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***Report of the Safer and Stronger
Communities Scrutiny
Panel***

***Review of Domestic Violence
Service provision and areas of
vulnerability***

September 2008

The role of the council's Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel is to examine, in detail, selected issues relating to services being delivered by the council and its partners for cleaner, greener, stronger and safer communities, and associated transport and environmental matters.

The aim is to find out if there are ways in which the council and its partners could be doing things better, and to influence national issues.

This report is the end result of a review into a particular subject. It sums up how the review was carried out, the panel's findings/considerations, conclusions and recommendations for any improvements which could be made.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT

‘Domestic Violence – Service Provision and Areas of Vulnerability’

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Introduction by the Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel

Domestic Violence used to be something nobody talked about. It was something that was kept at 'home' and the police defined violence within a relationship as a 'domestic'. Those days, thankfully are long gone.

This subject has had much media coverage recently, and powerful soap opera story lines. And it's about time. Domestic Violence is a serious crime with 1 in 4 women becoming victims in their lifetimes, and 2 women killed each week by a current or former partner. It remains a crime predominantly against women, by men.

Domestic violence manifests itself in many forms; partner on partner, parent on child, forced marriage. Myself and the vice chair attended a conference held here in North Lincolnshire where we heard from Jasvinder Singh, who was forced to run away from home rather than be forced into a marriage to someone she'd never met at the tender age of 15. Rather than lose 'honour', her family cast her out as if she were dead. Her sister suffered the same fate and tragically committed suicide by setting fire to herself because she knew what dishonouring her family would mean. She saw no escape.

Clearly it is unacceptable that people cannot feel safe within their own homes and within their own families. The panel has heard that there is help and assistance available and at last Domestic Violence is getting the priority it deserves. However, there are still many barriers when women are seeking help or are fleeing from violent partners and much work needs to be done to try and address some of the anomalies. For example, it is highly unlikely that a woman not in receipt of benefits would be able to afford to access the services offered at the refuge, or indeed afford to take out a non-molestation order on a former partner. Unfortunately it is for reasons such as this that many victims feel they have no option but to remain in a violent relationship.

This has been an extremely in depth review and I know I speak on behalf of the panel when I say it is probably one of the most interesting we have ever done. I certainly hope it proves useful in terms of our conclusions and recommendations.

On behalf of the panel, I would like to thank everyone who agreed to speak to us, and who spoke honestly and openly. Special thanks to Dianna Broadmeadow from Safer Neighbourhoods whose assistance and advice was absolutely invaluable and who encouraged us to dig a little deeper!

I certainly hope that this review encourages debate with partners, but more than anything I hope that our recommendations can make a difference.

Councillor Andrea Davison

Chair, Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY PANEL**

Councillors: A Davison (chair)
 P Clark (vice-chair)
 M Ali
 S Armitage
 T Ellerby
 T Foster
 N Sherwood

The following members were also involved in this review

Councillors: J Berry
 C Sherwood

GLOSSARY

This report is written as far as possible in plain English with the minimum of jargon. All acronyms are spelt out in full when they first appear but for the sake of clarity their meanings are repeated here.

CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership - A partnership between the emergency services, local authorities and public, private and voluntary sector agencies that work together to reduce crime, disorder and substance misuse.
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference - The aim of the MARAC is for professional agencies to meet and share information, with the aim of reducing the risk of serious harm to domestic violence victims assessed as being high-risk.
GOYH	Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber works with organisations across the Region to deliver government policies and programmes and to contribute a regional perspective in their development.
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Childrens Board is a multi-agency body, and comprises representatives from senior management of each of the main agencies involved in child protection - Education, Health, Housing, Police, Probation and Children's Services. The voluntary sector is also represented.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord is a technical term for social landlords that are registered with the Housing Corporation (most are housing associations, but there are also trusts and co-operatives) to provide social housing. RSLs run as businesses but don't trade for profit.
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator is a national measure of performance, set by central government
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate is a trained specialist whose goal is the safety of domestic violence victims. Their focus is on providing a service to victims at medium to high risk of harm to address their safety needs and help manage the risks that they face.
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advocate provide professional and emotional support to the victim's of sexual violence (and their families).
LAA	Local Area Agreement is a three-year agreement between a local area and central government. The LAA sets out how local priorities will be met by applying local solutions. It also contributes to national priorities set out by the government.

ECHR	The European Court of Human Rights is the international court set up to interpret and apply the European Convention on Human Rights.
HRA	Human Rights Act makes rights from the European Convention on Human Rights into a form of higher law in the United Kingdom.
CARDIFF WSU	Cardiff's Women's Safety Unit is a multi-agency initiative working with a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations including the police, Crown Prosecution Service, Probation and Social Services. The WSU offers a comprehensive range of services at one referral point, to women who have survived domestic violence and or known perpetrator rape – a one stop shop.
SOADA	Sandwell Organisation Against Domestic Abuse is a multi agency co-ordinated response to domestic abuse in Sandwell.
CJSSS	Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary is a new way of working to encompass a simpler set of processes and procedures, has been successfully piloted in magistrates' courts in four areas. CJSSS aims to improve the way cases are managed and dealt with, focusing on the methods that make the justice system work well.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements is a set of arrangements established by police, probation and the prison services (known as the Responsible Authority) to assess and manage the risk posed by sexual and violent offenders.
IDAP	Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme is a nationally-accredited community-based group work programme designed to reduce re-offending by adult male domestic violence offenders.
CAADA	Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse is a charity established to encourage the use of independent advocacy as a way to increase the safety of survivors.
PCT	Primary Care Trust is a National Health Service (NHS) organisation that guides the work of doctor's surgeries and other local health services and makes sure that hospital care and other specialist treatment is available to local people when they need it. It might be a visit to a doctor or a dentist, an optician for an eye test, or just a trip to a pharmacist to buy cough mixture. NHS walk-in centres and the NHS Direct phone line service are also part of primary care.

1 THE SELECTION AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel's role is to monitor or examine services being delivered by the council and its partners for cleaner, greener, stronger and safer communities, and associated transport and environmental matters.

The panel agreed to conduct this review after undertaking its usual consultation process with Service Directors, Cabinet Members and other stakeholders for any policy or service areas that would benefit from independent overview and scrutiny members reviewing the service.

During the consultation process, members attended one of Humberside Police (B Divisions) monthly Performance Challenge Days. The key theme for the October 2007 Performance Challenge Day was Domestic Violence. A Detective Chief Inspector informed the members of the Scrutiny Panel in attendance, as well as Humberside Police Officers and other stakeholders that, in Humberside Polices' opinion, there was a shortfall in service provision and there were areas of vulnerability with regards to domestic violence.

At the panel's meeting on 19 November 2007, members agreed to commence a review into domestic violence – service provision and areas of vulnerability, with a brief –

- To establish the extent of the council's role and responsibilities, to evaluate how effectively and appropriately the council fulfills the role and responsibilities, and to determine what else (if anything) should be done.
- To clarify what policies or strategies the council has and whether any new policies are required.
- To uncover the degree to which other agencies are involved and how effectively co-ordinated they are.
- To establish what can be done to improve public recognition of the problem of domestic violence and its consequences.
- To ensure that sufficient and appropriate provision is provided to meet the needs of all sections of the community regardless of their place of living, ethnic origins and sex.
- To make conclusions and recommendations.

2 HOW THE REVIEW WAS CARRIED OUT

The council's Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel –

- Agreed to carry out an intensive investigation into 'domestic violence – service provision and areas of vulnerability'.

Desktop Research

Documentation including -

- Local and National press articles
- Wide range of websites and national journals were also used as part of the information collection process.

Interviews

Interviews were held with internal and external witnesses including -

- Detective Chief Inspector Baker – Humberside Police B Division
- Dave Basker - Head of Practice, Children, Strategy and Partnerships, North Lincolnshire Council
- Ian Bridge – Head of Tenancy Support, North Lincolnshire Homes
- Mike Briggs – Service Director Adult Social Care, North Lincolnshire Council
- Dianna Broadmeadow – Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence)
- Lynne Devine - Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, North Lincolnshire Council
- Sharon Dukes - Team Manager, Stonham Women's Services/Mental Health Service
- Jane Duncan - Chief Executive, North Lincolnshire Homes
- Geoff Emberlin - Housing Advice Team Manager, North Lincolnshire Council
- Sergeant Follan - Humberside Police B Division Domestic Violence Unit
- Councillor L Foster – Cabinet Member Neighbourhood, Environmental and Communities, North Lincolnshire Council

- Councillor T Gosling - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, North Lincolnshire Council
- Denise Hyde - Service Director Children, Strategy And Partnerships, North Lincolnshire Council
- Mansur Kapasi - Treasurer and Manager at the South Humber Racial Equality Council
- Jackie Kinnell – Assistant Divisional Manager and Lead Nurse, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust
- Neil Laminman – Service Director Community Planning and Resources, North Lincolnshire Council
- Mary Mayfield - Principal Education Welfare Strategy Manager, Children and Young Peoples Service, North Lincolnshire Council
- Stuart Minto – Head of Safer Neighbourhoods
- Kerrie Mitchell – Supporting People Service Manager, North Lincolnshire Council
- Jo Moxon - Head of School Support and Learning Services, North Lincolnshire Council
- Mike Prudom – Deputy Justices' Clerk, Her Majesty's Court Service
- Deborah Smith - Head of Midwifery, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust
- Donna Taylor - Senior Probation Officer/Programme Manager - Humberside Probation Trust
- Nick Tharratt - Humberside Fire and Rescue Service
- Beki Williams - It's My Right Project

Questionnaire

- A questionnaire was sent out to all members of the North Lincolnshire Domestic Violence Forum.

Benchmarking Exercise

- The panel undertook a benchmarking exercise with North Lincolnshire Council's comparator authorities.

Site Visits

The panel undertook the following site visits -

- Humberside Police B Division domestic violence unit, Shelford House, Shelford Street, Scunthorpe.
- Hull co-located domestic violence unit, Kingston House, Kingston-upon-Hull
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference meeting

Panel Meetings

A series of public meetings were held for witness interviews and presentations, together with planning and evaluation meetings to consider information collated and presented to members.

Sub-groups made up of panel members also met to deal with urgent business in order for the review to proceed efficiently and effectively.

3 THE PANEL'S FINDINGS/CONSIDERATIONS

The programme of work carried out by the panel enabled members to use different techniques and perspectives to comprehensively examine the issue of domestic violence in North Lincolnshire. The findings and considerations of the panel are outlined below.

3.1 What is Domestic Violence and Abuse?

The panel learnt that defining domestic violence has historically proved to be problematic. In 2005 the government agreed a core definition of domestic violence as follows; "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 government also highlighted that such issues as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour killings are encompassed within this definition.

Domestic violence is a systematic pattern of abuse that is committed within a current or non-current partner or family relationship. It is rarely a one off event. It includes a range of abusive behaviours that tend to escalate over time, and can occur in new relationships or after many years.

Domestic abuse includes, but is not limited to:

Physical violence: for example slapping, pushing, kicking, stabbing, damage to property or items of sentimental value, attempted murder or murder

Sexual violence: for example any non-consensual sexual activity, including rape, sexual assault, coercive sexual activity, or refusing safe sex, restricting freedom: for example controlling whom you see or where you go, what you wear or what you do, stalking, imprisonment, forced marriage.

Emotional/psychological abuse: for example intimidation, social isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation, constant criticism, enforced trivial routines.

Economic abuse: for example stealing, depriving or taking control of money, running up debts, withholding benefits books or bank cards.

3.2 Who experiences domestic abuse?

Members were made aware that domestic abuse is not limited to any particular type of person or relationship. Anyone can experience domestic abuse. Research evidence¹ indicates that the majority of domestic violence is abuse of women by men, but domestic abuse also occurs in same-sex relationships, in heterosexual relationships when men are abused by women and in caring and other family relationships, for example when grown up children use violence against their parents.

Lack of relevant research means that much less is known about these forms of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is experienced differently according to gender, age, ethnicity or race, social class, religion or sexual identity. Societal oppression and discrimination, such as sexism, racism and homophobia make it harder for victims and survivors to protect themselves or get support and therefore make it easier for perpetrators to get away with using violence.

3.3 Domestic Violence

There is no statutory or common-law offence as such of 'domestic violence'. The term is used generically to cover a range of abusive behaviour, only some of which is criminal. Abuse can be physical, on a spectrum from a minor blow through sexual assault to murder – all of which are subject to legal sanction. But the abuse may be non-physical – for example, threats (to a partner or children in the household), intimidation, verbal harassment, isolation or enforced financial dependence, not all of which are subject to legal sanction.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 created offences of harassment and putting a person in fear of violence and enabled the prosecution of abusive psychological behaviour that did not fit easily into pre-existing legislation. Convictions can also provide victims with a practical outcome in the form of restraining orders.

3.4 National and Local Policy

Members were pleased that the government is committed to helping prevent domestic violence, improving the support and protection for victims and their children and bringing perpetrators of this crime to justice.

The strategic approach for this work is set out in the government's Safety and Justice Consultation Paper on Domestic Violence 2003 and in "Domestic Violence – A National Report 2005".

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, the Children Act 2004 and the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (section 120 implemented 2005) provide a legislative framework to direct this work, whilst the needs of children affected by domestic violence are also highlighted in Every Child Matters: Change for Children 2004, the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services 2004 and Safeguarding Children in Education 2004.

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, all agencies have a duty to work together to tackle crime, including domestic violence, and help bring perpetrators to justice. North Lincolnshire Council recognises the seriousness of domestic violence and works closely with key partners including criminal justice agencies, the health service, district councils and the voluntary and private sectors to address this issue.

Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the council has a duty to take into account the reduction of crime and disorder when carrying out all its functions. The council recognises that as a direct provider of services it has an important role in providing support to service users who may be affected by domestic violence, and has policies and procedures in place to ensure this.

Underpinning the commitment of the government is a National Domestic Violence Reduction Delivery Plan² focusing on 5 identified outcomes which the government has committed to achieve.

These are to:

- Reduce the prevalence of domestic violence, particularly in relation to high incidence areas and/or communities
- Increase the rate that domestic violence is reported, particularly in the high incidence areas and/or communities
- Increase the rate of reporting of domestic violence and the number of offences that are brought to justice
- Ensure that victims of domestic violence are adequately protected and supported
- Reduce the rate of domestic violence related homicides

3.5 Homicide Reviews

Members were informed that a key outcome of the National Delivery Plan² is:

“...to reduce the number of domestic violence related homicides.”

Due to the National Delivery Plan the number of women who are killed as a result of domestic violence has fallen by 14 per cent over the last two years. During 2004/05, approximately 140 people were killed as a result of domestic violence, of which just under a quarter were men³. A systematic review in the case of a domestic violence homicide is one way that agencies can learn lessons to prevent assault, significant injury and, ultimately, murder.

Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduces a statutory basis for local bodies to establish homicide reviews for victims of domestic violence. This will bring the procedure into line with current practice for serious case reviews following the serious injury or death of a child.

Under section 9(1) of the Act a domestic homicide review is defined as “a 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) A person to whom he/she was related or with whom he/she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or
- (b) A member of the same household as himself/herself, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.”

The statutory purpose of a review is to learn lessons from the death. In practice this will include:

- Identifying the lessons to be learnt, in particular about how local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard victims;
- Identifying how those lessons will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result; and
- Improving inter-agency working and improving protection for domestic violence victims.

3.6 How common is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is very common with at least 1 in 4 women experiencing it in their lifetime and between 1 in 8 to 1 in 10 women experiencing it annually. An analysis of data from the Intimate Personal Violence module British Crime Survey 2001 showed that 26% of women have experienced at least one incident of non-sexual domestic abuse since they were 16. Note that these figures do not include sexual abuse (which in many cases is perpetrated by a partner, former partner or other family member). If sexual assault and stalking are included, then 45% of women have experienced at least one incident of inter-personal abuse in their lifetimes⁴. Additional statistics are attached at Appendix 1 (page 73).

Local Context

3.7 Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership

Safer Neighbourhoods is the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) for North Lincolnshire. CDRP's are partnerships between the emergency services, local authorities, and public, private and voluntary sector agencies that work together to reduce crime, disorder and substance misuse. They were formed as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and there are 376 such partnerships across England and Wales.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership was formerly known as the Community Safety Partnership. In April 2004, the partnership amalgamated with the North Lincolnshire Drug Action Team and assumed the additional responsibility for substance misuse (including drug and alcohol misuse). The new partnership is named the Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership in recognition of its role as the Safer Neighbourhoods Action Group of the North Lincolnshire Local Strategic Partnership.

Funding for Safer Neighbourhoods activity comes from a number of sources including the National Treatment Agency, the government's Safer and Stronger Communities Fund, partner members and the many organisations and individuals who commit staff, volunteer time or other resources to our activities.

3.8 Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence)

Under the former Best Value Performance Indicator 225 the local authority has a requirement to employ a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator. The role of the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) encompasses the development, implementation and delivery of the Domestic Violence Strategy for North Lincolnshire through the delivery of an action plan, which embraces, for example the actions within the Turning the Curve/Staying Safe element of the Children and Young People Plan.

The postholder is based at Shelford House and does not work directly with the public although she does respond to calls. Key activities include;

- The provision of advice to agencies
- Writing and delivery of training and seminars/conference on domestic violence e.g. information sharing and risk assessment, domestic violence awareness
- Representing the local authority/Safer Neighbourhoods as the lead for domestic violence with external partners e.g. Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.
- Developing and advice on domestic violence policy and procedure
- Ensuring that the local authority is abreast of national good practice e.g. introduction of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts
- Monitoring and reviewing domestic violence responses
- Co-chairing the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

3.9 North Lincolnshire Council Domestic Violence Policy

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services formally adopted the council's domestic violence policy on 4 December 2007. The policy enables the council to make a clear statement on the commitment to addressing the issue of domestic violence and that the council supports both employees and customers.

The aim of the policy is to provide a framework to ensure that those customers and employees who experience and disclose domestic violence receive an effective, reliable and co-ordinated service that place the safety of survivors and children at the centre of interventions.

The policy is intended to work with other departmental policies and multi-agency services to ensure a pathway for progression and on-going support is available to every employee who discloses that they are experiencing domestic violence, where their welfare and safety is under threat.

3.10 Training

The panel learnt that a range of training courses are provided by the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) under the auspices of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

They include domestic violence awareness, the impact on the child, domestic violence and substance misuse, forced marriage, risk assessment and the MARAC.

A number of seminars and conferences have also been held, with national speakers. In addition to the training of local authority staff and local agencies, the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) has been engaged in the region's training of magistrates.

Funding for the training was provided via a domestic violence grant from the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH). The grant is now not available. The only training timetabled for the Municipal Year 2008-09 is the six courses to be facilitated by the LSCB, which is specific for children. No other training or resources have been allocated for this Municipal Year.

3.11 North Lincolnshire resident's priorities on the allocation of council tax

Between December 2007 and January 2008 'Research for Today', an independent market research company carried out resident budget consultations for the council as part of the council's financial strategy 2008-11 to ascertain residents' priorities on the allocation of council tax between various services.

As a result, a total of 208 residents were interviewed in their homes conducted in every ward, proportional to their population.

The total representative sample was made up of males 51 per cent and females 49 per cent, 34 per cent aged 18-40, 37 per cent aged 41-59, and 29 per cent aged 60+.

On ethnicity 96 per cent were white British and 4 per cent other.

A total of 20 service areas were highlighted as an issue needing to be addressed through the council's three-year financial planning process. The services are displayed in the table overleaf:

1. Public transport subsidies	11. Street cleaning
2. Concessionary fares	12. Baths Hall
3. Road maintenance	13. Leisure facilities
4. Car parking charges	14. Youth facilities
5. Home support	15. Accommodation based youth services
6. Intermediate care	16. Post 16 transport
7. Day centres for older people	17. Foster carers
8. Local tips	18. Domestic violence – supporting victims
9. Bring recycling facilities	19. Business support
10. Public toilets	20. Voluntary grants

3.12 Emergency Accommodation

Housing services often have a central role to play in the safety of people experiencing domestic violence. The provision of appropriate services to people in their own home is important because leaving is usually a last resort for most people experiencing domestic violence.

Most women escaping domestic violence and seeking help from statutory bodies have limited financial resources and many therefore turn to the social rented sector to provide them with somewhere else to live (either local authority or registered social landlord (RSL)).

North Lincolnshire Council has a specific legal duty towards homeless people and those threatened with homelessness under the 1996 Housing Act. The council is obliged by law to give 'reasonable preference' to certain prescribed categories of people on their housing register, and people fleeing domestic violence may fall into one or more of these. Additional preference may be offered to households with a particular need for settled accommodation on medical or welfare grounds.

Housing policies and procedures for people experiencing domestic violence can contribute to crime reduction and prevention, primarily by providing effective and appropriate advice, support and accommodation. Where this is lacking, people are more likely to remain in a violent situation or – where they have escaped – to return to their violent partner.

Research on homelessness for Shelter has found that domestic violence is "the single most quoted reason for becoming homeless". This study found that 40% of all homeless women stated domestic violence as a contributor to their homelessness.¹⁰

Violence against women has serious consequences for their physical and mental health. Abused women are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, psychosomatic systems, eating problems and sexual dysfunction. Violence may also affect their reproductive health.¹¹

Current or former partners in 2001/02 killed 46% of all female homicide victims compared with 5% of male homicide victims.¹²

In total there were 116 women who were killed by current or former partners in 2001/02, and the figures have been similar in subsequent years. This equates to an average of over 2 women each week who are killed by a current or former partner.¹² Women are at greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner.¹³

3.13 Staying at home

Members acknowledge that leaving the family home is usually a last resort for people experiencing domestic violence. It is possible that some who do leave would have stayed if improvements to the security of their current home had been made, and measures had been available to improve their personal safety. However, this only happens once the perpetrator has left the property. Should the perpetrator not leave the property, or the men, women and children have no alternative accommodation to move too, then the victims must decide whether or not to leave the property themselves.

The council, as well as other partners can install personal alarms (usually linked to the police), mobile phones, closed-circuit television, prioritise repairs and provide door chains, extra locks and external security lighting. These types of initiatives are relatively cheap when compared with the costs of providing someone with alternative accommodation or the costs of repeated violent attacks.

This 'target hardening' of properties used to be funded through the One Community Project. The One Community Project had been funded from a variety of sources, including a contribution from Safer Neighbourhoods. In real terms, the target hardening was heavily subsidised by external funding. However, over the years these funding sources have dried up one by one and Safer Neighbourhoods must now meet the full cost of target hardening.

During 2007, the One Community Project target hardened the following properties –

- A total of 94 properties following domestic violence at a cost of £18,800
- A total of 1,600 properties following domestic burglary at a cost of £60,840

3.14 Good practice

North Lincolnshire Homes and the Housing Advice Team give additional priority to households on the housing register experiencing domestic violence (often by awarding extra points).

3.15 Monitoring

The council is not required to produce figures showing the number of households experiencing domestic violence that are housed through housing registers or transfer lists.

However, the panel learnt that since 2004-05, the percentage of people being declared homeless as a result of a violent relationship breakdown has increased. Appendix 2 (page 75) demonstrates the problem.

3.16 Temporary accommodation

Many households escaping domestic violence spend a period of time in emergency or temporary accommodation, prior to finding a more permanent solution to their housing problem. For those accepted as homeless by the council, much of this accommodation is 'mainstream' and caters for all homeless applicants, although some accommodation – refuges, special hostels and reception centres – is specifically for households experiencing domestic violence.

3.17 Bed and breakfast hotels

The code of guidance accompanying the 1996 Housing Act states that bed and breakfast hotels should only be used as a last resort and are generally not suitable for families with children. This is primarily because of its lack of security and support. Other inadequacies can include poor living conditions, a lack of basic amenities, playing space and privacy and overcrowding.

3.18 North Lincolnshire Homes

North Lincolnshire Homes is a new Registered Social Landlord created to own and manage the social housing across North Lincolnshire that recently transferred from North Lincolnshire Council.

An agreement was reached between the council, North Lincolnshire Homes and the government on Monday 26 February 2007. The agreement sees the management and ownership of the council's 9946 properties transferred to North Lincolnshire Homes.

North Lincolnshire Homes is a registered charity and is registered as a company 'limited by guarantee'. That means it cannot trade for profit. Any income must be invested back into the organisation to maintain homes and improve services.

As part of the transfer, over £164m of investment was guaranteed for repairs and improvements over the next 10 years. Tenants' key rights and entitlements were also protected.

There have been no evictions from North Lincolnshire Homes properties as a result of a perpetrator committing domestic violence. However, perpetrators have been evicted for other reasons. There are three current investigations involving allegations of domestic violence. One case is a sole tenant, two other cases relate to families.

Less than 1 % of North Lincolnshire homes are let to men/women seeking alternative accommodation after leaving abusive relationships.

There is nothing specific in the allocations policy that refers to domestic violence. The allocations policy is the old North Lincolnshire Council policy, which North Lincolnshire Homes signed up to for two years as part of the stock transfer.

However, for a person/family designated as homeless for whatever reason, homelessness legislation would be utilised. Housing Managers do have discretion to deviate from the allocations policy to house an individual/family if it is deemed necessary.

Members were informed that North Lincolnshire Homes is currently working on a joint proposal with Supporting People to provide eight properties for “move on” accommodation. This is subject to the council classifying these eight properties as non-void properties. There has been no agreement as to the type and location of the eight properties.

The eight properties would be fully furnished. However, rent would be higher to cover lease of furniture and cost of re-decoration, deep cleansing etc.

In addition, housing benefit would be available to cover rent of properties.

3.19 Supporting People

Supporting People is a government-funded programme offering vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment which enables greater independence. Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, service users and support agencies.

Supporting People aims to make sure people get the housing-related support they need to live more independently, avoiding life in a care home or hospital, for example, or life on the street. It gives housing-related support to a range of vulnerable people, helping them to make a success of their tenancies, or to move to independent living from other places such as prison or hospital.

The Supporting People programme covers only housing-related support services. For example, services may provide help with life skills such as cooking, paying bills or budgeting, which is part of living independently. But these should work well with local health or statutory care services, such as personal or nursing care, to help someone live independently.

These services have been in existence for some time now and as part of a review of the programme the Corporate Services Cabinet Member agreed a structured Procurement Plan on 21 March 2006 (minute 398 refers).

This plan highlighted services for people experiencing domestic violence as a priority area. Consequently a review of the service was undertaken by a group of professionals involved in the area of domestic violence and chaired by the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence).

This was completed in June 2007. The findings from the report can be found at Appendix 3 (page 77).

The Supporting People budget in North Lincolnshire is £3.5m. This is to fund all supporting people projects, as well as any commissioned services.

Supporting People supports a domestic violence victim to the tune of £300 per person per week.

3.20 Refuge Provision

Members learnt that refuges can provide some women fleeing violence with a degree of safety and support that would probably not be available to them in any other form of temporary accommodation, and users express high levels of satisfaction with refuge services.

Stonham Housing Association currently delivers the refuge. The service only supports those women who have left a violent and abusive partner and can accommodate women with male children up to the age of 13. However, there is a gap in service provision in that there is no support for those victims of domestic violence who, for whatever reason, choose not to leave the perpetrator.

The refuge provision was more than 50% below the former Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) for refuge provision with 7 places. Based on current population figures there should have been a minimum of 15 places. However, paragraph 3.22 will explain that the tenancy support service has been re-commissioned to Carr-Gomm and as a result, North Lincolnshire now meets the former BVPI requirement of one bed space per 10,000 population.

The refuge was refurbished in 2004/5. There is the facility to accommodate one wheelchair user. There are 2.5 support workers plus an overall Manager.

The tenancy support service (2.5 staff) was also contracted to Stonham Housing Association to accommodate 18 places at any one time. This service worked to support women to maintain their own tenancy (Private and RSL). Appendix 4 (page 79) demonstrates the number of referrals received for tenancy support prior to the service being re-commissioned to Carr-Gomm.

The number of supported places provided by the former tenancy support contract was considerably less than that of the region and our immediate neighbours.

The East Riding, Hull and North East Lincolnshire domestic violence projects have confirmed that their one full time equivalent support staff supports 12-15 women at anyone time. In North Lincolnshire the former tenancy support contract had 2.5 full time equivalent staff supporting 18 places on tenancy support at any one time. If we operated as our neighbours they would have supported 24 – 30 places.

Assuming an average stay of 4-8 months as referred to by the former provider, we should have been in a position to support between 60 – 90 women during a year.

Anecdotal and statistical evidence indicate that this provision was inadequate. Victims can access advice and support (not tenancy support) through a number of other agencies, e.g. the Domestic Violence Liaison Officers, the It's My Right Project (IDVA), the Housing Advice team, Victim Support and a number of other agencies who work within the community with individuals and families, e.g. Homestart. However, only two of those agencies specialise in domestic violence.

The current level of refuge provision clearly did not meet the former BVPI (see paragraph 3.24) requirement of one bed space per 10,000 population. With a population of circa 153,500, North Lincolnshire was eight places short of the target. However, as a result of re-commissioning the tenancy support service to Carr-Gomm, an additional eight dispersed properties will be available to the victims of domestic violence (see paragraph 3.22).

Equally, the staff to resident ratio in North Lincolnshire refuge is high as 2.5 full time equivalent staff are employed at the refuge, yet it can only accommodate 7 women at any one time. Similar refuge staffing levels, (e.g. in North East Lincolnshire), one full time equivalent supports 12 women at any one time and other refuges in Hull, York and Doncaster tell a similar story. Obviously, the layout of the refuge cannot be changed but perhaps consideration could be given to the support activities undertaken by the staff to achieve 'stretch' elsewhere. Appendix 5 (page 81) demonstrates the number of referrals accepted by the refuge.

The costs/funding is commercially sensitive, but it is clear that the 'spend to places' proportion ratio is high. Although in cost terms North Lincolnshire may be comparable to the average cost, agencies are not achieving the number of places for the expenditure.

It is worth noting that a comparable local domestic service, It's My Right, has 1 full time equivalent member of staff supporting 10-12 high risk cases at anyone time at a weekly unit cost of £52.89. The project is co-located with Humberside Police.

In the Supporting People strategy for North Lincolnshire it states that the "spend to places proportion ratio is the highest for any client group in North Lincolnshire. Even allowing for the high cost anticipated for this group the contrast with the regional ratio is marked." Appendix 6 (page 83) demonstrates the costs associated with residing in the refuge.

The refuge service is reliant on housing benefit as a means of funding. Hence they are unable to accommodate women who cannot meet the full cost of charges either through housing benefit or earnings e.g. asylum seekers or women on low incomes.

The panel learnt that there are problems securing refuge accommodation for some women. This arises because refuges may lack the resources to accommodate women with mental health or substance abuse problems, may not allow male children over a certain age, and may be unable to accommodate women with large numbers of children.

The under-use of refuge services by women from some ethnic minority groups was also of particular concern.

The panel was concerned that some women are remaining in refuges (and indeed other forms of temporary accommodation) for longer than they need to, because of the lack of move-on accommodation, thus reducing the number of places available to women in a crisis situation.

Women's Aid have argued that while some women are able to cope with the move from a refuge into permanent general needs housing, others would benefit from transitional or 'second-stage' accommodation where they continue to have access to support and advice services. Currently, the amount of such accommodation is extremely limited and refuge groups have identified a need for more to be developed.

3.21 Women with no recourse to Public Funds

The panel was concerned to hear that due to current immigration and benefit rules, women resident in the UK under sponsorship arrangements could experience severe difficulties if they are in an abusive relationship. Women in such situations are prevented from claiming benefits, accessing social housing, and therefore often find themselves and their children completely destitute. Whilst the local refuge will house women at risk of domestic violence that have no recourse to public funds, this support is limited due to the intensive resource demands.

3.22 Housing related support service for people experiencing domestic violence

North Lincolnshire Supporting People funding has been made available to deliver a Floating Support Service to people in dispersed safe accommodation and those who are living in the community who are experiencing, have left or are fleeing from domestic violence. As a result of a successful tendering exercise, Carr-Gomm (a national charity providing high quality support and housing services that places individuals at the centre of planning and decision making) was awarded the contract to provide North Lincolnshire's tenancy support service.

Carr-Gomm will offer one-to-one face to face short-term support given on a range of issues such as: financial matters, benefits, budgeting, contacting other practitioners/agencies, help with employment, life skills and any other issues facing the individual, enabling them to become more independent.

The service aims to help eligible service users address feelings of isolation and the aftermath of violent and controlling relationships. The service will promote empowerment - empower people to make a positive change, achieve their goals, rebuild their lives and move forward to live independently:

- In dispersed safe accommodation and prepare them to make the transition into move-on or mainstream housing
- In their own tenancy/accommodation

Carr-Gomm will also enable service users to understand the importance of personal safety planning.

The service will support individuals who have left their own home and moved into one of the dispersed properties and will also support those individuals who elect to remain in their own home. The service will be a “pro-active” service, working on the premise that victims of domestic violence generally have to be the one to leave their property and give up everything in order to gain support.

It will provide a service for a range of people from diverse backgrounds suffering domestic violence, men and women, and will cover town and rural areas.

It is expected that the Carr-Gomm will operate in line with national guidelines on floating support worker to service user ratio of 1:12-15 at any given time. For the support within dispersed safe accommodation, the support worker to service user ratio will be 1:6 at any given time.

Carr-Gomm must adhere to the following domestic violence definition “Any incident of threatening behaviour or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality”. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.

3.23 Bench marking

In preparing this report it has proved difficult for the panel to find the data to make genuine national comparisons of support provision. The provision of refuge places for women had been a Best Value Performance Indicator for some years and although local authorities have a legal duty to house women and children fleeing violence, the services provided vary considerably. However, the ratio of 1 bed space per 10,000 population has remained unchanged and nationally there are approximately 500 refuges of varying sizes and occupancy levels.

In 2005 Supporting People undertook a bench marking exercise region by region.

For Yorkshire and Humberside the exercise looked at 49 services for the primary client group of women fleeing domestic violence. The 49 services offered a variety of different services, ranging from refuges with day staff and emergency call out, 24-hour cover and warden staff to floating support. Appendix 7 (page 85) demonstrates those service costs within the Yorkshire and Humberside region which can be compared to the services provided in North Lincolnshire.

Across the region, particularly in relation to floating support, the number of women supported at any one time by a full time member of staff or fte is 12 – 15. Whilst 12 is the minimum expected to be supported at any one time, it is recognised that after the initial intense support, the level of support may tail off. Each woman will be at a different stage. Allowance is also made within the figure for an ‘emergency’ response.

3.24 Best Value Performance Indicator 225

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) were measures of local authority performance set by central government departments. However, BVPIs have been replaced by National Indicator Sets as part of the second generation of Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

However, BVPI 176, which dealt with refuge provision has been expanded considerably and is now entitled BVPI 225. Previously, it looked at the number of refuge bed spaces per 10,000 population.

Question 2 related to refuge provision and suggested there should be a minimum of one refuge place per 10,000 population. Unfortunately for North Lincolnshire the ratio was 0.45. There are only seven refuge places which does not meet the criteria identified by the BVPI.

The purpose of BVPI 225 was to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence.

3.25 Local Area Agreement

In addition to the BVPI, there are now Local Area Agreement targets under the Safer and Stronger Community element relating to domestic violence which relate to the reduction of homelessness and the reduction of repeat victimisation.

An LAA is a three-year agreement between a local area and central government. The LAA sets out how local priorities will be met by applying local solutions. It also contributes to national priorities set out by the government.

Every LAA will be unique and tailored to meet the unique circumstances of different places – whether they are rural or urban, densely or sparsely populated, and no matter what challenges they face.”

The LAA consists of 198 indicators. However, 35 of these will be chosen as designated targets for each LAA which will be monitored over a three-year period.

In North Lincolnshire, one of the designated 35 LAA targets is specific to domestic violence. National Indicator 32 is the 'repeat incidents of domestic violence'. This target forms part of the shared ambition of communities that are confident and caring.

The LAA improvement target has been deferred to allow further negotiation with the government. It is anticipated that the three-year targets will be set by the end of 2008.

3.26 Costs of Domestic Violence

Nationally it is estimated that the total cost of domestic violence is over £23 billion a year. This total includes costs to the state, employers, as well as the human and emotional cost for victims.

There are clear direct costs to statutory agencies in the region of £3 billion caused by the burdens on the police, health, housing, social services, the wider criminal justice system and the courts. The social and economic cost of the murder of women through domestic violence is calculated at £1.1million per death.¹⁴

As well as the individual costs associated with a loss of quality of life and loss of life itself, domestic violence also costs our society as a whole. Appendix 8 (page 87) provides a comprehensive breakdown of the costs associated with domestic violence.

3.27 Specialist Outreach, Support and Advocacy Teams

Outreach services provide accessible and flexible points where information about service provision and follow-up contact are available. They support survivors living in, or moving out of violent relationships, and also survivors leaving refuges for resettlement

3.28 It's My Right – Independent Domestic Violence Advocate and Independent Sexual Violence Advocate service

This is an advocacy service which supports both men and women, regardless of whether or not they have left the violent and abusive partner and specialises in the support of high risk cases identified through the MARAC risk assessment protocol. Established in 2003 with funding from the Commission for Legal Services, the project is a partnership between Rape Crisis (the employing agency), Humberside Police, the Forge, South Humberside Racial Equality Council and Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire.

Initially there was one worker, however following successful funding bids the project has expanded to include three full time posts;

- Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) co-located with the Domestic Violence Police Unit
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) co-located with the CID section of 'B' Division, Humberside Police
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocate co-located with Children and Family Services, Cliff Gardens

Appendix 9 (page 89) provides a more comprehensive breakdown of the role of an Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service.

The following table relates to one postholder from the It's My Right project

	Cases	% decrease in repeat victimisation of accepted cases	Number of Children
2004-05	22	NA	37
2005-06	39	58	64
2006-07	19	65	28
2007-08	21	81	31

In the UK, the estimated cost in 2000 for the police to respond to a single incident of domestic violence was £1027 against the average unit cost per client of an advocacy service of £778; a saving to the police alone of £249 in just one case.

3.29 Funding of the IDVA Posts

In North Lincolnshire, Rape Crisis employs the two IDVAs and ISVA. However, they are only employed on a fixed term basis. Every year Rape Crisis has to bid to fund the three posts for the following financial year.

The ISVA is funded via grants from the Victims Fund and the Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

One IDVA is part funded by Safer Neighbourhoods and the Henry Smith Foundation.

The second IDVA is part funded by the Home Office and Safer Neighbourhoods.

The three posts, including on-costs, telephone landline, mobile telephone, travel and training costs £96,000 per year to fund.

3.30 The Health Contribution

The involvement of health in tackling domestic violence is now written into government legislation. Most notable is the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) which has placed a statutory duty upon local authorities to convene partnerships for crime reduction and it is expected that health will be a statutory partner in reducing crime (along with the police and the local authority).

The Health Service is in a unique position to contribute to helping people who suffer violence at home to get the support they need. Health services have a pivotal role to play in the identification, assessment and response to domestic violence, not only because of the impact of domestic violence on health, but crucially the health service may be the only point of contact with professionals who could recognise and intervene in the situation.

The main focus of the health service response to domestic violence in North Lincolnshire over the last 2 years has been in the implementation of routine and selection enquiry.

Routine enquiry refers to asking all women (or as many as is safely possible) who are using a service, direct questions about their experience, of domestic abuse regardless of whether there are signs of abuse or whether abuse is suspected. Selective enquiry refers to asking direct questions to women only when there are signs of abuse or abuse is suspected.

Members were concerned that injured victims of domestic violence who presented at accident and emergency and who had children may not receive the necessary treatment. This is as a result of the health practitioner identifying that children were involved and the requirement on the health professional to contact the council's Children and Family Services department. Consequently, the victim would rather not receive treatment and leave the accident and emergency department than Children and Family Services being contacted with the perceived threat by the victim that their children may be taken into care.

To date, it is mainly midwives who have received training in routine and selective enquiry across a number of sites and services within or connected to the Health Service in North Lincolnshire.

Locally, the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust have attended every meeting of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and is a key partner in the information sharing protocol.

3.31 Domestic violence and pregnancy

In 30% of cases of domestic violence, the abuse first started during pregnancy.¹⁸

Amongst a group of pregnant women attending primary care in East London, 15% reported violence during their pregnancy; fewer than 40% reported that violence started whilst they were pregnant, whilst 30% who reported violence during pregnancy also reported they had at sometime suffered a miscarriage as a result.¹⁹

Another study found that between 4 and 9 women in every 100 are abused during their pregnancies and/or after the birth.²⁰

Domestic violence has been identified as a prime cause of miscarriage or still-birth,²¹ and of maternal deaths during childbirth.²²

Legally, if a miscarriage is caused by abuse, the assailant can be charged under Section 58 of the Offences against the Person Act, “using an instrument with intent to cause a miscarriage.”²³ If a baby is born prematurely as a result of an assault, and then dies, the assailant may be charged with manslaughter.²³

12% of the 378 women whose death was reported to the Confidential Enquiry on Maternal Deaths had voluntarily reported domestic violence to a healthcare professional during their pregnancy.²² None had routinely been asked about domestic violence so this is almost certainly an underestimate. Within the six weeks following birth, 11 new mothers were known to have been murdered by their male partners during 2000-02, and 14% of all the women who died during or immediately after pregnancy (43 women) had reported domestic violence to a health professional during the pregnancy.²²

One study in the USA found a significant relationship between pregnancy, domestic violence, and suicide: pregnant women who attempt suicide are very likely to have been abused.²⁴

Locally, all Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust midwives have received domestic violence awareness training as part of their annual mandatory study day.

3.32 Substance Misuse

The use (or misuse) of substances is not the underlying cause of domestic violence. Many people who drink too much or take drugs do not abuse their partners or family members. Likewise, abusers may be violent without the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Abusers who use alcohol or drugs may use this as an excuse for their behaviour saying “I was drunk” or “I don’t remember”. Even if they genuinely do not remember what they did, it does not remove responsibility for their behaviour. There is never an excuse for domestic violence and the causes of domestic violence are far more deep rooted than simply being an effect of intoxication or alcohol/drug dependency.

If an abuser is alcohol/drug dependent, it is important that this is treated in tandem with addressing the violent behaviour. Addressing only one without the other is unlikely to prove successful.

Women experiencing domestic violence may also turn to alcohol or drugs as a form of escape from the violence. Sometimes abusers will use their partner's addiction as an excuse for violent behaviour, saying they have been provoked into using violence.

Excuses such as these are used by the perpetrator to deflect responsibility from themselves and put the focus or blame for the violence onto the victim.

In these situations it is vitally important not only for women to receive the support they need, but also for perpetrators to be held accountable for their actions. They should never be excused on account of the woman's alleged behaviour.

A study of 336 convicted offenders of domestic violence claimed that alcohol was a feature in 62% of offences and 48% of offenders were alcohol dependent.²⁵

One study of 60 women using crack cocaine in London found that 40% reported regular physical assaults from current partners – rising to 70% if past partners were included.²⁶

Additional research demonstrates that women who experience domestic violence are more likely to use prescription drugs, alcohol and illegal substances than their non-abused counterparts.²⁷

Members of the panel recognise that substance misusers experience significant barriers in accessing services, particularly refuge provision, as agencies were unable to cope with their additional needs.

3.33 Humberside Police

Individual incidents of abuse and repeated patterns of violence come to police attention within a broad range of domestic settings and a variety of family units. It is shown that approximately 95% of domestic violence is committed against a partner, ex-partner or an immediate member of the family, such as father, mother, son or daughter. Incidents of violence against other relatives account for approximately 5%.

The panel was made aware that Humberside Police focus on positive action and the successful implementation of the Human Rights Act 1998 when investigating domestic violence. Successfully implementing the Human Rights Act underpins all stages of intervention and investigation and should be seen as an opportunity to facilitate proactive and creative police and multi-agency responses to domestic violence rather than act as a barrier to effective action.

Under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), victims of domestic violence benefit from the positive obligations placed on public bodies.

This includes the requirements to offer effective deterrence against violence and to maintain a proper and effective system for the investigation of crime.

Under the ECHR, the police are placed under a positive duty to protect both adult and child victims of domestic violence. An officer's failure to exercise a power of arrest may leave the victim in immediate danger, and the police service open to a legal challenge under the law of negligence within the ECHR, therefore when a decision is made not to arrest, the reasons should be fully documented.

Home Office Circular 19/00 states that in a case of domestic violence, where there is evidence that supports a power of arrest then "the alleged offender should normally be arrested". Arrest is not mandatory, and in every case officers should consider whether an arrest is proportionate to balancing the interests of protecting the victim and any children present, the need to prevent further offences and the interests of the alleged offender.

It is the officer's decision to arrest and it is not reliant on the victim's willingness to proceed with a prosecution. This is stressed to the perpetrator to remove responsibility from the victim. Domestic violence victims have a high risk of repeat victimisation due to the proximity of the perpetrator and the violence often escalates in severity. Officers are aware of the fact that sometimes victims underestimate the future risk.

Where there is no power of arrest officers still need to take action and have a number of options available. It is essential to gain best evidence with full documentation and statements for future use in criminal or civil proceedings. Officers need to provide information about other support services on offer and refer victims to appropriate agencies. Where there are children in the relationship, officers must liaise with the child protection team. Appendix 10 (page 91) refers to additional measures Humberside Police implement to tackle domestic violence.

To continue to encourage reporting, it is essential that victims of domestic violence feel that they will receive a sensitive and professional response from the police. To enforce this service at all levels, training in domestic violence is now seen as a fundamental need for all police officers.

An investigating officer will not normally be the first point of contact for a victim of domestic violence. The first contact will usually be with the control room operator, station reception officer or uniform patrol officer.

Incidents are recorded at the first point of contact, usually an emergency 999 call and telephone operators collect as much information as they can about the incident.

Electronic data collection enables operators to identify repeat incidents and to flag outstanding court orders (assuming they have been entered on the system).

Once the incident is resolved officers update the initial on-screen record reporting details using an 11 points pro forma that covers the name, address, date of birth, ethnicity, details of the relationship, children, the incident and its outcomes.

It is essential that these front line staff are aware of the issues around domestic violence so that the initial contact does not hamper the future investigation or relationship between the victim and police.

3.34 Humberside Police B Division Domestic Violence Unit

The Domestic Violence Unit has recently expanded in recognition of the importance placed on domestic violence. The staffing is currently made up of –

- Two police constables as Domestic Violence Coordinators
- Three civilian admin staff (it was four but one has just left on maternity leave)
- A part-time Sergeant

In addition, an IDVA and ISVA are co-located within the police domestic violence unit and Criminal Investigation Department respectively.

The unit deals with all 913 forms (reporting mechanism for domestic violence cases) and these average 145 per month. Last year there were 2108 incidents with approximately a quarter of them being crimed and resulting in a lower number being charged. Appendix 11 (page 93) demonstrates the volume of domestic violence cases handled by Humberside Police B Division.

Each report is risk assessed and proactive work is undertaken with the victim. This role is changing to become more enforcement led.

The definition of domestic violence changed in 2004. This contributed to the significant change in recorded incidents. The database used by the Police for recording domestic violence does not at present allow data relating to children to be extrapolated. The data has been collated manually from the 913 forms.

Consequently, the average number of repeats drops dramatically to 14.8% due to the change in recording method.

What is noticeable is the number of incidents, circa 65% where the issue is emotional abuse. In these cases, intervention is needed but it is not a police matter as no criminal offence has occurred.

Based on the data currently available, North Lincolnshire would appear to reflect the national trend.

Appendix 12 (page 95) shows the results of an exercise based on 10% of all incidents of domestic violence in 2006/7 (200 in total). The table demonstrates that there is a significant percentage where the victim is likely to be of the age group to have children.

Further work needs to be undertaken to identify number of children in the household where a domestic violence incident has been reported.

3.35 Co-located domestic violence unit

Members were informed that creating multi-agency, co-located teams to tackle domestic abuse is a 'flagship' priority within many North Lincolnshire domestic violence partner agencies. Domestic violence will remain a priority within the refreshed LAA with repeat incidents of domestic violence (NI32) being one of the indicators that has been selected for inclusion under the 'communities that are confident and caring' shared ambition.

Research into domestic abuse suggests that there are five key ways to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic abuse. Namely –

- Increased and on-going communication
- Conducting risk assessments
- Providing advocacy to victims
- Translating policy into action, and
- Holding perpetrators to account.

Research also highlights the need for adopting a multi-agency response to take account of the complex set of issues confronting victims (e.g. emotional, financial, children, etc) to make sure that they have the resources and support that they need to make the difficult decision to leave and, ultimately, to remain safe and secure.

Currently, the Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership jointly funds with Rape Crisis two IDVAs to support victims of domestic abuse who are going through the court process. This is a fixed term contract until March 2009. One post is currently situated in the domestic violence unit at Humberside Police. The second post is co-located within the Children and Family Services at North Lincolnshire Council. However, the panel would ideally like to see the IDVA and ISVA posts receive mainstream funding. Early indications suggest that these posts have been successful in increasing the number of successful prosecutions and providing better support for the domestic abuse victims.

The 2006/07 National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan progress report suggests that IDVAs are “proven to be a catalyst for the achievement of successful outcomes of domestic violence cases within the Criminal Justice System”.

Numerous agencies have a role in supporting victims of domestic abuse and their families (particularly children) from those with a law enforcement role (police, probation etc) to those providing support with physical, financial and emotional needs (health, Children and Family Services, housing providers, etc). The development of a co-located team, which would consist of key workers from a range of agencies working together, would help to underpin the MARAC process and work of the IDVA.

It would also help to increase the on-going communication between workers, provide a more joined-up approach for victims and allow a greater co-ordination of resources.

Cardiff’s Women’s Safety Unit (WSU) was launched in 2001 using a £300,000 grant from the Violence Against Women Initiative, which was part of the Home Office’s Crime Reduction Programme. The aim of the WSU is to facilitate inter-agency co-operation to provide victims with a seamless response. The staffing of the centre initially consisted of an Operational Manager, two Support Workers, one seconded police officer and one administrator. Funding was later secured for a seconded nurse to liaise with the WSU.

The WSU plays a key role in the MARAC process as well as offering a range of other services including counselling, group work, Survivors Forum etc. Appendix 13 (page 97) shows the results of an evaluation of the WSU.

Sandwell is another example of best practice for co-located domestic violence units. Sandwell’s co-located team (SOADA) consists of a Business Manager/MARAC Co-ordinator, a Vulnerable Adult Worker, Police Domestic Violence Incident Officer, a Health Worker, a Women’s Aid Worker/IDVA, a Housing Officer, a Training officer, a Social Worker (one day a week) and three administration posts.

Unlike the centres in Cardiff, SOADA does not provide a drop-in service. Evaluation of Sandwell’s co-located team outlined a number of key benefits of their approach:

- Quicker responses of referrals to the team (victims are no longer required to report separately to different agencies);
- A more joined-up approach to responding to victims’ complex range problems, needs and circumstances; and
- Development of new services based upon the identified needs of the service users (e.g. group counselling for children suffering the effects of witnessing domestic abuse).

The panel was surprised to hear that of the four divisions that collectively serve Humberside Police, B Division (North Lincolnshire) is the only division not to have a co-located domestic violence unit in place.

C Division and D Division have had co-located domestic violence units in place for a considerable amount of time, whilst A Division is currently in the process of overhauling its domestic violence service, with ultimately a co-located unit being put in place as well as a MARAC co-ordinator.

Current difficulties facing the Humberside Police domestic violence unit include the following –

- Communication via e-mail or telephone is time consuming and may lead to mis-understandings.
- On-site social workers and health visitors would be desirable for immediate consultations on all domestic violence cases.
- Impromptu joint visits could be undertaken if co-location existed.
- Free up time and capacity to focus on other tasks other than having to ring/e mail colleagues in PCT/Children and Family Services.

3.36 Domestic Violence Courts

Members were disappointed to hear that the number of prosecutions for domestic violence cases is low as many victims are unwilling to report incidents to the police, let alone go to court. A Crown Prosecution Service evaluation of how magistrates' courts dealt with domestic violence cases was published in March 2004. It concluded that no single model could be suggested as a template but that a specialist approach to domestic violence, including effective support for victims, delivered benefits.

Specialist domestic violence courts were established in April 2006 after research evaluating five models in Cardiff, Derby, Leeds, London and Wolverhampton. There are now 64 in England, with plans to expand into Wales.

The evaluation found there was -

- An increase in the number of guilty pleas and convictions
- An increase in domestic violence offences reported to the police that resulted in prosecutions
- Enhanced evidence-gathering to allow prosecutions to continue if the victim retracts their statement, and
- A reduction in the number of cases lost before trial.

The intention is that bringing together all the expertise in one place and training the professionals involved in how to handle domestic violence cases, and the difficulty of prosecuting them, really helps the victim.

There is also a perception that a specialist domestic violence court gives the message to perpetrators that domestic violence will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly by police and magistrates.

The introduction of the specialist courts has resulted in the recognition of advocacy and support services for victims attending court.

One positive aspect of specialist domestic violence courts is that magistrates will be specially trained in dealing with domestic violence cases which will help them develop a better understanding of the range of emotions and dilemmas faced by victims.

The intention is that at the court, separate entrances, exits and waiting areas will be provided so that victims don't come into contact with their attackers. Cases will be fast-tracked wherever possible to limit the likelihood of further incidents while a case is waiting to be heard, and tailored advice and support will be provided by specialist IDVAs.

To achieve specialist domestic violence court status, local agencies including the court itself, North Lincolnshire Council, the police, the probation service and specialist domestic abuse advice services were required to pledge to work harder than ever to tackle domestic abuse together.

Working together and sharing information between agencies (with the consent of the victim) is vital in identifying, tracking and assessing domestic violence cases and supporting victims through the prosecution process.

An application for Specialist Domestic Violence Court status in North Lincolnshire was made in 2007. This was subsequently rejected. However, the application did bring about some rewards in that the Home Office provided Rape Crisis with part funding for an additional IDVA.

Since the application for specialist domestic violence court status was submitted, the Magistrates Court now fast-track all domestic violence cases, using the Criminal Justice: Simple, Speedy, Summary (CJSSS) system. This is a new way of working to encompass a simpler set of processes and procedures. CJSSS aims to improve the way cases are managed and dealt with, focusing on the methods that make the justice system work well.

Using CJSSS, from the defendant pleading 'not guilty' to trial now takes on average six weeks.

Members were informed that Court Orders generally fall into two parts:

- Orders about the way an ex-partner should behave in future - 'non-molestation orders'

- Orders saying who has the right to live in the home – ‘occupation orders’.

However, it should be noted that only the County Court or Family Proceedings Court can attach such orders.

3.37 Non-Molestation Order

These orders tell the ex-partner they must not use, or threaten to use, violence against the applicant or ‘harass, pester or intimidate’ them. This can also apply to any children living with the applicant.

The order is generally written in broad terms to stop all forms of unpleasant behaviour including, for example, threatening phone calls. It will also stop the ex-partner getting someone else to harass his or her partner.

The panel heard that the cost of applying for a Non-Molestation Orders is £75 to file an application and a further £75 for a court summons. However, the absence of legal aid and the use of solicitors could make the total cost of applying for a Non-Molestation Order a maximum of £8,000

Appendix 14 (page 99) shows the Non-Molestation Orders issued by the North Lincolnshire County Court from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The information is courtesy of Scunthorpe Magistrates Court.

3.38 Occupation Orders

If the perpetrators behaviour has been serious enough for them to be kept apart from the victim in order to protect them, then the victim will need an order saying who can live in the home.

An Occupation Order can order any number of the following:

- One partner to leave the home
- One partner to let the other partner return to the home
- One partner not to return to the home, or
- One partner to keep away from the home.

An Occupation Order cannot be used to change the ownership of the property.

Appendix 15 (page 101) shows the Occupation Orders issued by the County Court from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The information is courtesy of Scunthorpe Magistrates Court.

Applications made to the Family Court are very few and far between.

3.39 Information Sharing Protocol

It is now recognised that a multi-agency partnership approach is required in order to meet the full needs of victims/survivors living with or escaping domestic violence and abuse. These needs range from social, economic, welfare, safety, accommodation and criminal and civil justice issues.²⁹

A multi-agency partnership approach where the individual roles and joint responsibilities have been clearly defined can enable partnerships to effectively address this serious crime.

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places this obligation on a statutory footing, requiring some organisations to form partnerships to tackle crime and disorder, including domestic violence and abuse, and provides a legal power to share information.³⁰

Responsible information sharing plays a key role in enabling organisations and professionals to support and offer protection to victims/survivors and their children and to save lives. Casework, advocacy, conducting risk assessments and providing support and protection may all require information about individuals to be shared with other agencies.³¹

Following consultation, a Domestic Violence Pathway Partnership has been developed and implemented, which the MARAC process (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), is an integral part of, with the aim and objectives of increasing the reporting of domestic violence and the reduction of repeat victimisation by:

- Improving the safety of survivors and children in North Lincolnshire through co-ordinated and effective inter-agency response, risk identification and risk assessment and appropriate safety planning;
- Holding abusers accountable from initial point of contact with the police and through-out the criminal justice system;
- Working towards a culture of zero tolerance of domestic violence and abuse in the community;
- Ensuring that the knowledge and awareness of Domestic Violence and abuse across North Lincolnshire is enhanced and that appropriate policies and procedures are in place, including Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Appendix 16 (page 103) explains that the purpose of the protocol is to facilitate the secure and confidential sharing of information (both anonymous and personal data) between member agencies participating in the Domestic Violence Pathway Partnership and MARAC procedures and to raise awareness amongst agencies who may be involved in providing services to victims/survivors and their children.

3.40 MARAC

There are a number of structures in place to manage the risks to certain groups of the population. Child Protection Conferences are called when children have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm. Persons who fall within the definition of Vulnerable Adults can also be subject to Vulnerable Adult Case Conferences. Some of the most high-risk offenders are discussed at meetings called Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

The aim of these conferences is to provide a forum for sharing information and taking action to reduce future harm to very high-risk victims of domestic abuse and their children.

The MARAC also provides an audit trail of decision-making; it improves accountability and ensures that the caseworkers safety has been assessed accordingly.

It is vital that non-criminal justice agencies are well represented at MARACs. For example, the perspective of health visitors will be different from those held by police or probation, which typically are aware of criminal incidents only. Victim-oriented agencies, such as the WSU and Women's Aid, can provide information from the victim's perspective; Children and Family Services can provide information about children and take action on their behalf. Police and probation are able to offer information about the perpetrator's history, and presence of other aggravating factors, such as drugs or weapons. There is usually a wealth of information held in the community about a particular household, but it takes a MARAC-type process for that information to come together in a meaningful way.

Appendix 17 (page 105) provides a more detailed explanation of the MARAC process.

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" Article 3 The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA).

Humberside Police co-ordinate all paper work for the MARAC. This includes invites for meetings, all paper work for consideration and the minutes/actions. This is a very time consuming activity.

The panel learnt that there is currently no budget provision for the MARAC. Safer Neighbourhoods subsidise the MARAC process. This entails accommodation, refreshments, circulation of paper work etc.

MARACs are held monthly. Support for the process consists of agencies 'pulling together' to service the meeting. This concerned the panel as without a co-ordinator, an action to address a high-risk case may not be followed up or even acted upon placing the victim in unnecessary danger.

Again, the panel was surprised to hear that of the four divisions that collectively serve Humberside Police, B Division (North Lincolnshire) is the only division not to have a MARAC co-ordinator in place.

C Division and D Division have had a MARAC co-ordinator in place for a considerable amount of time, whilst A Division is currently in the process of recruiting a MARAC co-ordinator.

An actual MARAC was observed so that members could understand how the MARAC worked in practice and the role of partners at the meeting. The openness, honesty and commitment shown by all the partners was overwhelming.

Appendix 18 (page 107) demonstrates the workload of the MARAC partners compared to their colleagues in the Humberside Police area and the referral agency.

3.41 2007-2008 Adolescent Lifestyle Survey

The Adolescent Lifestyle Survey 2007/8 was commissioned by the Children's Trust Partnership and completed by the North Lincolnshire Public Health Directorate. The aims of the 2007/8 survey were to monitor local progress on a number of key Every Child Matters outcomes since 2004, and to inform the priorities of next year's Children and Young People's Plan.

The first adolescent lifestyle survey was completed by the Public Health Directorate in 2004, with the support of almost 3300 secondary school pupils in North Lincolnshire. This provided the Primary Care Trust and local partner agencies with invaluable baseline data on young people's health related behaviours and informed the priorities within the current three-year Children and Young People's Plan.

This second survey was designed to build on and develop this knowledge base. More than 3500 young people aged 11-15 years participated in the 2007/8 survey, representing more than a third of all secondary school pupils in North Lincolnshire.

Questions about domestic violence were included in the 2007 survey for the first time. This brief section began with a definition of the term, supplied by North Lincolnshire's Domestic Violence Coordinator. Pupils were then asked to confirm that they understood what this meant.

Overall, almost 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys said they had witnessed domestic violence within the family home, with an average 1 in 5, (20%), across both sexes. Rates varied between schools, and were highest in those schools with relatively high levels of free school meal eligibility. Overall, 1 in 3 of those on low incomes said they had witnessed domestic violence in the family.

These responses were not associated with any particular neighbourhood, social group or school. At least 1 in 10 children in every participating school said they had witnessed this, including children of all ages and both sexes.

3.42 Humberside Probation Trust

The Humberside Probation Trust facilitates the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) in North Lincolnshire. The IDAP is a group programme for convicted offenders which focuses on concepts like control and misuse of power. Offenders are expected to talk openly about their violence to the group, and listen to others' experiences – this, along with the educational content of the course has been proven to help violent men recognise the impact of their violence, take responsibility for their actions and eventually stop their violent behaviour.

IDAP is based on a co-ordinated effort by a number of agencies, including Probation and Police, and requires co-operation between all the Criminal Justice agencies.

Often, women's groups and charities like Victim Support are also involved – this partnership approach allows a comprehensive picture of the offender's behaviour to be built up and allows a decision to be made on the most suitable kinds of intervention.

The panel was concerned that only one IDAP operates in North Lincolnshire. The programme can only manage ten offenders at any one time and requires the perpetrator to attend 27 two and a half-hour weekly sessions. In addition, the perpetrator must attend an individual session every three weeks with their case manager. However, in North Lincolnshire there is a waiting list to access the programme. There is spare capacity on the north bank of the Humber, but it is not convenient for many offenders.

3.43 Questionnaire to the members of the North Lincolnshire Domestic Violence Forum

As part of the review process, a consultation exercise in the form of a questionnaire was carried out and distributed to all (75 in total) members of the North Lincolnshire Domestic Violence Forum. The Forum is a multi-agency partnership which co-ordinates and develops services to meet the needs of women and children experiencing domestic violence.

The panel chose to consult with the Forum after advice and in consultation with Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence).

Of the 75 questionnaires distributed, the panel has received a 32% response rate (24 questionnaires returned) from a range of agencies including the Primary Care Trust, National Children's Homes, Stonham Women's Services, Relate, Humberside Police, Samaritans, Children's Services, Adult Services, Scunthorpe Gay Men and Women's Group, Grimsby and Scunthorpe Rape Crisis to name but a few.

Appendix 19 (page 109) identifies all the agencies consulted by the panel and a summary of their responses to the questions asked.

4 THE PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the evidence presented and evaluated during this investigation, as detailed in the panel's findings and considerations, the conclusions and recommendations of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel are as follows: -

4.1 Homicide Reviews

The panel learnt (page 15) that as part of the National Delivery Plan the number of women who are killed as a result of domestic violence has fallen by 14 per cent over the last two years (2004 – 2006). Currently 103 women and 36 men are killed as a result of domestic violence³. A systematic review in the case of a domestic violence homicide is one way that agencies can learn lessons to prevent assault, significant injury and, ultimately, murder.

Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduces a statutory basis for local bodies to establish homicide reviews for victims of domestic violence. This will bring the procedure into line with current practice for serious case reviews following the serious injury or death of a child.

The panel would like to see a mock homicide review acted out. Whilst many may see this as irresponsible or a waste of partner's valuable time and resources, the panel believes that holding a mock homicide review would enable partners to critique their own practices and procedures when handling a disclosure of domestic violence. However, the panel does acknowledge that participating agencies would have to resolve all issues surrounding accountability prior to the mock homicide review.

A homicide review will have implications for all professionals in that they will be accountable for their actions, or lack of action.

Recommendation 1 That the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) facilitate a mock homicide review. The results of the mock review to be shared with all participating partners and this scrutiny panel.

4.2 North Lincolnshire Council

Local authorities play a vital and central role in tackling domestic violence. As well as providing services and raising awareness, A council's role at the heart of local communities means they are well placed to facilitate local partnerships – bringing all the agencies together to tackle issues.

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities have a statutory responsibility to work with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder in their local area. As domestic violence accounts for almost a fifth of all recorded violent crime, the panel was reassured that there was a Domestic Violence strategy and action plan in place for North Lincolnshire delivered by the Domestic Violence Implementation Group.

However, complex issues such as domestic violence cannot be tackled by agencies working in isolation. A multi-agency approach is essential. Being a member of a partnership can take lots of time and effort, but on its own achieves little. To be of use, partnerships need to take action collectively and individually.

For the partnership to succeed, it needs to be spearheaded by a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator. Whilst the Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership does employ a Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence), BVPI 225 (prior to it being replaced by National Indicator Sets as part of the second generation of LAAs) placed a requirement on the local authority to fund a co-ordinator post (page 17) if there are more than 35,000 households in the district. The number of households in North Lincolnshire at 14 July 2008 was 71,621. This means the requirement cannot be met through including the role in the job description of an existing senior officer. Whilst the BVPI is no longer in existence, the panel requests that the council uses the former requirement to employ a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator as an opportunity to drive domestic violence services forward.

Recommendation 2 That a dedicated Domestic Violence Co-ordinator post be established to lead and manage tackling domestic violence in North Lincolnshire.

The one overwhelming piece of information the panel learnt from each one of its witness interviews was the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm shown by the council's Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence). Every witness interviewed held the postholder in the highest regard. Without the postholder, many activities would not have been undertaken, for example training and the launch of the Domestic Violence Web-Based Directory.

However, the postholder does not have the resources, both financial and staffing to fulfil the expectations of North Lincolnshire residents. Quite simply the resources allocated towards tackling domestic violence in North Lincolnshire are inadequate.

What is especially disappointing to the panel is that tackling domestic violence was ranked at number eighteen in North Lincolnshire residents' priorities as part of the consultation exercise to set the council's financial strategy for 2008-11 (page 18). The members learnt that an additional £30,000 had been allocated towards tackling domestic violence via an additional LAA grant. However, members were unable to ascertain exactly what activities the grant would be used to finance.

In addition, there is currently no budget provision for the creation, printing and distribution of domestic violence material. This too is clearly unacceptable.

Recommendation 3 That a special meeting of the Safer Neighbourhoods Strategy Board be convened in order to 'plug' the gaps in budget provision, particularly the following –

- (i) **A dedicated budget for the creation, printing and distribution of domestic violence material.**
- (ii) **Updating and re-structuring the out-dated Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership web site to include more information on domestic violence.**
- (iii) **The IT support and maintenance of the Domestic Violence Web-Based Directory.**
- (iv) **The implementation of recommendations 2, 4, 21, 27, 28, 34, 35 and 36.**

4.3 Training

What was noticeable to the panel was the over-reliance on the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) to deliver the training to all the agencies involved in the Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership. More often than not it was down to the goodwill and dedication of the postholder that resulted in the training being delivered.

Funding for the training was provided via a grant from Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) (page 18). However, the ring fence protection for the training grant has been removed. Consequently, the £9,000 could now be used for other activities. This greatly concerned the panel as members heard that the £9,000 was insufficient as a training budget. Therefore, any reduction in the budget would have a detrimental effect on any future training provision. Members were informed that a budget of £15,000 would be necessary to ensure that individuals received appropriate training.

Recommendation 4 That the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) be allocated a specific budget to provide domestic violence training. In addition, a training programme be prepared and circulated to all partners for each council year.

Recommendation 5 That domestic violence awareness training be included in the council's corporate induction programme.

In addition, the government has recognised the importance of having knowledgeable and well trained staff in this field and has supported the rolling out of a training programme via CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) particularly focussing on support and advice, advocacy, risk assessment and safety planning ensuring that domestic violence staff are trained to a recognised and accredited standard.

Recommendation 6 That the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) identify and arrange for relevant partners to receive training from CAADA.

4.4 Children

The panel was greatly impressed with how agencies are working together to safeguard children. Many partners, including Children's Centres, Practical Family Support Service, Youth Counselling Service, Education Welfare Service from Children and Family Services and Health Visitors to name but a few have an excellent working relationship. This is even more impressive given that domestic violence is not their core business, although 70% of all incidents occur where there is a child within the family unit.

Recommendation 7 That all staff who come into direct contact with children receive basic awareness training from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board on domestic violence as a minimum, in order that appropriate resources and decisions are targeted at the family.

However, complacency should never be allowed to creep into the working practices of the council or its partners. An audit sweep of partners' involvement in tackling domestic violence would address this issue.

Recommendation 8 That the Service Director Children, Strategy and Partnerships ensure that all services commissioned locally by the Children's Trust are consistent with the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services and the principles set out in the statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The 2007-08 Adolescent Lifestyle Survey identified that on average 1 in 5 (20 % across both sexes) had witnessed domestic violence (page 42). However, the panel has no way of knowing how typical this result is. It may be that children have different understandings of what domestic violence is. For example, older girls were more likely than younger girls to say they had witnessed domestic violence. In contrast there was little difference amongst boys. Pupils who said they had been bullied a lot at school, were also more likely to report that they had witnessed domestic violence.

Recommendation 9 That the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) commission a piece of research with young people to gain a better understanding of how domestic violence is understood by them, and to ensure that they are confident about discussing any concerns they may have with appropriate adults.

The panel was informed that the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) had issued schools with various promotional materials to display in schools to advise pupils of where and when they could access help or information on domestic violence. However, after contacting various primary and secondary schools, none of them had displayed the information.

Recommendation 10 That to raise awareness of the seriousness of domestic violence and help children/young people and their families access appropriate support schools, the Service Director Learning, Schools and Communities encourage all schools in North Lincolnshire to:

- **Ensure relevant help line stickers are displayed inside every toilet cubicle, where appropriate.**
- **Display leaflets and posters, with telephone numbers, in**
 - **Changing rooms**
 - **School youth clubs**
 - **Reception areas, and along**
 - **Corridors, and on**
 - **Notice boards.**
- **Display posters and leaflets when there are parent evenings and open days.**

The panel was pleased to hear that many schools now include domestic violence awareness as part of pupils Personal, Social and Health Education lessons. However, only 40% of pupils in the recent 2007-08 Adolescent Lifestyle Survey recalled being given any information or advice on domestic violence in a school lesson. Of those that did, most reported that it had been useful. 10% said they would welcome more advice and information.

Recommendation 11 That the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator devise an action plan to ensure that all pupils are taught respectful relationships and communication life-skills in all North Lincolnshire schools.

Enshrined in this approach is the rationale that the most effective intervention for ensuring safe and positive outcomes for children experiencing domestic violence, is to provide a package of support for the non-abusing parent and their child that incorporates a robust risk assessment and holds the perpetrator accountable for their actions.

Recommendation 12 That a teachers' handbook be drafted and fresh guidance be issued to all schools about the importance of providing better support to meet the needs of children affected by domestic violence.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated and focused around the needs of children and young people. The CAF is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and deciding how those needs should be met. The CAF will promote more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, particularly in universal services.

It is intended to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of a child's needs and strengths, taking account of the role of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. Practitioners will then be better placed to agree, with the child and family, about what support is appropriate. The CAF will also help to improve integrated working by promoting co-ordinated service provision.

Recommendation 13 That the Service Director Learning, Schools and Communities continue to encourage all schools to complete the Common Assessment Framework to identify at any early stage any signs or symptoms that domestic violence may be present in a family.

NB However, the panel does acknowledge that any actual disclosure of domestic violence should be referred through the normal child protection procedures.

4.5 Emergency Accommodation

The dynamics of domestic violence means that safe, secure and supported accommodation can play a vital role in the reduction of domestic violence and the protection of victims. It is the foundation to ensuring that adult and child victims are afforded safety and security. Local authority housing departments and local housing policies will often determine whether a victim can secure an immediate place of safety.

A refuge is just one of the options that should be available in a local area. Dispersed housing or 'safe' houses are also options that have been developed and used with significant success (page 19). By providing dispersed housing or individual safe houses which have been target hardened and furnished, any victim, male or female can be safely and immediately housed in the short term, as they would be in a refuge, whilst a homeless interview and permanent tenancy is arranged. By providing a combination of options – refuge, dispersed housing, outreach and tenancy support the victim is being given choices.

The Supporting People programme recently tendered for a housing support service for victims of domestic violence. Carr-Gomm was successful at the end of the process and has resulted in the council obtaining improved value for money for the service.

Bearing in mind the panel's concerns over the value for money and the level of provision being provided by the refuge, members would have liked to have seen both the tenancy support service and refuge provision put out for tender. However, the contract for the refuge provision was extended for a further year.

Recommendation 14 That by no later than September 2009, the contract for the refuge provision be put out to tender.

4.6 Refuge

North Lincolnshire's current service provider for refuge provision is Stonham Housing Association (page 23). The freehold transfer of the current refuge building is owned by the service provider and has recently been refurbished with funding from the Housing Corporation.

The Supporting People review identified that the service was costly compared with the benchmarking figures available in 2005. The overheads were seen to be higher than the 10-15% suggested by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

This is disappointing bearing in mind that the current refuge can only accommodate seven women at any one time. Anecdotal and statistical evidence would indicate that this provision is inadequate.

Recommendation 15 That the Supporting People programme undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the refuge to determine if the provider is providing value for money.

The current level of refuge provision is clearly not meeting the former BVPI requirement of 1 bed space per 10,000 population. With a population of c153,500, North Lincolnshire is eight places short of the target.

The staff to resident ratio in North Lincolnshire's refuge is also high as the refuge can only accommodate 7 women at anyone time. Similar refuge staffing levels, (e.g. in North East Lincolnshire), support 12 women at anyone time and other refuges in Hull, York and Doncaster tell a similar story.

Recommendation 16 That whilst it is noted that the layout of the refuge cannot be changed, the Supporting People programme explore the feasibility of support activities being undertaken by the staff to achieve 'stretch' elsewhere.

The statistics provided at Appendix 5 to this report clearly demonstrate that there is a need for the refuge service. However, of particular concern to the panel is that the number of referrals to the refuge has dropped markedly compared to the previous year.

It is important to consider, not only how many bed spaces are actually provided, but also how 'available' they are. The number of rejections and the reasons given are important. There were 27 acceptances but no vacancies in 2006/7 compared to 66 acceptances but no vacancies in 2005/6.

Agencies and victims are no longer approaching the refuge as the key provider but looking elsewhere. Most refuge spaces are provided on an emergency basis. How soon women can move on is dependent on the availability of suitable alternative housing and whether move on property is available. There may also be other reasons such as safety.

Anecdotally, it would appear that refuge residents have to wait approximately 4 months to be rehoused but this is not the whole story as not every women stays for a set amount of time. Some stay a week, some much longer depending on individual needs.

Recommendation 17 That the Supporting People programme explore the reasons for the dramatic reduction in the number of referrals to and accepted by the refuge.

Members were also concerned about the lack of availability of Stonham Housing Association employees post 16:30 on a Friday until 08:30 Monday morning.

Recommendation 18 That as part of the re-commissioning of the refuge service (recommendation 14), the council's Supporting People Commissioning Body undertake a business case analysis to ascertain whether there is a need in North Lincolnshire for a 24 hour referral system for refuge accommodation and to have more staff on call.

As described on page 23 and contained within Appendix 5, the refuge will continue to accept women and children under the age of 13. Whilst any form of safe accommodation has to be welcomed, the refuge environment does not suit everyone, nor does it accept men or male children above the age of 13. This shortfall in service provision is perceived by the panel as a barrier towards victims of domestic violence seeking help.

Recommendation 19 That in line with recommendation 14, when the refuge service is re-commissioned by the Supporting People programme, the specification for tender includes emergency provision for men, women, and those victims with male children above the age of 13.

4.7 Tenancy Support

From the outset, the panel was concerned that the number of supported places provided by the former tenancy support contract was considerably less than that of the region and our immediate neighbours (page 25). The East Riding, Hull and North East Lincolnshire domestic violence projects have confirmed that their full time equivalent support staff support 12-15 women at any one time. Previously, in North Lincolnshire we had 2 full time equivalent staff supporting 18 places on tenancy support at anyone time. If North Lincolnshire operated as our neighbours, Stonham Housing Association should have been supporting 24 – 30 places.

Assuming an average stay of 4-8 months as referred to by the previous provider, North Lincolnshire should have been in a position to support between 60 – 90 women during a year. The average weekly unit cost (2005) was £103.66.

It is worth noting that a comparable local domestic service, It's My Right, has 1 full time equivalent supporting 10-12 high risk cases at any one time at a weekly unit cost of £52.89.

Consequently, the panel was greatly encouraged to hear that as a result of a successful tendering exercise, Carr-Gomm (a national charity providing high quality support and housing services that place individuals at the centre of planning and decision making) was awarded the contract to provide North Lincolnshire's tenancy support service.

Recommendation 20 That the Supporting People programme undertake a review of the new tenancy support contract after one calendar year to ensure that value for money is being provided with regard to tenancy support.

4.8 Target Hardening

'Target hardening' of properties used to be funded through the One Community Project. The One Community Project had been funded from a variety of sources, including a contribution from Safer Neighbourhoods (page 20). In real terms, the target hardening was heavily subsidised by external funding. However, over the years these funding sources have dried up one by one and Safer Neighbourhoods must now meet the full cost of target hardening.

During 2007, the One Community Project target hardened the following properties –

- A total of 94 properties following domestic violence at a cost of £18,800
- A total of 1,600 properties following domestic burglary at a cost of £60,840

During the budget setting cycle for 2008 it was recognised that Safer Neighbourhoods budget pressures would not allow the continuation of all previous activity. A budget was presented to (and accepted by) the Safer Neighbourhoods Strategy Board at its meeting in April 2008 which outlined that a number of work streams would cease or be significantly reduced. Even with this severely 'pruned' activity, the Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership begins the year with a deficit budget.

At its meeting, the Safer Neighbourhoods Strategy Board agreed that a sum of £20,000 would be made available for target hardening activity relating to the properties of domestic violence cases only.

It was recognised that there was insufficient funding available to target harden other types of property (unless funding were available from other sources).

Assuming that each 'sanctuary room' cost £2,200, Safer Neighbourhoods would only be able to target harden nine properties per financial year. Obviously not every property requires a 'sanctuary room'.

However, only high-risk cases through the MARAC are able to access target hardening funding. The MARAC considered 29 high-risk cases between April 2007 and March 2008. That equates to only £690 available per case which is a wholly inadequate figure.

In addition, no budget provision has been made available to target harden the new eight dispersed properties. The panel can only conclude that the funding for target hardening is wholly inadequate.

Recommendation 21 That the target hardening of properties budget be increased to a more realistic sum. This budget to be made available to target harden all high-risk cases as well as the new eight dispersed properties.

4.9 Housing Advice Team

The creation of a dedicated Housing Advice Team has enabled the council to tackle homelessness effectively. Members are only too aware of the excellent and compassionate way the Housing Advice Team handle homeless victims of domestic violence. A 70% reduction over four years in the number of homeless households is a remarkable achievement.

When faced with a victim of domestic violence, the Housing Advice Team can assist the victim in one of four ways. Namely, they can either stay in their own home and the team will assist in target hardening the property; they will be referred to North Lincolnshire Homes and/or a housing association according to priority; the team has the use of properties within the private sector (private landlords); or there is the option of relocation.

However, there are problems associated with assisting the victim. Many victims do not want to stay in their own home for fear of reprisal. Secondly, North Lincolnshire Homes have a right to refuse any referral if they deem the victim/children as having a history of antisocial behaviour, or if they have been in arrears previously with North Lincolnshire Homes. It is then that the interpretation of legislation has to prevail, and the Housing Advice Team would argue the case if they felt there were grounds to do so. Private landlords often request high rent charges and relocation to another area is often hampered by the lack of available information nationally. There is no adequate mechanism in place to assist relocations, many often take weeks/months to negotiate. Meanwhile the victim is housed in bed and breakfast or similar temporary accommodation.

Recommendation 22 That the council lobby for the creation of a national directory of housing advice teams/contacts who would be able to prompt immediate priority moves. This would involve monitoring of transfers between areas, the number of voids available within an area. One suggestion is that each authority ensure that 1% of its voids is left vacant to accommodate urgent cases. This would assist housing advice teams to look where was available, areas that had not been saturated with domestic violence victims and make a request.

The Housing and Strategic Planning Cabinet Member recently agreed the council's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013.

As part of the detailed action plan which sets out how the strategy will be implemented, members were therefore encouraged to note the positive recommendations contained in the action plan that relate to improving the service available to victims of domestic violence.

Recommendation 23 That the Scrutiny Panel monitor the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013, specifically the tasks relating to domestic violence.

The Scrutiny Panel was greatly encouraged by the excellent relationships that exist between the council and partner agencies in tackling homelessness. Continuation of these relationships can only benefit the residents of North Lincolnshire who unfortunately find themselves homeless.

Recommendation 24 That the council ensure that in order to deliver on the challenging targets set in its Homelessness Strategy action plan, it must provide the appropriate resources to enable the Housing Advice Team to continue to address the number of households accepted as homeless as a result of domestic violence in North Lincolnshire.

4.10 North Lincolnshire Homes

The panel was greatly encouraged that North Lincolnshire Homes were providing eight dispersed properties to be used as safe accommodation for victims of domestic violence (page 21). However, due to North Lincolnshire having a deficit of 45% of available bed spaces for victims of domestic violence, it is imperative that the dispersed properties are made available and habitable as soon as possible.

Recommendation 25 That the Supporting People programme encourage North Lincolnshire Homes to provide and make habitable the eight dispersed properties by the end of 2008.

The panel was disappointed to note that no perpetrators of domestic violence had been evicted from North Lincolnshire Homes properties. However, there are three current investigations involving allegations of domestic violence. One case is a sole tenant, two other cases relate to families. As North Lincolnshire's largest registered social landlord, the members would like to see North Lincolnshire Homes adopt a zero tolerance attitude to perpetrators of domestic violence.

The panel is concerned that failure of the landlord to evict results in the victim having to take action – which usually means that they leave the home.

Recommendation 26 That North Lincolnshire Homes be asked to amend its allocations policy as a matter of urgency to incorporate a clause preventing convicted perpetrators of domestic violence from entering into a tenancy agreement.

4.11 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The panel was greatly impressed with the multi-agency approach to the development of the MARAC. This is an information sharing and risk identification and assessment protocol where victims are identified as high risk.

High-risk cases are referred to the MARAC to ensure that all reasonable measures have been undertaken to protect the victim and that there is multi agency responsibility for the decision-making.

Page 40 and Appendix 18 (page 107) demonstrate the excellent work carried out by North Lincolnshire in view of the lack of resources allocated to administering the process. Appendix 18 also demonstrates the spread of referrals to the MARAC, which indicates a good knowledge, and understanding of the process by all agencies that attend.

Humberside Police co-ordinate all paperwork for the MARAC. This includes invites for meetings, all paperwork for consideration and the minutes/actions. This is a very time consuming activity.

The panel learnt that there is currently no budget provision for the MARAC. Safer Neighbourhoods subsidise the MARAC process. This entails accommodation, refreshments, circulation of paperwork etc.

Recommendation 27 That a budget be allocated to administering the entire MARAC process.

In view of the lack of resources allocated to administering the MARAC process, the panel would like to see an appointment made to co-ordinate the North Lincolnshire MARAC that take place to support those who are deemed to be at risk, or very high risk, of domestic violence.

The role of the MARAC Co-ordinator is to receive and risk assess referrals, co-ordinate and support the MARAC process and follow-up progress on actions that emerge from MARAC meetings.

Recommendation 28 That funding be identified by Humberside Police, Safer Neighbourhoods and other partners to appoint a MARAC Co-ordinator as a matter of urgency.

4.12 Magistrates Court and the Legal System

From 1 July 2007 a breach of a Non-Molestation Injunction (or order) is a criminal offence. Previously a breach of such an order has been punishable only as a civil contempt of court.

Effective enforcement was dependent on whether the court attached a power of arrest to the order. If no power of arrest was attached, the victim was required to apply to the Civil Court to obtain an arrest warrant.

For a Non-Molestation Order made after 1 July 2007 there is a power of arrest available under Section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act since any breach now constitutes a criminal offence.

With the implementation of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004, Courts are no longer able to attach a power of arrest to a non-molestation order, as the breach of such an order became an arrestable offence.

Recommendation 29 That Humberside Police checks that this (now criminal) breach of a Non-Molestation Order is investigated as would any criminal offence, witness statements will be required in respect of the breach and the offender interviewed.

The panel heard evidence that obtaining a Non-Molestation Order could cost the victim £8,000. Clearly many victims will be unable to afford this expenditure without assistance from police officers or an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate.

Recommendation 30 That Humberside Police considers assigning a Police Officer to advise victims of how to obtain a Non-Molestation Order, or at the very least place a referral for the victim to Its My Right.

The panel heard how an application for Specialist Domestic Violence Court status in North Lincolnshire was made in 2007, which was subsequently rejected.

The intention of a Specialist Domestic Violence Court is that bringing together all the expertise in one place and training the professionals involved in how to handle domestic violence cases, and the difficulty of prosecuting them, really helps the victim (page 38). The courts give the message to perpetrators that domestic violence will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly by police and magistrates

Since the application for specialist domestic violence court status was submitted, the Magistrates Court now fast-track all domestic violence cases, using the Criminal justice: simple, speedy and summary (CJSSS) system. This is a new way of working to encompass a simpler set of processes and procedures. CJSSS aims to improve the way cases are managed and dealt with, focusing on the methods that make the justice system work well.

However, the number of prosecutions for domestic violence cases is low as many victims are unwilling to report incidents to the police, let alone go to court. Page 37 of the report identifies the benefits of obtaining Specialist Domestic Violence Court status.

Recommendation 31 That local agencies including the Magistrates Court, North Lincolnshire Council, the Police, the Probation Service and specialist domestic abuse advice services be encouraged to work together to reapply for Specialist Domestic Violence Court status.

Respondents to the panel's questionnaire (Appendix 19 page 109) identified concerns with the existing Magistrates Court, namely the location of the entrance, exits and waiting areas to be used by victims of domestic violence.

This concerned the panel as giving evidence at court is a hugely traumatic experience for the victim. Exacerbating the situation by the victim and alleged perpetrator sitting within close proximity to each other in a waiting room for example is clearly unacceptable.

Recommendation 32 That regardless of the application for Specialist Domestic Violence Court status, Scunthorpe Magistrates Court be asked to ensure that all victims of domestic violence are made aware of the availability of separate entrances, exits and waiting areas so that victims don't come into contact with their attackers.

Recommendation 33 That the Judicial Studies Board be encouraged to provide specialist training for Magistrates on an annual basis on domestic violence issues to assist them with developing a better understanding of the range of emotions and dilemmas faced by victims of domestic violence.

4.13 A Co-located team for North Lincolnshire

Members heard from a variety of witnesses, as well as those members of the Domestic Violence Forum who completed the panel's questionnaire, that co-location of domestic violence services is a must for North Lincolnshire (page 35).

As part of the review, the panel heard from Humberside Police, who indicated that they would only support a move to co-location of domestic violence services were the location to be either Humberside Police Station on Corporation Road or Shelford House on Shelford Street, both in Scunthorpe. This was principally due to the perceived lack of operation efficiency from co-location existing away from the 'corporate centre' of police activity.

Informal discussions have also taken place with Humberside Police as to who they would like co-located, namely the Probation Service, Children and Family Services, Adult Social Care and North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust about co-locating staff members, for at least part of their working week. Discussions have been positive to date and agencies are awaiting a formal proposal to be made on the move to a co-located team to further discuss their possible contribution and involvement. In addition to these agencies and organisations, the panel would also seek to encourage third sector involvement (such as Women's Aid) at the site.

It is envisaged that the co-located unit would provide a strategic and operational capability to help improve domestic abuse in North Lincolnshire.

Public access may be considered in the future but in the short to medium term, this will be limited to meetings between professionals and those victims of domestic abuse that are attending the nearby Specialist Domestic Violence Court (where appropriate). The possibility of extending the remit of the centre to also cover sexual violence could also be re-visited in the medium-long term.

The success of the project is dependent upon effective partnership working with North Lincolnshire Council, Safer Neighbourhoods, Humberside Police and other key partners.

Numerous agencies have a role in supporting victims of domestic abuse and their families (particularly children) from those with a law enforcement role (police, probation etc) to those providing support with physical, financial and emotional needs (health, Children and Family Services, housing providers, etc). The development of a co-located team, which would consist of key workers from a range of agencies working together, would help to underpin the MARAC process and work of the IDVA.

It would also help to increase the on-going communication between workers, provide a more joined-up approach for victims and allow a greater co-ordination of resources.

Recommendation 34 That the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence) conduct a formal consultation exercise with the view to obtaining a written commitment from all key partners to base staff within the team; sufficient funding being identified to cover building, equipment and staffing costs; and clear arrangements for managing the team and building being put in place.

4.14 Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates service

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA) are trained specialists whose goal is the safety of domestic violence victims (page 28). While IDVAs will accept all referrals, their focus is on providing a service to victims at medium to high risk of harm to address their safety needs and help manage the risks that they face. Their medium to high-risk remit means that the majority (if not all) of their cases are women victims. IDVAs tend to come in at the point of crisis for a victim i.e. just after a police call out or Accident and Emergency attendance.

Research shows that abused women consistently cite the need for there to be one point of contact they can approach for help. The confusion of different policies and practices is a minefield for most professionals in this field to negotiate successfully, let alone for abused women.

Having one point of contact who can provide information and support, who maintains an overview of their progress within various systems and agencies and who can act as advocates on their behalf where necessary to ensure policies are being adhered to properly, can make all the difference.

An IDVA Service is possibly the single most efficient, effective and economic intervention that could be provided.¹⁷

However, there is a gap locally in service provision in that there is no support for those victims of domestic violence who, for whatever reason, choose not to leave the perpetrator. There is also no support for male victims of domestic violence.

In North Lincolnshire, Rape Crisis employs the two IDVAs and ISVA (page 29). However, they are only employed on a fixed term basis. Every year Rape Crisis has to bid to fund the three posts for the following financial year.

The ISVA is funded via grants from the Victims Fund and the Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

One IDVA is part funded by Safer Neighbourhoods and the Henry Smith Foundation. The second IDVA is part funded by the Home Office and Safer Neighbourhoods.

The three posts, including on-costs, telephone landline, mobile telephone, travel and training costs £96,000 per year to fund.

Recommendation 35 That partners monitor and review the current funding streams for the IDVA and ISVA posts.

Recommendation 36 That partners explore the possibility of funding an additional IDVA post to “plug the gap” that currently exists for support services to men and all victims who are perceived to be a low or medium risk case.

4.15 Humberside Police B Division

Normally, the first contact a victim of domestic violence will have with the police will be with control room staff, either a police officer or a member of support staff (page 32). In dealing with calls, call handlers have to obtain sufficient initial information to prioritise the call correctly and ensure that an appropriate police response is despatched.

Humberside Police has introduced a system to identify or ‘flag’ domestic violence incidents, with ‘flags’ subsequently being used by domestic violence officers or other nominated members of staff to retrieve incidents for follow-up contact with victims and to update domestic violence records and databases.

In all cases, however, search and retrieval of incidents are reliant on ‘flags’ being correctly applied at the outset.

The importance of 'flags' and their correct application in ensuring that, at the very least, domestic violence records can be updated, cannot be overstated. It is essential, therefore, that ownership of this task is clearly identified and that staff are clear on the procedures to be followed.

Recommendation 37 The panel asks that Humberside Police ensures that systems are in place to 'flag' domestic violence incidents accurately, that responsibility for the correct application of domestic violence 'flags' is clearly identified within force policies and that staff with that responsibility are clear on the procedures to be followed.

As already indicated on page 33, Home Office Circular 19/2000 created a presumption of arrest where such a power exists. Police officers were clear that, where a power of arrest exists, it should normally be exercised to protect the victim and any children from the risk of further violence. Equally important, however, is the need to ensure that officers are equipped prior to attending an incident so as not to impact on the quality of first response. Humberside Police has in place systems for providing front line officers with previous history information prior to attending an incident. However, there was an inconsistency in whether this information was passed to officers as a matter of routine.

Recommendation 38 The panel asks that Humberside Police review their existing system for providing front line officers with previous history information to ensure that it can be easily accessed, retrieved and communicated prior to scene attendance.

Humberside Police has in place validation processes, with clear lines of accountability through supervisors, to ensure that incidents are completed in line with force policy. In general, these were found to be followed. However, the panel was concerned over the inconsistent completion of 913 forms (police domestic violence logs). Whilst all 913 forms are completed eventually, any delay in completion of the 913 forms requires the domestic violence co-ordinators to either 'chase up' the missing information or proceed without all the relevant information. Neither scenario is particularly acceptable.

Members were greatly encouraged to learn that all domestic violence incidents are discussed at a daily management meeting. This involved discussing the police response to the incident and whether or not an arrest was made.

Recommendation 39 The panel would ask that the Chief Superintendent of Humberside Police (B Division) ensures that all the information recorded on domestic violence incident logs (913 forms) is sufficient to allow for effective investigation of scene attendance and investigation.

Recommendation 40 The panel would like to see the continuation of the proactive monitoring of domestic violence incidents at daily management meetings, particularly in reviewing decisions not to arrest.

Domestic violence units and specialist officers were first recommended in the Home Office Circular of 1990 and over 90% of forces now have Domestic Violence Officers/Co-ordinators within established units.

Humberside Police is no exception. However, resourcing of the unit is determined at the Basic Command Unit, resulting in varying staffing levels across the force and, consequently, varying workload and levels of service delivery.

Research suggests that domestic violence work tends to be marginalised from mainstream policing and has low status. However, Humberside Police B Division has greatly raised the profile of domestic violence, both at an operational and strategic level. But domestic violence officers do face considerable pressure in trying to balance a growing administrative commitment with the requirement to deliver an effective service to victims.

Recommendation 41 The panel asks that Humberside Police review Domestic Violence Officers' roles and job descriptions to ensure that the role is meeting the public's needs and expectations and that job descriptions accurately reflect work undertaken; and

- (i) As part of the process, assess workload and responsibilities to ensure that staffing levels are realistic and levels of responsibility are appropriate; and
- (ii) Review administrative functions with a view to providing adequate administrative support.

4.16 Health

In the last few years it has been increasingly recognised by health professionals and the Department of Health that health services have a critical role on providing access to help and protection for abused women and children, as a front-line point of contact for many women who are experiencing domestic violence (page 30).

The need for the involvement of health care professionals in identifying and referring domestic violence victims has been highlighted in many reports. The NHS is the one service that almost all victims of domestic violence come into contact with regularly in their lives.

In 2000, the Department of Health issued a Domestic Violence Resource manual recommending that steps should be taken to ensure that the NHS play a full role. The manual has recently been updated as part of a central Department of Health project tackling violence.

Recommendation 42 That the North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust ensure that the updated Department of Health resource manual is available for use in all departments.

The panel was surprised to hear that accident and emergency staff did not receive domestic violence awareness training. Whilst doctors and nurses do have access to specialist domestic violence trained nurses, the delay in accessing this support could be to the detriment of the victim.

Appropriate training can overcome health professionals' concerns about raising the subject and enable them to provide more appropriate care for their patients.

Recommendation 43 That the North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust explore the possibility of mainstreaming training on domestic violence in order that it is regular and ongoing for all staff.

Members were concerned that injured victims of domestic violence may not receive treatment they clearly need if issues/exploration of child concern are raised by health staff with the victims on attendance at Accident and Emergency. Whilst members recognise the duty to safeguard children it was felt that the victim needed to be treated with respect and given treatment prior to the exploration of wider factors and any possible child concern issues.

Safety of children needs to be an ongoing consideration throughout Accident and Emergency involvement, however not one that is undertaken in such a way to drive victims away from the hospital without treatment.

Recommendation 44 That Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust review its current training processes and procedures for assessing victims of domestic violence presenting at the accident and emergency department. At the initial point of contact, the panel asks that the needs of the victim be of equal priority as contacting partner agencies if children are involved.

Research shows that domestic violence increases during pregnancy. Consequently, training and questioning in maternity services has been undertaken. However, in view of the advantages of asking all women, efforts need to be made to ensure that in each locality there is a mechanism and setting whereby all women can be reached.

Routine and selective enquiry form the basis for providing women who are experiencing abuse with information about the local specialised services available to them.

Recommendation 45 That all health professionals practise selective enquiry.

Recommendation 46 That routine enquiry be considered in a number of different settings, in particular in primary health care and when case-taking.

The panel learnt that the quality of medical statements obtained from hospital staff was not particularly high reflecting a possible need for medical staff who are routinely called upon to provide such evidence to receive appropriate guidance.

Recommendation 47 That Humberside Police conduct an audit sweep of the health professionals who are routinely called upon to provide evidence. Once identified, those professionals to receive guidance on the necessary ingredients required to complete a medical statement.

4.17 Humberside Probation Trust

The panel was disappointed to hear that there was a waiting list to access the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme in Scunthorpe. This is in stark contrast to Hull and Grimsby. In Scunthorpe there is a high need for the Programme. However, Humberside Probation Trust informed the panel that although a waiting list was in existence, the numbers do not merit additional Programmes being run as the waiting list is not excessive and the current provision is acceptable.

Victims in North Lincolnshire become frustrated as the system is not as simple and is over subscribed (page 43). Consequently, a perpetrator of domestic violence who was genuinely seeking help may not be able to access the programme which is unacceptable.

Recommendation 48 The panel asks that Humberside Probation Trust reconsider its resource provision to North Lincolnshire to ensure that perpetrators of domestic violence are able to access the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme.

The Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme can only be accessed by heterosexual males. There is currently no provision for gay men.

Recommendation 49 That Safer Neighbourhoods assess the need for perpetrator provision for individuals in same sex relationships in order to ascertain whether Humberside Probation Trust should allocate resourcing for this specified social group.

At present in North Lincolnshire there are 25 high-risk domestic violence cases being managed through the MARAC process. Of the 25 cases, only 2 involve the perpetrator attending the IDAP. The outcome is that things are moving in the right direction, but there are uncertainties over the results of the programme.

Recommendation 50 That Humberside Probation Trust be asked to analyse the psychometric tests from the programme to ensure that the treatment is cost effective.

The panel heard how in some parts of the country, a voluntary perpetrator programme had been implemented. This is a programme that is available for men who have harmed their partners (but not been prosecuted) or who fear they may do so. However, the programme needs extreme care and caution to implement effectively.

The panel heard how Humberside Probation Trust wrote to all of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) in the former Humberside region offering to develop a Voluntary Perpetrator Programme on 29 November 2007.

However, there was no response from the North Lincolnshire LSCB about this proposal. This differs from the other LSCB's. Should North Lincolnshire wish IDAP to be offered to non-convicted perpetrators, this is work that Humberside Probation Trust would be willing to develop and deliver provided that the costs can be met by relevant partner agencies.

Recommendation 51 That the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board investigate the validity of a voluntary perpetrator programme for North Lincolnshire perpetrators of domestic violence.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS

The panel was made aware of the following statistics -

- An analysis of 10 separate domestic violence prevalence studies found that 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence over their lifetimes and between 6-10% of women suffer domestic violence in a given year⁵
- 45% women and 26% men had experienced at least one incident of interpersonal violence in their lifetimes⁴ – however when there were more than 4 incidents (i.e. ongoing domestic or sexual abuse) 89% of victims were women.
- Every minute in the UK, the Police receive a call from the public for assistance for domestic violence; 1,300 calls each day or over 570,000 each year.⁶ Of these, 89% were calls by women being assaulted by men. However, according to the government National Delivery Plan, less than 24% of domestic violence crime is reported to the police.⁴
- Repeat victimisation is common. 44% of victims of domestic violence are involved in more than one incident. No other type of crime has a rate of repeat victimisation as high.⁷
- On average, two women a week are killed by a violent partner or ex-partner. This constitutes nearly 40% of all female homicide victims,⁸ usually by men they know. When the researchers asked women about rape experienced since the age of 16, they found that 45% were raped by current husbands or partners, 9% by former partners, and a further 29% of perpetrators were otherwise known to the victim. Only 17% were raped by strangers.⁴
- Of women who had experienced domestic violence, only 25% had never lived with the partner who had committed the worst act of violence against them.⁴
- In a study of 200 women's experiences of domestic violence it was found that 60% of the women had left because they feared that they or their children would be killed by the perpetrator.⁹

APPENDIX 2 – HOMELESS STATISTICS

The table below demonstrates the percentage of people being declared homeless as a result of a violent relationship breakdown

	Accepted as homeless	Homelessness prevented	Total	Total acceptances	DV as % of acceptances
2003-04	56	0	55	466	12
2004-05	62	0	62	601	10.3
2005-06	72	0	72	502	14.3
2006-07	39	21	60	277	14.1
2007-08	26	26	52	177	14.7

APPENDIX 3 – SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Supporting People services have been in existence for some time now and as part of a review of the programme a structured Procurement Plan was agreed by the Corporate Services Cabinet Member on 21 March 2006 (minute 398 refers).

This plan highlighted services for people experiencing domestic violence as a priority area. Consequently a review of the service was undertaken by a group of professionals involved in the area of domestic violence and chaired by the Safer Neighbourhoods Officer (Domestic Violence). This was completed in June 2007. The findings from the report can be found below -

- The original funding distribution does not meet projected needs. There is a lack of capacity for new customers and shortcomings in existing services. The current services did not meet the BVPI for the number of refuge places per head of population in North Lincolnshire.
- Adult Social Services should undertake a market testing exercise, as required by Financial Standing Orders, to ensure that expenditure is providing effective services, with realistic costs, whilst achieving the required outcomes for the service user.
- The current provision did not meet the needs of other groups of people who may experience domestic violence, in particular men, women with older dependent male children, people who are transgender and women who may not want to enter a refuge environment.

Provision as at April 2007

- The provision of service funded by the Supporting People Programme as at April 2007 was one refuge facility that caters for women and children, a total of seven units of support.
- This was supplemented by a housing support service that was available to women living in any property across North Lincolnshire, a total of 18 units.
- Both these services were provided by one organisation under contract with Supporting People. Their contracts ended in June 2008. The contract for the refuge provision was extended with the existing organisation until September 2009. This was to ensure continued provision within the refuge environment.
- The contract for the tenancy support service was re-tendered using a revised model following the outcome of the review, and was to include a dispersed housing model.

Provision as at June 2008

- The new service was openly tendered in February 2008. Four organisations tendered for the new service, and following a rigorous evaluation process the new contract was offered to Carr-Gomm, an existing provider of supported housing services in North Lincolnshire.
- This service is of a high quality and has resulted in the council obtaining improved value for money for the service. This service will provide support to up to 44 people, including to victims living in a variety of dispersed properties that are to be obtained through North Lincolnshire Homes. The total number of dispersed properties will be eight, which will be implemented over the coming year.
- This has improved the service available to victims of domestic violence and complements the other services available.
- The refuge continues to accept women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

APPENDIX 4 – REFERRALS RECEIVED FOR TENANCY SUPPORT

The tenancy support service (2.5 staff) was contracted to accommodate 18 places at any one time. This service worked to support women to maintain their own tenancy (Private and RSL). The table below demonstrated the referrals received for tenancy support prior to the service being re-commissioned to Carr-Gomm.

	Referrals	Referrals Accepted	Number Women Supported	Number of Children
2004-05	35	35	35	NA
2005-06	48	48	48	NA
2006-07	53	8	8	NA
2007-08	110	19	60	60

APPENDIX 5 – REFERRALS ACCEPTED BY THE REFUGE

The number of referrals accepted by the refuge.

	Referrals	Referrals Accepted	Referrals Housed	Number of Children
2004-05	121	19	19	18
2005-06	275	66	39	NA
2006-07	121	26	26	38
2007-08	122	31	31	27

APPENDIX 6 – COST OF RESIDING IN THE REFUGE

In North Lincolnshire, the following costs are associated with residing in the refuge -

- A single occupancy dwelling costs £125.65 per week plus £15.04 per week 'top up' (if they cannot claim Housing Benefit)
- If occupying 3 bed, there is a charge of £145.72 per week plus £33.57 per week 'top up'
- If on income support/Housing Benefit the victim would have to pay the £33.57 or the £15.04
- If the victim is working they may not qualify for Income Support and Housing Benefit so have to pay
- The victim may still be paying rent/mortgage on the property that they fled from.

APPENDIX 7 – SERVICE COSTS IN YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

Appendix 6 demonstrates those service costs within the Yorkshire and Humberside region which can be compared to the services provided in North Lincolnshire.

Weekly costs at 2005

- Weekly unit costs range from £21.52 to £820.56
- The average for daytime staff on site with emergency call out is £332.77 (refuge)
- The average for floating support is £103.66 (tenancy support)

Support Hours per Unit per week

- The average for daytime staff on site with emergency call out is 26 hours, 58 minutes
- The average for floating support is 14 hours, 24 minutes.

Cost per hour of Service

- The average for daytime staff with emergency call out is £21.89
- The average for floating support is £18.73

APPENDIX 8 – COST OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The estimated total cost of domestic violence to society in monetary terms is £23 billion per annum. This figure includes an estimated £3.1 billion as the cost to the state and £1.3 billion as the cost to employers and human suffering cost of £17 billion.⁴ This estimated total cost is based on the following:

- The cost to the criminal justice system is £1 billion per annum. (This represents one quarter of the criminal justice budget for violent crime including the cost of homicide to adult women annually of £112 million).
- The cost of physical healthcare treatment resulting from domestic violence, (including hospital, GP, ambulance, prescriptions) is £1,220,247,000, i.e. 3% of total NHS budget.
- The cost of treating mental illness and distress due to domestic violence is £176,000,000.
- The cost to the social services is £0.25 billion.
- Housing costs are estimated at £0.16 billion.
- The cost of civil legal services due to domestic violence is £0.3billion
- The cost of domestic homicide is estimated by the Home Office at over one million pounds: a total of £1,097,330 for each death, or £112 million per year.¹⁵

APPENDIX 9 – INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATE

IDVAs are trained specialists whose goal is the safety of domestic violence victims. While IDVAs will accept all referrals, their focus is on providing a service to victims at medium to high risk of harm to address their safety needs and help manage the risks that they face. Their medium to high-risk remit means that the majority (if not all) of their cases are women victims. IDVAs tend to come in at the point of crisis for a victim i.e. just after a police call out or Accident and Emergency attendance.

There are a number of elements present within an IDVA service. These are:

- **Crisis Intervention:** advisors work from the point of crisis with a survivor and offer intensive support to help assure their short and long-term safety.
- **Risk:** the service is based on assessment and understanding of risk and its management. IDVAs must be trained to assess risk and respond in a way that is appropriate to the level of risk that the victim is experiencing. IDVAs have to be willing to involve other agencies when the victim or the children of the victim are in danger.
- **Independent:** from both the justice system and local government, in order to focus on safety and not other targets which statutory agencies must bear in mind when providing a service. Victims need support from someone who can give impartial advice on their safety options.
- **Professional:** this service is not suited to volunteers because the service involves supporting a victim with a trained caseworker and because IDVAs work with people who are at medium or high risk of serious harm. IDVAs should be trained to meet specific accredited learning outcomes. Currently, CAADA¹⁶ delivers an accredited training course for IDVAs which meets those standards and has been endorsed by Government. Women's Aid is also developing training.

The IDVA service should be provided in such a way as to be sensitive to all cultural and other differences and needs and be fully accessible to victims with complex needs and all those who face additional barriers to seeking help and support.

- **Multi-agency working:** IDVAs are trained to understand the value and legal requirements of information sharing.

While developing safety plans that are tailored to the individual's safety needs and goals, they are trained to approach individuals' situations with the expectation that the agencies involved will each take their responsibility for reducing the risk that the victim faces, whether that is the police arresting an offender who has breached bail or a health visitor reporting to other agencies that a perpetrator who had been reportedly to have left the house has since returned.

- **Measurable Outcomes:** IDVAs can contribute to increased victim safety and satisfaction, reductions in repeat victimisation, maintaining victim engagement with the CJS and increased reporting and support for children at risk of harm from domestic violence.

Research shows that abused women consistently cite the need for there to be one point of contact they can approach for help. The confusion of different policies and practices is a minefield for most professionals in this field to negotiate successfully, let alone for abused women.

Having one point of contact who can provide information and support, who maintains an overview of her progress within various systems and agencies and who can advocate on her behalf where necessary to ensure policies are being adhered to properly, can make all the difference.

An Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service is possibly the single most efficient, effective and economic intervention that could be provided.

Evidence based research¹⁷ shows that independent advocates are a key component element in

- increasing confidence in the CJS
- increasing prosecutions
- increasing reporting to the police
- decreasing 'cracked trials'
- reducing repeat victimisation
- encouraging help-seeking
- increasing safety
- assisting emotional recovery
- reducing repeat homelessness
- reducing levels of injuries sustained
- making savings to the public purse
- reducing the number of children 'at risk'

IDVAs have been crucial in reducing domestic violence in the USA, Australia and other countries and in ensuring more offenders are held accountable for their behaviour.

San Diego has achieved a 75% reduction in domestic violence homicides since 1985. Their coordinated approach, of which advocacy is the lynch pin, has been recognised by the Bush administration who has provided the required funding for 12 more jurisdictions to benefit from this approach. Evaluations in the UK have shown significant reductions in repeat victimisation and positive benefits on the process of healing and recovering.

APPENDIX 10 – POLICE OFFICERS

Domestic violence affects all sections of the community. It is not a problem exclusively associated with one social, sexual, or ethnic group.

Article 14 of Human Rights Act 1998 states that individuals have the freedom to enjoy the rights set out in the Act without being subject to discriminatory decisions.

This has a bearing, should a stereotypical assumption be made about a victim's wishes due to their culture, race, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability. An example of this is that it is wrong to assume that domestic violence is accepted behaviour within some religious/ethnic minority communities.

This is an issue that affects all operational police officers. One of the main areas, which need addressing, is ensuring that initial investigating officers are establishing effective foundations for the full investigation. Further, the work of the CSU investigating officer can be made more difficult, and even impossible, by inappropriate comments or actions made at the initial and often crucial stages. This fits in with the general training needs of all staff on domestic violence but it is essential that specific training elements are devised covering the needs of minority communities. This training should be developed with other relevant agencies and individuals.

The investigation of domestic violence must not be considered in isolation. By viewing perpetrators of domestic violence as separate and different from perpetrators of other crimes it is possible that crucial intelligence is lost and possible tactics overlooked.

Recent research shows that police know a large proportion of domestic violence perpetrators for a variety of other criminal matters ranging from drugs to firearms to murder. An analysis of the data for domestic sexual assaults in the Metropolitan Police District for January 2001 shows that 30 of the 70 offenders have criminal records for a variety of offences including other sexual assaults²⁸.

This must be viewed in two ways:

- police agencies investigating other criminal offences may well hold crucial information on domestic violence perpetrators, and;
- police officers investigating domestic violence may have access to intelligence relating to other criminal offences.

The lesson from the above information is that the concept of 'joined-up' policing and thinking must be applied across police investigations.

To complete a comprehensive and effective risk assessment of any domestic violence case it is essential that all relevant intelligence be collected relating to the family concerned. The victim's safety is always paramount.

- Use must be made of any Multi-Agency Fora and information sharing protocols to collate all available information on the perpetrator, victim and family.

Even though it may be the first instance of police contact, there is likely to have been involvement from other agencies. Vital information relating to the history and potential risk posed may, therefore, exist elsewhere.

- All criminal justice data and local intelligence must be collated in relation to the perpetrator and recorded accurately. This will allow a more effective risk assessment to be made.

APPENDIX 11 – HUMBERSIDE POLICE B DIVISION STATISTICS

The volume of domestic violence cases handled by Humberside Police B Division.

	Reported Incidents Average per month	Reported Incidents Annual figure	Repeat Victimisation %	Crimes	Referrals to Children and Young People Services
2004-05	83	995	39.39	438	143
2005-06	166	1995	45.51	756	214
2006-07	153	1834	51.47	681	299
2007-08	176	2108	14.80	736	184

APPENDIX 12 – HUMBERSIDE POLICE B DIVISION DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNT

Using the 2006/7 police data, an exercise based on 10% of all incidents (200 in total) provided the following evidence that out of all reported incidents the following;

Victim Gender

- Female – 84%
- Male – 16%

Victim Ethnicity

- White European – 97%
- Asian – 2%
- Other - 1%
- Victim Unable to speak English – 1%
- Victim Disability – 2%

Victim Relationship to perpetrator

- Partner – 40%
- Ex-partner – 45%
- Adult family member – 14%
- Child family member – 1%

Victim Age

- 16-18 – 2%
- 19 – 25 – 40%
- 26 – 35 – 29%
- Over 35 – 4%
- Unspecified – 25%

Type of abuse

- Physical – 37%
- Emotional – 62%
- Sexual – 0%
- Financial – 1%

APPENDIX 13 – CARDIFF WOMEN’S SAFETY UNIT

The operating costs of the WSU are estimated to be around £250,000 annually. An evaluation of the WSU has revealed that:

- The number of domestic violence complaints received by the police has increased over the lifetime of the project;
- Repeat victimisation is decreasing;
- The number of victims refusing to make complaints is declining;
- The number of concern for children reports submitted by police officers is increasing;
- User satisfaction is high; and that
- The per capita costs of running the centre are low compared to the per capita cost of domestic violence to the criminal justice system, agencies and victims.

APPENDIX 14 - NON-MOLESTATION ORDERS ISSUED BY THE COUNTY COURT

Appendix 14 shows the Non-Molestation Orders issued by the County Court from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The information is courtesy of Scunthorpe Magistrates Court.

Applications received	Ex-parte (that is, in the absence of the offender).	27
	On notice	22
Orders made	With power of arrest attached	18
	Without power of arrest attached	32
	Transferred to a county court	0
	Applications received from Magistrates	0
Undertakings	No of cases in which undertakings accepted	10
Warrants of arrest	Applications made	0
	Warrants issued	0

APPENDIX 15 - OCCUPATION ORDERS ISSUED BY THE COUNTY COURT

Appendix 15 shows the Occupation Orders issued by the County Court from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The information is courtesy of Scunthorpe Magistrates Court.

Applications received	Ex-parte (that is, in the absence of the offender).	14
	On notice	14
Orders made	With power of arrest attached	19
	Without power of arrest attached	11
	Transferred to a county court	0
	Applications received from Magistrates	0
Remands	In to custody	10
	On bail	0
	For medical report	0

APPENDIX 16 – INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL

Appendix 16 explains that the purpose of the protocol is to facilitate the secure and confidential sharing of information (both anonymous and personal data) between member agencies participating in the Domestic Violence Pathway Partnership and MARAC procedures and to raise awareness amongst agencies who may be involved in providing services to victims/survivors and their children.

This is in order to:

- enhance the safety of victims/survivors and their children through risk identification and assessment, appropriate information sharing and safety planning;
- monitor and provide accountability within the Partnership;
- collate all information on each case going through the Criminal Justice System and also at the point at which it is referred out to other agencies;
- hold abusers accountable and to identify at what stage the offender is within the system using manual and electronic tracking to identify risk where possible;
- identify any challenges with the Partnership;
- enable partners to deliver effective services;
- co-ordinate the collection, monitoring and analysis of domestic violence data to develop an understanding of the prevalence of this serious crime in North Lincolnshire.

APPENDIX 17 - MARAC

The MARAC is in place to discuss the victims and survivors of Domestic Violence that are deemed to be High Risk, to improve their safety and also to help improve the support for staff involved in High Risk Domestic Violence cases. It will work to provide evidence of and track the progress of actions taken by various agencies (both statutory, the police for instance, and voluntary) in tackling the issue of Domestic Violence, helping the victims who are categorised as High Risk and help to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation. The MARAC allows all these agencies with a role to play in the victim's safety to share information and decide upon the most appropriate way to reduce or manage the identified risks around each case of Domestic Violence that is the subject of a MARAC.

The MARAC only applies to the cases of domestic violence that have been identified as high-risk cases. Each case is assessed in its own context and circumstances to decide the level of risk. The risk factors can include the nature of the abuse (for example emotional, physical, sexual), previous behaviour or convictions, an escalation of this behavior, how the victim sees their own level of risk or vulnerability (either to themselves or their children), potential barriers to seeking help or can include other factors such as the use of a weapon or threats to kill (self or others).

These risk factors are used to assess the probability of serious harm occurring, and this decides the necessity to refer a case to the MARAC.

The aim of the MARAC is to effectively monitor and share information and resources to help to increase the safety, health and well being of victims and their families and in turn to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation. It will also be an aim to decide whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any individual or to the general community and for all the agencies to construct together a risk management plan to provide professional support to all those at risk in order to help reduce that risk.

APPENDIX 18 – NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE MARAC

Appendix 18 demonstrates the workload of the MARAC partners compared to their colleagues in the Humberside Police area and the referral agency.

	April	May	June	Total	July	August	Sept	Total	October	November	December	Total	January	February	March	Total
North Lincolnshire	3	1	2	6	0	1	2	3	2	3	7	12	0	4	4	8
Humberside (inclusive)	11	7	10	28	13	10	2	25	16	11	31	58	8	18	13	42

Referrals

	April - June	July - September	October - December	January – March 2008	Total
North Lincolnshire	3 It's My Right 2 Police 1 CYPS	1 It's My Right 2 Police	4 It's My Right 7 Police 1 Housing	5 It's My Right 1 Police 1 Probation 1 Housing	13 It's My Right 12 Police 2 Housing 1 Probation 1 CYPS

CYPS = Children and Young People Service

APPENDIX 19 – QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

As part of the review process, a consultation exercise in the form of a questionnaire was carried out and distributed to all (75 in total) members of the North Lincolnshire Domestic Violence Forum. Appendix 19 identifies all the agencies consulted by the panel and a summary of their responses to the questions asked.

1. NAME

.....

2. ORGANISATION

.....

3. WHAT IS THE MAIN ROLE OF YOUR AGENCY OR ORGANISATION?

4. WHERE IS YOUR AGENCY LOCATED?

5. IS YOUR SERVICE AIMED AT JUST THIS SPECIFIC AREA/COMMUNITY? (PLEASE TICK)

Yes	No
15	9

6. **HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR AGENCY COMES INTO CONTACT WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE? (PLEASE TICK)**

Never	1
Rarely	1
Occasionally	5
Regularly	8
Frequently	9

7. **HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR AGENCY COMES INTO CONTACT WITH PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE? (PLEASE TICK)**

Never	3
Rarely	3
Occasionally	8
Regularly	6
Frequently	4

8. **IF SOMEBODY COMES TO YOU OR IS REFERRED TO YOU FOR HELP WITH REGARD TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS THIS LOGGED OR RECORDED ANYWHERE AT ALL? (PLEASE TICK)**

Yes	No
23	0

9. IF YES, HOW IS THIS INFORMATION RECORDED? I.E WHAT PROCEDURE DO YOU GO THROUGH WHEN RECORDING AN INCIDENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

- Incident would be risk assessed, consent gained to share information gained, confidentiality discussed and documented. Paper file kept in a locked cupboard, in a locked office in a secure building.
- The fact that a client is a victim of domestic violence is recorded on an initial client contact form and reported quarterly to management committee. Most cases of domestic violence are referred to IDVA in Scunthorpe or Women's Centre, Grimsby.
- Information logged in case file. Where children are involved/witnessed domestic violence then it's reported to the council. All records routinely checked against MARAC agendas
- Logged on the helpline record for onward referral
- Referral through duty social worker and safeguarding team. Documented on paper and computer records.
- Any information we give is recorded on a day sheet within the team.
- Family file commenced. Give information regarding support networks available.
- It is simply logged as a domestic violence call. No other details are taken or kept.
- On the referral itself plus when each client signs up for our service, a core form is filled in, indicating the main support needed.
- Accident and Emergency use their own documentation. Paediatrics record on child's notes and any copies of referrals made would be in child's notes. Midwifery use a family file.

- File notes are made whenever domestic violence is reported. Database records are kept whenever domestic violence is reported as a case of homelessness.
- Family records and computerised health records, both for parent and child.
- Client notes. Supervisor/helpline notified. Plan of safety recorded where appropriate. Information given to clients of other agencies which may help with specific problems i.e. Police, Women's Aid etc.
- Follow domestic violence protocols.
- Information recorded on confidential client case records held electronically.
- It will usually be referred from the Police through their system. Our agency then logs information on a referral form and keeps a file on each client to provide an audit trail of every contact made. It is also recorded anonymously on a database for statistical purposes.

10. FROM YOUR ORGANISATIONS POINT OF VIEW, HAVE YOU ANY AREAS OF CONCERN WITH REGARD TO SERVICE PROVISION FOR THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

- The only specialist domestic violence service in North Lincolnshire are It's My Right and Stonham. The IDVA role is subject to short term funding and deals with the high-risk cases. To my knowledge, Stonham deal only with medium and standard risk cases. If funding for the IDVA role is not identified there will be a huge gap in services and no-one to support high risk victims. Refuge provision is inadequate. Not enough bed spaces per population. No provision for men. No provision for those with drug/alcohol issues or those with ASBO's.

- No, we have close links with IDVA services in Scunthorpe and a good relationship with the Women's Centre in Grimsby. A listening service is also provided to victims who require emotional support.
- Insufficient provision to assist perpetrators to change.
- No Home Start provision. Concern with regard to service provision for children affected by domestic violence. Lack of foster placement.
- Any areas of concern have been addressed by a review of the Supporting People services currently provided. The new service will be able to meet the needs of all people (not just women) at risk of domestic violence.
- Women generally come with partners who commit domestic violence. It is sometimes very difficult to see victims alone.
- We need a perpetrator programme as with child protection. Must be careful not to apportion blame on victims / responsibility for prevention of future incidents.
- We are working to increase the provision of supported accommodation for people fleeing domestic violence.
- Because our callers can be from anywhere in the country, or with e mail callers, internationally, it is not really relevant to services in North Lincolnshire.
- Much improved service provision since health signed up to the domestic violence protocol enabling sharing of appropriate information with Police and through MARAC. Training has been about domestic violence to all departments across the trust for the past year raising the awareness of and the referral pathways for domestic violence.
- I think that there are a number of different organisations in North Lincolnshire, each of whom does a good job in dealing with domestic violence.

Unfortunately, the fragmentation of services sometimes results in the necessary links not being made, and necessitates victims reporting to more than one agency. Also, there is currently inadequate refuge provision. Certain groups are excluded from what provision there is e.g. males.

- Too few refuge places. Not enough specific advice and information for victims to make a complaint to Police and what may happen.
- We would always prioritise any case of domestic violence as urgent, but we can only help as a listening ear, or give information and support. The client has to take responsibility for acting. Sometimes this can feel less than adequate.
- Lack of time to support families. Length of waiting list for children to access counselling support. Lack/absence of research-based input for perpetrators of domestic abuse. Poor communication between different geographical areas.
- Lack of local support for men who suffer domestic violence. Lack of local support and advice for women who fear honour killing.
- The IDVA post is not permanent. It is determined solely by funding allocation. There is no service provision for medium/standard risk victims (only high/very high).
- Concern over the dilution of women for women services. The speciality is in danger of being swallowed up in the drive for “equal gender” services. The years of expertise for women survivors of domestic violence may be lost forever. Long term support is vital.
- Reporting of domestic violence is not clear within maternity services.
- There is a lack of services available to child victims of domestic violence e.g. support, group work, therapy or just someone to talk about their experience.

- Support available from Police domestic violence unit and through other agencies e.g. women's refuge, Safer Neighbourhoods. Specialist domestic violence court is not available in North Lincolnshire. MARAC is in place but requires agency commitment. Concern over possibility of forced marriage within some groups.
- Far too few bed spaces as well as the ability to support men. Provision for children who are abusive, men fleeing domestic violence is unsupported in this area. Difficulty in moving single women on from service due to Housing.
- Due to government spending/targets the service given to women will be diluted. Quite rightly a service is needed for men and teenagers, which the current refuge does not cater for. A further concern is the referrals for under eighteens, which over the past twelve months have increased considerably and at the moment do not fall under the umbrella of the Police Domestic Violence Unit.

11. IF YES, HOW (IN YOUR OPINION) CAN THESE SHORTFALLS IN SERVICE PROVISION BE ADDRESSED?

- By mainstreaming the IDVA role. By increasing the amount of refuge bed spaces. By having dispersed housing with enhanced security. This would require a robust "wrap around" service and support network.
- Perpetrator programmes for all, not just those who have been convicted.
- Counselling availability for children in schools and in social services. Home Start provision reinstated in Barton area.
- Need to try and provide opportunities to see/speak to victim by themselves.

- Further training is required for universal and targeted services in responding to the earliest stages of relationship breakdown / domestic violence.
- Currently working with Supporting People and local housing associations to secure accommodation and support.
- Extended refuge provision. Co-location of services dealing with domestic violence would resolve the other issues, but probably not feasible or cost effective in this area as insufficient volume.
- Outreach work by refuge and other organisations. More education and information for wider public.
- More resources allocated to these families. Standardised and recognised communication/referral pathways nationally.
- Domestic violence directory could list organisations who provide support to victims.
- Mainstream the IDVA post. Although there is now going to be another IDVA in North Lincolnshire, I'm not sure how wide their remit is for level of risk to victims.
- Keep women led services for women. Women should be able to receive support for as long as they think they need it. It should be client led and not money/target driven.
- Stonham women's services should offer support to children who are staying in the refuge. Early intervention and awareness raising in schools is important. Tier 2 and 3 services are very important.
- Re-apply for specialist court status. Promote involvement in MARAC process. Increased training on forced marriage.
- More bed spaces in locality. Move on accommodation greatly speeded up for women and men fleeing domestic violence.

- New teams could be set up to provide these services as an extension to the existing services rather than develop new services and fund projects for services which already exist, thus creating confusion for the victims. A more effective use of resources would be a one stop multi agency approach e.g. one organisation funded specifically to address the service users' overall needs and to bring in the appropriate agencies that are already in existence.

12. HAVE YOU ANY ADDITIONAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE SERVICE PROVISION FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

- To my knowledge the It's My Right project is the only specialist service who will support male victims of domestic violence. Those with drug issues; men; those with ASBO's or who have criminal records cannot access refuge.
- In North Lincolnshire we have come a long way and in Dianna Broadmeadow we have an able, committed and enthusiastic champion. We have looked at what can be achieved with available resources but need to consistently monitor to ensure these are "joined up".
- Lack of refuge places.
- Co-ordination must be ensured between the plans for children's victims and perpetrators. These should combine to create a 'family plan'.
- Domestic violence still treated by the local authority as a lower priority than street crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Although places of safety are more numerous than they were when we started counselling, it still seems difficult to find safe, appropriate accommodation at times.
- Long-term effect on children.

- When swearing in an affidavit at the court centre, the reception in which it is done is open to the public. Victims can be overheard by other members of the public or the perpetrator themselves could come in to pay a fine for example. The issue of privacy needs addressing to reduce the risk faced especially if the order is being made without notice.
- Short-term help is on its way – replacing existing two-year support. Domestic violence is very complex and issues can take many months, even years, to resolve.
- Increased support for victims where violence is not seen as high risk.
- Only areas around convicting perpetrators.
- The new service that is being proposed limits time spent with each client to four months, which can not be client led, just time and money led, therefore abandoning the victim at an extremely vulnerable time.

13. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE THE MEMBERS OF THE SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL TO BE MADE AWARE OF?

- The It's My Right project and IDVA and ISVA roles are subject to short term funding and reliant on successful bids. Each time there is a new "funder" the "goalposts" are moved in order to meet the desired targets. Some targets work against each other i.e. to reduce repeat victimisation but at the same time to increase reporting.
- The Scunthorpe gay men and women's groups has been superbly well served by regular communication from the local North Lincolnshire Domestic Violence Forum.
- Lack of services for Caistor Road estate. Especially problems of deprivation; housing problems – condition of housing stock and repairs not being done.

- The tender for the new floating support service was advertised on 6 February 2008 and will close on 20 March 2008. The evaluation of tenders will then take place with a view to the new service commencing on 1 June 2008. The current service will continue to ensure a seamless transition and no break in service for users.
- It is important to be aware that many people subject to domestic violence do need to talk, but do not necessarily want any intervention. People are aware that if they confide, particularly if children are involved, intervention could well happen.
- Domestic violence has to be given higher priority by all departments within local authority.
- At Relate, we provide a good starting point for victims of domestic violence. We have very comprehensive training in all aspects of this dangerous way of behaving. Our training is ongoing so that we are aware of new strategies etc. We also have good back-up from supervision or the Relate helpline.
- North Lincolnshire Homes should ensure that a) there is a clause in the tenancy agreement relating to eviction of perpetrators, and b) enforce this consistently. Despite a tender being out at the moment, staff at Stonham offer a good service already and are welcomed by women in North Lincolnshire. Progress and goals are often hard to quantify in domestic violence cases. One size does not fit all.
- Although Police are generally very good in North Lincolnshire, their focus is often on the adult, securing a conviction. Many services focus on adults and can overlook children's needs. Children need to be able to 'tell their story' when they have experienced domestic violence.
- Both MARAC and MAPPA meeting work very well to ensure safety of victim and control of perpetrator. Some solicitors in the area have little awareness of domestic violence impact on individuals and I would like to see

solicitor's specific to domestic violence. There have been some instances of social workers making matters worse for an individual as a result of a lack of knowledge or understanding of domestic violence.

- There are several organisations currently offering the same service to victims of domestic violence who are not practising a multi agency approach, despite portraying one, and in some instances being quite territorial. The domestic violence forum has become non-productive as there were too many agencies involved, many in name only, and with no direct contact with domestic violence.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your responses will be carefully considered by the members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel.

Membership of the Forum includes -

- Accident & Emergency Department , Scunthorpe General Hospital
- Al-Ateen
- Adult Education Service
- Apna Sahara
- Army Welfare Service
- Bangladesh Women's Group
- Barnard Court Health Centre
- Barton & District Healthy Living Project
- Body Positive
- Bradbury, Roberts and Raby
- CAF/CASS (Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service)
- Carer Support Centre
- Carr Gomm Society
- Child Contact Centre
- Community Legal Services Partnership
- CONNEXIONS
- Court Witness Service
- Crosby Bridge Healthy Living Project
- Crosby Community Association
- Crosby Health Centre
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Disney Ward Scunthorpe General Hospital
- Doncaster and South Humber Community Trust
- Early Years Community Support Team
- Fern Training
- The Forge
- Grimsby and Scunthorpe Rape Crisis
- HANWAG ([Humberside Association of Neighbourhood Watch Groups](#))
- Hanover Housing Association
- Home Start Scunthorpe
- Homestart Barton Outreach
- Humberside Fire Brigade
- Humberside Police
- Impact
- It's My Right
- Job Centre Plus
- The Junction
- Mason, Baggot & Garton
- National Probation Service, Scunthorpe
- New Deal for Lone Parents
- NCH (National Children's Home)
- North Lincolnshire Council Adult Education Service
- North Lincolnshire Council Adult Services
- North Lincolnshire Council Corporate Services
- North Lincolnshire Council Education and Personal Development
- North Lincolnshire Council Homelessness Team
- North Lincolnshire Council Housing and Social Services

- North Lincolnshire Council Local Links
- North Lincolnshire Council Super Caretakers
- North Lincolnshire Council Supporting People
- Northern Lincolnshire and Goole National Health Service Trust
- North Lincs Primary Care Trust
- North Lincolnshire Women's Aid
- North Lindsey College
- Practical Family Support Service
- Priestgate Health Centre
- Relate
- Riddings Health Clinic
- Riverside Health Centre
- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Salvation Housing Association
- Samaritans
- Sandfield House Resource Centre
- Scunthorpe Citizens Advice Bureau
- Scunthorpe and District Mind
- Scunthorpe and Grimsby Rape Crisis
- Scunthorpe Gay Men and Women Group
- South Humber Health Authority
- South Humberside Racial Equality Council
- Solicitors
- Stonham Housing Association Women's Services
- Sure Start
- VANL (Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire)
- Victim Support
- West Cliff Drop In Centre
- West Street Day Care Centre