



Minutes of the meeting of the MILTON KEYNES FORUM AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE held on WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2006 at 3.00 pm.

Present	T Moore (Chair)	-	Adams Moore Solicitors
	A Taylor (Vice-Chair)	-	MK Women's Aid
	T Driscoll	-	Crown Prosecution Service
	M Henson	-	Educational Psychology Service
	E Mason	-	MK Shelter
	Sgt P Searle	-	T.V.P. Domestic Violence Unit
	I Chittenden	-	MK Women's Aid
	C Jerome	-	Borneo Linnells
	J Pask	-	Giffen, Couch & Archer
	H O'Neill	-	MK Race Equality Council
	J Chinery	-	Local Criminal Justice Board
	N Atkinson	-	MK Community Safety Team
	S Lloyd Morris	-	Franklin Solicitors
	J Croston	-	Lighthouse
	J Hosker	-	MKC Housing Options Adviser
Also Present:	M Toze	-	Committee Manager
Apologies:	S Sargant	-	A&E Depot Hospital
	L Hoggan	-	MK Early Intervention Centre
	Cllr P Seymour	-	MK Council
	R Flowers	-	Milton Keynes PCT
	J Street	-	MK Relate
	J Beard	-	The Coram Family Support Project
	M Francis	-	MK Primary Care Trust
	R Solly	-	Milton Keynes Council
	D Butt	-	Thames Valley Probation Service
	S Roberts	-	Thames Valley Police

1.0 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED –

That Toni Moore be elected as chair for the council year 2006-07

2.0 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED –

That Alison Taylor be elected as vice-chair for the council year 2006-07

3.0 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Milton Keynes Forum Against Domestic Violence held on 7 June 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

4.0 REVIEW OF SOLICITORS' EMERGENCY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ROTA

The Forum received a report from J Pask on the Solicitor's Emergency Domestic Violence Rota. The Rota provided cover for the hours between 9 and 12 and was largely working well. The Rota was widely distributed and any other agencies wishing to receive it should contact J Pask. There was currently a second rota in place to provide representation at the direct request of the court outside these hours.

It was intended that there would be a review meeting with judges and those on the Emergency Rota to discuss updating the system.

The Forum noted that T Moore currently also offered free advice once a week to Lighthouse clients. This service was more informal, and aimed to provide advice rather than representation. There was a high demand for this kind of advice, and it was possible that Lighthouse would seek to extend this service. However, this would wait until after the review of the Emergency Rota.

The Forum expressed its gratitude to those on the rota, and also to J Pask for organising the rota.

RESOLVED –

That J Pask would report on the outcomes of the Review of the Solicitors' Emergency Domestic Violence Rota at the next meeting of the Forum in December.

5.0 REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE SPECIALIST COURTS AND PRO-ARREST INITIATIVES

The Forum received a report from Sgt. P Searle on the outcome of the Specialist Courts and Pro-Arrest Initiatives. Although the courts had been co-operative in ensuring that domestic violence cases were placed together in the schedule, staffing shortages over the summer had meant Thames Valley Police had not been able to attend the courts, nor provide additional support to witnesses. It was not yet clear whether staffing would improve to a level where these services could be offered again.

A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) had been set up, and one meeting had been held so far. This was intended to

ensure that all agencies working on a case had given it the same risk assessment, and to prevent situations where staff could be put at risk if relevant information was not shared.

RESOLVED –

That S Roberts would give a further update on the specialist courts and pro-arrest initiatives at the next meeting of the Forum

6.0

REPORT ON THE ROLE OF THE REDUCING VIOLENCE PROJECT MANAGER (RVPM) AND ON THE EVALUATION AND BUSINESS CASE FOR MK LIGHTHOUSE

The Forum received a report from N Atkinson on his role and the development of the MK Lighthouse business plan, which was still in the draft stages.

It was noted that:

1. The March Evaluation had shown a proven and sustained demand. In fact, demand exceeded capacity.
2. It was difficult to prove the outcomes of MK Lighthouse.
3. The current system of funding created problems for planning and staffing.
4. It was possible that MK Lighthouse would be mainstreamed. However, it was not yet clear which service this would come under, nor whether Lighthouse would exist in its present form.

The Forum noted that mainstream funding from statutory bodies would allow the voluntary sector to fund specialist case-workers.

The Forum was informed that the operational costs given in the report were misleading as they only represented cash-flow and not the costs of staff provided directly from other bodies. For this reason Lighthouse's actual operational costs were closer to £270,000.

The Forum discussed methods of assessing Lighthouse's outcomes. It was noted that contacting clients and asking for their responses might not always be appropriate. The Forum suggested that representatives from other bodies who wanted to comment on the value of Lighthouse and its effects on their services should write to N Atkinson, who would collate their comments. It was noted that statistical information was of more use than case studies.

The Forum noted that a decision would have to be taken by 8 November on whether or not to renew Lighthouse's lease.

RESOLVED –

1. That those who wished to comment on the cost-effectiveness of Lighthouse would contact N Atkinson.
2. That a report on the outcome of the business case of Lighthouse would be presented at the next meeting.

7.0

THAMES VALLEY POLICE DATA REPORT

The Forum received a Police Data Report from P Searle. The repeat rate for offences in the April-June quarter 2006 was 24%. This was an increase on the same quarter in the previous year, when the repeat rate had been 20.4%. There had also been a 15% decrease in cases of serious wounding. There had been a 100% increase in common assault reports, which was largely due to procedural changes in how these were reported.

The Forum noted that repeat rates were a poor measure of outcome, since improved service would lead to an increased willingness to report ongoing problems.

It was pointed out that the recorded rates of Domestic Violence in Milton Keynes were significantly higher than in Luton. It was likely that this was due to differences in population and report rates.

The Forum discussed what statistics it would want to see in the future. It was felt that quarterly figures would be useful, including non-recordable figures and incidents. Equivalent statistics from surrounding areas would be useful for comparison.

RESOLVED –

That a Data Report on Domestic Violence figures be submitted for inclusion in the agenda of the Forum's next meeting, including quarterly figures and comparisons with surrounding areas.

8.0

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Forum noted the following:

1. That it was the 30th Anniversary of Women's Aid and everyone present was invited to attend the AGM
2. That Lighthouse would have a public meeting once the future of the service was determined.
3. That Lighthouse had been providing training sessions to magistrates.

9.0

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Forum agreed the dates of future meetings as follows:

- Wednesday 6 December 2006
- Wednesday 7 March 2007
- Wednesday 6 June 2007

All meetings to be held at 3.00pm at the Civic Offices, Central Milton Keynes.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 16:45 PM