



Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Resources and Sustainable Communities
Scrutiny Panel

Service Improvement Performance
Monitoring of the Community Safety
Improvement Plan – Review of Violent Crime

November 2006

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Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Resources and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

Service Improvement Performance Monitoring of the Community Safety Improvement Plan – Violent Crime

1. Introduction by the Chair

This is the second scrutiny review that has been undertaken in relation to crime and disorder following the Best Value Review of Community Safety in April 2004.

The Improvement Plan produced at the time of the review contained the following Improvement Actions in relation to town centre violence and domestic violence:

- Review service provision in terms of CCTV operation.
- Implement “a think safe, drink safe” campaign in all town centres.
- Implement the actions contained within the domestic violence strategy.
- Increase accessibility of information about local services in relation to domestic violence.



The Scrutiny Panel has considered the progress made towards implementing the above, together with a wider review of measures introduced to tackle violent crime and domestic violence in Tameside.

Tackling town centre violence is high on the Government’s agenda as shown by the recent introduction of the Violent Crime Reduction Act. Creating a safe environment is also one of the Council’s priorities in the Tameside Community Strategy and the Council’s Corporate Plan has an objective to reduce violent crime, including domestic violence. The Panel recognises that the level of town centre violence is generally speaking rising through out Greater Manchester although this problem in Tameside is confined to a relatively small number of areas. Much of it is alcohol related and occurs not in pubs and clubs but outside away from the security measures and initiatives that have been implemented in our town centre venues. The review has looked at ways that the same safety initiatives that are proving so successful in pubs and clubs can be extended to catering establishments. The review has considered some of the affects of the new licensing regime.

Domestic Violence had been identified in the 2004 Best Value Review as an area of weakness. Since then a number of improvements have been implemented with a full time co-ordinator appointed, a multi disciplinary Domestic Violence Forum has been

established chaired by a Cabinet Secretary and the Forum has produced an action plan to raise awareness of this crime and increase prosecution.

The Panel has met with key service providers and also commissioned an extensive consultation exercise with victims of domestic violence.

In common with all scrutiny reviews reports, this report is a snapshot in time looking at the services in question knowing that situations change and develop. For the review to be practical, it has to have limits to what it considers and there is other work ongoing, particularly work aimed at dealing with the underlying causes of violence such as alcohol misuse and work to tackle hate crime, that is outside the scope of this review.

The overall conclusion of this review is that significant improvements in tacking violent crime have been introduced since the Best Value Review, especially in relation to domestic violence which now has a dedicated officer and an active partnership in the Domestic Violence Forum which is developing proactive multi-agency support.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to and supported this review, which I commend to the Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Smith', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Councillor Michael Smith
Chair of Resources and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

2. Summary

The report reviews the progress of the implementation of Improvement Plan following the Best Value Review of Community Safety published in April 2004, insofar as it applies to town centre and domestic violence. The Panel selected these issues because the Best Value Report concluded that the Council's approach to tackling violent crime and domestic violence needed to be more focussed.

In undertaking these reviews, the Scrutiny Panel canvassed a range of opinions and received considerable information from the Community Safety Unit and the Council's partners.

The Panel has considered the Council's approach to violent crime both in town centres and domestic, together with the role of partners in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. The Panel has considered the licensing affects of the Licensing Act and the need to review licences when circumstances require. The Council has made significant efforts to reduce violent crime, although the trends indicate rising levels across the whole of Greater Manchester. A number of initiatives are grant funded and where possible mainstreaming of funding should be considered. There are also police shift patterns that do not appear to take account of the new licensing hours and need to be reviewed. The Council has installed very sophisticated CCTV systems and the best use of these needs to be made by improving communication with police operations. There are very effective schemes to reduce violence in pubs and clubs, but problems can occur at fast food outlets and in taxis. These need to be included in these schemes. There are good examples of multi agency working but they often concentrate upon crime prevention rather than considering the underlining causes of offending behaviour.

With regard to domestic violence it is clear that the Council has taken considerable steps since the criticism in the original Best Value Report. The Domestic Violence Forum provides a good example of multi agency working but this is only as good as the commitment of the respective partners and the Panel is pleased to a note a recent more effective input form the police. The local NHS trusts also play a significant role in combating this often hidden crime and the development of a standardised approach and further training would be welcomed. Tameside Refuge provides secure support for victims of domestic violence and should continue to be supported. The development of schemes to protect victims in their own homes is an important and welcome improvement as domestic violence is one of the major causes of homelessness. The Sanctuary Housing Scheme is a good example of these schemes and how effectively victims can be supported.

3. Membership of Panel

2005/06

Councillor Walsh (Chair), Councillors Grundy, P Harrison, Hill, Holland, M J Smith, Wareing, Welsh and K Wright

2006/07

Councillor M J Smith (Chair), Councillors Dickinson, Sidebottom, Travis, Walsh, Wareing, White, Whitley and K Wright

4. Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference for the Review were agreed at a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel held on 7th July 2005. A copy of the Project Plan for the review is appended to this report as Appendix 1.

Aim of the Scrutiny Review

To review the impact of current measures to tackle violent crime in Tameside and to consider future plans, in order to inform policy development and help ensure targets are met.

Objectives

To produce accurate and comprehensive information about the level of violent crime in Tameside and to consider its effects on the community.

To evaluate the impact of current policies and procedures to;

- Tackle and reduce violent crime in town centres;
- Reduce youth involvement in violent crime;
- Tackle domestic violence and provide support to victims;
- Deal with offenders;
- Tackle the underlying causes of violent crime, including alcohol misuse and hate crime

To consider future plans for tackling violent crime in Tameside.

To assess measures for tackling violent crime in relation to value for money.

To identify examples of best practice in Tameside and other Local Authorities and make any recommendations for improvement.

The report is divided into two sections:

Part One - focuses on town centre violence;
Part Two – focuses on domestic violence

Part 1 - Town Centre Violence

5. Methodology

- 5.1 Members of the Panel visited the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) control centre and met with CCTV operators, in order to gain first hand experience of the operation and impact of CCTV.
- 5.2 The Panel met with the Greater Manchester Police Area Inspector for Ashton-under-Lyne to discuss current policies and procedures for tackling town centre violence in Tameside.
- 5.3 The Panel met with representatives of 'Pub and Club Watch' crime prevention initiative, Stalybridge and Ashton-under-Lyne, together with the Watch Scheme Administrator, Greater Manchester Police, to discuss their views regarding town centre violence and the impact of current policies and procedures for tackling domestic violence.
- 5.4 Officers from the Scrutiny Support Unit attended a meeting of the Town Centre Case Intervention Group.
- 5.5 The Panel met with the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and the District Manager of the National Offender Management Service (formally the Probation Service).
- 5.6 The Panel met with the Head of Environmental Enforcement to discuss ways in which Licensing helps combat town centre violence in Tameside.

6. Background to the Review

- 6.1 Tackling violent crime is a national and local priority. In June 2005, the Government announced the Violent Crime Reduction Bill. The Bill was produced in response to concerns expressed by the Home Affairs Committee in 2004 about the Government's delay in developing a strategy to deal with violent crime.
- 6.2 The Bill, if implemented, will include a package of measures intended to increase the power of the Police and Local Authorities to reduce violent crime. Key measures include:
 - Police would be provided with powers to exclude individuals whom they consider at risk of carrying out alcohol related disorder from a specific area for up to 48 hours;
 - Police would be provided with the power to ban the sale of alcohol at licensed premises for up to 48 hours for selling alcohol to under 18s;

- Police would be provided with the power to fast track licensing cessation when a premise is associated with serious crime.

6.3 Creating a “safe environment” is also one of the six priorities identified in the Tameside Community Strategy. In addition, the Council’s 2005/6 Corporate Plan specifies an objective to “reduce violent crime in the Borough, including domestic violence”.

6.3 Furthermore, tackling violent crime is a key concern for Tameside residents. The Community Strategy Update in 2004 stated “insufficient progress” had been made towards “increasing the % of people who feel safe in public places in Tameside” and a survey conducted by the Community Safety Service in 2005 revealed that only 23% of respondents felt safe in Tameside town centres after dark.¹

6.4 At a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel held on 7th July 2005, it was agreed by Panel members that the Panel continues to monitor the performance of the Community Safety Improvement Plan by focusing on the Crime and Disorder Partnership’s (referred to as the CDRP in the remainder of this report) policies to tackle violent crime in Tameside.

7. Types and Levels of Violent Crime

7.1 There is no specific “violent crime” criminal offence. The Tameside Strategic Assessment’ defines violent crime as “a generic term for a number of crime types involving physical or verbal assault on an individual.”

7.2 The predominant types of violent crime recorded in Tameside include:

- Less serious woundings (which incorporates Grievous Bodily Harm, Actual Bodily Harm, Common Assault and Public Order Offences)
- Serious woundings (Grievous Bodily Harm)
- Sexual offences
- Personal robbery

7.3 The majority of violent crime recorded in Tameside falls into the “less serious woundings” category. In 2004 “less serious woundings” accounted for 75% of all violent crimes recorded in the borough. The number of serious offences is a small proportion of the total.²

- Police data shows that most offences occur in the street; a smaller number of woundings and common assaults also occur in nightclubs and pubs.³ Ashton and Stalybridge town centres are the main hotspots for violent crime. In the first

¹ Source: Tameside CDRP, Tameside Crime and Disorder Audit, (2005) p3

² Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (June 2004) p34

³ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2005) p54

half of 2006, 75% of all recorded incidents of wounding and common assault took place in Ashton and Stalybridge town centres; and 25% of incidents were concentrated around 3 streets in Ashton.⁴

- Friday and Saturday nights are the prime time for violent crime offences. The number of incidents reported start to rise during the evening and peaks around 1am and 4am.
- The majority of victims are under the age of 25; the rate of woundings per 1000 persons is highest in the 16 – 18 age group.⁵

7.4 National data shows incidents of less serious and serious woundings are often related to alcohol misuse. The 2005 Tameside Strategic Threat Assessment identified 12% of “less serious wounding” offences as alcohol related. However the CDRP believes that incomplete recording by the Police may underestimate the influence of alcohol on this type of violent crime. Recent emphasis has been placed on improving Police recording of alcohol related crime.⁶

7.5 Police data shows that recorded incidents of violent crime in Tameside have steadily increased since 2004. The number of incidents of common assault recorded in the first quarter of 2005/6 increased by 26% compared to the same period in 2004; this increasing trend has continued in 2006/7.⁷ The Scrutiny Panel recognise that measures to increase reporting of violent crime, particularly domestic violence may effect this data. Details of initiatives to increase reporting of violent crime are contained within this report.

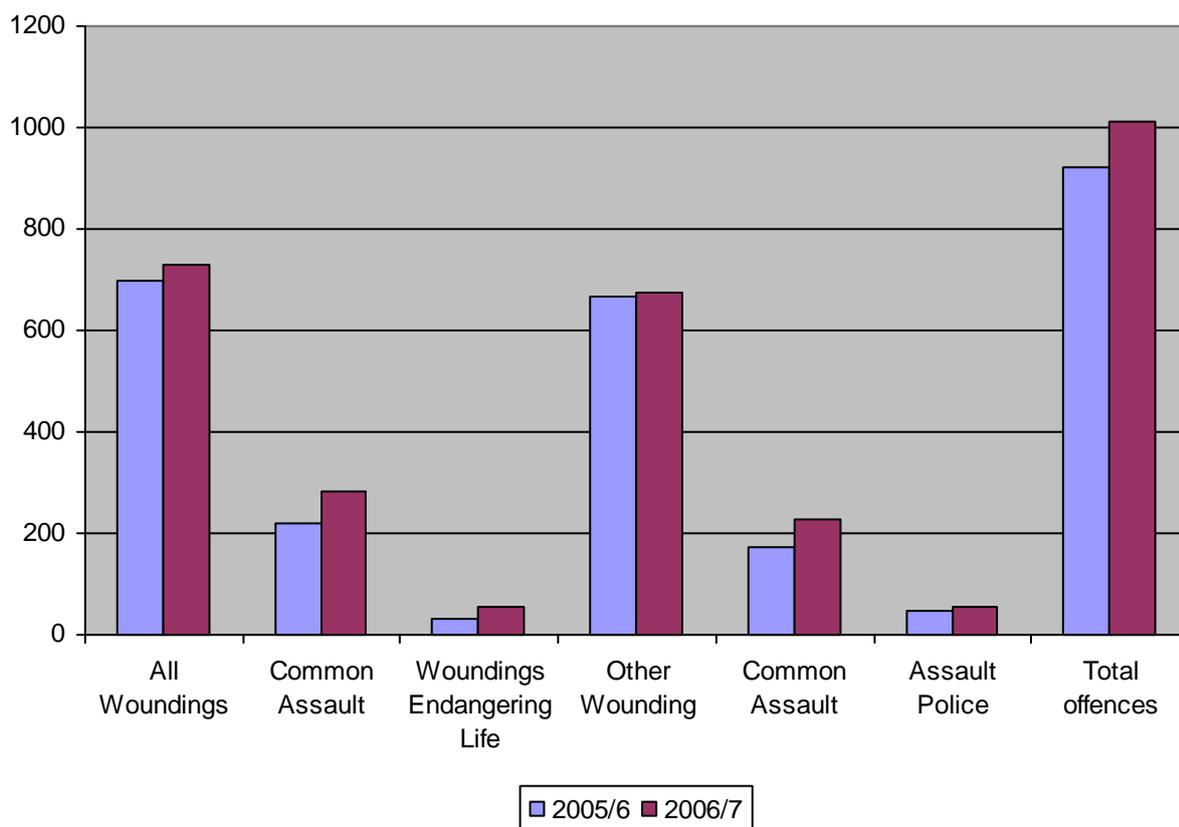
7.6 The graph below compares the number of incidents of violent crime recorded by the Police in the first quarter of 2006/7, with the same period in 2005/6. The graph shows that all types of violent crime again increased during the first quarter of 2006/7.

⁴ Source: Information supplied by the Community Safety Unit, Tameside MBC (August 2006)

⁵ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2005) p56

⁶ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2005) p57

⁷ Source: Information supplied by the Community Safety Unit, Tameside MBC (August 2006)



7.7 The increase in incidents of violent crime has resulted in Tameside CDRP failing to achieve its 2005/6 Best Value Performance Indicator to reduce violent crimes by 14.5% per 1000 population.

7.8 In addition, the CDRP has a Public Service Agreement (PSA) to reduce Common Assault and Woundings by 15% by 2007/8, based on 2003/4 baseline data. The PSA includes milestone targets for 2005/6 and 2006/7, which contribute to the final target of 15%.

7.9 In 2005/6 the CDRP failed to meet its milestone targets for both Common Assault and Woundings, as shown in the table below:

Type of crime	Milestone target for 2005/6	Actual number of incidents recorded in 2005/6	% Change based on 2003/4 data
Common Assault	640 (10% reduction based on 2003/4 data)	819	11.9% increase
Woundings	2600 (10% reduction based on 2003/4 data)	2920	1% reduction

7.10 The increases in violent crime during 2005/6 means that in 2006/7, the CDRP will have to reduce Common Assault by 13.9% and Woundings by 13.5%, in

order to ensure that Tameside is on track to meet its final PSA target in 2007/8. However the increases already reported for the first quarter of 2006/7, means that the milestone targets for 2006/7 will be difficult to meet.

- 7.11 In addition Tameside has the highest rates of recorded incidents of Common Assault and Woundings compared to the other CDRPs in Greater Manchester (excluding the city centre).
- 7.12 Recent police data shows that Tameside's performance in relation to violent crime is deteriorating and is worse than neighbouring CDRP's⁸

8. National Legislation Relating to Violent Crime - The Licensing Act (2003)

8.1 The new Licensing Act was passed in July 2003. The Act repeals most of the existing legislation relating to alcohol, entertainment and night café licensing and replaces it with a totally new licensing regime.

8.2 Key measures contained in the Licensing Act include:

- Responsibility for issuing licenses is transferred from the local Magistrates Court to local Council's;
- A single premise licence brings together the previous system of 6 separate licensing regimes. This licence covers all licensable activities to be carried out on the premise, including the sale or supply of alcohol, the provision of entertainment and the supply of hot food or drink between 11pm and 5am.
- Flexible opening hours - this provides the potential for 24 hour opening, 7 days a week, subject to consideration of the impact on local residents and businesses.

8.3 The Licensing Act's implications for tackling town centre violence

8.3.1 The Licensing Act is a key element of the Government's strategy for combating alcohol related crime and disorder, including town centre violence. On one hand the Act aims to provide the freedom necessary to boost night time economies and enrich local culture; however on the other hand it is intended to play an important role in the prevention of crime and disorder.

8.3.2 The Licensing Act requires that the following 4 objectives, relating to public order and safety, underpin all decisions made by the Licensing Committee:

- The prevention of crime and disorder,
- The promotion of public safety,
- The prevention of public nuisance,
- The protection of children from harm.

⁸ Source: Information supplied by the Community Safety Unit, Tameside MBC (Aug 2006)

8.3.3 If interested parties or other authorities (e.g. the Police, Trading Standards etc.) provide warranted objections that granting a full licence would prove detrimental to the above objectives, then the Act gives the Licensing Committee the power to reject an application or attach conditions to a licence.

8.3.4 For example where relevant objections to a premises licence application have been received the Licensing Committee may:

- Reject an application or limit trading hours
- Request that applicants indicate in their operating plans measures to prevent crime and disorder and promote the above licensing objectives. Such measures may include;
 - The use of CCTV;
 - Search methods;
 - Procedures for risk assessing promotions and events, such as “happy hours”, for the potential to cause crime and disorder; and plans for minimizing such risks;
 - Employment of suitably licensed door supervisors and other trained bar staff;
 - Participation in Pub and Club Watch and “Night Net” schemes.

Where no objections to a licence application have been received the local authority must grant the licence as applied for.

8.3.5 In addition flexible opening hours are intended to provide Licensing Committees with an opportunity to stagger closing times and thereby avoid the potential disorder caused by concentrations of customers leaving pubs and clubs at the same time.

8.3.6 The Licensing Act also gives “responsible authorities,” such as the Police, Trading Standards or the Fire Authority; and interested parties including members of the community, the power to request a premises license review if they feel the licensed premise is detrimental to public order and safety.

8.3.7 The Licensing Act is not intended as the primary mechanism to control general town centre violence and anti-social behaviour. Licensing Committees are required to consider individual applications upon their own merit and are prohibited from attaching blanket standard conditions to every licence. Licence conditions can only be applied where objections to applications have been received.

8.3.8 However, the Act does provide a tool for tackling violent and anti-social behaviour in and around specific “problem” or potential “problem” premises. This is an important tool, as “problem” premises are often not regulated by voluntary crime prevention schemes such as Pub and Club Watch.

8.4 The impact of the Act in Tameside during 2006

- 8.4.1 The Licensing Act became fully operational in November 2005. At that time it was unclear whether the Act would lead to an improvement in town centre violence in Tameside, as intended; or whether extended opening hours would result in increased incidents of alcohol-related disorder and the deterioration of levels of town centre violence.
- 8.4.2 During December 2005, Local Authority Licensing and Pollution Officers and Greater Manchester Police carried out a joint high visibility enforcement campaign to coincide with the implementation of the Act. During this time over 80 weekend and evening visits were carried out at licensed premises in Tameside in order to ensure compliance with licensing conditions and establish strict enforcement of the new licensing regime. This was important as it made Licensees aware of the conditions of the new system and placed emphasis on enforcement at the outset.
- 8.4.3 Early indications suggested that the Act would not have a significant impact on town centre violence in Tameside; as initially very few venues applied for extended hours.
- 8.4.4 However during 2006 a number of bars in Ashton town centre have secured licences to trade until 4am and 6am. With the exception of one premise, all applications for extended hours were granted by delegate powers as no objections were received. One venue was subject to Police objection and the application was deferred by the Speakers Panel for 6 months to allow the Licensee to demonstrate satisfactory management control. The Police objection was withdrawn following the 6 month period and the extended licence was granted.
- 8.4.5 The CDRP has identified a possible correlation between the increase in the number of licensed premises trading until 4am and the increase in incidents of violent crime in Ashton town centre during 2006. Indicators of this correlation are outlined below:
- I. The rise in incidents of violent crime has coincided with the increase in the number of venues granted extended licences;
 - II. During 2006, the peak time for incidents of violent crime has changed from between 12am - 1am to two peaks around 1am and 4am. This coincides with the increase in later trading times;
 - III. Recent CCTV footage has highlighted a number of disturbing incidents occurring in Ashton town centre at between 3am – 4am.⁹
- 8.4.6 Greater Manchester Police are currently working towards securing an agreement with Licensees in Ashton to close at 2am on a temporary basis, to assess whether this has an impact on levels of town centre violence.
- 8.4.7 The Scrutiny Panel was concerned that the power to request a premises license review is not being fully utilised as an enforcement tool in Tameside. The

⁹ Information supplied by the Head of Licensing, Tameside MBC, (September 2006)

Licensing Act gives “responsible authorities” and “interested parties” the power to request a premises licence review. However the Act does not extend the power to request a review to Licensing Officers. In Tameside, there have only been 2 applications for premises licence reviews; and on both occasions the premises closed before the review hearing took place.

Conclusion

- 1. Under the Licensing Act, “responsible authorities” and “interested parties” including the police, trading standards and members of the public are able to request a premise licence review. However, these agencies do not seem to be exercising this power and the power to request a license review has not been extended to Licensing Officers.**

Recommendations

- 1. That local Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to empower Licensing Officers to request reviews of licences.**
- 2. That procedures for requesting a premise licence review are publicised to relevant “responsible agencies.”**

9. Local Policies and Procedure to Tackle Town Centre Violence in Tameside

- 9.1 The CDRP’s approach to tackling town centre violence – the role of the Town Centre Safety Group**
 - 9.1.1 The Town Centre Safety Group was formed in order to raise the profile of town centre safety as a Council priority; and co-ordinate the work of the various agencies involved in town centre safety in Tameside, including the Police, Community Safety Unit, Licensing Authority and Pub and Club Watch.
 - 9.1.2 The Town Centre Safety Group comprises of representatives from each of the key agencies responsible for promoting town centre safety. Other representatives may be invited to attend specific meetings when relevant to the subjects addressed.
 - 9.1.3 The Town Centre Safety Group has produced an Action Plan for improving town centre safety. The Action Plan brings together the relevant strands of each agencies’ policies and procedures. In addition the Action Plan incorporates all relevant National Legislation and Tameside’s Public Service Agreement targets (PSA) relating to town centre safety.

9.1.4 The Action Plan contains measures relating to all aspects of town centre safety including;

- Town centre violence;
- Drink driving;
- Sale of alcohol to underage young people;
- Vehicle crime;
- Drug use;
- Safety and security of town centre buildings;
- Other forms of anti-social behaviour

9.1.5 The Town Centre Safety Group also provides the following additional functions;

- The Group is responsible for ensuring that national legislation relating to town centre safety is incorporated in the CDRP's relevant strategies and action plans.
- The Group provides a channel of communication regarding local intelligence relating to town centre safety;
- It also acts as an ad hoc forum for discussing other relevant issues as they arise.
- The Group monitors progress made towards implementing the actions contained in the Town Centre Safety Group Action Plan, by receiving regular progress reports in relation to each action.

9.1.6 The steady increase in reported incidents of violent crime in Tameside during 2005 – 2006 has prompted the Community Safety Unit to review the CDRP's approach to tackling this type of crime. The Community Safety Unit is currently considering proposals to form a new Violent Crime Group to lead on a revised action plan aimed at tackling violent crime in Tameside. The new Violent Crime Group would act as a steering group and would incorporate the existing Town Centre Safety Group.

Conclusion

2. The Panel acknowledges measures currently being developed to deal with the increased levels of violent crime in Tameside.

Recommendation

3. That the Panel are updated on the development and impact the new Violent Crime Group and revised Action Plan, 3 months from the publication of this report.

9.2 Licensing enforcement measures to tackle town centre violence

- 9.2.1 Greater Manchester Police and Tameside Council's Licensing Officers are currently sharing local intelligence and crime statistics on a monthly basis to identify "problem premises" in Ashton and Stalybridge in order to target resources.
- 9.2.2 Tameside Council's Licensing Unit, in conjunction with Greater Manchester Police, also carry out visits to licensed premises and organise test purchasing for under-age sales, in order to ensure compliance with licensing conditions and identify premises serving minors.
- 9.2.3 However the Scrutiny Panel was informed that the Council's Licensing Officers have been unable to sustain the level of licensing enforcement activity the CDRP had hoped to achieve throughout 2006. A number of reasons were stated:
- Funding for licensing enforcement schemes such as the Best Bar None Scheme, high visibility enforcement campaigns and test purchasing for under-age sales, currently relies on grants and is not mainstreamed. The unstable funding streams makes it difficult to sustain activities;
 - Licensing Officers are only able to make evening enforcement visits to licensed premises when accompanied by Police Officers. Conflicting priorities within Greater Manchester Police has often made it difficult for the Licensing Unit to secure enough Police support to carry out such enforcement work.
- 9.2.4 The Scrutiny Panel received information about the good practice of neighbouring authorities, including the "Best Bar None" scheme successfully implemented in Manchester. This scheme aims to highlight, and encourage Licensees to adopt, a "good code of practice," by rewarding Licensees who demonstrate commitment to reducing violent and disorderly behaviour in their premises. Manchester has reported a significant decline in alcohol related crime and disorder since the scheme began in the city in 2000. The scheme has since been adopted in over 30 cities throughout England and Scotland and is supported by the Home Office.
- 9.2.5 However, a bid for funding to establish a "Best Bar None" scheme in Tameside was unsuccessful.

Conclusions

3. A number of key public safety initiatives are still funded through grants and consideration should be given to mainstreaming the funding for enforcement schemes and other initiatives.
4. The work of Council Officers trying to enforce licensing regulations is being inhibited by lack of police support. The presence of sufficient police back-up is necessary to enable effective enforcement inspections to take place. It appears however that this is not currently available due to police resourcing issues.
5. It is noted that staffing shifts change at 3am thus removing officers from operational duties. The organisation of Police staffing shifts has not adapted to meet the needs of new licensing arrangements and should be reviewed.

Recommendations

4. That consideration be given to main stream funding of licensing enforcement schemes
5. That Greater Manchester Police give greater consideration to the resources available to enable enforcement activities to take place.
6. That the organisation of Police staffing shifts is reviewed in light of new licensing arrangements.

9.3 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

- 9.3.1 A fully digital CCTV surveillance system is in place, complemented by 60 cameras operating around Tameside. The Council's CCTV Control and Monitoring Room is staffed 24 hours and a radio link system is in place to ensure a two-way flow of communication between operators and the Police.
- 9.3.2 Unconcealed CCTV cameras have also been deployed as a deterrent to potential offenders, in areas identified as hotspots for alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour.
- 9.3.3 The aim of CCTV is to act as a deterrent – identifying potential incidents and intervening in order to prevent their escalation. CCTV also provides evidence for Court.
- 9.3.4 However the Scrutiny Panel was concerned that difficulty in establishing communication between CCTV Operators and the Police means CCTV equipment is not currently utilised to its full potential. The Community Safety Unit aim to secure Police presence in the Control Room at identified "high risk" times for crime and disorder – particularly Friday and Saturday nights. However

lack of Police resources has limited Police presence to one Officer for one night per week at the most.

- 9.3.5 In addition the Panel was also informed that CCTV operators often have difficulty in establishing communication by radio link with the Police at peak times; and the direct telephone line to the Police Operational Control Room is often engaged. This means incidents identified by CCTV are not always effectively followed-up by Police action.
- 9.3.6 CCTV footage has highlighted several persistent offenders who are not currently showing in police systems, as they leave the area before the Police arrive and have consequently not been arrested. The CDRP are aware of this issue and will be addressing it in the forthcoming violent crime action plan. Developments have been taken towards establishing a practice of holding regular meetings between the Police and CCTV Operators to ensure CCTV footage is monitored and acted upon.
- 9.3.7 In addition, Licensing Officers are currently providing on the job training for CCTV operators to help them identify and respond to potential incidents of violent crime.

Conclusions

6. **Very sophisticated CCTV recording is in operation in town centres but until recently, the evidence gathered had not been properly considered.**
- The recent regular viewing of CCTV footage appears to have had some success in identifying incidents of violent crime and sales of alcohol to minors. This will allow more effective action to be taken against perpetrators and should be continued.**
7. **Closed Circuit Television operators report having difficulty in communicating with the Police Operational Control Room at peak times. Consequently, incidents shown on CCTV are not always followed up. As a consequence of this, persistent offenders are avoiding arrest and there is a risk of the CCTV system losing credibility.**

Recommendations

7. **That the recently introduced practice of giving greater consideration to CCTV footage be encouraged.**
8. **That communication between CCTV and the Police Operational Control Room be reviewed and peak time difficulties addressed.**

9.4 NiteNet

9.4.1 “NiteNet” is a two way radio system which links bars and pubs with the CCTV control room. The Council supports Nite Net; and currently encourages licensed premises to adopt the scheme through the Licensing Policy. However the Council does not commission the scheme, as Licensees pay for it themselves.

9.5 Pub and Club Watch

9.5.1 Pub and Club Watch is a community based crime prevention scheme, organised by Licensees of pubs and clubs to help combat violence and other criminal activities.

9.5.2 The Scrutiny Panel felt that the Scheme facilitates better communication between Licensees, and Licensees and the Police, regarding local intelligence. Members of the scheme organise a “ring around” facility, which involves Licensees notifying neighbouring Pub and Club Watch members of incidents of anti-social / violent behaviour, in order to ensure “trouble makers” are excluded from all sites. In addition, Pub and Club Watch members hold regular meetings which provide a two way forum of intelligence sharing between Licensees and the Police; and provide an opportunity to discuss potential solutions to problems relating to violence in licensed premises.

9.5.3 In addition the Scrutiny Panel felt that the scheme has an important role in promoting best practice to help Licensees assist in the reduction of alcohol related crime and disorder. The Pub and Club Watch Co-ordinator for Ashton informed the Panel of a ‘Pub and Club Watch Code of Conduct,’ produced and adopted by members of the Ashton scheme, which aims to identify and promote The Code of Conduct requires Licensees to adopt the following examples of good practice:

- Be active members of the scheme, attending at least one meeting in two and keeping up-to-date with subscription payments;
- To co-operate with other Licensees to produce a co-ordinated approach to tackling town centre violence; by, wherever financially viable, subscribing to “NiteNet” and/or actively participating in the “ring round system;”
- To co-operate with Licensing Officers, Police, Town Centre Management and Tameside Council;
- To support the CDRP’s Anti Social Behaviour policies – by ensuring that individuals are reported effectively; and that all employees are aware of reporting procedures;
- To operate responsible promotions of alcoholic drinks and refrain from all inclusive offers which encourage binge drinking and anti-social behaviour;
- To ensure that door supervisors employed on licensed premises are fully trained to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) approved door supervisor certificate and are registered with the SIA;

9.5.4 In addition, members of Pub and Club Watch Schemes have participated in a series of training sessions funded by Tameside CDRP. The training sessions aimed to equip Licensees and bar staff with the necessary skills to deal effectively with incidents of violent and anti-social behaviour taking place on

licensed premises. In addition, sessions aimed to raise awareness of policies and procedures for monitoring ASBOs, and thereby enable Licensees and bar staff to contribute to effective monitoring. The Chair of the Ashton Pub and Club Watch Scheme felt these sessions were very valuable.

- 9.5.5 At the time of the Scrutiny Review, the CDRP was exploring the possibility of extending training on ASBOs to doorstaff employed in licensed premises.
- 9.5.6 Pub and Club Watch Schemes are well established in Ashton, Stalybridge, Dukinfield and Droylsden; whilst new schemes have recently been established in Hyde, Mossley and Longdendale.

Conclusions

- 8. Nitenet and Pub and Club Watch provide an effective means of crime prevention and support for licensees.**

Recommendations

- 9. That the Council proactively encourages licensees to become active members of the Pub and Club Watch scheme, and where financially possible subscribe to NiteNet.**

- 9.6 Measures to support late night takeaways in dealing with town centre violence / anti-social behaviour**
 - 9.6.1 The Scrutiny Panel was concerned that stringent measures for tackling violent and anti-social behaviour in licensed premises has driven violent crime onto the streets, affecting other late night establishments such as takeaways and taxi ranks. Furthermore Police data shows that 56% of incidents of recorded violent crime in Tameside take place on the streets.¹⁰
 - 9.6.2 The Scrutiny Panel was informed that there is little support specifically available for owners and staff of late night takeaways. Only Pub and Club Licensees are eligible to join Pub and Club Watch; the scheme is not currently open to owners of other late night establishments, such as takeaways. Furthermore, though in theory there is no reason why takeaways can't join "NiteNet," the Panel were informed that only pubs and clubs currently participate in the scheme.
 - 9.6.3 The Panel was informed that historically Licensing has not held information about which takeaways are open late at night; therefore there have been no channels to establish communication between Licensing, the CDRP and these establishments.
 - 9.6.4 However the introduction of the new Licensing Act opens up possibilities for establishing greater links with this type of late night establishment. At the time of

¹⁰ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2005) p54

this review, the Town Centre Safety Group, Licensing and Community Safety Unit planned to discuss the possibilities of promoting schemes such as Night Net for late night takeaways, may be through mail shot. The Group also intend to consider the possibility of encouraging Taxi companies to adopt the NiteNet scheme. To date, 2 private hire operators have expressed interest in subscribing to the scheme.

Conclusions

- 9. There is very little support and training available for owners and staff of late night take-aways.**

Recommendations

- 10. That the Council encourage late night take-aways to subscribe to support schemes such as 'Nitenet' and that the 'ring around' system be extended to include take-aways and other late night venues currently not included in the scheme.**
- 11. That measures to tackle violent crime in and around late night take-aways be included in the revised Violent Crime Action Plan.**

9.7 Transport provision for the late night economy

- 9.7.1 Environmental Services (including Licensing) and the Town Centre Safety Group have identified decreasing taxi rank disturbances in Ashton and Stalybridge town centres as a key objective.
- 9.7.2 Town Centre Safety Group has set a target of reducing taxi waiting times by 10%. An independent survey of taxi policies and provision was carried out in 2004. This survey concluded that there was "no significant unmet demand" in terms of taxi provision during the evening / night-time period. A further survey of taxi provision is scheduled to be carried out in early 2007; this will assess whether provision needs adapting in light of the extended hours introduced by the Licensing Act.
- 9.7.3 In the meantime, Environmental Services and Pub and Club Watch are working together to encourage drivers of Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles to collect customers directly at the doors of pubs and clubs, in order to minimize queues and decrease the chances of street disturbances.
- 9.7.4 In addition, Environmental Services is also completing a review of the local transport plan in order to ensure adequate provision is made for late night public transport.

Conclusions

10. The Panel welcomes initiatives to encourage drivers of Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles to collect customers directly at the doors of pubs and clubs.

Recommendations

12. That the Council continue to encourage drivers of Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles to collect customers directly at the doors of pubs and clubs.

10. Measures to Deal With Offenders of Violent Crime

- 10.1 Dealing with offenders at local level is a key priority for National Government. Since the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act in 1998, the Government has provided a number of new legal tools to help Local Authorities and the Police tackle offending behaviour.
- 10.2 The Tameside Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and the local Town Centre Safety Group Action Plan specify the measures employed by the Tameside CDRP to deal with offenders involved in town centre violence in the borough.
- 10.3 Measures employed by the Tameside CDRP fall into two categories:
- **Intervention** – designed to deal with violent and anti-social behaviour at an early stage and thereby stifle its potential impact.
 - **Enforcement** – intended to stop violent and anti-social behaviour and act as a deterrent to others.
- 10.4 Intervention measures include:
- **Warning Interviews**
- Individuals are invited to their local police station with representatives from the Anti-Social Behaviour team to receive a final warning regarding future conduct.
- **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)**
- ABCs are usually used for young people aged 10 to 18 years. The Contracts are voluntary written agreements between offenders and the Council, Police and any other relevant agencies, whereby the offender agrees not to behave in a certain way. They usually last for a 6 month period and are monitored by the Police and the Local Authority. A breach of an ABC can result in application for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).
- 10.5 Enforcement measures include:

- **Fixed Penalty Notices** (or “on the spot fines”)

Fixed Penalty Notices were introduced as part of The Criminal Justice and Police Act in 2001. They are available for a variety of “low level” offences including causing harassment, alarm and distress, and causing disorderly behaviour while drunk in a public place. Notices might be issued on the spot by a uniformed officer or at a police station by an authorized officer. They involve an £80 or £40 penalty depending on the nature of the offence.

Fixed Penalty Notices are intended to offer an alternative to Court prosecution. They provide Police with a way of removing an offender from a potential incident thereby difusing the situation.

Fixed Penalty Notices are only possible when there is sufficient evidence to bring a charge, the offence is not too serious or the offender is compliant and able to understand what is going on.

Once a penalty notice has been issued, the recipient has 21 days in which to pay or request a court hearing. Payment of the notice allows the recipient to avoid conviction and a criminal record. Failure to respond to the notice results in registration of a fine of the original amount plus an additional 50%.

Between 2003/04 and 2004/05 Tameside experienced a 130% increase in the number of Public Order offences recorded by the Police. Nearly 33% of these offences were dealt with by Fixed Penalty Notices.¹¹

The overall increase in the number of Public Order offences may, in a small part, reflect the fact that Fixed Penalty Notices have provided a method for dealing with offenders who would not otherwise have been dealt with by a caution or prosecution.

However, nationally, recent Home Office research has identified a number of limitations relating to the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for dealing with town centre violence.¹² These limitations include:

- I. Fixed Penalty Notices cannot be issued for many alcohol related offences, as the offender may not fully appreciate what is happening.
- II. Uncertainty about offenders’ identity often makes it difficult for Police Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices on the street.
- III. There is often a risk to Police Officers’ safety when attempting to issue a fine in the street surrounded by other interested and often inebriated parties.

The Scrutiny Panel felt that these are particularly important issues to consider in the context of town centre violence in Tameside, as the vast

¹¹ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2005) p55

¹² Source: Home Office, Piloting on the spot penalties for disorder: final results from a one year pilot (2004) Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen’s printer for Scotland

majority of violent incidents in Ashton and Stalybridge take place in the street; and nearly half of all incidents are alcohol related.

In addition a recent Home Office report expressed concerns regarding the repeat issue of Fixed Penalty Notices to the same recipients. The report commented that the deterrent value of Fixed Penalty Notices is lost if an offender receives a fine on a number of occasions without a conviction or criminal proceedings being instituted. The Tameside CDRP has recognised this issue as a potential problem in Tameside and recommended further analysis of patterns of repeat offending.¹³

- **Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)**

Anti Social Behaviour Orders were introduced as part of the Crime and Disorder Act in 1998 and have been available since April 1999. They are Court imposed orders designed to prevent acts of anti-social behaviour by targeting persistent perpetrators.

ASBOs are intended for use against offenders who persistently act in “a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household” as the perpetrator. This wide-ranging brief enables ASBOs to tackle a variety of anti-social and violent behaviours. They are available against anyone over the age of 10 years old.

Any agency “relevant” to a specific case may request an application for an ASBO; this can include Local Authorities, Police forces and Registered Social Landlords. In addition Courts can issue ASBOs on conviction in criminal proceedings.

When applying for an ASBO, the agency responsible for initiating the application is required to provide the Court with evidence to prove that the offender acted in a specific way on specific dates and at specific places and that these acts caused or were likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. Evidence can include breach of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract, witness statements, evidence of complaints recorded by the Police or other agencies, CCTV footage and previous convictions. In addition, when the ASBO is not initiated by the CDRP, consultation must be carried out with the Police and Local Authority.

The terms of an ASBO can prohibit a person from specific acts and from entering any defined geographical area. They last for a minimum of 2 years and there is no maximum duration. Temporary “interim” ASBOs can be issued whilst a formal application is prepared. ASBOs are civil orders, however breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and criminal procedures and penalties apply.

Three ASBOs have been issued in Tameside for issues relating to town centre violence. Tameside’s policy is to apply for a lower number of ASBOs

¹³ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2005) p55

in order to ensure they are effectively monitored and policed. In addition, the Panel was informed that strict enforcement enhances the value of ASBOs as a form of deterrent to other potential offenders. Pictures of offenders with ASBOs are issued to members of Pub and Club Watch and CCTV Operators and “good sentences” have been issued for breaches of ASBOs in Tameside.

Conclusion

11. Anti-social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in order to be effective require strict monitoring and enforcement.

Recommendation

13. That all bar staff and door supervisors be fully aware of Anti-social Behaviour Order cases, including terms and conditions of Orders and the procedures for reporting any breaches.

11. Town Centre Case Intervention Group

11.1 The Tameside Town Centre Case Intervention Group helps to co-ordinate and administer the CDRP’s actions for dealing with persistent offenders of violent and anti-social behaviour in the borough’s town centres.

11.2 The Group was formed in September 2004. Its main actions include:

- Identifying persistent perpetrators of town centre violence and anti-social behaviour;
- Sharing information on offenders, between agencies responsible for working with offenders and promoting town centre safety in Tameside.
- Formulating and administering the development of personal action plans to curtail individuals’ violent/anti social behaviour. This may include recommending individuals for ABCs and final warning interviews; and co-ordinating the application process for ASBOs.
- Promoting awareness of ASBO cases within the town centre.

11.3 The Group adopts a multi-agency approach. It consists of representatives from;

- Tameside Council Community Safety Unit
- Police
- Patrollers
- Probation Service
- Pub Watch
- New Charter Housing Trust Limited
- Town Centre Managers

- 11.4 The Scrutiny Panel felt that the Group has an important role in providing a forum for the different agencies to discuss specific cases in order to build up a more detailed profile of individuals' offending behaviour. This allows the Group to make a decision on the most effective form of intervention / enforcement; and in appropriate cases different agencies can carry out joint action,
- 11.5 Referrals to the Town Centre Case Intervention Group are made by any of the agencies represented on the Group, the Town Centre Safety Group, the CCTV Control Room and Tameside and Glossop Acute Services NHS Trust.
- 11.6 To date the Group has discussed 91 individuals, agreed 32 warning letters, 2 acceptable behaviour contacts, 11 ASBO warnings and 12 ASBOs. The Scrutiny Panel was informed that the number of cases referred to the Group is increasing rapidly. However the Group is currently administered by two Officers employed by the Community Safety Unit which limits the number of cases the Group is able to discuss and restricts the number of orders secured. The Panel was informed that the Group is currently at "saturation point."
- 11.7 The primary purpose of the Town Centre Case Intervention Group is to protect the public by preventing acts of anti-social and violent behaviour. Dealing with the underlying causes of an individual's offending behaviour is beyond the remit of the Group. Consequently the Scrutiny Panel felt that the Group's capacity to help provide long term solutions to offending behaviour is limited.

Conclusion

12. **The Panel feels that the Town Centre Case Intervention Group provides a good example of multi-agency working and information sharing. However, the Panel acknowledges that the main role of the Group is to provide public protection and not deal with underlying causes of offending behaviour.**
13. **The Panel acknowledges the increasing workload of the Group which is currently administered by 2 officers.**

Recommendation

14. **That the Crime and Reduction Disorder Partnership explore the possibility of establishing a protocol for the referral of cases, in order to deal with underlying causes of offending behaviour.**
15. **That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership consider exploring the possibility of increasing resources for the Town Centre Case Intervention Group.**

12. Recommendations – Town Centre Violence

TOWN CENTRE VIOLENCE

- 12.1** That local Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to empower Licensing Officers to request reviews of licences.
- 12.2** That procedures for requesting a premise licence review are publicised to relevant “responsible agencies.”
- 12.3** That the Panel are updated on the development and impact the new Violent Crime Group and revised Action Plan, 3 months from the publication of this report.
- 12.4** That consideration be given to main stream funding of licensing enforcement schemes
- 12.5** That Greater Manchester Police give greater consideration to the resources available to enable enforcement activities to take place.
- 12.6** That the organisation of Police staffing shifts is reviewed in light of new licensing arrangements.
- 12.7** That the recently introduced practice of giving greater consideration to CCTV footage be encouraged.
- 12.8** That communication between CCTV and the Police Operational Control Room be reviewed and peak time difficulties addressed.
- 12.9** That the Council proactively encourages licensees to become active members of the Pub and Club Watch scheme, and where financially possible subscribe to Nitenet.
- 12.10** That the Council encourage late night take-aways to subscribe to support schemes such as ‘Nitenet’ and that the ‘ring around’ system be extended to include take-aways and other late night venues currently not included in the scheme.
- 12.11** That measures to tackle violent crime in and around late night take-aways be included in the revised Violent Crime Action Plan.
- 12.12** That the Council continue to encourage drivers of Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles to collect customers directly at the doors of pubs and clubs.
- 12.13** That all bar staff and door supervisors be fully aware of Anti-social Behaviour Order cases, including terms and conditions of Orders and the procedures for reporting any breaches.

- 12.14** That the Crime and Reduction Disorder Partnership explore the possibility of establishing a protocol for the referral of cases, in order to deal with underlying causes of offending behaviour.
- 12.15** That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership consider exploring the possibility of increasing resources for the Town Centre Case Intervention Group.

Part 2 - Domestic Violence

1. Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were agreed at a meeting of the Panel held on 1st December 2005. A copy of the Project Plan for the review is appended to this report as Appendix 2.

Aim of Scrutiny Review

To review the impact of current measures to tackle domestic violence in Tameside and to consider future plans, in order to inform policy development and help ensure that targets are met.

Objectives

To consider the development of Tameside's approach to tackling domestic violence in Tameside;

To evaluate the impact of current policies and procedures to;

- i. Increase reporting and detection of domestic violence;
- ii. Support victims surviving domestic violence;
- iii. Prevent domestic violence amongst young people;
- iv. Deal with perpetrators;

To consider measures for dealing with domestic violence in minority groups, including BME communities and victims with disability.

To assess the CDRP's progress towards meeting its targets, including the Best Value Performance Indicator for Domestic Violence.

To consider future plans for tackling domestic violence and supporting victims.

To assess measures for tackling domestic violence in relation to value for money.

To identify examples of best practice in Tameside and other Local Authorities; and make any recommendations for improvement.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The Panel met with the Domestic Violence (Strategy) Co-ordinator in order to discuss the CDRP's approach to tackling domestic violence in Tameside.
- 2.2 The Panel met with police representatives from Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit (Tameside Division) to discuss the impact of Greater Manchester Police policies and procedures for dealing with domestic violence in Tameside. Members received information on the current procedures for dealing with reported cases of domestic violence; current measures to help increase reporting and detection of domestic violence and current measures to tackle domestic violence in hard to reach groups together with any future plans.
- 2.3 The Panel met with representatives of Tameside Victim Support to discuss services provided to victims of domestic violence.
- 2.4 The Panel met with representatives of New Charter Housing Trust Limited to discuss the Sanctuary Housing Project and a representative of Accent North West to discuss the homeless register in Tameside.
- 2.5 The Panel met with the Head of Antenatal Services, Antenatal Unit Manager and representatives of the Children's Centre Health Project to discuss the role of the health service in helping to tackle domestic violence.
- 2.6 The Scrutiny Panel consulted with victims of domestic violence in order to gather victims' experiences and opinions regarding the service they have received from voluntary and statutory agencies; and their views regarding the Council's approach to tackling domestic violence.
- 2.7 The Scrutiny Panel's consultation programme included the following activities:
- 2 discussion groups with residents at Tameside Refuge;
 - 2 discussion groups with young victims of domestic violence from the Young Parent's Group;
 - Case studies with 2 victims of domestic violence (one young victim, and one victim from a Black Ethnic Minority community);
 - 600 self completion questionnaires distributed to victims of domestic violence through the Police (500 questionnaires were sent to new incidents reported to the Greater Manchester Police Tameside Domestic Violence Unit over a 4 week duration, and 100 questionnaires were sent to a cross section of domestic violence incidents from the past 3 months police database);
 - Self completion questionnaires sent, via New Charter Housing Trust, to residents involved in the Sanctuary Housing Project;
 - Self completion questionnaires sent to residents at Tameside Refuge and victims of domestic violence receiving outreach support from Tameside Women's Project;
 - Questionnaires distributed to young victims of domestic violence through Connexions Personal Advisers.

2.8 A total of 76 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 12%. The views and opinions contained throughout the report represent those who have returned a questionnaire or took part in discussion groups. A full copy of the consultation document is appended to this report as Appendix 3.

3. Background Information

3.1 The “Tameside Domestic Violence Strategy 2005-2008” adopts the following definition of domestic violence;

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

3.2 There is no specific “domestic violence” criminal offence. Domestic violence is a generic term used by the police as a marker to describe a wide range of criminal offences and incidents ranging from common assault to rape. Typically domestic violence involves a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour, which tends to get worse over time. It can take a number of forms such as physical assault, financial control, mental and verbal abuse, humiliation and deprivation.

3.3 Domestic violence has profound implications on victims, their families and the community in general. For example national research shows;

- Domestic violence claims 150 lives each year and causes 25% of all suicides;
- It has more repeat victims than any other crime; Home Office statistics show on average a victim suffers 35 assaults before calling the police;
- Over 50% of women in contact with mental health services have experienced domestic abuse;
- 80% of victims are forced to seek help from the health service at least once due to injuries directly related to domestic violence;
- Domestic violence is the main single cause of homelessness in Tameside;¹⁴
- Fleeing an abusive relationship often has a detrimental effect on the victim’s employment and family and social networks;
- In addition, many children are affected by domestic violence. National studies show 90% of cases of domestic violence are witnessed or overheard by victims’ children. This often has a damaging impact on their health, educational attainment and emotional well being.

¹⁴ Source: Tameside Domestic Violence Forum, Tameside Domestic Violence Strategy 2005-2008 pp4-5

- Furthermore there is a strong link between domestic violence and child abuse. 1 in 5 child abuse cases dealt with by the NSPCC also involve domestic violence between adults in the household;¹⁵
- Domestic violence costs the nation in excess of £23 billion each year.¹⁶

3.4 Therefore domestic violence has a wide range of consequences which have cross-cutting implications upon a range of services, including housing, education, the youth service, health and social care and the voluntary sector.

3.5 Evidence shows that victims are usually women. During the first quarter of 2006/7, over 79% of victims of reported incidents of domestic violence in Tameside were female and over 81% of perpetrators were male. However, domestic violence is not confined to any one particular group of people; it occurs across the social spectrum regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality and wealth.¹⁷

3.6 In addition, domestic violence can take place in all types of relationships. The majority of incidents take place between intimate partners, however Police data for the first quarter of 2006/7 shows that 6.74% of recorded incidents of domestic violence in Tameside took place between son and parent and 3.90% of cases took place between daughter and parent.¹⁸

3.7 Nationally, domestic violence related incidents account for ¼ of all violent crime. A report produced by the Council of Europe claims 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence at some point during their life time; and between 6-10% of women suffer domestic violence each year. In addition, Home Office estimates suggest 1 in 6 men also experience some form of domestic violence during their life time.¹⁹

3.8 On average, Greater Manchester Police attend 500 reported incidents of domestic violence in Tameside per month. However many of these incidents do not result in a criminal offence. The graph overleaf shows the number of domestic violence related incidents in Tameside between 2000/2002 and 2004/05, which resulted in a criminal offence.

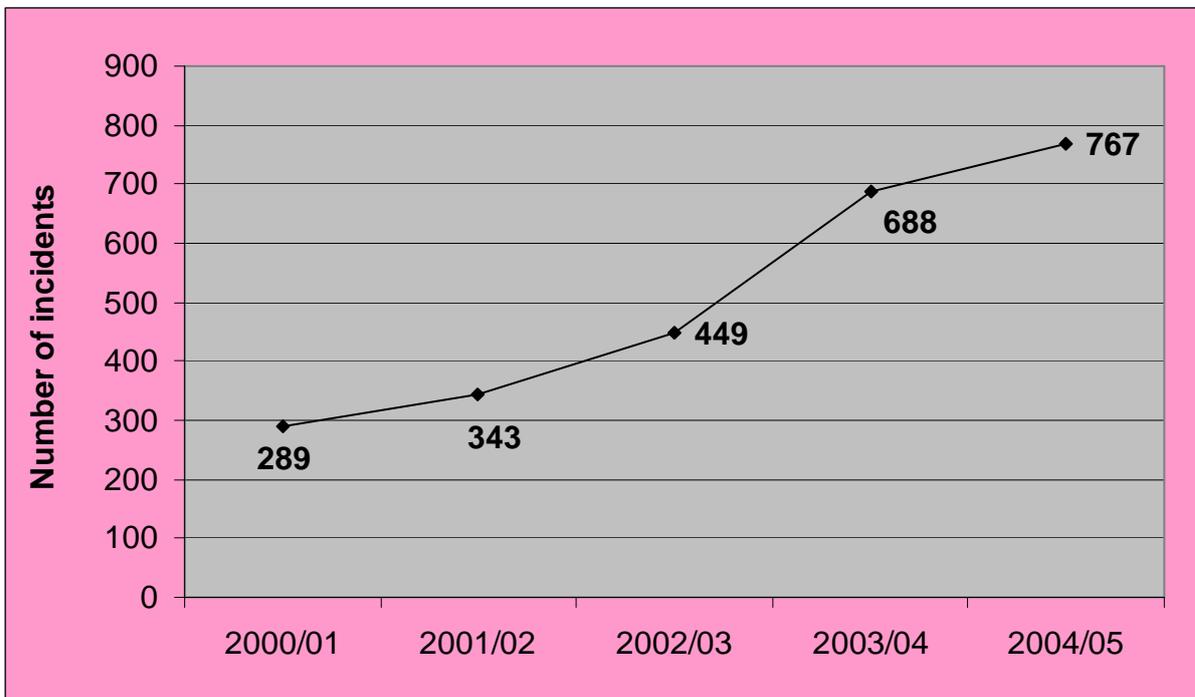
¹⁵ Source: Tameside Domestic Violence Forum, Domestic Violence – Draft Guidance for Schools (2005)

¹⁶ Source: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/> Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's printer for Scotland

¹⁷ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2006)

¹⁸ Source: GMAC, Tameside Strategic Assessment (July 2006)

¹⁹ Source: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/> Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's printer for Scotland



- 3.9 The graph shows the number of domestic violence related crimes in Tameside recorded by Greater Manchester Police increased by 62% between 2000/01 and 2004/05. Police data for the first quarter of 2006/7 indicates that domestic violence crimes have continued to increase – 296 crimes were recorded as domestic violence related during the first quarter of 2006/7, compared to 187 in the same period during 2005/6.
- 3.10 The Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership believe this rise may be the result of the partnership’s initiatives to increase reporting and police investigation of domestic violence related incidents. Details of initiatives undertaken to increase reporting of domestic violence are contained within the remainder of this report.
- 3.11 However, domestic violence remains an under-reported crime; therefore the CDRP believe police statistics of recorded cases of domestic violence significantly underestimate the scale of the crime.

4. Dealing with Domestic Violence

4.1 National Measures

- 4.1.1 Due to the prevalence and cost of domestic violence, Central Government has made dealing with domestic violence a national priority. The Local Government Association is running a 3 year project (2005-2008) funded by the Home Office, aimed at promoting the good practice of councils and partner organisations in tackling domestic violence. In addition the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act passed in November 2004 and implemented in April 2005, is central to the government’s strategy.

4.1.2 The Act places dealing with perpetrators of domestic violence at the heart of the criminal justice system. Police are given more power to positively intervene in incidents of domestic violence; and the Act makes it easier for perpetrators to be taken to court, convicted and sentenced.

4.1.3 Key measures contained in the Act include:

- Breach of non-molestation orders is made a criminal offence;
- Common assault is made an arrestable offence. This gives police the power to immediately remove an offender from a domestic disturbance. In addition, as part of the bail condition, police may prohibit the perpetrator from returning to the family home.
- The Act also extends the availability of restraining orders to include all violent offences; and cases where there has been an acquittal in court but where there is sufficient evidence to warrant a restraining order.

4.2 Local Authorities

4.2.1 Central Government has placed increased expectation on the role of Local Authorities in dealing with domestic violence. Home Office guidance identifies two key roles for local authorities;

- I. Commissioning and delivering services to tackle domestic violence and support victims.
- II. Working in partnership with other local agencies in order to co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to dealing with the cross-cutting implications of domestic violence.

4.2.2 The Government regards the CDRP as the forum for co-ordinating multi-agency work between key council services and other partnership agencies.

4.2.3 In 2005, the Government set a new Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) to measure Local Authorities' performance in tackling domestic violence. The BVPI assesses Local Authorities' performance in relation to 11 questions, including:

- I. Has the local authority produced a directory of local services that can help victims of domestic violence?
- II. Is there in the Local Authority area a minimum of 1 refuge place per 10,000 population?
- III. Does the Local Authority employ directly or fund a voluntary sector based domestic violence co-ordinator?
- IV. Has the local authority produced and adopted a multi-agency strategy to tackle domestic violence developed in partnership with other agencies?
- V. Does the Local Authority support and facilitate a local multi-agency domestic violence forum that meets at least 4 times a year?
- VI. Has the Local Authority developed an information sharing protocol and had it agreed between key statutory partners?

- VII. Has the Local Authority developed and launched a sanctuary type scheme to enable victims and their children to remain in their home, where they choose to do so and where their safety can be guaranteed?
- VIII. Has there been a reduction in the number of cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence?
- IX. Does the Council's tenancy agreement have a specific clause stating that perpetration of domestic violence by a tenant can be considered grounds for eviction?
- X. Has the Local Authority developed and funded an education pack in consultation with the wider domestic violence forum;
- XI. Has the Local Authority carried out a programme of training in the last 12 months for front line and managerial staff;

4.3 Tameside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

4.3.1 The 2004 Audit Commission Report identified Tameside's approach to dealing with domestic violence as an area of weakness. The report raised the following concerns;

- The Council's approach to tackling domestic violence was unclear;
- A multi agency approach to tackling domestic violence was still in its early stages;
- Domestic violence was not currently mainstreamed into day to day service delivery.²⁰

4.3.2 Since 2004 a full time Domestic Violence Co-ordinator has been in post in the Community Safety Unit and the CDRP has introduced a number of measures intended to improve Tameside's approach to dealing with domestic violence. These measures and their impact are outlined in the following sections of this report:-

4.4 The Domestic Violence Forum

4.4.1 The Domestic Violence Forum was launched in April 2004 in response to the Audit Commission's recommendations. The Forum is a sub group of the CDRP, it is administered by the Community Safety Unit and chaired by the Cabinet Secretary to the Cabinet Deputy for Co-ordination Services.

4.4.2 The Domestic Violence Forum is an umbrella organisation which aims to achieve a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to tackling the cross cutting implications of domestic violence, as required by the new BVPI for domestic violence.

4.4.3 Membership is open to any person or agency involved in tackling domestic violence and/or supporting victims. The Forum currently includes representatives from:

²⁰ Audit Commission, Inspection Report – Community Safety (April 2004)

- **Housing agencies** – New Charter Housing Trust Limited, Threshold Housing Project, Supporting People;
- **Social Services** – Asylum Seeker Team and Race and Diversity Team;
- **Health Services** – The Acute Trust Maternity Service, Pennine Care, Tameside and Glossop Primary Care Trust;
- **Young People’s Services** – Traveller, Refugee, Asylum Seeker Support Team (TRASST), Children and Young People Service, Youth Service and Branching Out;
- **Education** – Education Welfare, Sure Start;
- **Victim Support;**
- **Tameside Women Project** – Refuge for women and children
- **Beevers Solicitors;**
- **National Offender Management Service (Probation);**
- **Greater Manchester Police;**
- **Community Safety Unit.**

4.4.4 The Forum holds quarterly meetings, which provide an opportunity for Forum members to:

- Share information with other agencies and practitioners;
- Develop recognition and respect for the work of different member agencies;
- Co-ordinate policies and practices wherever possible.

4.4.5 In addition the Domestic Violence Forum has carried out a number of other measures to help tackle domestic violence in Tameside and meet the requirements contained in the new BVPI, including:

- Measures to support the development of a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic violence, including multi-agency training sessions for frontline staff and “train the trainer sessions”; the development of a good practice guide for dealing with domestic violence; and the publication of a directory of local service providers for victims of domestic violence;
- Measures to raise public awareness of domestic violence and the support services available, including the production and distribution of publicity leaflets, posters and contacts cards. In addition, the Forum funded an enhanced publicity campaign to coincide with the World Cup, in order to raise public awareness of domestic violence at what is traditionally a peak time for incidents of domestic violence.
- Production and distribution of publicity materials translated into appropriate languages for BME communities;
- Production of guidelines to help schools identify and deal with domestic violence.

Conclusion

- 1. The Domestic Violence Forum provides a good example of multi-agency working through information exchange and through raising the profile of domestic violence within a wide range of services.**
- 2. The Forum also has an important role in raising awareness of domestic violence within the community and promoting the support services available.**

Recommendation

- 1. That a protocol be developed in order to ensure all relevant agencies nominate a lead representative to attend Domestic Violence Forum meetings and report back to their service area.**

4.5 The Domestic Violence Forum Action Plan 2006/07

- 4.5.1 The Domestic Violence Forum has produced an Action Plan for 2006/07 which identifies other ways in which the group aims to help tackle domestic violence during 2006/7.
- 4.5.2 The Action Plan contains measures to:
 - Help develop educational programmes for dealing with domestic violence in schools;
 - Explore the issue of young people as victims and perpetrators of domestic violence;
 - Explore the possibility of developing local provision for perpetrators of domestic violence, including those not convicted;
 - Explore the issue of Forced Marriage with a view to developing a protocol for dealing with the issue.
- 4.5.3 The action plan also highlights the need to develop a system to capture victim satisfaction with local support services.
- 4.5.4 Furthermore, at the time of this review, the Forum was discussing plans to extend its remit by developing an information sharing protocol to allow for the discussion of individual cases of domestic violence. This will allow the Forum to take a more proactive approach to dealing with specific perpetrators and victims, and is required as part of the new BVPI for domestic violence.

4.6 The Domestic Violence Strategy 2005 – 2008

4.6.1 The Domestic Violence Forum has contributed to the production of a Domestic Violence Strategy which integrates existing policies and procedures for dealing with domestic violence.

4.6.2 The Strategy also contains further key issues relating to domestic violence in Tameside, which will inform domestic violence action plans for the next 3 years. The key issues identified in the Strategy are listed below:

- There is a need to find additional funding to help support the services provided by the Tameside Women's Project;
- Domestic Violence is an under-reported crime. In addition, a large proportion of victims retract reports, and 49% of victims fail to provide enough evidence to enable prosecution;
- There is no special help for male victims and disabled victims of domestic violence;
- A high proportion of young people in their early teens are getting involved in abusive relationships. The Forum believe there may be a link between teenage pregnancies and abusive relationships;
- There are no local early intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence.
- The Probation Services provides an "Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme," however this is only available to convicted offenders.

5. The Role of Health Services in Helping to Tackle Domestic Violence

5.1 The health service is in a unique position to contribute towards tackling domestic violence. Healthcare professionals come into contact with victims of domestic violence on a regular basis. For example:

- NHS guidance states that health professionals deal with the after-effects of domestic violence "everyday;"²¹
- Research shows that 80% of victims are forced to seek help from health services due to injuries directly relating to domestic violence;
- Over 50% of women in contact with mental health services have experienced domestic abuse;²²
- 40%-60% of victims of domestic violence experience abuse whilst pregnant and more than 30% of cases of domestic violence actually start during pregnancy.²³

5.2 In addition, for many victims the health service is their first or only point of contact with professionals who can help ensure they get the support they need.

²¹ Department of Health, Responding to Domestic Abuse: a handbook for health professionals (December 2005) p29
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²² Tameside Domestic Violence Forum, Tameside Domestic Violence Strategy 2005-2008 p4

²³ Department of Health, Responding to Domestic Abuse: a handbook for health professionals (December 2005) pp4-15

5.3 Furthermore, research suggests that victims of domestic violence want the health service to take a proactive role in identifying cases of domestic violence and signposting victims to appropriate support services. A report produced by the NHS states:

“Time and time again victims of domestic abuse have said they wish somebody had asked them if they were experiencing problems in their personal relationships.”²⁴

5.4 The results of the Scrutiny Panel’s consultation with victims of domestic violence in Tameside mirror the NHS’ findings. Discussion groups with victims at Tameside Women’s Refuge and Connexions Young Parents’ Group revealed many victims wanted someone to take the initiative and raise the issue of domestic violence. They reported feeling “embarrassed,” “ashamed” or “scared” to admit they were experiencing domestic violence and said they would have felt more comfortable discussing the issue if it was introduced by someone else. One victim said:

“I wanted to tell a midwife or someone at my antenatal appointments, but I didn’t know what to say and didn’t feel safe – I wanted someone to ask if everything was alright.”

5.5 The Scrutiny Panel felt that GPs’ surgeries or antenatal appointments offer victims respite from a controlling relationship and provide them with an opportunity to access information without the perpetrator being present.

5.6 National Guidance

5.6.1 The Department of Health published a handbook in December 2005, entitled “Responding to Domestic Abuse – A Guide for Health Professionals.” This handbook aims to clarify the role and responsibilities of health professionals in relation to domestic violence, and helps to formalise a consistent and effective approach across the NHS to dealing with domestic violence.

5.6.2 The handbook identifies 5 key roles for the health service in relation to dealing with domestic violence:

- Identify the signs of domestic violence and actively encourage disclosures through routine and selective enquiries;
- Provide appropriate information to help victims explore their options and make referrals to relevant local agencies;
- Assess the extent of danger a victim faces and inform the Police in “high risk cases” or where there is reason to suggest a child’s safety is at risk;

²⁴ Department of Health, Responding to Domestic Abuse: a handbook for health professionals (December 2005) p30
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- Keep accurate records to indicate the harm domestic violence has caused to the victim (health records may be used as evidence in court prosecutions);
- Work with partnership agencies as part of a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic violence.

5.6.3 The handbook also contains guidance to help health professionals fulfil their responsibilities and develop a policy for dealing with domestic violence.

5.6.4 However the Scrutiny Panel acknowledge that health professionals' role in supporting victims of domestic violence is intermediary. Health professionals are not responsible for advising victims and they are not caseworkers for victims once they have been referred to sources of help.

5.7 Local measures

Primary Care Trust

5.7.1 The Panel felt that work on domestic violence within the PCT has been slow, but has started to pick up pace since the publication of the Department of Health Guidance.

5.7.2 The PCT has recently appointed a permanent Sure Start / Children's Centre representative to the Domestic Violence Forum.

5.7.3 In addition, Tameside Children's Centre Health Project has recently produced domestic violence guidelines for Children's Centre Workers and Health Visitors, based on the Department of Health Guidance.

5.7.4 The Guidelines outline the role and responsibilities of Children's Centre Workers and Health Visitors in relation to domestic violence. They provide advice and examples of best practice to help Children's Centre Workers and Health Visitors carry out the following duties:

- Identify signs of domestic violence;
- Support victims of domestic violence;
- Provide information to empower victims to make informed choices about their safety and lifestyles;
- Protect children;
- Work with multiple agencies to achieve the above.

The Panel was informed that the Children's Centre have had one disclosure of domestic violence since the publication of the Guidelines; this victim was successfully referred to other agencies.

5.7.5 Furthermore, representatives from Sure Start have attended "Train the Trainer" courses delivered by the Domestic Violence Forum. It is intended that this training will now be rolled out to all Children's Centre Workers and Health Visitors, in order to support the implementation of the Domestic Violence Guidelines.

5.7.6 The Children's Centre Project Lead is currently working with Public Health to extend these Guidelines to General Practitioners; and to raise GPs awareness of their roles and responsibilities in relation to domestic violence. There are currently no formal guidelines to support GP's in identifying and dealing with cases of domestic violence.

The Acute Trust

5.7.7 Antenatal Services at Tameside and Glossop NHS Acute Trust is represented on the Domestic Violence Forum, though due to staffing issues are not always able to send someone to meetings.

5.7.8 The Head of Antenatal Services informed the Panel that community midwives carry out routine enquiries regarding domestic violence at all first antenatal appointments. However, antenatal services have limited opportunities to talk to victims away from their partner and consequently find it difficult to establish the necessary environment for victims to disclose abuse.

5.7.9 The Panel found that there are currently no formal procedures in antenatal services for responding to disclosures of domestic violence, however the Panel was informed that community midwives would usually liaise with the appropriate Health Visitor and GP subject to the victim's consent.

5.7.10 Midwives have received training on domestic violence in the past; however the Panel felt that this training needs updating.

5.7.11 The Panel was informed that posters and help cards for victims of domestic violence are displayed in Antenatal Services and distributed to GP's surgeries and Children's Centres.

5.7.12 The Scrutiny Panel felt that there is a need to develop a standardised approach across the PCT and Acute Trust for dealing with domestic violence. In addition there is a need for improved communication between the PCT and Acute Trust regarding disclosures of domestic violence or suspected cases of domestic violence.

5.7.13 The Scrutiny Panel felt that more work needs to be done to support GPs in dealing with domestic violence. The Panel's consultation with victims of domestic violence revealed victims' views regarding the support they received from their GP were mixed. The Panel was informed that Tameside Women's Refuge used a GP's surgery as an anonymous meeting place to help one victim make arrangements to leave an abusive relationship.

5.7.14 However some victims expressed dissatisfaction regarding the support they received from their GP. For example one victim approached her GP for "practical advice, but was only given anti-depressants." Furthermore, the majority of victims felt uncomfortable discussing the issue of domestic violence with their GP. Reasons cited include:

- “GPs cannot help;”
- “They judge you;”
- “They can’t do anything unless you want treating for the physical effects of domestic violence.”

5.7.15 In addition many victims felt that there was limited information about support services available to victims of domestic violence in many surgeries.

Conclusions

3. The Panel acknowledges that guidelines have been produced for health visitors and children’s centre staff to assist health professionals identify and deal with cases of domestic violence. However, though some initiatives are in place within the Ante-Natal Services to identify domestic violence, there is a need to develop a standardised approach across the health services. In addition, there is a need for training to complement guidelines.
4. There are currently no formal guidelines to support GP’s in identifying and dealing with cases of domestic violence.

Recommendations

2. There should be closer working relationships between the PCT and Acute Trust in relation to procedures and initiatives to identify and cases of domestic violence and refer to appropriate support services.
3. That GP’s health visitors and community midwives be encouraged to attend multi agency training sessions run by the Domestic Violence Forum, including specific issues affecting male victims and victims from BME communities.

6. The Role of the Police in Tackling Domestic Violence

6.1 The National Policing Plan 2005 - 2008

6.1.1 Tackling domestic violence has become a national priority in recent years due to its prevalence and cost. The Domestic Violence National Report produced by the Home Office in March 2005 states:

“Over the last 30 years domestic violence in the UK has gone from being a largely unspoken subject to one which is being tackled and confronted by Government, statutory bodies and the voluntary sector.”²⁵

²⁵ Home Office, Domestic Violence: a national report (March 2005) p2 Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen’s printer for Scotland

- 6.1.2 The National Policing Plan for 2005 – 2008 reflects the increased profile of domestic violence as a national issue. The Plan identifies reducing violent crime, including domestic violence, as 1 of 5 “key national priorities for police action.”²⁶
- 6.1.3 The plan states that the police have a duty to contribute towards tackling domestic violence in 4 key ways. These include;
- I. Investigating all reports of domestic violence;
 - II. Facilitating effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system;
 - III. Providing support services for victims of in order to protect the lives of both adults and children who are at risk of domestic violence;
 - IV. Working in partnership with the local council, other statutory agencies in the CDRP and voluntary organizations in order to produce a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic violence.
- 6.1.4 A training pack has been provided by CENTREX, which complements the National Policing Plan and aims to help Police carry out their responsibilities in relation to dealing with domestic violence. Training covers:
- Initial handling of 999 calls;
 - Sensitively dealing with victims;
 - Working with the local community to raise awareness of domestic violence;
 - Working as part of a multi-agency approach;
 - Risk assessing offenders.

6.2 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

- 6.2.1 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) is central to the role of the police in tackling domestic violence and has been described as “the biggest overhaul of domestic violence legislation for 30 years.” The Act gives the police the power to positively intervene in incidents of domestic violence; and consequently allows the police to adopt a proactive approach to dealing with offenders and supporting victims.
- 6.2.2 Key measures contained in the Act include;
- Common assault is made an arrestable offence. This gives police the power to immediately remove an offender from a domestic disturbance. In addition, as part of the bail condition, police may prohibit the perpetrator from returning to the family home.

²⁶ Home Office, National Policing Plan 2005-2008 p5

- Breach of civil non-molestation orders is made a criminal offence and the law is changed so that the police can always make an arrest for breaches.
- Police are given the power to take offenders to court without the victim's consent;
- The Act also extends the availability of restraining orders to include all violent offences and cases where there has been an acquittal in court but where there is sufficient evidence to warrant a restraining order.

6.3 Greater Manchester Police policies and procedures for dealing with Domestic Violence

Greater Manchester Police Authority's Best Value Review on Domestic Violence

6.3.1 Greater Manchester Police policies and procedures for dealing with domestic violence were considered by the Greater Manchester Police Authority as part of their Best Value Review of Public Protection carried out in 2005.

6.3.2 The Review focused on the processes for the investigation of domestic violence and victim care, including current levels of satisfaction, accessibility, partnership working and future service requirements.

6.3.3 A number of areas for improvement were identified in the Review including:

- The current process for investigating domestic violence does not comply with guidelines issued by the National Centre for Policing Excellence and the Association of Chief Police Officers.
- There is no regular consultation with staff, users or victims of public protection services.
- There is no performance management framework in place to assess progress towards achieving statutory performance indicators relating to domestic violence.
- Consultation with public protection staff suggests low morale, high workloads and a lack of management accountability and support.

6.3.4 The Review culminated in the production of a Best Value Improvement Strategy for 2005 – 2008, which contains the following actions;

- Produce a revised domestic violence policy by December 2006, which ensures that the force adopts a proactive approach to the investigation of domestic violence offences.
- Consult with victims and service users to gauge their satisfaction with public protection services and identify future needs.
- Provide specialist training for all domestic violence police officers.

6.3.5 The Panel acknowledged that the above recommendations had been incorporated into the Greater Manchester Policing Strategy for 2005-2008.

However, lack of resources means specialist domestic violence training is only available for Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officers; though basic training on dealing with incidents of domestic violence is included the initial training programme for all Police Officers.

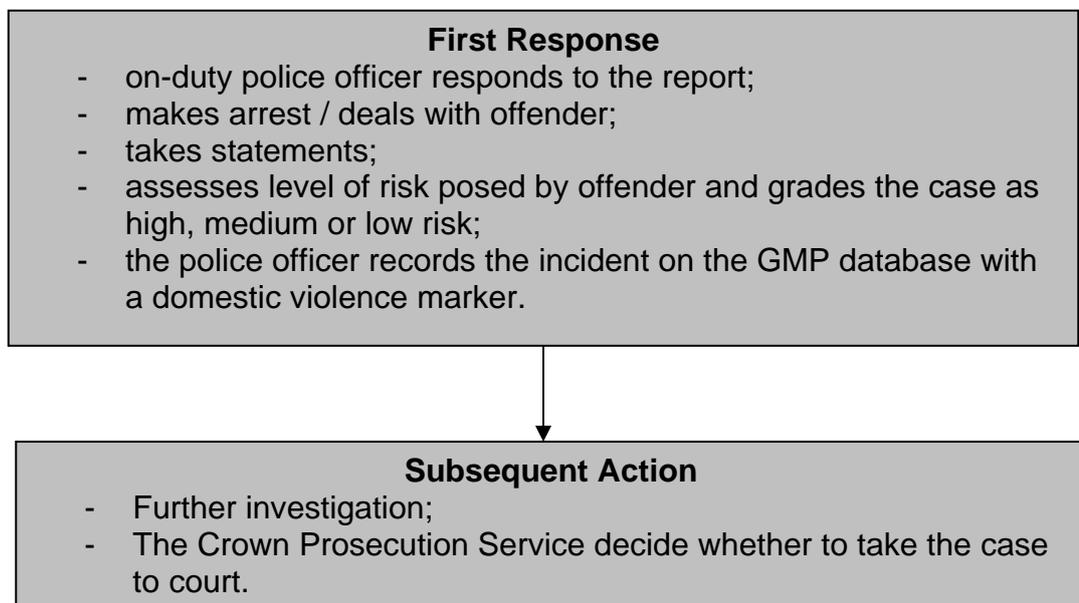
Greater Manchester Police Strategy

6.3.6 The Greater Manchester Policing Strategy for 2005 – 2008 gives considerable weighting to the national policing priority for tackling domestic violence. The GMP Strategy commits the Force to:

- Increasing the detection rate for domestic violence;
- Reducing the overall number of incidents of domestic violence;
- Providing protection for victims

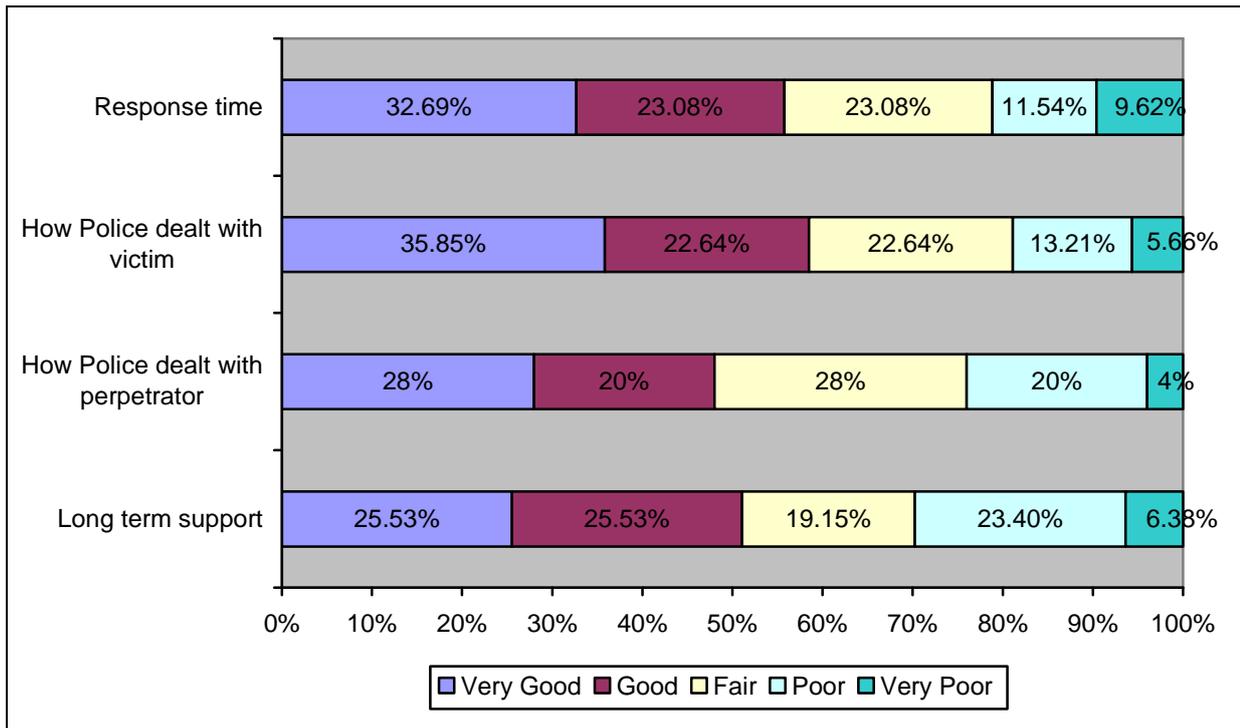
6.3.7 The Tameside Division of GMP has introduced a number of measures intended to improve the borough's performance in relation to the objectives contained in the Greater Manchester Policing Strategy.

6.3.8 Greater Manchester Police Tameside Division aims to promote a proactive approach to dealing with reported incidents of domestic violence. On-duty Police Officers, who are the first to attend reported incidents of domestic violence, are required to take positive action in all cases. The diagram overleaf summarises GMP's procedures for dealing with reported incidents of domestic violence.



Whenever an arrest is not made, the on-duty Police Officer must justify why arrest was not considered the appropriate course of action.

- 6.3.9 In addition, the Force currently has a policy of targeting or cold calling on known persistent perpetrators still living with their partner. The Panel was informed that the impact of this policy was due to be reviewed later in 2006.
- 6.3.10 The GMP Domestic Violence Unit based in Ashton, aims to promote and co-ordinate this proactive approach to policing domestic violence. The Unit's main responsibilities include:
- monitoring all reported cases of domestic violence in order to ensure on-duty police officers take appropriate action when incidents are reported;
 - carrying out any necessary follow up action, such as tracking offenders, making referrals to other agencies and advising victims about available support services. The Unit completes a "welfare check" before closing a case of domestic violence – which involves ensuring the offender and victim are located;
 - The Unit employs Specialist Domestic Violence Officers who personally contact victims involved in "high risk" domestic violence incidents to provide information about procedures for Police investigation and available support services. All victims of reported incidents of domestic violence receive a letter from the Unit;
 - In addition the Unit is often a port of call for victims unable to contact the Officer in charge of their case.
- 6.3.11 However the Sergeant of the GMP Domestic Violence Unit, Tameside Division, informed the Panel that lack of resources makes it difficult for the Unit to ensure all victims are regularly updated on developments throughout their case.
- 6.3.12 The Sergeant of the Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit, Tameside Division, would like the Unit to employ specialist officers trained to deal with incidents of domestic violence from the initial call through to subsequent investigation. The Scrutiny Panel felt that the combination of Uniformed Officers and support staff in the Unit would make the Unit better placed to provide victims with continuity of care and improved communication about the progress of their case and may help to reduce retraction rates.
- 6.3.13 During the Scrutiny Panel's consultation with victims of domestic violence, respondents' were asked to rate their experiences of the Police in relation to 4 criteria:
- i. Length of time taken for the Police to arrive after an incident was reported;
 - ii. How the Police dealt with the victim during the initial response;
 - iii. How the Police dealt with the perpetrator;
 - iv. The long term support provided for the victim by the Police;
- 6.3.14 The results for all 4 criteria are displayed in percentage form in the graph below (the graph only shows the responses relating to GMP, Tameside division):



6.3.15 The graph shows mixed results for all four criteria, indicating that victims have very different experiences of Police involvement. The criteria dealing with police response time and the way in which the victim was dealt with during the police initial response to the report of abuse received the highest proportion of good and very good ratings. The long term support offered by the police received the highest proportion of poor and very poor ratings. Respondents opinions regarding the way in which the police dealt with the perpetrator were particularly inconclusive.

6.3.16 32 respondents provided additional comments relating to the role of the police. The nature and content of the respondents' comments were very mixed. 4 respondents provided positive comments regarding:

- The sensitive and considerate manner in which the case was handled by the police
- Support provided by the officer dealing with the respondents ongoing case
- The advice provided by counter staff at the police station
- The prompt response of the police in arresting the offender

6.3.17 However, the majority of comments were critical of the police. Key criticisms raised included:

- Domestic violence was not taken seriously by the police
- Lack of communication between the police and victim
- Poor response time
- Lack of support for the victim
- Police not interested in male victim

- The majority of respondents felt the police should take a more proactive approach in arresting offenders

6.3.18 The issues raised in the questionnaire were mirrored in discussion groups held with victims of domestic violence. In addition, the following issues were also raised:

- Victims felt the police policy for targeting or cold calling on perpetrators of domestic violence still living with the victim can inflame abuse
- Perpetrators too often bailed by the police

6.3.19 For most victims, the first point of contact with the Police is the on-duty Police Officer responding to a reported incident. Therefore the Scrutiny Panel felt that high quality training on domestic violence for on-duty Police Officers is essential for helping to ensure that all victims of domestic violence receive a consistent level of Police support.

6.3.20 Respondents were asked whether they had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer and whether they were aware of the Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit. 56 respondents answered this question;

- Only 11 respondents (19.6%) replied that they had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer;
- 40 respondents (71.4%) stated they had not seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer;
- 5 people (8.9%) “didn’t know;”
- No respondents between the ages of 16-18 had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer.
- Of those respondents who had not seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer, 19 (47.5%) “had not heard” of the Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit.

6.3.21 The Scrutiny Panel recognise that some of the respondents who reported that they had not seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer also reported that they had “not heard of the Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit.” Therefore the number of respondents reporting that they had not seen a Specialist Officer may be affected by victims’ lack of clarity about the role of the Specialist Officer and whether they have had contact. The Scrutiny Panel feels that this should be explored further; and measures should be taken to raise awareness of the Specialist Officers and the role of the GMP Domestic Violence Unit.

Conclusions

- 4. A Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005-2008 has been produced by the police authority to address identified areas of weakness relating to domestic violence.**
- 5. Scrutiny Panel consultation revealed mixed views of victims experiences of police involvement in their individual cases. For the majority of victims, the first point of contact with the police was with the on-duty police officers responding to a reported incident. Therefore, an appropriate level of specialist domestic violence training for all police officers is essential.**
- 6. Consultation revealed that a significant proportion of victims were not aware of the specialist GMP Domestic Violence Unit.**

Recommendations

- 4. That the Panel receive an update on progress made towards implementing the actions contained in the Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005 -2008 produced by the police authority.**
- 5. Where cases are not dealt with by the attending on-duty police officer in accordance with the GMP Domestic Violence Unit policies and procedures, refresher training including issues affecting male victims of domestic violence should be provided.**
- 6. That greater publicity is given to the GMP Domestic Violence Unit and the role of specialist domestic violence officers and that Greater Manchester Police explore ways to improve communication with victims of domestic violence.**

7. Housing Provision and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence

7.1 Implications of domestic violence on victims' housing needs

- 7.1.1 Homelessness is one of the most common and destructive implications of domestic violence:**
 - National statistics estimate domestic violence accounts for about 16% of homelessness each year;**

- Nationally, more than 130,000 homeless households were re-housed between 1995 – 2002 as a direct result of domestic violence;²⁷
- Domestic violence is the largest single cause of homelessness in Tameside. Between 2002-2003, 193 of the 616 cases of homelessness recorded in the borough were caused by domestic violence;²⁸
- However these official figures for homelessness are likely to under-estimate the number of victims who lose their home as a result of domestic violence. Many victims turn to family and friends as an immediate respite from abuse and are consequently never recorded as homeless;
- Leaving home in order to flee an abusive relationship has a detrimental effect on many victims' employment and family and social networks. In addition victims' children are often forced to change schools and move away from friends, which can have a destabilising influence on the child's wellbeing, education and behaviour.
- Furthermore, recent research suggests a significant number of victims of domestic violence experience "repeat homelessness." For example, a survey of 4,000 applications for re-housing made by homeless victims of domestic violence revealed 27% of applications were the victim's second or subsequent homeless application.

7.1.2 A report produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2002 states that domestic violence often initiates a cycle of homelessness. For example;

- Many victims are pursued by their violent partner after leaving the family home. This often forces the victim to leave their new property or return to the perpetrator;
- Fear of living alone and the difficulties of coping without family and friends also often prevents victims from settling in their new home and may result in the victim moving home again or returning to the perpetrator;
- In addition many victims are financially dependent upon the perpetrator and consequently feel unable to independently support themselves and their children;
- Research indicates that it takes an average of 6 attempts for a victim of domestic violence to permanently leave an abusive relationship.²⁹

²⁷ Source: http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/domestic_violence/accommodation.htm

²⁸ Source: Tameside Homelessness Forum, Tameside Homelessness Strategy p5

²⁹ Source: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1149673> Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's printer for Scotland

7.2 National Legislation and Guidance relating to housing support for victims of domestic violence

7.2.1 In recent years national Government has placed increased responsibility on Local Authorities and Housing Associations (also known as Registered Social Landlords) for addressing the housing needs of victims of domestic violence, in order to reduce homelessness and prevent “repeat homelessness.” Guidance published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2002 states:

“Someone is statutorily homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in.

It would not be reasonable for someone to continue to live in their home, for example, if that was likely to lead to violence against them (or a member of their family.)”³⁰

7.2.2 The Homelessness Act passed in 2002 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to find temporary emergency accommodation for victims of domestic violence. In addition the Act requires that Housing Agencies treat homeless victims of domestic violence as “priority” cases for re-housing.

7.2.3 Furthermore recent legislation also encourages Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords to prevent homelessness by developing initiatives to help victims remain in their own homes. For example, the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act passed in 2004 presents moving home or going into a refuge as the last option, and the new Best Value Performance Indicator for Domestic Violence assesses Local Authorities’ performance towards:

- Developing a sanctuary type scheme to enable victims and their children to remain at home if that is the choice;
- Reducing the % of cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence.

7.3 Local measures for addressing the housing needs of victims of domestic violence

7.3.1 Tameside Women’s Refuge

7.3.1.1 Tameside Women’s Project is a voluntary organisation which runs a purpose built refuge for women and children fleeing domestic violence. It is the only refuge in Tameside for victims of domestic violence.

³⁰ Source: ODPM, The Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2002) Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen’s printer for Scotland

7.3.1.2 The refuge contains 20 rooms with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities. Boys under the age of 15 and girls of any age are permitted in the refuge and there are a number of family units available. During 2004 the refuge housed 128 adults and 129 children.

7.3.1.3 Residents are given access to 3 key workers who offer support in relation to the following issues:

- Health and social care,
- Resettlement and aftercare,
- Children's Play Workers and Counsellors

The Resettlement and Aftercare Worker maintains outreach links with women after they have left the refuge.

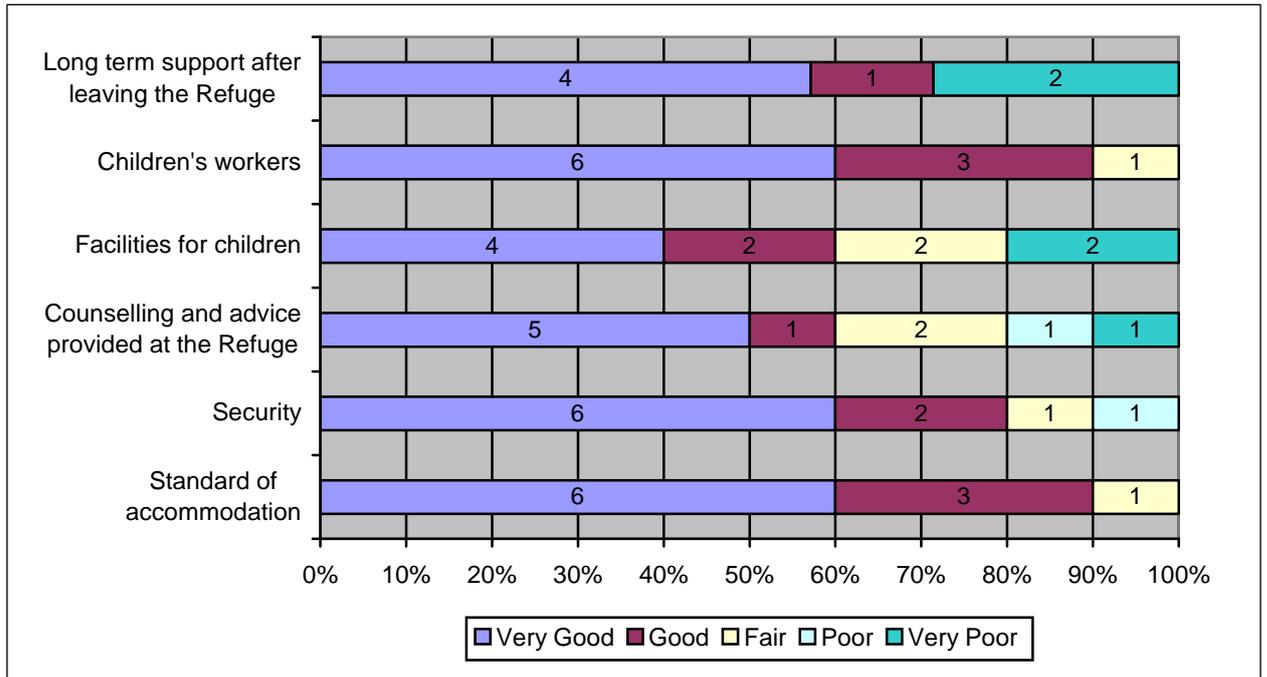
The refuge also offers a 24 hour telephone helpline and counselling service for non-residents.

7.3.1.4 Women may be referred to the refuge from a range of agencies and can be self referred. Many residents come from outside Tameside. The refuge admits a large number of women from BME communities. These are usually from outside the borough because of the need to escape extended families.

7.3.1.5 The refuge is funded by the voluntary organisation Tameside Women's Project. The Project received £25,000 per annum from the "Supporting People" fund, which is used to part finance the wages of the play workers and children's counsellor. The Panel was informed that this funding ceased in March 2006, however alternative funding for the Children's Workers at the refuge had been secured for the next three years.

7.3.1.6 Residents and ex-residents of Tameside Women's Refuge, when consulted, agreed that refuges do have a negative image and they felt that this may put people off leaving an abusive relationship. However, participants praised the security and facilities provided at the Refuge.

7.3.1.7 The graph below shows how respondents rated the services provided by the Refuge



7.3.1.8 8 respondents made additional comments regarding the Refuge.

- 3 respondents praised the security at the Refuge and commented on the “supportive” staff.
- 3 respondents praised the facilities for children and commented on the need to secure funding to develop such facilities further;
 - “The children’s services are an asset and should be an ongoing concern”
 - “It’s a real shame that the future of children’s workers is in jeopardy”
 - “There should be more activities for children as the children get bored.”

Conclusions

8. **Tameside Refuge provides a safe and secure environment for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The Refuge also offers resettlement and after care.**
9. **The Children’s Workers provide a valuable source of support to children living in the Refuge and the funding for this provision should be an ongoing concern.**

Recommendation

7. **That the Council assists the Tameside Women’s Project in exploring opportunities for mainstream funding for Children’s Workers before the current means of funding expires.**

7.3.2 Housing Options

7.3.2.1 Housing Options is a housing support and advice service run by New Charter Housing Trust Group Limited (NCHT) on behalf of Tameside MBC. The service has been commissioned by the Council to fulfil the Council's statutory duties under the Homelessness Act:

- To find temporary emergency accommodation for priority homeless cases;
- To assess homeless applications in order to identify "priority" cases for re-housing.

7.3.2.2 In addition Housing Options employs of housing advisors who offer information and guidance on a wide range of housing issues, including homelessness / threatened homelessness, re-housing options and housing benefit; and they can refer clients to other appropriate agencies. In addition, advisors process homeless applications for re-housing and monitor and track the progress of applications on behalf of the client.

7.3.2.3 Furthermore, the Housing Options team includes a specialist advisor specifically employed to assist victims of domestic violence regarding housing and other associated issues. For example, the specialist advisor can arrange accommodation at Tameside Women's Refuge and provide victims with legal advice. The specialist advisor also holds a weekly surgery for residents at the Refuge.

7.3.3 Accent Housing Association / The Homeless Register

7.3.3.1 The Council transferred responsibility for managing the homeless register from NCHT to Accent Housing Association in March 2005.

7.3.3.2 The homeless register comprises of a list of all cases, judged by advisors at Housing Options, to be statutorily homeless; together with details of available properties. Registered Social Landlords in Tameside are required to allocate 50% of their available housing stock to the homeless register.

7.3.3.3 Accent is responsible for:

- Interviewing all applicants contained in the homeless register to acquire an understanding of their specific housing needs, including the location and size of property they require;
- Matching applicants with appropriate properties

7.3.3.4 The Scrutiny Panel was concerned that some victims of domestic violence experience difficulty in securing permanent housing in Tameside. Workers and residents at Tameside Women's Refuge expressed concerns that some victims experience problems in getting re-housed. They felt that this often results in a lengthy stay in the Refuge or another form of temporary accommodation and leaves victims more susceptible of returning to an abusive relationship.

Residents agreed that difficulty in securing suitable accommodation is one of the main reasons which deters victims from leaving an abusive relationship, especially if a child is involved.

- 7.3.3.5 Some victims had experienced difficulty in securing new accommodation because of rent arrears on the property they have left. This is a particular problem for victims of domestic violence as many victims are financially dependent upon the perpetrator, or the perpetrator often remains in the family home.
- 7.3.3.6 In addition residents at the Refuge felt that some Registered Social Landlords may be reluctant to offer accommodation to victims who have left a number of previous addresses in order to escape domestic violence.

Conclusion

- 10. Issues associated with being a victim of domestic violence often makes it difficult for victims to secure permanent housing. For example, previous rent arrears and multiple previous addresses. Difficulty in securing permanent housing is one of the main reasons which deters victims from leaving an abusive relationship.**

Recommendation

- 8. That all Registered Social Landlords develop more flexible policies to meet the specific needs of victims of domestic violence.**

7.3.4 Sanctuary Housing Project³¹

- 7.3.4.1 The Sanctuary Housing Project is a joint initiative between the CDRP, Tameside MBC's Housing Strategy Team and NCHT, designed to reduce homelessness by helping victims of domestic violence remain in their own homes.
- 7.3.4.2 The scheme is jointly administered by NCHT and Greater Manchester Police and is funded by Tameside MBC Housing Strategy and the CDRP. The Project involves making security improvements to the properties of victims who wish to stay in their own home but are still in fear of domestic violence, or who wish to move to alternative accommodation but still fear the threat of domestic violence.
- 7.3.4.3 The Project was launched in Autumn 2005 as a pilot scheme available to tenants of New Charter. However following positive feedback and the provision

³¹ Source: The information contained in this section is taken from: New Charter Housing Trust Group, Housing Management Procedures Manual- Sanctuary Project

of further funding, the scheme has been extended to private houses and tenants of other Registered Social Landlords.

- 7.3.4.4 Victims must meet the following criteria to be considered eligible for the scheme:
- i. The victim must have experienced domestic violence or be at “serious risk” of domestic violence;
 - ii. The victim has to actively want to stay in their property and must not be living with the perpetrator;
 - iii. There must be evidence to show the victims has made contact with the Police and the GMP Domestic Violence Unit;
 - iv. The victim must agree to police involvement in the case.
- 7.3.4.5 Applications for the Sanctuary Housing Project may be made directly by the victim or via another agency such as the Police or Victim Support. All applications are initially received by the designated NCHT Officer with responsibility for the scheme, who makes an initial assessment of the case based on the above criteria and then refers the application to the GMP Crime Reduction Advisor.
- 7.3.4.6 The GMP Crime Reduction Advisor visits the victim’s property with the designated NCHT Officer in order to identify what (if any) security improvements are required. The Crime Reduction Advisor will endorse the application with one of the following recommendations:
- Recommend work to be carried out;
 - Recommend that the risk to the tenant is too high for them to remain in their own home;
 - Recommend that the risk is not high enough to warrant additional security.
- 7.3.4.7 In cases where security improvements are recommended, NCHT carry out any necessary work. The type of work carried out ranges from installing alarms, window or door locks, to improving security lighting or cutting down hedges. Initial work is funded by TMBC Housing Strategy and the CDRP, but residents are responsible for the long term maintenance of all security improvements made to the property.
- 7.3.4.8 In addition, all physical security improvements are complemented by enhanced Police support. The Police place a “marker” on all addresses involved in the Sanctuary Housing Project to ensure the Police response is “prompt” if they are called out to any incidents at the address. In addition NCHT continue to monitor all cases for 6 months following the implementation of security improvements. NCHT and the Police have re-visited one property to install additional security equipment in response to further incidents of domestic violence.
- 7.3.4.9 At present 57 properties have benefited from the project, this includes properties from NCHT, West Pennine, Jonny Johnson, Ashton Pioneer Homes, Accent and 2 private properties. NCHT are currently monitoring the outcomes of

the scheme and are in the process of collating formal feedback on the project. A full evaluation of the project is due to be completed later this year.

- 7.3.4.10 The Scrutiny Panel felt that this scheme offers victims a valuable opportunity to feel safe in their homes, thereby reducing the upheaval caused by re-locating due to domestic violence. During consultation with victims of domestic violence 3 participants praised the scheme and staff for helping them to feel safer in their own homes.
- 7.3.4.11 In addition, many participants who had not accessed the Sanctuary Housing Project felt that the scheme seemed to offer a valuable opportunity for victims to stay in their own homes and avoid the stresses caused by homelessness and the need to relocate.

Conclusions

- 11. **The Sanctuary Housing Project supports victims who, in appropriate cases, wish to remain in their own homes, by providing security improvements and advice. The scheme has a valuable role in contributing to the reduction in homelessness in Tameside.**
- 12. **The Panel welcomes the additional funding obtained to enable the scheme to be extended to include homeowners and residents of other registered social landlords.**

Recommendation

- 9. **That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership continue to support the Sanctuary Housing Scheme.**

8. Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence

8.1 Victim Support³²

- 8.1.1 Victim Support is an independent national charity for anyone affected by crime. The service comprises of local volunteers who are specially trained to provide support, information and practical help to people who have been threatened or abused. The Tameside branch of Victim Support currently employs 6 full time workers and 1 part time worker along with 25 community volunteers and 15 Court volunteers.
- 8.1.2 The range of assistance and advice provided by Victim Support is extensive and determined by the needs of the individual victim. The services most frequently accessed by victims of domestic violence include:

³² Information provided by representatives of Victim Support, Tameside branch

- Impartial advice, either anonymously over the telephone or in person, to help victims explore the choices available to them;
- Access to contact details and information about other agencies to help with housing, benefits, counselling and legal advice, and if necessary community volunteers may liaise with these agencies on the victim's behalf;
- Help with supporting children;
- Advice on personal safety.

- 8.1.3 Furthermore, the Tameside branch of Victim Support has a designated worker specifically employed to help victims of violent crime apply for Criminal Injuries Compensation. The designated worker provides victims with information and advice on applying for compensation and processes all administration related to the claim. The post is currently funded for 3 years through a grant from the "Big Lottery Fund."
- 8.1.4 Victim Support also runs a Witness Service in every Crown Court and Magistrates' Court in England and Wales. The service aims to offer victims and witnesses emotional support and practical information before, during and after a court hearing. For example, volunteers are trained to provide information on court proceedings and accompany victims in the courtroom if required.
- 8.1.5 In addition the Tameside Witness Service is currently involved in an enhanced "Witness Care Scheme" in collaboration with Greater Manchester Police and the Crown Prosecution Service. This scheme aims to bring together all agencies involved in the criminal justice system to establish a co-ordinated and proactive approach to supporting victims and witnesses throughout the entire criminal justice process, from the initial charge to sentencing in court.
- 8.1.6 The scheme is part of a national initiative which aims to increase the number of victims and witnesses giving evidence in court, and thereby reduce the number of ineffective trials and help to bring more offenders to justice.³³ The scheme aims to improve the accessibility and quality of information, reassurance and support available to victims and witnesses in order to increase witness engagement in the criminal justice process. The scheme targets victims and witnesses of all types of crime. However, domestic violence has a high retraction rate, therefore the Scrutiny Panel felt that initiatives to increase the number of victims giving evidence in court are particularly relevant to tackling this type of crime.
- 8.1.7 The scheme was initially piloted in Essex, Gwent, North Wales, South Yorkshire and West Midlands during 2004 and was rolled out across Greater Manchester in 2005.
- 8.1.8 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that Victim Support also proactively aims to meet the specific needs of victims from BME communities and younger victims. They produce a variety of advice leaflets, which are accessible in English, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Punjabi, Somali, Turkish, Urdu and Welsh.

³³ Source: Avail Consulting No Witness, No Justice Pilot Evaluation (October 2004)

Translators are available for victims from BME communities. In addition, Victim Support also proactively targets younger victims by producing small information cards specifically designed to appeal to children and young people.

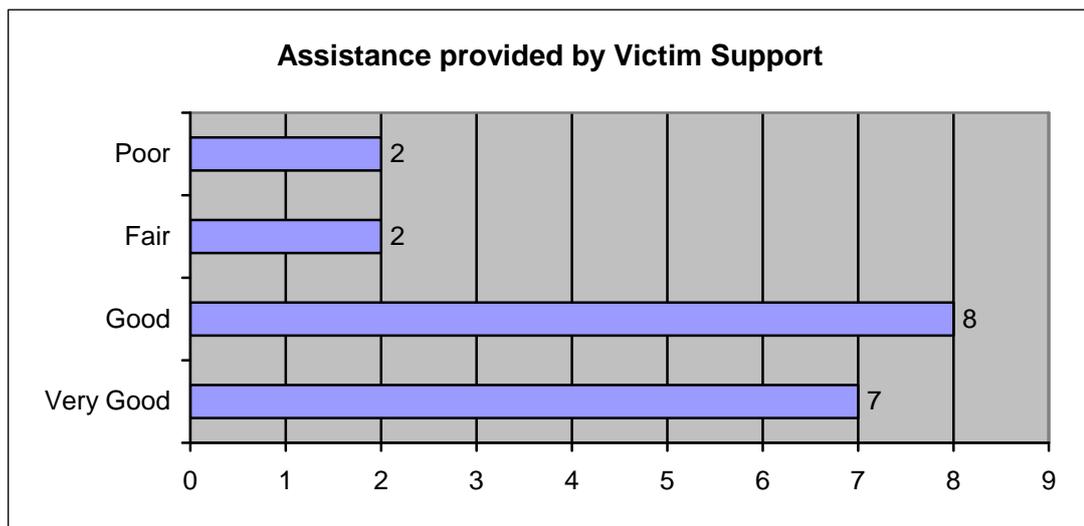
8.1.9 The Scrutiny Panel’s consultation with victims of domestic violence showed that the number of respondents accessing Victim Support was low in all age groups. The number of young people was particularly low. In addition, all respondents that had accessed Victim Support were female and of European ethnic origin.

8.1.10 A significant number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of services provided by Victim Support:

- 18 respondents reported they “had not heard of” the Witness Service;
- 21 respondents reported they “had not heard” of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Service;
- 2 respondents commented that they “had never heard of Victim Support before now” and 1 victim remarked “I don’t know of the support available from Victim Support.”

8.1.11 22 of 53 victims who responded to the question claimed that they had not been contacted by Victim Support after reporting an incident of domestic violence to the Police.

8.1.12 However, the Panel’s consultation showed that Victim Support provides a valuable service for victims who do access the service. Respondents who accessed Victim Support were asked to rate the assistance they received by the service. 79% rated the assistance they received as “very good” or “good.”



Conclusion

13. **Victim Support provides a valuable source of information and support for victims of domestic violence. However, many victims do not seem to be accessing this service, particularly younger victims.**

Recommendation

10. **That Victim Support be encouraged to explore alternative means of promoting the service amongst young people. For example, by distributing promotional material through the Youth Service and in schools.**

9. Specialist Court System for Victims of Domestic Violence

9.1 The aims and key features of the specialist court system for victims of domestic violence

9.1.1 A pilot project to establish a specialist court system for victims of domestic violence was funded by the Home Office in 7 courts throughout England and Wales during 2004.

9.1.2 The objective of this specialist system is to recognise and meet the specific needs and special concerns faced by victims of domestic violence, in order to:

- Decrease the number of retractions made by the victims of domestic violence;
- Increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice.

9.1.3 There are 3 key elements to the specialist court system:

i. **Specialist court sessions specifically allocated for cases of domestic violence**

- These specialist courts can be used to fast track cases of domestic violence; or cluster pre-trial hearings, pleas, pre-sentencing reports and sentencing into one court session. “Fast tracking” and “clustering” reduces the length of time the victim is forced to wait between the pre-trial hearing and the trial; and thereby aim to lower the number of retractions made by victims.
- Prosecutors, Magistrates and Police attending the specialist courts have extensive knowledge of domestic violence crimes;
- Special provisions, such as separate entrances for the victim and perpetrator and screens between the victim and perpetrator, are provided in all court rooms.

ii Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The MARAC is a multi-agency forum comprising of representatives from agencies involved in tackling domestic violence, including the Police. The MARAC is responsible for:

- Producing a standard risk assessment protocol to enable agencies to identify “high risk” cases of domestic violence;
- Discussing cases of domestic violence identified as “high risk;” and taking measures to proactively prevent further harm to the victim and their children. This may include gathering evidence for use in court, making referrals to social services and ensuring the most vulnerable victims are provided with appropriate support.

iii Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA)

The IDVA comprises of independent advisors (provided by Victim Support and the Witness Service) who are responsible for providing a “one stop shop” holistic support service to meet the diverse needs of victims of domestic violence throughout the entire criminal justice process. This involves advisors working with multiple agencies in order to actively support and co-ordinate service provision to meet the specific needs of the victim. This may include:

- Providing objective advice and support in court;
- Helping to arrange housing and/or education;
- Helping to arrange legal, financial and/or health advice;
- Liaising with service providers and/or the Police on behalf of the victim.

9.2 The impact of the pilot project

9.2.1 The evaluation of the pilot project highlighted a number of significant benefits brought about by the specialist courts, including;

- An increase in the number of incidents of domestic violence reported to the Police that result in a case in court;
- An increase in convictions – Data from the Crown Prosecution Service shows there was an overall increase in the percentage of cases ended in conviction, from 46% in December 2003 to 59% in December 2005. However 71% of the cases tried in specialist courts ended in conviction;
- An increase in guilty pleas;
- A reduction in the number of retractions;
- More appropriate sentencing;
- Cases strengthened through the use of evidence provided by MARACs;

- Victims felt safer and had more confidence in the criminal justice system.

9.2.2 Following the positive evaluation of the pilot scheme, the Home Office has recently extended funding for the specialist court system to over 50 court areas throughout the UK, including 9 North West court areas:- Salford, Wirral, Halton, Wigan, Manchester, Bolton, Liverpool, Merseyside and Lancashire.

9.3 Developments in Tameside

9.3.1 Tameside was not included in the Home Office scheme; however Government Office North West is encouraging areas not covered by the Home Office programme to consider independently establishing specialist courts modelled on the Home Office pilot.

9.3.2 A new group has recently been formed to discuss domestic violence and the criminal justice system in Tameside, with a view to considering the possibility of implementing a specialist court system in Tameside for victims of domestic violence.

9.3.3 The new group comprises of representatives from:

- The Judicial Support Unit;
- The Witness Care Unit;
- The Criminal Prosecution Service;
- Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit;
- Victim Support and the Witness Service;
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Domestic Violence (Strategy) Co-ordinator

9.3.4 The group held its first meeting in October 2006.

Conclusion

14. The piloted Specialist Court system for victims of domestic violence appears to be a more effective way of dealing with cases of domestic violence and the initiatives in relation to the protection of victims is welcomed. The introduction of this system in Tameside would be of significant benefit to the community and early introduction of this system should be encouraged.

Recommendation

11. That the Scrutiny Panel be updated on the progress relating to the development of a Specialist Court system in Tameside for victims of domestic violence 3 months from the publication of this report.

10. Borough Treasurer's Comments

- 10.1 The funding of the Community Safety team is dominated by external grants and serious consideration regarding the ongoing work needs to be made if mainstream funding is not achieved or the grants are not made more permanent.

11. Borough Solicitor's Comments

- 11.1 The Council has been under an overarching statutory duty under sections 5 and 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies for the reduction of crime and disorder in the Borough. In addition, as identified in the report, it has particular powers and duties relevant to the subject matter of the report in connection with taxi, alcohol and entertainment licensing and in relation to ASBOs.
- 11.2 The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 has been enacted but not yet brought into force. It contains powers for the Council, together with the Police, in accordance with guidance to be issued by the Secretary of State, to designate alcohol disorder zones where there has been nuisance annoyance or disorder associated with the consumption of alcohol supplied at premises in the area and that the nuisance etc is likely to be repeated. On designating a zone, the Council and the Police must prepare an action plan setting out what action they will take in the locality if the plan is implemented. The Secretary of State can, by regulations, make provision for the imposition of charges payable to the Council each month by licensed premises and clubs in the area and for how such sums can be used in the zone.
- 11.3 Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 makes provision for local authority scrutiny of crime and disorder matters. It has also been enacted, but not yet brought into force. It will require Councils to have a crime and disorder committee with power to review and scrutinise decisions and actions of the Council in connection with its crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the Council in respect of them. This report anticipates this prospective duty.
- 11.4 The Council, as the Housing Authority, has statutory duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002. The 1996 also places a duty on registered social landlords to co-operate with housing authorities in exercising their homelessness functions. These are covered in the report.

12. Recommendations – Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence

- 12.1** That a protocol be developed in order to ensure all relevant agencies nominate a lead representative to attend Domestic Violence Forum meetings and report back to their service area.
- 12.2** There should be closer working relationships between the PCT and Acute Trust in relation to procedures and initiatives to identify and cases of domestic violence and refer to appropriate support services.
- 12.3** That GP's health visitors and community midwives be encouraged to attend multi agency training sessions run by the Domestic Violence Forum, including specific issues affecting male victims and victims from BME communities.
- 12.4** That the Panel receive an update on progress made towards implementing the actions contained in the Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005 -2008 produced by the police authority.
- 12.5** Where cases are not dealt with by the attending on-duty police officer in accordance with the GMP Domestic Violence Unit policies and procedures, refresher training including issues affecting male victims of domestic violence should be provided.
- 12.6** That greater publicity is given to the GMP Domestic Violence Unit and the role of specialist domestic violence officers and that Greater Manchester Police explore ways to improve communication with victims of domestic violence.
- 12.7** That the Council assists the Tameside Women's Project in exploring opportunities for mainstream funding for Children's Workers before the current means of funding expires.
- 12.8** That all Registered Social Landlords develop more flexible policies to meet the specific needs of victims of domestic violence.
- 12.9** That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership continue to support the Sanctuary Housing Scheme.
- 12.10** That Victim Support be encouraged to explore alternative means of promoting the service amongst young people. For example, by distributing promotional material through the Youth Service and in schools.
- 12.11** That the Scrutiny Panel be updated on the progress relating to the development of a Specialist Court system in Tameside for victims of domestic violence 3 months from the publication of this report.

Resources and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Review of Violent Crime (Policies and Performance)

AIM OF SCRUTINY REVIEW:

To review the impact of current measures to tackle violent crime in Tameside and to consider future plans, in order to inform policy development and help ensure targets are met.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To produce accurate and comprehensive information about the level of violent crime in Tameside; and to consider its effects on the community.
2. To evaluate the impact of current policies and procedures to;
 - i. tackle and reduce violent crime in town centres;
 - ii. reduce youth involvement in violent crime;
 - iii. tackle domestic violence and provide support to victims;
 - iv. deal with offenders;
 - v. tackle the underlying causes of violent crime, including alcohol misuse and hate crime.
3. To consider future plans for tackling violent crime in Tameside.
4. To assess measures for tackling violent crime in relation to value for money.
5. To identify examples of best practice in Tameside and other Local Authorities; and make any recommendations for improvement.

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
1	Site visit to CCTV control room to talk to operators and gain first hand experience of the operation and impact of CCTV.	2i	By Scrutiny Panel Meeting 1 st September 2005	Scrutiny Panel members	Completed
2	Briefing paper outlining national legislation for tackling town centre violence; and local policies and procedures for tackling violent crime in Tameside town centres.	2i	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st September 2005	Gaynor Alexander	Completed
3	Briefing paper outlining Tameside's progress towards meeting its targets relating to town centre violence; and a summary of residents' views regarding violent crime in Tameside.	1	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st September 2005	Gaynor Alexander	Completed
4	Meet with Police representatives and Town Centre Area Inspectors (Stalybridge and Ashton) to discuss current policies and procedures for tackling town centre violence in Tameside.	2i	Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st September 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Completed
5	Meet with representatives of Pubwatch to discuss their views regarding town centre violence and the impact of current policies and procedures.	1 & 2i	Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st September 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Completed

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
6	Site visit to mobile Accident and Emergency Unit in Oldham to assess its impact on the Local Authority's management of town centre safety.	2i & 5	September 2005	Scrutiny Panel members	Re-scheduled
7	Briefing paper outlining national legislation and local policies and procedures for dealing with offenders convicted of violent crime.	2iv	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 13 th October 2005	Gaynor Alexander	Completed
8	Meet Probation Officers and representatives from the Youth Offending Team to discuss policies and procedures for dealing with offenders, including the impact of current measures and future plans.	2ii; 2iv & 3	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 13 th October 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Completed
9	Briefing paper summarising Tameside's targets and performance in relation to domestic violence.	1 & 2iii	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 3 rd November 2005	Gaynor Alexander	Completed – December 2005
10	Briefing paper outlining national legislation and local policies and procedures for tackling and reducing domestic violence, dealing with offenders and supporting victims.	2iii	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 3 rd November 2005	Gaynor Alexander	Completed – December 2005
11	Meet Domestic Violence Co-ordinator to discuss policies and procedures for tackling domestic violence, including the impact of current measures and future plans.	2iii & 3	Scrutiny Panel meeting 3 rd November 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Completed – December 2005

	Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
12	Meet with representatives from Victim Support and other services responsible for dealing with domestic violence and its implications, to discuss current measures for supporting victims and dealing with perpetrators. (See separate project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Violence)	2iii	December 2005 – April 2006	Scrutiny Panel	Started in December 2005
13	Consultation with victims of domestic violence. (See separate consultation plan)	2iii	January 2005	Gaynor Alexander, Alison Davies, Scrutiny Panel Member	
14	Briefing paper outlining recent research regarding the influence on violent crime of alcohol misuse; and a summary of national legislation and strategies to tackle alcohol misuse.	2v	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st December 2005	Gaynor Alexander	Re-scheduled for April 2006
15	Meet the Alcohol Co-ordinator to discuss the effect of alcohol misuse on violent crime in Tameside; the impact of current policies and procedures for tackling alcohol misuse; and future plans for dealing with alcohol misuse.	2v & 3	Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st December 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Re-scheduled for April 2006
16	Meet representatives from the Licensing Authority to discuss the anticipated impact, on alcohol misuse and violent crime, of the Licensing Act.	2v	Scrutiny Panel meeting 1 st December 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Completed – November 2005

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
17	Meet with representatives of the Licensing Trade to discuss their views in relation to alcohol misuse, violent crime and the promotion of responsible drinking	2v	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 1 st December 2005	Scrutiny Panel	Completed – November 2005
18	Briefing paper summarising recent data about the level of Hate Crime in Tameside; and an outline of national and local measures for tackling this.	2v	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 19 th January 2006	Gaynor Alexander	?
19	Meet representatives of the Community Cohesion Partnership to discuss policies and procedures for reducing Hate Crime in Tameside, including the impact of current measures and future plans.	2v & 3	Scrutiny Panel meeting 19 th January 2006	Scrutiny Panel	?
20	Talk to young people (including representatives from BME communities) about their views regarding the level of violent crime in Tameside and policies and procedures for tackling this.	1 & 2ii	January 2006	Gaynor Alexander, Alison Davies, Scrutiny Panel Members	?
21	Briefing paper summarising revenue and capital budget and expenditure for violent crime.	4	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 9 th February 2006	Gaynor Alexander	
22	Briefing paper profiling the involvement of young people as offenders and victims of violent crime.	2ii	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel meeting 9 th February 2006	Gaynor Alexander	Re-scheduled for March 2006

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
23	<p>Meet Officers from Education Services to discuss the impact of violent crime on young people; and the effect of measures to reduce violent crime amongst youths, including the impact of current measures and future plans.</p> <p>(To be considered along side the issue of youth involvement in domestic violence - see separate project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Violence)</p>	2ii & 3	Scrutiny Panel meeting 9 th February 2006	Scrutiny Panel	Re-scheduled for March 2006
24	<p>Speak to representatives from local schools, Connexions and the Youth Service to find out about current practices and future plans to reduce and deal with violent crime amongst youths.</p> <p>(To be considered along side the issue of youth involvement in domestic violence - see separate project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Violence)</p>	2ii & 3	Scrutiny Panel meeting 9 th February 2006	Scrutiny Panel	Re-scheduled for March 2006
25	Produce draft report and identify conclusions and recommendations	All	By Scrutiny Panel meeting May 2006	Gaynor Alexander and Alison Davies	
26	Agree final report	All	Scrutiny Panel meeting May 2006	Scrutiny Panel	

Resources and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Review of Domestic Violence (Policies and Performance)

Aim Of Scrutiny Review:

To review the impact of current measures to tackle domestic violence in Tameside and to consider future plans, in order to inform policy development and help ensure that targets are met..

Objectives:

6. To consider the development of Tameside's approach to tackling domestic violence in Tameside;
7. To evaluate the impact of current policies and procedures to;
 - i. Increase reporting and detection of domestic violence;
 - ii. Support victims fleeing domestic violence;
 - iii. Prevent domestic violence amongst young people;
 - iv. Deal with perpetrators;
8. To consider measures for dealing with domestic violence in minority groups, including BME communities and victims with disability.
9. To assess the CDRP's progress towards meeting its targets, including the Best Value Performance Indicator for Domestic Violence.
10. To consider future plans for tackling domestic violence and supporting victims.
11. To assess measures for tackling domestic violence in relation to value for money.
12. To identify examples of best practice in Tameside and other Local Authorities; and make any recommendations for improvement.

Timescale:

The review will be completed in May 2006.

Equalities Issues:

- Evidence shows that domestic violence occurs across the social spectrum regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality and wealth.
- In addition national research suggests that domestic violence is particularly under-reported by certain sectors of society, including victims from BME communities, older victims, male victims, victims from same sex relationships and victims with disability.
- Therefore consideration of the ways in which the CDRP's policies and procedures to tackle domestic violence impact upon these "harder to reach groups" will form an important part of this Scrutiny Review.

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
1	Briefing paper outlining national legislation and guidance relating to domestic violence; and background information on the CDRP's approach to tackling domestic violence in Tameside.	1, 5 & 6	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 1 st December 2005	Gaynor Alexander	
2	Meet with the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator to discuss the CDRP's approach to tackling domestic violence; and find out about key issues relating to tackling domestic violence in Tameside.	1 & 5	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 1 st December 2005	Scrutiny Panel	
3	Consultation with victims of domestic violence (see separate consultation plan)	2i, 2ii & 3	Consultation – January 2006 Top line results - by Scrutiny Panel Meeting 9 th February 2006	Gaynor Alexander, Alison Davies, Scrutiny Panel Member	
4	Briefing paper outlining national legislation relating to the role of the police in tackling domestic violence; and GMP policies and procedures for dealing with domestic violence in Tameside.	2i, 2ii & 3	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 19 th January 2006	Scrutiny Panel	

	Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
5	<p>Meet with Police representatives to discuss the impact of GMP policies and procedures for tackling domestic violence in Tameside, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current procedures for dealing with reported cases of domestic violence; • Current measures to help increase reporting and detection of domestic violence; • Current measures to tackle domestic violence in BME communities and other “hard to reach” groups; • Future plans. 	1, 2i, 2ii & 3	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 19 th January 2006	Gaynor Alexander	
6	Speak to representatives from the PCT and Acute Trust to find out about their policies and procedures for detecting and dealing with cases of domestic violence.	2i & 2ii	By Scrutiny Panel Meeting 9 th February 2006	Gaynor Alexander	
7	Briefing paper outlining national guidance and local services for supporting victims fleeing domestic violence, including victims from BME communities and other “hard to reach” groups.	2ii & 3	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 9 th February 2006	Gaynor Alexander	

Action	Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
8 Meet with representatives from Victim Support, Tameside Women's Project, Housing Options and NCHT to discuss services for supporting victims of domestic violence, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the accessibility and impact of current services, • the accessibility and impact of services to meet the specific needs of victims from "hard to reach" groups, • future plans. 	2ii & 3	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 9 th February 2005	Scrutiny Panel	
9 Briefing paper outlining recent research about the involvement of young people as victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.	2iii	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 2 nd March 2006	Gaynor Alexander	
10 Briefing paper outlining national guidance and local measures to help prevent domestic violence amongst young people, including examples of best practice from other Local Authorities.	2iii & 7	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 2 nd March 2006	Gaynor Alexander	

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
11	<p>Speak to representatives from local schools, Connexions and the Youth Service to find out about current practices and future plans to help deal with and prevent domestic violence amongst young people.</p> <p>(To be considered along side the issue of youth involvement in town centre violence – see separate project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Town Centre Violent Crime)</p>	2i, 2ii & 2iii	By Scrutiny Panel Meeting 2 nd March 2006	Gaynor Alexander	
12	<p>Meet representatives of Education Services to discuss the Council's current work and future plans to help prevent domestic violence amongst young people.</p> <p>(To be considered along side the issue of youth involvement in town centre violence – see separate project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Town Centre Violent Crime)</p>	2iii	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 2 nd March 2006	Scrutiny Panel	
13	Briefing paper outlining national measures and local programmes to deal with perpetrators of domestic violence.	2iv	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel 30 th March 2006	Gaynor Alexander	

Action		Objective met	Timescale	Lead Scrutiny Panel member(s) and/or Scrutiny Support Officer(s)	Monthly update
14	Meet with representatives of the Probation Service and Youth Offending Team to discuss measures for dealing with perpetrators of domestic violence, including the availability and impact of current measures and future plans.	2iv	Scrutiny Panel Meeting 30 th March 2006	Scrutiny Panel	
15	Briefing paper summarising revenue and capital budget and expenditure for violent crime.	6	Briefing paper for Scrutiny Panel Meeting 20 th April 2006	Gaynor Alexander	
15	Produce draft report and identify conclusions and recommendations	All	By Scrutiny Panel meeting May 2006	Gaynor Alexander and Alison Davies	
16	Agree final report	All	Scrutiny Panel meeting May 2006	Scrutiny Panel	

Appendix Three

Consultation with victims of domestic violence

- 1. Overview of the aims and methodology of the Scrutiny Panel's consultation with victims of domestic violence**
- 1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel's consultation with victims of domestic violence is to gather victims' experiences and opinions regarding the service they have received from voluntary and statutory agencies; and their views regarding the Council's approach to tackling domestic violence. It aims to provide victims with an opportunity to inform service improvement and policy development.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Panel's consultation project is an important part of the review as victims of domestic violence are often a hidden minority whose views are largely unheard and unrepresented. The Scrutiny Panel's consultation is only the second consultation project with victims of domestic violence in Tameside and it is the first attempt of its scale.
- 1.3 Victims of domestic violence are a "hard to reach" group for the purpose of consultation. Domestic violence is an under-reported crime and very few victims access support services, consequently the majority of victims remain "hidden" and are difficult to engage in consultation. National research shows that young victims of domestic violence, male victims, victims from BME communities and victims from more affluent areas are especially difficult to engage, as the number of victims from these groups who access support services is particularly low.
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Panel's consultation programme included the following activities:
 - 2 discussion groups with residents at Tameside Refuge;
 - 2 discussion groups with young victims of domestic violence from the Young Parent's Group;
 - Case studies with 2 victims of domestic violence (one young victim, and one victim from a BME community);
 - 600 self completion questionnaires distributed through the Police to victims of incidents of domestic violence reported to the Police (500 questionnaires were sent to new incidents reported to the Greater Manchester Police Tameside Domestic Violence Unit over a 4 week duration, and 100 questionnaires were sent to a cross section of domestic violence incidents from the past 3 months police database);
 - Self completion questionnaires sent, via New Charter Housing Trust, to residents involved in the Sanctuary Housing Project;
 - Self completion questionnaires sent to residents at Tameside Refuge and victims of domestic violence receiving outreach support from Tameside Women's Project;
 - Questionnaires distributed to young victims of domestic violence through Connexions Personal Advisors.
- 1.5 The Scrutiny Panel's programme of consultation was designed to represent victims from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible. Victims who were already using support services were accessed through Tameside Refuge and the Sanctuary

Housing Project; and it was hoped that the questionnaires distributed through the Police would enable the Panel's consultation to represent victims from a diverse range of backgrounds with different experiences of domestic violence.

1.6 In addition, the Panel was also keen to ensure that this programme of consultation included victims of domestic violence from some particularly "hard to reach" groups, including young victims and victims from BME communities. To this end, the Panel targeted young victims through Connexions and the Young Parents' Group; and held in depth discussions at Tameside Refuge with victims of domestic violence from BME communities.

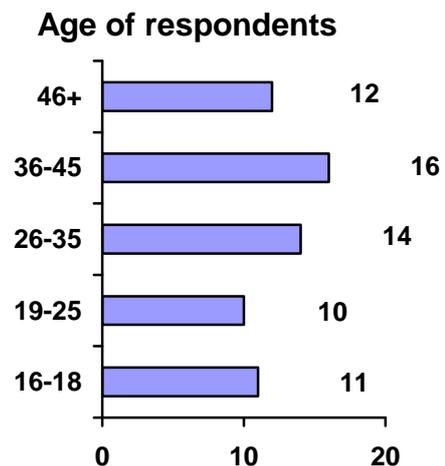
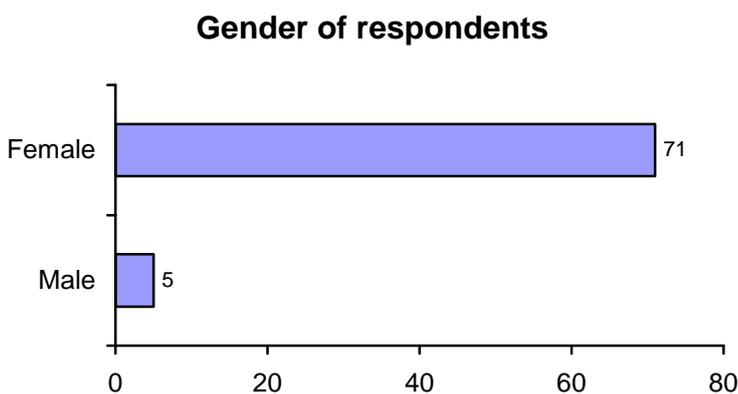
1.7 The findings of the consultation and the key issues they raise are outlined below.

2.1 The Questionnaire – response rate and profile of respondents

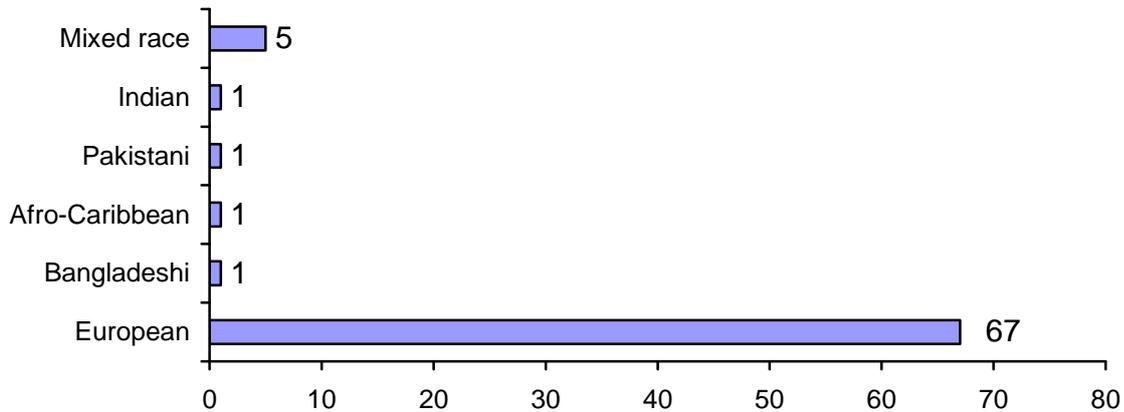
2.1.1 A total of 76 completed questionnaires were returned:

- 8 questionnaires were returned by victims attending the Young Parent's Group;
- 10 questionnaires were returned by residents of Tameside Women's Refuge;
- 3 questionnaires were returned by residents involved in the Sanctuary Housing Project;
- 55 questionnaires were returned by victims accessed via the Police.

2.1.2 The graphs below and overleaf show the profile of respondents.



Ethnic origin of respondents

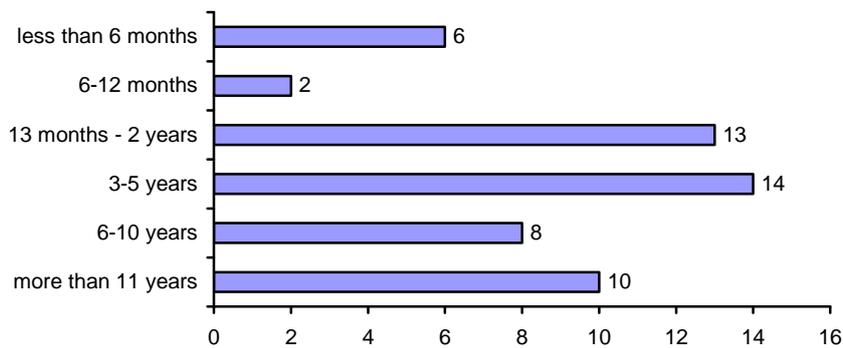


2.1.3 The graphs show;

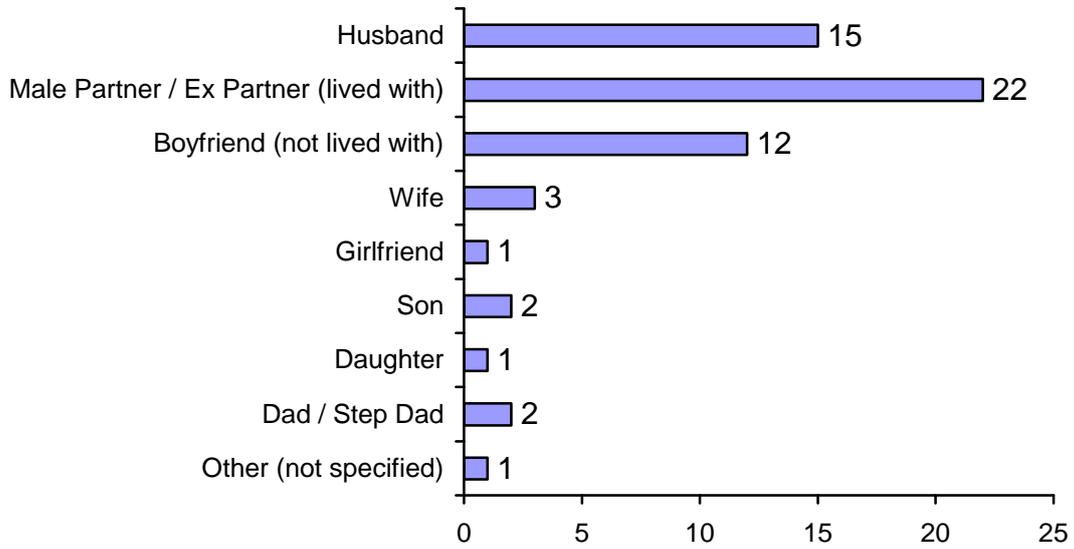
- The vast majority of respondents are female (92%) and classify themselves as “European.”
- Proportionally, the highest number of respondents fall into the 16-18 age range (17% of all respondents).
- The high proportion of young people represented in the Scrutiny Panel’s consultation is, in part, due to the fact that young people were specifically targeted through the Connexions Young Parents’ Group.

2.1.4 The following graphs provide an insight into the respondents’ experiences of domestic violence:

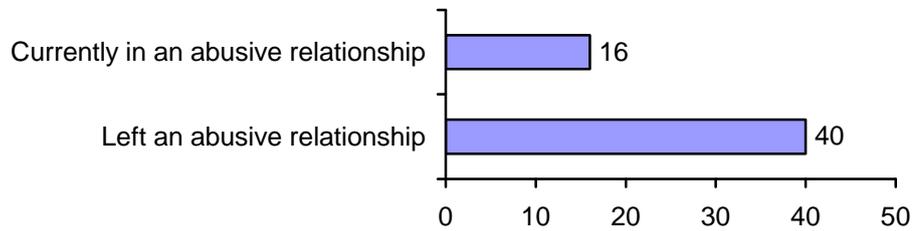
Length of time the victim experienced abuse



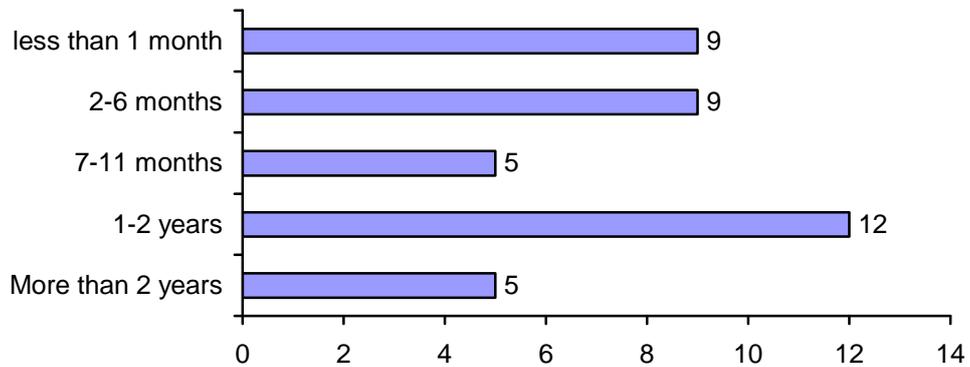
Relationship to the perpetrator



Current relationship status



Length of time since the victim left the relationship



2.1.5 The graphs show that the questionnaire data includes the views of victims whose experiences of domestic violence vary widely:

- The majority of respondents experienced domestic violence for between 1 and 5 years.
- However a significant number of respondents suffered domestic violence for a much longer duration and a smaller number reported experiencing domestic violence for less than 1 year;
- In the vast majority of cases, the perpetrator was the husband or male partner of the victim; and in the majority of cases the perpetrator lived with the victim during the abuse.
- However, a smaller number of respondents reported suffering domestic violence perpetrated by their wife, girlfriend, son, daughter and Father.
- 40 out of the 56 respondents who answered the question had left the abusive relationship. However 16 respondents remained in the abusive relationship at the time of completing the questionnaire.
- The majority of respondents who had left the relationship (57.5%) reported leaving within the previous 12 months; - 9 respondents had left the relationship within one month, 9 respondents had left between 2 to 6 months and 5 respondents had left between 7 to 11 months.
- However a significant number of respondents had left the abusive relationship for a longer duration of time – 12 respondents had been out the relationship for between 12 and 24 months and 5 respondents reported leaving the relationship more than 2 years ago.

2.1.6 The low response rate and the low number of male and BME respondents means that the questionnaire findings cannot be considered representative of the opinions and experiences of victims of domestic violence in general. However, the data does reflect the views of a cross section of victims from a diverse range of backgrounds with different experiences of domestic violence. When considered in conjunction with the Panel's qualitative consultation, the questionnaire findings provide an important insight into the views and experiences of a minority whose views are largely unheard and unrepresented.

2.2 Questionnaire Findings -

2.2.1 The questionnaire is divided in to 4 key sections covering:

- i. The Police;
- ii. Victim Support and the Witness Service;
- iii. Housing provision and support;
- iv. Tameside Women's Refuge

2.2.2 The main findings for each section are outlined overleaf.

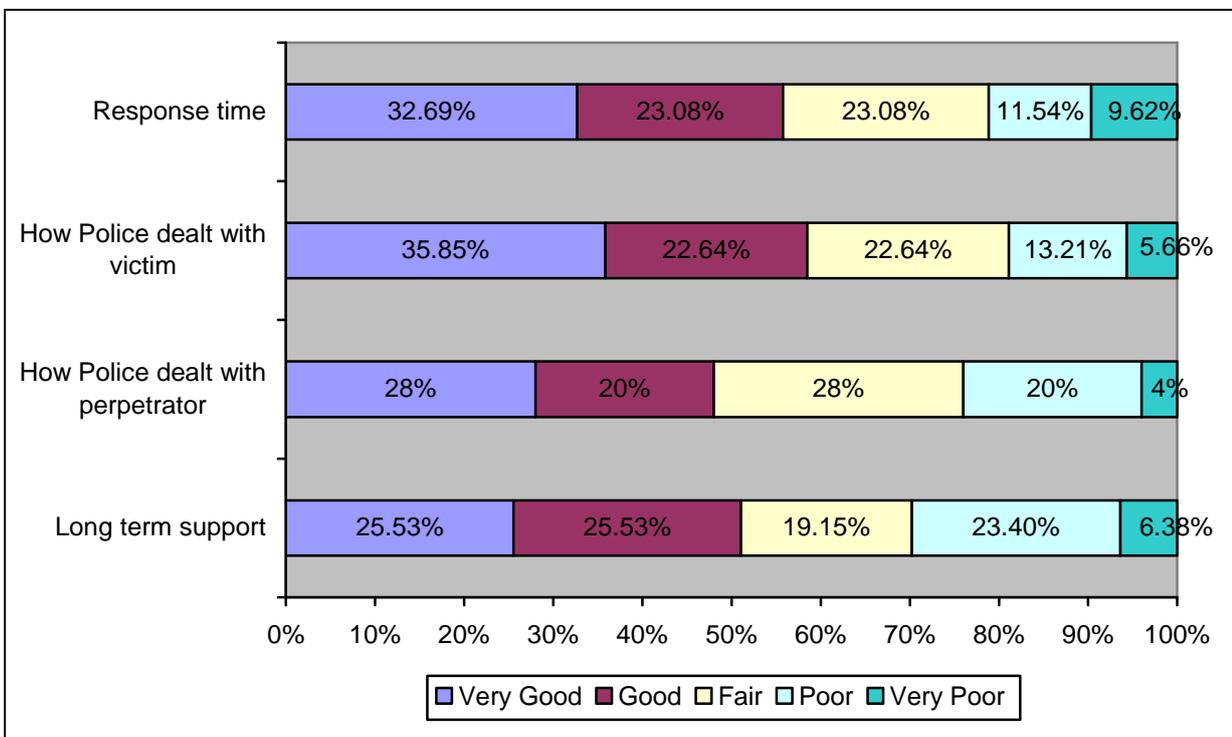
3. The Police

3.1.1 90% of respondents had reported domestic violence to the Police, 94% of these cases were reported to the Police in Tameside.

3.1.2 Respondents' were asked to rate their experiences of the Police in relation to 4 criteria:

- v. Length of time taken for the Police to arrive after an incident was reported;
- vi. How the Police dealt with the victim during the initial response;
- vii. How the Police dealt with the perpetrator;
- viii. The long term support provided for the victim by the Police;

3.1.3 The results for all 4 criteria are displayed in percentage form in the graph below:



3.1.4 The graph shows mixed ratings for all 4 criteria. The criteria dealing with the Police's response time and the way in which the victim was dealt with during the Police initial response to the report of abuse received the highest proportion of "good" and "very good" ratings:

- 33% of respondents rated the length of time taken for the Police to respond to an incident of domestic violence as "very good" and 23% rated it as "good." A further 23% of respondents rated response time as "fair." However 11.5% of victims who responded to this question felt the Police response time was "poor" and 9.6% of respondents felt it was "very poor."

- Meanwhile 36% of respondents felt the support they received from the Police during the initial response to the report of abuse was “very good and” 23% felt it was “good.” A further 23% rated it as “fair.” However 13.2% of respondents felt the support they received was “poor” and 5.7% of respondents rated it as “very poor.”

3.1.5 Respondents’ opinions regarding the way in which the Police dealt with the perpetrator were particularly inconclusive. 28% of respondents rated the Police’s action as “very good,” 20% rated it “good,” 28% felt it was “fair,” whilst a further 20% rated it as “poor.” 2 of the 50 respondents felt it was “very poor.”

3.1.6 The long term support offered by the Police received the highest proportion of “poor” and “very poor” ratings. 30% of respondents felt the support they received from the Police following the initial report of abuse was “poor” or “very poor.” 19% felt it was fair,” 25% rated it as “good” and 25% rated it as “very good.”

3.2 Respondents’ comments relating to the Police

3.2.1 The questionnaire provided respondents with an opportunity to make additional comments regarding their opinions and experiences of the Police. 32 respondents provided additional comments.

3.2.2 The nature and content of the respondents’ comments were very mixed: 4 respondents provided positive comments regarding:

- The “sensitive and considerate manner” in which the respondents’ case was handled by the Police;
- The “fantastic support” provided by the Officer dealing with the respondents’ on-going case;
- The “good clear advice” provided by “counter staff at the Police Station;”
- The “very prompt response” of the Police in arresting the offender.

3.2.3 However the vast majority of comments were critical of the Police. The key criticisms raised are summarised below:

- Domestic Violence is not taken seriously by the Police
This was the most common criticism – twelve respondents made comments regarding the Police’s attitude towards domestic violence. Typical comments include:

“They weren’t really interested – they just said I should find somewhere else to live if I wasn’t safe.”

“They don’t always come when you need them. Domestic violence doesn’t seem to be a big issue to them.”

“I told the Police I thought he’d come back and I feared for my safety and they just advised they would visit me the following day as the Police Officer was going off duty.”

“Although there were evident bruises, the perpetrator was not removed from the situation because he was asleep when the Police arrived.”

- Lack of communication with the victim

Six respondents made criticisms relating to Police communication with the victim:

- 4 respondents criticised the lack of feedback they received from the Police regarding the progress of their case;
- 1 victim felt “the Police don’t talk to you properly. They just tell you what they think you want to believe;”
- 1 victim felt that the Police’s lack of communication with victims “means many women are scared of following the case through to Court...women should be made aware that it is zero tolerance with domestic violence.”

- Poor response time

Five respondents made critical comments regarding the Police’s response time to reports of domestic violence. Typical comments include:

“I believed the Police waited to long to respond to a call out when I was being attacked and verbally abused by my daughter. The Police took two days to attend my home from the time of my phone call. In this time one of us could have been severely injured.”

“It took them over a week to arrest my ex;”

“On some occasions it’s taken over 24 hours to respond to a 999 call.”

“It took the Police over a week to arrest my ex as the officer that dealt with it was on holiday.”

- Lack of support for the victim

Four respondents felt the Police neglected to attend to the victim's needs. Two typical comments include:

"The night the Police called they didn't bother about what happened to me, just to get him as he was wanted for arrest anyway."

"They [the Police] assumed that because the perpetrator was asleep he was the victim...and accused me of breach of the peace. I was angry with the fact they didn't look into the past occasions I had to call the Police about his past record. I felt like a criminal not the victim."

- Police not interested in male victims

One male respondent felt that the Police approach to tackling domestic violence experienced by male victims and Police support for male victims of domestic violence is neglected. The respondent commented:

"Police are not interested in male victims of domestic violence. They are only interested in the female. Two sides not given the same attention and publicity is only for female victims."

- Support for Police taking a more proactive approach to dealing with the perpetrator

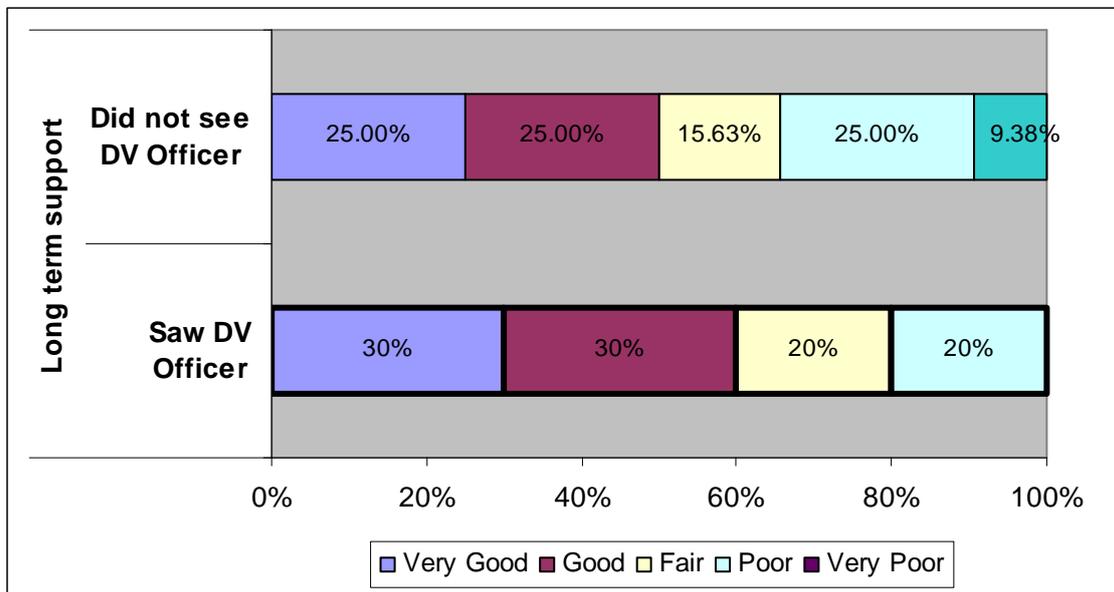
The majority of respondents felt that the Police should take a more proactive approach in arresting offenders.

3.3 The role of Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officers

3.3.1 Respondents were asked whether they had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer and whether they were aware of the Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit. 56 respondents answered this question;

- Only 11 respondents (19.6%) replied that they had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer;
- 40 respondents (71.4%) stated they had not seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer;
- 5 people (8.9%) "didn't know;"
- No respondents between the ages of 16-18 had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer.
- Of those respondents who had not seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer, 19 (47.5%) "had not heard" of the Greater Manchester Police Domestic Violence Unit.

3.3.2 The graph below compares the ratings given by respondents who did see a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer and those who didn't, in relation to the support they received from the Police following the initial report of an incident.



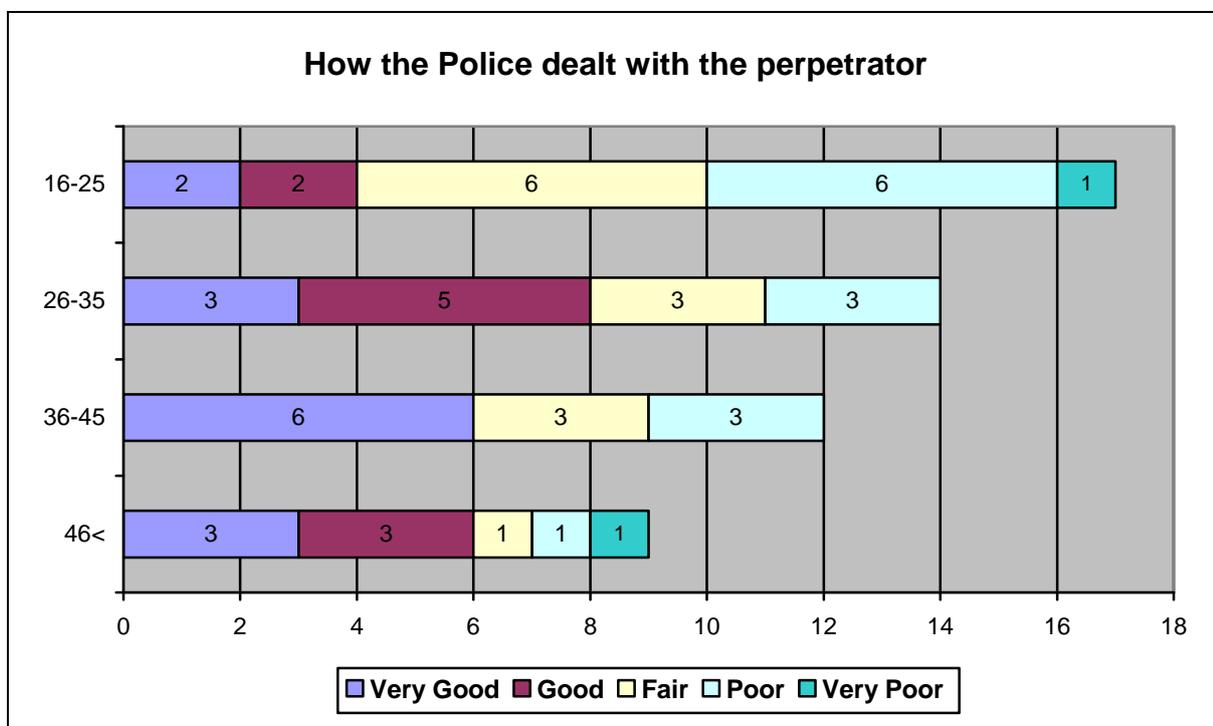
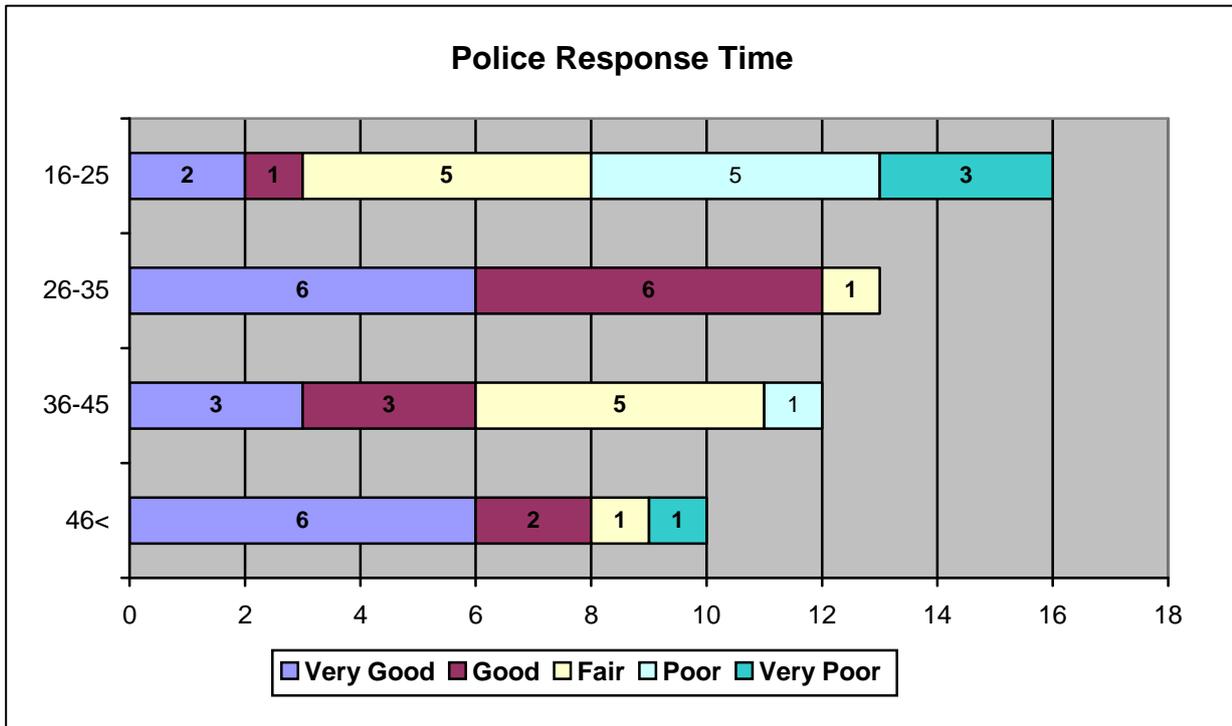
3.3.3 The graph shows that the 11 people who had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer rated the long term support they received from the Police slightly more positively than those who had not seen a Specialist Officer:

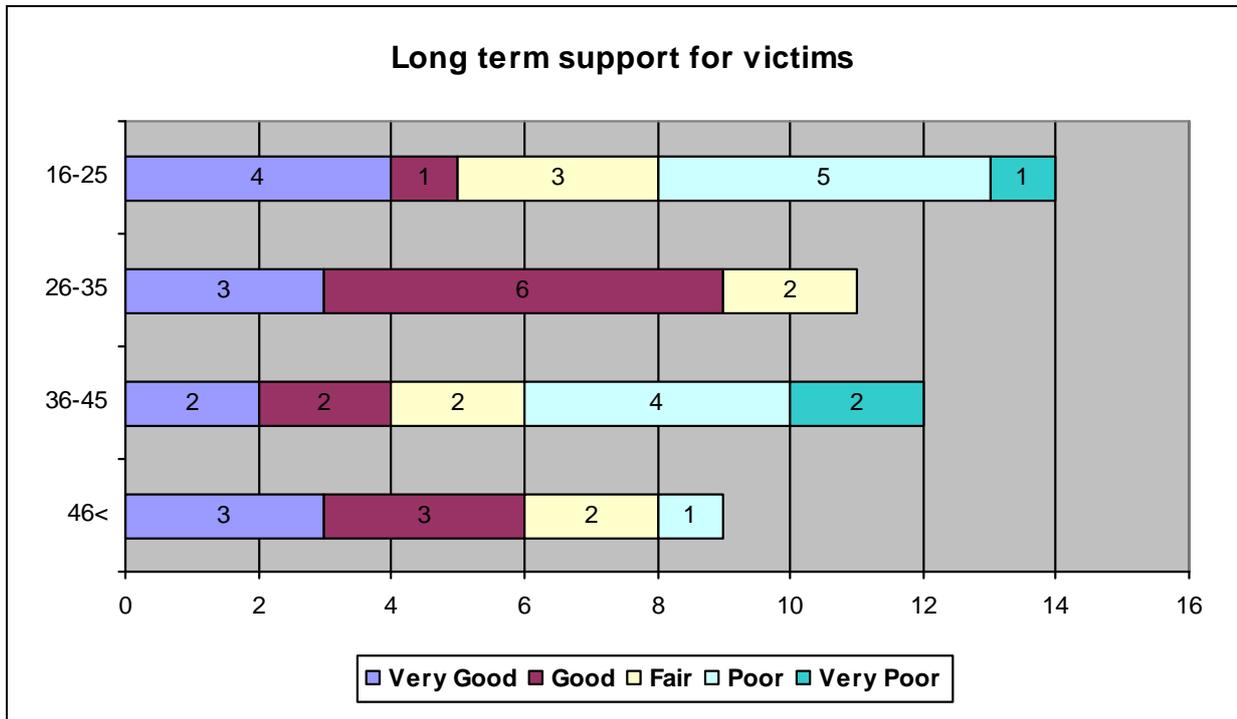
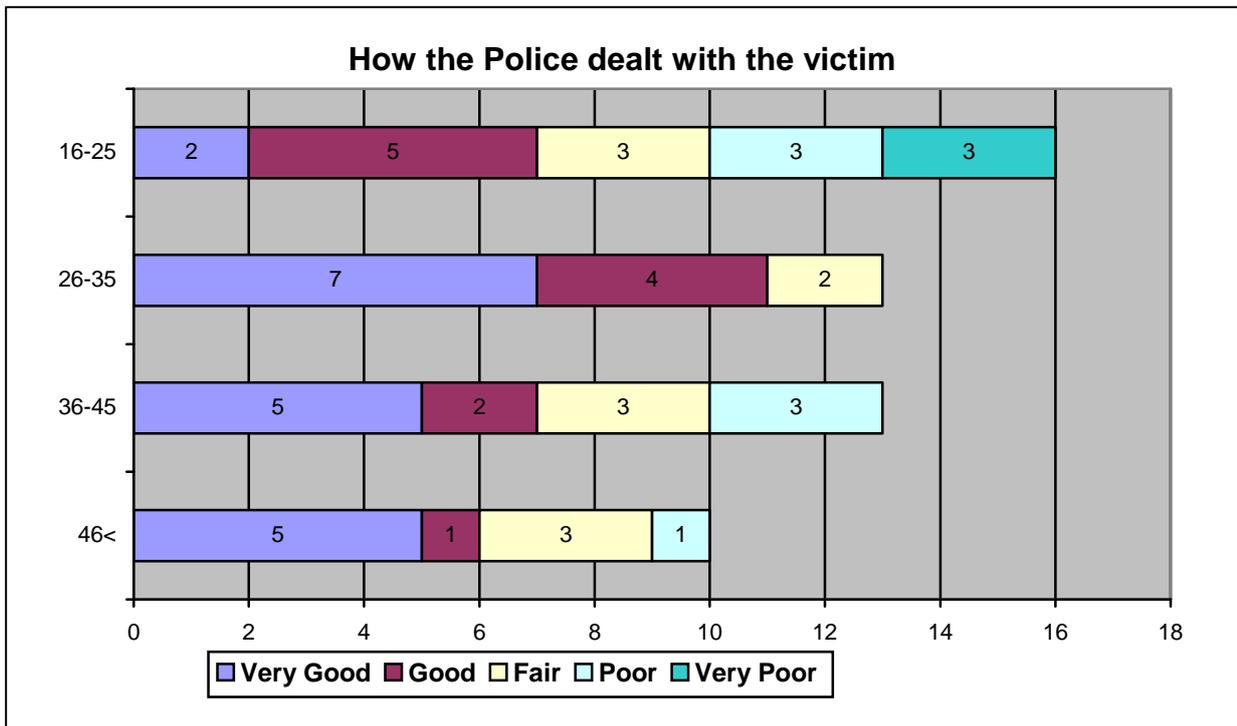
- 60% of respondents who had seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer rated the long term support they received from the Police as “very good” or “good;” and a further 20% felt it was “fair.” 20% of these respondents rated the support they received as “poor” and none of these respondents rated it as “very poor.”
- In comparison, 25% of respondents who had not seen a Specialist Domestic Violence Police Officer rated the long term support they received from the Police as “poor,” whilst 9.38% of respondents felt it was “very poor.”
- However the low response rate prevents the formation of generalised conclusions.

3.4 Breakdown of data according to Gender, Ethnic Origin and Age

3.4.1 The data indicates no potential correlation between gender or ethnic origin and victims’ rating of the Police. However the low response rate from male victims of domestic violence and victims from BME communities render it impossible to formulate generalised conclusions.

3.4.2 The graphs below and overleaf show a breakdown of the ratings given to the Police according to age, for each of the 4 criteria.





3.4.3 The graphs show:

- The highest proportion of “poor” and “very poor” ratings was recorded by the 16-25 age group. This age group account for over 56% of the total number of “poor” and “very poor” ratings given;

- The highest proportion of “good” and “very good” ratings was recorded by the 26-35 age group.

4. Victim Support

4.1.1 Respondents were asked whether they have used Victim Support. The results reveal only a small proportion of respondents have accessed this service:

- Only 19 of the 63 people who responded to this question reported that they have accessed Victim Support;
- 4 respondents have used the Witness Service;
- 2 respondents have used the Criminal Injuries Compensation Service provided by Victim Support;

4.1.2 All of the respondents who accessed Victim Support were female and of European ethnic origin; none of the male respondents or respondents from BME communities reported using the service.

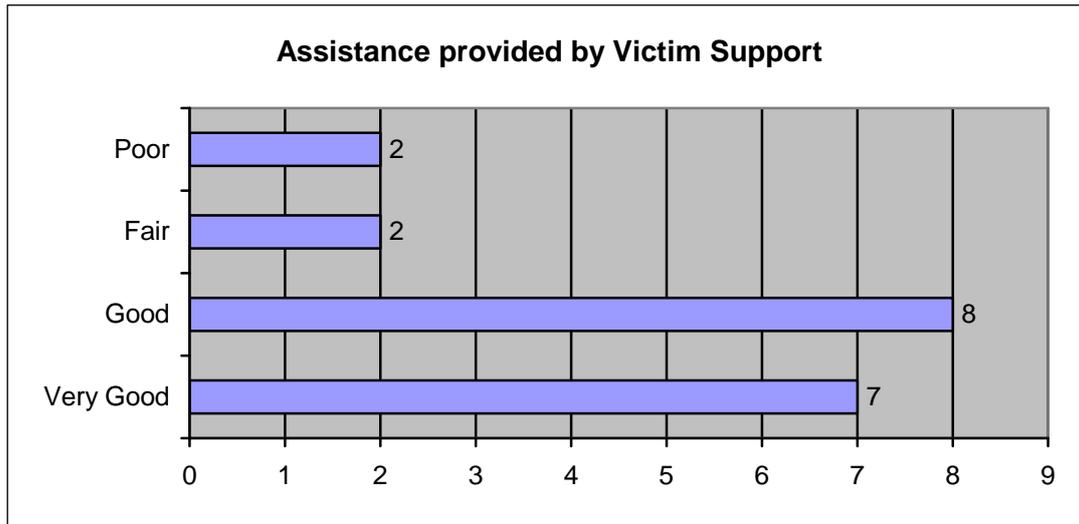
4.1.3 The number of respondents accessing Victim Support was low in all age groups; however the proportion of younger people who had used the service was particularly low – only 1 respondent in the 16-18 age range reported using the service and only 2 people in the 19-25 age range had used the service.

4.1.4 A significant number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the services provided by Victim Support;

- 18 respondents reported they “had not heard” of the Witness Service;
- 21 respondents reported they “had not heard” of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Service;
- 2 respondents commented that they “had never heard of Victim Support before now;” and 1 victim remarked “I don’t know of the support available from Victim Support;”

4.1.5 In addition respondents were asked whether they had been contacted by Victim Support after reporting domestic violence to the Police. 22 of the 53 (41.5%) victims who responded to the question claimed that they had not been contacted by Victim Support after reporting an incident of domestic violence to the Police.

4.1.6 The 19 respondents who have used Victim Support were asked to rate the overall assistance they received. The results are displayed in the graph overleaf.



4.1.7 The graph shows that 79% of the respondents who had accessed Victim Support rated the assistance they received as “very good” or “good.” Only 2 respondents felt the assistance they received was “poor” and no respondents felt it was “very poor.”

4.2 Respondents’ comments relating to Victim Support

4.2.1 The questionnaire provided respondents with an opportunity to make additional comments regarding their opinions and experiences of Victim Support. 8 respondents provided additional comments, 2 of these respondents had accessed Victim Support.

4.2.2 The comments made by the 2 respondents who had used Victim Support were very positive. They made the following comments;

- Victim Support volunteers are “very supportive and understanding” and “very helpful;”
- “Victim Support provides someone to listen to you, it helps you so much;”
- In addition these respondents valued the independent and confidential nature of Victim Support -

“When families get involved in situations it can be difficult to talk to them. I found I could talk about my situation more because no-one knew me at Victim Support.”

4.2.3 However the comments made by respondents who haven’t used Victim Support may indicated the following reasons why some victims fail to access the service:

- 2 respondents cited not “knowing what support is available” as the main reason for not accessing Victim Support;
- Meanwhile 1 respondent felt Victim Support is unable to offer practical assistance – “they are there if you need to talk to them but they can’t do anything else to help you;”

4.2.4 In addition, a misconception was to view Victim Support as an offshoot of the Police rather than an independent agency. Two typical comments include:

“At Court I dropped out of giving evidence, but I am still being harassed, but I feel if I went to Victim Support they wouldn’t help me because I dropped out.”

”The Police don’t listen to you, so why should I tell Victim Support.”

5. Housing Provision and Support

5.1.1 Respondents were asked whether they received help from Housing Options to be re-homed as a result of domestic violence. 10 of the 61 people who responded to this question indicated that they had received help from Housing Options as a result of domestic violence. All 10 respondents were female, 9 classified their ethnic origin as “European” and 1 as Afro-Caribbean.

5.1.2 The 10 respondents were asked to rate the help they received; 9 gave ratings, as shown in the table below:

Help provided by Housing Options?				
Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
3	4	0	2	0

5.1.3 4 respondents felt they had been offered suitable accommodation, 4 respondents were currently waiting and 1 respondent felt they had not been offered suitable accommodation.

5.1.4 Respondents were asked how long they waited to be re-homed. Of the 6 respondents that answered, 1 secured accommodation within 3 months, 2 waited between 3-5 months, 2 waited between 6-11 months and 1 respondent waited over 12 months.

5.2 Respondents' comments regarding housing provision and support

5.2.2 Two of the 3 respondents involved in the Sanctuary Housing Project provided positive comments regarding the impact of the scheme:

"I can't thank the people involved in the Sanctuary Housing Project enough, it has saved my sanity."

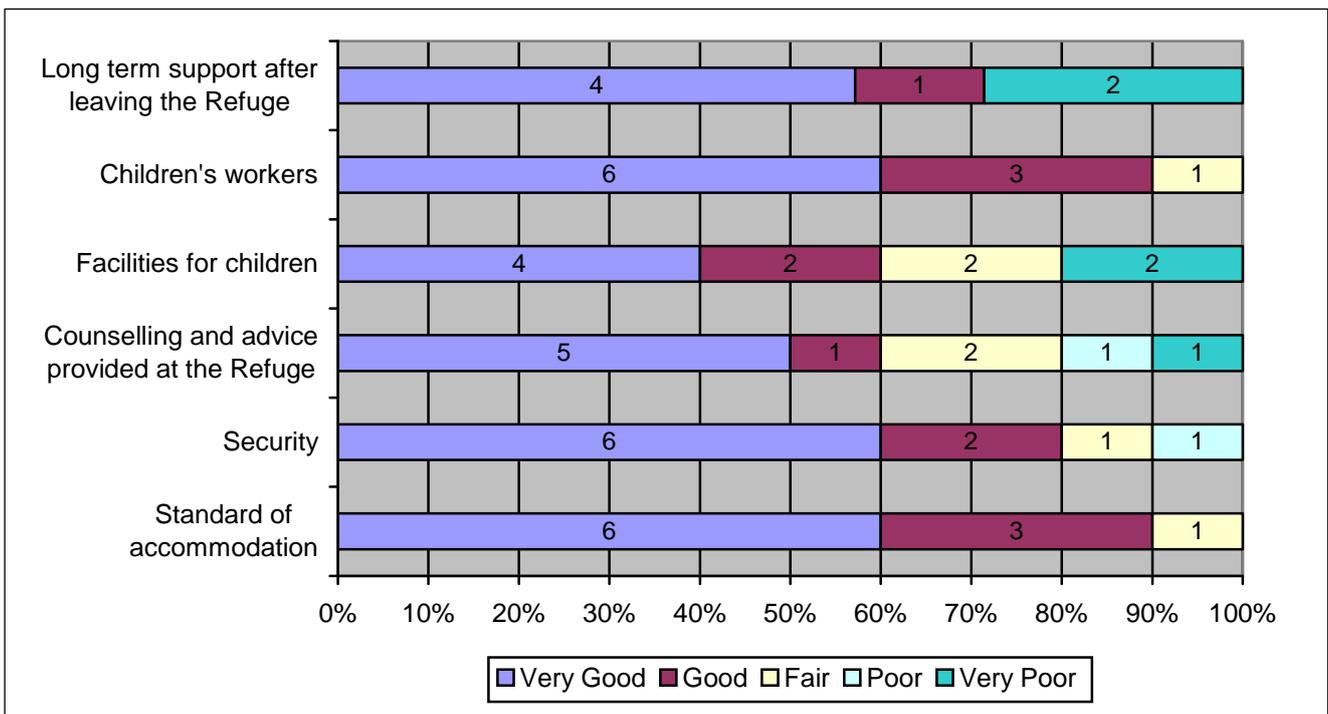
"My Ex can see the CCTV that New Charter have put in and the Sanctuary Housing Scheme staff regularly give me a ring to see how I'm doing. It has helped me to feel safer in my house."

6. Tameside Women's Refuge

6.1 The 10 respondents that have used Tameside Women's Refuge were asked to rate the Refuge in relation to the following services:

- i. The standard of accommodation;
- ii. Security;
- iii. Counselling and advice provided at the Refuge;
- iv. Facilities for children;
- v. Children's Workers;
- vi. Outreach support

6.1.2 The results for all 6 criteria are displayed in the graph below.



6.1.3 The graph shows that the majority of respondents rated the services provided by the Refuge as “good” or “very good:”

- The criteria for the standard of accommodation and Children’s Workers received the highest ratings - 90% of respondents rated the standard of accommodation and the Children’s Workers based at the Refuge as “good or “very good;” and one respondent rated them as fair.
- 81% of respondents felt the security provided at the Refuge was “good” or “very good;”
- Facilities for children, counselling, and outreach support received slightly more mixed results.

6.2 Respondents’ comments

6.2.1 8 respondents made additional comments regarding the Refuge.

- 3 respondents praised the security at the Refuge and commented on the “supportive” staff.
- 3 respondents praised the facilities for children and commented on the need to secure funding to develop such facilities further;

“The children’s services are an asset and should be an ongoing concern”

“It’s a real shame that the future of children’s workers is in jeopardy”

“There should be more activities for children as the children get bored.”

- Two respondent felt that the greater outreach support needs to be developed;

“I felt very safe at the refuge, but I am scared of being on my own”

7. Qualitative Consultation – number and profile of participants

7.1 The Scrutiny Panel carried out a range of qualitative consultation with victims of domestic violence including:

- 2 discussions groups with residents at Tameside Women’s Refuge
- 2 discussion groups with young victims of domestic violence from the Young Parents’ Group run by Connexions;
- 2 individual interviews with victims of domestic violence

7.2 Participants were asked about their experiences and opinions relating to the following:

- i. The Police;
- ii. Legal proceedings;
- iii. Housing provision and support;
- iv. Tameside Women's Refuge
- v. Publicity / availability of information relating to domestic violence;
- vi. Domestic violence amongst young people

- 7.3 The two discussion groups held at the Refuge involved a total of 12 participants; 7 participants classified their ethnic origin as "British," 3 described themselves as "mixed race" and 2 were "Asian;" 2 participants had left the Refuge and were currently receiving outreach support. The discussion groups with members of the Young Parents' Group involved 7 participants who had experienced domestic violence; all were female and classified themselves as "European."
- 7.4 The limited number of participants involved in the discussion groups means that the opinions and experiences expressed cannot be considered representative of victims of domestic violence in general. However, these discussion groups do provide detailed information which helps to develop and enhance our understanding of the quantitative data provided in the questionnaires.
- 7.5 Feedback from the discussions with victims of domestic violence in relation to each of the subjects discussed and the key issues raised are outlined overleaf.

8. Feedback from discussions with victims

8.1 The Police

8.2 The vast majority of participants were critical of the Police. The key criticisms raised include:

8.3 Lack of communication between the Police and victims

- The majority of participants felt the Police fail to keep the victim informed of developments in relation to their case.

8.4 Lack of support for the victim

- Participants felt that the Police fail to provide victims with adequate support and protection after they have reported a case.
- They felt that Police Officers fail to establish "trust" and positive relationships with victims.
- In addition participants agreed that lack of support from the Police is often a contributory factor for victims' retracting their statement. The majority of participants reported feeling particularly vulnerable after reporting domestic violence to the Police - they commented on feeling afraid of the perpetrators' reaction, "dependent" upon the perpetrator, "scared" of leaving the relationship

and uncertain about court proceedings; and felt the Police failed to allay these concerns.

8.5 Police policy for targeting perpetrators

- The majority of participants felt the Police policy for “targeting” or “cold calling” on perpetrators of domestic violence still living with the victim, inflames abuse.
- Two participants described incidents when their partner became more abusive following Police intervention of this type.

8.6 Perpetrators’ too often bailed by the Police

- The majority of participants felt that perpetrators of domestic violence are too often released on bail by the Police, for example one participant commented:

“If the perpetrator was kept in custody for longer, it would prevent the victim from having to face him straight away and it would give her time to get stronger.”

- Participants revealed that abuse intensified when the perpetrator was released on bail; one participant explained:

“The Police kept arresting him when I phoned, but they kept letting him go. This made him angrier and increased the abuse.”

- Many participants reported returning to their partner after reporting an incident of domestic violence to the Police, because they feared the perpetrator’s reaction after bail.

8.7 Domestic violence is not taken seriously by the Police

- Some participants felt domestic violence is not taken seriously by the Police. Typical comments included:

“Nobody in the Police believed me when I told them anything. They think I’m crazy.”

“I feel like I’m fighting the Police as well.”

“I kept phoning the Police but they wouldn’t arrest him because he hadn’t hit me. He had his hands around my throat but nobody did anything.”

9. Legal Proceedings

9.1 Participants discussed the implications of;

- i. New legal powers allowing the Police to take a case to court without the victim's consent;
- ii. Probation programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence;
- iii. Support for victims in Court.

Participants' views and experiences in relation to the above issues were very mixed.

9.2 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

- Some participants welcomed new legal powers contained in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act, which allow the Police to take a case to court without the victim's consent.
- For example, some participants claimed that victims fail to press charges because they fear the perpetrators' reaction. These participants felt that the new legal powers will provide an opportunity for perpetrators to be brought to justice whilst distancing the victim from the case. One victim summarised:

"[The new powers] will provide a way of taking forward a case and dealing with the offender, whilst taking the emphasis off the victim."

- However other participants felt that Police interference could exacerbate tensions as the perpetrator would blame the victim regardless of whether the victim had given consent to the court case.
- Participants felt this would be a particular problem if the perpetrator was bailed or court sentencing was not strong enough. For example one participant commented:

"It will make things worse unless there is stronger sentencing afterwards...otherwise the perpetrator will be angrier and resent the victim and cause the victim more grief"

9.3 Probation Service Anger Management Programmes

- Participants had mixed experiences and views regarding the impact of Probation Programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence. For example 3 victims felt that the Probation Service Anger Management Programme had an adverse effect on their partner's abusive behaviour. They commented:

“He was ashamed to be attending but he believed he was right and justified. He said he was angry because of what I had put in through.”

“The programme is a bad idea. My partner blamed me for being forced to do the programme and he became more violent at home.”

“He felt he was forced to go through probation because of me, the programme doesn’t make him admit to any problems...it has just made him worse.”

- However participants agreed that the impact of Probation Programmes ultimately depends on the perpetrator’s character and their commitment to rehabilitation. In particular, participants felt that Anger Management programmes may be more influential for perpetrators involved in isolated incidents of domestic violence.

9.4 Support for the victim in Court

- One participant criticised the lack of support she received whilst giving evidence in Court;

“I would have liked a video link but I wasn’t allowed one because of my age. They put up a screen but he [the perpetrator] could easily see around it.”

“They let him [the perpetrator] walk out of court 10 minutes after me, so we were waiting for the same bus home. It was handled very badly.”

10. Housing provision and support

- 10.1 Some participants expressed frustration regarding the length of time it had taken / was taking to secure permanent accommodation as a result of homelessness caused by domestic violence.
- 10.2 Furthermore participants agreed that difficulty in securing suitable accommodation is one of the main issues which deter victims from leaving an abusive relationship. One typical comment was:

“You need to find a proper place to stay, but it takes a long time to get a house, especially if you have a child...this makes it very difficult to leave.”

- 10.3 However participants who had been re-homed were satisfied with the accommodation they had received.
- 10.4 1 participant had received assistance from the Sanctuary Housing Project and praised the scheme and staff for helping her feel safer in her own home. This participant commented;

“The Police wouldn’t install a panic alarm at my house, but Sanctuary have installed CCTV, security lighting and a panic alarm.”

“The CCTV is very visible and one of the workers from Sanctuary regularly rings me to see how I’m doing...He [the perpetrator] hasn’t been around to the house since and I feel safer.”

- 10.5 Participants agreed that the Sanctuary Housing Project seems to offer a valuable opportunity for victims to stay in their own homes and avoid the stresses caused by homelessness and the need to relocate.

11. Tameside Women’s Refuge

- 11.1 Participants who were residents or ex-residents of Tameside Women’s Refuge praised the security and facilities provided at the Refuge. However, they agreed that “shared living can become difficult at times” and “you need your own space.”
- 11.2 Participants who had not used the Refuge expressed negative perceptions of Refuges, as “horrible,” “dirty” and “not a nice place.”
- 11.3 Residents and non-residents agreed that refuges do have a negative image and they felt that this may put people off leaving an abusive relationship. Participants felt

that more work needs to be done to dispel popular perceptions of refugees and the “type” of people that use them.

12. Publicity / availability of information relating to domestic violence

- 12.1 Participants felt that publicity information relating to domestic violence focuses too heavily on the potential implications of not reporting domestic violence, rather than informing victims of what support is available to help them leave the abusive relationship. Participants felt that victims would be more likely to leave an abusive relationship if available support services were publicised more widely. Typical comments included:

“Support after victims have taken the initiative and reported domestic violence is most important, but leaflets and posters just try to scare people into reporting;”

“Women don’t report domestic violence because they don’t know what they can do after leaving their partner. If they understood better what would happen more women would leave domestic violence.”

- 12.2 In addition, participants felt that publicity information places too greater emphasis on physical abuse. Participants felt that more work needs to be done to raise the profile of different types of controlling behaviour, including psychological abuse and financial control. Typical comments included;

“Many victims don’t even know they are experiencing abuse until it becomes physical.

“It was a gradual build up of abuse over about 6 months. I didn’t notice what was happening and I wasn’t physically attacked at first, but I was getting more and more isolated and cut off from my friends and family – he checked all my phone calls and wouldn’t let me out of the house on my own. I began to feel as though I was dependent upon that person for everything, but I didn’t realise I was experiencing domestic violence.”

- 12.3 Some participants felt that it would be useful to have “a one stop shop” which brings together information and advice on services available to help victims of domestic violence.
- 12.4 However other participants preferred accessing information at an anonymous outlet which forms part of a neutral facility. For example, many participants felt that Health Centres, GPs’ Surgeries and Dentists are ideal places for providing information on support services available for victims of domestic violence. They explained that GPs’ surgeries or antenatal appointments offer victims respite from a controlling

relationship and provide them with an opportunity to access information without the perpetrator being present.

13. Domestic violence amongst young people

13.1 Participants agreed that preventative work in schools is essential in tackling domestic violence. The vast majority of participants felt their partner had a derogatory perception of women in general and believed that is important to encourage in children respect for others and healthy relationships from an early age.

13.2 In addition participants felt that schools provide an ideal forum for:

- Raising awareness of domestic violence and the different forms it can take;
- Helping young people who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence access support services. For example, one participant suggested including contact details for the domestic violence helpline in student diaries.

13.3 Participants felt “Crucial Crew” is a particularly valuable initiative that may help children from abusive households “open up” and access support. However they felt that it is important to ensure adequate support and counselling is available at these events for children who may need it.

13.4 Young participants sited Connexions as the service they approached, or would be most likely to approach, for help relating to domestic violence. The reasons they cited include:

“They [Connexions] are easy to speak to”

“I found it easier to talk to someone you don’t know”

“They have lots of information about places you can go to for help.”