

# LUTON

## Domestic Violence Strategy 2005 to 2008

Prepared by

**The Safer Luton Partnership**

for the

**Crime and Disorder Reduction  
Partnership**

in consultation with Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum, other statutory and voluntary agencies and the community.



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## **Foreword**

**Ivor Twydell**

**Divisional Commander Luton Police  
Chair of Luton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership**

Domestic violence is a familiar phrase to us all, one that easily trips off the tongue. But is it a phrase we have become immune to? Does it really convey the distress and fear of those who suffer and witness it? The betrayal of trust is bad enough once but does it really express the despair of those subject to chronic abuse on a daily and weekly basis? And what about the acute cases that can lead to life changing injuries or worse? Like me do you find it easy in these target and performance driven times to reel off the 'stats' without thinking about the individuals that make up the figures?

When we hear first hand accounts by those who have been on the receiving end, it is not difficult to imagine the horrible impact domestic violence has on those who have been beaten and abused or those who have witnessed it. And when we stop to think and reflect on the ripple effect of individual cases as the shock waves impact on children, extended families, friends and neighbours and beyond we can easily see the pernicious consequences for all communities and society as a whole.

Here in Luton, together, we have decided to do more about it. We are re-focusing our energy, efforts and resources to see how we can work together more effectively to:-

- educate and raise awareness that violence in the home is unacceptable
- increase confidence to report it when it happens
- deal robustly with offenders and bring them to justice
- support the victims and survivors

This strategy, the combined efforts of the voluntary and statutory agencies in Luton, and supported by the Bedfordshire and Luton Domestic Violence Steering Group, is designed to do achieve these outcomes. I commend it to you.

**Hazel Simmons**

**Chair**

**Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum**

I am very pleased to be asked to write an introduction to this strategy that outlines the work by all agencies on Domestic Violence in Luton.

The Domestic Violence Forum has been running since the early 1990's and today has around 50 statutory and voluntary sector members. The Forum has set itself some challenging aims and objectives including coordinating training activities, increasing the number of people accessing services and improving the understanding of domestic violence in the community and public arena.

We recently employed Sue Baker as Luton's Co-ordinator. Sue has done a tremendous job since coming into post not least of which has been developing links with all agencies and working closely with partners to take forward our training plan.

Domestic Violence is a crime that mainly affects women and has the highest repeat incidence of any crime with 57% of victims involved in more than one incident (Home office, July 2002). To combat this we must work together and that is why the role of Luton's Domestic Violence Forum is so important.

## **Introduction**

On a national level, domestic violence has been given increasing priority on the Governments Agenda, with the current government stating its commitment to tackling the issues.

Domestic violence is Britain's biggest hidden crime and one that overwhelmingly affects women and their children. We know that nationally one in four women will suffer domestic violence in their lifetime, routinely abused in what should be the safety of their own homes. Children, with long-term affects, often witness incidents of domestic violence.

Domestic violence accounts for a quarter of all reported crime. It is a crime, which takes place largely unseen but which has tremendous costs to family and community life and to local and national services.

Women are more at risk of violence from men they know than from stranger attacks and street violence.

Domestic violence usually increases in frequency and severity over time, resulting in physical and emotional damage to the women and her children. The woman is increasingly isolated from family and friends and from any source of help. The end result may be serious physical injury, disability or even death. In this country their partners or former partners, usually following years of abuse, kill two women a week.

For these reasons, this strategy focuses on domestic violence against women. Agencies should however continue to recognise that domestic violence does occur in same sex relationships and where the perpetrator is female and the victim male.

Domestic violence affects all people in all communities and of all ages. It is a cross cutting issue that no single agency is able to deal with. It can only be effectively tackled through multi agency strategies.

In order to develop this strategy an audit of the current national and local picture has been undertaken. This compiled with the current work of a range of agencies across the town, both statutory and voluntary, along with developing work and identified gaps have helped to form the action plan.

## **The Domestic Violence Strategy**

The Luton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have developed this Domestic Violence Strategy, in consultation with the Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum. It is the First Domestic Violence Strategy for Luton and is linked to the Luton Community Safety Strategy, which covers the same period 2005 to 2008.

The Luton Community Safety Strategy, 2005 to 2008 sets out the aims and approaches to crime and disorder for Luton. The Community Safety Strategy is produced as part of the statutory requirements placed on Luton under the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998.

The Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum is a multi agency partnership made up of key statutory agencies and representatives. It is a sub group of the Luton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as outlined in the Partnership's structure on the back page of this document.

In order to develop this strategy an audit of the current national and local picture has been undertaken. This compiled with the current work of a range of agencies across the town, both statutory and voluntary, along with developing work and identified gaps have helped to form the action plan.

The Action Plans of the Domestic Violence Strategy are grouped under key areas that have already been identified both on a countywide basis and at a local level. The Action Plan is also linked to the Community Safety Strategy 2005 to 2008 and its Area Based Action Plans.

In order to performance manage the Strategy and the Action Plan the Luton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership will carry out regular audits to collect information about domestic violence, identify needs and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to tackle the main issues.

The Partnership is committed to sustaining existing services that have been shown to work, to support a development programme that includes securing resources to deliver new initiatives and to ensure that services are made accessible to those in need.

## **National Statistics**

Domestic violence has a major impact upon women's health causing more injuries than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined (Stark & Flitcraft 1996).

Domestic violence is a significant cause of injury, disability and death, with an average 2 women a week killed by a current or former partner (Home Office, 2002).

A domestic violence incident is reported to the police every minute of the day in the UK (Stanko, 2000).

Domestic violence is the crime most commonly experienced by women, and has the highest repeat incidence of any crime with 57% of victims involved in more than one incident. (Home Office, July, 2002).

A third of police calls to incidents of domestic violence come from women who are being harassed by ex-partners (Kelly, 1999).

Though accounting for a quarter of all violent crime, domestic violence is the least likely violent crime to be reported to the police (Home Office 2002).

Women's Aid (2002) found that 60% of women had left home because they feared that the perpetrator would kill them or their children.

25% of women experiencing domestic violence are assaulted for the first time during pregnancy (Royal College of midwives, 1997).

Violence frequently starts or intensifies during pregnancy harming the foetus as well as the mother (Mezey, 1997).

In 90% of domestic violence incidents, children were in the same or the next room (British Crime Survey, 1992).

In over 50% of known domestic violence cases, children were also directly abused. (NSPCC, 1997).

100,000 children run away from home every year in the UK. Four out of five children who run away from home say they do so to escape family conflict, violence or abuse. (The Children's Society, 1999).

The link between child physical abuse and domestic violence is high, with estimates ranging between 30% to 66%, depending upon the study. (Women's Aid, 2002)

A 2000 survey by the Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust of 1,300 school children found that one in three boys thought that violence against women was acceptable.

## **Bedfordshire County Wide View**

In addressing Domestic violence the Bedfordshire County Domestic Violence Strategic Group has developed a joint Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Vision. They have produced a Strategic Statement that outlines its Vision and Commitment.

The strategic statement adopts the following definition of domestic violence as a starting point to the joint approach.

“Domestic Violence is any violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual emotional and financial abuse”

The definition is taken from ‘Safety and Justice; the Government’s proposals on Domestic Violence’, published in June 2003 (page 6).

This was contextualised through the Home Offices definition that went on to say that,

“Domestic Violence occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. However it is primarily women who suffer as a result of it”.

The Strategic Vision was set up with the purpose of recognising the seriousness and long term consequences of domestic violence for individuals and families and to work together to eradicate both the experience and fear of domestic violence in Bedfordshire and Luton.

The vision is focused on four recognised areas:-

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Protection of Justice
- Support
- Accessibility

In terms of these areas the county has an expectation that local strategies and actions plans will focus on these and incorporate work that includes under these sections the following:-

### Prevention and Early Intervention

- Education and general awareness – Public, Schools and High Risk Groups
- Professional Awareness, Risk Assessment and Management of Risk
- Information to Victims and Families
- Reduce Re-offending – perpetrator programmes

## Protection and Justice

- Intervention through the civil and criminal law – Police, CPS and courts
- Integrated Safety Provision – refuge, capable guardians, developments to fill identified gaps
- Vulnerable People Interventions – safe environments and practices
- Holding the offender to account – removal, intervention to change, programme completion.

## Support

- Community Services
- Benefits – Housing, DSS
- Counselling – guidance and mentoring for emotional, physical and psychological issues
- Health – whole person and family help
- Voluntary Sector – validated network

## Accessibility

- Recognition of individual and specific groups' needs
- Recognition of the need to provide a voice for service users and potential service users.
- Available to all – recognising the special needs of all diverse communities including minority ethnic community, gay and lesbian people and disabled people.

The County forum has made strategic commitments to developing this work.

In moving this vision forward each of the four Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in the county have developed a local structure that embeds this vision into their local strategies.

## **The Luton Picture**

The Luton Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Forum is a multi-agency group established in 1991. It is sub group of the Luton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership focussing exclusively on the issues related to domestic violence (see Structure)

The Forum has no defined membership but has a distribution list of over 40 members representing key agencies and organisations coming from statutory, voluntary and community sectors. It has a Management sub-group of 7-8 members who are drawn from these organisations.

The Luton Forum acknowledges that domestic violence essentially involves the misuse of power and the exercise of control by one person, usually a man, over another, usually a woman. For this reason, the primary focus of the Forum is male violence against women.

For joint working purposes the group agreed to adopt the Home Office definition of domestic abuse.

"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."

This includes issue of concern to black and minority ethnic communities.

The Luton Multi Agency Forum has moved its work forward through the employment of a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator. Based at the Safer Luton Partnership the individual has enabled the Forum to co-ordinate all of its activities, ensuring that there is a consistent and credible information available to all. It enables work to be delivered holistically and in partnership.

The Luton Multi Agency Forum has developed a set of aims for the group. These are to:-

- Lower the number of families affected by Domestic Violence and increase the number of people accessing services
- To ensure that all agencies have access to good quality Multi-Agency training that enables them to improve the service provided they provide.
- To improve understanding of issues of Domestic Violence in the Community and Public Arena.
- To continually develop and sustain the work of the Forum in terms of ensuring that Domestic Violence remains high on the agenda through campaigning for and supporting services across the town.

## Demographics

Luton is one of the largest towns in the South East and has a diverse population of over 184,000 people. Served by Unitary Council and a Police Basic Command Unit with a co-terminus boundary. It is well served by several transport links, including three main-line railway stations and London Luton Airport, one of the four London International airports. The M1 motorway also passes through Luton, linking Luton to destinations both North and South. This high level of road, rail and air connections means that Luton's transport infrastructure is such that it is one of the most accessible destinations from within mainland Europe.

The population is made up of a diverse range of cultures. Around 28% of local residents are from black and minority ethnic background. The Council, Police and its key partners are committed to promoting positive community relationships and strengthening community cohesion.

There are a number of factors unique to Luton, which contributes to its diversity in retail and leisure opportunities as well as the range of individuals that live or migrate to the area. Luton is:-

- Home to of several national and multinational companies, taking advantage of the diverse skills present in the local workforce
- Close in proximity to London (approximately 35 miles) meaning that Luton is also well within the commuter belt to London.
- Has one of the largest covered shopping centres within the UK, situated in the town centre
- Is a university town, attracting large numbers of both national and international students to the town
- Hosts the renowned Luton International Carnival, which is second largest street festival in the UK, only smaller in the number of visitors per year to London's Notting Hill Carnival.

Overall Luton ranks as the 103<sup>rd</sup> most deprived local authority in England out of 354. Bedfordshire as a whole however, shows a much lower deprivation score overall as it ranks as 127<sup>th</sup> most deprived county in England out of a total of 149. Therefore deprivation is an issue that is particular to Luton at a regional level. Within Luton, deprivation has been found to be concentrated within specific geographical areas and therefore is not spread evenly throughout the district.

The largest area of deprivation within the town lies in the South, High Town, Dallow and Discot wards. There are also areas of pocket deprivation in some of the outlying wards, most notably large hotspots in Northwell, Sundon Park, Lewsey Farm, Leagrave and Farley

## **Local Domestic Violence Statistics**

Luton has a population of 184,371 living in households. Of this total population 92,252 are adult women (Census, 2001).

From these figures we can estimate that over 23,063 women in Luton will suffer domestic violence at some point in their lives.

Ethnicity: Non-white groups represent 26.1% of the Luton population.

Luton Women's Aid provides 19 refuge spaces, which complies the Local Authority BVPI 225 of 1 refuge place per ten thousand population.

In October 2003/04 Luton Women's Aid received 694 calls to their helpline, made 70 outreach visits, received 507 requests for refuge (including 159 ethnic minority) accommodation, but actually provided spaces for 85 families including 76 children.

The Police are called to around 350 incidences a month of Domestic Abuse, around 60% of these are repeat calls.

At the time of writing there are 120 young people on the Child Protection register.

Of this 80% have an element of Domestic Violence recorded on file. This may be recorded, as the primary reason for being on the register or it may be that domestic violence was one element of the referral

## **Delivering the Strategic Vision in Luton**

Looking at the Four Key areas of the County Strategic Vision: -

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Protection of Justice
- Support
- Accessibility

It is clear that there are a number of agencies and initiatives in Luton already addressing these.

The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to promote the economic, social and environmental well being in there are. There is no doubt that domestic violence has negative economic, social and environmental consequences and is detrimental to well being.

As part of its role the council has a key role in tackling Crime and Disorder. Social Services are a key agency in its child protection role. Other council services like Education and Housing have a role to play in addressing the issues around domestic violence.

The council now also has a statutory duty to ensure that services provide Best Value and as such a Best Value Performance Indicator for Domestic Violence is in place.

BV 225 aims to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authorities services, which are designed to help victims of domestic violence and to prevent further domestic violence.

In developing the action plans for this strategy, an audit of current provision was undertaken to identify what currently existed and what new developments were in place.

This information has been collated under the four agreed key strategic areas already agreed at a County Level.

By using these areas as Strategic Aims a framework for developing a cohesive and comprehensive approach to tackling the issue of domestic violence can be undertaken. The audit clearly identifies that there is a lot of work still to do but it also established a good infrastructure that is in place and a commitment to the issue and any developing work that evolves from this.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is keen to support and sustain the work, along with working closely with voluntary sector partners to ensure that statutory services and be delivered and developed.

## **Prevention and Early Intervention**

### Sure Start

Sure Start is a Government initiative that aims to improve the life chances of children under 4 and their families in areas of disadvantage. The programme aims to deliver joined-up services to young children and families by enabling statutory and voluntary agencies to work in partnership with parents, carers and community groups. Services are structured towards meeting the needs of families, and are planned, developed, managed and delivered in partnership with the community.

Luton's Sure Start programme is centred on the Marsh Farm estate and aims to support all families, before and after birth in developing existing and new services to ensure that children under four and their families get the best start in life. The intention is that parents and carers will have an ongoing opportunity to use and develop their skills in managing, evaluating and designing changes to the programme. Services for children are child centred and delivered to an excellent standard.

Ultimately Sure Start's aim is to make life better for children, parents, and communities by bringing together early education, childcare, and health and family support in one location.

Sure Start Marsh Farm have their own guidelines around Domestic Abuse and aims to reduce the incidence and impact of Domestic Abuse on the families on the estate through their implementation plan for 2005/6.

This will be done through the a range of actions which will include the setting up of a multi agency team where all staff are trained in addressing the issues and ensuring that the service provides a co-ordinated and consistent approach by all agencies involved.

### Schools

Education is committed to addressing the issues of domestic abuse and reducing the harm it has on the families and children. This is done in a number ways in Luton through training, support and protection. This helps to ensure all persons are clear about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that children are kept safe from harm, and that families are able to access appropriate support if their lives are affected by domestic abuse.

All staff working in schools are offered child protection training. The training comprises several elements but ensures that school staff have access to various multi-agency training, which includes a 3-day course on Domestic Abuse and a course that looks at the impact that domestic abuse has on parenting capacity. This is to raise the awareness of child protection/children in need and will include the issue of domestic abuse

Young people in schools have the opportunity through the PHSE and Citizenship programme to look at topics such as domestic abuse but also to explore with issues around 'rights and responsibilities' and 'negotiations within relationships'.

Family workers within schools have the ability to build effective relationships with families and are often in the front line offering support and guidance to families experiencing domestic abuse. They are also in a prime position to offer early intervention.

### Health Service

The local health service are committed to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic violence on families and children by raising awareness, working with other agencies to ensure people live without fear and children reach their potential.

As health screening is a government priority in relation to domestic violence the health service had identified ways in which it can respond. These include, raising awareness of domestic violence as part of corporate inductions and ensuring that information is distributed to all teams, services and GP practices. In addition in training is being implemented at a number of levels to equip staff with not only awareness but also what to do in terms of tackling the issues. The Health Service is committed to collating data that enables them to address the issue of domestic violence.

### Public Awareness Campaigns

The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator is committed to this area of work. Within the Luton Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Forum this is a key aim. In March 2004 a campaign of poster within Luton buses was began, which included statistics on domestic violence and local help line numbers. 20,000 information leaflets have been produced and will be distributed through all agencies. Information leaflet on the area of Forced Marriage have also been produced and distributed throughout education establishment etc. More campaigns are planned, which will include a poster campaign, attendance at local events, nursery school outreach etc.

### Corporate Social Responsibility and the employer's role

Domestic violence not only impacts on the survivor and their children, but also their employer through lost work time or days through injury or mental health problems, or through seeking help. In addition jobs are lost as a result of poor work performance and or the need to move area to escape a violent partner or by the violent partner causing disruption at the workplace.

A number of employers are now seeing domestic violence as a Human Resource issue and introducing workplace guidance on dealing with employees who are the survivors – or perpetrators – of domestic violence. A number of statutory agencies have already addressed this.

### Convicted and Non-convicted Perpetrator programmes

Bedfordshire Probation Area is fully committed to the implementation of the accredited programme IDAP – Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme – which will be an important step forward in the more effective management of convicted perpetrators. IDAP involves attendance at both an intensive group work programme and individual sessions with a Probation Officer, before, during and after the programme. This work is complemented by contact with the

victim/partner/ex-partner of the perpetrator by the Women's Safety Worker who will act as an important link to enable the perpetrator's account of his behaviour to be properly challenged. The aim of the IDAP programme is to ensure that all perpetrators who attend will undertake work on their attitudes and behaviour, but that primarily the work is to support victims (and prevent future victims) so each offender within IDAP will be managed via a small multi-agency group within the Probation Service's high risk management strategy (called MAPPA – Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), so that the sharing of information about all aspects of a perpetrator's activities can be monitored.

## **Protection and Justice**

### Police response

Luton Police are in the process of setting up a new Domestic Violence unit. The staff will increase to a total of 20 officers who will be based at the Police station and will provide cover seven days a week.

The unit will be committed to provide an excellent quality service to:

- Meet the needs of the public in general and the victims in particular.
- Promote an environment in which people can live and move safely without fear.
- To protect the victim from further acts of violence.
- To assess the specific needs of each victim and make appropriate referrals to agencies and counselling services.
- To advise the victim of the court process and address any concerns regarding it.
- Reduce Domestic violence within the community by highlighting the seriousness of the conduct involved and consequences of such action.
- To create policy to ensure a consistent procedure is used in responding to and investigating incidents of domestic violence.
- To act as a single point of reference for partners engaged in domestic violence reduction.

The new unit will have the capacity to deal with offenders as well as victims

The unit will aim to improve the service that Bedfordshire Police provides to victims of Domestic Violence. It will also look to increase the number of successful prosecutions in cases involving Domestic Violence.

### Crown Prosecution Service

CPS is implementing the guidance set-down in the Crown Prosecution Service Domestic Violence Policy, re-launched in January 2005.

### Specialist courts

The courts are committed to increasing the number of perpetrators brought to justice. Along with this, there is a need to ensure that services offered to victims of domestic violence are continually improved.

The Magistrates Court has undertaken an investigation into the setting up of a Specialist Domestic Violence Court and expects to have this in place in October 2005.

## Local Criminal Justice Boards (CJS)

The Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board intend to develop and implement an action plan to deliver the changes necessary in all CJS Agencies to comply with the guidelines set out in the Office of Criminal Justice Reform's seven priorities to improve victim and witness satisfaction. Four of the priorities involve guidance for use in Domestic Violence.

## No Witness No Justice

This is one of the three major reforms of the government in the field of criminal justice.

It aims to improve the flow of information between the Police, Crown Prosecution Service and the witness that takes place between the point of charge and case disposal.

Witnesses will be informed of case progress and also asked about any concerns or practical difficulties they may have.

## **Support for Victims**

### Luton Women's Aid

Luton Women's Aid has been helping survivors of Domestic Violence for over 30 years. It runs five refuges, runs a helpline, gives training and does outreach work into the community.

### Helplines

Luton has two main victims help-line, one is part of the Luton Police Domestic Violence Unit and the other is part of the work of Luton Women's Aid. At present Luton does not have any specific 24 hours help-line, however, the Luton Women's Aid number is picked up by the Samaritan after working hours. Luton Women's Aid would be keen to work with others to provide a 24 hour helpline.

### Housing Strategy

Within Luton Borough Councils Strategy Statement the Council has long-term objectives it expects to achieve by 2011. Within this strategy under the key themes of deprivation, crime, health and social care the Council will work towards supporting the victims of domestic violence and hate crimes within the team plans of each department.

Luton Borough Council is serious about nuisance, racial harassment and anti social behaviour and under the Landlord Services there is a dedicated Tenancy Enforcement Team.

### Supporting People

It is clear that the government expects agencies across the board to respond more effectively to domestic violence than has been the case in the past. Apart from the welcome extension of priority need categories in the Homelessness Act 2002, has signalled its expectations to local authorities of the improvements that it would like to see in the nature of services provided. These have included targets to reduce the use of bed and breakfast hotels as temporary accommodation for families and a greater emphasis on reducing (if possible) the incidence of repeat homelessness.

More recently the 'Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – ODPM' has announced its intention to revise the Code of Guidance to set out clear standards for temporary accommodation (including additional standards for bed and breakfast hotels) and guidance on providing support, education and work related advice and opportunities to people living in temporary accommodation. A number of the recommendations drawn from this research on domestic violence fit within this developing framework. Further advice on repeat homelessness and domestic violence will also be forthcoming in the medium term.

Dealing effectively and sensitively with domestic violence requires a range of key service responses and it also necessitates staff having the ability and flexibility to work with other service providers in joint initiatives for the wider benefit.

For the Luton Supporting People there are some main themes. These are to identify trends in domestic violence and responsibly plan, with a clear commissioning approach; explore the advantages and disadvantages of a range of housing options; examine how culturally sensitive housing providers are in responding to the needs of the community; investigate women's mobility; explore support issues in more depth, including those specifically affecting minority ethnic women and women with disabilities.

This will be developed further in conjunction with the Supporting People cross authority work and planning for when the next commissioning plan is prepared.

### Local Authority Housing & Homelessness

Luton Borough Council takes a very serious view in respect of Domestic Violence and has always supported the victims of Domestic Violence through the homeless process before the statutory framework came into existence.

The Homeless Persons Team accepted 30 cases of Domestic Violence during 2004/05 and advised many others on legal options and remedies. Following the results of the inspection (Supporting People) more intense work was put into place to respond to the needs of this group.

There is now in place a protocol for all front line officers dealing with or likely to have contact with victims of violence. A training programme for all staff has been established and domestic violence has become part of the core mandatory training for new officers.

Systems have been put into place which signpost victims directly to the relevant officers.

Luton Borough Council Housing Needs Department provides financial support by way of a grant to Luton Women's Aid. A dedicated Homeless Officer is part of the Domestic Violence Forum. The Housing Needs Manager has recently submitted a bid (LPSA) to raise funding for a pilot Sanctuary Scheme for Luton.

All agreements for temporary accommodation provided to homeless households contain a clause relating to domestic violence under sanctions the Housing Needs Team will take against perpetrators.

### Advocacy Services

If funding became available this would be beneficial to all agencies, as well as, victims, due to the support provided and information gathered. It is an area, which we are seriously considering.

### Children's Services

The needs of children affected by domestic violence and their families are identified through the children in need assessment process and supported on a multi agency basis. The Local Safeguarding Children Board for Luton will be reviewing the protocols for domestic violence established under the Joint Bedfordshire and Luton Area Child Protection Committee. The new Children and Learning Department supports the development of children's services focusing on

5 key outcomes identified in the Children Act 2004 and Every Child Matters-Change for Children Programme for children and young people to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing.

Services will be working to improve support to parents and carers through universal and targeted support to families and children; promote early intervention and protection through improved arrangements for information sharing, introducing the common assessment framework to standardise assessment tools, assigning a lead professional to promote greater co-ordination of services for families where children a variety of needs and risk factors and increasing the support existing within Luton schools of family workers. The common assessment framework and lead professional will be in place during 2006, after the pilot projects have been evaluated.

Through the work of the Domestic Violence Forum, Children and Young People's Strategic Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board services for children and families affected by domestic violence will be supported and co-ordinated to ensure prompt and appropriate responses.

Luton Borough Council has established a set of guidelines on dealing with victims of violence. Agencies in Luton have signed up to these guidelines as good practice.

## **Accessibility**

### Domestic Violence Co-ordinator

Luton currently has a domestic violence co-ordinator in post. The co-ordinator takes a role in ensuring that other agencies consider domestic violence issue in their planning and that their plans link to and support the Domestic Violence Strategy.

### Co-ordination of the Luton Multi Agency Violence Forum.

Ensures that both statutory and voluntary sector organisations are aware of the Forum and its work in addressing Domestic Violence. It has an open membership that enables all those providing services around this area of work to meet and discuss the issues, as well as enabling networking and partnership working.

### Marsh Farm Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing

A six-month pilot project within Marsh Farm is planned for mid-2005, working jointly with the Police, Sure Start and Social Services, which will enable Sure Start to offer service and support to survivors of Domestic Abuse.

### Work with Hard to Reach Groups

Multi agency support for work, particularly in the voluntary sector which helps to identify and develop initiatives that enables those from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) groups to receive services that meet their specific needs.

## **Developing the Action Plan**

In identifying the aims, objectives and tasks for the Action Plan the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Vision and Objectives, along with the Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum's Aims and Objectives have been consulted on with a range of agencies. Taking into consideration other key papers like the Domestic Violence Act 2004 and the requirements of the Local Authority in relation to the 11 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) the Action Plan for Luton has been developed.

The Action Plan is a co-ordinated document that considers what is already in place, where the gaps are and how these might be met.

The Action Plan is based on the following key aims: -

- To raise the profile of domestic violence in agencies, workplaces and the community
- To provide integrated services for women and children that are accessible to all in a seamless approach to provision, protection and prevention
- To develop new services where there are identified gaps in provision
- To reduce repeat victimisation
- Co-ordination of mapping and monitoring of domestic violence work
- Co-ordination of training and education for agencies and the community.

Detailed action plans have been drawn which forms the basis of the work undertaken by the Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum. The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator for Luton oversees this work. The action plans will be reviewed on an annual basis. They will be subject to regular performance monitoring. The action plan will be reported on at each meeting of Luton's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's quarterly meetings.

The Tasks within the Action Plan provide only a summary of the work that will be undertaken in the first year of the period 2005 to 2008.

A detailed Action Plan and current progress can be obtained from the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator.

At the end of the first year an update on progress to date will be compiled outlining the work that has taken place in addressing each of the tasks

### Action Plan 2005 – 2006

<b>Aim</b>	<b>To raise the profile of domestic violence in agencies, workplaces and the community</b>	<b>Lead: -</b>
<b>Design, Print and Distribute a range of resources</b>	Leaflets and directories have been distributed to Doctors Surgeries and Health Visitor. Leaflets have been distributed to schools, the university and colleges. Building on the number of agencies providing co-ordinated information and advice will develop this.	<b>Domestic Violence Co-ordinator.</b>
<b>Deliver a local advertising campaign</b>	To secure funding and run advertising campaigns that target both victims and perpetrators	<b>Luton Police</b>
<b>To organise events during local domestic violence week</b>	To plan and implement local initiative that supports the national awareness campaign	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>
<b>To support community groups through sensitive campaigns and information</b>	To provide information to community groups through existing networks like mums and tots and family workers	<b>Domestic Violence Co-ordinator.</b>
<b>To initiate work on Domestic Violence Policies</b>	To work with agencies across the town to develop work based domestic violence policies where none exists	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>

<b>Aim</b>	<b>To provide integrated services for women and children that are accessible to all in a seamless approach to provision, protection and prevention</b>	<b>Lead</b>
<b>Development of an Advocacy Service</b>	To investigate the feasibility of setting up a domestic violence advocacy service	<b>Domestic Violence Co-ordinator Police, Courts, CPS</b>
<b>To ensure that women are able to access regular Drop in Services run by the community</b>	To provide community based drop in centres where vulnerable women from the community can access support locally	<b>Domestic Violence Co-ordinator Community Groups</b>
<b>To develop a working information sharing protocol that agencies can sign up to.</b>	To work with agencies across the town to develop a protocol for sharing information that enables agencies to provide a co-ordinated service.	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>

<b>Aim</b>	<b>To develop new services where there are identified gaps in provision</b>	Lead
<b>Marsh Farm Sure Start project to be up and running during 2005</b>	To have a specific service running in the Marsh Farm New Deal for Communities area that addresses the issue of Domestic Violence	<b>Sure Start</b>
<b>A self Referral Perpetrators programme to be investigated and established as required</b>	To set up initial meetings with agencies to consider the setting up of a Referral Perpetrators programme. To implement programme is feasible	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>
<b>To provide multi agency support group or counselling services for young people</b>	To map current support services for young people. To increase support groups aimed at young people where possible.	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>
<b>To increase work in schools around domestic violence</b>	To ensure that there is a holistic and co-ordinated programme of work being delivered in schools that raise awareness and provide support for young people	<b>Luton Borough Council Education</b>
<b>To consider the issues associated with women with no recourse to public funds and how these can be addressed</b>	To set up a small working group to discuss this issue and make recommendations for the way forward	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>
<b>Developing services for women who have escaped domestic violence</b>	Multi agency support group currently being planned. To ensure that this is progressed	<b>Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum</b>

<b>Aim</b>	<b>To reduce repeat victimisation and hold abusers accountable</b>	Lead
<b>To extend the current Domestic Violence help line to operate 24hours a day</b>	To consider and implement approaches to increasing the Police and Women's aid help lines to 24 hours.	<b>Police Women's Aid</b>
<b>Map the support services provided, particularly by the voluntary sector and create a directory of services</b>	To ensure that there is a structure in place that maps all the services being delivered across the town in relation to Domestic Violence. To update the current directory as required	<b>Domestic Violence Co-ordinator</b>
<b>To develop Perpetrators Programmes</b>	To ensure that the Perpetrators Programme is set up and rolled out. To keep information on how many people have attended the programme	<b>Probation</b>

To reduce number of children on the Child Protection registers resulting from Domestic Violence.	To collect information on numbers of young people on the Child Protection register with a view to implement initiatives that will enable the number to be reduced.	Social Services
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<b>Aim</b>	<b>Co-ordination of mapping and monitoring of domestic violence work</b>	
To support and encourage agencies other than the police to collect data where possible to get a true picture of domestic violence in the town	To co-ordinate collection of data across agencies through specific guidelines that enable more accurate collection to take place	Luton Multi Agency Domestic Violence Forum
To update the current interim directory of services at least every six months.	To ensure that all new services are entered into the Directory and that this is distributed regularly	Domestic Violence Co-ordinator.
To continue initial discussions in terms of identifying the cost of domestic violence	To plan and fund this work to complete a piece of research that provides a realistic picture of the cost of Domestic Violence.	Police Luton University

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Co-ordination of training and education for agencies and the community.</b>	
To develop a co-ordinated approach to training across all agencies.	To compile a database of present training and resources. To identify gaps in training and to consider approaches to addressing these	Domestic Violence Co-ordinator
To run a minimum of two multi agency training events each year.	To run three Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Training days. Funded by key agencies.	Domestic Violence Co-ordinator.

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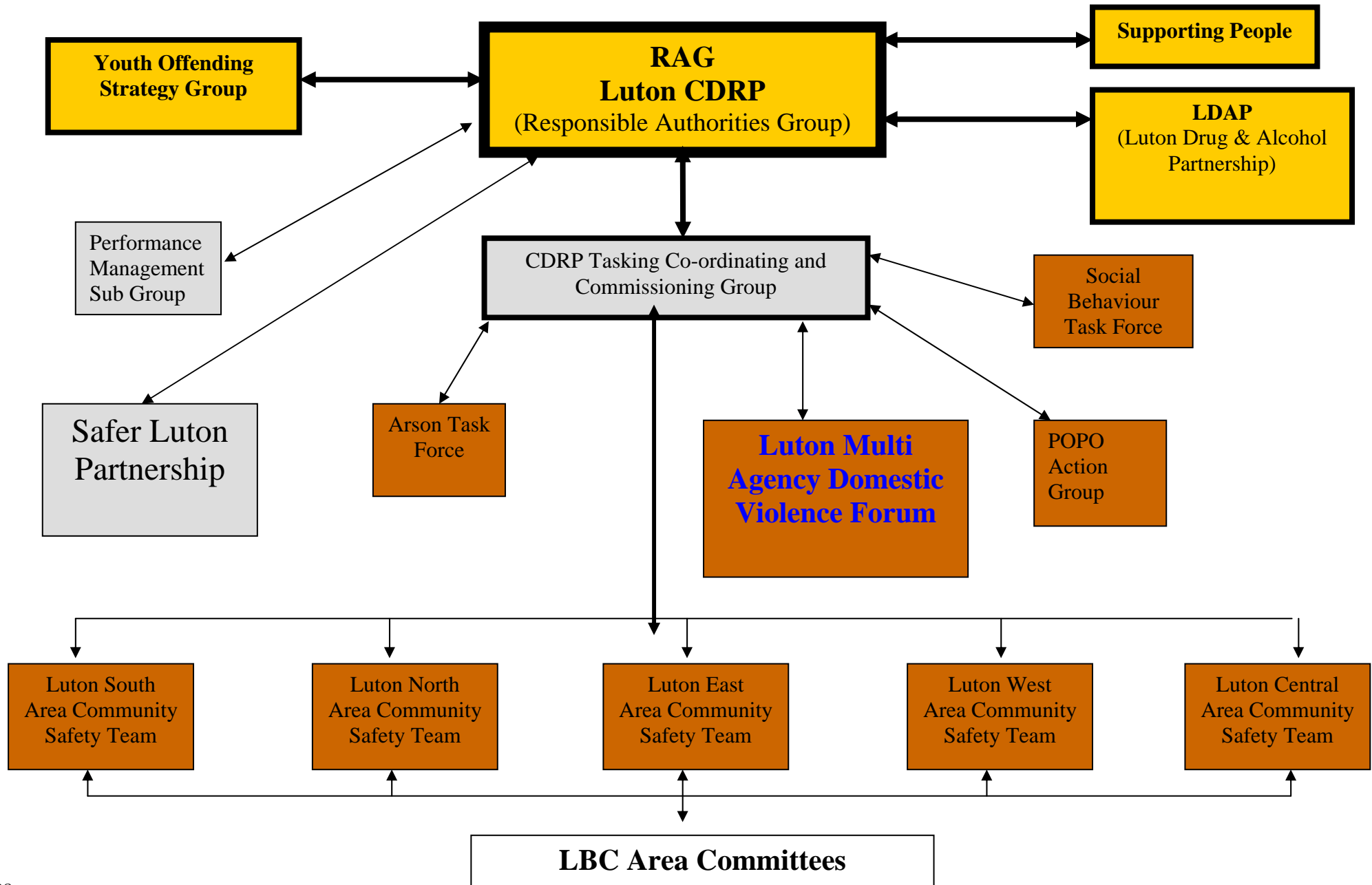
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## **Luton Domestic Violence Forum Membership**

Alcohol Services for the Community  
Barnfield College  
Bengali Women's Project  
CAB  
Crown Prosecution Service  
Bedfordshire Police Domestic Violence Unit  
Education Welfare Services  
EFEA  
Family Consultation Clinic  
Family Matters  
Flying Start Co-ordinator  
FWA Well Family Project  
Homes for Homeless People  
James Kingham Project  
Life Housing  
Luton & Bedfordshire ACPC Training Co-ordinator  
Luton All Woman's Centre  
Luton Borough Council – Community Safety  
Luton Borough Council – Homeless Team  
Luton Borough Council – Social Services  
Luton Borough Council – Standard & Performance  
Luton Borough Council – Supporting People, Housing & Social Services  
Luton Borough Council – Tenancy Enforcement Team  
Luton Drug and Alcohol Partnership  
Luton Law Centre  
Luton Magistrates Court  
Luton Primary Care Trust  
Luton Samaritans  
Luton's Women Aid  
Machins Solicitors  
Probation Service  
Safer Luton Partnership  
Sure Start  
University of Luton  
Victim Support

# Luton CDRP Structure



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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is correct

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