

Cabinet – 27 September 2006

Domestic Violence Strategy

Portfolio: Councillor Garry Perry, Safer stronger communities, partnerships and Vision 2008

Service Area: Community Safety

Wards: All

Key decision No

Forward Plan: No

Summary of report

The report presents a strategy for reducing domestic violence in Walsall entitled “No More Excuses”. Domestic violence is one of the key targets within our Local Area Agreement which has been agreed with government. The strategy has been prepared by the Domestic Violence Forum, an umbrella organisation of which the council is a member, comprising a range of agencies and groups tackling domestic violence. Whilst the strategy has been endorsed by the Safer Stronger Walsall Partnership, it is now brought to the cabinet for specific approval from the council. A feature of the strategy is a commitment from all the partner organisations to what is known as the 14 “Walsall Wills” a statement of commitment for what partner organisation will do.

Domestic violence has become an important priority for the government. Some headline statistics are as follows:

- nationally 2 women are killed on average each week by a male partner or former partner
- domestic violence is the largest cause of morbidity in women aged 19-44 (more than cancer or road accidents)
- 3 out of every 4 children on the child protection register, live in households where domestic violence occurs
- in Walsall there are approximately 4000 reported incidents per year.

Local authorities and their partners have a vital role in tackling domestic violence by safeguarding survivors, offering services to reduce the impact of abuse and holding perpetrators to account.

Recommendations

1. That the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2006-9 is endorsed by the Cabinet
2. That a member strategic champion is identified who will promote the strategy.

Resource and legal considerations

There are no direct resource implications of this report. However there are a number of resource issues that will need to be addressed as the strategy is taken forward most notably the reliance until now on short term grant funding for much of the work.

The Domestic Violence Forum is a voluntary sector organisation and a registered charity which relies on funding from a number of organisations to sustain the service. These are as follows:

- New Deal for Communities (ends 2008)
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (ends 2007)
- The Big Lottery (end 2008)
- Walsall Children's Fund (ends 2008)

For the current year the Domestic Violence Forum has been allocated £129,500 from the Local Area Agreement.

In line with other parts of the LAA there is some searching work to be done to evaluate what initiatives really work and to ensure that we focus activity on meeting the targets. Activity that does not directly support the reduction in domestic violence and repeat occurrences is unlikely to be funded. A target action planning workshop will take place shortly to begin this assessment.

The Safer Stronger Walsall Partnership is responsible overall for achieving the targets and the council is central to this partnership. But the council also has a key corporate role itself and a role for its specific services – not just childrens services and housing but many other services as well such as schools, youth service, community safety, local neighbourhood partnerships, revenue & benefits. A project group has been established within the council to address these issues.

Citizen impact

By working in partnership, the domestic violence unit ensures that all citizens within Walsall are beneficiaries of their services and expertise. Some of the other services involved, who help ensure this wide citizen impact, are as follows:

- *health*: domestic abuse is a major public health problem affecting a large number of vulnerable women and men. A multi agency approach minimises the problem as well as the impact on the community.
- *Education*: provides a key link into the work of domestic abuse and a number of services are available which aim to raise awareness and provide training
- *Housing services*: Walsall MBC deals with situations where people have found themselves threatened with homelessness through domestic abuse. The Supporting People programme plans and funds housing related support services for such people including those experiencing domestic abuse. The Womens Refuse also provides support.
- *National Probation Service*: working with people who are both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse
- *CAFCASS*: work to ensure that contact arrangements for children who experience or witness domestic abuse can be managed safely

Community safety

Domestic abuse is a priority for community safety for a number of reasons:

- it is part of the violent crime agenda and it is clear from the crime audit that violent crime is on the increase in the borough
- the Crime and Disorder Strategy for 2005-8 set targets for reducing the levels of repeat victimisation and increasing the reporting of domestic abuse neither of which are being achieved
- reducing incidents of domestic abuse and other forms of domestic abuse is a government priority.

The range of actions to reduce domestic violence include:

- *physical*: provision of personal alarms, CCTV to support victimless prosecutions, premium services for repeat offenders
- *victim*: witness support, domestic abuse alarms, crisis intervention, raise awareness of sexual violence
- *offender*: perpetrator programme, referrals form/to MAPPA, specialist domestic abuse courts, SAFE (Stopping Aggression in the Family Environment) programmes
- *prevention and community*: delivery of school based education, specialist social worker, development of support group for victims

Environmental impact

There are no particular environmental implications of this report.

Performance and risk management issues

Domestic Violence has been identified as a 'stretch target' within the Safer Stronger Communities Pillar of the LAA. As such it is split into two: the number of repeat incidents and the numbers of offenders brought to justice.

In addition, there is a reward grant element of the LAA which relates to meeting the stretch targets. This reward grant of £730,000 will not be paid until 2008. Should the stretch target be reached then a percentage of this sum as yet undecided) can be allocated to domestic abuse work.

Equality implications

The work of the Domestic Violence Forum is borough wide and as such its services are available and accessible to all residents. There is some evidence of reluctance to report incidents of domestic abuse which leads to under reporting. Such reluctance may be attributed to a number of factors (e.g. fear of reprisals for reporting, language barriers, pressure from extended family to stay with partner, fear of facing things alone). An increase in reporting is to be addressed through a multi agency approach which includes Stepping Stones, SAYA and the Crisis Intervention Service.

One of the Walsall Wills for 2006-9 identified in the strategy makes the following commitment: 'we will ensure that domestic abuse services consider the specific needs of black minority ethnic groups, same sex, disabled and older victims and survivors'.

Consultation

Consultation on the Domestic Abuse strategy has taken place with a wide range of partners. These include: police, fire service, education, housing, youth offending service, PCT.

Consultation with service users has also taken place. This included the Crisis Intervention Service which deals with the resulting impact of domestic abuse. The feedback from participants was very positive and the view from practitioners was that such a service was greatly needed.

A participatory appraisal report has been undertaken on the school and youth programme, SAFE, the Women's Support Group and the training programmes. Such research is carried out by local people and empowers them to express their views. Feedback on all programmes was very positive.

Vision 2008

The work of the Domestic Violence Forum sits well within the council's vision for 2008 impacting upon several of the key priorities and primarily ensures that all people are safe and secure in the places they work, live and visit.

Background papers

'No More Excuses' 2006-2009, A Strategy to Reduce Domestic Abuse in Walsall.

Author

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Partnership Manager for Crime and Disorder Interventions
Safer Stronger Walsall Partnership



Signed:

Executive Director: Jamie Morris

Date: 18 September 2006



Signed:

Portfolio holder: Cllr Garry Perry

Date: 18 September 2006

No More Excuses

Domestic Abuse

Strategy

(2005 – 2008)

Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategy

Walsall Wills (2005 – 2008)

- We will ensure that services are informed by and where appropriate delivered by survivors of abuse
- We will ensure that services are available to children living with domestic abuse
- We will seek sustainable funding for the full range of Walsall domestic abuse services
- We will consolidate the 24 hour crisis service by extending access to Social Care and Health referrals
- We will develop and deliver services jointly with multi disciplinary partners wherever possible and will engage partners in developing a range of responses
- We will ensure that DA services consider the specific needs of black and minority ethnic, same sex, disabled and older victims and survivors
- We will continue to seek the support of local services to provide emergency resources, to promote DA awareness and to develop employee centred responses to staff experiencing domestic abuse
- We will ensure that our public relations strategy is targeted appropriately, remains innovative and accessible
- We will continue to make demands for improved court and legal services for victims of domestic abuse
- We will ensure the Forum is representative of key partner agencies and services and that the Forum acts as a quality assurance mechanism for new and developing DA services

- We will continue to develop perpetrator programmes and ensure that they are fully evaluated
- We will continue to deliver and develop our comprehensive raising awareness and training programmes
- We will establish information sharing protocols across all key partner agencies
- We will engage partners in developing a range of responses which would include working with survivors who are experiencing drug and alcohol misuse or have mental health concerns
- We will work with partners to develop and establish a range of flexible, responsive and appropriate housing to complement the existing refuge provision.

Signatories of Safer Walsall Borough Partnership

John Brown	Signed.....	Chair, Safer Walsall Borough Partnership. WM Fire Service HQ
Jamie Morris	Signed.....	Exec.Director Neighbourhood Services. Walsall Council
Nozmul Hussain	Signed.....	Director, Safer Walsall Borough Partnership. Walsall Council
Cllr Garry Perry	Signed.....	Councillor Walsall Council
C/Supt.Bruce Gilbert OBE	Signed.....	OCU Commander, H1 WM Police

Mac McGregor	Signed.....	Borough Commander WM Fire Service
Helen Denton	Signed.....	Managing Director Education Walsall
Rosie Higgins	Signed.....	Drug Strategy Team GOWM. Birmingham
Peter Brown	Signed.....	Walsall Housing Group
Dr.Sam Ramaiah	Signed.....	Director of Public Health Walsall tPCT
Cllr Alan Paul	Signed.....	Councillor Walsall Council
Clive Wright	Signed.....	Director, WBSP
Pat Brown-Richards	Signed.....	District Manager, WM Probation
C/Supt. Peter Monroe	Signed.....	OCU Commander, H2 WM Police
Ian Willetts	Signed.....	CEN Theme Leader
Pat Jennings	Signed.....	Head of Service, Youth Offending Service, BVC
Kay Child	Signed.....	Chair Walsall Domestic Violence Forum
Sheri Rogers	Signed.....	Domestic Violence Co-ordinator WDVF

Contents

PART ONE Background

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 The aim of the Domestic Abuse Strategy
- 1.2 Definition of Domestic Abuse
- 1.3 Linkages to other Strategies
- 1.4 The Structure of the Strategy
- 1.5 Progress made against the strategic aims of Walsall Wills as identified in 'No More Excuses' (2000)

PART TWO Consultation

- 2.1 Evaluation of the Crisis Intervention Service
- 2.2 Summary of recommendations
- 2.3 Participatory Appraisal Report

PART THREE Domestic Abuse in Walsall

- 3.0 Walsall
- 3.1 The size of Domestic Abuse in Walsall

PART FOUR Working in Partnership

- 4.1.a Ethnic Minorities
- 4.1.b Health in Walsall
- 4.1.c Education
- 4.1.d Housing Services
- 4.1.e National Probation Service – West Midlands
- 4.1.f CAF/CASS
- 4.1.g Social Care and Supported Housing
- 4.1.h Area Child Protection Committee
- 4.1.i The Local Criminal Justice Board and Crown Prosecution Service
- 4.1.j West Midlands Police Domestic Abuse Unit

4.1.k Fast Track/Specialist Court

4.1.l Witness Care Team (WCT)

4.1.m Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU)

PART FIVE

5.0 Sustainability and Funding

PART ONE Background

1.0 Introduction

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on Chief Police Officers and local agencies to work together to develop and implement a local strategy for reducing crime and disorder.

The Walsall Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Drug Action Teams (known as 'The Safer Walsall Borough Partnership') recognises its special responsibility for achieving the particular vision of ensuring that by 2008 all people in Walsall are safe and secure and that year by year Walsall becomes a much safer community.

The strategy and the Act recognises that making Walsall a safer community can only effectively be achieved through a combination of prevention and enforcement and that Safer Walsall Borough Partnership (SWBP) and its constituent partners have a central role to play in both of these aspects.

The requirement to better co ordinate the management and activities of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Drug and Alcohol Action Teams was set out in the Police Reform Act 2002 following discussion and consultation by Government with regard to the improved performance benefits of simplifying the working arrangements of these two bodies and the need to recognise their overlapping agendas.

The opportunity this legislation presented has been fully embraced in Walsall with a merger of the two bodies and the emergence of a new strategic partnership responsible for ensuring that effective strategies for reducing the blight of crime and drugs in Walsall are implemented.

SWBP has been formed to give strategic direction to the work by and between agencies to tackle and reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime; and to tackle and prevent and harm and distress of individuals and communities in relation to drug and alcohol misuse.

Key outcomes for the success of SWBP include:

- Delivery of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy leading to sustained reductions in crime, disorder and anti social behaviour
- Delivery of the drug action plans leading to reductions in the misuse of drugs and improved access to treatment for drug users
- Delivery of the crime targets contained in the Crime and Disorder Strategy
- Improved mainstreaming of crime and drugs issues with key partners and stakeholders
- Individuals and communities being and feeling safer
- Effective targeting and deployment of budgets and other resources

The Drugs and Crime Audit, which underpinned the SWBP strategy, was based on extensive research and statistical analysis and consultation with residents and communities in Walsall. In the context of matters relating to domestic abuse, residents of Walsall identified anti social behaviour, fear of becoming a victim, alcohol related disorder and prostitution as being of concern to them in the context of crime and community safety.

Key Strategic Priorities have been identified one of which is fear of crime and vulnerability which include young people as victims of crime, hate crime and domestic abuse. A target to reduce the overall levels of the fear of crime has been set at 5%.

Domestic Abuse is a priority for the following reasons:

- Domestic abuse is a part of the violent crime agenda and it is clear from the audit that violent crime is on the increase in the borough
- The SWBP strategy for 2002-2005 set targets for reducing the levels of repeat victimisation and increasing the reporting of domestic abuse, neither of which were achieved
- Reducing incidents of domestic abuse and other forms of domestic abuse is a government priority
- There are approximately 4000 reported incidents per year in the borough

The overall target for 2008 is a reduction in the level of repeat victimisation for domestic abuse of 15% compared to March 2003.

The SWBP Strategy for 2005-8 identifies targets for domestic abuse as follows:

5% **reduction** per year in repeat rate compared to 2002/2003 figures

5% **increase** per year in reporting of incidents compared to 2002/2003 figures

The SWBP has identified a number of actions, which will be used to achieve these targets. These include the following:

Physical (addressing the physical environment) eg priority for rehousing, safer house facility, provision of personal alarms, CCTV to support victimless prosecutions, premium service for repeat offenders.

Victim (prevention of crime through awareness raising) eg witness support, domestic abuse alarms, crisis intervention, anti social behaviour issues, advocacy service for victims, sexual assault referral centre, raising awareness of sexual violence.

Offender (enforcement, management, and education of offenders and persistent offenders) eg perpetrator programme, referrals from/to MAPP, referrals from/to Consultation and Problem Solving Forum, specialist domestic abuse courts, continuing support for the delivery of the SAFE programme, referrals from the Prolific and Persistent Offender Scheme

Prevention and Community (improving broader life chances and engaging communities) eg delivery of school based education, specialist social worker, alignment of work of DV Coordinator, work with schools, development of new support group for victims, consideration of domestic violence in terms of homelessness and children's services

1.1 The aim of the Domestic Abuse Strategy

The first domestic violence strategy was launched in 2000 and contained the 14 'Walsall Wills', which were produced in consultation with users and providers of services. They outlined what needed to be done in the borough and the document was seen as the starting point for increased joint working and improved services for all affected by domestic abuse in Walsall.

1.2 Definition of Domestic Abuse

It is important to agree on a common definition when agreeing a basis for data collection and information sharing. The sharing of information at a local level is crucial to effective multi agency working and falls into two categories:

- a) Anonymised data sharing for the purposes of performance monitoring
- b) Information sharing in relation to an individual case, which has the potential to increase victims safety and hold perpetrators to account

In keeping with this consistent approach, the definition of domestic abuse used by Walsall Domestic Violence Forum is as follows:

‘Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.’

Other definitions are contained within this document under the relevant sections and reflect the different perspectives various partners bring to the work of domestic abuse.

1.3 Linkages to other strategies

The work of Walsall Domestic Violence Forum fits strategically within the priorities of the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, the Local Authority and Partner organisations by impacting upon the Reducing Violent Crime and Health Inequalities Floor Targets. It links with the Local Authority Homeless Strategy and the Supporting People Strategy, it also fits directly with the WBSP priority of ‘Community Safety and Reclaiming Neighbourhoods’ and the Local Authority’s pledges of ‘Ensuring People are Safe and Secure’; ‘Making Walsall a Healthy and Caring Place’ and ‘Making it Easier to Access Local Services’.

1.4 The Structure of the Strategy

The first part of the domestic abuse strategy provides a progress update on the key strategic aims – the ‘Walsall Wills’ – which were developed for the ‘No More Excuses’ strategy launched in 2000.

The second part of the strategy provides a new set of strategic aims in the form of the ‘Walsall Wills’ which have been developed during the consultation process for this strategy.

In 2000, Walsall Domestic Violence Forum in association with key partner agencies developed its first Domestic Violence Strategy. The strategy aimed to deliver a comprehensive range of services.

The Domestic Violence Unit is at the forefront of services delivered in this area and has either achieved or exceeded in its objectives to develop a range of services to victims, perpetrators and children. These objectives were described in the Walsall Wills; progress against each of these is outlined below.

1.5 Progress made against the strategic aims of Walsall Wills as identified in ‘No More Excuses’ (2000)

Progress against each of the 14 Walsall Wills can be identified as follows:

- **We will provide by December 2002 a seamless, free, safe 24 hours, 7 day a week service form confidential environments where agencies are networked together and work collaboratively.**

Target Achieved

Walsall Domestic Violence Forum moved into its current base in Bloxwich in June 2001, this was necessary in order to accommodate the additional staff required to deliver the planned range of services. Funding for the new Crisis Intervention Service was secured from the New Deal for Communities (up to 3/07) and the New Opportunities Fund (up to 9/08). The 'pilot' of this innovative service was launched in March 2003 in the New Deal areas, extended to cover all areas of H2 OCU in May 2003 and went borough wide in September 03. The service works in partnership with the police and provides consenting victims with direct support and practical assistance. A specialist social worker is employed to ensure that all child protection concerns are correctly addressed. Support is available to all agencies and organisations within Walsall.

A range of staff are equipped to provide advice and guidance to professionals working with people affected by domestic abuse.

These include a specialist midwife to address specific issues raised by social care and supported housing and health. Seventy-six referrals were made to the specialist midwife for domestic abuse between April 2003 to March 2004.

Staff members attend regular external conferences and seminars to ensure that they have up to the minute information regarding best practice and legislation; they are well placed to share their knowledge with those requiring it. Services are now more confident to share their expertise and work together in order to improve services for clients. This will be further enhanced by the development of the new strategy that will address Domestic Abuse in line with the requirements of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership strategy.

Partnership working with the police will contribute to reducing violent crime in the borough in accordance with key performance indicators they set.

The services outlined later in this strategy demonstrate the holistic range of provision available directly from Walsall Domestic Violence Forum. Protocols are in place in respect of joint work with the police; the SWBP is ensuring that the innovative Crisis Intervention Services is available to victims of domestic abuse. Two people carriers have been purchased to enable victims and their children to be transported to a place of safety as required. Further protocols are currently being developed with various departments within Social Care and Supported Housing and the Teaching PCT. This will ensure that services are widely available.

The SAYA telephone help line service enables victims who do not speak English to gain appropriate support and information. Four hundred and thirty six calls were made to SAYA multi lingual help line during the year April 2004 – March 2005.

Stepping Stones provides a helpline for victims of domestic abuse; six hundred and sixty eight calls were made to Stepping Stones between April 2004 and March 2005.

Two further drop-in groups are now established (January 05) at various locations within the borough, these complement the well established Stepping Stones group meeting. This gives more opportunity for women to seek information about their options at a venue/time of their choosing.

The Crisis Intervention Service enables victims to receive support from the initial complaint. Four hundred and sixty four referrals were made to the Crisis Intervention Service between April 2004 and March 2005.

Aven House provides short-term refuge with 24-hour access and can cater for 36 women and children at any one time. The number of women referrals has increased over the last three years to 1295 in 2003/4 as well as the number of women admissions from 489 to 741. The number of child referrals has increased in comparison with women from 1014 in 2001/2 to 1058 in 2003/4. Child admissions have also increased from 822 to 1058 (an increase of 28.7%). Rainbow Tots nursery is situated in the grounds of Aven House and provides specific services for children and also a Saturday Club.

I learned to listen...there is no such thing as a nagging woman, it's a woman who cannot be heard

Man attending SAFE Programme

- **We will ensure that all domestic violence services are culturally sensitive and that culturally specific services are provided**

Target Achieved

The SAYA (which loosely translated means an 'umbrella of care') is a multi lingual help-line, which was launched in May 2003. Trained volunteers staff the help line under the auspices of our project officer (funded by the PCT and the SWBP). Sure Start funding has enabled the employment of a project worker to deliver culturally sensitive services within the Palfrey, Pleck and Alumwell areas of Walsall. Available languages are: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindu, Punjabi and Urdu. Three drop in groups are now in place to enable women to access direct face to face culturally specific support.

The number of SAYA contacts made between April 2004 and March 2005 is 436
The number of Stepping Stones calls made between April 2004 and March 2005 is 668.

It's the best thing that's happened to me

Woman's Group Service User

- **We will ensure management sign up to proposals for change across business, service, statutory and voluntary sectors in the town**

Target Achieved

The Human Resources department of Walsall MBC now includes our training programme in their manual and allow staff to attend during regular working time. Specific training in domestic violence in the workplace has been developed and delivered to a number of employers and trades union representatives further seminars are planned. Walsall was a partner in the regional development of a training pack for employers made possible by Daphne funding in 1999.

The Walsall Domestic Violence Forum is registered with the Data Commissioner for the collection and storage of data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Ongoing discussions continue with the Police in respect of information sharing. They are currently

providing personal details of clients who consent to the Crisis Intervention Service and with those subject to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Although we have come a long way recently, we are still not able to produce fully reliable statistics on the 'true size' of domestic abuse in Walsall.

The Domestic Violence Court was established in July 2004 and figures to date show that of the 321 domestic abuse related cases 59% of these have been heard in the Domestic Violence Court. All available bench magistrates have received enhanced Domestic Abuse training package and the same members of the partner agencies (eg probation, CPS) are present each week. The partnership approach has focused on witness care and increased the speed of processing offenders

Domestic Abuse alarms will be issued on a borough wide scale by police officers and members of the Domestic Violence Forum. The aim is to reduce the number of repeats and increase reporting in line with the key aims of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership Strategy. These alarms will be placed within both H1 and H2 police divisions and within the Domestic Violence Forum.

- **We will ensure that all service organisations recognise the wide ranging aspects of domestic violence**

Target Exceeded

The training programme is now well established and Walsall Domestic Violence Forum is seeking to gain national accreditation for the range of training provided. The syllabus includes: Domestic Violence Awareness, Domestic Violence/Child Protection and Domestic Violence/Adult Protection.

Free training is available to all who live, work or volunteer in the Walsall area and is taken up by all multi agency partners – including Social Workers, Community Wardens, Police and Probation Officers, Housing Officers, Midwives and other staff from departments and wards with the Health sectors, nursing home and residential unit staff, education and youth workers together with voluntary organisations including Citizens Advice, Relate and drug/alcohol services.

Both the Area Child Protection Committee and the Adult Protection Board endorse the training. Funding attracted by the Franchise Partnership Agreement with Dudley College ensures that the training programme is self-sustainable. Three or four full training days are delivered weekly. During the period April 2004 to February/March 2005 a total of 82 courses were delivered to a total of 1394 participants from multi-agency departments.

A key strength is that the programme is coming back next term; to often good initiatives are introduced without continuation

School & Youth Programme Service User

- **We will ensure that national examples of good practice are disseminated to the borough and appropriately implemented**

Target Achieved

Walsall has become an example of good practice envied by many other areas. The range of services available includes two 24-hour telephone help-lines: Stepping Stones and SAYA multi-cultural service. We also have a Crisis Intervention Service providing information, support and transport to a place of safety, if required, for victims and their children. Stopping Aggression in the Family Environment – S.A.F.E., is a 32-week programme for men who wish to stop abusing their partners. These services refer clients to either of three women’s weekly support groups held across the borough. The School & Youth Programme works with young people to reduce the occurrence of Domestic Abuse in future generations.

Delivery of a comprehensive multi-agency training programme ensures that professionals and community members are able to recognise abuse and make appropriate referrals. Currently the MARAC – Multi-agency risk assessment conference, is being piloted in H1 police division and is showing very positive results. A dedicated domestic violence court has been set up within the Borough and the perpetrator course has been identified as a model of ‘national good practice’.

- **We will ensure that the Domestic Violence Forum becomes the route for all consultative work on domestic violence in the borough with the Forum taking a lead on service quality**

Target Achieved

Many agencies and organisations are now looking to the Forum to assist them in the development of their policies, procedures and strategies to address domestic violence. These have included: social care and supported housing-adult protection department, Accord Housing Association and Walsall SWBP. Walsall Domestic Violence Forum seeks to ensure that all service provision is to a standard of excellence and welcomes the opportunity to advise service providers in best practice. New legislation and best practice guidelines are distributed at Forum meetings to enable all sectors to receive up to date information pertaining to Domestic Abuse. Multi agency Forum meetings are held on a quarterly basis whilst the smaller Management Committee and Task Groups meet monthly. A web site is currently under construction to enable easy access to information by agencies, organisations and the public.

I've changed my thought processes

Man attending SAFE programme

- **We will continue to seek sponsorship from local businesses to provide emergency resources for women leaving domestic violence situations**

Target Achieved

Walsall Soroptomists have kindly donated emergency parcels for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The packs include food items, baby foods and nappies, and personal toiletry essentials. Donations have also been received from Asda, Blakemore’s Cash and Carry, Boots Chemist, Debenhams, Safeway and Sainsbury’s.

- **We will ensure that current and ex domestic violence service users are involved in the strategy and delivery of services**

Target Achieved

One of our training facilitators is a survivor of domestic violence. Many volunteers have also experienced domestic violence in the past. Once they have fully come to terms with their own experience this makes them ideally suited to the support of others.

As an independent organisation we are able to gain clients perspectives in relation to services provided. Their compliments and complaints are then fed back to agencies to enable them to continually monitor their provision. Where there are numerous complaints received in respect of one particular agency, we provide information and assistance to them in order to improve the quality of the service provided to the user group.

(I have)...a greater understanding of Domestic Violence and Child Protection Issues
Training Programme Participant

- **We will ensure the delivery of voluntary and Court mandated perpetrator programmes**

Target Exceeded

S.A.F.E. – Stopping Aggression in the Family Environment is a 32-week programme for men who wish to stop their aggressive behaviour. This challenging programme began in November 2001 and is delivered by a mixed gender team who have been trained in the methods used by the Domestic Violence Intervention Project, London. S.A.F.E. is a member of RESPECT the national body for perpetrator programmes and works in accordance with their guidelines and procedures. Separate group work is completed with the female partners of those men attending S.A.F.E. to ensure their safety.

The programme delivered by probation has recently undergone an overhaul and has been reinstated as a national accredited programme. IDAP – Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme is a court mandated programme delivered by probation as part of a sentence given to a perpetrator by the court. Support for the partners attending local IDAP programmes is sought from local providers. It is anticipated that these women will attend the S.A.F.E. Women's Group.

Ninety-one men made contact during the year April 2004 to March 2005.

- **We will ensure that services recognise the impact of domestic violence on the emotional, physical, and sexual development of children**

Target Achieved

Domestic Violence can have serious impact upon the children witnessing and/or experiencing it. The Training Programme highlights many of the effects and provides information in making appropriate referrals to Social Care and Supported Housing. The Forum now employs a specialist social worker and a family support assistant who are able to work directly with children in order to address their individual needs.

The specialist social worker holds a weekly surgery at Aven House Women’s Refuge working with women to assist them in keeping their children safe. She is also available as a reference service to staff of the refuge as well as to professionals from all quarters.

Work with children and young people is being delivered across the borough giving the opportunity to reach many young people that may be personally affected by living with domestic abuse. The programme delivered teaches that ‘We all have the right to feel safe all of the time’ and ‘Nothing is so awful or so small that we can’t talk to someone about it’. The programme is now delivered to young people in the age ranges of 3 to 25 years and includes the ‘hard to reach groups’ – teenage mums, young offenders and disaffected pupils. School programme delivered to (figures relating to April 04 to February 05):

	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2004/05</u>
Nursery Age:		596 children
Infant/junior ages:		298 children
Senior age:	177 children	1102 children
Youth:		110 young people
Teenage mothers:		65

It’s a difficult subject but it stimulated an interest; we had good feedback from participating pupils.

School & Youth Programme Service User

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Evaluation of the Crisis Intervention Service:

Healthy Living Solutions (April 2005)

This was the first review of the Crisis Intervention Service (CIS) and considered the 741 referrals received during the first 14 months of operation. The report was based on in-depth interviews with women who used the service and with key practitioners whose work closely links with the CIS. In total 59 interviews were carried out as part of the study; in addition, a quantitative analysis of the data available to the service provided insights into the incidents reported to the police and the range of support offered by the CIS.

The project was initially designed to provide a crisis response service but it soon became clear that some of the clients required intense follow-up support to enable them to deal with the resulting impact of the Domestic Violence. For some victims this included support with going through the court process, for others it was around keeping themselves and their families safe and being able to take the next steps with their life. Follow-up support was provided for 97 clients.

The client’s perspective of the service was overwhelmingly positive. They reported that the service had a significantly positive impact on their lives. The impact reported by the women ranged from enabling them to continue through with prosecution to providing them with an essential lifeline at a time when they felt completely isolated and alone. The service provided both practical support with finding and getting to accommodation and emotional support with

dealing with the psychological impact of prolonged abuse. The specialist insights and knowledge of the CIS workers was highly valued by the clients. They reported that it helped them be better prepared for how the perpetrator would behave in the future and also helped them move forward with their lives.

The view from the practitioners interviewed was that such a service was greatly needed. This included the requirement to provide both the crisis support but most importantly the on-going follow-up support. The latter was seen as an essential component to the service. Generally, there was a lack of knowledge about how the service had developed to include provision of on-going support. Practitioners were keen to know how useful the service had been to clients.

There was an interest in extending the referral pathways into CIS. The work carried out by CIS in supporting victims through the criminal justice system and after the court case, was seen as positive by both the clients and the practitioners. There was also support for the role of CIS in the development of the Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

"CIS helped me believe in myself, that I can do it. He always told me that I couldn't do it on my own, that I wouldn't be able to manage. (CIS worker) helped me believe that I can do it and it has helped encourage me to think about going to college and that"

Crisis Intervention Service User

2.2 Summary of recommendations

Continuity of support to victims

There has been considerable development to the service in its first 14 months. The most significant has been the amount of ongoing support provided to service users. There is strong support for this development from both the service users themselves and practitioners from different agencies across the borough. It should be an area that the service looks to commit to providing in the future.

Data and information sharing

- There is a need to review what data is being collected and clarify for what purpose it is being used.
- Where data is to be collected on a long term basis consideration needs to be given to the accuracy and completeness of data sets
- It would be useful to explore what data trends could be used to explore the effectiveness of joint approaches to addressing domestic violence e.g. repeat victimisation rates or other indices from the criminal justice system.

Promoting the service

- There is a need to clarify with partner agencies who the service is for and what is provided
- There is a need to ensure an on-going promotion of the service directly with the police operating at the front line. This should include involvement of CIS in relevant training activities and input at parade sessions.

Operational Issues

- How the service is going to continue to meet the requirement for on-going follow up support needs to be considered.
- Consideration needs to be given to ensuring continued engagement of the volunteers.
- Extending the role of volunteers to provide more on-going support to the victims needs to be explored.
- Provision of updating, information exchange sessions and various learning updates for the volunteers need to be re-examined.
- If there are on-going challenges about response time to transport during the day these expectations need to be managed

Future directions

- A need to revisit and develop a shared vision for the service
- Explore issues around referral into the service such as police referring all intimate partner related cases with the option of opting out being available.
- The on-going support for the victims needs to continue to be provided
- Priority be given to ensuring on-going liaison with key agencies
- Consideration is given to developing other community-based referrals but the capacity to meet the potential increase in daytime referrals needs to be considered.
- Liaison and shared learning with other similar projects being developed around the country.

2.3 Participatory Appraisal Report

Walsall Domestic Violence Forum offers a number of programmes enabling service users to look at issues, receive training and support in relation to Domestic Violence. The 4 programmes forming the basis of this participatory appraisal were identified as:

- The School and Youth Programme

- S.A.F.E. (*Stopping Aggression in the Family Environment*)
- The Women's Support Group
- The Training Programme

Participatory appraisal is a type of research done by local people; it is about sharing information and ideas about things people find important. The PA approach and methods are informal and the techniques easy to apply meaning that a lot of information can be obtained from different groups of people in a short space of time. The techniques are an ideal alternative to using a questionnaire and it empowers participants to record their views.

This consultancy approach was delivered in a number of ways, participants were engaged either by an informal semi structured interview over the telephone, on a one to one basis or in a group session. In total there were 37 'over the phone' sessions; 4 group sessions and 3 one to one interviews.

Findings

The School and Youth Programme

The report concludes that, based on the feedback received from participants, the School and Youth Programme is an 'overwhelming success'. Responses included:

- All participants praised the delivery of the programme looking at the sensitive issue of Domestic Violence.
- They all commended the punctuality, communication, delivery and professionalism of the staff of Walsall Domestic Violence Forum.
- They felt that the programme was relevant and fitted in with Government Agenda.
- The programme allowed the issues of Domestic Violence to be discussed, often for the first time.
- Participants highlighted the positive response from pupils involved in the programme.

It became obvious during the consultancy that the School and Youth Programme was an important feature on the participating organisations timetables and the benefits of delivering the programme were clear. Contributors to the consultancy stated that they wish for the programme to continue on a regular basis and with the current method of delivery.

S.A.F.E. Programme (*Stopping Aggression in the Family Environment*)

A total of 8 participants contributed to the consultancy, their overall views of the programme were positive:

- All participants praised the staff delivering the programme.
- Staff qualities were identified as: professional, good listeners, understanding and fair.
- They all felt that their attendance on the programme was important and beneficial to them, their partners and their families.

- Participants stated that they appreciated and recognised the opportunities available to them by attending the programme.
- They also made suggestions for improvements to the programme including:
 - A review of the ‘check in’ system
 - More flexibility in ‘time off’ rules.
 - Look at the possibility of making the programme available more locally.
 - The times and length of the programme, some men attend straight from work.

In conclusion, all participants expressed that the benefits and learning gained by attending the S.A.F.E. programme were important and essential in maintaining a happier and more comfortable lifestyle for all.

The Women’s Support Group

Women attending the Women’s Group reported that they felt more confident as a result of meeting with the staff and volunteers running the programme as well as with other women who were in a similar situation. Comments include:

- “You get the chance to talk and listen to other people who are in similar circumstances to myself.”
- “You feel safe; no pressure is put on you.”
- “Sometimes you just want to be there...you can just listen...no one forces you to talk.”
- “You can have a personal councillor who is very supportive.”
- “I’ve learnt a lot on this programme... it has helped me change my life.
- “You are relaxed...no pressure is put on you.”
- “I have changed a lot because of this support...I’ve learnt not to make the same mistakes as I did in a previous relationship.”
- “The support, advice and guidance I have received has helped me a lot.”

The views of the women towards the Women’s Group were very positive. Those participating felt that the staff were supportive and kind, putting no pressure on anyone and were non-judgemental. They were all clearly satisfied with the service received and made no suggestions for any improvements.

<i>I needed help and got it.</i>

Training Programme

1. Domestic Violence Awareness;
2. Domestic Violence / Child Protection;
3. Domestic Violence / Adult Protection

The overall views of participants towards the training modules listed above were very positive. A number of features and views relating to the programme were frequently raised, these were:

- All participants confirmed the professionalism of the staff and praised their delivery of the programme.
- They expressed positive views related to the teaching methods used, interaction and course content.
- They all spoke of the quality of the information pack given to all trainees.
- The training was identified as an excellent learning experience.

Participants reported that they now feel more confident in working with people affected by Domestic Violence and have a far greater understanding of the issues involved including why people don't leave an abusive partner. The report concludes that the participants of the programme that contributed to the consultancy were clearly satisfied with all aspects of the training.

Participatory Appraisal:- September 2005 – The Electric Palace, Bloxwich.

3.0 Walsall

With a population of 253,000 based on current figures Walsall borough is situated in the Black Country, neighbouring Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Dudley and Birmingham. Walsall's incidents will reflect the national trend of 1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse with a large number of unreported cases.

3.1 The Size of Domestic Abuse in Walsall

The statistics below are those that have been provided by Safer Walsall Borough Partnership (SWBP) and are police based. They are illustrated by way of each Police Command Unit, H1 and H2.

2003/2004

Repeat Offending for H1 - 35.2%

Repeat Offending for H2 - 37.4%

Total incidents for H1 - 1781

Total incidents for H2 - 2676

Force Average 33.2%

2004/2005

Repeat offending for H1 - 29.6%

Repeat offending for H2 - 36%

Total incidents for H1 - 1,460

Total incidents for H2 - 2,403

Force Average 31.9%

The Key Performance Indicator is no more than 30% repeat offending.

(I've learned)...a way of controlling my temper and not taking it out on my family.

Man attending SAFE
programme

4.0. Working in Partnership

4.1.a Ethnic Minorities

The overwhelming majority of victims of domestic abuse are white Caucasian, the BME community only contributing to approximately 10% of all victims. There is some evidence of reluctance to report incidents of domestic abuse which leads to under reporting. Such reluctance may be attributed to a number of factors: pressure from the extended family to stay with the partner regardless of the problems/abuse, women reluctant and afraid of facing things alone, victims may rely on their partner for everything, language barriers may exist where the victim has come from abroad. Increase in reporting is to be addressed through a multi agency approach such as Stepping Stones, SAYA and the Crisis Intervention Service.

4.1.b Health in Walsall

The health economy in Walsall will endeavour to ensure that issues around domestic abuse are considered when commissioning services. Initial discussions with health commissioners will take place to develop this.

Awareness will need to be raised amongst key health professionals to ensure appropriate signposting and support is available for people accessing health services.

Domestic abuse is a major public health problem affecting a large number of vulnerable women and men. Multi agency approach to minimising the problem as well as the impact on the community is the best way and this strategy provides yet another opportunity for all of us to consolidate and develop our action plans.

4.1.c Education

Education provides a key link into the work of domestic abuse and a number of services are available which primarily aim to raise awareness and provide training. There is a schools library service located at Rushall Community College, which includes the Healthy School Collection. In it there are up to date resources regarding domestic abuse issues that teachers can access for use in school. Regular CP awareness training is offered to all new and current staff, and designated teachers for CP. This includes highlighting domestic violence under emotional abuse. All schools have CP policies, which include being aware of signs of DV and abuse. Keeping safe and emotional literacy programmes are included in PSHE programmes from nursery through all school years. Education Walsall has representatives on the Children's Task Force and MARAC.

From September 2005 a new Safer Schools Project is to provide closer links with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. EWS staff attend training offered by the Domestic Violence Forum and direct parents/children to the support services available.

Referrals are made, where applicable to Walkways for children who witness domestic violence in their family environment.

It is proposed that the Domestic Violence Forum deliver 'twilight training sessions' for education.

It gave me the opportunity to network with people from different backgrounds and professions.

Training Programme Participant

4.1.d Housing Services

Walsall MBC deals with situations where people have found themselves threatened with homeless or homeless due to domestic abuse. During 2004/5 there were 94 cases where a person(s) was made homeless following the breakdown of a relationship due to domestic abuse, a significant increase on 2003/4 when 54 cases were accepted. During 2004/5 Walsall MBC accepted a legal duty to provide accommodation to 449 households made homeless for a variety of reasons, which include

- 94 cases were made homeless due to a relationship breakdown following domestic abuse from a partner.
- 12 were made homeless due to domestic abuse from an associated person (a previous partner who they no longer reside with.)
- 1 was made homeless due to a racially motivated incident.
- 10 were made homeless due to other forms of harassment.

The Supporting People Programme plans and funds housing related support services for vulnerable people including those who have experienced domestic abuse. Aven House Women's Refuge is funded by the Supporting People Programme and has provision for up to seventy women and their children. The local Supporting People Commissioning Bodies (Walsall MBC, Probation and PCTs) develop strategies for the provision of housing related support to vulnerable groups who are identified as needing help in the area. The supporting people programme has an important role to play in terms of standards of provision. All existing services must be reviewed for quality and value for money by the end of March 2006.

There is a need to work with Supporting People Commissioning Bodies and local authority departments to ensure that robust and effective housing and supporting people strategies are in place for victims of domestic abuse. This needs to include:

- Appropriate temporary accommodation
- Refuge provision
- Fast track re housing
- Help for victims in managing their tenancies
- Support to enable victims to remain safe within their own homes (Sanctuary Scheme)

4.1.e National Probation Service – West Midlands

The National Probation Service’s definition of domestic abuse is as follows:

‘.....violence by men against women with whom they have a relationship or have had a relationship. Such violence may take the form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and occurs on a spectrum from systematic criticism and humiliation through threats and intimidation, to physical assault, rape and murder.

Domestic Violence can also take place within male or female homosexual relationships or very occasionally in heterosexual relationships when the man is the victim. However, research indicates that in the great majority of cases the abuser is male and the victim female. This statement therefore focuses on the issue of violence and abuse towards women by men’ National Probation Service.

The National Probation Service will release a new National Strategy on working with Domestic Violence offenders.

National Probation Service – West Midlands policy states that domestic abuse is a crime. It is unacceptable and must be taken seriously. The Service believes in order to deal effectively with domestic abuse it is necessary to understand that it is intentional behaviour. Perpetrators are therefore responsible for their behaviour.

In working with perpetrators of domestic abuse or with abused people, the primary concern must be to promote the safety of the abused person, particularly women and children.

National Probation Service – West Midlands believes that domestic abuse issues can only be effectively addressed by statutory and voluntary agencies working in close and active collaboration with one and other at a local as well as national level.

National Probation Service – West Midlands in Walsall is committed to reducing domestic abuse by effective delivery group work programmes with convicted perpetrators of domestic abuse.

National Probation Service – West Midlands will aspire to implement the Home Office’s National Standards by applying effective enforcement of Court Orders.

National Probation Service – West Midlands at local level will work closely with all other agencies in order to reduce further victims of domestic abuse.

Specific to Walsall is that we now have now dedicated report writers and offender managers for domestic violence work and the cases are risk banded at either tier three or four.

The IDAP programme starts in June 2005 with Walsall staff involved in delivering the Programme, the West Midlands area now have dedicated support workers for victims of domestic violence.

The Walsall probation office holds at least seventy cases involving domestic violence. Six lifers killed their partners.

Forty pre-sentence reports have been completed where the main offence was domestic violence (January 2005 – May 2005).

(I have)...a clearer understanding of how it is...an understanding of why people stay and endure domestic violence.

Training Programme Participant

4.1.f Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS)

The principle function of CAFCASS is to promote and safeguard the interests of children and young people subject to family court proceedings.

In public law, a children's guardian is appointed to represent a child or young person subject to care and/or adoption proceedings. The guardian will work alongside but independently of social services and other involved agencies in pursuing outcomes in Court which are in the child's best interests, with a particular duty to critically appraise the plan proposed by the local authority for the child's future care.

In private law, the CAFCASS officer is involved with separated parents who are in dispute over arrangements for their children. Where possible, the CAFCASS officer will assist the parents in reaching an agreement on post separation arrangements that are appropriate and safe for all concerned. Where parental agreement is not achievable CAFCASS will advise the court on the best outcome consistent with the safety and well being of the children concerned.

Domestic abuse is or has been either alleged or manifestly present in the majority of cases CAFCASS deals with, particularly in the field of private law. In public law, instances of domestic abuse have normally been identified and addressed through inter agency child protection procedures by the time the local authority has applied for care proceedings and a guardian is appointed.

In private law cases it is common for domestic abuse to have occurred at the point of parental separation or has been an ongoing feature of the relationship. Most cases involve the one parent's application for contact with their child(ren). Courts recognise that children should have the right to enjoy a relationship with both parents and will therefore support contact applications as long as contact can be shown to be to the child's benefit.

Where domestic abuse has occurred CAFCASS works to ensure that any contact arrangements can be managed to ensure the emotional and physical safety and well being of the children and the primary carer. Specifically CAFCASS will examine the quality of the relationship between the child and the non-resident parent to ensure that any contact that does take place will be of benefit to the child. CAFCASS has to ensure that the parent seeking contact is not using the court process and any subsequent contact arrangements to further victimise the primary carer.

In cases of domestic abuse CAFCASS will liaise with other agencies, notably the police, who may have had past involvement with the family. Following implementation of section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act, extending the definition of harm to include those having witnessed abuse being perpetrated, CAFCASS will notify the local authority whenever it is involved in a case where the children have been exposed to domestic abuse.

By attending one to one counselling I have my full self esteem back.

Women's Group Service User

4.1.g Social Care and Supported Housing

Every local authority has a general duty to safeguard children and promote their welfare. They are also, so long as it is consistent with their safeguarding duty, responsible for promoting the upbringing of children by their families.

In every day terms this means responding to expressions of concern about a child's health or welfare, taking action to ensure a child's safety if this is necessary and supporting families where there is a child in need. This may mean providing or contributing to the provision of services which will promote the child's welfare.

Domestic abuse can have a profound impact on children in a number of ways. Children typically know what is going on and are likely to be affected directly by the fear, distress and disruption to their lives, even when they are not directly abused. Many men who abuse their partners also threaten and abuse children and an increasing number of children who live with such violence are now on Walsall's child protection register.

At present much time and resource is put into investigating allegations of harm in cases of domestic abuse. Walsall Social Care and Supported Housing acknowledges that a much broader approach is necessary so that services can respond to the victim parent sensitively, challenge perpetrators and work with children to overcome the negative experiences and influence the next generation that domestic abuse is wrong.

4.1.h Walsall Area Child Protection Committee

Each local authority has a responsibility to ensure that there is an Area Child Protection Committee covering its area ACPC is an inter agency forum for agreeing how the different services and professional groups should co-operate to safeguard children in their area.

In order to work together effectively domestic abuse services and the ACPC has to work together to establish incidence and need, how we will respond collectively and what each agency can contribute in addressing concerns.

Early in 2006 ACPC will be replaced by Walsall's Safeguarding Children's Board, the responsibilities will be similar to those currently held by ACPC, the difference is that WSCB will be on a statutory footing. WSCB will have to be satisfied that the work agencies do together and individually will improve outcomes for children and young people. ACPC has contributed to this strategy to ensure the specific needs of children are considered in the development of domestic abuse services.

4.1.i The Local Criminal Justice Board and Crown Prosecution Service Response

The local criminal justice board is attended by the police, CPS, court, probation and SWBP. Its role is to co-ordinate local efforts to bring more offenders to justice and increase confidence in the criminal justice system. Whilst the SWBP has the overall responsibility for tackling domestic violence the LCJB also has a role to play. The Board supports the government in delivering criminal justice outcomes around 'offenders brought to justice' and 'confidence' in the system. Achieving positive outcomes for domestic violence services is an important element of meeting both of these targets, especially given the high attrition rates.

Guidance has been issued by the government to LCJBs on tackling domestic violence. This highlights the contribution this will make to targets to narrow the justice gap and increase confidence. The top 6 actions recommended are:

- Engage in wider local partnerships with protocols on addressing domestic violence
- Actively manage cross-CSJ performance on domestic violence
- Ensure that plans to implement the case management initiatives reflect the needs of domestic violence victims
- Implement specific measures on domestic violence – in particular specialist courts, supported by independent caseworkers
- Focus in post conviction safety of the victim
- Establish procedures for joint training and information sharing.

It is expected that at a local level these actions will be progressed through the local criminal board meetings.

The Crown Prosecution Service will be asked to develop plans on:

- Identification and computerised flagging of all domestic violence cases
- Implementation of the revised CPS policy and procedures
- Training prosecutors
- Circulating guidance to prosecutors giving charging advice or making charging decisions under the Charging Initiative

*Sometimes you just want to be there.....
You can just listen....no one forces you to talk.*
Women's Group Service User

4.1.j West Midlands Police Domestic Abuse Unit

The Police definition of domestic abuse is as follows:

‘Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse* (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender.’

(*Includes allegations of sexual assault, criminal damage, threats to commit criminal damage, stalking and harassment, affray, threats to kill, witness intimidation, theft, burglary, breach of bail, honour crimes, forced marriage. This list is not exhaustive and includes practically any other offence if it is in the context of domestic control or domination.)

The new Police Policy was launched on 18th July 2005.

The West Midlands Police have produced a Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure. The extent of domestic abuse in the West Midlands for 2004 was as follows:

40,708 reported incidents of domestic abuse
19 domestic related murders and 16 attempted murders.

It is known, however that domestic abuse is a vastly under reported crime.

The priorities of the policy are as follows:

- To protect the lives of both adults and children who are at risk as a result of domestic abuse.
- To investigate all reports of domestic violence thoroughly and professionally.
- To take effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system.
- To adopt a proactive multi agency approach in preventing and reducing domestic abuse.

Locally, H1 and H2 police divisions have issued a joint borough wide Domestic Abuse Policy. It emphasises that police action in relation to domestic abuse is to protect the victim/children from further attacks, that domestic abuse should be treated as seriously as other forms of violent crime and the powers of arrest should be used. Police officers will always attend reports of domestic abuse and complaints cannot be dealt with by telephone. Every domestic incident is recorded.

4.1.k Fast Track/Specialist Court

The introduction of a specialist Domestic Violence Court has shown it to be effective in bringing more offenders to justice and increasing victim satisfaction. The court has been successful in shortening the average time for hearing cases, which is an important implication for survivor safety.

4.1.1 Witness Care Team WCT

Their role is to support the victim by informing them of court dates, bail conditions, changes of plea and the result of a court case. Where appropriate the services of the CIS are offered to the victim. Staff from the domestic abuse unit attend the family court.

4.1.m Child Abuse Investigations Unit (CAIU)

This unit undertakes joint investigation with Social Care in all cases of domestic abuse where children have been harmed. This is undertaken in liaison between the domestic abuse officer and the staff from CAIU.

*(CIS Worker)...kept in constant contact, her reassurance was really important,
without her I would've fallen apart*
Crisis Intervention Service User

5.0 Sustainability and Funding

Support services for victims of domestic abuse are currently co-ordinated through the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum. The Forum is a voluntary sector organisation, which relies on funding from a number of organisations to sustain the service. These are as follows:

New Deal for Communities (ends 2008)
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (ends 2006)
The Big Lottery (ends 2008)
Walsall Children's Fund (ends 2006, further application for 2008 in process)
Single Regeneration Budget (ends 2006)
Community Safety Commission (ends 2006)
Local Network Fund (ends 2006)
Sure Start (ends 2006)
Primary Care Trust (ends 2006)

The partnership, through the Community Safety Commission and the Single Regeneration Budgets, manages a substantial element of the funding to the Forum. A shortfall of some £80k was identified by the Forum to cover management costs for 2005/6. To meet the shortfall a successful application for funding was made to the Commissioning Executive of the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

In approving the Commission the Executive proposed to approve the additional Network Renewal Funding to support the work of the Domestic Abuse Unit and link this to the work being undertaken in the existing Community Safety Strategic Commission. This ensures that the work of the Domestic Abuse Unit is monitored in line with the Strategic Commissioning monitoring arrangements as well as measuring impacts upon the targets.

To ensure a resolution is found for the longer term funding arrangements of the Domestic Abuse Unit it is proposed, and agreed by the Board of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership that the Forum sits within the structure of the Safer Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

This document has been written in line with 'Developing Domestic Violence Strategies – A Guide for Partnerships' as outlined by the Home Office, Violent Crimes Unit, December 2004.