

Equalities Monitoring – Services

C - Community Safety

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1.Introduction

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act set up Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) throughout England and Wales to make key agencies work together to reduce crime and disorder. These partner agencies are the Local Authority, Police, Fire Service, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Probation.

The Bracknell Forest CSP has worked hard since then to make Bracknell Forest a safer place. The BFC Community Safety Service, which manages the business of the CSP and ensures compliance with its statutory obligations, has an impact in improving the wellbeing of the community by working with partners to reduce crime and disorder. This includes working to eliminate victimisation, discrimination and harassment for all people within the community.

The purpose of equalities monitoring is to ensure that BFC is providing a fair and equitable service to all residents. While the Community Safety Service works to eliminate inequalities in all work that it does, this report will consider four key areas of crime and disorder which can impact all residents, but which have relevance to residents with the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These 4 key areas are:

Domestic Abuse (DA)

Prevent

Modern Slavery and Exploitation (MSE)

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

2. Access to Service

1. Domestic Abuse (DA)

- Whilst the government definition of domestic abuse applies to both men and women, domestic abuse remains a gendered issue with many domestic abuse victims being women and the majority of perpetrators men.
- Most domestic homicide victims are women, killed by men. Key findings from the femicide census (2018) found that of the 149 women killed that year, 91 (61%) were killed by their current or former male spouse or intimate partner; 12 women (8%) were killed by sons or step-sons; and 5 (3%) were killed by a son-in-law or ex son-in-law
- Domestic abuse remains a hidden crime with many victims not wanting to report the abuse to family, friends, or indeed agencies. Seeking help is difficult because initially victims may not recognise the abuse in the first place, often minimising what is going on. On recognising the abuse, many may think they will not be believed; or that family, friends or professionals will not take their experiences seriously; or they fear they will be 'blamed' or in some way be seen as responsible for the abusers behaviour
- Many people face discrimination in society for several reasons and this discrimination compounds the difficulties a victim of domestic abuse may encounter when seeking help. Victims from marginalised groups face additional barriers to obtaining support and advice they need. They may experience prejudice, stereotyping and misunderstandings. The issues a victim of domestic abuse may face over and above the abuse may be different at different times. Belonging to more than one group compounds these issues

2. Prevent

- Referrals to this service belong to and are managed by Counter Terrorism Police South East and are only referred to Channel when deconfliction process has been completed
- Continued training and awareness raising is to be explored and developed across Council services to understand and appreciate how we are working with growing incidents of:

Asylum seekers: someone fleeing war, or fearful of persecution (e.g. for religious or racial reasons). Note that persecution does not necessarily mean violence.

Refugees: someone who has been granted asylum; typically granted a 5-year stay in the UK.

Economic migrants: this can mean anyone moving to a different country for work, but the term is typically used to refer to unskilled or low-wage workers (professionals tend to be referred to using the more positive term 'expat')

Integrating community, cultural and faith groups is integral to delivering a robust and responsive service.

3. Modern Slavery and Exploitation (MSE)

- Hidden crime type that is often not understood by the public: public awareness began in 2019/20 to raise awareness of what MSE is, what the signs are and how to report
- There may be language barriers to understanding key MSE messages: further work needs to be done to ensure messages are available in a variety of languages
- Additional awareness and first responder training needs to be undertaken to ensure all colleagues and partners of how to respond should they become aware of someone who may be a victim of MSE

4. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- Reports of ASB tend to be received across most adult age-groups, predominantly from those in the middle to older age groups and from both genders. However, exact proportions are not known.
- We also do not collect data from those reporting who may have other protected characteristics.
- ASB in Bracknell Forest can incorporate hate crime but mostly does not to our knowledge.

3. Equality Data

1. Domestic Abuse (DA)

- Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) which includes number of referrals to their service, including risk levels, gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality and complex needs.
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which includes number of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) referrals, referrals with a male victim, referrals where the victim is LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender), number of victims aged 16-17 and number of others harming aged 17 and below.
- Other sources including Thames Valley Police, Hestia (Medium Risk Safety Planner role).

2. Prevent

- Thames Valley Police Niche database (crime recording)
- Thames Valley Police Hate Crime and Vulnerability toolkits
- CTLP (Counter Terrorism Local Profile): Delivered annually by Counter-Terrorism Policing of the South-East (CTPSE)
- Daily Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) bulletin

3. Modern Slavery and Exploitation

Thames Valley Police produce a quarterly infographic for all CSPs including Bracknell Forest which summarises information about suspected victims based on the statutory returns to the Home Office as well as intelligence submissions to police. The infographic includes the type of exploitation, nationality, age range, gender and whether under 18 or over 18.

National research has also been conducted as follows:

- Between Two Fires: Understanding the Support Needs and Vulnerabilities of People from Albania, Vietnam and Nigeria who have Experienced Human Trafficking into the UK
- A Few Doors Down: The Links Between Modern Slavery and Substance Misuse
- Responding to Modern Slavery and Exploitation within the Homelessness Sector
- Still in Harm's Way: An update report on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK

4. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Matrix. A key focus is on how we can provide effective support to victims of ASB, ensuring that together we understand better the impact ASB can have on their lives and ensuring processes are in place to protect them from further harm. Priority is given to the identification and protection of high risk or vulnerable victims. A vulnerable person is one whose experience of ASB, and resulting harm, is likely to be more significant because of their individual personal circumstances
- The partnership problem-solving group (PPSG) is a multi-agency group which discuss and agree actions to reduce the negative impact that problem individuals and families have on victims through their ASB. The work of the PPSG identifies desirable outcomes and determine what interventions will be used to achieve this, taking into account vulnerabilities and protected characteristics. Depending on the vulnerability and protected characteristic, appropriate representation is invited to meetings to support the outcomes sought
- Thames Valley Police CMP database
- Thames Valley Police ASB spreadsheet
- Thames Valley Police Niche database (crime recording)
- Equalities Monitoring Form (Community Trigger Applications)

4. Equality Duty

The equality duty is a general duty on public bodies and others that carry out public functions. It ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees. The council has a general duty under the Equality Act to pay due regard to three key equality objectives:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

1. Domestic Abuse (DA)

- Awareness raising includes signposting for all victims of domestic abuse including signposting for male victims.
- Introduction to Domestic Abuse training includes section on 'marginalised groups' to encourage delegates to identify and understand the additional issues faced by marginalised groups suffering domestic abuse.
- Berkshire Women's Aid (local service provider) values include 'we believe in providing support to anyone who needs it, regardless of their sex, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability'.
- Domestic Abuse Forum representation from Army Welfare and survivor(s) of domestic abuse as well as all relevant service areas. Membership of both the Domestic Abuse Forum and the DA Executive Group are reviewed annually with gaps in membership identified and addressed as necessary.
- Equality and Diversity agenda item planned for November DA Executive Group meeting.
- Bracknell Forest Council were part of a two-year Thames Valley BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee) project 2018-20. The project was funded by the Home Office VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Transformation Fund and supported by the local authorities across the Thames Valley and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The project set out to identify barriers experienced by women from ethnic minority communities subjected to abuse or violence when needing to access support, and to identify lessons for improving service responses. The project was delivered via a network of six BAMER Support workers employed by four domestic abuse service providers across the authority areas, and coordinated by a Strategic Officer, hosted by Oxford City Council. The project was overseen by the BAMER Project Board, to whom the Strategic Officer reported, chaired by the OPCC, and consisted of representatives from six of the nine authorities (including Bracknell Forest). An evaluation report is due to be published Autumn 2020 which will outline recommendations from the project to be implemented locally. The report will be shared with relevant local Boards, namely the Bracknell Forest Domestic Abuse Executive Group, Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Partnership and Community Cohesion and Engagement Partnership. A BAED (Black, Asian Minority and Ethnically Diverse) Project Board has been formed to continue the momentum of the BAMER project work and oversee local delivery of the recommendations from the report.

2. Prevent

- Connection to statutory and community groups to identify emerging trends and concerns
- Prevent lead is an active participant, collaborator and member of the CCEP (Community Cohesion Engagement Partnership)
- Faith and Belief forum participation
- Hate crime data interrogation
- Ongoing awareness raising and training
- Dissemination of training materials
- CPD roundtable events to share learning, updates and good practice
- Monthly scheduled Channel Panel meetings
- Prevent Steering group every 4 months with action plan monitoring
- Continue to promote/educate Councillors/professionals and carers as well as through public awareness-raising, practitioner forums and colleague/partner networks
- Continue to support local and national initiatives
- Support activities through Involve
- Regularly review and evaluate the Prevent Action Plan and membership

3. Modern Slavery and Exploitation

- The Bracknell Forest CSP has a Modern Slavery Strategic Group in place which is working to ensure statutory compliance by BFC. This includes awareness training for all practitioners and partners who are public facing
- The government's support programme (the National Referral Mechanism or NRM) requests age and gender when notifications/referrals are submitted
- Any suspected victims who consent (consent from children is not required), including those with protected characteristics, are referred to the Victims First – Willow Project who support all victims, their family/friends and their caseworkers
- BFC safeguards suspected victims aged 17 and under at risk of exploitation or who are being exploited through its Makesafe Team (Exploitation Prevention) and their risk strategy groups for those at all levels of risk
- Adults at risk of exploitation including those with a learning disability and/or autism are referred into the CSPs Partnership Problem-Solving Group which includes police, the Willow Project and the appropriate BFC service should the person have a protected characteristic
- The Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is currently running an Early Intervention Youth Fund project which aims to reduce violence perpetrated by and against young people related to exploitation (local and County drug lines)
- BFC Procurement are undertaking research into good practice used by its largest suppliers to prevent modern slavery and exploitation in their supply chains. This good practice will be shared with other smaller suppliers. This will involve awareness of MSE with contractors in the construction and service industries who employ people who may not have English as their first language
- BFC is about to undertake a MSE programme across all departments including the identification of champions, appropriate training and the compilation of a referral pathway. In addition, MSE e-learning will be mandatory for all new starters in relevant service areas. This will improve equality of treatment by enhancing our ability to

identify and respond to suspected victims with protected characteristics who come into contact with council services

- It is aimed to include equalities monitoring information on the CSP's annual consultation with the community on CSP priorities (which include MSE) to help identify which sectors of the community are not being reached
- Better use of leads in hard-to-reach communities needs to be made to ensure that MSE awareness reaches everyone
- TVP and the Home Office should be encouraged to collect and provide further equality monitoring information on referrals to the NRM and intelligence submissions (apart from gender and age) to enable better identification of hard-to-reach groups
- All public awareness-raising should be accessible to all with protected characteristics including those with sight loss, those who have English as a second language and those with a learning disability
- BFC should continue to promote MSE awareness and support services to councillors as community representatives as well as through targeted public-awareness-raising messages, practitioner forums and colleague/partner networks
- BFC Community Safety will be raising awareness of MSE on relevant national days through several routes including online. It will need to ensure that these messages are accessible to all including those with protected characteristics
- TVP were recently successful in securing a stock of key fobs with the Modern Slavery Helpline details printed on them. These will be distributed to those at risk of MSE through CSC, Housing and ASC

4. Anti-Social Behaviour

- The ASB Risk Assessment Matrix enables the Community Safety Service to act quickly and effectively in order to tackle ASB targeted at vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics using the powers available in legislation (see E of the Matrix in the column alongside)
- Continue to ensure that our web pages are clear, informative and up-to-date and include information on how to obtain information in a different format (web pages updated September 2020)
- Continue to promote the dedicated team telephone number and mailbox for all enquiries
- Have Your Say events (hosted by TVP)
- Targeted community events
- Continue to promote ASB services to community Councillors as well as through public awareness-raising, practitioner forums and colleague/partner networks
- Explore collecting equalities monitoring data for all ASB reports