

## Middlesbrough Domestic Violence Forum

### ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

I am pleased to be able to contribute to and produce this report, my second since commencing in post as Forum Co-ordinator.

The Forum is one of the theme groups serving the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership and has been the driving force behind the development of Domestic Violence services within Middlesbrough.

This report includes achievements from year 1 of our 3-year domestic violence strategy (2007-2010), and monitors progress on the set objectives.

We have ensured that Middlesbrough remains at the forefront of developing new initiatives. One of the ways in which this is achieved is through our strong partnership work.

In February 2008 Cleveland Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel was launched. The panel is made up of service users, CPS, Police, Witness Care Unit, My Sisters Place, and is facilitated/chaired by myself on behalf of Middlesbrough Council. The overall aim of this initiative is to increase public confidence in the criminal justice system and to encourage more victims on Teesside to come forward and give their views. The work from the panel will assist to increase the number of successful prosecutions and convictions.

I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with members of the Forum and other agencies in order to deliver on our set targets.

**Susan Milburn**  
Forum Co-ordinator

### CHAIRS REPORT

Welcome to the Middlesbrough Domestic Violence Forum Annual Report for 2007 – 2008. The Forum continues to attract representatives from a wide range of agencies and our delivery plan enables all agencies to take an active role and joint responsibility for tackling the problem of domestic violence in Middlesbrough.

The promotion of multi-agency working is a key aim of the Forum and we have been successful in establishing a strong partnership culture in Middlesbrough that is evident in the range of successful multi agency initiatives. This ambition has been aided more recently by the roll out of the

Governments 'Co-ordinated Community Response Model', an approach that the Middlesbrough Forum has welcomed and actively driven forward.

I am delighted to see close working relationships between all sectors in the delivery of the MARAC, Specialist Court and through joint training. Middlesbrough now has effective information sharing protocols and a better understanding of assessing and managing risk in domestic violence cases, an agenda that is being led by Cleveland Police.

There is much work to be done and we look forward in the coming year to improving the new systems and approaches we have implemented, but I see us in a better position than ever before to protect victims and hold perpetrators to account.

Becky Rogerson  
Chair

## **Progress on Objectives:**

### **Objective 1:**

**To ensure that all staff in relevant agencies have access to high quality domestic violence training.**

My Sister's Place has delivered 12 training sessions entitled "Current approaches to Domestic Violence in Middlesbrough" to 140 professionals from January-April 2008. These sessions were funded through the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership.

My Sister's Place has delivered the Open College Network accredited course to 14 people from a range of agencies. The Freedom Programme has also been delivered to 20 women.

In addition 'tailored' domestic violence training sessions have been delivered to staff from housing and health. Parents, volunteers and service users have also received training.

The University of Teesside continues to offer the University Certificate in Professional development (UCPD) and is aimed at professionals and voluntary sector workers in law, social work, housing, medicine, health, refuges, domestic violence forums and policing as well as to magistrates, judges, and court personnel.

The National Probation Service Teesside delivers both awareness raising and case management training in relation to the Community Domestic Violence Programme to Trainee Probation Officers and other staff. All court staff in Teesside Magistrates have also received this training.

### **Ongoing:**

## Objective 2:

Provide support services for children and young people who experience domestic violence.

The affects and longer term impact of domestic violence on children and young people has been identified by Middlesbrough's Children and Young People's trust, and it continues to be an issue which will be addressed by Middlesbrough's multi agency Children and Young People's Strategic Plan.

Domestic Violence is a key priority for action, and the trust's Stay Safe Theme Group will lead on this.

The Voluntary and Community Sector is active in providing both preventative and support services for children, young people and families.

### **Barnardos Secos:**

Barnardos Secos have provided "Protecting Self" education sessions to 360 young people within 9 of Middlesbrough's schools and 3 LAC residential settings. The Education session's covers sexual exploitation/domestic violence, bullying and sexual bullying. The overall aim is to help young people gain a better understanding of healthy and loving relationships.

18 parents and carers have also received support.

### **Barnardos - key facts (statistics for 2007)**

- Over the period Barnardos supported 43 women working 'off the street' in houses/brothels
- They provided intensive case- work and risk assessment to 56 young people less than 18 years of age.
- They provided outreach, case- work and drug assessments to 93 vulnerable young adults between 18 and 25 years of age, including 'on the street'.
- Barnardos processed 99 new missing from home cases.

### **Envisage:**

Envisage has had a busy year supporting young people who have experienced Domestic Violence within Middlesbrough. Following an assessment of need, the children and young people identified individual actions, which has helped alleviate the affects of Domestic Violence. This has included one to one support, in school support, family activities, group work, safety planning, and social and recreational activities. Referrals have been received from a number of different agencies.

Envisage has recently worked closely with the Common Assessment Framework Team and has been able to take referrals from the CAF panel as well as contributing to the MARAC.

### **Harbour Children's Outreach Service:**

Since April 2007 – March 2008 Harbour has been working in 4 schools in Middlesbrough. During this period 37 children and young people have been referred for one to one support: 15 males and 22 females. 178 young people have accessed the safe relationship programme, and 83 children and young

people have been supported through group support. 16 parents/carers have accessed a workshop and 55 children have accessed refuge accommodation.

**Progressing:**

### **Objective 3:**

#### **Hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour.**

**The National Probation Service (Teesside)** has established the Community Domestic Violence Programme. Demand for the programme continues to be high. During 2007 45 men completed the course Tees wide (18 from Middlesbrough). During this period, 43 men commenced the programme Tees wide with (25 from Middlesbrough).

**The S.A.F.E Project:** After piloting the programme for one year. The S.A.F.E Project secured four years lottery funding in 2007.

During the period the project received 120 referrals (including some self referrals). 117 assessments have been completed and 11 pre group work sessions have been undertaken.

Nine men have completed the 30-week programme to date, with a further 11 men attending groups in Middlesbrough and Redcar. An evaluation is undertaken with the men's partners when they complete the programme to see if there has been an improvement in their health and well-being as a result of the interventions. This is an outcome required by the funder's of the service.

#### **Ongoing:**

#### **Objective 4:**

**Build on existing Partnerships and develop stronger Partnership working, to ensure prevention and early intervention, protection, justice and support for victims and their children.**

There are a number of projects and initiatives in progress to achieve this objective.

#### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

A MARAC has been developed from national guidelines from CAADA (Co-ordinated action against domestic abuse) and brings together key agencies and groups to share information about the highest risk cases of domestic abuse. This information sharing enables an individually tailored safety plan to be implemented for each case and ultimately provides help and support for victims of domestic abuse and their families, and helps to hold perpetrators to account in criminal cases. Between April 2007 and March 2008 149 new cases were reviewed at the MARAC, in total during this period 344 cases were reviewed. The Middlesbrough MARAC has established an effective system for managing and reducing high -risk cases.

#### **Teesside Specialist Domestic Violence Court:**

The specialist court was officially launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007. The aim of this specialist court is:

- To increase the effectiveness of the judicial system in respect of domestic abuse
- To provide protection and support to victims and witnesses, and to improve services to victims and survivors
- To provide appropriate sanctions to perpetrators
- Increase co-ordination of professional bodies involved in supporting victims and witnesses dealing with perpetrators
- Increase the number of successful prosecutions and reduce victimisation

525 cases were completed in the specialist court between January and December 2007.

More completed cases occurred in Middlesbrough than in Stockton or Langbaugh (53.1% compared to 32.2% and 13.7% respectively).

Of the 525 completed cases the gender of the defendants are predominantly male (505 cases or 96.2%)

Female defendants make up 3.3% of cases (18)

#### **Middlesbrough Sanctuary Scheme:**

The Middlesbrough Sanctuary Scheme was launched in September 2007.

The Sanctuary Scheme enables victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own home and feel safer by adding additional security measures to the property. These can include: The creation of a safe room, known as the sanctuary room, fire security equipment, panic alarms, window locks, new door locks and many other products. Ongoing support is also available from

My Sister's Place. The Sanctuary Scheme is delivered in partnership between My Sister's Place and Erimus Home Choice and is funded by Middlesbrough Council.

**Women's Support Network and Jigsaw:**

In August 2007 WSN took the Jigsaw Men's Sexual Violence project under its wing. The Jigsaw project provides counselling for men who have suffered sexual abuse. The service will run as a pilot until August 2008, facilitated by the original Jigsaw volunteers and counselling service at WSN. The male clients will benefit from the availability of WSN'S advocacy team to support them through the criminal justice system.

WSN have worked in partnership with Cleveland Police and Health in the development of the Teesside SARC, (Sexual Assault Referral Centre). The SARC is now operational and is referring clients to WSN for advocacy and support.

A new Sexual Violence Strategy group has been formed in partnership with Women's Support Network and the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership.

**Sexual Assault Referral Centre:**

Helen Britton House is a purpose built **S.A.R.C** for Teesside. This is a multi agency project comprising of Cleveland Police, the four Primary Care Trusts and specialist sexual violence support services within the voluntary sector. The S.A.R.C was launched on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007. It aims to provide a comprehensive service to anyone who has experienced sexual assault or rape. To date it has received 132 referrals (both male and female). The service is client led and victims do not need to have reported to the police in order to access Helen Britton House. Support workers are available to provide information, explain options and help victims make informed choices about what to do next.

**Progressing:**

## **Objective 5:**

### **To continue developing the local Service User Group, and establish a Tees wide Service User Consultation Network:**

The Forum has established the Middlesbrough Service User Group, which meets on a regular basis. The purpose of the group is to use the service users personal experiences of domestic violence including their opinions of both past and current service provision. This information will be used to influence future strategies and inform future practice. This places the service users at the core of decision-making.

Some members of the service user group have become volunteers of the Cleveland Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel. They are crucial factor to the success of this new initiative. This gives them the opportunity to look at how case have been handled, both those that have resulted in charges and those that have not. The purpose is to see what lessons can be learned for the future.

From our local Service User Group, the Forum hopes to develop a model of good practice with the intention of developing a Tees wide Service User Consultation Network. Funding has recently been secured through the Northern Rock Foundation to develop a Tees wide Network.

## **Progressing**

**Objective 6:****Raise awareness of domestic violence and challenge attitudes of tolerance to this crime:**

A number of awareness raising campaigns have been run throughout the period, including press releases, radio and television coverage.

There's no Excuse for Domestic Abuse cards and holders have been produced and distributed to hairdressing salons throughout Middlesbrough.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007 a current affairs programme (BBC Inside Out) featured how domestic violence is approached and tackled in Middlesbrough. This focused on the effectiveness of partnership working between the Police, My Sisters Place, the SAFE project and other relevant agencies. The programme highlighted the different interventions available for victims and perpetrators. It also raised the profile of our multi-agency approach.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008 (A derby cup match) an awareness- raising day took place at Middlesbrough Football Club. This included the players warming up in tee shirts with the D.V printed logo. Posters were displayed throughout the concourse; stickers were displayed on the back of toilet doors, as well as other publicity including a press release, which featured in the next match day programme.

We have already received one self- referral to the SAFE project from this campaign.

**Objective Achieved:**

As we move into year two of our three-year strategy the priorities from our action plan include:

- Public Awareness Campaigns
- Education and Training
- Awareness Raising around Honour Based Violence for DV agencies
- Deliver and monitor the Sanctuary Scheme
- Promote agency use of risk assessment for the MARAC
- Develop Children's Services
- Monitor the development of the Specialist Court
- Progress development of the Scrutiny Panel with Service Users
- Develop a plan to reduce the number of alcohol related incidents
- Progress development of a Tees wide Service User Consultation Network

## **THANKS TO OUR FUNDER'S**

**The Northern Rock Foundation**

**Middlesbrough Council**

**Government Office North East**

**Tees Valley Community Foundation**

**Safer Middlesbrough Partnership**