

Heading: Domestic Violence

Introduction

Domestic violence is defined as,

'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviours, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- *Psychological*
- *Physical*
- *Sexual*
- *Financial*
- *Emotional*

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour: is an act or pattern of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

The British Crime Survey (BCS) self-completion module on intimate violence found that 7% of women and 5% of men were estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, this is equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million females and 800,000 male victims. In addition to this Women's Aid estimate that two women are killed each week by their partner or ex-partner (2011).

The BCS (2011) also looked into the nature of the abuse and found that around a quarter (27%) of partner abuse victims suffered a physical injury as a result of the abuse. Among those who had experienced any physical injury or other effects (such as emotional problems), around a quarter (28%) received some sort of medical attention. When domestic violence is happening not all people take themselves out of the situation, and when asked for the reasons why they did not leave shared accommodation, 38% mentioned the presence of children as the reason, 34% stated love or feelings for their partner and 21% stated that they had nowhere to go.

[NICE guidance](#) has identified some of the risk factors associated with domestic violence, these include;

- Is female
- Is aged 16-24 (women) or 16-19 (men) (Smith et al. 2011)
- Has a long-term illness or disability (this has been shown to almost double the risk) (Smith et al. 2011)
- Has a mental health problem (Trevillion et al. 2012)
- Is a woman who is separated (Smith et al. 2011)
- Is pregnant or has recently given birth (Bowen et al. 2005 and Harrykissoon et al. 2002)
- Are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (Roch et al. 2010) (Donovan et al. 2006)
- Have a alcohol or drug misuse problem (Smith et al. 2012)

What do we do?

Across Wokingham Borough the focus has been on five themes, these include;

- Awareness – to improve awareness of the extent and impact of domestic violence in Wokingham borough, both within the community and within agencies
- Joint working – ensure support is also available for professionals in understanding, assessing and supporting victims and perpetrators of domestic violence
- Support for victims – ensure that Wokingham Borough meets the needs of all victims of domestic violence to enable access to specialist support and a life free from violence and abuse, this includes recognising the needs of and supporting children and young people whose lives are affected
- Children and Young People – to promote preventative work and educate children and young people about domestic abuse, and to support children and young people experiencing/witnessing domestic violence
- Perpetrators – supporting perpetrators of domestic violence within the community

These priority objectives have been agreed and feature within the Borough's Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Work is ongoing to address these priorities and the full breakdown of achievements and actions so far can be found in the Domestic Abuse Strategy Review.

Key developments of note include;

- Increasing levels of domestic abuse reporting – nationally domestic abuse is severely underreported with the BCS reporting that only 27% of women and 10% of men report domestic abuse to the police. The more people that come forward the better support and help can be offered. Greater awareness and skills related to domestic violence have also been achieved across the community and agencies helping to identify domestic violence
- A perpetrator programme has been commissioned as part of an integrated approach
- A specialist worker has been embedded within the Early Help Hub Domestic Abuse Triage as of August 2015, all police recorded domestic violence incidents are passed to this post for evaluation
- The Early Help Hub has been established as of August 2014 as the central point of coordinate assessment and targeted service delivery
- A Domestic Abuse Repeat Incident Management group has been set up, to ensure effective intervention in the most challenging cases
- A partnership strategy for Early Help has been implemented with staff trained in a single practice framework

National & Local Strategies and Strategic Drivers/links

Local

- Domestic Abuse Strategy 2012-2015
- Domestic abuse Strategy review 2015

National

- [NICE: Domestic violence and abuse: how services can respond effectively](#)
- [NICE: Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working](#)
- [Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan](#)
- [Adult Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse](#)
- [Getting it right first time](#)

Facts, Figures, Trends

The Thames Valley Police Data from 2014 shows an increase in both recorded crime and non-crime occurrence within Wokingham Borough, the definition of both are as follows;

A recorded crime is all offences reported to the Police **minus** any offence that has the below criteria of Crime Related Occurrence or Offence is Cancelled.

A Non-Crime Occurrence will be a domestic incident non crime that doesn't have a Home Office statistic code (used to identify crimes when analysing crime data).

Crime Related Occurrences: This term is used to describe a record of an occurrence which has come to the attention of the police, which, on the Balance of Probabilities would normally amount to a notifiable crime, but a resultant crime has not been recorded. The specific circumstances where this would happen are:

- 1) The occurrence is reported by a third party and either
 - a) The alleged victim declines to confirm the crime or
 - b) The alleged victim cannot be traced
- 2) The occurrence is being dealt with by another police force
- 3) The National Crime Recording Standard or Home Office Counting Rules for Recording Crime direct that a crime should not be recorded

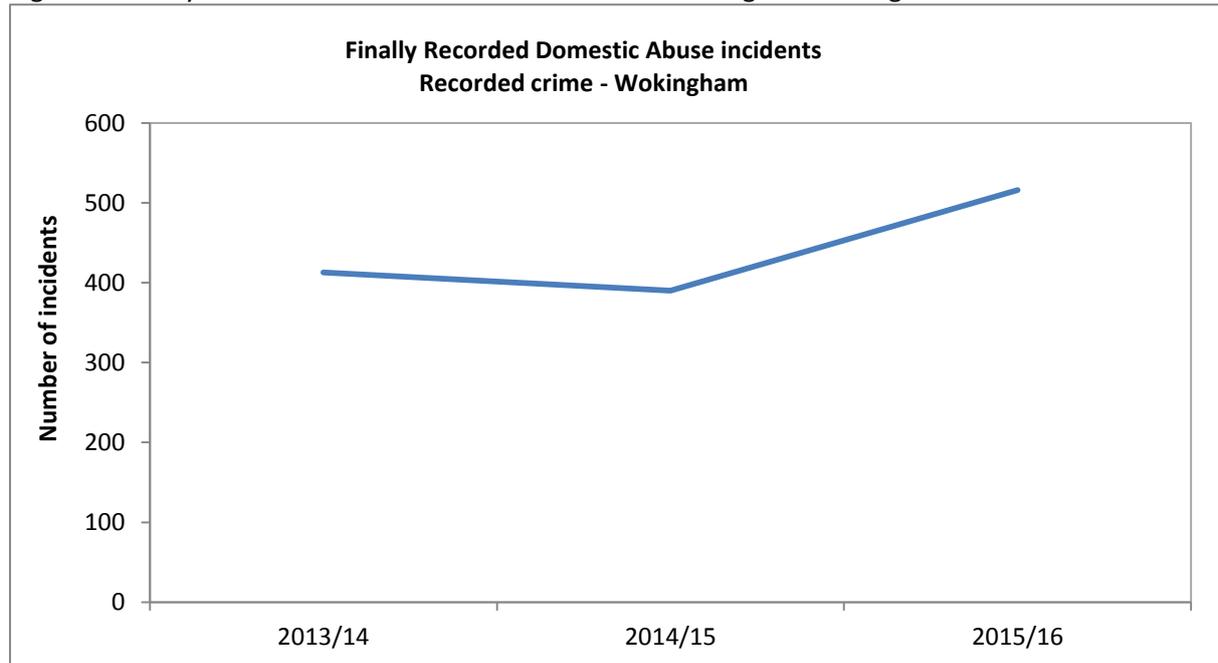
Offence is Cancelled: An offence can only be cancelled if it has been recorded as a crime. The situations when a crime can be cancelled are governed by the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime. Specific circumstances when an offence can be cancelled are listed below:

- 1) The offence was committed in another force area.
- 2) There is additional verifiable information which determines that no notifiable crime has been committed.
- 3) The crime constitutes part of a crime already recorded.
- 4) The crime was recorded in error.
- 5) The crime was recorded as an assault and there is additional verifiable information that the offender acted in self-defence.
- 6) The crime is an offence of fraud and there clear auditable information that shows that the offender has been dealt with in another jurisdiction.

The data for Wokingham Borough is displayed in figures 1 and 2 below, showing an increasing trend in domestic violence. Based on recent data received from Thames Valley Police, there has been a 32% increase in recorded crime incidents between April 2015 and March 2016, in Wokingham borough, when compared with the same period the previous year. There were 516 recorded crime incidents of domestic abuse between April 2015 and March 2016, which equates to 3.24 crimes per 1,000 population.

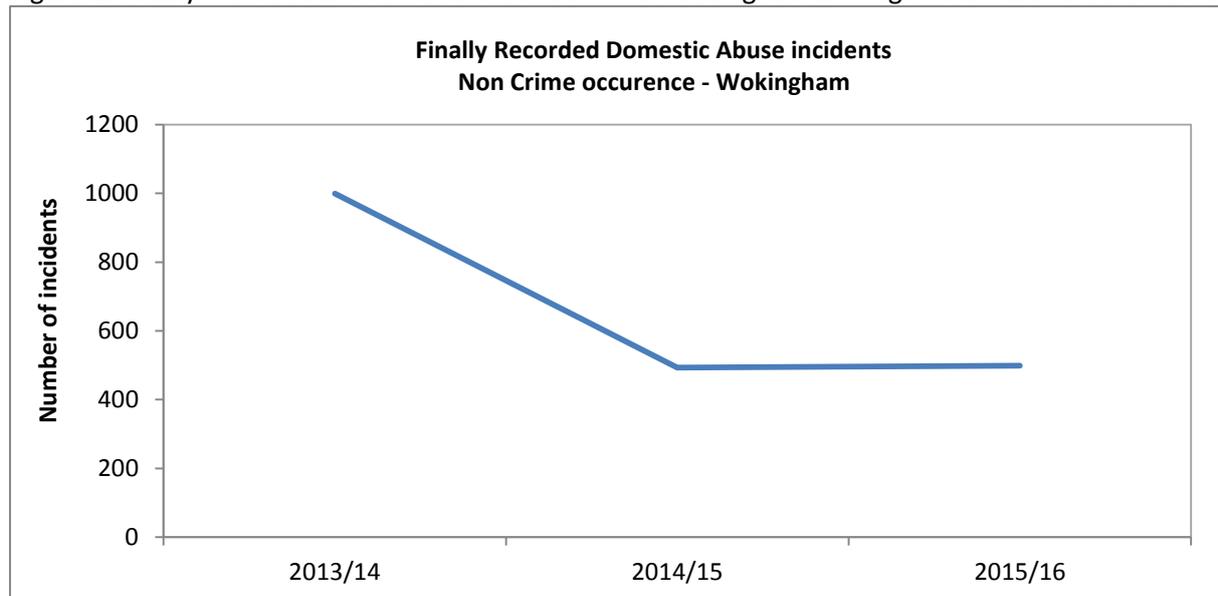
For non-crime occurrence of domestic abuse, there is a decline in the number of instances in Wokingham borough when compared with previous years. Although there were 6 additional non-crime occurrences of domestic abuse between April 2015 and March 2016 (a slight increase of 1.2%), compared to the previous year; these figures have significantly reduced since 2013/14 as shown in the chart below. In fact, since 2013/14 domestic abuse incidents – non-crime occurrence have reduced by 50% over this two year period.

Figure 1: Finally recorded Domestic Abuse incidents in Wokingham Borough



Source: *Crime_Disorder (DA)_v3_JSNA, Thames Valley Police 2016*

Figure 2: Finally recorded Domestic Abuse incidents in Wokingham Borough – Non Crime Occurrence



Source: *Crime_Disorder (DA)_v3_JSNA, Thames Valley Police 2016*

What are the unmet needs/ service gaps?

Domestic abuse is mainly associated with women, in actual fact is void of gender and age bias. The needs of men and children may be under fulfilled due to this.

Recommendations for consideration by other key organisations such as: CCG's, General Practices, Local Authority department e.g housing and other providers.

- To work more closely with the wider community to increase referrals for domestic abuse into services from a wider range of partners
- Explore further links between domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse

This section links to the following sections in the JSNA:

Mental Health

Substance Misuse

References

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Date:

Update Due: