

Bracknell Forest Community Safety
Partnership (CSP)
Annual Progress Report – 30
November 2023

Notes for pages 14-17

Key Focus 1: Tackle exploitation and serious violence across all ages

The Serious Violence Duty, which effectively went live in December last year, places quite significant requirements on CSPs across the country and quite rightly so. The tragedies due to knife crime that we read about in our newspapers are devastating. Yet they are preventable. This year, we have undertaken an analysis of serious violence in Bracknell Forest across all ages – both in public space and private space and are in the process of taking a new strategy through the partnership and Council-approval process. We have included the voices of residents of all ages as well as professionals and will be setting a challenging but realistic work plan to steer our work in coming months. While our levels of serious violence are low in number, our aim is to prevent the risk of them happening in the first place.

SAVE stands for Serious Adult Violence and Exploitation. We know that our approach to safeguarding those under 18 who are at risk of Serious Violence and Exploitation is mature and robust. However, we know that risk extends beyond the age of 17 so we have developed this cross-organisational operational response especially for adults. Upon its launch last year, the group didn't get that many referrals, so we are re-launching it again this year with more awareness and information.

The next 2 items on the slide all relate to our ambitions with Exploitation prevention.

The first is to compile an all-age Exploitation Strategy to understand what it looks like in Bracknell Forest and address the threat beyond childhood.

The second is to develop a training and awareness offer to those out in the community who may suspect exploitation but not know what to do and how to get help. Here we are looking towards taxi drivers, security staff, shop owners, hotel staff and also just people out and about who are natural guardians of those who are vulnerable.

When we think about exploitation, we perhaps don't immediately consider financial scams and fraud and how severely they impact our older residents who can be relentlessly targeted to hand over money to highly sophisticated scammers. This year, Bracknell Forest, through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Partnerships Fund, has funded a 2-year project which supports those who have been scammed by installing call blockers, exploring ways to get money back and also highlighting latest scams to community groups and Council social care teams.

I will include how to make a referral in the notes from this meeting which can be shared widely within communities.

Key Focus 2: Reduce town centre anti-social behaviour and crime

Youth Disorder and SS4

Post COVID, the levels of ASB in the Town Centre have been growing. A multi-partner group was set up to provide a combination of support and diversion to the young people as well as holding them to account for crimes committed. Under the banner of Safer Streets 4 which was a government fund that Bracknell, Wokingham and Windsor Maidenhead had been successful bidding for, Berkshire Youth conducted outreach throughout the town centre, offered a programme of activities over the summer including a 3-day camping trip, cooking classes, sport events, days to the Beach and to London and also worked with Bracknell Town Council to hold activities at Braccan Walk Youth Centre. Alongside the supportive work, there was also enforcement activities in the form of additional police operations and referrals into the Council's Youth Justice Team to prevent an escalation into more serious offending. Safer Streets 4 has come to an end now. However, the Town Centre Partnership Problem-Solving Group continue to monitor and respond to levels of ASB in the town centre and we are hopeful at identifying a way to sustain some of the work that was delivered under Safer Streets 4.

Shoplifting

There has been significant focus on increases in shoplifting in the media over recent months and it seems to very much be a nationwide issue. Bracknell Forest Town Centre has not escaped the same trend unfortunately and we have heard of quite significant losses in stock by our key tenants in the Town Centre. However, these incidents weren't being reported to police which meant that an enforcement response was not in place. There was also lack of understanding over how shoplifting reports were investigated and the levels of CCTV capability within stores and how to submit evidence. The CSP created a group with police, Community Safety, Lexicon, Town Centre Economic Development and the Peel Centre and set out a process for retailers to follow to report shoplifting officially so that we understood where it was taking place and who was doing it. Police Assessment and Investigation Unit (AIU) have also worked with us to unblock barriers which led to incidents being filed without action. A meeting with retailers in the Town Centre who were being hit the hardest by shoplifting took place in July to explain the reporting process and, in recent months, we have seen an almost vertical rise in reported shoplifting which is what we needed as now we can respond in an evidence-based way. A separate piece of work is also taking place to jointly tackle prolific shoplifters who are active in the borough and a number of arrests and charges have taken place. It's important to note that proceeding to prosecution lies in the hands of the Crown Prosecution Service and, as shoplifting is not considered a high impact crime, this does not always happen. We now have 2 dedicated police officers for the Town Centre and recent operations tackling retail crime have been fruitful.

Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

Partner and public consultation told us there was overwhelming support to extend the current PSPO that we have in place in the town centre. The PSPO gives authorised officers additional powers to seize and confiscate alcohol where it is, or is likely to, cause ASB. They last for 3 years and the one we have expired this year. We will need to look at this again in 2026.

Key Focus 3: Reduce harm caused by domestic abuse

(Management of perpetrators and enforcement)

Who's in Charge

- Who's in Charge? is a 9-week child to parent violence (CPV) programme aimed at parents whose children are being abusive or violent toward them or who appear out of parental control.
- This year so far, the project has reached 26 families and 51 children, with 6 groups due to run this year
- The general, overriding comment from parents is knowing someone else is experiencing the same difficulties is a relief, a feeling of companionship and inclusion with all commenting that they feel that they are not judged.

DAPS

- 121 intervention for perpetrators in families where there are children who are on a protection plan or are children in need
- Of the 40 clients that engaged with DAPS in 22/23, 90% don't re-offend as far as we are aware in terms of reports to police or other partners.
- There is also complementary support for victims in those families too which is important
- It is noted that in 2022, OFSTED graded BFC 's children's services as "outstanding" with a special mention, in their report, of the Domestic Abuse support and reporting

MATAC

- Partners that come together to manage perpetrators who pose the highest risk in terms of frequent DA, recent DA and most harmful DA.
- Due to challenging resourcing issues, MATAC faltered a little during the year. However, it now has a Domestic Abuse Offender Management Coordinator and an administrator and is being chaired by a local Problem-solving Sergeant and Community Safety so is back on track with robust support and direction.

DVPN/Os

- A DVPN is an emergency non-molestation and eviction notice which can be issued by the police, when attending to a domestic abuse incident, to a perpetrator. A DVPO is a civil order made by the court.
- Historically these tools been under-used so awareness and training is currently being undertaken by TVP to increase the numbers used locally. From October this year, the number of these will be monitored by MATAC to encourage use where appropriate..

Key Focus 3: Reduce harm caused by domestic abuse

(Delivery of the Safe Accommodation Action Plan)

Sanctuary Scheme

- Introducing this scheme where victims can access safety modification to their home was a recommendation in the Strategy – based on victim/survivor support
- It provides additional protection by strengthening access points to the property e.g. multiple locking systems, reinforced doors, window locks, emergency lighting, letterbox protection
- There were 43 referrals in 22/23 with 35 proceeding.
- Sanctuaries aren't completed in isolation: they are combined with a safety plan and outreach support and DVPOs or DVPNs can also be included

New Domestic Abuse Support Roles

- Introducing a single point of contact within the housing service to support victim survivors who are leaving an abusive relationship was also a recommendation in the strategy
- **Accordingly, a DA Housing Support Officer has been in post since July 2022, fixed term min 2 years and will act as the key contact point for other organisations (and other parts of the council) for housing operational matters (DA).**
- **We also have a BWA Safe Accommodation Outreach worker in post whose role is to provide high quality support, risk assessment, information and advocacy to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation.**

Cost of Living Resources

The current cost of living crisis is having an impact on many residents, but it significantly exacerbates the barriers that victims of domestic abuse face when leaving an abusive relationship. Support and advice is provided through BFC's Welfare Service and, in addition to that, the CSP has developed a collection of DA-specific advice from a range of charities and organisations, and this can be found on our DA webpages.

Professional Training on Trauma

- Another recommendation based on feedback from victims and survivors was training for professionals who come into contact with them on the impact of DA on adults and children and how it affects mental health and well-being. We listened to this and commissioned Thames Valley Partnership to deliver this training in 22/23. We had a lot of interest and ran additional sessions due to the demand. So far, 5 sessions have run with 66 delegates being trained and we will continue to run the training to ensure that professionals have that understanding of just how traumatic DA is.