



Report of the Police and Crime Panel

Report title: Tools and strategies for dealing with Domestic Abuse

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Author and contact: T/ACC Katy Barrow-Grint

Purpose: As requested by the Panel

Recommendations: For noting only

Executive Summary

This report provides a detailed overview of the tools and strategies employed by Thames Valley Police (TVP) to address Domestic Abuse (DA). A range of key initiatives is highlighted, illustrating TVP's proactive approach to managing high-risk cases, collaborating with partner agencies, and implementing evidence-based interventions. The report showcases successes such as innovative projects and increased usage of specific tools, while acknowledging challenges such as capacity issues and the conclusion of certain initiatives.

MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

Meeting to discuss the most high risk cases of DA and sexual violence, to share information and to safety plan to safeguard victims. These are held monthly and TVP currently has 11 MARAC's across the Force, these are chaired by the Detective Inspector of the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit with good representation from key partners. High risk DA investigations account for approximately 4% of the total number of DA crimes reported.

TVP commissioned SafeLives to complete an extensive review of the TV MARACs early in 2023. The review contained 52 recommendations. The document was shared with key partners and owners for the actions were identified across a range of services, including police. TVP have produced a standardised new MARAC Operating Protocol to provide central position on approach to the MARAC, based on learning and the Safe Lives principles to an effective MARAC.

The following is a sample to illustrate how many cases have been heard during 2023 in some of TV MATAC areas:

- Buckinghamshire heard 267 cases 55 (21%) were repeat cases.
- Reading discussed 233 cases 79 (34%) were repeat cases.
- Wokingham discussed 105 cases of which 34 (32%) were repeat.
- West Berks discussed 85 cases and 23 (27%) were repeat cases.
- Bracknell discussed 130 cases, Slough 201 cases.
- Windsor and Maidenhead 114 cases.



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MATAC – Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination.

A monthly meeting is held on each of the 11 Local Policing Area's (LPA), these identify and target medium risk serial perpetrators of DA. The small cohort of around 2-4 is identified through using a method called RFG (recency-frequency-gravity). These meetings are chaired by the LPA neighbourhood Insp/PS. TVP commissioned the VKPP (Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme) to conduct a Peer Review following concerns from other internal reports that the Force did not have a consistent approach across the Force. The report provided the Force with a number of recommendations, most have been completed. Work is ongoing to standardise the MATAC process in LPA's and provide more consistency and using the Northumbria MATAC research and best practice we have increased our MATAC coordinators from one to three, plus and admin. This will be further increased to five when the new Force Harm Reduction Units in implemented.

MAPPA – Multi-agency Public Protection arrangements.

Process through various agencies to work together in order to protect the public by managing the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders. MAPPA 2's are chaired by the LPA, MAPPA 3 are chaired by either DCI/Supt or probation.

IOM – Integrated Offender Management.

IOM brings a cross-agency response to crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities with the National main focus on Neighbourhood Crime (Fixed cohort). IOM looks to manage those persistent and problematic offenders that cause the most harm to the community through **Change** (intervention and prevention, support, mentoring), **Control** (obtaining stability, statutory control, civil interventions, orders, notices, bail conditions etc.) and **Disrupt** (arrest, enforcing civil orders, warrants - when their risk cannot be managed and all other options have been considered).

Under the Free cohort IOM is able to utilise these resources to run IOM schemes for other cohorts. Within TVP we invite applications for DA. These DA perpetrators will predominantly be statutory offenders and most will have committed offences in other crime types in addition to DA. Recent figures are that within the IOM 56 persons (18%) have a Niche marker for DA (either as victim or suspect) and 36 have been referred in under the DA Free cohort.

DRIVE

The DRIVE project is a collaborative approach to tackling DA, by liaising with partners to work with those presenting abusive, challenging and violent behaviour. It is a programme developed by leading DA charities including Respect, SaveLives and Social Finance which has been subject to evaluation work in other pilot sites. The Thames Valley scheme is funded through the OPCC from a Home Office grant. Our service provider, Cranstoun, will deliver one to one case management for suitable High Risk/High



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Harm perpetrators and cases are referred through existing MARAC and MATAC structure. DRIVE went live at the beginning of January with 'Perpetrator Panels' operating in all three Thames Valley counties by mid-January. The scheme will accommodate approximately 10 new cases per county each month within its case management capability and, additionally, oversee the disruption of perpetrators in cases not suitable for case management but where multi-agency management of the perpetrator would make a significant contribution to the reduction of risk. Of the cases owned by the Service Provider, it is anticipated around half will be disruption and the remainder will move to engagement with and support of perpetrators. This has funding until 2025.

DVPOs / DVPNs – Domestic Violence Protection Orders/Notices

These are to provide the victim of DA with immediate protection following an incident. TVP currently looks to issue DVPN's if the perpetrator if no further action is taken as the custody disposal. A DVPN offers victims who have been subject to violence or the threat of violence to extra safeguarding and support. When a DVPO is issued by the Court they are being managed and discussed through the MATACs and work is ongoing to ensure that any breaches are managed more robustly on each LPA (HMICFRS Area for Improvement PEEL 2023). January 2024 will see a change in the process for a DVPO in TVP, the paper work will be available in Niche, training will be given by Court Presentation Officers around how best to fill complete the paperwork, and each ICR team on each LPA will have a single point of contact for DVPN's who can provide additional advice and support. From January 2023 to December 2023 TVP have had 280 hearings force wide and 255 DVPN's granted a success rate of 91.07%

SPOs – Stalking Prevention Orders

SPOs are Civil Orders, the aim of which is to protect victims of stalking. It must be applied for by the Police and a breach is a criminal offence. Standard and medium risk are managed on area and any of high risk sit with Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit. There are currently two stalking Detective Sergeant's, one North of the Force, and one South. They oversee and secure SPO's with the Officers in the Case and the Forces Legal team. Breaches sit with the LPA and is consistent throughout the force. The force has significantly increased its use of SPOS from just 4 in 2021 to 16 full orders, 8 interim orders and 5 orders with other forces in December 2023. There can still be some unrealistic expectations from legal around the applications. A Service level agreement to be agreed with them which should further increase applications being made. Wakemans is a company used by Surrey Police, they have been commissioned to complete the application process, and this takes away all responsibility from Force Legal Teams. There are cost implications with this, but the service also includes training for officers. This options is currently being explored within the Force for 2024.



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COBI – Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Intervention

COBI is a programme for perpetrators of both domestic and non-domestic stalking cases. COBI is specifically designed to treat people who have demonstrated thoughts and behaviours, directed towards another person, which could be described as obsessive. The programme is delivered by Interventions Alliance and consists of 12 one to one sessions, which are 2.5 hours in duration. The programme aims to help the perpetrator learn new ways to manage the obsessive feelings without causing harm to others. This is the first time TVP have applied for and obtained funding for this specific programme. Funding was obtained in April 2023 by the OPCC in collaboration with TVP and Probation for 150 places and the programme was mobilised in November 2023. The Stalking Coordinators make referrals. Attendance on the programme is now being added as a requirement to subjects Stalking Protection Order (SPO). Following the granting of the SPO a referral form is completed and submitted to Interventions Alliance. They then complete an initial assessment and confirm if the perpetrator is suitable for the programme. If deemed suitable attendance to all 12 sessions will be required by the perpetrator. Failure to attend without reasonable excuse will be a breach of their SPO and investigated accordingly.

The South East National Probation Service were also involved in the completion of the bid and will have access to the places. They will be making referrals as part of their licence conditions and RAR days when a Community Order is given. Monthly meetings are held between all agencies involved to ensure appropriate use of the places.

At this time, the requirement has been granted on three SPO's and has been requested on several more applications that are awaiting 1st court hearings.

The contract ends on March 2025.

DVD's – Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme - Clare's Law Disclosure

A DVD allows people to make enquiries with the Police about an individual they are in a relationship with, or in a relationship with someone they know where there are concerns. The applications are administrated within the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit. Due to the demand and capacity, the Force is still failing to have what is considered adequate numbers of DVDs and in the recent HMICFRS Peel Inspection this was again identified as an area for improvement for the Force.

A small pilot is ongoing within the Assessment Investigation Unit in Berkshire, whereby a team of two officers working 44 hours a week complete the secondary investigations element of the requests. Any required disclosures were then sent back to DAIU for completion. Evaluations were positive and a number of bids have been submitted for a centralised team to complete the applications. Unfortunately none have been granted. Work is ongoing to see how TV can meet this AFI.

DVD's video guidance has been added to Op Guidance. This will be shared through internal comms channels and external partners in Jan 2023. DA representation on



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working groups for PCEP and DCEP established with DVDS requested as part of curriculum.

SAR – Safeguarding Adult Review

Multi agency review which seeks to determine what relevant agencies and individuals involved could have worked differently and could have prevented the abuse.

DHS & DSR– Domestic Homicide Reviews & Domestic Suicide Reviews:

All requests for reports relating to Domestic Homicide Reviews and Domestic Suicide Reviews are channelled through the Service Improvement Investigation Review Team. The team comprises a manager, DS, DCs and Specialist Investigators who are all PIP 2 trained and recruited with relevant specialist knowledge and operational experience.

Detailed analysis and research is undertaken following an ‘index event’ such as a DA related homicide or suicide where it is suspected that the victim was suffering from Domestic Abuse. The reports are shared with Community Safety Partnerships around the force area and panel members attend multi-agency meetings in order to assist with the production of the Overview Report for publication.

Formal recommendations from the DHR/DSRs are channelled through the Governance & Service Improvement Learning & Recommendations Panel. Other individual or departmental learning derived from such statutory reviews is fed back to individuals and departments. It is also incorporated into short case studies, and a selection of these are made into ‘Vodcasts’ – essentially training tools in video form, including actual footage and recordings. These tools are anonymised and available to colleagues across the force. S/I regularly train cohorts of student officers around statutory reviews, and also have an input into the specialist DA course.

For the last 3 years an annual Compendium of Learning has been put together to summarise broader learning themes, with the intention that these are tackled by the most appropriate colleagues/teams. For the last two years, learning themes for the year have been launched through a conference – the next is due to take place on 6th February in Exeter Hall and on line. This is recorded for use in future training.

CARA

CARA project specialises in working with perpetrators of DA. Referrals come through the Police for Standard risk offenders with no previous offending history and they are given a CARA caution where they attend workshops to raise their awareness around DA. TVP has trialled this in Bucks area, and is funded until March 2024. Between 2012 and 2014 after CARA was launched there was a 35% reduction in DA offending nationally and there was over 1500 offenders receive intervention each year. There were 142 referrals received from TVP within 2022-23 reporting period. Out of the victims that engaged 61%



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reported they experienced positive changes from their partners since they had accessed CARA sessions, none of the victims reported negative or abusive behaviour from their partners.

As funding ends on 31/03/2024 we have started to stop referrals from TVP and this will be communicated to the Local Custody where it has been trialled.

The closest replacement for CARA we can provide is our Red Snapper Domestic Abuse Hub online course, or the version tailored to Female Perpetrators. It's free to attend but the suspect will need internet and device access. It's not an exact match for CARA, obviously, but it's the only DA provision we have at the moment – and available force wide. The issue with this it is online and there is no victim contact which is something CARA offer.

Conclusion

In summary, Thames Valley Police exhibits a steadfast commitment to addressing domestic abuse through a collaborative and multifaceted approach. The achievements, such as the introduction of innovative projects and increased usage of specific tools, showcase progress. However, challenges, including potential gaps in services due to the conclusion of specific initiatives, are acknowledged. Despite these challenges, TVP's dedication to continuous improvement, evidenced by ongoing training, reviews, and partnerships, positions it as a dynamic force in the ongoing fight against domestic abuse.