



**REPORT TO: POLICE AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
22 NOVEMBER 2018**

SUBJECT: THEMATIC REPORT – DOMESTIC ABUSE IN MORAY

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1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee about Domestic Abuse in Moray.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (J) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the monitoring of delivery of the Police and Fire & Rescue Services in Moray.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Police and Fire & Rescue Services Committee scrutinise and note the information provided in this report in relation to Domestic Abuse within Moray.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The number of recorded domestic incidents in Moray has reduced from last year to date and are outlined in the table below. This figure includes both crime related incidents and non-criminal incidents.

| | 2016/17 | Per 10K | 2017/18 | Per 10K |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Moray | 747 | 77.8 | 711 | 74 |

- 3.2 The number of detected crimes over the last 2 years in Moray are shown below which also highlights an increase in the detection rate:

| | Recorded | | Detected | | Detection Rate | |
|-------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| Moray | 633 | 591 | 452 | 434 | 71.4 | 73.4 |

4. Violence Against Women Partnerships

- 4.1 'Equally Safe' is the Scottish Government's strategy to prevent violence against women and young girls. Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWPs) are 'the multi-agency mechanism' to deliver on this at a local strategic level.
- 4.2 Taking into consideration differences in Local Authority areas, reviewed guidance published by the Scottish Government in 2016, suggested VAWPs ought to strengthen links with local key partnerships, including Adult and Child Protection Committees, Health and Social Care Joint Integration Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, Community Justice Partnerships and Alcohol and Drug Partnerships.

Additionally, VAWPs are expected to play a role in established processes which exist to assist victims of Domestic Abuse and reduce instances of reoffending such as Multi Agency Tasking and Coordinating (MATAC) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

- 4.3 The guidance also highlighted 6 minimum standards for VAWPs:
- Every Local Authority should have a VAWP in place
 - VAWPs should bring together key public and third sector organisations
 - Every VAWP should have a Terms of Reference
 - Every VAWP should have a strategic plan in place
 - Every VAWP should have a framework in place for measuring its performance and progress towards achieving its agreed outcomes
 - Every VAWP should have a designated person who is responsible for co-ordinating its core activities
- 4.4 In Moray, the Community Safety Strategy 2013-2016, set out the strategic direction, priorities and outcomes to be taken forward by the Moray Community Safety Partnership (CSP). This was responsible for the development of a local strategy to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and men throughout Moray.
- 4.5 The Moray Domestic Abuse Forum/Partnership had been established since 2000 and was a multi-agency collaboration with representation across all sectors. The partnership has been in abeyance since October 2016, after a restructuring of Moray Council where the post of Domestic Abuse Partnership Information Officer was discontinued.
- 4.6 With no VAWP in Moray, Police Scotland coordinated a strategic development session in May 2018, to address the gap in strategic governance of gender based abuse issues. This formed the basis of developing a new action plan and establishment of a VAWP in Moray.
- 4.7 The first meeting of the VAWP in Moray was held on 17 September 2018. DCI Kevin Walker will be assuming role of Chair of the Partnership in subsequent meetings.
- 4.8 Governance for the VAWP will be through the Moray Chief Officer's Group.

5. MARAC

- 5.1 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are held locally and provide a means for agencies to share information confidentially and produce a co-ordinated action plan to address identified risks to victims. Since their conception, the Police have adopted a leading role in relation to identifying victims suitable for referral and also co-ordinating the meeting.
- 5.2 Victims who are deemed to be of high risk of serious harm are referred to MARAC. The Domestic Abuse Questions (DAQs) are the means by which risk is assessed by police officers. Other agencies use a similar assessment tool. The resulting scoring from the DAQs (or equivalent) are used in conjunction with professional judgement to establish whether a victim should be referred to this multi-agency meeting.
- 5.3 Attendance at the monthly MARAC meetings varies, dependent on the nominals being discussed. The meetings are co-ordinated by Police Scotland and are currently chaired the Moray Drug and Alcohol Partnership Manager. The following organisations are invited to attend:
- Moray Women's Aid
 - Children and Families, Moray Council
 - Housing, Moray Council
 - NHS Grampian
- 5.4 Those attending the meetings can vary also, particularly if there is an allocated worker available to attend to discuss one of their clients who features as a referral.
- 5.5 A MARAC Management Group is now in place in Moray. This will provide governance to ensure the effectiveness and multi-agency attendance at MARACs and address any operational issues.

6. MATAC

- 6.1 Multi Agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATAC) meetings provide an effective multi agency response in the targeting of domestic abuse offenders deemed to present the greatest risk of harm to victims. Once again, through the sharing of information and carrying out proactive enforcement, the risk to victims can be reduced through the tasking from these meetings.
- 6.2 The meeting is chaired by the Public Protection Unit (PPU) Detective Chief Inspector on behalf of the Detective Superintendent.
- 6.3 There are three meetings held monthly, with a view to identifying ways to minimise the threat, risk and harm provided by a perpetrator. In the main nominals are identified by the Partnership Co-ordination Unit (PCU), with generally 1 to 3 discussed at each meeting. The following organisations are invited to attend:
- Police Scotland – Partnership Co-ordination Unit
 - Police Scotland – Divisional Intelligence Unit
 - Police Scotland – Divisional Alcohol and Violence Reduction Unit

- Police Scotland – Domestic Abuse Task Force
- Police Scotland – Local Policing
- Moray Women's Aid
- Housing, Moray Council
- Criminal Justice Social Work (SW), Moray Council
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- Children and Families Team, SW, Moray Council
- NHS Grampian
- Scottish Prison Service

6.4 Partner attendance at MATAC meetings is low, with generally only 2 or 3 in attendance from agencies other than Police Scotland. This undoubtedly impacts on the effectiveness of the meeting.

6.5 The introduction of the MARAC Management Group and direct contact with partners through the MARAC Co-ordinator to encourage attendance and identify deputies should make a positive impact on this issue.

7. DSDAS

7.1 The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) provides a way of sharing information about a partner's abusive past, with a potential victim. It gives people at risk of Domestic Abuse the information needed to make an informed decision on whether to continue the relationship.

7.2 Decision Making Forums (DMFs) is the process where a multi-agency meeting is held to consider the circumstances and decide if a disclosure should be made. In Moray, these are chaired by a PPU Detective Chief Inspector on behalf of the Detective Superintendent, who has ownership of the Domestic Abuse portfolio. Attendance at the meetings is varied, but in order to take place there must be a minimum of three organisations represented, including Police Scotland.

7.3 The following organisations are invited to take part:

- Moray Women's Aid
- Criminal Justice SW, Moray Council
- Children and Families SW, Moray Council
- Housing, Moray Council

7.4 Police are also represented at the DMFs by the PCU, with cases presented by an Officer from the Unit.

8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Moray Council's responsibilities with regards to the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 are directly relevant to Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

This report is presented to the Moray Police and Fire & Rescue Services Committee within its remit for local scrutiny of the Police.

(c) Financial implications

There are no identified financial implications.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no identified risk implications.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no identified staffing implications.

(f) Property

Not applicable.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Not applicable.

(h) Consultations

The Local Police Plan, upon which the performance is reporting, was subject to consultation with elected representatives, and was heavily influenced by ongoing feedback from local communities within the Moray Council area.

9. CONCLUSION / FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1** Although there is a decrease in the number of domestic incidents in Moray, there is still a requirement for partner representation and input to ensure victim safety is suitably addressed and joint, proactive action is taken in respect of perpetrators who pose a significant risk.
- 9.2** The development of a VAWP and a MARAC Management Group in Moray are clearly a positive step to address the gap in the area since the end of 2016. These meetings are still developing and there is still a requirement for a clear reporting and governance structure.
- 9.3** Although the numbers of referrals to MARAC meetings was not previously recorded, there are new mechanisms in place to enable Police Scotland to provide partners with information on the number and kind of referrals received which should assist in ensuring any trends or gaps in service are suitably highlighted.

- 9.4 Awareness raising work is ongoing with partners to ensure improved multi-agency attendance at meetings and concerns regarding this issue will be raised with the new MARAC Management Group and the Violence Against Women Partnership.**
- 9.5 As is the case with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, there is no Co-ordinator in place for the Moray Violence Against Women Partnership. This role is crucial to maintaining the administration of the partnership, linking with national Co-ordinator groups and identifying best practice. Discussions are to be initiated with Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils to consider a Co-ordinator post covering all three areas.**

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Background Papers: None
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