



## **Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum Terms of Reference, July 2010**

The Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum is a multi agency forum made up of representatives from both voluntary and statutory organisations as well as members of the community who come together to promote a coordinated approach to tackling domestic violence and abuse in Bristol.

The forum has previously worked to its own strategy and annual action plan. From 2007, the DVA Strategy Group has worked to develop a citywide DA strategy to which BDAF continues to have a key input and to which it works. In addition to this, BDAF's work is informed by a number of relevant strategies and policies, service users, practitioners, strategists and decision makers from both the voluntary and statutory sector.

### **Purpose**

The forum has as its overarching aim the reduction of domestic violence and abuse and repeat victimisation. This will be achieved through a focus on the following three areas:

- **PREVENTION** – To continue to find innovative ways of raising awareness and reducing the incidence of domestic violence and abuse.
- **PROVISION** – To ensure the provision of a comprehensive and coordinated range of services across the city.
- **PROTECTION & JUSTICE** – To ensure the effective protection (legal & otherwise) of survivors and their children in the wider community and in their own homes.

These three areas will be the focus of the three sub-groups to the DVA Strategy group, which report back to BDAF on their progress. This reporting will be focused around the topic of each BDAF meeting.

Reports will also be received from the action groups and local forums. All reporting will be two-way – BDAF will report back to the sub and action groups, and local forums.

### **Aims:**

- To act as a lobbying and pressure group with decision-makers and the public
- To fundraise for service provision and prevention work in Bristol
- To share good practice and create actions to take forward to improve services
- To effectively collaborate with the strategy group and wider strategic structure, including two-way feedback

### **Definition**

All members of the Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum must agree to the following common definition of domestic violence and abuse as:

- The misuse of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and/or financial control by one person over another who is or has been in a relationship. This includes family members.
- Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) covers a wide range of behaviours and may be actual or threatened.
- DVA includes forced marriage, so-called “honour”-based violence, and female genital mutilation.
- DVA also includes the use of children to control an adult victim. Because of this, child abuse and domestic violence and abuse can overlap.
- DVA is usually perpetrated by men against women, but not exclusively.
- DVA is a continuing pattern of events, behaviour and coercive control.

DVA occurs in all groups and sections of society and may be experienced differently, due to, and compounded by race, sexuality, disability, age, religion, culture, class or mental health.

### **Key principles and values**

Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum is committed to raising awareness, recognising the impact, and reducing the incidence of domestic violence and abuse. The experience of survivors of domestic violence and abuse should inform all parts of the work of the forum. It is paramount that a city-wide approach to victims of domestic violence and abuse is consistent, co-ordinated and innovative and must reflect the needs of all communities.

The forum will meet as a minimum, on a quarterly basis. Each meeting will focus on an area related to domestic violence and abuse, chosen by the chair and development worker from an agreed list, or in response to new developments. Meetings will open with a presentation related to this area, and include information sharing, reporting and discussion. Feedback from sub-groups and other forums will be included, with a focus on the topic of the meeting.

### **Officers**

The Chair and Vice Chair of the forum will be elected from among the membership. Elections will take place every two years at a forum meeting. If there is only one candidate for each post then a secret vote will be taken. If there is more than one candidate then a secret ballot of members will take place (one vote per organisation). Written job descriptions have been agreed for both roles.

### **Membership of Bristol Domestic Abuse Forum**

Membership is open to all agencies in Bristol whose work involves domestic violence and abuse or working with those experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence and abuse. BDAF members can be part of an organisation or interested individuals.

Members must sign up to BDAF and:

- Agree to the BDAF definition of domestic violence and abuse
- Agree with and work towards achieving the actions within the citywide strategy and annual BDAF action plan

- Attend a minimum of one BDAF meeting per year in order to vote at elections for the Chair and Vice Chair (one vote per organisation not per member).
- Feed back business and information from the meetings to their organisations

In addition to the formal membership, there will be a database of people interested in receiving minutes and information from BDAF but who do not want to attend meetings or have voting rights.

### **Relationship to other bodies**

Representatives from BDAF will be elected to attend other groups and boards as appropriate, e.g. DVA Strategy Group, Safer Bristol and Bristol Safeguarding Children Board and other local citywide DAF's. Written job descriptions will be agreed for these roles.

Representatives from local forum and the sub-groups of the strategy groups, as well as any service user forum, will be elected by those groups to represent them at BDAF meeting. Written job descriptions will be agreed for these roles.

### **Review of terms of reference**

The terms of reference will be reviewed every two years.

Updated, 1/5/10