

TITLE OF REPORT: **Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination: Addressing Offending Behaviour of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators**

REPORT OF: **David Bunce**
 Strategic Director – Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Summary

The Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination Group (MATAC) has been established by Northumbria Police to address the offending behaviour of domestic abuse offenders within Gateshead.

1 Background

- 1.1 As a reminder, at the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2015, members requested additional information relating to the Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination Groups that have been established by Northumbria Police, in collaboration with partners, to address the offending behaviour domestic abuse perpetrators.
- 1.2 Latest national statistics relating to domestic abuse show in the last 12 months, there were in excess of 1 million calls for assistance to Police for domestic-related incidents – of which, 269,700 were classified as domestic-related crime and around 6,400 were domestic-related sexual offences. This equates to over 8% of all crime committed throughout the whole of England and Wales and on average, it equates to someone contacting the Police for assistance in relation to domestic abuse every 30 seconds. There were almost sixty-thousand cases referred into MARAC for high-risk of serious harm or murder cases; of which almost 45% involve children.
- 1.3 The figures above demonstrate the prevalence of domestic abuse at a national scale and highlights the devastating impact that it can have on lives of victims and individuals. In September 2014, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to conduct an inspection on the Police response to domestic abuse. The final report highlighted that although services and agencies are available to provide support to victims many forces missed opportunities to target domestic abuse perpetrators and programmes designed to change behaviour of perpetrators are often quite sparse.
- 1.4 The report provided a rationale for how improved targeting and management of perpetrators of domestic abuse would reduce victimisation and potentially prevent domestic homicides from occurring. It also highlighted best practice used Police Scotland regarding their methods of tackling domestic abuse perpetrators and use of the 'Recency, Frequency and Gravity' analysis tool alongside a Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination process. As a result of

these findings, Northumbria Police has recently implemented a similar early intervention model, which is the first of its kind within England and Wales.

- 1.5 Promoting early intervention work with perpetrators of domestic abuse remains a key priority within the regional Violence Against Women and Girls (VAGW) Strategy which has been implemented jointly on behalf of Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioners. Tackling perpetrators is also included within the strategic priorities identified within the Community Safety Board Partnership Plan for 2015/16 and sits comfortably with the introduction of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Operation Encompass initiatives within Community Safety in Gateshead.

2 New Approach

- 2.1 Following consultation with partners, Northumbria Police submitted a proposal to the Home Office in an application for Police Innovation Fund, setting out a consistent process to identifying and targeting the most harmful/serial domestic abuse perpetrators. A significant proportion of the process is about preventing re-offending by perpetrators as well as prevention of escalation of violence at the very early stages – and includes:

- Identification of perpetrators and the production of in-depth subject profiles;
- Introduction of multi-agency MATAC approach to identify actions to try and curb offending behaviour (enforcement, preventive and support elements).
- Production of a domestic abuse toolkit and/or guidance document for use by operational staff;
- Commissioning of a voluntary domestic abuse perpetrator programme to ensure areas across Northumbria have some form of provision available;
- Implementation of 'live' monitoring / tagging offenders on a voluntary basis which will be able to assess the proximity of victims and offenders.

Analysis and Identification

- 2.2 Northumbria Police have a dedicated Analyst to produce target lists along with in-depth subject profiles for each target. The Analyst uses a method of analysis based on RFG – 'Recency, Frequency and Gravity' of offending behaviour to identify the most harmful/serial perpetrators to target. The definition of a serial perpetrator to be used by MATAC is an offender who is listed as an offender aged 16 years or over, has committed more than one domestic abuse incident against two or more different victims (partner/ex-partner, familial relationship as well as non-violent incidents) in the last 3 years. The development of a bespoke analytical package ensures Police and partners are able to implement a consistent and evidence-led way of targeting offenders who cause greatest level of harm within our communities.

Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination Groups

- 2.3 Once the perpetrators are identified using the RFG methodology, there needs to be a process for the tasking and coordination of resources to tackle these perpetrators effectively. The process mirrors the MARAC and MAPPA models that are already in place within Gateshead and ensures the Police and partner agencies resources are deployed in the most appropriate way. The MATAC meeting is held on a monthly basis and is chaired by Detective Inspector within Northumbria Police Protective Vulnerable Persons (PVP) Unit.

2.4 The membership of the MATAC is quite fluid and includes a range of Council services and partner agencies (depending upon the nature of the case) with membership including: CPS, Probation, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators, IDVAs, Housing Providers, Prison Service, Police (including representation from PVP, Force Intelligence Unit and local Area Commands).

2.5 Only a maximum of 5 perpetrators would be worked with at any point in time and the MATAC would decide how each perpetrator should be targeted and which agencies should do it. It is envisaged the MATAC process will highlight more of the serial offenders who offend against a series of victims, who are quite often assessed as standard risk victims, therefore meaning these serial perpetrators are not highlighted by any other process (e.g. MAPPA).

Domestic Abuse Toolkit

2.6 Good practice/guidance around domestic abuse and tackling of perpetrators has been produced which will include tactical options to disrupt and prevent further offending. This will complement the extensive work Northumbria Police and partner agencies currently carry out in support of victims of domestic abuse and seek to reduce victimisation and harm and increase feelings of safety. The domestic abuse toolkit includes multi-agency prevention methods, diversion, disruption and enforcement options (based on whether perpetrators choose to engage or not engage in the process). An example toolkit has been included in the Appendix for information.

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes

2.7 Northumbria Police have commissioned a Respect-accredited domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programme within Sunderland, which is a consortium of Barnardos, Impact Family Service and Gentoo. Additional funding has been approved for additional programmes in all localities across Northumbria – and will complement the existing domestic abuse perpetrator programme that we already have located in Gateshead. Deter Innovations have been providing specialist support to domestic abuse perpetrators for a number of years – and were visited as part of the recent OSC Review into Domestic Abuse. The service receives referrals from a range of Council services – including Children Services and Community Safety – and the MATAC process will draw upon and complement the work already been undertaken by this agency.

Electronic monitoring of DA perpetrators

2.8 The Innovation Fund Bid provides funding for 10 x GPS Electronic Monitoring Proximity Devices. These devices are a unique design which provides a unit to both the victim and perpetrator (and also has the function of a mobile phone enabling Police to make calls and speak to the victim and perpetrator). The perpetrator is additionally tagged with a conventional type tag on the ankle.

2.9 The perpetrator can be given exclusion zones of particular areas which can be at designated times of the day. The unit also uniquely provides a 'live' proximity alert between the perpetrator and victim unit, so that perpetrators can also be given a condition not to be within a certain distance of the victim. As soon as the perpetrator and victim are within the designated distance of each other both the victim unit and the perpetrator unit will receive an alert informing them of the

proximity, the Police will also receive an alert. Both victim and perpetrator will be located via GPS and further appropriate intervention taken, if necessary. This device has been very successfully used by Spanish Police, who report victims increased feelings of safety and reduced perpetrator re offending. It is thought that Northumbria is the only locality in the UK to trial these devices.

- 2.10 There have been a couple of issues with the introduction of this approach. Firstly, the law is unclear around using GPS monitoring and requires some clarification from the Ministry of Justice. The second and most obvious barrier is that for the Courts or Probation Service to consider use of any type of tagging unit they need approval from the Secretary of State. Currently, the Secretary of State has awarded the national to Capita, who do not have this technology at their disposal. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria has raised the issue with representatives from the Home Office who have been asked to consider designating Northumbria a pilot area to trial the devices. Although, there are no issues in deploying these units on a voluntary basis but full cooperation, of both victim and perpetrator, is required.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 The MATAC Model will be implemented within Gateshead in January 2016. A dedicated MATAC Co-ordinator has been employed by Northumbria Police to co-ordinate and facilitate the process – who will link in closely with Community Safety. Initial discussions have taken place with Council services and partners about their involvement and expected role in the MATAC process; whilst a specific Information Sharing Agreement has also been drafted/approved. In addition, a clear referral process has been created and shared with partners to allow agencies to submit domestic abuse perpetrators to be considered as part of the process.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are asked to:
- (i) Discuss and comment on sections 1 to 3 in report;
 - (ii) Agree to receive a regular update in relation to the MATAC process;

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Toolkit



Safeguarding Objectives

Adopt a multi-agency approach to:

- Reduce re offending of domestic abuse perpetrators
- Safeguarding adults and children at risk of domestic abuse

