

PROTECTIVE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING – 22 JUNE 2010

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DETECTIONS – USE OF ASSESSMENT TOOL

REPORT BY CHIEF CONSTABLE

Introduction

1. This report outlines the use of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harassment (DASH) risk assessment tool that is used by officers after intervention to examine the effect that intervention has had in the overall reduction of danger to the victim.

Background

- 2.1 All domestic abuse incidents and crimes are risk assessed using the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harassment (DASH) model; this incorporates initial risk identification, assessment and risk management.
- 2.2 The risk level applies to risk of serious harm and not risk of further incidents so even repeat figures are not always useful in measuring reduction in risk. DASH is about concentrating on the critical few to identify the high risk cases. All high risk cases are taken to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). MARAC data is collected nationally with particular focus on the repeat cases to MARAC. The principle behind this measurement relates to the success of the multi-agency interventions and safety plans.
- 2.3 The proposal appears to be suggesting that officers visit victims after the event and revisit DASH to then compare DASH 1 with DASH 2. I feel that this is too simplistic to realistically measure an unquantifiable professional decision. If we start measuring officers on a reduction from high to medium or medium to standard we stand a real danger of affecting the professional judgement not necessarily in the victim's best interest. This could be potentially very dangerous. The dynamic element of DASH already allows for it to be a fluid process but we should not be counting risk levels as any part of performance as we are in grave danger of corrupting the decision making process.
- 2.4 High risk meetings are held monthly on every Anti Victimisation Unit (AVU) to review all their high risk cases.

Conclusion

- 3.1 It is therefore considered that the only realistic indication of measuring the success of the risk assessment process is a reduction in domestic homicide and domestic indictable only offences.
- 3.2 It is acknowledged that domestic abuse detections are not a suitable measurement due to the fact that of all the domestic abuse that is recorded over half are recorded as Crime Related Incidents (non crime) therefore these cannot be detected.

Recommended - That clarification on this matter raised by an Authority member is noted and updates on domestic violence detections be reported where necessary to the Committee.

MARTIN RICHARDS
Chief Constable

Contact: Superintendent Jane Rhodes, HQ CID
Email: jane.rhodes@sussex.pnn.police.uk
Telephone: 0845 6070999