

Local Members' Interest

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee - Monday 04 March 2019

Domestic Homicide Reviews and Emerging Themes

Recommendation

- a. That the Select Committee scrutinises the contents of the report.

Report of Cllr Gill Heath, Cabinet Member for Communities

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

1. This covering report and the detailed report attached as Appendix A summarise the findings from Domestic Homicide Reviews and Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Learning Reviews completed across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent since their introduction in 2011. The Committee is asked to note the findings.

Report

Background

2. A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a by member of the same household as themselves. Since April 2011 there has been a statutory requirement for local areas to conduct a DHR following a domestic homicide that meets the criteria.
3. It is the responsibility of the local Community Safety Partnership for the area in which the victim lived to conduct the DHR and to satisfy itself that any recommendations arising have been implemented.
4. In 2018 the multi-agency Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board commissioned an analysis of the completed Reviews undertaken to date across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to promote key learning and trends with the aim of informing and shaping future policy development and operational practice locally. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent use the same local DHR guidance and it was felt that looking at the outcomes from the reviews across both local authority areas would enhance the learning and more clearly identify any trends or themes.
5. The Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board is responsible for the delivery of the pan Staffordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-20. It is jointly chaired by the County Council's Commissioner for Safety, Children and Families and a senior officer from Stoke-on-Trent City Council. The Board has a broad membership from a

wide variety of agencies including (but not limited to) Police, District and Borough Councils, Probation, Health agencies, the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and Safeguarding Children Boards for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and Domestic Abuse service providers.

6. The key points covered in the analysis report commissioned by the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board are outlined below. The analysis report is entitled a *Summary of Key Findings From An Analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent* and is attached as Appendix A.

Review Analysis and Themes

7. DHRs provide a rich source of information on the nature of domestic homicide, the context in which it occurs and, most importantly, on the lessons that can be learned from the tragic event. The attached Appendix A report sets out what we know about domestic homicide and draws out common themes and trends and identifies learning that emerged across the sample of DHRs scrutinised.
8. The report looks at the fourteen DHRs in the area (i.e. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent) which have been cleared for publication by the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel. (Home Office quality assurance is a required element at the end of the DHR process, prior to publication of the DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary.)
9. Of the fourteen DHRs across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent which have been cleared for publication by the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel, six are Staffordshire DHRs.
10. In addition to DHRs, Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent) has also conducted four Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Learning Reviews (MALRs). This brings the total number of completed reviews to 18. Total figures in the Appendix report are broken down based on 18 completed reviews.
11. The Multi-Agency Learning Reviews initially began as DHRs but were then later re-badged as MALRs when further information came to light to indicate that the criteria for a DHR had not been met after all. MALRs follow the same process as DHRs but the final reports are not sent to the Home Office for quality assurance purposes and they are not published. The final reports are, however, shared with all agencies who took part and with those agencies who have been assigned recommendations as a result of the review. The lessons learned from these reviews are equally as valid as those learned from DHRs.
12. The Appendix report provides an analysis of the 18 DHRs and MALRs completed to date including details the gender of DHR victims and perpetrators, the nature of the relationship between victim and perpetrator (e.g. current or former partner or family member) and their age ranges. It also looks at the number of dependent children, ethnicity, the prevalence of mental health and/or substance misuse issues, any history of violence, the method of killing and location of death.

Next Steps

13. Further in-depth analysis of the Reviews completed to date will be undertaken and reported to the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board at a date to be agreed by the Board. The current focus of DHR activity remains on the Reviews that are currently underway across the county.

Link to Strategic Plan

14. The work undertaken in relation to domestic homicide reviews links with the third of the three priorities within the County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22, i.e. that the people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

15. The Select committee previously received a report relating to findings from Staffordshire DHRs in December 2015 and prior to that a Safe and Strong Select Committee Working Group met in October 2013 to consider the learning from the Domestic Homicide and Multi-Agency Learning Reviews undertaken in Staffordshire during 2011 and 2012.

Community Impact

16. Undertaking domestic homicide reviews and implementing the learning from them should benefit those members of the community who are victims or perpetrators, or at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators, of domestic abuse as well as their families, friends and colleagues.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix A - Domestic Homicide Reviews – Summary of Key Findings From An Analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent – October 2018