence. West Yorkshire Police has established teams specialising in investigating rape and sexual assault cases. This will have a number of key benefits in the investigation of offences and improved response to victims.

The rate of domestic homicide in Bradford has reduced in recent years. However, the high rate of attrition in relation to domestic violence, rape and sexual assault undermine public confidence in the system. This lack of confidence results in victims not coming forward and perpetrators not being brought to justice, leaving them to re offend.

In order to improve confidence in the system and satisfaction for victims it is important that where serious crimes are committed lessons are learned and practice improved. These will be identified through the implementation of Serious Case Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and Serious Untoward Incident Reports. The responsibility for carrying out these reviews sits:

- Bradford Safeguarding Children Board, where it is identified that a child or young person has been a victim
- Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board, where it is identified that a vulnerable adult has been the victim
- Strategic Health Authority, where it is identified that health have had significant dealings with the victim
- Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership, where a domestic homicide is identified that adheres to the Home Office definition (which includes individuals who are of have been in an intimate relationship)

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership believes perpetrators should stop the violence and be held to account for the acts they have committed. The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership aims to improve the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Where women do not want to access criminal justice systems, the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will ensure that will have access to appropriate civil remedies and support services. The partnership is working hard to have violence

against women and girls recognised as unacceptable in any community and perpetrators of such crimes must know that they will be brought to justice.

5a. Address violence against women and girls through multi-agency meetings

Multi-agency operational meetings such as Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) and Prostitution Tactical Group meetings provide a new way to bring together different partners to engage in constructive information sharing and problem solving.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences are essential for protecting those victims of domestic violence identified as at highest risk of serious harm or death. MARACs involve key agencies, police, probation, education, child and adult services, health, housing and the voluntary sector, working together on an individual victim's case to share information to identify key actions aimed at providing greatest protection. Bradford holds two MARAC meetings a month. one in Bradford

Local data shows that since MARACs were implemented district-wide the repeat victimisation rate for incidents reported to the police has decreased, as have the number of domestic related serious violent crime incidents. Ensuring that MARACs continue will require sustainable funding from partner agencies.

In specific cases the multi-agency Child Protection Case Conference are convened to look at children who are likely to suffer significant harm i.e. their expected development would be impaired due to domestic violence in the parental relationship. In these cases the likely outcome would be a multi-agency Child Protection Plan which ensures the child's welfare is safeguarded. The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board have funded full time post on a fixed term basis to free up staff time to allow increased involvement in multi-agency bodies like MARAC. This will ensure that practice in this area is informed by up to date thinking and that information that can protect children is used as effectively as possible.

Multi-agency strategic meetings, such as the Bradford Violence Against Women Forum, Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership, Bradford Prostitution Strategic Partnership, Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board and the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board provide an opportunity for voluntary sector agencies to engage with senior representatives from the statutory sector. Agencies use the multi-agency meetings to tackle local issues and identify any areas where they need more support. They also provide an opportunity for the implementation and exchange of good practice.

5b. Reduce prostitution by focusing on those profiting from the sexual exploitation of women and girls and by providing support services to help women and girls exit and recover from prostitution and sexual exploitation

The sexual exploitation of girls under 18 years of age is a child protection issue and any girls identified as being at risk should be referred through child protection procedures.

Prostitution, trafficking and sexual exploitation are serious problems that the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will address through the Bradford Prostitution Strategic Partnership. The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership wants to see more perpetrators arrested, prosecuted and convicted and more women and girls assisted in exiting and recovering from their experiences within the sex industry.

The Bradford Prostitution Strategic Partnership works to a shared outcome-focused action plan. The Partnership set up the Bradford Prostitution Tactical Group to share information and carry out case conferencing to help those involved in prostitution to work towards a planned exit through removing barriers, such as lack of access to housing and drug and alcohol services.

Operation Pentameter is a national multi-agency initiative set up by the police to reduce trafficking by providing a safe exit for women and children forced in to the sex industry and prosecuting traffickers. The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership recognises the good work the police have done in disrupting traffickers and freeing victims. The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership will support future initiatives and will assist in national, regional and local actions aimed at reducing the impact of these crimes.

5c. Enhance the effectiveness of community based interventions with perpetrators

The majority of perpetrators of violence against women and girls never come to the attention of the criminal justice system. When they do it is important that interventions are appropriate if re-offending is reduced and victim confidence increased. The role of domestic violence perpetrator programmes is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence through rehabilitation for offenders to reduce re-offending. Not all men attending domestic violence perpetrator programmes will end their abuse, but perpetrator programmes may reduce risk and enable women and girls to end relationships more safely.

West Yorkshire Probation Service runs the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) for perpetrators, with support for the victim offered by voluntary sector agencies. Self-referral programmes with integrated women's support have also been supported by the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership.

5d. Prevent young men and boys from becoming perpetrators through early intervention and implementing existing safeguarding procedures

The links between domestic violence and child abuse are well established. Negative consequences for children and young people include reduced educational attainment, increased involvement in anti-social behaviour, street/playground violence and running away. These connections need to be integrated into the practice of child protection agencies in Bradford.

Safeguarding practice in respect of children has increasingly focussed on early intervention as a way of diverting children from situations that compromise their development and require complex interventions later in their lives. The introduction of systems such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Contactpoint identify children early enough to intervene effectively. Other measures, for example anti-bullying initiatives are also trying to achieve the same goal.

A number of researchers have pointed to the possibility of children being diverted from copying the negative behaviour of the adults around them by the presence of more positive role models. 'Working Together 2010' specifically addresses how the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) fits with the safeguarding system to ensure that no children get lost between systems. This will allow an organised response based on an agreed multi-agency assessment which should provide a sound basis on which to help children and families.

In 2009 the Bradford District Abuse Partnership was recognised as a national leader in the field of domestic violence and in recent years the district has made significant progress in protecting women and girls against violence and abuse.

Important advancements have included developing district-wide Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy, establishing Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and introducing Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.

However, violence against women and girls still presents the district with considerable challenges, especially in relation to rape, sexual assault and prostitution.

Difficult economic times are looming and subsequent social impacts on individuals and families are likely to result in increases in violence and abuse. Resourcing our district's response will be critical if the Partnership is to reduce the long-term catastrophic human and financial consequences.

This strategy signals the Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership's commitment to meeting the challenges ahead and sets out an integrated and collective strategic approach to addressing this important community safety issue.

The Partnership's subsequent delivery plan will provide a mechanism for implementing the strategy and will include an assessment framework pinpointing areas requiring greater emphasis.

The Bradford Domestic Abuse Partnership would like to thank all the agencies, organisations and individuals who have been involved in providing services and leading on work to tackle violence against women and girls within our district.

We look forward to working with all our partners to put this new strategy into practice and making Bradford as safe as possible for all women and girls.

BSCB	Bradford Safeguarding Children Board
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
IDAP	Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services (IDVAs)
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy Services (ISVAs)
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
SARCs	Sexual Assault Referral Centres
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Courts