

People Scrutiny Committee – 24th January 2017

Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Children & Learning

Question 1

“The new domestic abuse team has been announced recently. Do you think it will work and what specific aims will be most affective in tackling this high priority crime?”

Answer

Yes.

The Southend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT) is a multi-agency team, established in June 2016, which seeks to transform how high risk domestic abuse is responded to within Southend by working collaboratively as a partnership.

Whilst having a MARAT is nothing new, having a dedicated Southend one is, and I believe is a big step forward to ensure we move responding to domestic abuse in Southend into the modern era. This is just one of the steps we have taken recently, alongside increasing funding for the Domestic Abuse Service, to allow victims of domestic abuse to stay in their own homes wherever possible, whilst dealing with the perpetrators.

The Southend MARAT process does not change each agency's own responsibilities to deal with domestic abuse, particularly in relation to safeguarding children and adults. However it brings together these agencies, quickly, to ensure there is no delay in offering interventions to protect and support everyone involved where a multi-agency approach might be more beneficial. The MARAT also allows agencies to research and share appropriate information with each other.

As I said earlier, having a MARAT is nothing new, but we felt within Southend that residents could get a better response, if we had a dedicated Southend team, as this will speed up all agencies responses to reports of domestic abuse. The aim is for all victims to have an action plan agreed at a multi-agency risk assessment conference within 14 working days of the referral. I believe this aim will be one of the most effective - as it will allow agencies to tackle the problem and for plans to be put in place quickly.

The Southend MARAT received 255 referrals for high risk DA incidents between June and October 2016 and, after assessing them, held a conference for 225 of these cases.

The partnership completed a review in October 2016 of the first four months of the Southend MARAT model 'going live' and the initial findings suggest that the model is meeting the identified need and is an effective safeguarding mechanism for planning within high risk domestic abuse cases. The review feedback reflected the strength and commitment of the partnership and highlighted the improvement in the timeliness of the safety and action planning process being completed.

The multi-agency partnership will continue to review the quality of the information sharing and safety and action planning process within the Southend MARAT model. Progress and outcomes will continue to be monitored, with a particular focus on capturing the impact of the MARAT approach as experienced by victims, children and family members.

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Health & Adult Social Care

Question 2

“Southend on Sea aging population that will rise year on year. What ways is Southend Council promoting and communicating to adult over 65 and older how to stay healthy?”

Answer

Southend Borough Council employs a variety of methods of communicating with adults aged 65 and over about how to keep healthy. The method used will depend on the particular initiative being promoted, and may include the use of media, face to face contact or through written contact. The following examples highlight the use of these methods.

The Southend Borough Council website hosts the Southend Health and Wellbeing Information Point, which contains information on how to stay healthy as well as acting as a directory of health and wellbeing services. This also includes information specifically for older people, such as information about the postural stability service for those at risk of falls.

The Council is training a wide range of frontline staff on 'Making Every Contact Count' so that they are able to have a face to face conversations with people of all ages about adopting healthy lifestyle behaviours and signposting them to appropriate services.

In addition, the Public Health Team provides support to GP practices to ensure that eligible people aged 40 to 74 years are sent a written invite to attend for their NHS Health Check. This is accompanied by information about the health conditions the NHS Health Check Programme is aiming to prevent, their associated risk factors and lifestyle advice. People aged 65 and over also receive information about dementia and local dementia services.