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I. BACKGROUND.

Domestic Violence comprises a broad range of behaviours, which can often overlap. The Home Office’s definition of domestic violence 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.*

The 2001 British Crime Survey (BCS) included a self – completion module on domestic violence, and this is widely regarded as providing the most robust estimates, to what is understandably an under reported crime. The finding indicated that one in five (21%) women and one in ten (10%) men have experienced at least one incident of non- sexual domestic threat or force since they were 16. If financial abuse is included, then 26% of women and 17% of men have experienced domestic violence since the age of 16 (Walby and Allen, 2004). Domestic Violence affects all sections of society, regardless of age, gender, wealth, sexuality and geography. However, it is mainly women who suffer. The presence of children in the household is associated with nearly double the risk of domestic violence for women (Walby and Allen, 2004).

According to the 1996 BCS, half of those who suffered domestic violence in the previous year were living with children aged 16 years or under (Mirrlees-Black, 1999).

Children who live with domestic violence typically know it is happening; 29% of those who have experienced domestic abuse in the previous year stated that children had been aware of what was going on during the last incidence of violence. Children were more likely to be witnesses to violence against women who had suffered repeated violence: 45% of these women said children were aware of the last incident (Mirrlees-Black, 1999)

**Domestic violence in Wolverhampton**

Tackling domestic violence is a priority area in Wolverhampton’s crime & disorder strategy; it has also been identified as a key issue in the Low Hill Neighbourhood Safety Action Plan. Low Hill has the highest reported domestic violence figures in Wolverhampton.
Wednesfield Police reported Domestic Violence figures of Beat 51, 52, 53 and 77, which covers the Sure Start Programme Area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEAT</th>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>INCIDENTS</th>
<th>RECORDED AS CRIMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>The Scotlands</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Fallings Park (including Old Fallings Crescent)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Showell Road (including Bushbury Lane)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Low Hill</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>370</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beat 77 portrays the “core” of Sure Start’s Programme Area, whilst Beats 52 and 53 includes only some of the roads/streets within the designated area.

Beat 77’s figures are a third of the overall area and show the prevalence of both reported Domestic Violence and Repeat Domestic Violence incidences.

A report produced in May 2001 by the University of Wolverhampton for Wolverhampton Domestic Violence identified the blockages experienced by women in accessing information, advice and support around domestic violence. A number of recommendations were made to improve accessibility:

- Improved data collection and management
- Improved training with particular attention to cultural diversity
- Improved information and communication flows
- Clear lines of responsibility for liaising with women going through the courts as to the progress of their case
- Empowering victims of domestic violence through education and training or local women’s support for women going through prosecutions process
- Integrated support system for women

The last recommendation was seen as key to improving services. There should be a one-stop shop where women can access information, advice and support on the wide range of issues that are tied into domestic violence and choices to be made.

**The Sanctuary Project**

Therefore Barnardo’s established the Sanctuary Project with the support from the Neighbourhood Safety Project. The project offers a locally based integrated support
The service aims to increase the number of women reporting violence, improve local response, and offer information about options and ongoing support.

The project employs a developmental worker and a part-time administrator. The coordinator's role is to take responsibility for developing and promoting the project with local agencies, recruiting and training volunteers and liaising with other agencies with a view to increasing the number of reported incidents and prosecution, thus decreasing the number of repeated reported incidents over the longer term.

2. **AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

See “Terms of Reference” (Appendix 2)

3. **FUNDING**

The Bushbury & Low Hill NSP originally funded this project. At the end of March 2004, the NSP under Crime Concern ceased to exist, but continued under the governance of the local authority.

In April 2004 Barnardo’s demonstrated its commitment to the project by continuing the funding. It also receives £5,000 from the WCSP and £15,500 from Sure Start. In April 2005, Barnardo’s committed a further £40,000 (approx) and we are now seeking an additional £21,000 from Sure Start. Barnardo’s are currently in the process of seeking alternative funding from March 2006 onwards, primarily through the Home Office.

(See full financial breakdown of the current year’s budget – Appendix 1)

4. **MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

Prior to receiving funding from Sure Start, the project was working with women within the Low Hill and Scotlands areas. However, on occasions referrals were taken from outside the designated area. Since September 2004 we have become more prescriptive concerning referrals in order to keep within the remit of the Sure Start Programme Area.

Early monitoring arrangements for the project were inadequate, so whilst quantitative information about service users was gathered it was not supplemented by any qualitative data describing service users’ experiences of the project. However, since September, a new monitoring system has been developed which incorporates a mechanism for systematically gathering qualitative data in reference to the service outcomes, which incorporate service user’s feedback.
The Advisory Group oversees the development of the project and comprises representatives from the Police, PCT, solicitors, Home Start, Sure Start, the NSP, Social Services, WDVF, Young Victims' Project and Supported Housing. The targets set are outlined as follows:

- The service will be regularly monitored and evaluated*
- Records of every service user will be kept on a computerised system.
- Quarterly reviews will be carried out on all service users.
- Regular evaluation of sessions and training programmes.
- Regular evaluation from partner agencies i.e. Police
- A database will be created with desired information i.e. postcodes.
- Advisory Group will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss progress and development of the project.
- An independent evaluation and review to be carried out.*
- Records of service users in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- An information sharing protocol put in place.
- If funding is sufficient then consideration will be given for the Project to have an outside supervisor, however this is not possible at the present time due to budget restrictions.
  (* The type of monitoring and evaluation will be dependent upon funding)

5. SANCTUARY PROJECT USERS FROM JULY 2004 UNTIL PRESENT DATE.

Since we started in July 2004 we have received 45 referrals. The following provides a breakdown of

- Ages of service users.
- Location of service users (postcodes).
- Ethnic origin.
- Ages of children involved
- Number of referrals with children included.

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Age breakdown of service users.

- 33 - 39 yrs: 36%
- 25 - 32 yrs: 31%
- 18 - 24 yrs: 11%
- 40 - 50 yrs: 4%
- Not specified: 18%

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(See Appendix 3 and 3a Monitoring Evaluation)
(Since September 2004 there have been 12 referrals from within the Sure Start Programme designated area, and 5 from just outside the area itself)
Breakdown of Ethnicity

- White / European: 52%
- Asian / British: 22%
- Pakistani: 2%
- Indian: 4%
- Black / British: 11%
- Not specified: 9%

Breakdown of service users with children involved.

- Number of referrals involving children under 19: 39
- No children involved: 3
- Not specified: 3

86%
6. SERVICES PROVIDED

This is a breakdown of the support we provide to service users. The length of support / intervention varies from women to women depending on the circumstances.

(See Appendix 4)
7. SIGNPOSTING TO OTHER SERVICES

This is a breakdown of the other agencies that service users have been signposted to.

![Breakdown of referrals to other agencies]

8. PROJECT OUTCOMES

We conducted a telephone survey with the 45 women that have used, or are still using the project, to see how they viewed the service the Sanctuary Project provided them. Out of the 45 women, we were only able to speak directly to 10. There were various reasons for the low numbers such as the telephone numbers changing, women moving from the area, partners answering the phone or the women feeling it was not convenient to talk.

Out of the 10 women we spoke to:

- 80% were referred to the service by either their Health Visitor or Doctor
- 20% were told about the service by their friends.

- 40% were contacted by the project under a week after we had received the referral.
- 20% were contacted by the project more than a week after we had received the referral.
- 40% couldn’t remember how long it had been.
• 100% of the women contacted were satisfied with the worker they dealt with.

When asked what they found particularly helpful about the service

• 60% said they found just talking to someone helped them.
• 20% found the Freedom programme helpful.
• 20% found that their children’s development had significantly improved since receiving support from the project.

We asked them about the information they had received from the project:

• 60% found that everything was explained very clearly to them while they used the Sanctuary Project.
• 40% found that everything was explained clearly to them while they used the Sanctuary Project.

We asked if the project had been helpful to them:

• 80% found that the service met their needs very well.
• 20% found that the service was satisfactory.

100% of the women felt there was nothing missing from the Sanctuary Project Services.

(See Appendix 5 – Service Users’ Questionnaire)

9. VOLUNTEERS

The Service is delivered by a Domestic Violence Coordinator but is managed by the Children’s Services Manager. The DVC recruits and retains the volunteers. Many of the volunteers do not live within the programme area. This is due to the confidential nature of the work involved and forms part of the risk assessment strategy. Volunteers are interviewed, references sought and they are then CRB checked if successful (Enhanced CRB check as opposed to Standard).

There are currently 5 volunteers who are working with service users, having gone through an intensive training programme headed by the DVC. The volunteers are then linked to a service user. Volunteers are given supervision sessions on a monthly basis.

(See Appendix 6 – Breakdown of volunteers’ training programme)
10. SUMMARY

Domestic Violence is a crime. It does not respect race, geography, social background or other similar factors. It is a volume crime, affecting one in four women and one in six men in their lifetimes, with women suffering higher rates of repeat victimisation and serious injury; it accounts for 16% of violent crime, covering offences ranging from common assault to rape and murder; and it has a massive impact on victims, their children and the wider community. Domestic Violence is to be found everywhere. Partnerships are in the lead locally for tackling domestic violence and so have a crucial role in supporting a strategic framework.

It is important to get the next generations of victims and perpetrators early, mould attitudes, and teach them that domestic violence is never acceptable. Those who are suffering domestic violence now, as either primary or secondary victims (largely children), also need information and support as early as possible to improve their safety at the earliest possible stage. This is an issue to which the Sure Start Programme is committed.

The Sure Start Programme

Target - “For children under 5 and their families, cater for 400,000 children in the most deprived communities by the end of 2006 – provide access to integrated and holistic services.”

Many families who use Sure Start services will be experiencing domestic violence and a number of local programmes have made domestic violence a priority. Regional Managers and Lead Officers should work to ensure that Children’s Centres and local programmes have an understanding of issues relating to domestic violence and how to refer to them appropriately, and that programmes should access to any guidance produced.

The needs of children affected by domestic violence should be included in local audits, as evidence shows that there is some coincidence between domestic violence and child abuse. Children can also be affected by witnessing domestic violence. Indeed from January 2005, the definition of harm will be extended to include witnessing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. Research shows that in up to 90% of domestic violence incidents in a household, children are in the same or next room (Hughes 1992). Domestic Violence can also have a detrimental effect on a child’s development and educational attainment, and it is a predator of delinquency”.


The work of the Sanctuary Project

In summary, the Sanctuary Project has been providing a service to women and children since July 2004. To date we have worked with 45 women and over 110 children indirectly. The Sanctuary Project offers a locally based integrated one-stop service where women can access information on the various services and options
available. The Sanctuary project is overseen by an advisory committee comprised of Health Visitors, PCT, Police, Voluntary Groups, Local residents, Social Services, Neighbourhood Safety Project and Sure Start.

We have recruited and trained volunteers who befriend and support women on a one to one basis. We also have, and are supporting women going through the criminal court process. The Sanctuary Project is now working in partnership and receiving referrals from the Police, Neighbourhood Safety Project, Social Services and Health Visitors.

The Sanctuary Project is a good model of a voluntary sector project working in partnership with statutory and other voluntary services to improve the lives of women and children affected by domestic violence at a local level.

(See Appendix 7 – Sanctuary Agreed Targets)