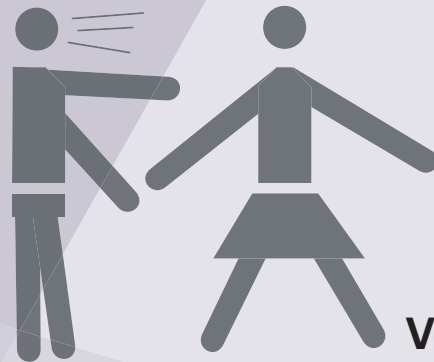


**Holding Prisoner**



**Verbal Abuse**



**Shoving**



**Hitting**

## **A Partnership Response to Domestic Abuse**

Published by:  
Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Forum  
c/o Civic Centre, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 1DH

**Chorley & South Ribble  
Domestic Abuse  
Strategy  
2005 / 2008**

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## Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the Chorley & South Ribble's first domestic abuse strategy, on behalf of the Domestic Abuse Forum.

This builds on the excellent work already undertaken by agencies & individuals in the area to improve responses to domestic abuse. Credit goes to all those, who, over the years in South Ribble & Chorley, have taken the issue seriously & acted. The recent merging of the two fora, not only consolidates resources & impact, but also presents itself as an appropriate time to pull together the strategic direction & work of the two groups over the years.

The post of Domestic Abuse Project Co-ordinator was created in 2001, as a result of the forum's perseverance in obtaining funding from the Home Office Crime Reduction's Violence Against Women programme. Hosted by South Ribble Borough Council, the post originally covered the one Borough, but has now been mainstreamed by the council & receives funding from both councils to cover both Chorley & South Ribble. It is the co-ordinator's role to strengthen the partnership working & responses to tackling this horrendous crime & its potentially devastating effects.

Kennedy Potts Training Association were chosen to draft this strategy as specialists in training & awareness around domestic abuse, but also for their local connections & knowledge, as residents in the area.

For far too long domestic abuse has been seen as a private matter that individuals, usually women, have been left to deal with on their own. Homes, that should be places of safety, are all too often places of suffering. It is time to recognise that responsibility to challenge this appalling behaviour lies with all of us, whether as friends, family, frontline workers, service providers, funders or policy makers.

The challenge of ending domestic abuse will clearly take a lot longer than the three year life of this strategy, but I feel confident that we are taking important steps toward this very goal.

*Councillor Brenda Wilson, South Ribble Borough Council & Chair of the Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Forum*

## Mission Statement

The Forum is committed to tackling domestic abuse with regards to survivor safety, abuser accountability, challenging societal attitudes and preventative work.

## Definition of Domestic Abuse

The term domestic abuse is used to describe a pattern of any kind of physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse between two adults who are, or have been, in a close family relationship. This includes intimate partners or ex-partners, or close family members.

The Forum recognises that, while abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability, faith, class or age, the most common form is that of women being targeted by their male partners or ex-partners.

Most forms of abuse can be described as coercive and controlling behaviours, which reflect the abuser's misuse of power & control over others. Abuse can be threatening or actual. It can happen every so often or on a regular basis, although it is rarely a 'one off' event and usually gets worse over time.

Domestic abuse is a complex social problem with devastating consequences. It causes untold pain & distress to survivors, their children & families, and drains the resources of all in our community.

## Notes on Terminology:

Throughout this strategy, 'victim' and 'survivor' will be used interchangeably to refer to anyone who has experienced, or is experiencing, domestic abuse.

- (i) Behaviour can include threats, intimidation, verbal & mental abuse, humiliation, constant criticism, social isolation & withholding money.
- (ii) This applies to anyone over 17 years of age, although the forum recognises that this age cut off may be problematic in some cases, e.g. older children being abusive to parents.
- (iii) Must be or have been in a relationship, e.g. husband & wife, same sex couples.
- (iv) Mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws & step parents.

## Chorley & South Ribble Strategy in Context

### National Developments

The Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Strategy has been developed in the wake of the Government's consultation process on domestic abuse, 'Safety & Justice' (2003), and while the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 progresses through Parliament. This legislation outlines the Government's intentions to prevent domestic abuse by improving support and protection for victims and bringing more perpetrators of this crime to justice. This builds on the Government's domestic violence strategy ('Justice For All,' 2002) and further indicates its commitment to consultation and the building of partnerships to reduce repeat victimisation. These two Government papers constitute an unprecedented advance in outlining a national approach to the issue of domestic violence. By ensuring that the crime reduction agenda addresses violence against women as a specifically funded project, the Government is raising the profile of domestic abuse and positioning it in mainstream politics.

There are other forthcoming Government initiatives or legislation that will impact on the domestic abuse field. The Children's Act 2004 means that, from January 2005, the definition of 'harm' in regard to a child will be extended to include witnessing or hearing the ill treatment of another. In July 2004, the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA) issued a consultation paper, Parents' Separation: Children's Needs and Parent's Responsibilities. Its draft proposals aim to help parents resolve issues associated with relationship breakdown, while ensuring that the welfare of children remains paramount. Finally, the Sentencing Guidelines Commission is examining the sentencing practice of the judiciary in domestic abuse cases and has also undertaken a consultation process with stakeholders.

Domestic abuse represents a substantial element of the official crime statistics for England & Wales, routinely accounting for a quarter of all recorded violent crime. Every year around one hundred and fifty people are killed by a current or former partner; of these, a hundred and twenty are women. Of the men who are killed by female partners, this will often be after he has abused her for years before she has reacted to protect herself. These figures translate as the death of a woman every three days at the hands of an abusive man. With recent research indicating that one woman in three suffers domestic abuse at some point in her life, then the lives of millions more women are being affected. In the UK one incident of domestic abuse is reported to the police every minute.

Responding to the prevalence of domestic abuse the Association of Chief Police Officers ACPO, in 2004 produced their guidance on investigating Domestic Violence. The aim of this guidance is to provide the police with clear information about the policing of domestic violence incidents.

Sexual assault is a significant, yet hidden, aspect of domestic abuse. Self reporting studies indicate that women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by men known to them, with 45% of rapes reported to the survey being perpetrated by current partners.

## Nature of Domestic Abuse

There is a massive under-reporting of domestic abuse. From self-reporting exercises we know that, on average, women will be assaulted many times before reporting it to the police and that only half of those suffering such abuse ever tell anyone. Of those that do, many will talk to a relative or friend rather than contact agencies. Crisp & Stanko estimate that, every year in England and Wales, 3.6 million friends & relatives are told by loved ones that they have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. There are many recognised barriers to disclosure including: victims' own denial of their situations, their isolation from external support systems, their fears of not being believed, their negative experience of previous agency response and their very real concerns about potential reprisals from their abusers.

Under-recording is also well documented nationally. Very few agencies document anonymous information or keep statistics on the incidence of domestic abuse in relation to service users or staff. This lost opportunity to collect data contributes to gaps in our understanding of the true extent of domestic abuse. It also impedes the development of effective and appropriate responses such as our ability to measure the impact of interventions, inter-agency co-ordination, case management and adequate performance monitoring.

Chorley & South Ribble Forum acknowledges that domestic abuse includes a range of behaviours and effects. For some victims, actual physical assault is not a feature in their abusive relationships, but imprisonment or financial controls may be their abusers' methods of exerting power and control. Sexual abuse, including rape, frequently features as part of the wider abuse, with forced pregnancies often being a result and, in some instances, an intention.

Many women, experiencing violence in their relationships, do not want to acknowledge to themselves or others that they are abused women. It is living with fear that can have longer term effects, as a local survivor said:

*" ... that's what they are living with ... constant fear all the time ... and I think that's the element so many don't understand, the emotional. People can see that your eye needs stitching, people can see that you've a broken arm, people can see that the head needs stitching or that you've got two broken teeth, folk cannot see the fear, they cannot see that this has gone on usually for years and that you're living in that state all them years ... "*

Domestic abuse is perpetrated across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. However research repeatedly demonstrates that abuse is predominantly by men against women. A 2002 report on research conducted with male respondents to the Scottish Crime Survey 2000 found that men were:

- Less likely to have been repeat victims of domestic assault
- Less likely to be seriously injured
- Less likely to report feeling fearful in their own homes
- More likely to also be a perpetrator of domestic abuse .

Some groups or individuals, according to their different experiences of oppression and discrimination, may experience the impact of abuse differently. In addressing domestic abuse, we need to be conscious of the diverse needs of our community and the specific impacts that abusive behaviour can have on some individuals. For example, women from black communities may – if they disclose being victims of abuse - fear losing the support of their extended family or community or risk compounding racist stereotypes of male aggression or faith beliefs in male dominance.

The majority of children are aware if their mother is being abused, often more so than their parents realise. In 90% of domestic violence incidents children are in the same or next room. Depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, eating problems, heightened aggression or passivity, difficulties with concentration and stress related illnesses, such as asthma and bronchitis, are all possible short or long-term impacts on children who witness domestic abuse.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory requirement on Local Authorities to effectively monitor the level of domestic abuse in their communities and form partnerships to reduce the problem. An identified key service objective was:

*'To provide women and children fleeing domestic violence with a place of safety and to enable them to rebuild their lives free from violence.'*

Domestic abuse has the highest rate of repeat victimisation of any crime. In 35% of cases there is a second incident within five weeks of the first, and the British Crime survey found that 57% of victims of domestic abuse are involved in more than one incident. Also, minor violence is a predictor of escalation to major violence . As this anonymous case from South Ribble illustrates:

*"....you're scared of getting beaten all the time even though you do get used to that, but then they take you somewhere else with it, they do something more painful and more to the edge because they have to, or else they could lose their control."*

## Chorley & South Ribble

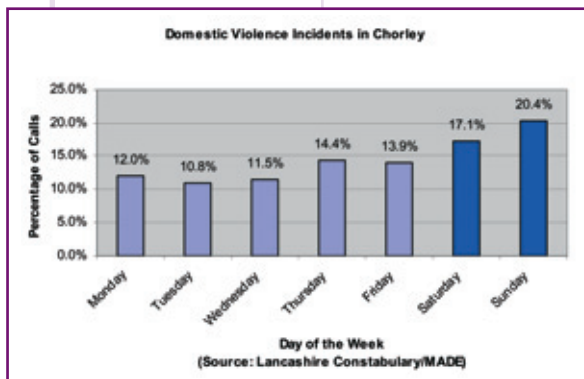
In recent years the two Fora (now combined into the Chorley & South Ribble Forum) have been active in the collection of data on the prevalence of domestic abuse in the two boroughs. Traditionally the police have been the principal source of statistics on violence in the home and the information they provide is still vital in helping to measure the number of perpetrators who come to the attention of the authorities. However, police statistics only show us a small proportion of the problem.

Domestic abuse data is recorded by Lancashire Constabulary as an incident. If the incident is classed as a crime, it is then recorded under the specific crime type, such as violence against the person. Not all of these proceed to prosecution.

April 2003 – March 2004.	Total Domestic Abuse Incidents	% where power of arrest used could have been	% of repeat victims of total number of victims
Chorley	1,227	68%	38%
South Ribble	1,172	68%	24%

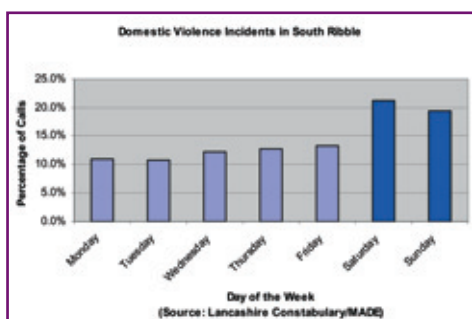
Source: Lancashire Constabulary

The Multi-Agency Data Exchange (MADE) conducted a time and day analysis of some of the domestic abuse incidents reported to the police in Chorley & in South Ribble. This data shows that reports of domestic abuse increase at weekends and peaks occur around Christmas and holiday periods.



Chorley: Reports through from Monday to Thursday account for 48.7%, with Friday to Sunday accounting for the rest.

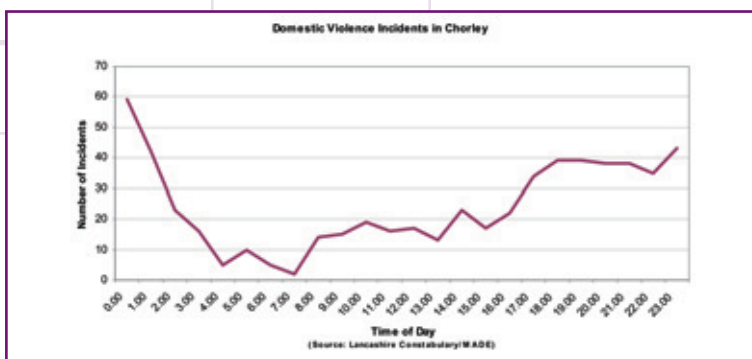
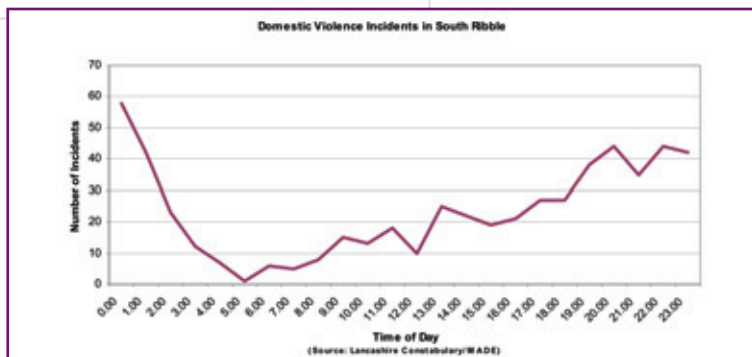
South Ribble: Reports through from Monday to Thursday account for 46.3%, with Friday to Sunday accounting for the rest:



### Percentage of Domestic Abuse Incidents (South Ribble)

Day of the Week	April 2003 and March 2004
Monday	10.9%
Tuesday	10.7%
Wednesday	12.1%
Thursday	12.6%
Friday	13.2%
Saturday	21.2%
Sunday	19.4%

If we look at the time of day, then domestic abuse is more likely to be reported during the evening, peaking just after midnight.



On 25th November 2003 the two fora held a 'Make it Count Day'. This showed that, on a typical day across the two Boroughs, there were 240 reports of domestic abuse, with workers aware of, or suspecting, a further 1,180 ongoing situations. In 2004, over the 16 day period from 25th November to 10th December, the general public reported knowing about a further 78 situations where someone was experiencing domestic abuse (data collected from local supermarkets & other public places).

Clare House Refuge in South Ribble received 272 referrals in the year 2003/4 and their domestic abuse helpline took 393 calls. Between May 2003 and April 2004, Chorley Women's Refuge Group had 235 requests for admittance for women, with 279 children.

As there is a link between homelessness and fleeing violence the collection of data on homelessness can be crucial in analysing domestic abuse within a local area. These are the local figures for the year 2003-4:

	Chorley	South Ribble
Domestic abuse as the main cause for homelessness	52	57
Priority need due to escaping violence	19	21

The British Crime Survey 1999 found that 5.9% of women between the ages of 16-59 had received frightening threats or experienced physical assault within the last year. Applying these figures locally suggests that annually there are 3,589 individual direct victims (this figure excludes repeat incidents).

Adopting a formula used by researchers to calculate the financial cost of domestic abuse on a national scale, we can estimate that the overall annual cost (to public services, employers, lost economic output and long-term human costs) in the Boroughs is £89, 889,040. This suggests that any interventions that reduce the incidence of domestic violence are likely to be very cost effective.

## Consultation Process

This is the first strategy document prepared by the newly created Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Violence Forum and is the result of consultation with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies and departments, and the hard work of members of the previous two Fora, with the support of both Chorley & South Ribble Community Safety Partnerships. The key elements of this strategy will also contribute to the Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Strategies 2005 – 2008.

Until late 2004 Chorley & South Ribble had separate domestic abuse fora. Following a lengthy consultation period and a recommendation from the Local Government Association Programme of Support for Domestic Violence Partnerships, the decision was taken to merge into one forum. The intention being that a unified forum will become more effective in addressing domestic abuse and there will be less duplication of services and initiatives. This strategy is the first joint venture and publication of the new Forum.

For some time, the Fora have benefited from the work of an active service users' and advisory group, Voices for the Future. The work of this group has informed the development of domestic abuse services across the two Boroughs and has played a significant role in the formulation of this strategy, including providing many of the quotations.

The Forum will continue to regularly consult with service users to ensure that their approach to domestic abuse is informed by the individuals who are most affected by it, i.e. female survivors/victims.

Other documents and related strategic processes that have informed the development of this strategy and the delivery plan are:

- Domestic Abuse: What do you Think? Young People's Consultation Project.
- Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Fora: Development Day Report, 10th Feb 2004.
- Anthony Wills, Sept 2004, Local Government Association: Programme of Support for Domestic violence Partnerships.
- Home Office Violent Crime Unit, 2004, Developing Domestic Violence Strategies - A Guide for Partnerships.
- Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Project Co-ordinators Report, 2003/4.
- Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Fora: Make it Count Day, 25th Nov 2003.
- Chorley Community Safety Partnership: Crime & Disorder Audit, 2004.
- South Ribble Community Safety Partnership: Crime & Disorder Audit, 2004.
- Kennedy Potts Training Associates, strategy consultation meeting, 23rd Nov 2004.

## Statement of Intent

Throughout history domestic abuse has been accepted, tolerated and even promoted, at times, by various institutions. This factor - which has contributed to the current high prevalence rates -, together with the lack of any kind of domestic abuse provision prior to the 1980's, means that addressing domestic abuse is in its infancy. The time, resources and commitment to develop an evidenced based multi-agency approach are required to make any kind of lasting impact on this social problem.

Work on addressing domestic abuse can only be effective if multi-agency co-operation is achieved. The services, expertise and resources that partner agencies can bring to the development and delivery of a strategy are crucial to its success. Organisations from all sectors, statutory, voluntary and private, have a contribution to make. The Forum wants to encourage multi-agency working, both within itself and across the Boroughs; to develop a comprehensive reporting network and to identify key lines of communication and referral points.

The Forum is committed to:

- ✓ Developing and delivering a three year Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plan.
- ✓ Developing and maintaining high levels of engagement from its partner agencies in the delivery of domestic abuse work across the two Boroughs.
- ✓ Consolidating the recently unified Forum and further developing the structure of the sub-groups to maximise impact and effectiveness.
- ✓ In order to avoid duplication and gaps in provision, ensuring that domestic abuse services and initiatives are co-ordinated.
- ✓ Continuing to consult with service users and ensuring that their experiences underpin service provision.
- ✓ Identifying the specific and diverse needs of the community and exploring the range of services required to meet these needs, particularly highlighting the experiences of victims/survivors from minority ethnic backgrounds and asylum seekers.
- ✓ Ensuring that domestic abuse is viewed by all agencies, both statutory and voluntary, as a major priority. The Forum believes that it is vitally important that those approaching the helping agencies receive a consistent and appropriate response from adequately trained staff.
- ✓ Contributing to a co-ordinated strategic approach at county level.

## Strategy Statement

The group with the responsibility to drive the strategy is Chorley & South Ribble Domestic Abuse Forum, in partnership with Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnerships.

The Aims of the Strategy are:

1. To increase safe choices and quality of support for those, predominantly women and children, experiencing domestic abuse.
2. To hold abusers, predominantly men, individually and collectively, accountable for their behaviour.
3. To challenge those societal attitudes which promote or collude with domestic abuse.
4. Provide children and young people with the motivation and skills needed to develop non-abusive and respectful relationships.

To effectively address and challenge domestic abuse there needs to be a focused and cohesive inter-agency response to the many complex issues involved. The essential outcomes of the strategy are:

- Collaborative working between the statutory and voluntary sectors at all levels.
- Adequate core funding to ensure that direct services for those affected by domestic abuse are able to continue both delivering and developing essential specialist services.
- An acknowledgement of the risks to children of living with domestic abuse and the development of responses to their needs, both physical and emotional, which promote their safety.
- Appropriate sanctions are in place and interventions encouraged, which both hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour and reduce the risks they pose of further harming women and children.

### **Aim One:**

To increase safe choices and quality of support for those, predominantly women and children, experiencing domestic abuse.

The provision of specialist domestic abuse services is an essential part of:

- a) assisting victims and their families to escape from violent and abusive behaviours
- b) supporting them in creating new and safer lives for themselves
- c) supporting women who decide to remain in relationships with violent men.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

It is acknowledged that there are many complex problems faced by individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse and that specialist services are often the most appropriate to address these. Many people who require assistance never seek it from the statutory sector and will instead turn to voluntary/independent sector provision. It is therefore crucial that these services are adequately funded and supported and the value of the work they undertake is recognised.

Chorley & South Ribble have a number of voluntary sector projects involved in the delivery of domestic abuse services (see Domestic Abuse Directory of Information and Services). No single agency can adequately provide the totality of provision required to ensure the overall safety of victims, work with perpetrators and also educate the community in order to challenge the attitudes that underpin the use of violence and abuse. To ensure re-active and pro-active services go to those who need them, it is therefore essential that all service providers are committed to partnership working. However, it is recognised that there are gaps in communication between local service providers and that these have, at times, led to the duplication of services and inaccurate data collection regarding met and unmet need. The Forum is taking action to improve this situation and seeks to develop a more open culture of information sharing and collaborative working. It is thought that only through the development of such a culture will there be a more cohesive and complementary provision of services for the two Boroughs.

The protection of those who are currently experiencing abuse in their own homes and their children is central to this strategy. The role of police officers in this cannot be underestimated. Victims must feel sufficient confidence in the police to report domestic abuse and the role of dedicated domestic violence liaison officers has proved positive in encouraging this.

*"The second time I contact(ed) the Domestic Violence Officer who was absolutely brilliant."*

However, as a local survivor recently stated, the training of professionals needs to go further:

*"Whatever policeman or woman that you speak to, or that comes to your door, should have an understanding and should be trained in this area. Everybody - especially people on the other end of the phone, 'cos sometimes how they speak to you, can be what you do next - probation, police, nurses, doctors, whatever, they need to listen."*

The need to increase the reporting of domestic abuse incidents was identified as a target in Chorley's 2002 Community Safety Strategy, with a target to increase reporting by 10% by 2005, which has been reached. However, under-reporting continues to be a problem and the reasons victims are reluctant to report are varied. Survivors tell us that one such reason is the lack of follow-up services. Any strategy should seek to listen to the voices of victims/survivors and take steps to encourage those experiencing abuse to disclose.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

*"....I wanted people to know what I was going through and how scared I was, and look this is how bad he is, please help me! You know I have got this everyday, and they just turned their back on me and then you just go smaller in yourself, you feel that you are more on your own and then you just put up with it more and manoeuvre them (abusers) even more so you don't get a beating. You just feel more like, 'Well, I'm in this prison'."*

The safety and protection of children should always be the highest priority for all service providers. Research indicates that in child abuse cases domestic violence features in 40% of sexual abuse cases and 55% of the physical abuse cases. There must be a recognition, by all agencies and their staff, that there should be active investigation whenever children are believed to be at risk as a result of living in homes where domestic abuse features.

This should be undertaken in a non-oppressive manner and the non-abusive parent, usually the mother, should be supported. The fear of having children 'taken away' or becoming involved in any child protection procedures are often a barrier for some women to seeking help and this needs to be acknowledged. Many women who are experiencing domestic abuse feel guilty and ashamed about not being able to look after or protect their children as well as they think they should. The Voices for the Future advisory group noted that women were only being asked if they needed any help when their child's behaviour was identified as being problematic in school or nursery. They indicated that they would like to have been asked as a matter of routine about their home lives. For this to happen, staff from all agencies need to be aware of the issues surrounding domestic abuse and be sufficiently confident to act appropriately (see appendix, good practice guidelines).

Although there is a range of services currently available across Chorley and South Ribble, information about these services does not always reach the people for whom they are designed. People can only access services that they know exist! The promotion of domestic violence services is crucial to ensure that they reach their target audiences. In order to assist them to make informed choices, those experiencing abuse in their relationships should be aware that support and advice are available. The needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups cannot be presumed to be met by mainstream provision. There should be a specific analysis of the experience of BME women in the boroughs which identifies their needs. In addition to making mainstream services relevant to BME women, there may be a requirement to develop specialist services.

Victims are often deterred from seeking help or leaving a violent relationship because they either have nowhere else to go, do not feel safe in their own homes or have – or believe they have - no legal right to remain. The availability of safe and secure accommodation for victims and their children, either for respite or as a stepping-stone to re-housing, is therefore crucial and can be literally life saving. In Chorley & South Ribble there is a range of emergency accommodation for homeless people, including two refuges which provide haven for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

South Ribble Women's Refuge, Clare House, is run by Progress Care Housing Association and in 2003-4 accommodated 49 women and 58 children. 83% of referrals received by Clare House had to be refused due to there being no vacancies.

Chorley Women's Refuge Group is an unincorporated voluntary organisation with charitable status. Operating with an occupancy rate of 90%, it was able to admit 23 women and 28 children. Both projects have recently experienced a change in their funding arrangements and are now largely funded by Supporting People. However, recent enquiries about increasing capacity for the Chorley Refuge have not thus far met a positive response.

Chorley Borough Council Housing Services & South Ribble Housing, along with six local housing associations, are the main providers of long-term accommodation in the Boroughs. It is unreasonable to expect anyone to continue living in accommodation, when it is probable that this may lead to them experiencing violence. Both Chorley & South Ribble Housing Departments provide advice and support for tenants fleeing domestic abuse and work closely with the refuges in attempting to provide a seamless approach to moving on to longer-term accommodation.

*"A Housing Officer came to see me at the refuge and asked me what would make me feel safe. I thought that was really good."*

Women accessing refuge services form only a minority of those experiencing domestic abuse, therefore it is important that a range of services are available and accessible for other women living with violence. Many victims do not want to leave their homes and often refuse to do so, believing that the perpetrator of the abuse should be the one to leave. Some women only reluctantly flee their homes when they feel their lives are at risk. For those who at present do not want to leave their home and/or the relationship, it is important that there is access to non-residential support services. Most of these direct support services are currently provided in the two boroughs by voluntary sector projects (see Domestic Abuse Directory of Information & Services). These provide embryonic counselling, support group and outreach provision and their problems of short-term funding can, at times, lead to a stop-start delivery of services. Pro-active outreach work and advocacy can significantly improve victim safety, and the Forum recognises that only with a partnership approach and an emphasis on co-ordinated work can the stakeholders shared aims be met.

In order to reduce the number of repeat assaults, there must be more support for victims and this support should be provided as early as possible. Early intervention in domestic abuse cases is reliant upon early identification and subsequent appropriate action being taken by professionals. In order to provide this effective service staff require training. Ensuring staff undertake this training is a responsibility for all the agencies that victims may access, not just those perceived to be in the 'front line'.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

A base line of domestic abuse training for all agencies is required which incorporates:

- Awareness raising of nature of domestic abuse
- Requirements of various agencies
- Role of workers
- Safety planning
- Self care
- Good practice guidelines
- Legal framework

The Forum recognises the value of comprehensive staff training on domestic abuse and the added value to be gained by undertaking this in a multi-agency setting. To this end, the Forum has developed a pool of trainers, from different agencies, able to deliver a one day awareness raising training package.

Substance misuse and domestic abuse are linked in many cases. It is estimated that drugs or alcohol are involved in between a third and a half of all reported incidents. Men often blame their abusive behaviour on drink/drugs and victims frequently become substance users as a way of coping. The dual problem of domestic abuse and substance use make it harder for victims to access services as providers are often unable to cope with the additional needs presented. For this reason, the Forum sought and were successful in securing funding to conduct community research in this area, and a report is due in 2005.

Gaps in Provision:

- Many victims remain reluctant to report domestic violence or seek help; they need information about and confidence in all the services and agencies that they may come into contact with.
- A need to improve partnership working in spirit and practice.
- As a result of a lack of, or deficits in, domestic violence training, there is a significant lack of awareness of the issues amongst many staff.
- No agreed common purpose, approach or protocols between the various statutory and voluntary sector agencies.
- There is no agreed protocol for data and information sharing between agencies.
- No needs analysis to accurately map capacity and gaps in service provision.
- There is a significant shortfall in refuge provision in Chorley.
- There is no comprehensive training needs analysis available to inform training need.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

### Key Objectives:

- To develop collaborative information sharing protocols and data collection procedures on domestic abuse in the two Boroughs.
- To improve public knowledge of local domestic abuse services and to encourage the reporting of incidents.
- To produce an analysis of the experience of BME women in Chorley and South Ribble and identify their specific needs.
- To deliver multi-agency domestic abuse training to staff in all relevant statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies.
- To increase emergency accommodation provision for women fleeing violence in Chorley.
- To increase outreach work and advocacy provision across the two Boroughs.
- To work collaboratively with other co-ordinators and fora in the region to explore developing services for male victims of domestic abuse.
- To consider implementing the findings of the research into domestic abuse & substance use.
- For the Forum to develop closer working arrangements with the Drug Action & Alcohol Group (D.A.A.G.).

## Strategy Statement: Continued

### Aim Two

To hold abusers, predominantly men, individually and collectively accountable for their behaviour.

Although it is recognised that a positive police response can improve reporting levels for domestic abuse, there is widespread acknowledgement that the Criminal Justice System's responses to such abuse are inconsistent and, at times, dangerous. As one local woman stated:

*"I've had all agencies, probation, police, prison. It's this sort of big nothing – all this is coming in and then it all disappears into like a big black hole .... Are they taking you seriously? ... No ... It's like they are sort of thinking 'Oh here we go again,' while they are talking to me, they are very, very civil and pretend, I can only say pretend, that they are listening or that they are doing something. They all talk and come up with wonderful solutions and if this happens, we will do this, and if that happens, we will do that, and basically the bottom line is they do diddly squat, because it has taken them five weeks to arrange a meeting to discuss the situation."*

Both civil and criminal law needs to ensure that maximum protection is offered to all victims in order to reduce further violence. The current approach of the legal system is patchy, with a tendency to rely on the good practice of individuals, rather than agencies' policies and procedures. In its consultation paper, Safety & Justice, the Government recognised that women are deterred from reporting their experiences, as they fear the way they or the matter will be treated by criminal justice services. It is to be hoped that the Domestic Violence Act will address some of the inconsistencies and improve the treatment of victims & witnesses by the legal system.

Many victims choose not to report incidents, as they think that nothing will happen to the perpetrator. Unfortunately this belief has some validity. People, mostly men, who perpetrate acts of domestic violence need to be held accountable for their behaviour and the responsibility for this should not be placed with or left to victims. Increased community sanctions for abusive behaviour may lead to increased confidence in victims that the 'system' can do something and this may, in turn, lead to increases in reporting. For offenders who perpetrate domestic violence there should be:

- Interventions designed to hold them accountable for their behaviour.
- Sufficient negative consequences to act as deterrents.
- Community condemnation of their behaviour.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

In Chorley & South Ribble influential criminal justice agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Lancashire Police are active in the Forum and individual staff take on the role of 'championing' addressing domestic abuse in their agency. This is very positive and is helping in initiatives like a more forceful arrest and prosecution policy, a witness and victim support unit and the creation of public protection units. The role of the local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) could be crucial in establishing a more co-ordinated response to domestic abuse from the key justice agencies, including drawing in the currently less involved agencies. LCJBs support Government in delivering criminal justice outcomes, including 'offences brought to justice' and 'confidence' in the system. Achieving positive outcomes for domestic abuse survivors is an important element of meeting both these targets, especially given the high attrition rates for these crimes.

Below are the six 'top actions' recommended in guidance to the LCJBs for tackling domestic abuse and how this will contribute to narrowing the justice gap:

- ✓ Engage in wider local partnerships with protocols on addressing domestic violence.
- ✓ Actively manage performance on domestic violence across the criminal justice system.
- ✓ Ensure that plans to implement the case management initiatives reflect the needs of domestic violence victims.
- ✓ Implement specific measures on domestic violence – in particular specialist courts, supported by independent caseworkers.
- ✓ Focus on post-conviction safety of the victim.
- ✓ Establish procedures for joint training and information sharing.

Lancashire Probation Board is planning to roll out an accredited domestic abuse programme for male perpetrators from April, 2005. In Chorley & South Ribble, this will mean that only men who have been arrested, charged, convicted and court mandated will be put through a groupwork programme, i.e. a very small minority of abusers. There is no provision for men who are not convicted of a criminal offence or who seek help on a voluntary basis. The Forum is committed to exploring the most effective way of working with perpetrators in terms of both best protecting women and children and securing best value. Work on filling this gap in services needs to be approached responsibly, with assurances built-in that services to victims and children will not suffer any loss of resources or funding as a result of the development of work with men.

When perpetrator programmes are being discussed, often the focus can too readily be on the abuser. This misses the point that the primary aim of working with perpetrators is to increase women and children's safety. As the abusive behaviour of most perpetrators goes unchallenged - clearly contributing to the recidivistic nature of domestic abuse - then perpetrator programmes should challenge men and hold them accountable for their abuse.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

There is an ongoing debate about the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes, with sparse research evidence. The most comprehensive evaluation of perpetrator programmes yet undertaken was by Gondolf in the USA . He took into account women's and their male partners' reports of abuse and found that 30 months after the completion of programmes:

- ✓ 53% of the men had not been physically violent
- ✓ 21% of men had not used physical or verbal abuse

These figures do indicate that under some circumstances there are reductions in the incidence of violence and abuse for some women. One of the lessons from this and other research is, that for perpetrator programmes to be effective, they must be just one element in an integrated approach to domestic abuse, which ensures that women have access to adequate support services alongside effective interventions with men.

In addressing domestic abuse in family court proceedings, the Lord Chancellor's Department identified domestic violence in 80% of cases. It should be understood that post-separation contact with children remains a potential opportunity for abuse to be continued. Workers should not presume that because the relationship has ended, so has the abuse. The point of separation and the immediate period after separation remain high-risk times for women

### Gaps in Provision:

- Co-ordinated response to domestic abuse by the criminal justice system.
- Involvement of the Forum in the local Criminal Justice Board.
- There is currently no perpetrator programme available for non-court mandated men.
- Integrated support services for women would need to be in place alongside any interventions with perpetrators.
- Other than with the minority who are supervised by Probation, no risk assessment of perpetrators is routinely currently taking place.
- There is no tracking of perpetrators' movements, e.g. with regard to housing applications or child protection procedures.

### Key Objectives:

- The development of links between the local Criminal Justice Board and the Forum.
- To work with the local Criminal Justice Board in narrowing the justice gap for victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- To develop witness & victim support services.
- To explore working directly with self-referred perpetrators of domestic abuse in an effective and safe way.
- To develop a mechanism for perpetrators to be signposted to appropriate and available services.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

### **Aim Three**

To challenge those societal attitudes which promote or collude with domestic abuse.

Changing public attitudes, especially those of young people, is crucial if there is to be a significant long-term reduction in the prevalence of domestic abuse. Research indicates that 1 in 4 young men and 63% of adult men think that violence towards a partner is justifiable at times. While not enough is known about how to change such attitudes, an obvious starting point might be raising awareness of the damage that such violence causes, both to individuals and the wider community. Society needs to recognise that stopping domestic abuse is everyone's responsibility. At national or local levels, media campaigns can be effective in educating the public about such issues and the unacceptability of domestic abuse. The early evaluation findings of recent national campaigns indicate that strong anti-violence messages are starting to have an impact on public attitudes.

A vital part of any awareness raising campaign is the provision of clear accessible information to the public. This should be done with reference to the diverse nature and needs of the local community, producing leaflets and posters in appropriate languages and positioning them in relevant places. Local campaigns have the dual benefit of raising the awareness of the general public as well as making safety information available to victims. Below is a quote from a member of the Voices for the Future Group:

*" I like the fact that we're getting the public a bit more aware of domestic abuse by the leaflets and the campaign....I'm just proud of what we've achieved already, what we've all achieved. I'm proud of myself, (I've) achieved things that I didn't think I could; this group has helped. "*

Domestic abuse imposes considerable and various costs on society: direct financial costs to public agencies and voluntary organisations, the cost of trauma to victims and any children involved and the indirect financial costs to the community and the economy of lost output. A recent Department of Trade And Industry report on the cost of domestic abuse estimates the total economic output lost due to domestic abuse to be around £2.7 billion per annum. This lost productivity encourages some employers to address the issue of domestic abuse amongst their employees.

Chorley & South Ribble Forum includes representatives from several major employers in the Boroughs. The Forum will seek to promote employers' good practice, by encouraging them to have in place policies and procedures that help identify employees who may be suffering or perpetrating domestic abuse. Once identified, the employer should contribute to the support of the victim and have a sufficiently effective code of conduct to deal with the perpetrator.

Perpetrators need to be made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and will be challenged. Promoting a culture of zero tolerance towards abusive behaviours and attitudes is essential. The Forum has a key role to play in providing a 'joined-up' approach to information promotion and engendering models of respectful relationships with and between agencies and services.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

### Gaps in Provision:

- The profile of the Forum and domestic abuse needs to be raised with key partner agencies.
- There is no co-ordinated campaign of information distribution in the two Boroughs.
- The advertising of services is ad-hoc and may be duplicated.

### Key Objectives:

- To build on the work already being done by developing a public awareness plan of action to cover the three years of this strategy.
- To ensure any public awareness raising campaign is culturally relevant and accessible to all sections of the community.
- To co-ordinate the distribution of information about services across the two Boroughs.
- To raise the profile of the Forum with key partner agencies and to encourage the participation of strategic planners and policy makers.
- To encourage and map employers who develop domestic abuse policies.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

### **Aim Four**

To provide children and young people with the motivation and skills needed to develop non-abusive and respectful relationships.

Preventing domestic abuse being perpetrated in the first place should be a priority for any domestic abuse forum. It is important to access early the next generation of victims and perpetrators and mould attitudes that domestic abuse is never acceptable. Work with young people will be more effective if it is in appropriate settings and delivered by those skilled to do so and who have credibility with the young people. The use of appropriate role models, particularly young males with raised local profiles, can be useful to help young people receive the 'right' messages about abuse and gender roles or, at least, ones which question some of the stereotypes around in some youth culture.

The Education Act 2002 introduced a new duty on schools, Local Education Authorities and Further Education Corporations to safeguard and promote the safety of children. This includes addressing domestic abuse where appropriate. Schools and colleges should include domestic abuse in discussions on personal safety with all age groups. This is especially important as the most relevant support network for children affected by domestic abuse is often their friends and peers, who need to know about and have some understanding of such abuse in order to provide the appropriate support. While there is already some work taking place with young people in school, access to some schools is a problem. This area of work needs to be further developed and a consistent approach across all schools agreed.

Living in a household where domestic abuse is being perpetrated can have a detrimental effect on a child's development and educational attainment, and may be a predictor of delinquency and other problems. When victims become aware that their children have become involved in the abuse, this often induces them to decide to leave.

*"Well, it was the incident where I was looking after the cat. I was trying to stop him from getting the cat, and Pete came out of the bedroom and said, 'Why does he keep doing it Mummy?' And even though I knew that Pete wasn't always in the house at these times, I sort of knew he must know something. You know, he is a bright child, he knew something, but I'd never seen him see things and he came out of his bedroom at this particular time. It was like a big blow in my face really. Then I realised, I can't ... what I am saying is that as soon as Pete was involved in that way, that was enough."*

It should be emphasised that the 'cycle of abuse' theory, i.e. that children who witness domestic abuse go on to become abusers or victim/survivors in adulthood, has been widely disproved and that, while there are links between childhood and adulthood experience of domestic abuse, these are not causal. However, any increase in awareness amongst children and young people will likely lead to more disclosure and a consequent increase in demand for support services. As there is currently a lack of such direct support services, this – alongside developments in preventative work – needs to be addressed.

## Strategy Statement: Continued

The changes to children's services outlined in the white paper, 'Every Child Matters', provide local areas with an opportunity to ensure that the needs of children affected by domestic abuse are embedded into local services. Those services should include:

- ✓ Improved support to parents through targeted services to families.
- ✓ Early intervention and protection, including a common needs assessment framework, a lead professional where the child faces multiple risk factors, and multi-disciplinary teams in schools.
- ✓ Greater accountability and integration of services locally.
- ✓ A workforce reform strategy, to help in the recruitment and retention of professionals.

### Gaps in Provision & Prevention:

- Little work is currently being undertaken in schools and with youth services.
- Direct services to children are fragmented and not mainstream.
- Social Services & education not sufficiently represented in the Forum and strategy development.
- There is currently no analysis of the unmet needs of certain sections of the community.

### Key Objectives:

- To work with education and youth services, and individual schools & colleges to develop preventative work with young people.
- To apply for funding for a play therapist for the local refuge services.
- To develop relevant gender specific work for boys and girls.
- To explore funding for specialist outreach services for children living with or fleeing domestic abuse.

## Appendix

### *Good Practice Responses*

*Always be alert to the possibility of domestic abuse, there may be a reason for injury or depression.*

### *To survivors of abuse*

#### *Confidentiality & Safety*

- Safety should be the key focus of all work
- Always speak to the survivor on her own, NEVER in front of their partner.
- Find out if she is happy to talk to you
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Do not disclose any information about your client without their express permission (there may be some limits to this, eg Child Protection situations)
- If you are going to refer her to another agency or act on her behalf, make sure that you have her consent
- If you need to contact them you will need to find a way that will not put the client in danger (this may mean finding a creative way of reaching her if she cannot be contacted at home)
- Women must not be sent back to where the perpetrator is living.

#### *Non-judgemental*

- Take her concerns about her safety seriously
- Listen, be sensitive and believe her
- Reassure her it is not her fault and that you appreciate how difficult it is to talk
- Be led by your client's needs, your role is to follow them, not take the lead. She may need immediate help, want to find out what her options are, or she might just want someone to listen to her.
- Women are not responsible for the violence they experience, they cannot be blamed for it
- Women are not alone, support is available
- Be sensitive to the fact that many black women experience racism when seeking help
- Women's experiences should be defined in terms of trauma, experts often regard survivors of violence as suffered from 'post traumatic stress disorder.'
- Women survivors have many strengths including courage and resourcefulness.

## Appendix

### **Choices**

- Women experiencing domestic violence should never be asked to participate in couple or family counselling or mediation.
- Always validate women's experiences if they disclose violence, recognise and name abusive behaviour and respect her choices
- Clients should be enabled to make choices about their own life and to take control of decisions
- Address language needs but use an interpreter not a family member
- Don't press her to do anything or make decisions for her
- Only give accurate and up-to-date information. If you don't know something, don't be afraid to say so, but be prepared to check facts with the relevant organisations or to refer her on if needed. Or find out with her.
- Offer the use of the phone or, if she wants you to, offer to phone for her.
- Workers should support women in making their own choices in their own time, in a space they feel space and comfortable in  
*(Sources: Stella Project, LIAP & Kennedy Potts)*

### **To perpetrators of abuse**

- Remember that violence is a choice NOT an uncontrolled reaction
- Domestic violence is unacceptable and must be challenged,
- Abusers are responsible for their violence
- Any form of violence or threatening behaviour is a crime
- Men's violence to partners and ex-partners is an attempt to control and manipulate
- Abuse takes many forms and controlling behaviours are one aspect
- Do remember that the man will use techniques or language to deny, minimise or blame the woman for the violence and abuse
- Recognise that violence is used to control women's thoughts, feelings and action
- Challenge the use of pornography as degrading and harmful to women
- Do not collude with any objectification of women
- Don't become involved in conversations that place responsibility for male violence with women

### *To perpetrators of abuse continued*

- Don't accept or collude with any excuses for abusive behaviour such as alcohol or stress
- Keep the links between domestic abuse and child abuse at the front of your mind
- Ensure that the woman's confidentiality is maintained in any dealings with him
- Ensure you do not do or say anything that puts her at risk
- Do not use the man as a messenger when needing to find out about the woman's safety
- Give men information and support in attempting to change their behaviour

*(Sources: LIAP & Kennedy Potts)*

### **Notes**

- 1) The legislative changes in the adoption & Children's Act 2002, which amend the Children's Act 1989
- 2) C. Flood-Page & J. Taylor (eds); *Crime in England & Wales, 2001/2*
- 3) C. Mirrlees-Black; *Findings from a New British Crime Survey*; Home Office 2004
- 4) E. Stanko; *The Day to Count: Criminal Justice 1:2* (2000)
- 5) Home Office Research Study 237 2004; *British Crime Survey 2000*
- 6) Crisp & E. Stanko; 2001
- 7) Scottish Executive Central Research Unit 2002
- 8) Hughes; *NCH Action for Children, 1992*
- 9) C. Kershaw et al; *Home Office Statistical Bulletin 18/00, 2000*
- 10) S. Walby & A. Myhill; *Reducing Domestic Violence, What Works?* Home Office, 2000
- 11) Note: these figures are under-counted due to the way priority need is documented. These figures only include single people without children.
- 12) S. Walby; *The Cost of Domestic Violence*; Women & Equality Unit (2004).
- 13) C. Goddard & P. Hillier; *Child Sexual Abuse: Assault in a Violent Context*, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 28:20-33 (1993)
- 14) E. Gondolf; *Multi-site Evaluation of Batterer Intervention Systems*; 1998.
- 15) M. Wilson & M. Daly; *Spousal Homicide: Canada*; *Statistic Canada* 14:8 (1994)
- 16) M. Burton et al.; *Young People's Attitudes to Violence, Sex & Relationships*; *Zero Tolerance* (1998); Mooney J.; 1994; *The Hidden Figure*.
- 17) Refuge's 2004, 'Don't ignore it,' campaign.
- 18) [www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/domesticviolence](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/domesticviolence)

*Drafted by Kennedy Potts Training Associates 2005*

