

Background - The Societal Costs of Domestic Violence

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. More often it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim.

The direct financial costs of domestic violence to our society are huge, as are the health and psychosocial impacts on victims and society.

In 2004/5 there were more than 21,000 domestic violence offences in England and Wales, accounting for 16% of all violent crime, and it is well documented that domestic violence is chronically under-reported. Domestic violence affects people of all ages, genders & faiths and is present across all socio-economic groups.

On average, a woman will be assaulted 35 times by her partner or ex-partner before she goes to the police. According to the Home Office, two British women die every week, and 30 men each year, at the hands of their partner or ex-partner. The Home Office estimates the costs of domestic violence at £23bn a year, of which £3bn falls to public services.

Children, as well as being direct victims of domestic violence, are often subject to the "hidden harm" related to domestic abuse such as emotional neglect, substance misuse and psychosocial problems. 52% of child protection cases involve domestic violence.

In Milton Keynes, the latest figures show:

- An average of **431** offences were recorded per month during the period April –September 06
- An average of **14** Domestic Crimes & Crime Related Incidents per day
- **6.6%** of total crime recorded by the BCU was domestic related.

Current Resources

The Thames Valley Partnership evaluation of MK Lighthouse published in March 2006 highlighted that there had been a proven, sustained demand for MK Lighthouse's services since its inception.

However, its effectiveness has been limited by the insecure nature of its funding. The MK Lighthouse team structure has altered according to which partner agencies have been able to obtain agreement and funding to employ staff to work within Lighthouse.

There is no secure funding for this service as of 1st April 2007.

Projected operational costs for the service for 07/08 are £259,500.

Commitment in terms of staff from MKPCT, Victim Support and Housing Services remains and the **projected shortfall is £211, 250**. Please see attached budget and shortfall paper.

The Trustees of MKWA no longer consider it tenable to make further applications for voluntary sector funding for an established project. Please see appendix 1 - Statement from MKWA. Pump priming funding from Thames Valley Police and the Community Safety Partnership has come to an end.

One suggested proposal is to divide the mainstreamed costs of MK Lighthouse service provision as a percentage share between Milton Keynes Council Learning and Development (30%) and Neighbourhood Services (30%), Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust (25%), The Voluntary Sector (10%) and Thames Valley Police (5%)

MK Lighthouse Management Board MK Lighthouse Business Case

Issues

The evaluation of MK Lighthouse published in March 2006, was able to collate some data on outcomes for clients, including those separated from partner, those rehoused or moved to a refuge and those seeking legal proceedings but little that clearly showed the outcomes of the service as a whole.

The evaluation does highlight the significant outputs, including the number of victims risk assessed, referred into other services, number receiving specialist legal and housing advice and most importantly, those receiving advocacy and emotional support, an intervention that is acknowledged as staff intensive by services who have contact with victims of domestic violence.

The absence of clear outcome measures, performance indicators and service level agreements applied to MK Lighthouse is of major concern to current partners. Criticism of MK Lighthouse in this matter would seem unfair in the light that only one key outcome measure was ever applied to the service: that of reducing repeat offences in domestic violence. However, the question remains as to why this issue had not been addressed in previous years.

This issue should be addressed by the management board & key partners as a condition of any future funding. MK Lighthouse, in line with other local domestic violence services, must continue to provide best value services and contribute robust data collection, information & intelligence sharing and have the outcome data to support evaluation and future funding applications.

These measures should ideally sit within an overarching domestic violence strategy for Milton Keynes, tied into the strategic objectives of MKC and the Community Safety Strategy.

Operationally, MK Lighthouse is highly regarded by professionals, particularly by those who refer into the service. Client feedback and evaluation shows service user satisfaction.

Strategically, MK Lighthouse has been subject to criticism for not providing robust outcome data. Again, this criticism would seem unfair in the light of the single outcome measure applied.

However, there has been a recorded increase in reports of domestic violence and a 3.4% increase in repeat offences in 05/06. This could be as a result of increased confidence in reporting domestic violence to the Police and other agencies, as well as the pro-active arrest policy of the Police.

Changes in the way DV incidents are recorded and counted (a change from a 6 month to 12 month repeat window) may also be related.

Whether or not MK Lighthouse is proved to be effective at tackling repeat domestic violence incidents, the increase in reports, offences and the evaluation show that there is an obvious need for a victim focused service in Milton Keynes.

Currently, MK Lighthouse is the only open access service for both male and female victims of domestic violence in Milton Keynes. MK Women's Aid provides a helpline and refuge, as part of a national voluntary network, working solely with female victims. Thames Valley Police provide a perpetrator focused Domestic Violence Unit, which refers a large number of victims to MK Lighthouse, but are unable to provide ongoing support to victims.

As MK Lighthouse receive an average of 30 new referrals per month and has worked with over 800 victims with an associated 1,000 children to date; around 25 of which

MK Lighthouse Management Board MK Lighthouse Business Case

were on the Child Protection Register at time of parents referral, it would appear that it makes a significant impact as a domestic violence service.

Taking the example of Models of Care for Substance Misuse, (National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse: Models of Care for the treatment of adult drug misusers 2002) having a local service to co-ordinate the care pathway of a person presenting with complex needs, which supports them through the stages of recovery from drug misuse, has been shown to enhance retention of clients in service, improve outcomes and reduce costs.

A reduction in duplication of interventions from the significant number of agencies that can be involved in a clients care plan, further reduces costs through savings in staff time.

If applied to domestic violence, the complex issues experienced by a person living with abuse, including legal, financial, health & medical, social and emotional problems also often require victims to access a significant number of services in order to resolve and deal with their difficulties.

Therefore, the benefits of a dedicated local domestic violence service such as MK Lighthouse that provides client advocacy and co-ordinates the care pathway through a similar process of recovery from inter-relational abuse would apparently yield like for like best value results in terms of a reduction in duplication and savings in staff time.

The Local Costs of Domestic Violence

As with the national picture, it is difficult to obtain a definitive figure on the costs of domestic violence to the local economy. The following statements, provided by partner agencies, are an illustration of projected costs and impact on services of supporting victims of domestic violence in the absence of a local service.

“MK Primary Care Trust allocates 0.2 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) Health Visitor resources to MK Lighthouse and many other Health Visitors (HV’s) also have contact with clients who present with domestic violence issues. When appropriate and with the agreement of clients, they are referred to MK Lighthouse.

HV’s audit the number of clients with domestic violence issues on their caseload and the HV audit 05/06 shows that HV’s are aware of approximately 350 families across MK living with domestic abuse.

If MK Lighthouse did not exist there would be a need for more support from HV’s to undertake individual visiting and advice. It is very difficult to predict, but I would estimate that in addition to our current Domestic Violence allocation of 0.2 WTE within MK Lighthouse, a further 0.2 WTE HV time is currently used across the service to support clients with domestic violence issues.”

Christine Thompson

Senior Manager, Professional Lead Health Visiting & School Nursing (Children's Lead)

“I understand from MK Women’s Aid that should MK Lighthouse be forced to close, then the demand for general advice and assistance would be transferred onto the women’s refuge. This would cause problems as, since 2003, staff at the refuge has been primarily funded from the Supporting People budget which pays for housing support services. This funding is currently ring-fenced and pays for advice and support only to women living at the refuge – it cannot be used to support community based services provided by MK Lighthouse such as telephone help-lines, counselling and general advice to the public.”

MK Lighthouse Management Board
MK Lighthouse Business Case

Tracey Chapman
Supporting People Co-ordinator, Milton Keynes Council

“Victim Support Oxon & Bucks provides the equivalent of a full time post for MK Lighthouse funded from April 2006 over 3 years by The Big Lottery Fund and indeed we are delighted to be part of a multi-agency team. We also believe that the current management sits well with the project rather than being 'owned' by any one agency.

Were MK Lighthouse to close then the posts would continue but be based within Victim Support. However, I believe MK Lighthouse is ideal in that the demographic make-up of Milton Keynes suits this kind of advocacy work.

I would go one step further and state that agencies should be supporting this valuable and innovative initiative. Domestic violence is an issue for all of us and my agency completely supports the multi-agency approach. Although we cannot commit funding to forestall any closure we are delighted to commit staff”

Joanna Fenstermacher
CEO, Victim Support Oxon & Bucks (Chair Oxford Domestic Violence Forum)

“MK Lighthouse supports many parents whose children attend Milton Keynes Early Intervention Centre.

Domestic violence is unfortunately a common feature in the lives of a majority of our families, both currently and historically.

The “Freedom Programme”, offered by MK Lighthouse, in particular is invaluable in seeking to break dysfunctional patterns and change unhelpful ways of thinking.

Through discussion with parents/carers at the Centre I know they find the input of MK Lighthouse very helpful and that it makes a real difference to the way they view themselves, their choices and their relationships.

We wholeheartedly support future secure funding for MK Lighthouse and its vital role within Milton Keynes.

Linda Hoggan
Centre Manager, Milton Keynes Early Intervention Centre

Each victim we speak to is informed of MK Lighthouse and the services they offer. It is difficult to say what impact MK Lighthouse has as a service, however I would estimate that up to two officer days per week are saved as a result of MK Lighthouse intervention.

When I joined the Unit in February 2005 MK Lighthouse was still in its first year and we did not refer to the service as often as we do now. My officers were frequently out of the office for long periods of time trying to resolve issues for victims which did not really fall within our remit. Other agencies would not pick these clients up because they needed a multi-agency approach. The Lighthouse has very much helped to resolve that issue and meant that we can concentrate on dealing with High Risk victims and offenders.

Sergeant Paula Searle
TVP Domestic Violence Unit, Bletchley.

MK Lighthouse Management Board
MK Lighthouse Business Case

“The Milton Keynes Police Basic Command Unit provides a Domestic Violence Unit (DVU). The unit, in line with Force policy, are focused on dealing with perpetrators. The DVU supports victims by signposting them to MK Lighthouse, which enables them to make a single contact and saves a substantial amount of officers’ time which would previously have been tied up with making contacts with numerous agencies.

The DVU estimates that between April 2004 and March 2006 about 90 full referrals were made and there are 14 open cases which have been referred between April 2006 and July 2006. It is difficult to estimate how much officer time is saved by the project but the DVU manager estimates that in previous years about two officer days per week were spent providing support to victims, equating to between £10,000 and £15,000 per year. This victim service is one that Thames Valley Police could not now provide and is the responsibility of other agencies. Thames Valley Police values and supports the work of MK Lighthouse and will continue to do so but only with the continued full support of our partners”.

Colin Black
Chief Inspector Operational Support Milton Keynes BCU

“The majority of enquiries and referrals for people aged 18 years and over wishing to access MK Council’s Adult Social Care Service are dealt with by the Adult Social Care Access Team (ASCAT). This team deals with around 150 referrals per week with around 80% relating to people aged 65 years and over. ASCAT’s Customer Liaison Officers have advised me that they refer on no more than an average of 1 person a month to MK Lighthouse. This suggests to me that most people with domestic violence issues are referring themselves direct to MK Lighthouse or being referred by other agencies. I am strongly of the view that if MK Lighthouse was closed some of these people would be referred to ASCAT. It is very difficult however to accurately quantify this, but I know that ASCAT would not be able to give people the intensity of support provided by MK Lighthouse.

Most of MK Lighthouse’s referrals appear to be younger people with children so there is a much greater potential savings impact for Children’s Services. However, if ASCAT picked up 10 hours work per month, should MK Lighthouse close and a mid-range social worker dealt with this, a very conservative estimate of cost would be £131 per month or £1572 per year.”

John Heseltine
Social Work Manager, Older People & Hospital Social Work

“Milton Keynes Children’s Social Care pays for the MK Lighthouse Manager’s salary and the costs for all IT etc, which is a substantial package. One of the positives from our point of view is that it is a resource we informally refer to almost daily. We send out MK Lighthouse leaflets with all our letters which covers issues of domestic violence, so that people have a place to go that is less intrusive for them rather than the statutory services we offer.

The response to this is not quantifiable however, as we are unaware how many of our signposting referrals actually make it to the Lighthouse service. There is no formal feedback from them regarding these figures.

Another real positive is the Freedom Group Work Programme. The feedback we receive is that it clearly gives the participants the opportunity to explore their own

MK Lighthouse Management Board
MK Lighthouse Business Case

emotions. If this service was bought direct from a supplier I am unsure how much it would cost independently.

Some of the limitations of the service from the operational managers' views were; there are no home visits, this limits the interaction with families, some women are unable to be proactive and go and visit the project. There is no men's group or perpetrators programme. Children's Services would very much like to have a men's programme running as it is one of the biggest areas of need, there are no opportunities in this area for such work."

Vikki Blakeston
Manager Referral and Assessment Team, Children's Services.

"Milton Keynes Council Housing Needs Department allocate the equivalent of 0.4 whole time staff to provide housing advice and options at MK Lighthouse for those who are affected by domestic violence. We fully support the idea of providing an holistic service for those experiencing domestic violence rather than just receiving housing advice. Previous practice entailed referring on to other agencies to assist with security measures, legal advice or ongoing support, all of which is now provided at MK Lighthouse.

It is a much more appropriate medium to have an offsite resource where clients can receive multi-agency support in a more focused way. Listening to comments from my team MK Lighthouse provides a supportive environment, which empowers improved self-esteem and choice.

I am sure that the reduction in approaches to Milton Keynes Council Homelessness Department from victims of domestic violence is as a result of self-referral to MK Lighthouse. Closure of MK Lighthouse would therefore have an impact upon this service."

Diane Jeavons
Senior Housing Needs Advisor, Milton Keynes Council.

"MK Emergency Department does not currently collate figures on domestic violence for the same reasons that we are unable to quantify the number of alcohol related attendances. Patients may book in with an injury, however it is not stated that there was any violence recorded on the notes as there are currently no specific data codes for us to detail and trace back.

Whilst we do not have any direct involvement in MK Lighthouse we believe that it offers an invaluable service to clients and other agencies, one that we at the Acute Trust would not have the resources to provide ourselves. MK Lighthouse offers the kind of support needed by vulnerable people and their families that is not available anywhere else in the community as a one stop shop. Domestic violence is a high risk area where clients require a service to work with them in partnership with other agencies to ensure their safety. The cost of providing this service through other means would be astronomical."

Julie Orr
Matron, Emergency Department, MK General Hospital

**MK Lighthouse Management Board
MK Lighthouse Business Case**

Conclusions

MK Lighthouse provides a service to victims of domestic violence in Milton Keynes that is operationally well regarded by professionals and service users, based on the best practice “one-stop-shop” model.

Victims require a multi-agency approach that has obvious cost implications for a range of statutory and non-statutory services. It may therefore be reasonable to assume that costs savings can be made with the use of a dedicated local service that provides advocacy and case management for victims, which reduces duplication of interventions.

Recommendations:

- A) To mainstream total funding from within MKC and Partnership Agencies
- B) Funding should be granted on the condition that MK Lighthouse Management Board in consultation with key partners develops a series of robust outcome measures and performance indicators. These may include quantitative and qualitative measure such as:
 - Number of repeat presentations by clients within 6 or 12 months
 - Numbers made safe in own home (requires definition)
 - Numbers of associated children prevented from being placed on Child Protection register or removed from register.
 - Number of victims who feel safer as a result of MK Lighthouse intervention
- C) MK Lighthouse Management Board to assume strategic responsibility for the service until a clearer management arrangement has been identified.
- D) That the issue of management of MK Lighthouse is discussed and resolved. L&D do not believe they are the most appropriate directorate for a domestic violence service to sit under. Several options highlighted below have been forwarded and require exploration.
 - a) MK Women’s Aid to assume management responsibility for MK Lighthouse
 - b) A more appropriate directorate to be identified within MKC
 - c) An appropriate Partnership agency to assume management responsibility
 - d) MK Lighthouse to apply for charitable status under the management of a Board of Trustees

**MK Lighthouse Management Board
MK Lighthouse Business Case**

Appendix 1

Milton Keynes Women's Aid

Milton Keynes Lighthouse – Position Statement of MKWA, October 2006

Milton Keynes Women's Aid was founded in 1976 and until the opening of MK Lighthouse was the only organisation in Milton Keynes and the surrounding area dedicated solely to providing specialised advice and support to women living with or escaping domestic abuse.

MKWA worked very hard to bring the Lighthouse project into existence. It was required because of the increasing number of requests for advice and support and the increased number of reported incidents to the police. All agencies in fact reported greater awareness of domestic abuse and consequently the increasing need for advice and support.

Before the founding of MK Lighthouse, MKWA ran a small outreach service which was intermittently funded from various grant making bodies but otherwise telephone advice and support was given (unfunded) by the staff of the refuge.

The Current Situation

Currently MKWA second 2 full time workers to MK Lighthouse. They are funded through external grants until the end of March 2007. No applications have been made for continued funding as the Board of MK Lighthouse intended to secure alternative statutory funding. Other considerations were also that it is extremely difficult to obtain continuation funding (as opposed to start up funding) and that reliance on seconded staff can cause managerial confusion and uncertainties particularly when funders have their own additional requirements.

MKWA also actively supports MK Lighthouse by acting as the tenant for the premises at Acorn House (costs are reimbursed) and through the commitment of its Chief Executive Officer to the Board of Management (unfunded).

The Threat

MK Lighthouse will close in March 2007 unless funding is found from statutory agencies to cover its costs including those of the 2 MKWA workers.

The Premises

If statutory or other funding is not found and guaranteed unequivocally to extend MK Lighthouse after March 2007, then MKWA will have to give notice to the Landlords of Acorn House in the first week of November 2006.

The impact of Closure of MK Lighthouse upon MKWA

Advice and Assistance Calls

We believe that in the absence of a community based specialist organisation, workers in statutory agencies would advise their clients to contact Women's Aid for specialist advice. In the year 2003/4 MKWA dealt with nearly 400 advice and assistance calls. After the establishment of MK Lighthouse this number fell to 150 calls in 2005/6. In the event of closure we estimate in 2007/8 we would receive up to 500 calls.

MK Lighthouse Management Board MK Lighthouse Business Case

Appendix 1 - MK Lighthouse – Position Statement of MKWA, October 2006

500 calls @ 15 minutes each equates to 125 hours of staff time. In all conscience we could not refuse to answer the phone to distressed members of the public, however:

- Supporting People does not fund this work
- Telephone calls are very disruptive to the refuge as callers are generally in crisis and often cannot be telephoned back
- The service to residents of the refuge would be impaired
- The cost of the 0800 number provided by MKWA to the public would increase significantly

Casework

Casework for women who do not require accommodation will significantly increase if MK Lighthouse closes. Originally this work was carried out by the MKWA Outreach worker who was effectively replaced by MK Lighthouse.

MK Lighthouse records show that a minimum of 52 clients annually have been referred by MKWA. (This number is a minimum as it does not include the large numbers of clients referred informally by MKWA). Analysis shows that the average time taken with these clients was 3 hours and 20 minutes. Were MK Lighthouse to close MKWA would be under considerable pressure to undertake this casework. As with phone calls it would be difficult to refuse to help, but:

- Supporting People does not fund this work
- The service to refuge residents would be impaired
- The work would be disruptive and time consuming as it could not take place on MKWA property

The Freedom Programme and other activities

Were MK Lighthouse to close, MKWA would be under considerable pressure to offer additional Freedom Group Work Programmes to members of the public. MKWA is not likely to be able to meet this need without specific funding and resources. MKWA would be under pressure to take up activities currently carried out by MK Lighthouse such as training, speaking at conferences, attending committees etc

Possible Ways Forward: The Position of MKWA

MKWA's funding for its 2 members of staff ends at the end of the financial year. MKWA would start looking for replacement funding if necessary but is pessimistic about this (see above) and would have lost the staff. In any event there would be a gap in provision of MKWA staff of 6 – 12 months and it would be difficult to sustain MK Lighthouse in the interim. This would be the situation whether or not MK Lighthouse seeks charitable status as has been suggested at some forums.

Charitable status would not negate the responsibility of the statutory sector to fund MK Lighthouse. Although charitable funding would be easier to obtain for specific pieces of work, it would be unsafe to rely on charitable income for long term core funding.

MKWA is happy to enter into discussions about the future management of MK Lighthouse on the basis funding is secured, including provision for management costs.

MK Lighthouse Management Board
MK Lighthouse Business Case

MK Lighthouse – Position Statement of MKWA, October 2006

Conclusion

MKWA would be severely adversely affected by the closure of MK Lighthouse because we anticipate we would struggle very badly to meet the consequent demands upon our service.

We feel let down by our partners in the statutory sector as we had understood that MK Lighthouse funding would be mainstreamed were the project proved to be a success. We do not know of anyone who does not believe MK Lighthouse to be successful. It is impossible after only 2 years to prove that MK Lighthouse has reduced the bill to the statutory services in respect of domestic violence - firstly as no longitudinal studies were commissioned by the statutory sector, and secondly as this sort of study is inherently dangerous in this field.

It is undoubtedly true that MK Lighthouse has taken the strain off some statutory sector services when their clients experience domestic abuse and we would anticipate a tremendous public outcry should the statutory sector withdraw funding and cause MK Lighthouse to close.