



Community Safety – Update on Violence Against Women and Girls

1. Introduction:

This paper provides a brief overview of the work undertaken to date across Community Safety and what work is planned moving forward.

2. Safer Streets:

At time of writing we still have not heard if our bid for the Safer Streets fund has been successful, we are told that notification should still be by the end of May 2021.

On Monday 24th May 2021 the 3rd round of Safer Streets funding will be launched, with a particular focus on areas of concern to women and girls. If Torbay is not successful within our application for the 2nd round of funding, we shall seek to submit an application within this 3rd round if eligible.

This work would seek to enhance our CCTV / street light infrastructure and complement the ongoing work by Kevin Mowat's teams in this area.

3. Current activity in relation to sexual/domestic violence against women

STP - Whole Systems for Whole People project:

Two workshops were held on 6th and 12th May entitled "Co-designing a radically improved response to sexual violence and abuse in Devon" (inclusive of Torbay and Plymouth). The events were supported by Dame Suzi Leather and brought together a range of interested parties from across the system, including third sector representatives and experts by lived experience. The culmination of 6 months' work was presented to the collected bodies that detailed evidence gathered and the voices of 16 individuals with lived experience of sexual abuse and their attempts to navigate the system for help.

Attached to this report is the Call to Action that was circulated to participants, within it is an overview of the evidence collated throughout the project. As well as commenting on the sheer prevalence of sexual violence, this has also identified numerous ways in which survivors struggle to find the support they need within the system (and how traumatic this experience can be) and how poorly the Criminal Justice System responds to sexual violence. What is very apparent is the scale of the issue and how the experiences surface within all areas of the system – hence it being everybody's responsibility to address.

Following these events we are finalising a Theory of Change, collating a summary of ideas generated through the workshops and considering examples of good practice elsewhere. People will then be invited to reconvene in late June / early July to plan action against the learning going forward. Learning from this project will be incorporated into a sexual violence strategy.

In the meantime we, with our partners across Devon and Plymouth, have the opportunity to apply for £600 – 650k NHS funding to become one of a few Pathfinder areas across the country to explore and test new ways of responding to sexual violence. We are in the very early stages of discussions but Torbay has offered to lead the bid to show commitment to and leadership in this important area of work.

4. Understanding the local experience of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and Strategy Development:

Safer Communities conducted a confidential online survey on Are You OK asking for those who have experienced domestic abuse and or sexual violence to respond, and which will help us understand an individual's experiences, especially around help and support. The final analysis of the data collected should be completed by July.

To assist with our statutory responsibilities to meet the safe accommodation duty and produce a DA needs assessment as per the DA Act, we have commissioned an organisation to produce this work for us and also include a wider DA assessment that will be used to inform the development of a new Strategy. This work will commence end of May / first week of June 2021 and conclude September of this year.

Planning has started around a piece of work to engage and listen to the voices of Children and Young People to help better understand the wants, needs, experiences and influences on young people when it comes to relationships. The main areas of exploration will be around domestic abuse, sexual violence, sexual health, positive relationships, consent and more. This is being done following growing evidence coming to light that highlights how many young people experience violence and abuse from a young age and how normalised patterns of behaviour can be for some. There appears to be many possible contributory factors such as patriarchy, prevalence and accessibility of pornography, parental influences to reference a few.

5. Prevention:

The newly established Youth Crime Prevention Group has a focus on preventing young people from becoming involved in crime and becoming victims of crime. It is currently working on developing an approach to Harmful Sexual Behaviours as one of the initial areas of work. This is still in development but an agreed priority amongst the group.

6. Relating to the murder of Sarah Everard

The above activity all relate to issues that have been highlighted by the murder of Sarah Everard, that violence against women and girls is all too prevalent and within Torbay too. We are committed to a wide range activity that goes beyond short term projects and looks deeper into the factors that create and sustain violence against women and girls. The volume and depth of the work being undertaken will create a stronger and more robust strategic approach to our collective efforts in this area.

We have again included the image below that was produced by the University of Alberta's Sexual Assault Centre, it serves to show the nature of contributory actions and attitudes that

underpin the more extreme acts of violence in the upper part of the triangle. Whereas it focuses on sexual violence and these discussions are not limited to it, the graphic is included to demonstrate the levels at which we need to consider working and where our efforts are best placed.

Pyramid of Sexual Violence

