



Local Government Association

work to address domestic violence and Local Area Agreements: where does it fit?



contents

introduction	2
LAA: what are they and how do they work?	3
where can work to address domestic violence be located within the LAA framework?	4
local examples	7
conclusions	18
resources and guidance	19

introduction

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are three year agreements which set out priorities negotiated between central government and the local area. LAAs aim to simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to be tailored to local circumstances. They work by putting the council at the centre of a network of local public service providers and encouraging partners to support each other in furthering common goals. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are now being repositioned as the 'partnership of partnerships', responsible for developing and overseeing LAAs.

Work to tackle domestic violence is exactly the sort of cross-cutting initiative that fits within the structure of the LAA framework. A number of local areas are already using LAAs creatively to pool funding and resources to tackle domestic violence. This paper looks briefly at how the LAA process works, where work to address domestic violence might fit within the LAA framework, and then goes on to draw on the varied experiences of local authorities.

The local government white paper, and subsequent planned local government bill, is expected to underpin and reinforce the prominence now given to LAAs and LSPs. Some of the detail in this note, on the LAA 'block' structure and on the performance reward grant, may also be affected as a result. The Local Government Association (LGA) will issue general updates accordingly.

Domestic violence makes up 17-25 per cent of all reported violent crime¹.

On average two women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner. In 2003/4 nearly 40 per cent of all female homicide victims were killed by a current or former partner compared with about 5 per cent of male homicide victims².

In 2005, more than 12,000 households were accepted by local housing authorities in England as being owed a main homelessness duty where the reason for homelessness was fleeing domestic violence. This represents 13 per cent of the total number of homelessness acceptances in England in 2005³.

52 per cent of child protection cases involve domestic violence⁴.

The total cost of domestic violence to services and the economy is £5.7 billion a year (excluding the human and emotional cost to individuals estimated at over £17 billion a year⁵).

Councils have a vital role to play in tackling domestic violence. It is easiest to understand this role by dividing it into three areas:

- leadership and input into local partnerships – domestic violence cannot be effectively addressed by agencies working in isolation. Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to work with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder;
- corporate responsibilities – for example agreeing a strategy, developing domestic violence employment policies, training relevant staff and raising awareness;
- direct service provision – councils play a major role as the providers of essential services for people affected by domestic violence (especially housing, social care and children's services). Councils are also essential to commissioning local services delivered outside of the statutory agencies.

1 Nicolas S, Povey D, Walker A and Kershaw C (2005) 'Crime in England and Wales 2004/5' Home Office Statistical Bulletin No 11/05. London: Home Office.

2 Povey, D (ed) Crime in England and Wales 2003/4: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime. Home Office Statistical Bulletin No 02/05. London: Home Office

3 Summary information collected through the quarterly P1E returns on local housing authorities' activities under homelessness legislation. Published by the DCLG

4 Farmer, E and Owen, M (1995) 'Child protection practice: private risks and public remedies', London: HMSO

5 Walby, S (2004) 'The cost of domestic violence', University of Leeds, Women and Equality Unit, DTI

LAAs: what are they and how do they work?

An LAA is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area. LAAs are negotiated by local authorities on behalf of their local strategic partnerships (LSP) and their government office (GO) on behalf of central government. LAAs provide an opportunity to consider, negotiate, agree and deliver local and national outcomes. As such they provide a framework through which councils can take the lead across the public sector in developing a shared vision for their own local area.

LAAs aim to:

- deliver better outcomes for local people based on local priorities;
- offer greater local autonomy, as part of government's efforts to devolve decision-making;
- improve central-local relations;
- simplify some central funding, helping to pool budgets and cut down on bureaucracy;
- help join up public services locally;
- improve partnership working by encouraging partners to support each other in furthering common goals that are based on a sound knowledge of local people's needs. LAAs provide an opportunity for working innovatively with a range of partners to improve service delivery.

The result should be a balance of national and local priorities that brings together different public services and workforces, and, makes better use of resources.

LAAs are currently structured around four blocks (or policy fields): children and young people; safer and stronger communities; healthier communities and older people; and economic development and enterprise. Areas negotiate an agreement which local partners and ministers then sign. The agreement needs to include mandatory outcomes and indicators for each block, laid down by central government as well as other outcomes and indicators which should reflect local priorities.

Some areas have been granted 'single pot' status for their LAA. In these areas there is no requirement to work within the four blocks, and areas have more flexibility in merging funding streams and in choosing their own thematic structure for their LAA.

The 'reward element' of an LAA is the inclusion of what many partnerships had already been working on as Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs). This translates to about 12 key 'stretch' targets - those targets that are literally stretching and more difficult to achieve. Where achieved (to a level of 60 per cent or more) a reward grant is payable by the DCLG, on a sliding scale up to 100 per cent achievement. Where local targets exist, areas are expected to use these, as the basis from which further improvement or 'stretch' is then measured. The research on the costs of domestic violence can also be used as a guide in negotiating with the government office the value-for-money or business case for earning reward through specified reductions in levels of domestic violence.

In July 2004, the LGA produced a publication *Targeting abuse – setting domestic violence stretch targets* sharing councils' experiences of setting domestic violence stretch targets in the first round of LPSAs. The report outlined the key benefits and difficulties involved. Copies can be downloaded from the LGA's website: www.lga.gov.uk

where can work to address domestic violence be located within the LAA framework?

Most domestic violence targets are located within the safer and stronger communities block of the LAA. Looking across the other blocks, there are obvious examples of targets where effective action to address domestic violence would have an enormous and positive impact.

Currently, whilst many local authorities recognise that domestic violence is a cross-cutting issue; few have been successful in including domestic violence related targets within the other blocks. We would hope that as the LAA process continues to evolve, local authorities are granted greater freedom to use a wider range of appropriate and measurable targets that work across the LAA blocks.

Even within the blocks, there are opportunities to develop joined up initiatives. For example, LAAs present a unique opportunity for action on alcohol, drugs and domestic violence to be effectively integrated into local processes and outcomes. Addressing domestic violence issues can contribute to increasing access and retention in substance misuse services. This way, identifying domestic violence amongst drug and alcohol service users and providing relevant pathways for support can contribute to meeting indicators within the “Reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs” mandatory outcome.

Set out below are some examples of relevant targets included throughout the LAA guidance. The targets listed here are not exhaustive.

safer and stronger communities

Mandatory indicators:

- reduction in overall British Crime Survey comparator recorded crime; and
- reduction in the proportion of adult and young offenders, and prolific and other priority offenders, who re-offend.

Other possible indicators listed in the guidance:

- reduction in violent crime, including alcohol related violence, domestic violence, sexual offences, hate crime and the use of weapons;
- increase in the proportion of violent offences which result in sanction detections;
- increase in the proportion of violent offenders who are brought to justice;
- number of victims of domestic violence enabled to remain in their own accommodation through sanctuary schemes⁶;
- reduction in the number of cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence;
- number of perpetrators of domestic violence who are evicted as a result of contravening clauses in their tenancy agreement.

Whilst it is encouraging to see some targets relating to domestic violence in the guidance, the LGA does have concerns about their content. Firstly, there remains a problem with definitions – what is repeat victimisation? How exactly is this defined? Secondly, we are concerned that the focus on sanction detections may result primarily in an increase in cautions. We believe that a more appropriate outcome focus would be to look at the number of arrests, prosecutions and convictions.

⁶ The LGA and DCLG is in the process of producing a guidance note: 'Options for setting up and running a sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic violence', which will be available on the DCLG and LGA websites.

Finally, the last three indicators reflect the questions in BVPI 225. When commenting on the draft BVPI we noted the potential perverse incentive inherent in the indicator on reducing homeless acceptances: authorities could score well by turning people away. Conversely, if councils are effective in raising awareness of service provision for domestic violence survivors, this will encourage people to come forward and therefore numbers may increase. We are disappointed that this indicator has been reproduced in the LAA guidance.

The DCLG and the Home Office are committed to ensuring the LAA indicators are fit-for-purpose and will review the current indicators in consultation with stakeholders.

Generally, the LGA has argued that LAAs should focus on 'better outcomes', defined locally from the bottom up. The application within LAAs of centrally imposed mandatory targets, and prescribed indicators, can at times frustrate the 'local' element of LAAs. Where partners on thematic partnerships (eg CDRP) and the LSP feel that domestic violence issues should be prioritised, this may need to be communicated strongly to the government office.

suggested targets for the reward element in the safer and stronger communities (taken from the DCLG note on the reward element of LAAs)

Local authorities are expected to use a selection from the following basket of outcome-focused indicators when developing their reward targets. They are also encouraged to think innovatively about other targets they might develop as long as robust figures can be produced. For example, other targets around increasing referrals from other non-criminal justice agencies.

- Increase the number of incidents of domestic violence reported annually either directly to the police or through a third party.
- Increase in the proportion of incidents of domestic violence which result in sanction detections.
- Increase in the proportion of offenders brought to justice as proportion of the total number of reported incidents/sanction detections.
- Increase the number of incidents of domestic violence reported directly to health services.
- Increase in the proportion of health referrals made to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference System (MARAC) or equivalent.
- Reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence to those victims who are being managed by a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference system (MARAC) or equivalent.
- Reduce the proportion of repeat domestic violence offences committed by perpetrators on the CJS programme (IDAP).

In their note on the reward element, the government recognises the tension between increasing reported crime and reducing crime. They highlight the importance of flagging all incidents of domestic violence at police force level and state that there should be an increase in sanction detections for violence offences, as well as an increase in the proportion of offences brought to justice (convicted) as proportion of the total number of reported incidents/sanction detections.

children and young people (non reward)

We know that living with domestic violence can adversely affect each of the five outcomes for children and young people set out in *Every child matters*⁷. Therefore effective work to tackle domestic violence will make a significant difference to a number of the indicators listed in the children and young people's block.

While, at present there are no specific domestic violence indicators in the Children and Young People's block, it is clear that reducing the impact of domestic violence on children and young people will have a positive impact on a number of existing indicators. Some of the most obvious examples are set out below, although many more could also have been included, for example those indicators relating to: re-offending; bullying; educational achievement; developing self-confidence; or dealing with stressful life changes.

- Number of re-registrations on the child protection register.
- Number of children placed in temporary accommodation by local authorities under the homelessness legislation, who are on the child protection register.
- Low birth weight births.
- Percentage of young people drinking alcohol.
- Number of families with children placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation/aggregate number of days spent by families with children in temporary accommodation.
- Level of school attendance among children of families living in temporary accommodation.

healthier communities and older people

Again, work to address domestic violence should have a positive impact on a range of indicators, for example working to support vulnerable adults and older people.

- Percentage of young people drinking alcohol.

economic development and enterprise

Work to tackle domestic violence will assist in increasing the self esteem and expectations of individuals. So, for example, it should increase the number of survivors who are lone parents, sick or disabled (physical or mental health issues) back into sustained employment by reducing fear and risk.

- Reduce the incidence of child poverty, contributing to national targets of halving child poverty by 2010.

⁷ The LGA, ADSS, CAFCASS and Women's Aid have produced commissioning guidance which provides a framework to ensure that the range of needs that children and young people experience in relation to domestic violence are identified and addressed. 'A vision for services for children and young people affected by domestic violence', can be downloaded from the LGA website: www.lga.gov.uk

local examples

Devon County Council

Indicators and targets:

- to increase reporting of domestic violence to the police by 10 per cent by March 2008 from the 2004/5 baseline of 7157 (ie to 7873);
- to increase the percentage of offences brought to justice as a proportion of the total number or reported offences.

Domestic violence is one of the core LAA outcome areas in Devon. It is included as part of the safer and stronger communities block of the LAA and was drawn together by identifying the common elements in the eight community safety strategies which exist at the district council level in Devon.

In effect the domestic violence targets are Devon's previously agreed LPSA2 targets, hence they have brought with them pump-priming and potentially reward monies. The targets are measured by figures produced by the police and are incorporated into Devon's overall LAA performance monitoring system.

Devon had already agreed that Against Domestic Violence and Abuse (ADVA) Devon would deliver the domestic violence outcomes for the various community safety partnerships. ADVA has its origins in the development of a domestic violence strategy in 2001/2. At that time there was a gap in any county-wide strategic approach to tackling domestic violence. In response the county council took the lead in establishing a domestic violence co-ordinator to take a lead and spearhead the work on LPSA1 which targeted domestic violence. ADVA is now a well established county-wide partnership of all statutory, voluntary and community agencies dealing with domestic violence. It is chaired by a senior Devon County Council elected member and has a team of five people employed by the county council leading the work and managing a multi-agency pooled budget of £1.1m. The budget funds up to 40 contracts for work, largely delivered by the voluntary sector, covering services for: children and young people; women survivors; male survivors; male perpetrators; a training and awareness programme for approximately 1,000 delegates a year; a survivors reference/support group; and advocacy work linked to MARACs and the Specialist Domestic Violence Court in Exeter.

Under the LAA Devon are moving towards a reduction in the number of community safety partnerships in the county and are increasingly working under the Safer Devon Partnership. This has thematic groups leading on each of their six outcome areas: volume crime; domestic violence; drugs/alcohol; anti-social behaviour; prejudice/hate crime; and youth crime prevention. These themes are co-ordinated under SDP which gives them potential to manage cross-over issues.

Devon is using the LAA as mechanism to try to pull together at a more strategic county-level work under the overall safer communities theme. Domestic violence was already included because of the developments under ADVA, but what has been of note is that the county strategic model for domestic violence led by ADVA has been seen as a big success and a potential model for all other areas of Safer Devon work. They commissioned Crime Concern to produce a report on how to re-structure, to better implement LAA outcomes and their suggested model draws heavily on ADVA work.

Roy Tomlinson, Policy Officer: roy.tomlinson@devon.gov.uk

Dorset County Council

Indicators and targets:

- Dorset's overarching target is to reduce the impact of domestic violence and support victims; this will be measured by:
 - a reduction in the proportion of repeat incidents of domestic violence in the total number of incidents reported to the police (also their reward element target);
 - a reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances due to domestic violence (from P1E returns made by each local authority); and
- Dorset is also monitoring domestic violence incidents and resulting crimes to provide contextual data, although these will not form part of the indicator.

As a pilot LAA authority, Dorset's agreement started in April 2005. The timing was good as the LAA coincided with development of their domestic violence strategy. Domestic violence was already an agreed target within the CDRP's Crime Reduction Strategy 2005/8. Dorset was therefore able to align targets, actions and outcomes (for example cross-referencing to BVPI 225). Their domestic violence strategy and action plan has therefore been adopted as the delivery plan for the LAA target so that everything holds together.

Within their LAA, Dorset decided to include a specific domestic violence target as part of the safer and stronger communities block. They acknowledge that many other areas have included domestic violence by 'default' as part of a wider target to reduce violent crime. However, in their view they thought it would be better to work to address domestic violence as a stand alone target.

A range of arguments can be adopted to 'sell' the target by:

- demonstrating the cross-cutting nature of the problem (how domestic violence has impacts on outcomes across the LAA blocks);
- auditing the impacts (homelessness, health, children etc.);
- stressing the need to involve partners, particularly at the strategic/senior level and harness the voluntary sector (to build on what was already happening in the voluntary sector).

Generally, Dorset believes that to achieve LAA targets there is a need to work in a co-ordinated way and to share resources. Locally they are aiming to achieve this through:

- an officer group of domestic violence leads from their six borough and district councils. This group meets regularly to discuss the BVPI and look for opportunities to share work;
- the Dorset Sanctuary Scheme which is part of the BVPI;
- individual local authorities are all introducing measures to reduce and prevent homelessness. Christchurch Borough Council has been particularly proactive including: appointing a Housing Support Officer to help clients maintain their tenancies; the use of rent deposit schemes; a restructured housing advice service to allow more prevention work; funding a domestic violence outreach worker; setting up private landlords' forum; and a homeless prevention fund;
- piloting the routine questioning of health visitors;
- consulting with survivors to gain information about their experiences of using services;
- proactive policing campaign planned to reduce repeat victimisations;
- the recruitment of two IDVAs to work with high-risk repeat victims identified by the police;
- setting up a specialist domestic violence court;

- provision of co-ordinated, multi-agency awareness training for any practitioners who work with victims to ensure a consistent standard across the county;
- a minimum standard of domestic violence input planned for all child protection cases.

In terms of funding, Dorset has a pump-priming grant for the reward element target for work on repeat victimisation. BVPI initiatives are being funded using homeless prevention money and they have secured funding through the safer and stronger communities stream of the LAA. Dorset also has a very good system of 'funding in-kind', so that most borough and district councils provide rooms free of charge for training.

Nicola Pengelly, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator: n.pengelly@dorsetcc.gov.uk

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Indicators and targets:

- East Riding's agreed outcome is to develop a co-ordinated service for victims, their families and perpetrators to tackle domestic violence and abuse;
- the supporting indicator is to achieve a reduction in domestic violence repeat victimisation;
- their target is to achieve reductions in repeat presentations to the police and the Domestic Violence Accommodation Project (DVAP).

East Riding of Yorkshire Council has developed a proactive response to domestic violence. Their Domestic Violence Accommodation Project (DVAP) aims to provide effective and appropriate advice, safe accommodation, and the ability to access a comprehensive support package. This project is tailored to a rural setting and offers both individual refuge provision and a comprehensive support service. It is designed to increase choices for individuals, who may wish to remain in their own property or to be relocated nearby within their own community. The project can also assist individuals who wish to be relocated further away.

East Riding's LAA was signed off in March 2006. While they have agreed to aim to increase positive arrests by local police to 75 per cent, the exact figure for the reduction in repeat presentations where victim has returned to perpetrator or entered into a relationship with a new perpetrator will be identified when a baseline has been set.

DVAP clients are encouraged to seek further assistance if their circumstances change eg the perpetrator is released from prison or if there are child contact issues. In this way East Riding recognises that some victims will use returning to the service as a positive choice to make themselves safe. In its first year 18 per cent of contacts with the DVAP service were repeats, but many of these will have been a positive response rather than a demonstration of repeated victimisation. Hence the need to develop a robust baseline.

Within the LAA actions for the DVAP include:

- establish the reasons for repeat presentations;
- establish Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs);
- work with partner agencies to establish Specialist Domestic Violence Court/fast-track court system;
- train the DVAP team in achieving the best evidence, including preserving evidence and taking photographs;
- identify the top ten persistent repeats.

Actions for the police include:

- locate the police domestic violence co-ordinator with the DVAP team (completed);
- prioritise police attendance at MARAC meetings;
- provide digital cameras to Incident Response Team sergeants to ensure photographic evidence is collected and used to confront offenders during interview;
- review domestic violence incidents at daily management meetings;
- identify top ten persistent repeat offenders.

John Sanderson, Safe Communities Group Manager: john.sanderson@eastriding.gov.uk

Greenwich council

Greenwich was one of the 20 areas to sign as a pilot LAA in March 2005. Although the pilot phase proved to be challenging, useful lessons were learnt. The council and its partners have consequently made a number of amendments to the LAA as part of the 'refresh' process and new local agency decision-making structures and processes have been introduced to better support the development of the LAA and delivery of LAA targets.

The LAA has provided a useful opportunity for local agencies to reaffirm their commitment to reducing domestic violence. Domestic violence is a significant feature of the safer and stronger communities block of the LAA. The Safer Greenwich Partnership (the strategic partnership responsible for this block of the LAA) has allocated pooled/aligned resources for domestic violence work and this has helped establish an independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service and a Sanctuary Scheme.

The key challenge has been in determining SMART multi-agency targets that will effectively measure progress. During the pilot phase three indicators were submitted:

- increased detection rates;
- reduced homelessness arising from domestic violence;
- decrease in repeat victimisation.

At the refresh in April 2006, it was decided that the first two indicators were not effective measures. The first because it was primarily a police, rather than a multi-agency target; and can lead to a perverse incentive of increased cautions. The second target was problematic as the necessary data was not easily available. There was also a concern that this type of target could run the risk of perverse incentives.

The third target was amended to link it to the work the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service. Discussions are underway as to the most appropriate methodology for how repeat victimisation will be measured.

An indicator regarding: recorded incidents of domestic violence was suggested at the 'refresh' in April 2006, with a view that a reduction of incidents would indicate a reduction of domestic violence. However this is considered to be an inadequate target given the problem of under reporting. Partners are currently considering alternative targets for the November refresh.

In hindsight, the process for determining domestic violence targets at the pilot phase could have been improved. Tight timescales led to insufficient discussions about targets, with some agencies not being involved or fully engaged. The introduction of a new Domestic Violence Project Management Board should improve partnership working around domestic violence. The board will consist of senior representatives from local 'responsible authorities' and will ensure that domestic violence outcome targets are agreed, owned and delivered. In addition revised governance arrangements for the LAA has led to the setting up of a LAA board to help improve broader partnership arrangements across all LAA blocks. This should help to better co-ordinate cross-cutting themes such as domestic violence.

Eileen Edwards, acting Head of Social Inclusion and Justice Division Greenwich Council:
eileen.edwards@greenwich.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire County Council

Indicators and targets:

- the domestic violence indicator is in the safer and stronger communities block and reads "proportion of police recorded crimes with domestic violence markers that are incidences of repeat victimisation";
- the target is a decrease in the proportion of domestic violence incidents that are repeats to 11 per cent by March 2008 from the 2003/04 baseline;
- the baseline is 14 per cent.

In Cambridgeshire the County Domestic Violence Steering Group reports to the County Strategic Community Safety Group and this drew up the targets for the LAA. This indicator is reviewed quarterly at the County Strategic Community Safety Group and its steering group. There have been enormous problems with the collection of this data from the police but with the intervention of the chief constable these appear to have been overcome.

The County Domestic Violence Steering Group are currently working with partners to introduce a Domestic Abuse Unit similar to the model in Cardiff but adapted for a rural county. The aim of the Domestic Abuse Unit is to improve domestic violence services for users and the key outcome is to reduce repeat victimisation in line with the LAA target. The steering group are currently commissioning consultants to draw up a business plan for the Domestic Abuse Unit to be funded by partners to achieve the LAA target.

Cambridgeshire does not have an LPSA target on domestic violence as this was negotiated and agreed in advance of the LAA. However, they have been successful in gaining support from the County Strategic Community Safety Group to 'top slice' Home Office funding for the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service which covers the county, and the LAA target was the main driver in securing this support.

Cecilia Tredget, Deputy Chief Executive, East Cambridgeshire District Council:
cecilia.tredget@eastcambs.gov.uk

Leeds

Indicators and targets:

- increase reporting of domestic violence;
- reduce repeats;
- increase the number of incidents which result in a sanctioned detection.

Leeds City Council was included in the second round of Local Area Agreements, adopting specific targets to address domestic violence within their reward section (LPSA targets).

Work to achieve these domestic violence targets has built upon existing multi-agency initiatives (such as the introduction of mini-MARACs), working closely with existing voluntary sector providers, and linked to the implementation of BVPI 225.

Priority areas for action include:

- piloting an enhanced IDVA service – working with the existing service to extend what they do (this will provide an out-of-hours service with a capacity to attend incidents with, or immediately after, the police call out);
- roll-out of training to improve police responses such as enhanced evidence gathering and the consideration of victimless prosecutions (an evaluation of a pilot in one police division had been very positive - showing training had led to a range of positive changes in practice);
- production and dissemination of a revised public guide to domestic violence support services;
- production of a series of publicity materials targeting pubs and clubs. The materials are aimed at challenging attitudes in young people, as well as highlighting the support and services available. Young people are being consulted on the use of images;
- Leeds are also funding voluntary sector led focus groups to consult with service users.

Michele DeSouza, Manager Leeds Inter-Agency Project: michelle.desouza@leeds.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council

Indicators and targets:

- the indicator is to reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- targets are based upon the;
 - number of incidents of domestic violence reported annually to the police;
 - number of incidents of domestic violence which result in sanctioned detections (sanction detections are crimes for which someone is charged, summonsed, and receives a caution or other formal sanction).

Nottingham City Council has agreed a domestic violence reward target in their LAA. The reward grant should enable the development of a multi-agency criminal justice project resulting in improved partnership working and improvements in the number and quality of cases being brought into the justice system. It is hoped that this will help achieve a greater number of sanctioned detections and convictions, driving down

high-risk domestic violence and repeat reports. This would also achieve savings to the criminal justice system, housing, child protection services, employers and those suffering from homelessness, physical and mental health or substance misuse.

Nottingham city's stretch target has been set in line with the findings from LPSAs of an increase in reporting of 10 per cent each year. It is thought that reporting may reach a plateau at some point in the next three years. At that point, concentration will move from increasing reports, to increasing sanctioned detections.

The logic behind the target for the proposed increase in sanctioned detections is as follows: the current sanctioned detections rate is 20 per cent of detectable crimes; detectable crimes are usually 33 per cent of all reports. A no stretch percentage increase is predicted to be a 22 per cent, 23 per cent and 24 per cent increase over three years, linked to the increase in reporting. Therefore a stretch target percentage increase over three years is predicted to be 25 per cent, 30 per cent and 35 per cent sanctioned detections again set against an increase in reporting.

The Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA⁸) estimated that 8 per cent of their reported domestic violence will be high risk. Using Professor Sylvia Walby's research on the cost of domestic violence, the cost of high risk survivors in Nottingham to the criminal justice system alone was estimated as being £2 million.

The proposed stretch will see an increase in reporting over the period of 2,230 of which 624 are likely to be high-risk and medium-risk cases. The average cost of domestic violence is £2,190. If, in 43 per cent of these cases there is no further violence, this will result in a saving of £587,997 to the state, with over £2,400,690 in individual victim costs and over £172,344 in employer costs.

The interventions Nottingham city believe are required to enable the reduction in 8 per cent of high risk domestic violence incidents are as follows:

- police risk assessments enable the police to identify the families most at risk of domestic violence and to concentrate resources on these perpetrators;
- improved evidence gathering by the police, piloted in the Home Office DVEC programme, to provide the CPS with an improved case file, reducing attrition;
- MARACs to enable agencies to share information about the highest risk families and find solutions;
- IDVAs to support victims/survivors through the civil and criminal legal systems and reduce the withdrawal of witness statements and reduce the attrition rate at court;
- IDVA/ MARAC project manager;
- specialist domestic violence courts clustering domestic violence cases to reduce the attrition rate;
- information sharing protocols between agencies to enable conferencing and joint solutions for high-risk families;
- domestic violence trained prosecutors, courts, probation and police officers.

These interventions proposed through the LAA reward target are based on the Cardiff Women's Safety Unit and the Hammersmith and Fulham Standing Together Project recommended as best practice by the Home Office. The interventions are innovative, reflect best practice and are partnership based within the CDRP context.

Jane Lewis, Domestic Violence Policy Officer: jane.lewis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

⁸ CAADA is a charity established to encourage the use of independent advocacy as a way to increase the safety of survivors. They are working to create a consistent, professional and effective response for all survivors of domestic violence and in particular those at high risk. They do this through delivering services directly to advocacy projects, their local multi-agency partners and also through work with funders, policy advisers and government.

East Sussex County Council

Indicators and targets:

- increase the number of new domestic violence incidents that are reported to the police (baseline data 2005/6: 5,232: target 2008/9: 5,300);
- reduce the proportion of repeat incidents of domestic violence reported annually to the police as a proportion of the total number of incidents reported (reduce to 23.27 per cent by 2008/9 from 26 per cent in 2006);
- increase BVPI 225 performance: meet the requirements of BVPI 225 fully by 2008/9.

East Sussex's domestic violence targets are predominately grouped under the safer and stronger communities block and are linked to a reward grant. The final target aimed at being compliant with BVPI 225 is proving the hardest to achieve.

However, their domestic violence targets have also been linked to the children and young people's block, where they are underpinned by the relevant internal documents/strategies/plans. Although the targets in the children and young people's block do not carry any reward grant, they enable the domestic violence team to raise the profile of domestic violence initiatives across a wider section of partnerships and East Sussex County Council. This has been very productive in terms of developing new multi-agency initiatives that meet everyone's targets and that are domestic violence orientated ie work with Sure Starts and Children's Trusts.

The rationale for the indicator was argued both on a national and a local basis. Nationally, Home Office research was used to demonstrate key positive and significant changes to working practices by instigating collaborative partnership working. This was underpinned by the implementation of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), the Children Act (2004) and safeguarding provisions, the Every Child Matters Framework, BVPI 225 and the evaluation of Specialist Domestic Violence Court pilot sites in Gwent and Croydon. Locally they used evidence of increasing new reports and the success of the perpetrator reduction panel in Hastings and Rother, where the CRI project has been working successfully with the Anti-Victimisation Unit, and the hospital domestic violence project.

The LAA process was very inclusive. In the end, East Sussex chose to stay with targets that were familiar and did not test the boundaries of innovation. This was felt to be partly due to constraints on the use of freedoms and flexibilities.

Jacque Ballard, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator: jacque.ballard@eastsussex.gov.uk

Coventry City Council

Indicators and targets:

- Coventry's target is to improve the confidence of domestic violence and abuse victims in the criminal justice system.

Their performance indicators are:

- number of individuals reporting being a victim of domestic violence and abuse to the police;
- number of detections of domestic violence and abuse perpetrators as recorded by the police;
- number of convictions of domestic violence and abuse perpetrators as recorded by the CPS.

Domestic violence and abuse is an element of Coventry's LAA insofar as the relevant LPSA targets have been included within the LAA. More generally, domestic violence will also be included as a target among the PSA1 target 'reduction of total crime (BCS comparator crime) by 20 per cent', as it will make up a significant proportion of the number of woundings. Both of these targets sit within the safer and stronger community's block of the LAA.

A steering group has now been established to oversee action on the LPSA indicators and this has helped significantly with implementing performance management processes. The group has senior representation from the police (each BCU), the CPS and probation and the domestic violence and abuse co-ordinator.

In retrospect, the inclusion of targets for domestic violence and abuse within the LPSA has not been an easy journey. Initially, the difficulty was with identifying and gaining 'sign up' to a target that would help to achieve the priorities in the partnership's existing domestic violence and abuse strategy, which did not also conflict with individual agency targets. Engaging with senior representatives within those individual agencies to seek 'sign up' was difficult. An additional, ongoing issue has been with data collection, both in terms of 'clean' data, various definitions of terminology (which has impacted on the consistency of data provision) and the capacity/processes to enable co-ordinated data collation. The journey is now a lot easier and, although there are still issues to sort out, there is now full engagement by the key partner agencies and a keen desire to analyse and learn from data intelligence.

In general, while it has been a difficult and time consuming process, Coventry feels that the adoption of domestic violence and abuse targets has been beneficial. Whether or not the targets are finally achieved, going through this process has helped to strengthen partnership working above and beyond the requirements of the performance indicators.

Pat Moore, Domestic Violence and Abuse Co-ordinator: pat.moore@coventry.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council

Indicator:

- reduce the percentage of domestic violence incidents reported to the police where alcohol is also a factor.

A domestic violence incident is defined as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or are family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. Suffolk recognises that domestic violence is a serious and complex crime, which is chronically under reported. Whilst domestic violence is not a BCS comparator crime, CDRPs across Suffolk consider it to be an important issue, which if tackled effectively will contribute to wider community safety and reduce incidents of violent crime. The county domestic violence development officer works to develop initiatives across Suffolk, to complement the work of each district's domestic violence forum.

Domestic violence accounts for a quarter of violent crime in Suffolk. If left unchallenged, it can increase in severity/frequency and may lead to homicide. Many victims of domestic violence were unable to be accommodated in refuges due to alcohol dependency. Research by local agencies indicates domestic violence as a high-risk factor for those attending alcohol treatment programmes, and for young people with offending behaviour.

Research has shown that victims often turn to alcohol as a form of self medication and relief from the pain, fear, isolation, shame, denial, low self esteem and guilt associated with domestic violence and abuse (similar psychosocial issues to substance misuse). We know also that many young people may begin alcohol dependency due to one of their parent's violent behaviour or abuse. Significant evidence also exists to show that an abusive male partner often introduces their victim to alcohol use and that attempts to sobriety are viewed as threatening to the controlling partner.

Victims of domestic violence often experience severe trauma on a regular basis. Those with alcohol dependency face additional barriers to reporting or disclosure because of fears of negative consequences; such as losing their children, if they admit their problem with alcohol. If a victim is drinking then their judgement and ability to assess risk may deteriorate and so the danger they are in can be increased. Heavy drinkers are also at increased risk of victimisation. The cost of alcohol dependency to the NHS is between £1.4bn and £1.7bn. The cost of domestic violence to NHS is a further £1.2bn and time off work due to injuries is costing employers and workers nearly £3bn. The cost to individuals and families cannot be calculated.

The Harmony Project is funded by the Alcohol Research & Education Council. It seeks to prevent and tackle the harm that alcohol causes to health where there are incidents of domestic violence and abuse within a family. The project will; identify gaps in provision; develop an innovative multi-agency training model for practitioners; deliver holistic individual outreach/group work for victims and their families; and share good practice. There is no current provision in Suffolk for joint work with victims of domestic violence and their families where alcohol is a risk factor. It is vital to recognise the nature of the links between alcohol and domestic violence and to address those links in the design of local services⁹ and to remove existing barriers to joint working; such as the misconception that victims who use alcohol are in part responsible for the violence they experience.

⁹ Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Cabinet Office 2004 p.72

By investing in training staff and developing integrated services they hope to dramatically improve practice by developing knowledge, skills and motivation and be more effective, tackling the underlying causes and increasing the safety of victims and their children in Suffolk. Information sharing will improve collaboration and referrals. A seminar for senior management and chief officers will challenge the current culture of single provision, and will further promote the development of both individuals and organisations.

Although the domestic violence target is clearly within the safer and stronger communities block, they have found it helpful to understand how domestic abuse work can contribute to other targets. So, for example, domestic violence is significantly under-performed amongst older people. Domestic violence and abuse work can enhance the life choices of older people and enable them to live healthier and safer lives.

Marianne Fellowes, County Domestic Violence Development Officer:
marianne.fellowes@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Norfolk County Council

Indicators:

- the number of offenders (partner domestic violence) who are convicted as a proportion of the total number of domestic violence incidents (partner domestic violence) recorded by the police across Norfolk (cautions do not count in the numerator of this indicator);
- the percentage of victims of domestic violence (partner or ex-partner only) recorded on the constabulary's Domestic Violence Database in the year being measured who have been victims of a reported domestic violence incident by the same perpetrator within a period of 12 months preceding their last recorded incident;
- the target for this second indicator has a baseline of 31.8 per cent (without LPSA) and a stretch (with LPSA) target of 28.6 per cent Norfolk wide.

Both of Norfolk's indicators are taken directly from their LPSA2 targets and are measured through police and CPS data only at the present. In their discussions for next year's refresh Norfolk hope to start to look at increasing the reporting of domestic violence and the interventions needed to address the barriers domestic violence poses to achieving many of its outcomes across all four blocks.

Mark Pigeon, Domestic Violence Reduction Co-ordinator: marc.pigeon@norfolk.gov.uk

conclusions

The inclusion of initiatives to address domestic violence in the LAA framework has been successful in improving responses by enhancing partnership working, pooling resources and encouraging co-ordination. Already a number of local authorities have been able to use the LAA process as a focus for positive initiatives to address domestic violence and reduce the harm it causes individuals and communities.

Whilst some domestic violence targets have been successfully incorporated within LAAs, the cross-cutting nature of the issue has not yet been reflected in the range indicators and targets. Other than in the guidance on the reward element of LAAs, most targets are still very much focused on criminal justice responses (and figures) rather than looking at the wider social context. Domestic violence targets are mainly confined to the safer and stronger communities block, yet we know that successfully tackling domestic violence will help authorities meet a range of other indicators spread across all the four blocks. The most obvious examples are some of the indicators included in the children and young people's block.

The LGA has concerns about the domestic violence related indicators currently included in the safer and stronger communities block in the guidance for Round three. These concerns relate to the lack of clear definitions, the focus on sanction detections and a worry that some of the indicators listed have potential perverse incentives. What is still lacking is a clear link to improved outcomes for the individuals concerned – ie links to effective multi-agency processes or measures that reflect perceptions of increased safety. We therefore very much welcome the government's commitment to reviewing the current indicators in consultation with stakeholders.

We hope that as the LAA process evolves a wider range of appropriate targets will be adopted that cross the blocks and enable councils' greater freedom to innovate and tailor effective local solutions. The development of more robust data management and information sharing systems will help facilitate this process. In addition, a continued dialogue between central and local government is needed help develop an outcomes framework that is reflective of the complexity this problem and the range of responses required.

resources and guidance

Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA has been running a three year Home Office funded domestic violence project, which aimed to identify and promote good practice of councils and partner organisations in addressing domestic violence by:

- developing and supporting local partnerships;
- sharing good practice;
- raising awareness of domestic violence and council's role in addressing this problem;
- influencing national developments for a more co-ordinated response.

Information and resources from the LGA project can be found on our website at:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/ProjectHome.asp?lsection=59&ccat=943>

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

The DCLG website contains a range of useful resources including: the LAA guidance for Round Three and a refresh (review) to Rounds One and Two (providing a detailed outline of the LAA framework and listing the priority outcomes - both mandatory outcomes and indicators), a Q&A sheet, lists of LAAs, information on enabling measures and LPSAs as well as links to other website and publications:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161635>

Local Area Agreements: Local Agreements Network

The Local Agreements Network provides a comprehensive and extended support service for lead officers, specialist officers and their partners, who are engaged in developing, negotiating and delivering LAAs. The Local Agreements Network is the combined IDeA and Shared Intelligence support for LAAs. It is supported by the DCLG and the LGA: <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=1174195>

Also on the IDeA Knowledge website is a link to the DCLG guidance note: '*The reward element of LAA's: negotiation of stretched targets*'. This note provides guidance on the negotiation of stretched targets within the reward element of LAAs, including guidance on individual targets within the LAA Outcomes Framework, a checklist for viable targets not in the Outcomes Framework, and potential solutions on value for money issues: <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/4948043>

