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To: Kent Community Safety Partnership – 19th March 2013

Classification: For Information

Subject: KCC Select Committee on Domestic Abuse

Summary: This paper provides an update for members of the Kent Community Safety Partnership regarding work underway to take forward the recommendations made in the KCC Select Committee report on Domestic Abuse which was published in December 2012.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The KCC Select Committee was established in late 2011 and began its work in Spring 2012 to investigate the topic of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) in Kent.
- 1.2 The focus of the Select Committee was on services for adults experiencing DVA and those available for perpetrators as well as services being developed for children and young people who are impacted by exposure to DVA while growing up.

2.0 Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The agreed Terms of Reference for the Select Committee were:
 - To investigate breaking the vicious cycle and impact of domestic abuse in Kent, focusing on equitable access to support for victims and the efficacy of perpetrator programmes in reducing repeat victimisation and repeat offending.
 - To examine co-ordination and collaboration within and between statutory and voluntary agencies, with a particular focus on delivering efficient services and maximising safety while reducing negative impacts of organisational change in key organisations.
 - To make recommendations for Kent County Council and partner organisations (having explored funding options and feasibility) in order to improve outcomes for, and reduce long term damage to, individuals and families affected by domestic abuse.

3.0 Process

- 3.1 The Domestic Violence and Abuse Select Committee held eight hearings to gather oral evidence from a range of experts from the statutory and voluntary sectors. In addition, written evidence was gathered from a wide range of contributors from all sectors and desk-based research informed the review.
- 3.2 Eight visits took place during the review and these primarily provided the opportunity for Members to speak to people with direct experience of domestic violence and abuse, in supportive surroundings.

3.3 The final Select Committee report was presented to meetings of the KCC Cabinet and County Council in December 2012.

4.0 Final Report

4.1 The key themes of the report's 14 recommendations include:

Strengthening the multi-agency response to DVA by:

- Developing a clinical care pathway to assist GPs and other medical professionals in responding to domestic violence and abuse.
- Improving information-sharing by health professionals.
- Retaining front-line specialist health visitor roles.
- Strengthening Police contact, referral and information exchange processes.
- Developing the Central Referral Unit.
- Improving the 'safety net' for cases not meeting social care thresholds.
- Strengthening the co-ordinated community response in terms of contacts and access to specialist support.

Improving the sustainability and equity of services through joint commissioning

Ensuring that domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is given a high priority

Raising public awareness of DVA and ensuring that Members as well as officers (multi-agency) receive appropriate training

Ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions including the damage done to children

Seeking to break the vicious cycle of domestic violence and abuse by:

- Improving services for children affected by DVA as well as seeking to raise awareness of DVA among young people universally.
- Improving awareness of the impact of DVA on children and young people among those involved in educating and working with young people.
- Maintaining and improving links between education and specialist social care and other support.
- Ensuring children and young people have access to information and resources on domestic violence and abuse.

5.0 Task and Finish Group

5.1 It has been proposed that a Task and Finish Group, comprised of key agency lead officers and KCC departmental lead officers, is established to consider work that can be done to assist the achievement of the recommendations identified within the Select Committee Report.

5.2 The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (KMDASG) has been asked to lead on co-ordinating this work. At the recent meeting of the KMDASG Executive Group it was agreed the KMDASG would assist with this work.

5.3 Lead officers have been identified for all 14 of the recommendations and the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group will take place on 7th March 2013.

5.4 Progress with this work will be reported back to Kent CSP at the October 2013 meeting.

Supporting Documents:

KCC Select Committee Report on Domestic Abuse -
<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/council-and-democracy/select%20committees/Domestic%20Abuse%20Report.pdf>

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