

Adva budget update

As many of you would have seen, the process of setting the adva budget was very difficult this year. A number of major challenges have had to be faced and a shift in central Government approach to supporting aspects of domestic violence and abuse work has further complicated the position.

Firstly, as part of its response to the challenging financial position it faced Devon County Council conducted a service prioritisation process that led to a proposal to reduce its contribution to the adva pooled budget by £1m. After further consideration and consultation this decision was changed and a final pooled budget of £961,484 was approved for the 2011/12 financial year.

Secondly, the Home Office announced a funding programme to support MARAC work that was targeted at the community and voluntary sector as providers. Bids had to be submitted on the basis of match funding from local statutory partners. Verbally, we understand we have been successful in securing funding for three of the four MARAC IDVA posts in the County. Providing this is confirmed with the match funding, this will generate an additional £135,000 to the budget.

Thirdly, the Ministry of Justice opened up another bidding process to the voluntary sector for work associated with supporting victims of violent crime. Bids were submitted by the three dva providers in Devon for funding of the three Special Domestic Violence Court IDVA posts. Again verbal confirmation has now been received that these bids have been approved.

The overall outcome of these processes is that adva's budget for 2011/12 should end up being £1,096,484. In summary this means in terms of direct service provision that the following will be provided in this financial year (numbers in brackets represent the level of service in 2010/11):

- Outreach support, 11.33 posts (13);
- CYP Outreach workers, 5 posts (7);
- Children workers in Refuges, 2 posts (3);
- MARAC IDVA, 4 posts (4);
- SDVC IDVA, 3 posts (3);
- Training reduction of budget contribution to £25,000 but intention to run 64 courses;

- REPAIR programme – reduced to two geographic projects with closure of South project based on lower take-up in that area;
- Continued part funding for SEEDS, Sexual Abuse Referral Line and BME action group.

So after what looked at one time to be a terminal ending of all adva services the picture for 2011/12 now looks a bit more healthy than it was. The funding round proved to be the most difficult in the history of adva. It was draining for all of us involved in the process and above all very worrying for those affected by dva who have benefited from adva funded services over the last few years. Thanks to all those who supported adva and the service providers over this difficult time. It was heartening to receive so many messages of support from the Partnership and beyond.

Now we have the budget set, contracts for the work have been agreed with the three main providers – Domestic Violence and Abuse Services; North Devon Women's Aid; and Stop Abuse for Everyone. This means a reasonable level of service will continue in Devon and perhaps, most importantly, all aspects of service within the adva strategy will be able to continue.

This year's budget-setting process clearly marks what is a very changed set of circumstances for the future funding of dva services and one which we will all need to adapt to if our valuable services are to have a sustained future.

SAFE

Stop Abuse For Everyone

Stop Abuse For Everyone (SAFE) is one of Devon's specialist voluntary sector domestic abuse charities (covering East and Mid Devon and Exeter) which has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to combat the issues facing women and their children experiencing domestic abuse (more recently also supporting male victims of abuse). Chris Collier (Chair of Trustees) comments on the impact of the funding cuts to their service.

Funding campaign

The threat of proposed 100% cuts at the close of 2010 propelled us into action. The three services – SAFE, North Devon and South and West Devon came together and fought a strong and ultimately reasonably successful battle. The high quality daily press releases were taken up by local media and set the tone of the campaign. This close co-operation will continue and already the benefits of collaboration are being shown by the success of a recent joint funding application. Social media worked well: websites proved invaluable, twitter spread the word and on Facebook we gained a following of an amazing 6,000+.

The consequences of loss of funding

- The loss of two part-time counsellors (not adva funded).
- The loss of a dedicated worker with male victims. This work will now be shared by all the members of the Outreach and IDVA teams.
- A huge reduction in Pattern Changing courses.
- The loss of the Pattern Changing coordinator post.
- The loss of the equivalent of half of an Outreach post. This has been absorbed by all the affected workers choosing a reduction to their hours. The impact will be even more demands on their services and an even bigger waiting list.
- The loss of 0.5 of a post in the Children and Young Person's Outreach team, which will also result in longer waiting lists and fewer children and young people supported.
- Initially the loss of all funding for the four Children's workers at the Refuge (half of the posts subsequently re-instated at reduced hours).

The long period of uncertainty led two of our valued workers to seek alternative jobs. This allowed us to avoid making valued and experienced workers redundant by offering them re-deployment.

Positive news

- The male victim worker has become the Young People's Worker for East & Mid Devon.
- One of the Children's workers at the Refuge has become the Young People's Worker for Exeter.
- The Pattern Changing coordinator worker has become the Women's Safety worker on the Repair programme.
- A successful bid to the Home Office coupled with adva funding has secured an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

(MARAC) post for this year.

- A successful consortium bid to the Ministry of Justice secures 3 years funding for the Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors to the Specialist Domestic Violence Court.
- Preliminary 'Best Value' reports from CAADA demonstrate that SAFE offers very high levels of support with the majority of service users reporting positive outcomes.
- An association with Wilkinson Grant provides support this year, in particular in organising an awareness and fund raising event in October – look out for details.
- We have secured the free services of a senior consultant who in the coming weeks will gather information to enable him to offer us strategic advice.

Moving forward

We move towards uncertain times with anxiety over funding, changes and politicising of statutory services and, with the knowledge gained during our campaign, that awareness of the cost and need of our services is at best, misunderstood. We have much to do to bring about awareness and understanding of domestic abuse. The manager and trustees will work and do their best to ensure that SAFE has all the policies and procedures and strategic planning in place to meet the challenges to come.

We need your support more than ever and I hope you will look out for events and consider becoming a Friend of SAFE – you will find all details on the SAFE website:

www.safe-services.org.uk

adva manager comment

One positive impact of the recent hiatus has been the opportunity to clear out my office of nearly ten years documents and papers! It's been a cathartic experience and only today, having burned or re-cycled much of the evidence of the first steps of our adva journey, I found our very first 'Briefing Note 1' dated March 2002.

This spoke of the need to establish a domestic violence strategy for Devon; the Domestic Violence Network that was established by Roy Tomlinson in 2000 (and supported by colleagues still working with adva such as Chris Pearson and Dinah Mears); the endorsement of this work by Devon's Strategic Partnership and the formation of the emerging Task Groups for 'data collection', 'training and awareness-raising', 'survivors services' and 'consultation'. At that time Devon County Council supported this new work with £190,000 which enabled us to advertise for four part-time outreach workers (to fill the District gaps where no outreach service existed) and to pilot a freephone helpline, and to hold our first Conference in Dartington Hall on 25th November 2002 to launch the strategy. Soon after a domestic violence co-ordinator was also advertised...

What will the next ten years of our journey mean? Domestic abuse work subsumed within the wider Violence against Women and Children agenda? Domestic abuse work as part of a wider

partnership revolving around Safeguarding? Domestic violence as part of an holistic early intervention programme? I believe in partnership working and I know collectively we've worked across statutory and voluntary organisations to pull together in the best interests of families whose lives are shattered by domestic violence and abuse. Men, women and children of Devon deserve our continued, specialist, focussed support. We just need to find the right way to continue to work together maintaining quality, consistent, accessible, dynamic and life-changing services.

adva training

Following a period of flux due to budget cuts, adva Training is back and open for bookings! The courses we now offer are:

Tackling Domestic Violence & Abuse (formerly known as 'Level 1') at a revised cost of £25 to most statutory agencies within Devon; £70 for each delegate from all agencies outside Devon and from private agencies and a cancellation charge of £150 if less than three weeks' notice is given.

Domestic Violence and Abuse – the Impact on Children (formerly known as 'Level 2') at a revised cost of £150 for each delegate from most statutory agencies within Devon; £280 for each delegate from all agencies outside Devon and from private agencies and a cancellation charge of £300 if less than three weeks notice is given.

The MARAC process in Devon – increasing safety for victims of domestic violence and abuse

at a revised cost of £10 for each delegate from most statutory agencies within Devon; £100 for each delegate from all agencies outside Devon and from private agencies and there is a cancellation charge of £150 if less than three weeks' notice is given.

Free Voluntary Sector places are limited to 3 places per course on all the above training.

We are holding a waiting list for **Tackling Abusive Behaviour – Taking Responsibility and Managers Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse – the links to duty of care**. When the lists are full, we will offer dates for this training. The revised costs for both of these training courses will be £25 for each delegate from most statutory agencies within Devon; £70 for each delegate from all agencies outside Devon and from private agencies and a cancellation charge of £150 if less than three weeks' notice is given.

We are now partners with **Devon Safeguarding Children's Board** as Working Together to Safeguard Children training providers. As such the **Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse and Domestic Violence and Abuse – The Impact on Children** courses are aimed at, amongst others, Working Together Staff Group 2 and above, and Working Together Staff Group 3 and above, respectively. The available dates for these courses are shown as follows:

Tackling Domestic Violence & Abuse

One-day course (formerly called Level 1 Foundation Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse):

20 June 2011, Buckfastleigh

30 June 2011, Torrington

7 July 2011, Honiton

13 July 2011, Tiverton

18 July 2011, Barnstaple

Domestic Violence and Abuse – The Impact on Children

Two day course* (formerly called Level 2 Domestic Violence and Abuse – the Impact on Children):

4 and 5 July 2011, Honiton

*NB: Delegates need to have attended the Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse course before undertaking Domestic Violence and Abuse – the Impact on Children.

We would like to remind you that, as part of the adoption and implementation of the CAADA DASH RIC across Devon, adva has developed a half day multi-agency training course called **The MARAC Process in Devon – increasing safety for victims of domestic violence and abuse** to support and embed this process. This course focuses on completing the CAADA DASH RIC within all agency roles and also what to do with a completed RIC, in particular with reference to the MARAC process.

This course replaces the adva one day 'Preventing Murder and Serious Harm' training day. However, if you have already attended the 'Preventing Murder and Serious Harm' training day, this half day course is recommended as an excellent refresher and introduction to the CAADA DASH RIC. The available dates for this course are shown below:

The MARAC Process in Devon – increasing safety for victims of domestic violence and abuse

Half-day course*:

11 July 2011 in Tiverton

9.15am–12.15pm (no lunch provided) or

1.30pm–4.30pm (no lunch provided)

*NB: Delegates need to have attended the Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse course before undertaking MARAC training.

Please note that bookings are made through an online booking system accessible from our website (www.adva.org.uk, following links for Professionals and Training Courses) and that any queries on bookings need to be directed to Claire Birch on **01392 382567** or email: claire.birch@devon.gov.uk. Further details of all courses, including costs, can also be found on the adva website.

2010–11 adva training data

We are soon to publish our detailed training report about delegates adva trained during 2010–2011. This will be available on the adva website in the near future.

Once again the report will highlight which sector and agency our delegates came from and also which geographical location across Devon they worked in. The data will be broken down into adva course 'type' for analytical purposes, which is useful for both adva and the delegates' agencies. This report also publishes top line data about delegate numbers and the number of adva training courses and course types we have run from 2007–08 to 2010–11. The table below (Table 1) shows a snapshot of the number of delegates adva trained in 2010–11 and also the number of training courses we ran.

Summary of delegates trained on domestic violence and abuse courses 2010–2011

Table 1: Overall Summary of delegates trained by adva in 2010–11

Level 1 Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse

825 delegates over 57 courses

Level 2 Domestic Violence and Abuse – The Impact on Children

199 delegates over 15 courses

The MARAC Process in Devon – increasing safety for victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse

155 delegates over 12 courses

Tackling Abusive Behaviour – taking responsibility

57 delegates over 4 courses

Managers Tackling Domestic Violence & Abuse

67 delegates over 6 courses

Schools

41 delegates over 1 course

Torbay Level 1

101 delegates over 9 courses

Ad-Hoc

GP: 23 delegates over 2 courses

Level 1: 13 delegates over 1 course

Level 1 Midwives: 51 delegates over 2 courses

Buy-in

Level 1 Midwives: 11 delegates over 1 course

Level 1: 14 delegates over 2 courses

Managers: 20 delegates over 2 courses

Total 1577 delegates over 114 courses

This second table (Table 2) shows a summary of delegates attending the core multi-agency adva training courses in 2010–11 by the ‘sector’ they come from. NB The ‘Sector’ headings used here correspond with Devon County Council’s (DCC’s) online booking system. We therefore use these categories to ensure our data corresponds to the rest of Devon County Council. For information, CYPS (Children and Young People Service) sits in the ‘Local Government’ sector and not the ‘Children & Family Support’ sector or ‘Young People’s Services’ sector in this report. Likewise, Local Government Housing teams sit under the ‘Local Government’ sector and not ‘Housing’. ‘Emergency Services’ includes Police, Ambulance and Fire; ‘Health’ includes PCT and Provider Trusts and ‘Housing’ includes Housing Associations.

2010–11 core adva Domestic Violence and Abuse multi-agency training courses Table 2: Summary of delegates trained by Sector 2010–11

- 1** Tackling DVA
- 2** DVA – the Impact on Children
- 3** The MARAC process in Devon
- 4** Managers Tackling DVA
- 5** Tackling Abusive Behaviour
- 6** Total

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Central and Regional Government	1	0	0	3	0	4
Children and Family Support	49	13	10	7	1	80
Courts and Legal Services	28	3	10	2	3	46
Education	123	19	11	2	4	159
Emergency Services	32	7	2	0	3	44
Faith Based	3	0	0	0	0	3
Health	139	34	22	9	4	208
Housing	47	8	6	2	2	65
Local Government	186	56	44	27	18	331
Private	7	3	1	0	1	12
Voluntary	208	54	49	15	21	347
Young People's Services	2	2	0	0	0	4
Total	825	199	155	67	57	1303

What this data tells us at a glance, when compared to the 2009–10 data, is that our greatest number of delegates remain from the Voluntary Sector and the Local Government Sector. When you drill down further (as the report will show) we can see that actually 240 of the total 331 delegates from the Local Government Sector, for example, are from CYPS, which is an increase from 2009–10. This is really useful and important information to know, for both adva and CYPS. The most notable increase in delegate numbers by sector in 2010–11 is from the Children and Family Support Sector, the Health Sector, the Housing Sector and the Private Sector.

All this information (and much more!) will be available in our 2010–2011 adva Training Data Report.

LINX in Devon

Between September 2010 - 2011, 17 LINX groups have run across Devon, with a further 6 groups due to have started by this September, bringing the total up to 23 groups across Devon. These groups have been delivered by a range of agencies including schools, youth clubs and youth offending teams.

LINX Groups in Devon

Exeter: West Exe Learning Centre – 4 groups; St James High School; Isca College; Exeter Youth Offending team – 3 groups; The Fountain Centre
East Devon: East Devon Youth Club.

South Devon: Ratcliffe School – 2 groups;
South Dartmoor College – 3 groups.

North Devon: Okehampton Youth Club
(Room 13); Okehampton Community College;
North Devon YISP; Bideford College – 2 groups;
Braunton School; Ilfracombe School.

The staff who have facilitated these groups have approached LINX with real energy and enthusiasm which has yielded some very positive results, including reduction in exclusions from lessons, increased communication skills and higher self-esteem.

LINX is due to carry on expanding across Devon with Jan Mclean, Advisory Teacher for Behaviour, hoping to take LINX into all schools in North Devon in order to meet the high level of need of children and young people experiencing issues around domestic violence. We are also looking at the possibility of taking an adapted LINX Course into primary schools.

News

Recruitment is underway for a new LINX Co-ordinator and we look forward to welcoming them on board! The Co-ordinator will deliver a number of groups across Devon.

For further information on LINX please contact **Vicki Smith**, LINX Project Support Worker for Devon on 01392 384978 or email: vicki.a.smith@devon.gov.uk

DVA social worker, North Devon

It is great news that, despite the reduction in adva funding, this post has secured alternative funding from CYPs and can now continue for the full 2 years.

Much of the first year focused on research into the area of families that have or are being affected by domestic abuse and looking at alternative interventions to safely engage all family members. This year is going to be an exciting year with the launch of Family Group Conferences (FGC) specifically for families affected by domestic abuse, a model that has been successfully running in Hampshire for 10 years. FGC co-ordinators are about to be recruited and it is anticipated that the service will be available for referrals/enquiries by September 2011.

The role has also focused on whole family assessments involving the victim, child and perpetrator using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and multi-agency planning process in the Team around the child (TAC) meeting. Having an independent lead for these cases has assisted practitioners to think of more inclusive practice, ways of safely involving the perpetrator and less onus on the victim in making changes.

If you would like to find out more about either the FGC model or CAF you can contact **Pam Ardy** on 01271 386230 or alternatively email me at pam.ardy@devon.gov.uk

Amended date of Partnership meeting

Unfortunately a Safeguarding meeting clashes with the intended Partnership meeting so the revised date is **Monday, 4 July**

at **Living Options, Isca House, Haven Road, Exeter, EX2 8DS**. The Executive Steering Group will meet in the morning (9.30am–12.30pm) followed by the full Partnership meeting at 1.30pm–4.30pm. We would be most grateful if you make a note of this change in your diaries.

Is this love? A new resource pack for teenagers

Adva's successful **Is this love?** campaign, designed to help teenagers recognise abusive behaviour and give them the confidence to seek help, has been extended into Devon's secondary schools as part of the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) aspect of PSHE.

An education pack developed by adva and young people from the Linx project in Devon, is now available to all year 10 and 11 students, encouraging them to think about what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour within a relationship.

The study pack, which has been approved by Devon County Council, contains a short animated film (available at www.adva.org.uk) made with the help of young people to introduce the subject and stimulate discussion. There is also a help sheet for teachers to direct discussion, including statistics around teenage relationships and domestic abuse, a sheet for students with discussion points from the film and a lesson plan with activities for an hour-long lesson. All of these elements aim to get young people talking and thinking about some of the issues raised. There is also a PowerPoint presentation for use in PSHE or assembly. Devon Youth Service has already piloted the education packs with the help of two youth groups from Exeter.

Adva's Rachel Martin said: "A classroom discussion about what love is – and what love isn't – goes some way towards helping young people to understand what is acceptable behaviour and what it not. Abuse often starts in teenage relationships and it's a crucial time to do as much as we can to try and prevent our next generation of potential perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse. A classroom is a good and safe place to help promote healthy, non violent relationships and students will be advised who they can contact both within and outside school, if they need advice or support."

L-R adva manager Rachel Martin, animator Emily Cooper and Det Supt John Clements, Devon & Cornwall Police, launch this year's Domestic Violence awareness week campaign 'Is this love?'

Research shows that young people have a wide acceptance of abuse. Findings from a recent survey of 14–21 year-old males, carried out by the Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust revealed that:

- 1 in 8 young men thought it would be okay to hit a nagging woman.
- 1 in 10 young men thought hitting disrespectful woman was justified.
- 19% of young women and 34% of young men did not think that being forced to have sex constituted rape.
- One in five teenage girls have been hit by a boyfriend.

The study packs have been introduced to Devon's secondary schools as a response to research which shows that children and young people want, and need, to talk about issues such as domestic abuse. Schools also have a number of legal responsibilities, under the ECM Agenda, The Education Act 2002 and The Children Act 2004, which mean that they are well placed to help young people tackle beliefs and think about their behaviour as they progress into adult life.

All material can be downloaded from the adva website www.adva.org.uk



Are Devon's specialist domestic abuse services making any difference?

CAADA (co-ordinated action against domestic abuse) is undertaking independent evaluation of many of the adva-funded specialist services in Devon.

Included in this 18 month 'Best Value' research are outreach, MARAC idva, SDVC idva and the children & young people's outreach services. All three of Devon's specialist services are participating in this research, and initial findings from the first six months data (September 2010 – end March 2011) show encouraging results. 442 intake forms were submitted (for idva and outreach only) and of these 172 service users completed their support (so an exit form was submitted). A summary of the data findings on these 172 clients is:

- The three Devon Services are supporting clients experiencing a range of levels of risk and severity of abuse. A significant proportion required support with additional needs such as financial problems, mental health problems and drug and alcohol misuse problems.
- The majority of clients seen were female, 8% clients supported were male. Two per cent of clients were recorded as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. The proportion of B&ME clients is reflective of the profile of the local population.

- 71% of clients accessing the Devon Services have children, with a total of 465 children living in households where abuse is taking place. Of those clients with children there was CYPs involvement in just 18% of cases.
- 61% of clients report a complete cessation of all types of abuse and large reductions in each abuse type can be seen for both IDVAs and Outreach.
- The majority of clients reported positive outcomes at case closure with 65% reporting feeling safer, 65% reporting an improvement in their quality of life and 80% reporting confidence in accessing help and support.

Adva equally awaits the final report which will be available from October 2011.

Coalition Government's 'Violence against Women and Children'

[Strategy, Action Plan and Domestic Violence-related funding in Devon](#)

On the 25th November 2010 the Home Secretary announced the Government's proposal to keep funding vital domestic abuse services over the next four years; in March 2011 the Government published its 'Call to End Violence against Women and Children Action Plan' and in April 2011 the Home Office and Ministry of Justice Departments supported funding bids in Devon for three MARAC idva posts and three SDVC idva

posts. Whilst the MARAC posts are only part-funded (up to £20,000 each) for three years, the SDVC idva posts are wholly funded for four years. The Government has committed to sustain these MARAC idva posts, provided the match-funding continues.

As yet adva has not engaged with the wider VAWC agenda, focusing its efforts over the last ten years in tackling domestic violence and abuse. However, it is likely in the brave new world we are entering that adva's work will be subsumed within a wider context, VAWG and possibly a wider umbrella still, safeguarding.

Diana Barran, Chief Executive of CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse, particularly welcomed three features of the Home Secretary's statement:

"A focus on prioritizing the use of public funds on risk reduction in its broadest sense, beyond a focus on criminal justice. We know that no one agency has the solution to this complex issue and it is important to identify and prioritise the most vulnerable people. Only by coordinated action between agencies can victims get the effective support they need.

A focus on partnership working, without which 11,000 victims in the last year alone would not be as safe as they are today. We know that victims need the best of public and voluntary agencies working together to make a real difference to victim safety and to enable them to live safely in their homes.

A new commitment to stable funding over a four year period. This means that services will be better able to plan their activity more effectively, focusing their time and energy on support that makes the biggest difference to victim safety rather than ongoing cycles of funding applications."

Sexual Violence funding

[The Fawcett Society has been successful in attracting a large grant to open a Rape Crisis Centre in Devon. More news on this is welcomed...](#)

Devon's Sexual Abuse Line has also been successful in attracting Ministry of Justice funding (May 2011).

"The Rape & Sexual Abuse Line is delighted to announce it has been successful in securing allocation of a grant from the Ministry of Justice's Victims and Witness fund. The grant awarded will enable us to continue our work for a further three years, continuing to provide a freephone helpline service for people across Devon, who have experienced rape, childhood sexual abuse and/or sexual violence at any time."



Update May 2011

We are pleased to report that SEEDS Devon currently has eight members who meet on a regular basis. We look forward to new members joining the group during the coming year.

During the past twelve months SEEDS Devon has been involved in giving the following presentations:

- Relate, Exeter
- Home Start, Exeter
- Parenting Network, South Devon (Totnes) & West Devon (Okehampton)
- Combined Network & Ofsted Update Training (Early Years & Childcare Services) Honiton

In addition to being involved in presentations and training events, members regularly attend DV Forums across the county in both the Statutory and Voluntary sector.

The bi-annual survey was distributed through the adva Partnership network but there was a very disappointing response. Only one questionnaire was completed (via the internet)

despite it being sent out a second time. The general feeling is that there has been a "survey overload" in recent months and this is not the most effective way to reach service users.

We would welcome contact from Agency staff with suggestions on how we can reach their clients in order to obtain up-to-date feedback on whether services are meeting their needs.

SEEDS Devon was commissioned by CAFCASS to develop a questionnaire which will go to all CAFCASS clients to gather information on their DV policy and practice. The questionnaire has been piloted and is now in the process of being finalized for distribution by CAFCASS across Devon and Cornwall by the end of June this year.

Plans for 2011/12

- New Member recruitment for Devon SEEDS will take place on 22 June at the CVS offices in Wat Tyler House from 11am. A further recruitment day will be held in October/November.
- It is hoped that we can set up sub-groups in both South and North Devon during the coming year to enable a wider geographical spread to our work.
- Regular contact with Stop Abuse for Everyone Exeter, North Devon Women's Aid and Domestic Violence and Abuse Services South & West Devon will continue and it is planned to involve SEEDS in a more pro-active way by acting as an independent reference group to

collate service users' feedback and develop support services for women leaving the Refuge.

- We have purchased display stands and plan to attend as many events as possible throughout the year where the poetry and art work that has been collected will be displayed to raise awareness. We will also be making a SEEDS video to be used for promotional purposes, presentations and media events.
- We are already planning for the November Awareness Week and hope to have small promotional items to sell to raise awareness as well as funds.
- We will continue to be involved in policy development or research projects as appropriate. The Survivor's voice is clearly valued and it is crucial that we continue to be consulted and contribute to the development of policies and legislation to address domestic abuse issues.
- We believe that SEEDS has a major role in monitoring and evaluating the impact on services resulting from the cut backs to all the Devon agencies involved with domestic abuse. This will be a challenge in light of our own reduced funding but we are confident that we will continue to be a voice for women and children who are experiencing abuse.

The Devon & Torbay Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

...has been successful in bidding for Home Office funding to support the role of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) in North Devon & Torbay.

The funding is for £20k per annum for the next four years and will help assure the continuity and sustainability of the Devon & Torbay SARC for the foreseeable future.

JSNA VAWC!

Great news... NHS Devon are continuing to fund the development of its Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 'VAWC' – Violence against Women and Children, with the intention of using it to inform service provision within Devon from April 2012.

This document was well received in 2010 and Dr Gemma Hobson will continue to update it during 2011–2012. The document's aims are: i) to understand the needs of victims and perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and ii) to make evidence-based recommendations to inform the commissioning of services to meet these needs.
<http://dscb.info/publications/>

Choosing to Change – a new way of working with DVA

A pilot programme at Relate Exeter & District, the Choosing to Change (C2C) programme began life as an emerging theme by Relate counsellors assessing DVA clients.

A client 'sub-group' was identified who presented with low levels of physical violence but potentially high levels of abusive, controlling behaviour which was damaging to their partner and their relationship. This group did not fit the profile of clients likely to accept an onward referral to a perpetrator programme such as Repair, nor would they be 'safe' to work with in a couple counselling setting. Therefore, a service provision gap was identified into which such clients 'disappeared' with no change in abusive behaviours in current or subsequent relationships.

Relate in Exeter discussed this scenario with adva who took the mantle and supported Relate in piloting an innovative way of working with this client group. Ignition Creative Learning were commissioned to develop the programme and train workers.

The result was Choosing to Change; a seven session programme for abusive/controlling heterosexual relationships with low levels of physical violence, where the male was assessed as the primary aggressor. (These criteria were

selected for purposes of the pilot but it is hoped that with time the remit of the work can be extended to include relationships where the female is the primary aggressor, or same sex relationships.)

The programme aims to increase a man's awareness of the impact of his abusive behaviour on his partner and relationships. Further it aims to support an increase in both motivation and confidence to change. If these two key areas increase, a further assessment may indicate that couple counselling is an appropriate referral option and experienced Relate counsellors would then be able to safely work with a couple towards a relationship free from abuse.

The programme is not a behavioural intervention: change in behaviour would be addressed during couple counselling, but it does seek to support a client in taking responsibility for their behaviour and in understanding that behaviour as a choice they are making which has damaging consequences.

The programme offers up to 7 sessions with the male partner, using motivational interviewing skills. Alongside these sessions, contact is made with the female partner on a weekly basis to assess risk, and to provide information about the focus of the Man's sessions. At Session 5 an assessment is made with the male and the female independently to see if they wish to be referred to couple counselling and whether it would be safe to do so. If so, Session 6 includes goal setting for behavioural changes each partner would like to work towards. The seventh

session is a joint session with the male, female and two workers to share these goals and to begin to establish a focus for the couple work.

The pilot began in October 2010 and has run for a six month period. Initial evaluation is both interesting and encouraging. The majority of couples accessing Choosing to Change have either completed the programme but not continued with couples work or been referred to couples work. A minority did not complete the full seven sessions. Workers assessed that for those couples not being referred to couples work, Choosing to Change as an intervention still increased the safety of their relationships.

The pilot phase has emphasised that assessment into the programme is key. The intervention seems most relevant for those couples who are co-habiting, have an established relationship and are motivated to remain together.

There has also been an adjustment to ongoing couples work; workers have noticed a disparity between the male, showing increased motivation to change, and the female, expressing increased anger at her partner's behaviour. This difference has resulted in a 'split agenda', with each partner needing a different support during this interim phase before counselling work can begin on the behavioural changes discussed in sessions 6 and 7 of the programme.

And what of client feedback? There has been a variable response from clients; one client commented:

"The course has made a difference. I have become less angry and aggressive and have realised the damage it can have on my family. I don't get aggressive verbally or physically anymore."

The programme worked well for him. Other participants have been less positive; particularly if a relationship has ended following referral and involvement with Choosing to Change. Workers commented that working with C2C raised awareness of certain key DVA issues and helped a relationship to 'end safely'. However, clients may not share this view, particularly if their hope was to retain a relationship free from abuse. Overall, the programme appears to have been a great success on many levels; for the counsellors at Relate, the facilitators, the participants and their partners.

Now the pilot phase is complete, we are considering the future for this innovative way of working. Workers have identified a number of revisions to the initial programme as a result of piloting the work. Our hope is to address these revisions in collaboration with Relate nationally, who have expressed an interest in piloting the programme in a further five or six Centres. Talks take place in late June 2011. In the meantime, the service continues to be offered locally by Relate Exeter and District. For more information please call 01392 275681 or email manager@exrelate.org.uk

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