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**By:** Stuart Beaumont, Head of Community Safety & Emergency Planning

**To:** Scrutiny Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014

**Subject:** Final Progress Report on the Achievement of the Domestic Abuse Select Committee Recommendations

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** This report summarises the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations set out within the Domestic Abuse Select Committee Report (issued in December 2012).

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Select Committee was proposed at the Crime and Disorder Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2011 as a result of concerns that victims of domestic violence and abuse often fell through the ‘safety net’ or discontinued pursuing their cases in Court due in part to a lack of clarity on referral points.
- 1.2 The Select Committee established the following terms of reference for the review:
- 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.

- 1.3 The 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 was undertaken to inform the review.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The final Select Committee report was presented to meetings of the KCC Cabinet and County Council in December 2012.

## **2.0 Key Findings from Final Report**

- 2.1 The key themes identified within the report's 14 recommendations included:

### ***Strengthening the multi-agency response to DVA by:***

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

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

### **3.0 Delivery Process**

- 3.1 A multi-agency Task and Finish Group, comprising of key agency lead officers, was established to consider the work that could be undertaken to assist the achievement of the recommendations identified within the Select Committee Report. The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (KMDASG) which is a sub-group of the Kent Community Safety Partnership was asked to lead on co-ordinating this work.
- 3.2 The Task and Finish Group has met bi-monthly during 2013 to capture the progress made by agencies towards achieving the recommendations set out within the Report.
- 3.3 Progress towards the achievement of the recommendations was monitored by the KMDASG at all their quarterly meetings during 2013.

### **4.0 Progress of the Recommendations Implementation**

- 4.1 A Green/ Amber/ Red key has been used to monitor the progress towards the achievement of the recommendations where:  
 Green = Recommendation completed/advanced progress made  
 Amber = Progress is underway  
 Red = No significant progress has been made
- 4.2 Of the 14 recommendations within the Select Committee Report, 12 have now been marked as Green within the Action Plan (see Appendix A). Where work is continuing to take place during 2014 the Action Plan provides information on the agency or partnership that has adopted the recommendation/ work stream, for example some elements of Recommendation 1 have been included in the KMDASG Domestic Abuse Strategy 2013-16.
- 4.3 The 2 remaining recommendations (number 10 and 11) have been marked as Amber within the Action Plan. Work has already been conducted towards the achievement of the recommendation and is still being undertaken by the partners involved but some of the elements of

these particular recommendations will take longer to achieve and/or require the commitment of significant funds to address the gaps in service that have been identified.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The agencies and teams involved in the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Section Committee's recommendations made significant progress in the achievement of the majority of those recommendations during 2013.
- 5.2 Work to address any ongoing issues identified within the recommendations will be taken forward by either the key agency/ team involved or by the relevant partnership group.
- 5.3 The KMDASG used the work undertaken by the Select Committee to inform the development of the new Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy, which was issued in 2013, therefore a number of the recommendations will continue to be priority areas of work for the KMDASG over the life of their new Strategy.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

- 6.1 For members to note the progress made by agencies in the achievement of the Domestic Abuse Select Committee Recommendations and the plans in place to continue work as described above.

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### **Supporting Documents:**

1. KCC Select Committee Report on Domestic Abuse - <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/council-and-democracy/select%20committees/Domestic%20Abuse%20Report.pdf>
2. Appendix A – Select Committee Domestic Abuse Action Plan
3. Appendix B - Domestic Abuse Task and Finish Group Membership List
4. Appendix C – Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2013 – 16
5. Appendix D – Glossary

For further information contact:

Alison Gilmour

Kent and Medway DV Co-ordinator

Tel: 01622 650455

Email: [alison.gilmour@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:alison.gilmour@kent.pnn.police.uk)