



**To:** Business Coordination Board

**From:** Chief Constable

**Date:** 20 January 2015

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE GOVERNANCE**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report to the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (“the Constabulary”) Action Plan for tackling domestic abuse.
- 1.2 The paper follows the updates provided to the June and October 2014 Board meeting. Specifically, it responds to the Police and Crime Commissioner’s recommendation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 Board meeting for a quarterly report to monitor the Constabulary’s Action Plan.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this paper. A further paper will be produced in April 2015 that should provide evidence of continuous improvement.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Constabulary’s Action Plan was launched in September 2014 and has been driven forward over the last four months. Crucially, it continues to focus its energies on improving service for victims, putting them at the centre of the response.
- 3.2 The Action Plan has been assessed by both Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) and the College of Policing. Both have given support to the content and direction of the Plan.

- 3.3 In February 2015 the College of Policing will publish its Approved Professional Practice (APP) for Domestic Abuse. This will be the nationally approved manual of standards that provides evidenced based guidance. The draft APP has been assessed by the Constabulary and all recommendations are already adopted within the Constabulary's Action Plan.
- 3.4 A Domestic Abuse Implementation Group has been formed, replacing the previous Safeguarding Board, which brings together all key stakeholders to ensure the outcomes set within the Plan are met.
- 3.5 As a result of changes in the Constabulary's governance structure, the Implementation Group now feeds into the Force Performance Board (FPB), chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable. Here, a monthly report on progress is provided, with effective scrutiny provided by the FPB.

#### **4. The Focus of the Implementation Group**

4.1 The Implementation Group is focussing on the following areas:

- Initial attendance at incidents - Getting there promptly equipped with all the information, supporting victims, taking positive action against perpetrators and gathering evidence effectively.
- Investigating incidents – Improving specialism and knowledge in Investigators, significantly increasing the number of “evidence based prosecutions” (where there is no statement of complaint) and working in greater partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), challenging decisions where appropriate.
- Identifying learning from both a local and national level, ensuring policies, procedures and staff attitudes are committed to continuous improvement. An essential element of this is incorporating the views of victims through surveys.

4.2 The Constabulary's National Domestic Abuse Action Plan, which directs the activity and focus of the Implementation Group is attached as Appendix 1.

#### **5. Progress**

5.1 There has been good progress in terms of getting to incidents promptly. The majority of domestic abuse incidents are reported to police when the suspect is not present, but it is important to attend swiftly to provide re-assurance to victims, protect them from further harm and capture evidence. Between October and December 2014 the average time to attend reduced almost halved (average time 642 to 346 minutes and median time from 152 to 77 minutes). For those incidents where an immediate response was required (the offender was on scene or there was a risk that they may return to the scene) the average time to arrive has been reduced from 24 minutes to 19 minutes.

- 5.2 There is also an indication that the quality of evidence gathered is improving. This follows joint training inputs between specialist teams and CPS lawyers which began in November 2014. Here the importance of a joint approach has been fostered and relationships developed. Strong emphasis is being placed on using body worn video to capture evidence at scenes of incidents.
- 5.3 A new training package for front line supervisors has been developed and began its roll-out in November 2014. This is in the form of a four hour interactive training session. It focusses on case studies of domestic abuse incidents, using both local and national learning to inform the future response. By March 2015, every Sergeant and Inspector will have attended a session. Feedback has indicated that this is helping support knowledge and capability of officers.
- 5.4 A quality assurance mechanism is now in place that reviews 20 incidents per month. Crucially, this is focussed around the victim, their needs, and whether the police investigation has been victim-centric.
- 5.5 As part of their Crime Inspection of the Constabulary in September 2014, HMIC considered how well the Constabulary was dealing with domestic abuse, following on from HMIC's domestic abuse inspections of all police forces in 2013 and 2014. HMIC recognised the progress made by the Constabulary in this area, noting that "The crime inspection found evidence that Cambridgeshire had improved its approach to investigating domestic abuse and protecting victims."

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Implementation Group is now well established and has been driving forward the improvement plan. Results are demonstrable, with evidence that a more effective service to victims is being provided. Internal scrutiny is provided through the FPB, where key stakeholders are being held to account.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this paper. A further paper will be produced in April 2015 that should provide evidence of continuous improvement.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

<b>Source Documents</b>	<a href="http://www.hmic.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/cambridgeshire-approach-to-tackling-domestic-abuse.pdf">http://www.hmic.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/cambridgeshire-approach-to-tackling-domestic-abuse.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-leads-action-on-police-response-to-domestic-violence-and-abuse">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-leads-action-on-police-response-to-domestic-violence-and-abuse</a> <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/business-coordination-board/june-12-bcb">http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/business-coordination-board/june-12-bcb</a> <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/14-10-02-BCB-Agenda-Item-014-Domestic-Abuse-Governance.pdf">http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/14-10-02-BCB-Agenda-Item-014-Domestic-Abuse-Governance.pdf</a>
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