

# Partnership: the key to reducing the risk of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire

**Romy Briant**

# Domestic Abuse

- An escalating pattern of control and abuse within an intimate relationship
- Home Office 2004: 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 impact on children of witnessing domestic violence is defined in legislation as abusive

# The scope of the problem

## National statistics

- Men and women both victims but preponderance = women
- Significant under reporting
- Affects all socio economic groups and crosses cultures
- Change associated with increased risk: eg pregnancy, leaving relationship
- Alcohol a catalyst

## 2004/5 UK baseline statistics:

- 16% of violent crime; 2 women killed a week
- 1 in 10 women at any one time; 1 in 4 in their lifetime
- 35 incidents of DV before a victim reported
- 14 different agencies before victim receives the help needed
- Majority of adult victims have children
- 750,000 children across the UK
- 70% of children on the child protection register

# The scope of the problem: size

## Oxfordshire statistics 2007/8

- Approx 8000 reported incidents to police (risen from 5500 in 2004/5). Still under reported.
- 5000 children in homes where incidents reported
- 1 in 20 Oxfordshire children do not feel safe in their home (Schools Survey 2007)
- 1st DV pilot in secondary school: 7 of 8 children on fixed term exclusion found to be affected by domestic abuse
- Cost to Oxfordshire estimated at £26 million

# The scope of the problem: impact

## Adults

- physical injury: (*17% of maternal deaths, 70% of repeats at A&E*)
- emotional impact of living in fear: poor mental health - 25% of female emergency admissions to psychiatric wards
- homelessness, social isolation, loss of confidence
- increased risk of self harm: eg 14 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 5 times more likely to attempt suicide

## Children

- poor mental health, low self esteem, anxiety, panic attacks
- increased risk of self harm and drug and alcohol abuse, risk taking
- isolation, poor peer relationships, running away
- aggressive and disruptive behaviour, bullying or being bullied
- poor school performance, exclusion or disrupted attendance
- reduced longer term life chances
- risk depends on degree of abuse within adult relationship and age and emotional resilience of the child: young children esp. vulnerable

# Why partnership?

- Safety the priority – achieved through integrated multi agency services round victim, perpetrator and child
- Cross cutting issue in terms of statutory responsibilities, range of interventions and resources needed, and impact on individual and community wellbeing
- Nationally recommended good practice
  - Living Without Fear 2000
  - Safety and Justice 2003
  - Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
  - National report on DV 2005
  - Community Response Model 2006/7
  - Vision for Services for Children 2006

# Development of Oxfordshire's strategic partnership

- 2004 Oxfordshire Domestic Violence Steering Group established (had taken 2 years to evolve)
- CDRPs and OCC pooled funding for a county coordinator post.
- 2006 LAA: greater and higher level strategic recognition, contributed resources, cross cutting made easier, reinforced importance of partnership at every level (2 stretch targets 06/09 1 stretch target 08/11)
- 2007: ODVSG = 'tactical business group' within the community safety partnership of the LAA
- The model became paradigm for addressing other areas of community safety

# Membership of the steering group

- 5 x Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships: Cherwell, Oxford, Vale of White Horse, South Oxon, West Oxon
  - Oxfordshire County Council Community Safety Unit
  - Thames Valley Police
  - Voluntary sector
  - Health – PCT
  - Children, Young People and Families
  - Thames Valley Probation
  - Crown Prosecution Service
  - Independent chair
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- 6 meetings a year and annual awayday
  - Developing closer alignment with Supporting People

# ODVSG: Strategy summary

- Sustain a dedicated multi agency partnership
- Integrated approach to work with
  - victims/survivors
  - children
  - perpetrators
- Strategy to encompass
  - prevention,
  - early intervention, risk assessment
  - high risk management, safety and justice
  - ongoing support

# Strategic principles

- Safety a priority
- Choice and empowerment for victims
- Input by/consultation with people affected by DV
- All agencies work to a common model which integrates work with victims, children and offenders and includes information sharing protocols and risk assessment
- Informed by local needs: takes forward elements where county approach brings added value
- Underpinned by training and awareness raising
- Evidenced based good practice and national frameworks
- Performance management – (including annual review of effectiveness of the steering group)

# What has been achieved?

## Early intervention

- Bedrock = multi agency champion networks piloted in 2005 – 220 champions 60 agencies
  - 2 day initial training and 4 network meetings a year: shared model of family dynamics and risk, common protocols, mutual trust
  - conduit for colleagues into the multi agency network, a source of expertise for colleagues, a potential resource for training within agency, developing enhanced multi agency practice
  - other resources are linked to the network as they are developed with aim of building seamless pathways for victims
  - evaluation: enhanced professional practice and strong anecdotal evidence of effective early intervention for victims
  - innovation: builds on principle of one stop shop but new approach esp for rural areas - Home Office endorsed model of good practice
- In house awareness training: eg Health, Housing, Youth Offending

# What has been achieved?

Work with victims at significant risk

- 2007 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference process for coordinated management of high risk
- 2007 introduction of DV court supported by strategic and operational partnership groups
- 2007 'Reducing the Risk' new charity: objectives are to support partnership work and fill gaps in services
  - First service = Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service— close partnership with police (seconded police officer), MARACS and courts. Support for victims at high risk who have not previously engaged
  - Introduction of multi agency case management system.

# What has been achieved?

Increased capacity and range of resources and choices for victims

- website: [www.reducingtherisk.org.uk](http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk)
- helpline (but not a dedicated Oxfordshire 24 hour line)
- outreach services across the county (more capacity needed)
- sanctuary schemes – being piloted
- refuge options being explored
- support groups introduced
- dedicated counselling (pilot scheme in Oxford)
- easier access to civil recourse ( to be evaluated)
- work on tool box etc. to ensure availability of resources to minority groups

# What has been achieved?

## Children's strategy

- Cross cutting strategy group established 2007 endorsed by Safeguarding Board
  - Vision :Children in Oxfordshire feel safe and thrive in family environments where adult relationships are healthy and non abusive.
  - Objective: emotional safety and well being of children within parental and family relationships
- Strategy developed based on age appropriate services, tiers of need and integrating adult risk assessment and children's safeguarding processes.
- Incorporated in current CYPP priorities
- Pilot of early intervention in schools - based on champions - extremely positive evaluation
- Phased implementation planning in progress

# Priorities to come

- Review and consolidate strategy for victims
- Roll out of children's strategy through champion approach & preventative work: schools, children's centres, HVs etc  
signpost smaller community based organisations  
requires additional training capacity + therapeutic resources and extended IDVA service
- Further work: resources for male victims, minority groups, victims with no recourse to public funds, sexual violence strategy, honour based violence strategy, elder abuse
- Resources for perpetrators
  - Criminal justice in place and systems for ongoing improvement
  - Need for further prevention/early intervention (e.g community based perpetrator programmes): resource implications – business plan required

# Benefits of partnership

## ODVSG

- Integrated multi agency strategic and operational approach mutually reinforcing and promotes more effective and safer services
- Builds positively on flexibility of two tier county – focus on local data and meeting local needs, taking forward what is most effective at local and county level, and integrating these
- Effective pooled funding and mutual evaluation
- ODVSG umbrella body for taking forward strategically associated issues: eg honour based violence, sexual violence
- Based on and builds common purpose and trust

## LAA

- Reinforced partnership at centre of approach at all levels
- Higher level strategic recognition; prioritised through stretch targets
- Additional resources (pump priming funding for champions and IDVA service)
- Facilitates effective cross cutting and alignment of services

# Potential and actual cross cutting

Cross cutting/coordinated direction of travel with other tactical business groups:

- Alcohol: eg alcohol and DV champion nurse in emergency dept of JR
- Young offenders: eg training programme for staff and young offender - breaking the cycle
- Potentially more integrated work re prolific offenders

Cross cutting with other partnerships

- Children and young people's partnership
  - 1 Prevention:
    - developing stronger family relationships and community support
    - more integrated approach to PHSE
  - 2 Early intervention
    - huge implications for work with vulnerable children and breaking the cycle
  - 3 Child protection – both emotional and physical safety
- Healthier communities
  - Mental and physical health and potentially elder abuse
- Housing Partnership
  - more joined up approach to safety and choice/ work with joint housing team

The model of partnership and integrated practice in Oxfordshire has a national profile and features in the LGA library of LAA innovation and good practice

