



To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 12 June 2014

DOMESTIC ABUSE GOVERNANCE

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report to the Police and Crime Commissioner the Constabulary's response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) Report '*Cambridgeshire Constabulary's approach to tackling domestic abuse*' 2014.

2. Background

- 2.1 HMIC undertook an inspection in November 2013 on Cambridgeshire Constabulary's response to domestic abuse. The Constabulary was disappointed by the HMIC findings following the November inspection. However, when the HMIC inspection team revisited in February 2014 they highlighted the progress that the Force had made in addressing its response, noting substantial improvements to victims of violence.
- 2.2 The initial criticism from the HMIC acted as a catalyst for the Constabulary to fast track progress. The Force prides itself on having a strong culture of doing the right thing in the right way and the inspection encouraged some self-reflection followed by a major collective effort to improve service for victims.
- 2.3 It is the Force's stance that such drastic improvement could only be achieved if there was a strong foundation on which to build. This foundation is the clear focus on the protection of the vulnerable and the necessity to focus resources in line with the principles of threat, risk and harm.
- 2.4 Staff across the Constabulary were hurt by the criticism from HMIC. They felt that they were letting victims down and this ran contrary to the very basis of why most people joined the Police. This strong desire to protect the vulnerable allowed a structured and impactful approach to be taken to rectify the issues raised. The feeling wasn't

that it was the “fault” of a specialist team, but was the collective responsibility for all to improve.

3. Response to the report

- 3.1 Following re-inspection, HMIC provided re-assurance that it wasn't the case that Cambridgeshire was missing some integral part of tackling domestic abuse. They noted that time was required to further embed working practices and to monitor performance.
- 3.2 HMIC made fifteen recommendations, all of which the Constabulary has accepted. These ranged from reviewing capacity, training, structures and processes through to partnership working and leadership.

4. Action Plan

- 4.1 The development of an action plan has been crucial to engaging all staff. The plan has broken the fifteen recommendations down into five key areas:
- Leadership
 - Business processes
 - Training
 - The Domestic Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit/Multi-Agency Referral Unit
 - Partnerships
- 4.2 The action plan is being overseen under the direct leadership of the Chief Constable who has initiated a Safeguarding Board for the Force. These monthly meetings are providing scrutiny and promoting accountability and ownership. Progress has been swift, with all actions being addressed. HMIC have provided strong support for the content of the plan and have acknowledged that demonstrable results have been achieved within a short period of time. The plan will be superseded in September 2014 when the Force will introduce a fresh action plan around its long term vision to protect victims by tackling domestic abuse. This is in line with an HMIC requirement for all Forces to publish a plan.
- 4.3 The Safeguarding Board has not only ensured a governance structure is in place to ensure that all recommendations are being embedded, but is also acting as a wider forum to transform mind-sets across the Force, re-enforcing the importance of prioritising according to risk. A Detective Chief Inspector from the tri-force Major Crime Unit was brought in to lead on implementation of the plan. The rationale was that bringing an officer in from outside Cambridgeshire would help provide objectivity and transparency. This officer has since been put in as a Temporary Superintendent within the Corporate Development Department and continues to lead on this area.
- 4.4 Since January, every Police Officer and those staff members involved in contact management have received a bespoke training package. This has involved personal tuition to over 1500 staff. Feedback has been positive, with the view that this is a

transformational process. The aim has been specifically to re-enforce a sense of collective responsibility throughout the organisation.

- 4.5 There has been no requirement to significantly reconfigure business processes or partnership alignment, but this will continue to be reviewed in line with national best practice. There has been a redeployment of staff to ensure that the Domestic Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit and the Multi-Agency Referral Unit (MARU) are up to full strength. A further bid has been approved to increase the size of the MARU by five Police Officer posts. This is on the back of a significant increase in referrals from front line officers (it is believed as a result of increased awareness following the training programme).
- 4.6 A key way in which partnership arrangements can be enhanced is through the introduction of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub which will work on developing the partnership arrangements that exist within the MARU and offering a dynamic structure in which all partners will make safeguarding decisions collectively. A Project Board was held on 15th May 2014, with key stakeholders from Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Health and Probation present. Agreement was reached that the Hub would go-live on 1st September 2014. This is seen as a highly significant way in which to increase partnership intervention and is in line with best practice across the Country. The level of service for victims will be enhanced and it will also allow a closer relationship between partner agencies.
- 4.7 The Force strives for continuous improvement. The Chief Constable's direct control of the newly formed Safeguarding Board is ensuring strong focus on identifying and reducing vulnerability. All Force senior managers are members of the Board.
- 4.8 Part of this development is the review of how new approaches to performance can be introduced. The Safeguarding Board is specifically looking at innovative techniques and is already in dialogue with the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge to assist with enhancing this area. It is important that any assessment of success is qualitative rather than quantitative and partnership information will be crucial to achieving this. Here, it is essential to achieve, re-enforce and develop the concept of doing the right thing in line with the Code of Ethics which is being introduced within policing.
- 4.9 Visits are being undertaken to Forces around the Country to glean further best practice from those areas that have been highlighted as being particularly effective (Lancashire, Norfolk, Avon and Somerset). Here, specific focus is being placed on identifying where partnership arrangements can be enhanced and looking at those areas where there are joint performance regimes across all agencies. It is anticipated that the implementation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will allow Cambridgeshire to move towards working within a joint performance model. This will ensure that victims are receiving the best level of service process at all stages of the process.

5. Recommendation

5.1 It is recommended that the board note the contents of this paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document(s)	http://www.hmic.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/cambridgeshire-approach-to-tackling - domestic-abuse.pdf
Contact Officer	T.Supt Jon Hutchinson Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters