Birmingham Ashram Group

SUMMARY
The project will target the Sparkhill and Sparkbrook areas of Birmingham, which feature in the top 7% of the Index of Local Deprivation. Over 50% of the population of these areas are of Asian origin. The focus of the project is Asian women experiencing domestic violence as well as other members of their communities affected by it.

INTERVENTIONS
- Appoint co-ordinator and outreach workers to work with Asian communities
- Publicity and awareness raising campaign
- Needs analysis in order to identify gaps within current service provision and to address the specific needs of the target groups
- Increase personal safety of women with the use of home alarms, mobile phones, personal attack alarms and personal safety programmes.
- Research the potential for an Asian women’s drop in centre within the target area
- Establish and maintain Asian women self help groups
- Enhancing the prosecution process through use of interpreters and photographic evidence
- Increasing the use of civil remedies e.g. restraining orders
- Monthly case monitoring meetings by the forum e.g. repeat victims
- The co-ordinator will also establish and maintain a joint agency database. All member agencies of the forum currently keep statistical information and by pooling this, more accurate analysis will be undertaken resulting in a more focused channelling of resources.

AGENCIES INVOLVED
Ashram Group, E3 Domestic Violence Forum in Birmingham, Birmingham City Council Housing Department, Birmingham City Council, Housing Department Homeless Support, Birmingham City Council, Housing Department, West Midlands Probation Services, Birmingham Specialist Community NHS Trust, Ashiana Community Project, Bharosa, West Midlands Police E3 OCU, E3 Victim Support, Jyoti Ashram / Ashram Group, Women Acting In Todays Society (WAITS), Focus Housing, Birmingham Women’s Aid.

Croydon Advocacy Project

SUMMARY
The project is an advocacy service available to all women living in Croydon who are experiencing domestic violence, and/or rape or other sexual abuse within a domestic violence context, from a partner, ex-partner or boyfriend and who are seeking to escape the abuse. The aim of the project is to empower women to use civil and/or criminal remedies and to prioritise their safety, and that of their children, throughout the process.
The project will also be available to women, who have left a violent relationship, and are subject to contact proceedings to ensure their safety concerns are recognised.

INTERVENTIONS

- Provide an advocacy service linked to the Ambassador One Stop Drop-in and based in the same premises. (The One Stop is an innovatory crisis intervention centre with a number of services under one roof. The centre has a manager and callers are greeted by a “friend”, who is herself a survivor of domestic violence. Under the same roof a police officer, solicitor, housing officer and benefits adviser are present. Statutory agencies such as the Police and Housing refer women to the One Stop as a matter of course. Women also self refer.)

The advocacy support will include safety planning, with the woman, (before, during and after the legal process), accompanying her to court and attending court on the woman’s behalf, accompanying to solicitors, medical appointments (to assist evidence gathering), explaining and familiarising with court process and environment. The service will assist in accessing other agencies e.g. housing and schools. Alarms and mobile phones will be available to women at particular risk, e.g. women remaining in their own homes or where bail has been set. A contract will be made with Croydon Playcare for providing childcare during court appearances, appointments etc.

The service will provide support throughout the legal process and for six weeks afterwards which will assist in empowering the woman not to return to a violent partner whatever the outcome of the legal process. It will also assist in data gathering to assess the outcome of the intervention.

At the end of the support, women will be informed that they can return to the project if they are subject other legal proceeding in relation to domestic violence e.g. contact proceedings. Contact proceedings have been noted by survivors as a particular area of potential and actual risk of further violence. The role of the advocacy service will be to assist in pressing upon her solicitor the importance of her, and her children’s, safety needs in respect of contact orders and during the court process. This will maximise the safety of women and their children.

AGENCIES INVOLVED


Tower Hamlets Victim Advocacy and Safety Counselling Service

SUMMARY

Range of measures to improve support for victims, enabling them to make better use of legal protection and other sanctions and services available to increase their safety, and enhance evidence gathering and improve inter-agency co-ordination to increase the use of all available legal sanctions for domestic and sexual violence offences. This will include a Victim Advocacy and Safety Counselling Service based In Victim Support, a Multi-agency Safety Planning Panel and a Repeat Victimisation Police Policy.
INTERVENTIONS

The measures include:

Victim Advocacy and Safety Counselling Service

A specialist team of 4 independent victim advocates based in Victim Support will work with women at high risk of repeat victimisation, women reporting sexual violence, and women experiencing violence which gives rise to child protection concerns. The team will include at least one Bengali/Sylheti speaking advocate and will involve trained volunteers from the local community. Women will be provided with:

- Proactive contact from a victim advocate with an out of hours call out service
- Structured risk assessment and safety planning
- Practical assistance in dealing with other local agencies to increase their safety and take legal action, including support when attending court.
- Practical assistance in dealing with other local agencies to increase their safety and take legal action including support when attending court
- Practical safety measures where appropriate
- Ongoing proactive monitoring

There will also be options to:

- Install temporary intrude alarms
- Security surveys
- Basic target hardening
- Photographic evidence of victims injuries
- Provision of personal attack alarms

Multi-agency Safety Planning Panel

Will review and co-ordinate service provision in high-risk cases. The Panel will review specific cases, and ensure that all possible strategies for increasing the safety of victims and imposing sanctions to deter repeat offending are fully explored, and implemented in a co-ordinated way. The Panel will include representatives of service users and all key agencies. The Panel will monitor the implementation of local policies in relation to specific cases, and therefore contribute the development of best practice.

Police Repeat Victimisation Policy

The police have adopted a repeat victimisation policy providing a two stage response. Community Safety Officers will contact all victims within 24 hours of reporting an incident of domestic violence and offer advice and referral to support services. Victim statements will be obtained in all second and subsequent reported incidents. A positive arrest policy will also be implemented. Digital cameras will be used to obtain photographic evidence of victim’s injuries. The Central Monitoring and Tracking System will enhance the provision of data to the Police for them to identify and respond to
‘repeats’. These ‘repeats’ may include reports to other agencies that currently are not co-ordinated and of which police may not be aware.

AGENCIES INVOLVED

London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Social Services, Metropolitan Police, Victim Support, Tower Hamlets DV Forum.

Originator: Policing & Reducing Crime Unit, Home Office, 2001

http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence25.htm#birmingham