

Briefing Paper: Domestic abuse

Prepared by the Safer Poole Partnership, Strategy Team, Borough of Poole, June 2011



1. Topic

Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse

2. Purpose

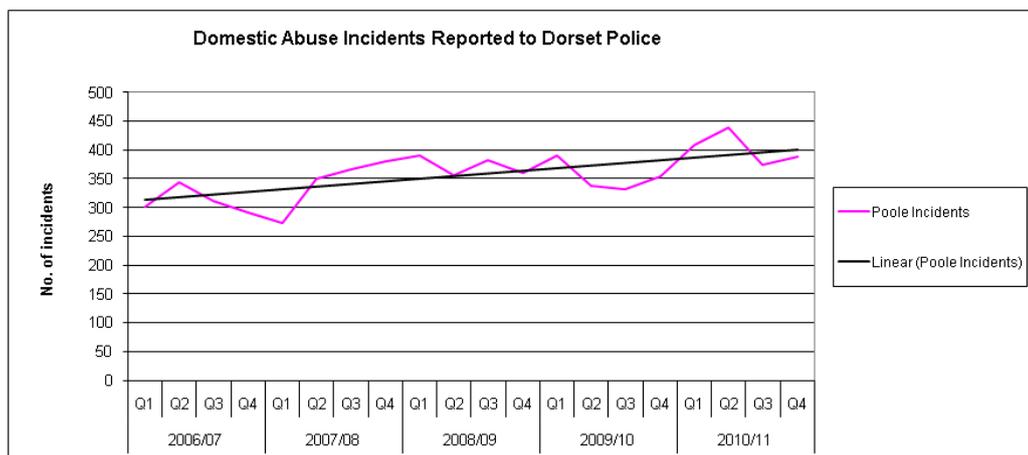
The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of research and analysis regarding domestic abuse. This will include why it is an important issue for Poole and the extent and nature of the problem, including geographic variations.

3. Why is domestic abuse an important issue for Poole?

3.1 Domestic abuse affects a large proportion of the population

Domestic abuse is a serious problem that affects a significant part of the population. National estimates suggest that one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives.

Increasing the confidence of victims to report their abuse has been an objective of the Safer Poole Partnership for six years. As a result, the number of incidents reported to the police has risen sharply, as illustrated in the graph below:



3.2 Domestic abuse costs Poole a significant amount on money

It is calculated that the annual cost of dealing with domestic abuse incidents in Poole is around £15million. This includes around £550,000 from children's social care services, and £400,000 from housing services. It is estimated that each high risk cases costs around £10,000, which

include police time, GP visits, prescriptions, A&E attendances, 2 nights in a refuge and the criminal justice costs of a prosecution.¹

3.3 There is a need for partners to work together to tackle domestic abuse

Poole has a well established partnership approach to tackling domestic abuse. It works across the conurbation through a Bournemouth and Poole Strategic Domestic Abuse Group, and the joint Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out how this group will coordinate action to tackle the issue over the next two years. A lot of achievements have been made through good partnership working, including the establishment of regular multi-agency case conferences for victims, the commissioning on an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service to work intensively with high risk victims, and implementation of a specialist domestic abuse court.

However, there is still a lot of partnership working required to make a real impact on the problem. Work is underway to strengthen county-wide partnership working, especially through the joint commissioning of services. There is recognition that the increases seen in reported domestic abuse are highly likely to be a reflection of an increase in victim confidence, but with this increase in confidence there has been an increased demand for services in Poole. There is a need to continually review, refine and support this services provided for victims, to ensure effectiveness and value for money.

4. What is the nature of the problem in Poole?

75% of victims of domestic abuse are female, whilst 80% of offenders are male. In 67% of incidents the offender is the partner or ex partner of the victim. In a further 30% the offender is another family member. The peak age for offending is 22, but the peak age for victimisation is slightly older at 27. However, there does appear to be an emerging problem of violence in teenage relationships. Children are present in around 44% of incidents. Alcohol is a significant contributing factor to domestic abuse, and it is therefore unsurprising that New Year and major football matches (such as the World Cup) are peak times for this crime type.

5. Recommendations for further analysis to assist in shaping step-change project

The Strategic Domestic Abuse Group commission and receive regular domestic abuse analysis to inform their action. Forthcoming programmed analysis to inform identified gaps includes, the 'housing story' for domestic abuse victims, understanding the volume of victims without access to public funds and the impact this has on services, and an evaluation of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference process and associated Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service.

¹ Bournemouth and Poole Domestic Abuse Strategy, 2010 - 2013

6. Further details

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