

County Council – 22 October 2021

Item 9(c) - Notice of Motion by Cllr Lord

Male Violence - Briefing Note

Understanding the extent and form of male violence in West Sussex and nationally remains challenging. Domestic and sexual violence and abuse are under-reported, particularly within marginalised communities, as are many forms of harassment and intimidation.

Between September 2020 and August 2021, Sussex Police recorded 8,799 Domestic Abuse Crimes and 5,141 Domestic Abuse incidents in West Sussex. During the same period 3,353 sexual offences were recorded by police in West Sussex.

Domestic Abuse services in West Sussex are continuing to see high demand with WORTH services, the West Sussex high risk service, receiving over 100 referrals into the service each week.

However, it is widely acknowledged that domestic and sexual violence and abuse offences are under reported for a variety of reasons including fear, coercion and control and social pressures, where unacceptable behaviour has become normalised through increase access to digital communication and exposure to pornography.

The Complex Domestic Abuse Unit was created as a multi-agency approach to tackling the highest harming perpetrators in Sussex (aiming to work with the top 40 as identified using a harm matrix). This unit includes Sussex Police, CGL drug and alcohol worker, mental health navigator, a behaviour change intervention and a dedicated IDVA for associated victims. Full evaluation on the impact of this approach is awaited.

Partners in Sussex have recently been awarded £962,781 through Safer Streets 3 with £505,931 being spent on activity in West Sussex. This is one off funding for specific projects contained within the bid, which was based on data, public consultation, and consultation with partners specialising in Violence Against Women and Girls services.

As part of the public consultation, members of the public were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of safety, and what could be done to make them feel safer. Sussex wide, 57% reported feeling reasonably safe, 16% neither safe nor unsafe, 15% unsafe 9% very safe and 3% very unsafe. The primary answers to 'what makes you feel this way' were 'men' and 'intimidating behaviour'.

The activity planned as a result of this successful funding bid includes the following which will be delivered by a variety of partners and overseen and coordinated by a multi-agency project team.

- 'bystander to upstander' training
- Education in schools around consent/toxic masculinity
- Identification of Safe Spaces and the development of the Safe Space app
- Extensive media campaign aimed at men and boys featuring 'local' celebrities
- Refresh of refuse vehicle campaign building on the success of the domestic abuse advertising during lock down

- Creation of Violence against women and girl's coordination posts
- Increase in street pastor/angels in locations in West Sussex

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