

# COMMUNITIES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

**CC(3)-07-08 (p3) - 30 April 2008**

**Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum - Committee paper for National Assembly for Government.**

## **Carmarthenshire.**

Carmarthenshire is on the whole a rural area, with the three market towns of Carmarthen and Llandelio and Llandovery. A large industrial town, Llanelli, and the mining town of Ammanford. With a mixture of small villages scattered in between.

172,842 people live in Carmarthenshire.

0.6 % ethnicity .

Approximately 49 % are Welsh speakers

## **Background to the Organisation**

CDAF was established in April 2000. It is a County wide partnership of agencies and organisations committed to the improvement of services to those who experience domestic abuse. The Coordinator came into post in May 2003 and the Forum became a registered charity in March 2004.

The Forum meets on a regular basis and the partners who are made up of representatives of both voluntary and statutory agencies such as: - Police, Social Services, Probation, County Council, Women's Aid, Victim Support and Health.

The Forum now enters its 8<sup>th</sup> year and has grown in strength, expertise and resources. It now has 30 partners and employs 4 members of staff with a strong focused steering group and 4 trustees.

The Forum is a signposting services for victims and also provides safety equipment such as specialist alarms and mobile phones to high risk clients in the County.

The Forum has worked very closely with schools over the past 4 years, running Crucial Crew, and has developed the 'Safer Relationships Programme' which is used by all comprehensive schools in the County. Recently the Forum has also produced a programme at primary school level called 'Tommy Teddy Be Safe'. This is the first work of its kind to be aimed at this age group.

The Forum set up and oversaw Supervised Child Contact Centre in Carmarthen and organised funding for the past two years.

As part of our charitable objectives, training has been paramount in promoting the awareness of Domestic Abuse to all local and national agencies. Over 950 people to date have received training; from GP's Magistrates, Police, Social Workers, and Health.

The Forum also has run training programmes for victims, confidence building workshops, Freedom Programme and personal safety planning.

The Forum continues to look at ways, causes and prevention methods to combat domestic abuse.

## **Why our Organisation**

The Forum has great expertise and experience in all aspects of domestic abuse. We are at a huge advance due to the partnership of our Forum which we can tap into other resources both at County and National level.

The Forum worked closely with the Welsh Assembly Government in developing the all Wales Website [www.notyourfault.org](http://www.notyourfault.org)

Due to the Forum's make up we are able to work with male victims, children, women and abusers. Our constitution states the importance of working with all.

The Forum has won major awards across Carmarthenshire in Partnership working and has been recognised at Regional level.

The Coordinator is one of the longest serving coordinators in Wales and has great expertise in training and marketing. She currently speaks at conferences and committees across Wales. She is an Ex Police Officer with management and counselling experience, who has written and developed all the school resources, the website and all the training packages for our County.

Her fundraising has allowed the Forum to become an entity within its own right.

## **Overview of 'Move onto Change' Project**

Last year the Forum ran a pilot project which looked at the viability of working safely and positively with perpetrators of domestic abuse. This project was funded by the Home Office.

Firstly the Forum looked at other nationally run perpetrator programmes, of which there are very few in the UK.

The Forum wanted to ensure that their programme was compatible with Probation's IDAP programme but which is only for convicted perpetrator. Since a mere 2% of domestic violence cases actually get to court, the large majority of perpetrators would not fit into Probation's strict criteria for the IDAP programme.

Best practice shows that the Duluth Model programme - 'Creating a process of change for men who batter' was the closest model to the IDAP programme and was the most comprehensive.

Staff received training from Sea Change to deliver the programme as facilitators, and purchased the resources from Duluth in America.

The programme which we renamed - 'Move onto Change', covers the following areas;

### **Non threatening and non violent behaviour**

#### **Respect**

#### **Equality**

#### **Trust and Support**

#### **Honesty and accountability**

#### **Responsible Parenting**

#### **Shared Responsibility**

#### **Economic Partnership**

#### **Negotiation and Fairness**

#### **Behaviour**

#### **Sexual Respect**

The programme works with control logs, video snippets and working on ways to change behaviour, belief systems and the use of non controlling techniques.

The Forum devised a referral form for both the victim and the perpetrator to complete. This enabled the perpetrators behaviour to be monitored from a variety of perspectives. This process also helps the victim to have a greater understanding of the programme.

Referrals were received from the Police, Social Services, Youth Offending Service as well as self referrals.

The programme worked with perpetrators from Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

The programme was run for 12 weeks, on a one to one basis.

18 men have completed the programme to date. Those who have completed all the modules have not used any violence on their partners over the past four months. They will be monitored by the Forum over the next six months too.

The next course starts 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008, There are ten men who will start with us. One man is coming back as a mentor to assist the programme. He feels he wants to give something back as he feels the programme has changed his life.

### **The Established Need**

"There were 1700 reported incidents of Domestic Violence to Carmarthenshire Police last year."

"Over 1,000 enquires to our 3 local Women's Aid"

"One in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime"

"One in eight have experienced domestic violence in the past year"

"2.2 women are killed by current or ex-partners each week"

"Domestic Violence covers a 1/4 of all violence crime in Carmarthenshire"

"A women may try to leave between 7 and 35 times before leaving for good"

"1 in 15 incidents involves a weapon"

"90 % of children either witness the abuse or are in the next room."

"Over 270 Personal Alarms given out to Victims of Domestic Abuse."

"We have 33 specialist alarms for high risk victims across our county."

"228 people have accessed the Bobby Van, which provides a safety locks, chains and spy holes, this is a joint partnership programme with Dyfed- Powys Police."

"103 women in the past two years have undertaken either the Freedom Programme, Personal Safety or Confidence Building with CDAF."

Due to increasing numbers of victims coming forward, the need to work with abusers was highlighted as an important issue. It is also important to ensure that the victim's safety is paramount, and we employed a safety worker to undertake safety planning and direct work with the victim.

Many women still loved their partners and wanted the behaviour to change rather than ending their relationship. Agencies required a programme to which they could refer the abuser in order to help with their controlling behaviours. The National Assembly also states this in their strategy.

### **"The aims of the All Wales National Strategy include:-"**

Increasing Women, Young People and Children's safety.

Holding Abusers Accountable.

The Prevention of Abuse.

Support and Informing Children and Young People.

### **"It states that:-"**

If Domestic Abuse is to be stopped in Wales, it is essential that Welsh organisations/ agencies offer an effective service to those who experience domestic abuse.

At the same time, however, the causes of domestic abuse must be addressed.

Domestic abuse needs to be tackled in **three ways**, education of young people, working closely with victims by means of support and advice and working with abusers to change their controlling behaviours.

The aim of the Forum is to work with all three strands providing an holistic approach to the hidden problem of domestic abuse in our society today.

The pilot project has taught us many lessons. Through extensive training and monitoring and evaluation of the Move onto Change programme we are able to provide a service to abusers which is fair, honest, professional and encompasses

the challenges put forward for the prevention of domestic abuse.

### **What we have learnt.**

From our successful pilot project and the evaluation we have learnt that:

"The Programme needs to be at least 16 - 18 weeks long."

"Both partners need to complete a Referral form."

"A Risk Assessment and checks need to be carried out."

"All agencies (especially Police and Social Services) need to be aware that they are undertaking or completed a programme"

"Programme notes of every man to be written up, checked and placed in a lockable cabinet."

"Reports to other agencies need to be agreed by the manager."

"Programme needs to be video taped to ensure Trainers are fair, just and within the programme limits."

"Issues with individuals behaviour to be discussed at Management level."

"The programme must be facilitated by a male and female trainer."

"To ensure continuity, the programme must be run in a group setting with a maximum of 10 men per programme."

"3 absences from the programme and the men are removed."

The cost of running three 'Move onto Change' programmes a year is approximately £ 25,000 this will target 32 men and their partners.

We currently have a shortfall in our funding for this year.

But the impacts of domestic Abuse are much wider, Their families and partners will also benefit as well as agencies and services, as there less impact with Police, Health and Social Services Department .

DA costs England and Wales approx £23billion per annum

£3bn on public services

£1bn Criminal Justice Services

£1.2bn on NHS

£2.7bn employers and workers

The Welsh Assembly Government are currently funding the NSPCC pilot perpetrator programme in North and South Wales. It does not however reach the Dyfed- Powys Region so without our programme men in Swansea, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire would have nothing.

One further issue I would like to raise within the Carmarthenshire area.

There has been huge changes to the way of Women's Aid can work with victims of domestic abuse from the Supporting People funding they receive, due to their changes in criteria.

They are no longer able to give medium or long term support to women attending court (whether Magistrates or Family Court). They are no longer able to attend Case Conferences, which is integral to ensuring the women's and children's safety.

They can no longer give emotional support or advocacy. Our Women's Aid use advocacy under the Home Office term - 'to represent the interests of women, to support and empower women, to secure their rights in a community context'.

The Supporting People money comes via the Council from the Welsh Assembly Government, I am enquiring whether the Assembly Members are aware of such changes or whether this is just in our County.

Love withers under constraints its very essence is liberty,

It is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy nor fear,

It is there most pure, perfect and unlimited where its votaries

live in confidence, equality and unreserved. Shelley 1792- 1822

Women who suffer domestic abuse, live with fear, oppression, hate and confusion. They do not live, they survive.... We all have a moral and social responsibility to help victims of domestic abuse.

Samantha Jones

Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum.

17 April 2008.