

## Agenda Item 17

### Violence Against Women

#### Strategy Group Meeting

12 March 2013

#### Action notes

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| <b>Present</b><br>Moira Paton, NHS Highland (representing Community Planning Partnership)<br>Fiona Palin, The Highland Council<br>Caroline Tolan, NHS Highland<br>Gillian Gunn, VAW Development & Training Manager<br>Heather Williams, Ross-shire Women's Aid<br>Cath King, The Highland Council<br>Margaret McShane, Northern Constabulary<br>Richard MacAulay, RAL Manager<br>Vikki Wickenden, VAW Team                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
| <b>Apologies</b><br>Elaine Mead, Chief Executive NHS Highland<br>Cllr Linda Munro, The Highland Council<br>Gus MacPherson, Northern Constabulary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |
| <b>1. Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Action</b> |
| Moira welcomed those present and introductions were made. She also welcomed Gillian back from maternity leave.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| <b>2. Previous Minute and Matters Arising</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Action</b> |
| The previous minute was agreed as accurate, Margaret asked that Eddie's name be removed from the last page under Service Users. Moira went through matters arising not covered on the agenda.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |
| <b>3. Feedback from Safer Highland</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               |
| Moira thanked Gillian for the huge piece of work she has done on the Strategic Assessment which is required for Safer Highland meeting on 26 March. It is hoped that it can be agreed that one or two large main priorities can be worked on each year whilst other work continues. Moira will give an update from Safer Highland at the next meeting. Safer Highland are meeting in a few weeks to look at the Strategic Assessment in a bit more detail and sign off the priorities to be reflected in the new SOA. There was a discussion on the extent of change which is happening currently and in the future e.g. with the new single Police Scotland beginning in April. | <b>MP</b>     |
| <b>4. Operational Update</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |               |

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| <p>Margaret gave a brief update in Gus's absence.<br/> The 1<sup>st</sup> April is when Scotland's single Force goes live. The local area is being headed by Chief Superintendent Julian Innes and his aim is to maintain the existing standard through all the change. The new Chief Constable has spoken about Domestic Abuse being one of his priorities. It is hoped to create a 'Multi agency tasking unit' in the future (although there are no firm plans) which would be like a MARAC for perpetrators. This is very successful in Strathclyde.<br/> Margaret gave an update on the new Domestic Abuse Investigation Team which has been up and running since January and has already worked successfully on two cases.<br/> A full update by the Police will be given at the next Delivery and Strategy group meetings.<br/> Fiona advised the group that Inverness Women's Aid had been successful in their bid for Badenoch, Strathspey &amp; Nairn outreach service.<br/> Cath was introduced as the new Chair of the Delivery group and a deputy is to be reconfirmed at the next meeting - this will be someone from the Police.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>GM</b></p> |
| <p><b>5. Strategic Assessment</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                  |
| <p>Gillian had previously circulated the VAW Strategic Assessment to the group and went through the Partnership recommendations for discussion and agreement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Development of a network of connected services and support for individuals who have experienced sexual violence</i></li> </ul> <p>There has been an increase of rapes reported in Highland which could be as a result in the change of legislation. Moira suggested that this needed to be a key priority. Margaret advised the group that the Police would be putting together a Rape Task Force in the future to standardise the way Rape victims are dealt with for the better. It was agreed that this was a priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Support improvements within the criminal justice response to VAW</i></li> </ul> <p>Gillian said we need to increase turnaround from a report to a conviction. There is ongoing work with Andrew Laing from the PF's office and he has been helpful in addressing a number of issues. Highland Council hold regular meetings with Sheriffs. It was agreed that this is a key day to day issue and should be continually worked upon, rather than be set out as a priority for this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop initiatives to tackle domestic abuse in teenage relationships and ensure appropriate support is available for those affected</i></li> </ul> <p>It was felt that we need to concentrate on teenage relationships and expand this to VAW not just domestic abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continue to improve safety and provide support for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse</i></li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that this has been moved on most in the recent past in terms of MARAC. MARACs are not up and running in all areas yet but will be very soon. We need to ensure that;<br/> Women need to feel supported throughout the MARAC process<br/> Women who don't go through the MARAC still feel safe</p> |                  |

- *Continue to tackle repeat domestic abuse offenders*

This is being done by MARAC and Police Domestic Abuse Investigation team who target repeat offenders. It's worth revisiting the way we are delivering the Perpetrator programme and investigating whether we could offer different approaches for e.g. group programme etc

- *Support and develop prevention initiatives to tackle gender inequality*

It was agreed that prevention work on this is a priority.

- *Increase awareness of commercial sexual exploitation and take steps to address it in Highland, including provision of support to women to 'escape' it*

There is acceptance in our society regarding sexual exploitation e.g. lap dancing clubs etc. It is recognised that CSE happens in Highland and demand for this needs to be tackled alongside ensuring that services are sensitive to the needs of those who have been exploited.

- *Improve our response to those affected by (or at risk of) forced marriage, FGM and 'honour' violence*

The numbers for this are low but anecdotal evidence highlights that women affected by these issues do live in Highland. There are no specific services in Highland, there is a helpline for some issues but no face to face assistance/advice. A suggestion is to develop a 'champion' with full training within organisations.

- *Ensure risks are minimized when children are in contact with a parent who has a history of perpetrating domestic abuse*

There needs to be improvements in this area such as specific training in family courts and support contact centres for safer 'handover' for women and their children. There are no extra resources to fund a contact centre but local facilities can be identified. There is work being done nationally on risk assessments for contact and it is hoped to link in.

- *Support communities to respond more effectively to those affected by VAW in their locality*

Need to be sure communities are providing a good response (emotional support, listening not judging) this is another area where 'champions' could be developed although the question arose 'how do you give people these skills?' Work could be done to link in with "Together we can stop it" campaign.

- *Support practitioners to develop their understanding of VAW and to improve service responses*

This relates to training and linked to long term outcomes. A timescale and a plan of who will do what. It was suggested that feedback was needed from practitioners in the form of a survey linked in to twitter/facebook, asking the questions re training, how equipped are they to do their job, their view of other services not just their own.

Important are the views from those affected by VAW.

Gillian will ask colleagues within the VAW network how they address this.

It was agreed there would be two main priorities;

1. Sexual Violence
2. Prevention initiatives

GG

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| <p>Gillian will work on a clear work plan (not a Strategy) for the next meeting. This will be developed by the Delivery Group and may include subsuming some of the priorities in to each other (e.g. prevention and domestic abuse in teenage relationships) as there is some cross over. Participation issues will also be picked up within the work plan. The Delivery Group's recommendations for the work plan will be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that by that time the recommendations from Safer Highland will also be clear and that these will be incorporated into the new draft plan.</p> <p>It was also agreed that Gordon be invited to future Delivery Group meetings.</p> | <b>GG</b> |
| <p><b>6. A.O.B</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |           |
| <p>There was no other business. Date of next meeting 17 April 10 – 12 Ante Room Assynt House.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |           |