

Safer Communities Scrutiny Information Pack

June 2017

This pack contains information on Domestic Violence and Abuse, Sexual Violence and Preventing Violent Extremism. Information on Modern Slavery is provided in the 'Safe In East Sussex In Focus Newsletter on Modern Slavery' at **appendix 3**.

Domestic Violence and Abuse, Sexual Violence

Domestic Violence & Abuse, Stalking and Rape, Sexual Violence and Abuse are existing work packages that are included in the Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan. The overarching aim is that local residents and communities are free from these forms of violence and abuse by delivering the following outcomes:

- Increased social intolerance and reduced acceptance
- People have safe, equal and abuse free relationships
- Increased survivor safety and well being
- Perpetrators are held to account and are required to change their behaviour

As noted in the 'Annual Review of Safer Communities Performance, Priorities and Issues' the number of domestic violence and abuse crimes and incidents and sexual offences have increased. While it is positive that more cases are being reported, this has an impact across all service areas.

The Portal continues to provide a single point of access and helps victim/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse to find advice and support in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Other commissioned services also provide support to victims of domestic violence and abuse across the county, including Refuge (which operates five refuges in East Sussex) and Home Works (which provides flexible and tailored support to prevent homelessness). East Sussex County Council was successful in securing funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in a joint bid with Brighton & Hove City Council. A one year pilot will develop support for victims in refuge with multiple, complex needs. This joins a number of other projects, including in Hasting and St Leonards, where a pilot is underway between specialist domestic abuse services and health professionals.

There are a range of activities locally that involve and encourage the community and individuals by raising awareness or promoting specific issues like understanding healthy and respectful relationships, consent or and where to seek help and support:

- In 2016, the Safer East Sussex Team worked with district and boroughs and local services to mark the '16 Days of Action' and 'White Ribbon Campaign'
- In February 2017 a coercive control conference was jointly hosted between the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer East Sussex Team
- The 'Ask Me' scheme has been rolled out, with the aim of creating safe spaces in local business and community settings in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex where people experiencing coercive control and other forms of domestic abuse can talk to someone and get help they need quickly.

Training continues to be delivered, including a revised domestic violence and abuse training package for staff which was launched in autumn 2016. A Champions Network has also been established to bring together practitioners from a range of agencies and to further strengthen community and agency responses across the County. Further work is underway to identify gaps in current training provision in response to emerging issues, including stalking and harassment, coercive control and (historical and recent) sexual offences.

The Council's Domestic Violence Policy for staff is being reviewed, with this due to be concluded in summer 2017. It will also be extended to address sexual violence.

A pan Sussex review of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process, which is designed to share information and develop multi-agency action plans in relation to the highest risk cases of domestic violence, was completed in April 2017. This was broadly positive; identifying strengths in the local MARAC process but making some recommendations to further develop working practice. Activity is ongoing to review and implement the recommendations.

There is a planned review of the Domestic Abuse Strategy, to reflect recent legislative and policy changes, and to extend it to address Sexual Violence and other forms of Violence against Women and Girls. This will commence in in summer 2017.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

Tragically between August 2015 and March 2016 there have been three domestic homicides in East Sussex. These deaths have triggered a corresponding Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), which is a statutory requirement where an individual's death has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by someone with whom they had an intimate personal relationship or who was a member of the same household¹.

The purpose of a DHR is to examine what happened prior to an incident which led to an individual's death where this has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by someone with whom they had an intimate personal relationship or who was a member of the same household. Specifically, the purpose of a DHR is to:

- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims;
- Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result;
- Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate; and
- Prevent domestic violence and abuse homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working.

The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership has responsibility for commissioning a review and appointing an independent chair to lead the review panel. The partnership is also responsible for signing off the Review Report and Action Plan, after which the review must be submitted to the Home Office Quality Review Group for approval. Thereafter the

¹ DHRs were established on a statutory basis under s9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) and came into force on 13th April 2011. The statutory guidance for the conduct of reviews was revised in December 2016 and is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews

partnership is responsible for monitoring the implementation of any single or multi-agency actions, and the publication of an anonymised report. Completed reports are also shared with the Local Safeguarding Children (LSCB) or Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to ensure that practice issues can be addressed and learning is disseminated as widely as possible. A series of dissemination events are planned for later in the year, to share learning across professional networks.

A summary of these homicides, and the progress of the DHRs, is as follows:

Review	Borough / District	Incident summary	Criminal justice outcome	Domestic Homicide Review
Adult E (Henrietta)	Rother	In August 2015 the victim was stabbed numerous times at her home.	Perpetrator found guilty of murder; sentenced to a minimum of 24 years in prison.	Complete and submitted to the Home Office for approval
Adult F (Pamela)²	Wealden	In March 2016 the victim suffered stab wounds to her neck, back and body at her home.	Perpetrator found guilty of murder; sentenced to a minimum of 22 years in prison.	Action plan(s) developed and being monitored
Adult G	Hastings	An incident occurred in December 2015 which resulted in the death of an adult male.	Suspects charged with murder. Re-trial ordered, with this scheduled for Jun 17.	Panel convened and review underway (delayed due to re-trial)

While this 'cluster' of domestic homicides between August 2015 and March 2016 may appear to be a cause for concern, there is no indication that there is any underlying trend (e.g. of increased number of homicides). While each domestic homicide is a tragedy in its own right, based on a review of police data relating to murders and attempted murders between 2008/09 and 2015/16, the number of domestic homicides is within the expected range.

² Pseudonyms are used in each DHR and, where possible, are chosen with the agreement of the victim's family.

Preventing Violent Extremism



The Safer East Sussex Team continued to deliver the six session Think, Protect, Connect workshops for young people. These workshops aim to create a safe space for discussion of Prevent related issues and explore identity, group belonging, terrorism, British Values, stereotyping, propaganda and grooming on the internet.

We have been invited to submit an application to the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) Association to gain accreditation for Think Protect Connect as part of their Building a Stronger Britain Together Project and this is currently in progress. We envisage that the resource will be accredited by Autumn 2017 and will then be available nationally as a resource for Schools to use.

An Innovation Small Business Research Initiative Application was submitted to the Home Office (October 2016) which involved re-designing Think Protect Connect into an 'Autism Friendly' resource and incorporated parent 'prevent' workshops with Autism Sussex. The application was successful and we developed and delivered the project from January to March 2017. Schools and organisations who took part in this project were:

- St Johns Special School Brighton and Hove/Seaford
- Bowden House Special School Seaford
- Bexhill Academy ASD Unit
- Sussex Coast College Hastings
- Framfield Children's Home
- Autism Sussex

In March we held an Xtreme e-safety Workshop for Parents - The consensus of parents/carers who attended the workshop was a need for greater support around their own lack of e-safety knowledge, with a number asking for further information and the possibility of attending e-safety classes. One parent mentioned that both her children were taking part in Think Protect Connect workshops and was extremely keen to talk in more detail about the need to keep her children safe online. Parent feedback about what they would do differently included:

- Look at monitoring and restricting access to the internet
- Be more aware and act rather than just think about it
- Sit down and have a discussion with our two boys about online safety
- Cascade the information with others
- Find out more about internet safety

The East Sussex Prevent Board assesses the countywide risk of people being drawn into terrorism and coordinates Prevent activity according to section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Prevent Action Plan 2017/8 has identified a number of areas partners agreed to prioritise for the forthcoming year to work on together. In addition to these the East Sussex Prevent board will be collaborating on some key areas with West Sussex Prevent Board as many issues raised within the Counter Terrorism Local Profile for Sussex are cross border.

They include:

- To review contacts at a strategic level with local communities of interest to the National Community Tensions Team.
- Partners to continue to explore opportunities with IAG (Independent Advisory Groups) and local faith groups in order to seek possible opportunities for avoiding immoderate voices in future messaging.
- To continue to explore existing pathways and emerging trends in mental health referrals in order to provide appropriate support.
- To consider undertaking a peer review of Prevent working practices before December 2017.
- To review the level of understanding of Prevent duty within other statutory agencies and where development and understanding of vulnerabilities is needed.