

MINUTE of MEETING of the SOCIAL POLICY, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 18 JANUARY 2019.

Present – Councillors Angela Doran (Chair), Charles Kennedy, Dave King, Sarah King, Dom McGuire, Kirsteen Sullivan (substituting for Councillor George Paul) and Damian Timson

Apologies – Councillor George Paul

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 2 November 2018 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT TEAM - 2018 WEST LoTHIAN 16 DAYS OF ACTION CAMPAIGN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy and a presentation by the Team Manager Domestic and Sexual Assault Team providing an overview of the West Lothian Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT) activities and of the 2018 West Lothian 16 Days of Action campaign.

Domestic abuse remained a prevalent issue within Scotland. Police statistics on domestic abuse in 2017/18 published by the Scottish Government showed an increase in incidents from 2016/17. Within West Lothian there had been 2,205 reported incidents of domestic abuse in 2017/18. West Lothian performed well in comparison to the national averages, particularly in relation to early and effective interventions and multi-agency working.

West Lothian's DASAT was a unique, 18-staff public service hosted by West Lothian Council and served adults and children experiencing domestic abuse, sexual assault or other forms of violence through a framework of integrated services including: The Court Advocacy Service, Living in Safe Accommodation (LISA), DASAT Children's Service, the Almond Project and the West Lothian Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) Project.

It was noted that DASAT expected a rise in referrals after the new Domestic Abuse Scotland Act 2018 came into force in February 2019 and

that referrals tended to increase after public campaigns.

West Lothian had participated in the 16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, whose aim was to engage with local partners to work together in a multi-agency approach to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. Several multi-agency and joint training events had taken place during the campaign. Although the campaign was short term, it aimed to generate long-lasting impact and raise awareness of the impact of violence against women and children.

During discussion, it was noted that the LISA team aspired to eliminate homelessness for persons experiencing abuse. Although support offered was short-term, each case was assessed individually and services could be accessed repeatedly as required at the discretion of the affected individuals.

It was also explained that the Almond Project supported women at risk of offending and part of its aims was to limit reoffending through supporting relationship and trust building as well as understanding the offenders' backgrounds. Indeed, during support and post six months reoffending was rare.

Finally, it was noted that prevention work was being done with schools and families, which involved teaching respect and healthy relationships and ensuring understanding of acceptable behaviours.

The panel commended DASAT on its successful efforts.

It was recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

- To note the contents of the report and presentation.
- To note the panel's thanks and appreciation for DASAT's endeavours and their positive outcomes.

4. FUNDING AWARDED BY THE BIG LOTTERY FOR WEST LOTHIAN'S WHOLE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy advising members of the award of the Big Lottery Funding to West Lothian's Whole Family Support Service.

The National Lottery Improving Lives Fund had awarded West Lothian Council £297,154 for the delivery of its Whole Family Support Service. The West Lothian Whole Family Support Service aimed to support families with multiple and complex needs with a child under 16 through the provision of whole family key worker support. The award would enable the project to support 70 to 100 families per year; its duration was from April 2019 to March 2022, and with match funding from West Lothian Council it would fund a total of 12 FTE key workers.

The funding had been awarded on the basis of the Service's successes, which currently centred on: improved parenting skills, increased skills to provide a stable, well-maintained home environment for families; improvement in practical skills; reduction in problematic substance misuse; increased engagement with education for children; children developing confidence and skills; and avoidance of accommodation for children at risk.

It was recommended that the panel note the positive allocation of £297,154 for West Lothian's Whole Family Support Service.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5. HEATHERFIELD NURSING HOME - PARTIAL REMOVAL OF ENHANCEMENT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy advising members of the partial removal of the enhanced fee element of the National Care Home contract fee to one private provider.

The enhanced quality fee had been implemented in order to create additional incentives to improve the quality of care in Older People Care Homes. The Care Inspectorate had awarded Heatherfield Nursing Home grades 5 and 4 to Key Questions 1 and 5 of the new Quality Framework respectively, which meant that the care home was eligible for only part of the enhanced quality award available for the best performing Care Homes. The Care Inspectorate findings were attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

It was noted that recommendations in the Care Inspectorate's report would be followed up at re-inspection stage.

It was recommended that the panel note the partial removal of the enhanced fee element of the National Care Home Contract fee to Heatherfield Nursing Home.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. EDINBURGH, THE LOTHIANS AND SCOTTISH BORDERS MULTI-AGENCY PUBLIC PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS (MAPPA) ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing an overview of the Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scottish Borders Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Annual Report 2017-18.

The Edinburgh, Lothians and the Scottish Borders MAPPA Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1 to the covering report, had been produced as required by the Strategic Oversight Group. The report was intended to provide an insight into the working of MAPPA across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scottish Borders. It provided an overview of the service and related statistical information, outlined roles and responsibilities of officers and services within relevant authorities, listed achievements in developing practice and provided information on strategic overview groups and their role.

The report continued to offer an opportunity for MAPPA to be accountable to the local community for the management of sexual offenders and restricted patients. Eight similar reports had been produced across Scotland and one at national level.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note the contents of the report; and
2. Note that any issues would be taken forward by the Offender Management Committee of the Public Protection Committee.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERIOUS INCIDENT REVIEWS (SIRS) 2015-2017

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing an overview of the national report by the Care Inspectorate on Criminal Justice Serious Incident Reviews 2015-17, published on 30 October 2018 and attached as Appendix 1.

Council criminal justice services were required to notify the Care Inspectorate when a significant incident occurred as it was important that services learn from them and maintain robust service processes. The most common reasons for notification were sexual offences, serious violence and death during supervision periods, and the majority of notifications had been made in relation to individuals who were on community payback order. West Lothian had been one of the best local authorities in terms of notification compliance.

The report noted that appropriate use of risk assessments had been present in 80% of cases reviewed; that 84% of case reviews had taken place within timescales; and non-compliance with supervision had been appropriately reported in 84% of cases.

The report on SIRs provided a helpful overview of responses by services across Scotland as well as assurance that West Lothian was compliant in terms of both submitting reviews timeously and the quality of those reviews.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Note that performance in relation to SIRs was overseen by the Senior Manager for Young People and Public Protection.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan had been circulated which formed the basis of the panel's work over the coming months.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.