



Bristol domestic violence/abuse strategy

2008 – 2011

Executive Summary

1 Background information

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is the misuse of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial control by one person over another who is or has been in a relationship. This includes family members.
- 1.2 The impact on survivors is wide ranging, and can ultimately culminate in domestic homicide.
- 1.3 There is a high prevalence of child abuse in families where there is domestic abuse. The impact of such abuse can have long lasting effects. 40% of children on Bristol's Child Protection Register are living in households where there is domestic violence.
- 1.4 Most police reports relate to male perpetrators, although there are female perpetrators of domestic abuse. Less than one in twenty incidents reported to the police result in a conviction.
- 1.5 Victims/survivors stay in or return to perpetrators because of issues of power, fear, practical difficulties, children, emotional dependency and for financial reasons.
- 1.6 Over 7,000 domestic incidents were reported to the police in 2006-7, and almost half of these were violent crimes. Taking the British Crime Survey's calculation of under-reporting into consideration, the true frequency of domestic abuse in Bristol is estimated to be over 26,000 per annum. This equates to 70 incidents per day, or nearly 3 every hour.
- 1.7 Domestic violence and abuse has the highest rate of repeat victimisation out of all crimes. Tackling prolific domestic violence perpetrators can have a large impact on crime reduction targets.
- 1.8 The cost of domestic violence and abuse in Bristol is estimated to be nearly £49 million per annum. This includes the cost of state responses and the loss of economic output.

2 Developing the strategy

- 2.1 Bristol's vision is that domestic violence and abuse will be prevented and where this is not possible, people at risk from its effects will be identified and empowered to live without fear. Those most vulnerable will be protected through effective services which are accessible to all.
- 2.2 A dedicated delivery group will be responsible for the management and delivery of the strategy's action plan. There has been extensive and wide consultation on the draft strategy and the final strategy is now being disseminated.

3 Aims, principles and objectives

- 3.1 The **aim** of this strategy is to work together with agencies and listen to survivors/victims to:
- ▶ Raise awareness of domestic violence/abuse and the harm it causes;
 - ▶ Take action to challenge social acceptance and change the culture of tolerance of domestic violence/abuse;
 - ▶ Develop and evaluate a range of flexible and effective services to improve the safety of women, children and men who experience domestic violence/abuse;
 - ▶ Prevent and reduce harm, with reducing repeat victimisation a priority;
 - ▶ Bring more offenders to justice
- 3.2 The **principles** of the strategy are that:
- ▶ The response to domestic violence/abuse will ensure that all survivors/victims and perpetrators have access to services without discrimination due to disability, sexual orientation, race, culture or creed, age or income group. Women-only services will be supported and men's access to other services will be ensured.
 - ▶ Services to survivors/victims and perpetrators will be designed and proportionate to the level of risk they face or pose.
 - ▶ We are committed to providing a quality service and will draw on national good practice and standards.
- 3.3 The **performance objectives** of the strategy are that:
- ▶ All people in Bristol who are affected by domestic violence/abuse will have access to a range of services to improve the safety of adult and child survivors. Services will be comprehensive, cohesive and co-ordinated through multi-agency partnerships to ensure appropriate responses, delivered to agreed quality standards.
 - ▶ Resources are allocated and performance is monitored to ensure that Bristol can deliver this strategy and that it is informed by the views of survivors and of provider services.
- 3.4 The **prevention objectives** of the strategy are that:
- ▶ Adults and children and professionals at all levels in agencies will be informed that domestic violence/abuse is widespread, damaging and not to be excused in any circumstances.
 - ▶ All children and young people and their carers are informed about healthy relationships and the impact of domestic violence/abuse.

3.5 The **provision objectives** of the strategy are that:

- ▶ Women, children and men from diverse backgrounds and needs are encouraged to report domestic violence/abuse and seek support. Agencies will ensure barriers to seeking support are removed.
- ▶ Survivors throughout the city have access to independent and flexible support, according to assessed level of risk and need, that offers a range of safety options and follows an empowerment and survivor-centred approach.
- ▶ Children and young people who are or have lived with and/or experienced domestic violence/abuse are identified and protected from harm and receive ongoing support for their recovery and promotion of their resilience.

3.6 The **protection and justice objectives** of the strategy are that:

- ▶ Perpetrators are informed about voluntary programmes of behaviour change, and are unequivocally held to account by the criminal justice system.
- ▶ Professionals are trained and supported in challenging perpetrators when working with individuals and families in all settings, prioritising always the safety of service users and professionals.
- ▶ Victims' rights and needs are supported throughout the criminal and civil justice processes.

4 Framework for service delivery

4.1 We have adopted a **four-tiered model** to plan for services for survivors, children and perpetrators to achieve our objectives.

4.2 The focus of Tier 1 is 'all families'. Plans include universal services, public information, health, education, children's services, housing services and domestic violence forums.

4.3 The focus of Tier 2 is 'vulnerable persons'. Responses include information about services/options, advocacy services, emergency police responses, needs assessments and specialist support and advice.

4.4 The focus of Tier 3 is 'persons with complex needs'. Responses include MARAC and MAPPA, emergency housing, sexual violence services, police intervention, legal advice, child and adult protection, probation and other services based on needs and specialist advocacy.

4.5 The focus of tier 4 is 'persons with acute/restorative needs'. Responses include MARAC and MAPPA, police intervention, legal protection, child and adult protection, emergency accommodation and specialist advocacy.