



## 'Making a Difference' -

Review of the support and interventions offered by Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid to victims of domestic abuse

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## Part One - Introduction

### Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid

Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid (BESBWA) is a registered charity which has been supporting victims of domestic abuse since 1976. Based in Slough, BESBWA also covers Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) and South Bucks. Through its many awards for excellence, such as Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, CAADAs IDVA Leading Lights and an OBE in the New Year Honours 2011 for the Chief Executive Geraldine Lejeune for Services to Vulnerable Families, this charity demonstrates how it is working to provide vital support to victims and helping to reduce domestic abuse and safeguard not only victims but their children.

#### IDVA Service – Leading Lights Accreditation

In 2009 BESBWA IDVA service was one of the first four IDVA services nationally to receive CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) accreditation of their leading lights programme. This accreditation programme is designed to recognise and reward safe practice in IDVA services across England and Wales. It demonstrates the commitment organisations have shown in supporting survivors of domestic violence and of the high quality standard that they provide.

### Counting the true cost of Domestic Abuse

If you were asked how much it costs the country to deal with domestic abuse each year would you be surprised to learn that it is a staggering £23 billion? Unbelievable it may seem but yes a staggering £23 billion<sup>1</sup>.

But then when looking at the fact that each week in England and Wales nearly 20,000 women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse and that this type of violence is still underreported should the cost be that surprising?

It is not just the criminal justice system but also other agencies that play a key role in reducing and preventing domestic abuse. Domestic Abuse has a huge impact on a range of areas and services such as health, children's services, education, housing and the economy.

Specialist voluntary sector agencies, such as BESBWA, have a major role in responding and supporting domestic abuse victims, male as well as female, and in so doing reduce the occurrence and risk levels of continued abuse.

<sup>1</sup> The cost of Domestic Violence September 2004 – Professor Sylvia Walby (University of Leeds)

Berkshire East and South Bucks may be perceived as affluent, low crime areas and as such domestic abuse may not be seen to be prevalent or an issue. However, domestic abuse is a hidden crime whether in an affluent or disadvantaged area. The local cost of domestic abuse for Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead and South Bucks is estimated to be over £80 million annually and this does not take account of the human and emotional suffering of victims and their families.

### Aim of this assessment

This report aims to evidence:

- how the different activities, support and interventions BESBWA provides makes a big difference to the lives of the victims and their children.
- the impact these interventions have on prevention – reducing repeat offences and escalation of the risk.
- the costs of domestic abuse to the local area and statutory agencies.

## Part Two - National Context of Domestic Abuse

Addressing domestic abuse has been a priority and a challenge for central Government for many years.

In 2006/07 a national Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) was developed and during 2007/08 was promoted by the Government. A multi agency co-ordinated response is vital to tackling domestic abuse and the CCR model demonstrates the relationship between agencies and the levels of response needed to tackle domestic abuse effectively at a local level. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) are core elements to the CCR.

In 2008 the Government made clear its commitment to tackling domestic and sexual violence through the publication of its first Tackling Violence Action Plan which includes specific activity to tackle domestic and sexual violence. Key actions in the action plan were:

- to double the number of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) by 2011
- national roll-out of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) by 2011, more than doubling the number currently in operation

### Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)

IDVAs are specialist case workers who work intensively with and support high risk victims of domestic abuse. IDVAs work in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and on behalf of the victim co-ordinate the

response of those agencies that may be involved with a case including those working with the children and perpetrator. The role of the IDVA is a pivotal component of both the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

The range of intervention the IDVA provides support to the victim for will include (*this is not an extensive list*):

- Safety planning
- Support in relation to a criminal court case
- Support with civil justice remedies
- Subject to MARAC
- Support with housing issues
- Access to target hardening
- Access to sanctuary scheme
- Access to refuge accommodation
- Support in relation to child contact
- Support with Social Services
- Support with benefits
- Support with schools
- Support to access counselling

The IDVAs positive impact and value for money has been evidenced by an independent evaluation<sup>2</sup>.

IDVA involvement with victims of domestic violence has been shown to decrease victimisation, increase notification of children at risk and reduce the number of victims unwilling to support a prosecution. The evaluation report on the SDVC pilots in Caerphilly and Croydon found that victims were more likely to participate in the criminal justice system if they were supported by an IDVA.

### Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

A MARAC is a victim focus meeting that brings together local statutory and voluntary organisations to protect victims (both female and male) at highest risk of domestic abuse. Organisations that may be involved in a MARAC are the criminal justice agencies, the local authority, specialist domestic abuse services, health services, housing, services supporting children and substance misuse.

Three of the key aims of a MARAC are:

- The identification of high risk victims via a co-ordinated community response and risk assessment tool/checklist.

<sup>2</sup>*Safety in Numbers – A Multi-site Evaluation of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Services* (November 2009) provided evidence of IDVAs impressive positive impact, ‘57% of all victims supported by an IDVA experiencing a complete or near cessation in the abuse they were suffering following around 3-4 months of contact’. This evaluation estimated the cost of

providing the support of an IDVA is less than £500 per victim supported and the cost per successful outcome, namely where all forms of abuse cease, is less than £1,000.

- Sharing of information to provide a multi agency co-ordinated response and safety action planning that is tailored to the individual needs and goals of victims and their children.
- To reduce re-offending and repeat victimisation.

After a MARAC meeting, the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) will be the main contact with the victim (normally the same day), and will let them know about the agreed safety planning actions and the support the agencies are offering.

### Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)

SDVCs are an essential element of a multi agency response to addressing domestic violence including addressing the high attrition rates and securing successful prosecutions.

An SDVC is not just about the court building. It is a partnership and problem solving approach to domestic abuse taken by the police, prosecutors, magistrates, court staff, the probation service and specialist support services that creates greater victims safety and brings perpetrators to justice. Agencies work together to identify, track, risk assess, support victims and share information.

The Government continued its drive and commitment to tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence. Following a large public consultation it published the cross - Government 'Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls' strategy in November 2009. This strategy focused on three main themes: Prevention; Provision and Protection. This strategy has since been followed up by Government with the publication of their strategic vision 'Call to end violence against women and girls' launched in November 2010 outlining how they plan to tackle violence against women and girls.

## **Part Three – Domestic Abuse in Berkshire East and South Bucks**

Over the past few years, and in line with Government commitment, a great deal of work has been undertaken by Thames Valley Police (TVP) to increase reporting of domestic abuse, to safeguard victims and bring perpetrators to justice and they have indeed been successful. However, it is recognised that domestic abuse is still very much a hidden crime and that victims remain silent and do not report their abuse to the police.

Therefore the following data from TVP on reported domestic abuse incidents is not, however, the complete picture. Data is now being collected from other agencies: A&E, social services and housing, as these are often the agencies that a victim may first disclose their abuse to. Although there has been a drive to increase reporting of incidents to police and other agencies it is the level of incidences of repeat victimisation that we have to be concerned about.

Thames Valley Police data	All Domestic Abuse Incidents (reported to TVP only)		% Changes	Repeat Victimization for All Incidents		% Changes
	2008/09	2009/10		2008/09	2009/10	
<b>Slough</b>	3205	3360	+ 4.8%	1260	1356	+ 7.6%
<b>South Bucks</b>	711	736	+ 3.5%	283	291	+ 2.8%
<b>Windsor &amp; Maidenhead</b>	1551	1657	+6.8%	508	654	+ 28.7%
<b>Totals</b>	5467	5753	+5.2%	2051	2301	+ 12.2%

Comparison period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 – 30 November 2009 and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 – 30 November 2010

In September 2009 TVP rolled out DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment) Risk Indicator Checklist, to all its officers to complete when attending an incident of domestic abuse. The aspirations of DASH are to ensure that there is a consistent approach when dealing with domestic abuse; that they identify and capture domestic abuse victims, especially high risk victims; that they refer victims to the appropriate agency or MARACs for support; increase in arrest rate of perpetrator and with this support ensure the victim is safe and repeat incidences are reduced.

#### Part Four - Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid

Originally Berkshire East Women's Aid provided emergency accommodation for victims fleeing domestic abuse. In 2005 BESBWA started their outreach and IDVA service. In the first year they supported 73 victims. Fast forward to 2009 and the increase in referrals and those supported by the BESBWA is now 802 with another 128 victims provided temporary accommodation in their three safe houses.

BESBWA growth over the last few years is testament to the confidence and awareness victims now have in the support services available to them. The support provided by BESBWA makes it possible for the victim to take responsibility for their lives and to start once again making their own decisions.

The support services provided by BESBWA are in high demand. Long gone are the days when Women's Aid use to provide *just* a safe haven for those victims fleeing/escaping from domestic violence. BESBWA provide an holistic service that contains tailored support for the victim and their children which includes the following:

- Three safe houses across East Berkshire providing temporary accommodation for up to 13 families at any one time. Each safe house with a dedicated key worker available to provide daily support and advice.

- A 24 hour on-call emergency helpline
- Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVAs) service which provides emergency and intensive support to high risk victims of domestic abuse.
- A specialist male IDVA service supporting high risk male victims of domestic abuse.
- Outreach Service providing longer term support to standard – medium risk victims.
- Specialist Children and Young People's Services – which includes Children's Support team, Sunbeam a dedicated Children's Centre, and a variety of support groups, workshops, activities and therapeutic work.
- Women's Safety Officer – working with women whose abusive partners are currently attending the Probation Domestic Abuse Programme.
- Freedom programme – a 12 week support programme for women victims of domestic abuse.
- Training programmes delivered to a variety of organisations including statutory, voluntary and private sectors and front line practitioners.

We have to recognise the vast achievements this organisation has accomplished and in a very short timescale. However funding has and still remains the major area of concern, and in the current climate with public sector budget cuts it has become increasingly difficult to sustain the current level of service offered.

As a consequence of the reduction in the financial support to BESBWA from RBWM and South Bucks for 2010 -11, BESBWA have had to cease providing some support services for these areas and their victims. South Bucks only received an outreach service for its referrals and RBWM only the specialist IDVA services are available.

Of the 75 RBWM clients seeking support from April – August 2010 only 29 were supported from the existing funding for male/BME/drugs IDVA service and 14 for the outreach service. The remaining 21 high risk victims and 11 outreach clients remained unsupported due to lack of funding.

Due to the financial uncertainties it is difficult for BESBWA to put in place a three year business plan. Therefore the business plan they are developing will be for two years with the priority of sustaining the current level of service delivery for the next 12 months.

## Part Five – BESBWA: demonstrating its value

Working with victims of domestic abuse, the following support services and interventions are deployed by BESBWA in tackling and reducing domestic abuse. In reviewing the support services and interventions, it was evidenced how they are leading to improved outcomes for domestic abuse victims and their children.

### Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)

BESBWA have five IDVAs supporting high risk victims of domestic abuse including IDVAs specialising in supporting Eastern European; Black Minority & Ethnic; Forced Marriage/ Honour Based Violence, Drugs and Alcohol and Male victims.

#### Malcolm – Male victim case study

In 2009, due to the increasingly high number of calls to BESBWA crisis line from men, the BESBWA IDVA service extended its support to male victims of domestic abuse. A male IDVA is now one of the specialist IDVAs supporting male victims.

Since its launch in 2009 the male IDVA has supported 52 high risk male victims of domestic abuse. Malcolm is one of these victims.

Malcolm is a qualified teacher and in 2010 was referred to the IDVA service by Thames Valley Police. The male IDVA made contact with Malcolm to talk with him about the abuse he was experiencing and to undertake a risk assessment – which he scored high on.

Malcolm's abuser was his wife who was using serious physical violence against him over a sustained period. The violence has escalated within the last 18 months, and since the birth of their child, to include punching and throwing objects including knives as well as threats to kill both Malcolm and his ex-girlfriend. Threats were also made against their child and on occasions the child was in the room whilst the violence was taking place.

With the IDVA's support, Malcolm was able to understand the dynamics of his relationship as issues including power and control were explored in detail. Due to Malcolm's high risk assessment he was referred to the MARAC.

Following the MARAC a multi agency safety action plan was put in place. The IDVA fed back to Malcolm and also explored with him the importance of disclosing information to social services. Following lengthy discussions Malcolm decided to disclose the abusive relationship to social services and along with the IDVA advocating on Malcolm's behalf, social services began to recognise the dynamics of what was taking place within the marital home.

With the support and interventions provided by BESBWA Malcolm is now living on his own, away from his abusive wife and has been able to rebuild his life. The court case is due to be held shortly, and the IDVA will continue to support Malcolm through the court process.

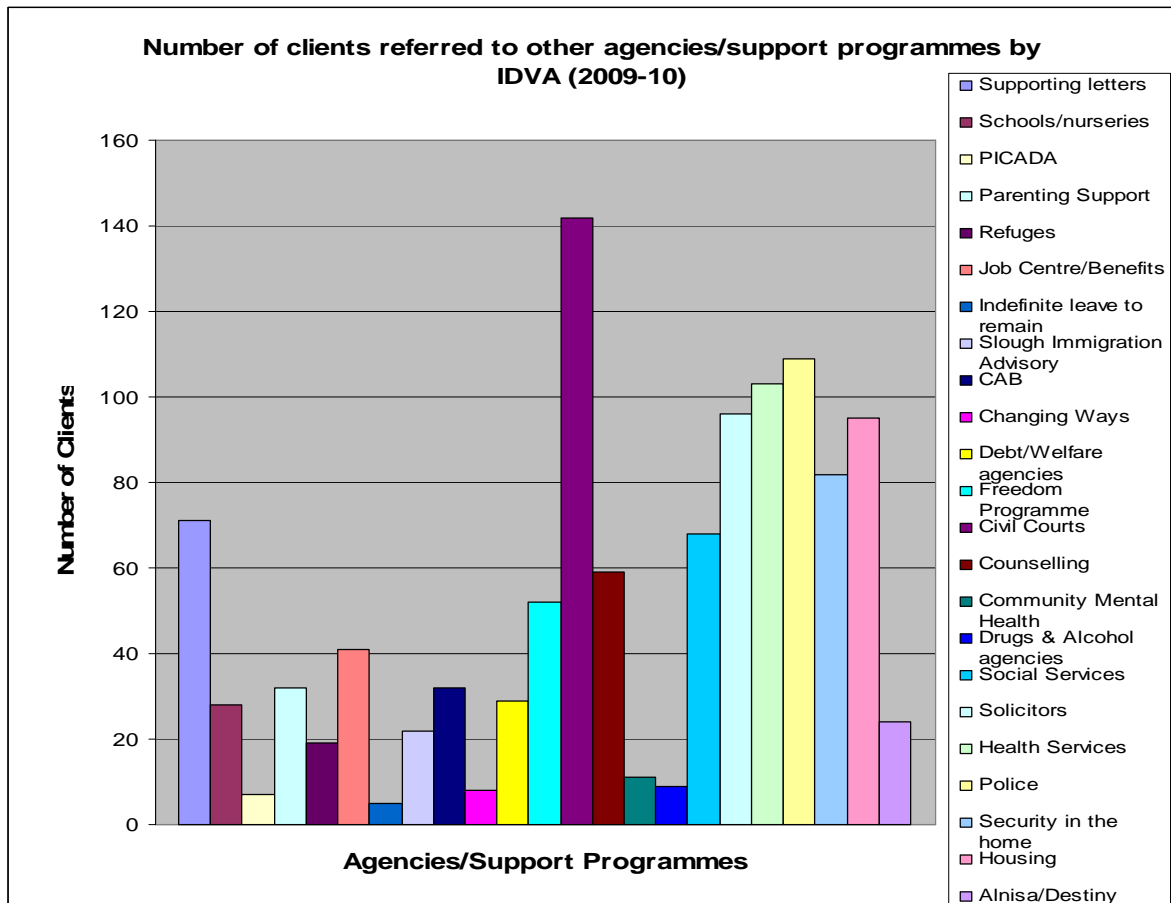
#### **IDVA service - outcomes**

In 2009 – 10 BESBWA had 520 referrals to their IDVA service including 52 male victims supported by their new male service. Of these high risk referrals:

- 458 clients engaged with the support service
- 143 of these clients were supported at the three MARACs
- 248 of these clients were involved with the SDVC
- There were 159 convictions and sentences
- 40 trials were attended by BESBWA

- 187 face to face meetings were completed by the IDVAs
- 89 clients from outside the area were assessed and referred to IDVA/outreach service in their appropriate area
- 403 children involved

All clients that engaged with the IDVA service each received an individual safety plan and support plan. In addition the IDVA supported the client in referring or engaging with a variety of other agencies or support programmes. The table below shows this engagement:



As well as demonstrating the support provided in the above, other successful outcomes from the 2009 – 10 cohort through the interventions of the IDVA service were:

- 329 clients had their risk assessment levels reduced
  - 318 left their abuser
  - 16 clients returned to work
  - 28 went into further education/training
  - 7 became volunteers
  - 19 repeat incidences of domestic abuse
- Once the risk levels of these high risk victims have been reduced then the victim is referred for continued support to BESBWA outreach service.

## Outreach Service

The outreach service supports standard to medium risk victims. BESBWA have two outreach workers. The support they offer is over a longer time scale than the IDVA and helps victims to take those steps back to independence.

The outreach service gives practical help, emotional support and provides information on a wide range of matters including housing, benefits, help with finances, back to work training, writing CV and safety planning. The outreach worker also helps the victim with dealing with other agencies and getting the services and information they need, for example legal advice. Support can be by telephone or where appropriate and safe in person.

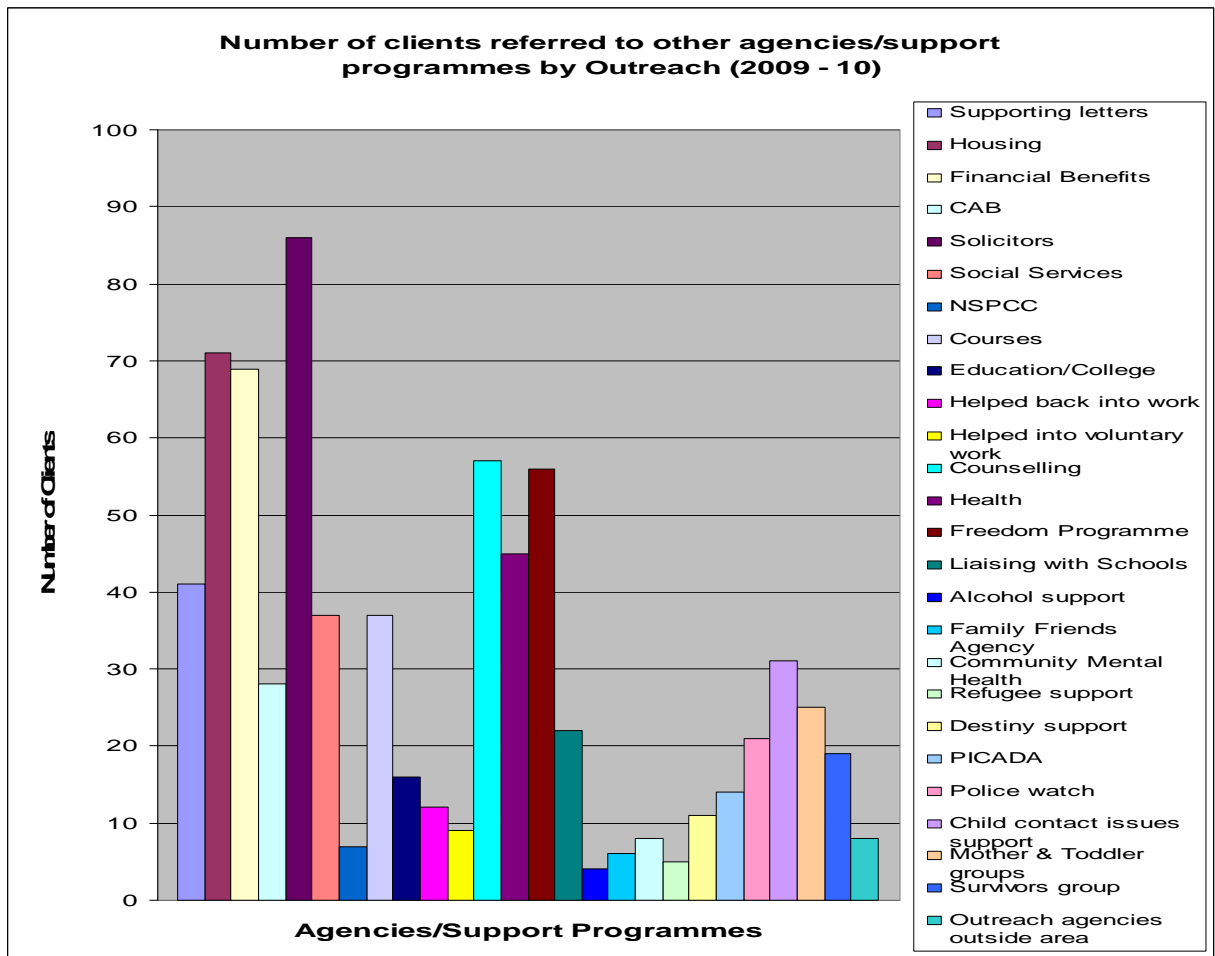
The outreach worker can also assist with accessing a safe place/refuge for the victim and children within or outside Berkshire East area.

### **Outreach Support Service - outcomes**

In 2009 -10 the BESBWA outreach service worked with over 200 victims to achieve their goals of independence. Some of these referrals were following the ending of their IDVA support therefore providing continuing support where needed. Of the 218 referrals:

- 168 clients engaged with the support service
- 265 children involved

All clients that engaged with the outreach service each received an individual safety and support plan together with emotional support from the outreach worker. The following table also shows other agencies or support programme the clients were engaged with following the outreach worker's referral:



Some successful outcomes from the 2009 -10 cohort are as follows:

- 169 clients had there risk assessment levels reduced
- 144 left their abuser
- 10 clients still receiving ongoing support
- 9 repeat incidences of domestic abuse

The service continues to grow and there is an unmet need for a male outreach worker to provide support to male victims.

#### Client B – Outreach Support case study

Client 'B' originally came to Refuge in November 2007 until January 2008 whilst alleging fleeing domestic violence from her husband.

After leaving Refuge, 'B' returned to her husband but requested to be included on the outreach programme until she felt she no longer needed the support.

In June 2010, 'B' contacted the outreach service requesting support as her husband was using threatening behaviour. In August following a further altercation 'B's husband was charged with assault by beating and remanded

Following a risk assessment on 'B', the case was referred to the MARAC. At the MARAC after sharing information among the agencies it was agreed both parties were both victim and offender.

'B' is still engaged with the outreach service and through the support of the outreach worker is now attending BESBWA Freedom programme and is also attending counselling. The outreach worker also supported 'B' with returning to work and attended a meeting with 'B' and the council to discuss housing options. The outreach worker also attended court with 'B' when her husband's case was held.

Both parties have now agreed to divorce. An occupational order was granted in favour of the husband as accommodation was for over 60's and 'B' is much younger. Through the support provided by the outreach worker 'B' has moved to new accommodation and has also returned to work.

### Children and Young People

Children are often the unrecognised sufferers of domestic abuse. Where domestic abuse is prevalent in a household the exposure to domestic abuse can have an impact in a number of ways on the children.

They are at risk of long-term developmental problems and there is an increased risk to becoming victims and perpetrators of violence themselves. Children also do not escape injury and are three to nine times more likely to be injured and abused – either directly or while trying to protect their parent. In addition the physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by their parent can have a negative impact on that parent's ability to look after their children.

These concerns have been recognised by BESBWA and they have established a Children Services Department together with their own Children's Centre 'Sunbeam'.

The Children Services Department has a team of four practitioners including Children and Families Liaison Officer, Early Years Practitioner and an Activities Co-ordinator. They provide a wide range of activities and support for the children and the parents to participate in:

- Mother and toddler groups
- Parenting clinics
- Baby clinics
- After school clubs
- Play therapy
- Homework club
- Support groups
- Activity nights
- Healthy living workshops
- PICADA programme

Many of the activities and support referred to above are held at BESBWA own Children's Centre 'Sunbeam'. The centre has enabled Children's Support Workers to undertake group work, activities and therapeutic direct work on a

weekly basis and provide consistent and continuous support in a welcoming environment for the children.

Prevention is a key component in tackling domestic abuse and the Children Services team have produced workshops that they deliver in schools to pupils to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the impact of abusive relationships.

The Children Services Department is registered with Ofsted in promoting and monitoring excellence and they are also members of the National Children's Bureau, the Children's Rights Alliance, the Social Care Association, the Council for Voluntary Services and the Berkshire Association for Clubs for Young People.

#### Client A – Eastern European case study

Client 'A' was referred to BESBWA IDVA service following a MARAC referral by the police. This was the first reported incident to the police (June 2010) following her partner's attempt to strangle the client although was not an isolated incident. Her partner (perpetrator) had been arrested and charged with threats to kill and assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Client A, a Polish national only spoke Polish and had twins of 15 months. She felt isolated as she wasn't allowed any friends and was financially dependent on her partner who controlled all the finances.

Assigned the support of the IDVA specialising in Eastern European communities, on their first meeting the IDVA found 'A' distressed and confused. Her landlord had asked her to leave her home and although registered as self employed she didn't work and had no access to money.

The IDVA undertook a risk assessment, assessed as high risk and put safety plan in place and liaised with the police to put safety measures in place such as panic alarm and sig flag.

The IDVA explained the court process, as her partner had been remanded and applied for bail and also liaised with the court, keeping the client updated.

Barriers that the client came up against included

- Culture
- Felt ashamed she had to contact police and blamed herself for everything that had happened. She decided not to support the prosecution.
- Social Services – 'A' went to see Social Services but only option offered to her was to take her children into care and pay for a ticket for her return to Poland.
- Job Centre - was directed by Social Services to job centre and given a phone number to call. Each time she called they put phone down as they couldn't understand her.
- Housing - went to council re housing options , they couldn't do anything and directed her to Social Services

By now 'A' was exhausted, felt powerless and didn't know what to do or where to go.

With continued support from the IDVA's 'A' went back to her accountant to look into self employment status. 'A' found employment, and applied for the Working Family tax credit and housing benefits. She opened a bank account in her name and received Child Benefit into her own account. In addition on the advice of the IDVA the client removed her partner's name from the tenancy agreement.

The IDVA tried to refer 'A' to other agencies for support and help with the children but each time came across the language barrier and was told the agency didn't have polish speaking staff.

Even without 'A's support the CPS continued with the criminal proceedings. The perpetrator was released on bail but in August 2010 he committed a further horrendous assault on 'A'.

The IDVA continued to support 'A' and arranged a joint visit to the GP, as following the latest assault 'A' couldn't sleep, was having nightmares and was finding it harder to cope with the twins. The GP prescribed anti-depressants.

With the IDVA's support 'A' decided to support the criminal proceedings and gave a Victim Impact Statement. The IDVA also liaised with a local solicitor firm regarding safe child contact.

Apart from the outcomes already described above other positive outcomes for 'A' and her children are:

- 'A' has been re-housed and lives on her own with her children (she still has a panic alarm installed in her property)
- Has made new friends and she feels better
- Has been encouraged by the IDVA to learn English and attend English classes
- 'A' has been referred by the IDVA to BESBWA Children's Services to attend parent and toddler group
- Risk has lowered and the risk assessment shows 'A' is not frightened anymore
- Safe child contact arrangements in place and going well
- No further domestic abuse incidents have been reported
- 'A' and children are happier

## Resettlement and Refuge

Refuges/Safe houses have an important role to play in the protection of those at risk from domestic abuse. BESBWA have three safe houses across East Berkshire providing temporary accommodation for up to 14 families at any one time. In 2009 - 10, 67 women and 62 children were supported in these safe houses.

Each safe house has a dedicated key worker. When a client first comes to the house a safety support plan is put in place. The key worker is available to provide daily support and advice and undertakes regular one to one sessions with their clients. Safety planning and support planning is core to enabling the clients to focus on recovery, future outcomes and safe transition back into the community.

Through the work of the resettlement programme, 22 women and their children were supported in 2009 - 10 in leaving the refuges. The resettlement officer supports families during and after their move especially as this is a very unsettled, isolated and insecure time for them. This is not the end of the involvement with the client as they can remain on the resettlement programme until they feel confident and empowered to live their lives independently.

### Women's Safety Worker

BESBWA has one Women's Safety Worker supporting the current and ex-partners of perpetrators that have gone through the criminal justice system and who have been sentenced to attend Probation's Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP).

The Women's Safety Officer offers crucial support to the victim when her partner/ex-partner attends the IDAP. This is because the risk to the victim may increase while the perpetrator confronts issues from his past and learns to take responsibility for his own abusive behaviour.

The Women's Safety officer liaises closely with probation to identify emerging risks and monitor the perpetrator's behaviour. She also attends the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (a strategic statutory body that manages violent offenders in the community) monthly meetings to discuss high risk domestic violence cases.

Many of the victims will stay in their abusive relationship for longer with the hope that the IDAP will change their partner's behaviour and the Women's Safety officer has to manage realistic expectations for the victims. She will also signpost the victim to other support services for her and her children.

The support for a victim is approximately 20 months. This support is provided from when the perpetrator is sentenced to 6 months after the IDAP has been completed. However, the support can also be for a longer period especially if the perpetrator is suspended from the programme and restarted. When a perpetrator is removed from the IDAP the Women's Safety Worker will refer the victim to the IDVA or Outreach service for continued support.

In 2009/10, the Women's Safety Workers case load consisted of the following:

- Of 64 referrals 27 victims took up the support
- 13 referrals to other support services
- 30 one to one meetings

### IDAP

This is a 28 week group programme provided by the probation service for men only.

The programme aims to help men understand why they use violence and the effects on their partners and children. The programme also aims to help men learn non-controlling behaviour strategies in order to prevent future violence and abuse. This programme is mandatory and the perpetrator has to sign a statement to confirm that he agrees to his partner/ex-partner having contact with the Women's Safety Worker. This role therefore differs from the IDVA as the perpetrator is aware of the support offered to his partner/ex-partner.

### 24 hour help line

BESBWA have their own 24 hour crisis help line for victims of domestic abuse and their family and friends to contact. The help line is staffed on a rota basis by the BESBWA team and they do not have any one dedicated resource. In 2009 – 10 an estimated 10,400 calls were received and actioned. For each call answered a risk assessment will be attempted to be done over the phone and the client then referred to the appropriate support, this being either BESBWA IDVA, Outreach, Refuge support or to other agencies or appropriate areas.

### Operational

There are a range of operational activities that contribute to the success of and smooth running of BESBWA. These include the following:

Training Programme – delivering internal training to new recruits and volunteers and training to external community and statutory partners. There has been a significant increase in request for BESBWA to deliver external training and they have been extremely successful in delivering training to local GPs, a profession which nationally is hard to engage with.

Freedom Programme – a free confidential support group designed to give victims of domestic abuse the chance to talk about, and understand their experiences. In 2009 -10, 51 women attended this programme.

Fundraising/event management – with a dedicated fundraising manager this role is crucial to sourcing new funding streams and managing fundraising activities.

HR and Learning and Development activities – recruitment, retention and provision of HR support to all employees and volunteers.

Administration Manager – providing office support, IT support, collation of data and statistics.

Finance Manager – providing accountability and scrutiny of BESBWA financial accounts.

Volunteers – In 2009/10 over 60 volunteers provided their valuable time supporting BESBWA through a range of activities including; event

management, translation, play therapy support, outreach support, gardening, fundraising and much more.

## Part Six – Working in partnership

As already mentioned, a multi agency co-ordinated response is vital to tackling domestic abuse. In the area covered by BESBWA there are three MARACs and two SDVCs providing effective and necessary partnership response to domestic abuse.

### Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

In Berkshire East a MARAC is held once a month for each of the three authorities – Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead and South Bucks.

There have been significant improvements to the MARACs in Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead since the appointment of a new MARAC chair in 2009. This has resulted in better engagement from other statutory agencies, the outcome of which has been increases in identification and referrals of high risk domestic abuse victims to the MARACs (especially in Slough). Due to these improvements the demands on the IDVA service have increased dramatically over the past year.

Area	MARAC Reviews 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2008 – 30 June 2009	MARAC Repeats	% MARAC Repeat Victims	MARAC Reviews 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2009 – 30 June 2010	MARAC Repeats	% MARAC Repeat Victims
Slough	29	2	7.8%	163	25	15.3%
RBWM	49	4	8.2%	49	3	6.1%
South Bucks	12	1	9%	19	3	15.8%
Total	90	7		231	31	

Jackie Phillips, MARAC chair for the three MARACs in Berkshire East (Bracknell Forest, Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead) has this to say about the importance of the support provided by BESBWA IDVA service and how without this engagement the MARAC is ineffective.

*'I have been Chairing the MARAC for 16 months and have been able to see the true benefits of the IDVA and outreach services from Women's Aid.*

*Whilst the service was fully funded the IDVA was able to support all high risk referrals to them. This meant that the MARAC was provided a full update on all victims regardless of whether they were accepting support and the IDVA would feedback the actions that had come from the MARAC to all victims. The IDVA would continue to support the victim through the court system. An IDVA supported victim is much more likely to attend court than one that isn't. The*

*range of supporting services available to a victim through women's aid is invaluable in maintaining engagement with a victim. Following the court process the Outreach service will then take up the support. This allows the victims who needed continued support and guidance to help them move on with their lives. Without these services the victim is more likely to return to the perpetrator and become a repeat victim. This is also generally true of those who decline support from the IDVA in the initial stages.*

*Due to funding shortfalls in the budget provided to women's aid by RBWM particularly, the IDVA service has been unable to provide support to any victims from this area who falls into the female white British population. This has meant at MARAC 75% of our victims were not being supported by the IDVA. The affect of this is that the MARAC does not receive up to date information about the victims' views or their current circumstances. The default position is for police to support the victim but this is a limited service due to the volume of victims dealt with by police. The unsupported victims are referred to Victim Support but their support is limited to initial contact and signposting to other agencies one of which would be Women's Aid! They do not have the resources to provide ongoing support. I believe the figures are that victims supported by the IDVA were less likely to be a repeat victim, something like 60%.*

*There are two key agencies that make my MARAC work, the IDVA and children's service. The other agencies are important but we can function if those agencies are unable to attend. If the IDVA was not present or not supporting victims the MARAC is particularly ineffective as the engagement with victim is much less and therefore information is a much poorer quality. Without information it is difficult to produce a meaningful action plan. Children's services are crucial for the child protection issues but also play a crucial role in keeping the victim safe. Their contact with the victim is extremely helpful when engagement with other agencies is difficult. Having both these agencies working with a victim can be very powerful and extremely effective'.*

#### Client L – Substance Misuse case study

Client 'L' was a victim of domestic abuse by two perpetrators at different times.

It's normally assumed that a perpetrator of domestic abuse is a partner. This is not always the case and the first perpetrator of 'L' was her son. The second perpetrator was her son's friend. In both cases alcohol dependency by both the client and perpetrators had a big part to play in the abuse, which occurred when the perpetrators and/or 'L' had been drinking.

'L' was the subject of a MARAC referral (high risk) following the abuse from her son. The specialist IDVA dealing with drugs and alcohol misuse was assigned to support 'L'. Successful action planning at the MARAC reduced the risk to 'L'.

'L' then became involved in a relationship with her son's friend. He became abusive and 'L' was referred back to MARAC as a repeat victim albeit with a different

perpetrator. The perpetrator was prosecuted and he pleaded guilty when the case was heard at the SDVC. He was given a restraining order for two years.

Supporting clients of domestic abuse is never straightforward but as in the case of 'L' there were many complex issues to deal with:

- 'L' had been in numerous abusive relationships
- 'L' had previously received a supervision order and a six week tag for possessing an offensive weapon in public, although 'L' by an ex-partners defence was this was self protection following an assault.
- 'L' has disclosed that her father was abusive to her and her mother when she was a child.

With the IDVA's support 'L' engaged well and with help of her GP and Alcoholics Anonymous 'L' has reduced her alcohol intake.

Some other successful outcomes for 'L' from the support provided by the IDVA are:

- 'L' attended the Freedom programme and enjoyed making new friends that were not within the drug and alcohol circle
- 'L' attended drug and alcohol support groups
- Awareness to other agencies of this client and the complex issues
- 'L' will be attending a specialist support group for substance misuse clients which is currently being set up by the specialist alcohol and drug IDVA
- Successful prosecution

Although there have been a number of successful outcomes for 'L', along the way there has been some problems to overcome. Originally 'L' wanted a Refuge space. However, very few Refuges in the country provide this escape for victims who have alcohol or drugs misuse problems. They will also not accept victims if they are working with probation or been on a tag. Therefore the option of a Refuge is not a possibility for these victims.

When IDVA support ends the client is transferred to the outreach service. In the case of 'L', due to staffing issues the outreach service was unable to start straight away and because of the lack of continuity of support and the time frame 'L' declined any further support. Especially due to her alcohol dependency 'L' would have benefited from this continued support.

### Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)

Berkshire East has two accredited SDVCs. One based in Slough and covers Bracknell Forest, Slough and RBWM, the other in Wycombe and covers Buckinghamshire.

In 2009 – 10 BESBWA IDVA service supported 248 clients involved in the SDVC and attended 40 trials supporting clients through this court process.

### Thames Valley Domestic Abuse Forum

BESBWA is a core member of the Thames Valley Domestic Abuse Forum. The forum is a multi-agency, strategic level forum, which aims to provide leadership and focus in dealing with domestic abuse across the Thames

Valley, through developing appropriate links between all agencies. The forum is chaired by Thames Valley Police with members from a range of statutory and voluntary organisations including CPS, Thames Valley Probation Service, HM Courts Service, local authority Chief Executive and Domestic Violence Co-ordinators, Victim Support Services, Community Safety Manager, MARAC Chair, Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

The forum meet on a quarterly basis and their aim is to:

- ensure the provision of multi agency support services to all victims of domestic abuse across the Thames Valley. It aims to improve the quality of services to those directly affected by domestic abuse, in particular children and young people, by reducing recurrence and risk.
- reduce the rates of attrition in domestic abuse cases and increase the number of offences brought to justice.
- monitor and evaluate service delivery under the Ministry of Justice co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse.

## Part Seven – Cost of Domestic Abuse

In 2004, Sylvia Walby<sup>1</sup> researched what the cost of domestic abuse was nationally for the Government. From this research the Home Office produced a ready reckoner tool estimating the local cost of domestic and sexual violence. Below are comparisons of the estimated national and local costs. The costs are derived from national estimates of costs published by Järvinen et al (2008) and given by the proportion of the national population resident in the local area. The local population size used for this exercise is the mid 2009 population for the 16-59 year olds.

*The local costs do not include additional costs from stalking, female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based violence and forced marriage.*

<b>Agency</b>	<b>National Costs</b>	<b>Local Costs Slough Pop: 84,300</b>	<b>Local Costs RBWM Pop: 88,200</b>	<b>Local Costs South Bucks Pop: 39,100</b>
Criminal Justice System: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Police</li> <li>- Prosecution</li> <li>- Magistrates courts</li> <li>- Crown courts</li> <li>- Jury service</li> <li>- Legal aid</li> <li>- Non legal-aid defence</li> <li>- Probation</li> <li>- Prison service</li> <li>- Criminal Injuries compensation board</li> </ul>	£1bn	£4,371,407	£4,573,642	£2,027,544
Physical & Mental Health Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GP including travel and associated costs</li> <li>- Prescriptions</li> <li>- Other primary health care</li> <li>- Hospitals</li> <li>- Ambulances</li> <li>- Mental health services</li> </ul>	£1.4bn	£6,340,221	£7,261,299	£3,219,011
Social Services: Care and support of children	£0.25bn	£823,221	£861,306	£381,826
Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temporary housing (local authorities)</li> <li>- Housing benefit</li> <li>- Refuges</li> <li>- Set up new homes – furnishings etc</li> <li>- Re-possession costs</li> </ul>	£0.16bn	£20,072,473	£21,001,033	£3,310,008
Civil Legal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Injunctions</li> <li>- Legal disentanglement of relationship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Divorce</li> <li>o Separation related action concerning children and finance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	£0.3bn			
Employment – Lost of economic output sustained by employer and employee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lost days at work due to injuries, fear and anxiety</li> <li>- Time seeking help and seeing doctors and lawyers</li> <li>- Lost productivity and promotion</li> <li>- Lost jobs – poor work performance/need to move locality</li> <li>- Disrupt education and training programmes</li> </ul>	£2.7bn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £2.1bn female victims</li> <li>- £0.6bn male victims</li> </ul>			
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£5.81bn</b>	<b>£32,207,321</b>	<b>£33,697,340</b>	<b>£14,338,390</b>
Human & Emotional: Cost borne by the victims, included in order that its impact is not ignored in public policy. Methodology to estimate is based on the public's 'willingness to pay' to avoid such trauma.	£17bn	£102,831,432	£107,588,758	£47,635,243
<b>Total</b>	<b>£23bn</b>	<b>£135,038,753</b>	<b>£141,286,098</b>	<b>£61,973,633</b>
<b>Total Overall Local Costs</b>		<b>£338,298,484</b>		

## Part Eight – Findings and Conclusions

This report has demonstrated the effective multi agency working of this charity. It has evidenced how BESBWA are playing a pivotal role in addressing the needs of the victim and in tackling domestic abuse.

Of the 458 IDVA clients, 329 clients had their risk levels reduced, 318 left their abuser and there were only 19 incidents of repeat offences. Of the 169 outreach clients 144 left their abuser and there were only 9 incidents of repeat offences. They are playing a major part in reducing the risk to the victim and in ending violence against women and men.

But there are many challenges that remain for BESBWA and one of their key ones is the sustainability of funding. Injection of Government IDVA funding has been on a yearly basis. Local areas have experienced financial cutbacks including those implemented by the Government to reduce the national deficit. This is having a major impact on the continued funding for IDVAs and the other services BESBWA offer and the sustainability of these local services are at real risk.

This is compounded further by the gap in the current IDVA service and support at the MARACs. Due to funding restrictions only victims that need specialist IDVA support are receiving this crisis intervention. If you do not fall into the category of Eastern European; Black Minority & Ethnic; Forced Marriage/ Honour Based Violence, Drugs and Alcohol or Male then as a high risk victim you are missing out on vital support needed and are in danger of continued abuse that may put your life at risk.

The outreach service is also an area that needs to evolve. There is no specialist outreach service so no longer term support can be offered. What will happen to future clients who need crisis interventions? Does this explain why a quarter of outreach referrals did not engage with the service?

The minimum requirement is that the current level of service is maintained, this is without taking account of the growing demands on these already vastly overstretched services and the developments needed. We must look at the service as holistic; we must include the support for the children, resettlement, training and raising awareness into the equation.

BESBWA are trained specialist and experts in their field and are clearly achieving results and positive outcomes that are contributing to victims gaining their independence and leading productive lives.

If this service diminishes we need to ask the questions 'who will safeguard these vulnerable victims and their children?' 'How much will it continue to cost local areas, agencies and Government if we let this valuable service reduce or disappear?' BESBWA are providing the service that is required now, it is at a fraction of the cost that has been estimated it cost the country and local areas in continuing to tackle this abuse, and more not less injection of funding is required if we want to continue the drive to eradicate this horrendous crime for

both female and male victims and counter the adverse effect it has on their children and their development.

## Annex A

### Methodology

The data for this report comes from a wide range of sources and covers different periods of time. However where possible this report uses the most up to date data that was available – in most cases this is from the year 2009/10.

The data set includes:

- Details of recorded DV incident – Thames Valley Police
- Details of victims accessing BESBWA services – supplied by BESBWA
- MARAC data – with approval for inclusion from MARAC chairs
- Mid year population estimates 2009.
- VAWG Ready Reckoner tool – Home Office