
WEST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

2008 - 2011

September 2008

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1. Introduction

Community Safety in West Lothian reflects a broad commitment to safety in our homes, on our streets and in our communities. Developing and supporting a high quality life in our communities requires that we tackle anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths, and violence and crime. Significant progress on these challenges continues to be underpinned by strong multi-agency planning, resourcing, implementation and monitoring.

The Community Safety Strategy for 2008 – 2011 will guide partnership work and resource allocation to support progress towards this vision. This new Strategy is about creating and committing to shared priorities for joint work, and thus specific areas of activity have been identified for immediate and continued action. These action areas have been selected because

- there are identified problems or gaps in services
- new actions fit with and support other priorities identified in the Single Outcome Agreement
- partnership working has the potential to make a real difference on these issues to an extent that no single partner organisation working in isolation could achieve.

The Strategy is firmly embedded in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for 2008 to 2011, and engages with the Outcome Planning Model based on the life stages approach to community planning which has been adopted in West Lothian. The life stages approach provides a framework for developing outcomes relating to the early years age group, school age children, young people in transition, adults of working age and older people. The Community Safety Strategy is outcome-focussed.

The Strategy builds on a track record of successful and innovative community safety work which has been developed and implemented by the main public sector service providers and voluntary organisations in West Lothian. Significant progress has already been made.

- Partnership work on anti-social behaviour means that our knowledge about “hotspots” and youth issues has improved, and we are able to focus resources on known problems and problem areas. The roll out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams will provide a local resource to tackle local problems.

- Preventable injuries and deaths have been decreasing in number. Existing work that is reducing injuries and deaths from road accidents and dwelling fires is ongoing. Additional outcomes regarding preventable injuries to older people and young children are added in this Strategy.
- Overall levels of reports of violence and crime have been falling and are now at their lowest levels for 8 years. While preventing and detecting crimes will remain a top priority for police, this Strategy focuses on additional work to improve the criminal justice outcomes for domestic abuse, to address violence and crime targeting vulnerable people, and to improve our understanding of and response to hate crimes. Finally, we are taking a holistic approach to community safety and young people, taking particular care to see young people as victims of violence, crime, and antisocial behaviour as well as offenders.

Locality planning structures have now been established in all nine locality planning areas in West Lothian. Community safety issues, particularly anti-social behaviour issues, are high on their agenda. Locality planning concerns have helped to shape the Community Safety Strategy, and implementation of the Strategy will depend on effective working between the community safety partner organisations and the locality planning structures.

Implementation of the Strategy will be guided by an action plan with annual targets; subgroups will monitor delivery of these targets and be accountable for them to the Community Safety Forum.

2. Vision, aims and outcomes

Vision

Our vision for West Lothian is one that is dynamic and inclusive; we need a highly skilled workforce, allowing people to develop their potential to the full. We want to promote a more inclusive community by providing housing, health and social care services in an integrated way, which allows groups of people to live as independently as possible. We are building communities of healthy individuals and families, where civic responsibility and safety are encouraged and where violence, crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to flourish.

Aims and outcomes

The key aims of the Strategy are to achieve reductions in

- anti-social behaviour
- preventable injuries and deaths
- violence and crime.

Key principles

West Lothian is one of the leading areas in Scotland for effective partnership working, and thus this Strategy can be and should be ambitious. Achieving the Strategy's outcomes will require even closer partnership working founded on key principles.

Focus on outcomes

West Lothian Community Planning Partnership is firmly committed to an outcome-based approach to planning, delivering and monitoring performance. This approach is the foundation of the Single Outcome Agreement, will be at the heart of the new Community Plan, and is a key driver of the Community Safety Strategy.

Working from the evidence

We are committed to an evidence-based approach to community safety. This Strategy is firmly based on the available evidence. The Community Safety Strategic

Assessment will be published early in 2009, and will provide additional data across all the community safety priority issues.

Resource allocation will be guided by strategic priorities and the evidence base.

We will develop an action plan to guide the implementation of the Strategy. The action plan will contain detailed baseline information and targets. Monitoring performance against these targets will be of critical importance.

Prevention and early intervention: Moving the agenda “upstream”

The community safety partner organisations will take appropriate action when anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths or crime and violence have occurred. However, we will focus our work on developing and implementing policies, which are likely to prevent crime, anti-social behaviour and preventable injuries and deaths.

Community engagement

The community has been engaged in determining the community safety priorities – anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths and violence and crime. Public perceptions of violence and crime and anti-social behaviour are important quality of life issues, and often do not correspond to actual experience of crime. Community engagement will continue to be important as this Strategy is implemented.

Some of the partner organisations have their own community engagement mechanisms. As a partnership, our primary community engagement links will be through the locality planning structures. We aim to develop a relationship which encourages a two-way flow of information and influence. Localities will be able to bring their community safety concerns and proposals to the Community Safety Forum, and community safety initiatives will be clearly communicated to the locality planning structures.

Information sharing

Effective action and investment should be guided by evidence and information. We have already improved information sharing arrangements in recent years, but much work remains to be done to ensure that, as a partnership, we are able to bring together and analyse the wealth of information which is collected and held by the individual partners. All the partners are committed to improving the sharing and joint analysis of community safety information and evidence. A joint website for a wide

range of data, including community safety data, has been established (www.wlinfo.org.uk).

Joint training

In a number of areas of community safety work (domestic abuse is one example), multi-agency training is the most effective model to support high-quality service and joined-up working. As a partnership, we will examine the areas where further joint training would prove valuable and bring forward proposals for resourcing and delivering training programmes across the partners.

3. Delivering the Strategy

Community Safety Forum

The Community Safety Forum is one of the three Forums supporting the Community Planning Partnership to deliver the Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan. The other two are the Health and Wellbeing and Economic Forums. The Appendix to this Strategy outlines the relationships.

The Community Safety Forum is responsible for providing strategic vision and direction for partnership-based community safety work in West Lothian. The Forum

- agrees and makes decisions on strategic priorities for community safety
- monitors progress against the Single Outcome Agreement and the Community Safety Strategy
- oversees the work of the sub groups – anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths, and violence and crime
- makes decisions on funding based on recommendations from the sub groups
- receives and scrutinises performance management reports from the sub groups.

Operational and implementation issues

The three sub groups are responsible for

- developing and renewing action plans
- ensuring that the plans are implemented and that any gaps or problems are addressed
- monitoring progress against the plans
- reporting to the Community Safety Forum
- making recommendations to the Community Safety Forum on funding issues.

A detailed action plan is being developed and will be renewed annually. The action plan will detail

- how the community safety outcomes are to be achieved
- the lead organisation(s)
- key indicators
- baseline information
- targets
- resources.

The Single Outcome Agreement

Community safety and public protection are specified as two of the twelve joint challenges in the Single Outcome Agreement, and account for three of the fourteen priority outcomes. The specific priority outcomes are

- all children and adults have safe lives
- the number of people affected by domestic violence is reduced
- the number of people (victims and offenders) affected by anti-social behaviour is reduced.

Implementation of the Community Safety Strategy will contribute to meeting SOA targets associated with

- residents feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods
- rates of recorded crimes and offences
- people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
- numbers of persistent young offenders
- home fires resulting in death or injury
- numbers of hate crimes
- domestic abuse incidents
- violence against women and children.

Locality planning

Local communities have expressed concerns about, and interest in, all the community safety priority issues with a particularly high level of interest in the anti-social behaviour agenda. In the course of 2008, the links between the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (a partnership response to anti-social behaviour) and the locality planning structures will be strengthened. In addition, we aim to promote dialogue and joint working with locality planning areas across all the community safety priority themes.

4. Cross cutting issues

Alcohol and drug issues

There are obvious and direct connections between alcohol and drug abuse and community safety both in general, and, more specifically, in relation to each of the community safety priority themes – anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths, and violence and crime.

In West Lothian, tobacco, alcohol and drug issues are addressed under the Health and Wellbeing community planning theme.

West Lothian Drug Action Team (DAT) is a strategic partnership with representation from West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Lothian and Borders Police and the voluntary sector. The DAT has a commitment to reducing tobacco, alcohol and drug-related deaths and injuries. The DAT funds specialist services to provide advice, information, support and treatment in relation to substance misuse in order to prevent injuries and deaths.

Alcohol and violence In October 2007, as part of joint work with West Lothian DAT, the Community Safety Forum commissioned an analysis of data on assaults recorded by Lothian and Borders Police and St John's Hospital in order to establish levels of alcohol-related violence during the festive period and a comparison period in February. The research reflected an increasing recognition of the need for action on violence in public and private places, action that needed to be informed by a better understanding of the role of alcohol misuse in domestic and community violence.

The results showed that the majority of assaults were judged to be alcohol-related, that is either the perpetrator, the victim, or both were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the assault. The data confirm that alcohol and violence are often linked and, together, have an impact on the victims of violence, the perpetrators and the health and police services. It was concluded that seasonal patterns of violence (and service use) suggest that focusing preventative measures (and service provision) at these times may be beneficial.

Two poster campaigns were developed targeting women affected by domestic abuse and other violence; a series of postcards have been developed in West Lothian's six community languages for distribution in local areas. Both campaigns promoted

support services available to women and gave a clear message that alcohol is not an excuse for violence.

Young people and alcohol misuse In the past year, Lothian and Borders Police have run a number of targeted operations to address underage drinking, including reducing sales of alcohol to underage drinkers, reducing availability of alcohol for purchase in off-licenses by those under 21 years old, and reducing anti-social behaviour fuelled by underage drinking in public places. In addition, a wide variety of different initiatives linking to substance misuse are run by DAT partners depending on local need and priorities.

The Police target specific localities based on information and intelligence. Specialist services are available for all ages and the current police initiatives are specifically targeting 12 – 18 year olds. In addition, as part of their new outcome contracts, specialist substance misuse services are required to target their services to the most deprived communities in West Lothian.

Deprivation

Areas of multiple deprivation, and individuals and households living in deprivation, are more likely to suffer some forms of preventable injuries and deaths, and are more likely to be the victims of anti-social behaviour and some types of violent and criminal activity. Examples include

- accidents in the home to pre 5 children where there is a clear link to deprivation
- anti-social behaviour hotspots are most likely to be in the most deprived areas.

In the Community Safety Strategy, there are a number of evidence-based analyses where specific actions are proposed with a focus on deprivation. There is also a recognition that broader based anti-deprivation work, often organised through locality planning, should have a stronger community safety dimension. Closer joint working between community safety and locality planning will ensure that this work takes place and is monitored.

Equalities

Equalities issues are recognised in the analysis and recommendations relating to each of the community safety priority themes. Examples include

- a focus on older people affected by falls leading to preventable injuries and deaths

- the priorities attached to hate crime and domestic abuse in the crime and violence theme.

More rigorous analysis will be applied to the Strategy and its implementation through an equality impact assessment of this Strategy to be completed with the action planning stage.

5. Achieving the community safety outcomes

Introduction

This chapter of the Community Safety Strategy provides in depth analysis of the issues, problems and approaches to be taken in each of the three community safety priority themes – anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths, and violence and crime.

It is important to recognise both the linkages between these three priority themes and the linkages between the broad community safety agenda and other community planning issues.

For example, the Community Safety Forum has highlighted the part alcohol has to play in many incidents. The Health and Wellbeing Forum also focuses on alcohol issues through the Drug Action Team (DAT). The Economic Forum is working with young people in need of More Choices and More Chances (those not in employment, education or training), and these are often the young people who find themselves involved in anti social behaviour. So, the diversionary work that is being done through the Safer Neighbourhood Teams has a positive impact on the work being done through the More Choices More Chances agenda.

The keys to effective collaborative work are sharing information through the Community Planning Working Group, and the involvement of key individuals across the Forums.

There are close and obvious linkages between anti-social behaviour and crime and violence. Low level anti-social behaviour can generate crime and violence, and people involved in committing anti-social behaviour can move on to involvement in more serious and violent crimes. A community which is the location for criminal activity is also more likely to be subject to anti-social behaviour, so actions which tackle violence and crime are also likely to impact on anti-social behaviour and vice versa. An anti-violence culture in our families and communities will form the foundation of lasting change to levels of violence and crime.

The linkages between community safety and alcohol issues are vitally important and are discussed elsewhere in this Strategy. There are other linkages with important community planning themes such as employability, addictions, and health and wellbeing. Where people are confident about their personal safety and the

community in which they live, they are more likely to address other problems in their lives and to seize opportunities to live a fuller and more rewarding life. Tackling community safety issues should help to achieve outcomes and targets across a range of other community planning priorities.

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour which, over a period of time, causes alarm or distress to individuals, households or communities. It is often described as “low level, high volume” activity which is not, in itself, serious criminal activity but which degrades the quality of life in communities.

Common examples of anti-social behaviour include

- groups hanging about in the street in a way that causes alarm or distress to residents
- noisy neighbours
- drinking or drug use which leads to people being rowdy and causing trouble
- graffiti and litter problems.

Crimes of vandalism, malicious mischief and malicious damage are indicative of levels of anti-social behaviour. Between 2004/05 and 2006/07, the incidence of these crimes in West Lothian grew from 4,414 to 4,566 in absolute terms. Over the period, these rates increased most markedly in Armadale and Bathgate, while they decreased in East Livingston and East Calder, Linlithgow and Livingston. Anti-social behaviour and “quality of life” calls account for 38% of public demand on police time.

Although some young people are often involved in anti-social behaviour, anti-social behaviour is not solely a youth issue – many adults are also involved in anti-social behaviour. And, even more important, young people are most frequently victims of anti-social behaviour. Territorialism, which has a particular effect on young people, is both a cause and a consequence of anti-social behaviour.

The number of calls related to anti-social behaviour by young people recorded by Lothian and Borders Police in West Lothian fell from 12,005 in 2006/07 to 9,697 in 2007/08.

West Lothian’s response to anti-social behaviour has been a multi-agency response built on the PIER principles

- prevention
- intervention

- enforcement
- rehabilitation

Prevention

West Lothian Police Division is committed to a focus on preventative, intelligence-led policing. Intelligence on anti-social behaviour hot spots is collated and analysed in partnership with West Lothian Council. The Council's antisocial behaviour analyst is co-located with police analysts.

Alcohol is a major contributory factor to much anti-social behaviour, and a range of initiatives, including initiatives targeted at young people, have had some success in curbing anti-social behaviour. The Risk Factory provides "hands on" experiential community safety lessons for primary 7 schoolchildren from throughout West Lothian. Many of the sessions have an anti-social behaviour focus.

West Lothian Council works to promote sustainable communities through focusing on both the built environment and community development. Sustainable communities are likely to have a stronger sense of community identity and social cohesion, which are likely to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Youth work, delivered by West Lothian Council, and by voluntary organisations, makes an important contribution to the prevention of anti-social behaviour. This work includes

- general youth work and youth clubs which offer positive activity, personal development and active citizenship
- specific diversionary activity such as late night football in areas where there is a pattern of young people being involved in anti-social behaviour
- streetwork and other initiatives aimed at engaging with "hard to reach" young people, many of whom are at risk of becoming involved in, or becoming the victims of, anti-social behaviour.

The Council has recently allocated additional funding for diversionary activities to address the Friday afternoon drinking culture that has emerged. These projects offer local opportunities for young people to engage in sport, arts, and a variety of other activities.

Intervention

The Social Work Youth Justice Team, West Lothian Youth Action Project, and other partners, attempt to identify young people most at risk of getting involved in anti-social behaviour at the earliest opportunity so that they can be referred to services and projects which address their anti-social behaviour or offer alternative activities.

There is a particular focus on intensive work with young people who are classified as persistent offenders.

Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service are the lead agency in the Cool Down Crew project, which does intensive work with young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, offending and anti-social behaviour. The programme has been successful in challenging anti-social attitudes and behaviour.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) was established in April 2007 to address anti-social behaviour issues in West Lothian. The multi-agency team works to deliver robust long-term solutions in specific geographical areas for intensive periods of time. The team comprises police officers, staff from West Lothian Council's Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) and youth workers. It pro-actively targets anti-social behaviour hotspots which are identified through intelligence analysis.

The team offers the flexibility to respond to issues in a number of areas at one time, or to focus upon one particular problem, and complements existing police and local authority resources. The SNT has responded to youth calls, vandalism, hate crimes and minor assaults. Evidence to date shows that deploying the team in a specific area has led to 30% reductions in youth calls and vandalism.

The Council's Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) uses mediation, written warnings, tenancy support, support for victims and other approaches to tackle one-off or initial instances of anti-social behaviour. The NRT had 365 active cases, referrals because of anti-social behaviour or noise nuisance, at the end of March 2008.

Enforcement

The main responsibility for enforcement activity lies with Lothian and Borders Police. Tackling anti-social behaviour is one the Force's five key priorities. Operations Froth and Floorwalk are examples of effective enforcement action. Operation Froth was an alcohol test purchase operation testing licensees' willingness to sell alcohol to under-age drinkers. Operation Floorwalk involved taking underage youths found with alcohol or intoxicated to a police station for discussions with a drug or alcohol

counsellor in the presence of their parents. This was followed up by discussion with a senior police officer.

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the Council's Environmental Safety wardens also undertake enforcement activities.

Rehabilitation

West Lothian Council's Youth Justice team aims to respond to early identification of offending by young people, and to reduce offending behaviour through family and parental support, group work and encouraging young offenders to address the causes and consequences of their offending behaviour. Referrals come from a number of sources including the criminal justice system where the team aims to reduce the number of probation orders being breached by young people. Referrals increased from 331 in 2006 to 408 in 2007.

Planned developments

During the course of 2008, Safer Neighbourhood Teams will become operational in each of West Lothian's locality planning areas. The locality planning partners will be involved in deciding the priorities for the SNT in their area.

The partners involved in the Anti-social Behaviour Sub Group will build on their current information sharing protocols to involve more partner organisations. Sharing the right information with the right partners is a key factor in early intervention to prevent anti-social behaviour and in effective action to tackle its impact where it has already started.

The partners will develop a comprehensive Anti-social Behaviour Strategy for West Lothian in the course of 2008. The Strategy will provide a comprehensive overview of anti-social behaviour in West Lothian, and the current and planned response by the community safety partners.

Key indicators :

Number of anti-social behaviour crimes (broken down by locality planning areas)

Number of people (victims and offenders) affected by anti-social behaviour

% of residents who feel safe in their local neighbourhood

Number of partners involved in information sharing protocols.

Preventable injuries and deaths

Whilst recognising that the overall numbers of unintentional injuries for both deaths and emergency hospital admissions have been decreasing over the years, unintentional injury remains one of the main causes of death and is one of the more common causes of emergency hospital admissions in children. Unintentional injuries are also a common cause of emergency hospital admissions and deaths among adults aged over 65 years.

Historically, Scotland has higher levels of many categories of preventable injuries and deaths than the rest of the UK and other countries in Western Europe. In order to address this there is a need for better co-ordination of efforts at a local level through targeted intervention, which is based on clear evidence and data.

The risk of unintentional injury in childhood increases with increasing socio-economic deprivation. Some categories of preventable injuries and deaths, for example those resulting from household fires and injuries in the home to pre 5 children, can be linked directly to deprivation. Across the UK, children of parents who have never worked, or who have been unemployed for a long time, are 13 times more likely to die from unintentional injury than children of parents in higher managerial and professional occupations (Audit Commission).

Older people and pre 5 children are more likely to suffer preventable injuries and deaths than the general population, for example through falls (in the case of older people), and accidents in the home (pre 5 children).

The Risk Factory, Scotland's first purpose built safety centre, opened in 2007 as a partnership between West Lothian Council, the other three local authorities in the Lothians (East Lothian, Edinburgh and Midlothian), Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, and Lothian and Borders Police.

The Factory provides high quality interactive community safety education for Primary 7 children across 11 safety scenarios. We aim to achieve and maintain participation by all West Lothian primary schools in the Factory's programme.

Alcohol abuse is a major contributing factor across a number of categories of preventable injuries and deaths including household accidents and fire and road traffic accidents.

The main categories of preventable injuries and deaths which are addressed in this Strategy include

- injuries in the home which result in children under 5 attending hospital accident and emergency units
- falls affecting older people
- injuries and deaths resulting from road traffic accidents
- injuries and deaths resulting from fires
- suicides and attempted suicides.

Some of these injuries are relatively minor. They are often dealt with by A & E departments and in GP surgeries and may result in no more than inconvenience and short term adjustments in the lives of the people concerned. Others are serious and can have very profound and long-term consequences for the people directly involved, their families, and in some extreme cases, entire communities. In addition to their direct consequences for individuals and families, preventable injuries and deaths are a longer-term quality of life issue.

West Lothian has been successful in recent years in reducing most categories of preventable injuries and deaths, mostly through programmes of partnership-based preventative work targeted both at the general population and at specific localities, age groups and households who may be more vulnerable.

This Community Safety Strategy recognises the achievements of recent years and aims to build on the lessons learned to continue to reduce preventable injuries and deaths through a mix of general preventative work and more targeted approaches.

Pre 5s in the home

The Staysafe project has been operational since 2000. The project aims to continue to reduce home accidents involving pre-school children by providing free and low cost safety equipment, and by raising awareness of risk factors. Staysafe targets families with pre-school children receiving means-tested benefits. Training professionals and voluntary organisations working with families with young children gets the home safety message across to families.

The number of pre 5 children attending St John's A & E following a home accident fell from 1,281 in 2005 to 1,082 in 2007. The number of admissions fell from 102 in 2006 to 72 in 2007.

Key indicators :

Number of pre 5 children attending A & E, and number admitted to hospital as a result

Number of burn and scald injuries and poisonings to pre 5 children

Road safety

Work to reduce the death and injury toll on our roads has been ongoing for well over 30 years. In 2000, the government published national targets for road casualty reduction by 2010 in comparison to the 1994-98 averages. Local partner agencies in West Lothian are all committed to trying to achieve these targets locally. The targets are:

- a 40% reduction in killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties
- a 50% reduction in child KSI casualties
- a 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate.

The number of KSI casualties has fallen from an average of 95 in the early nineties to 68 in 2007 – a reduction of nearly 30%. Whilst the trend in KSI casualties is downwards, there is a risk that we will not meet the national target of a 40% reduction by 2010. The other targets are more likely to be met.

The West Lothian Road Safety Plan 2006-2010 sets out how the Council and its partner agencies aim to meet the targets. The plan is reviewed annually, based on progress to date and available resources. Regular update reports are presented to West Lothian Council and will be presented in future to the Community Safety Forum.

The focus of the plan is on the three “e”s – **engineering, education and enforcement.**

The bulk of financial resource is spent on engineering measures, targeting locations where tried and tested engineering measures can be implemented to reduce

identifiable accident patterns. This approach has been shown, over a number of years, to be very effective at reducing accident numbers and casualties.

Education and enforcement campaigns are very resource intensive, and the benefits are difficult to measure. It is therefore important to target resources very clearly.

Local data suggest that over 40% of all fatal and serious accidents involve a driver under the age of 25. The majority of those drivers are male. Therefore, this group is a key target group for our education and enforcement work.

Key indicators :

Numbers killed and seriously injured (KSI) in road accidents

Children killed and seriously injured (KSI) in road accidents

The slight casualty rate (expressed as numbers of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres)

Fire

West Lothian's performance in delivering a co-ordinated preventative programme is amongst the most impressive in Scotland. The programme includes education, community activities, safety checks and the fitting of smoke alarms. Since 2004, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service has delivered more than 32,000 safety packs to homes in West Lothian; completed 8,000 home safety checks; and fitted 9,000 smoke alarms.

Over this period, there have been reductions in secondary fires, and fire casualties and deaths, but accidental dwelling fires have remained at about the same level.

Improved fire safety information and activities for older people has been identified as a priority for 2008/09 and beyond.

Key indicator :

Incidence of home fires resulting in death or injury

Suicides and attempted suicides

Suicide has a devastating impact on families, friends, communities, workplaces and services. Suicide is a complex issue, often caused by a combination of factors and circumstances including, but not limited to, mental illness, poverty, substance misuse, social isolation, loss, relationship difficulties, crime and workplace problems.

Choose Life was launched in 2002 as part of the government's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being. It is a ten-year strategy, with the goal of reducing the suicide rate in Scotland between 2002 and 2013 by 20%, supported by having 50% of key frontline staff trained in using suicide assessment tools/suicide prevention training programmes by 2010.

Choose Life West Lothian is supported by a multi-agency steering group made up from statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. It reports to the Health Improvement and Health Equality Group within the Community Planning structure.

Key indicator:

To reduce suicide rates (per 100,000 in West Lothian between 2002 and 2011 by 20%

The baseline is 15.9/100,000 and the target is 12.7/100,000

New and additional priorities

In the 2008 to 2011 period, we expect the current range of valuable preventative work to continue, and for the results to be reported through the community safety reporting structures.

However, the evidence base demonstrates the need for greater emphasis to be placed on

- prevention of falls, specially for older people
- additional work to prevent accidents to pre 5 children in the home, especially in the most deprived communities.

Prevention of falls

As more people live longer lives, and more older people are able to live in the community, independently or with support, there is a need to review services to ensure that they are responding to these social trends.

Within the context of unintentional injuries, in 2006/07, 57% of all adult emergency hospital admissions as a result of falls were for those aged 65 years and over. 260 West Lothian residents aged over 75 were emergency hospital admissions as a result of falls. In 2006, 84% of all adult deaths as a result of falls (10 out of 13 deaths) were those aged 65 years and over.

West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) has recently committed to the development of a 24 hour crisis response service for people being cared for in a community setting. The staff team includes a Falls Co-ordinator.

The community safety processes will ensure that other agencies are aware of this initiative and are able to support it where possible. There is also a need to examine the level of fall prevention work for older people and other vulnerable people who are living independently in the community.

Key indicator :

Reduction in the numbers of older people admitted to hospital as a result of a fall

Pre 5s in the home

Examination of the data relating to pre-school children attending St John's Accident and Emergency suggests that there is a need for more targeted preventative work relating to burns and scalds and poisonings. In 2007, there were 72 attendances relating to burns and scalds, and 68 relating to poisonings. The most common causes of poisonings were household chemicals and analgesia.

Staysafe proposes to expand the range of products it makes available to eligible families to include

- anti-scald triangles for the bath and anti-scald stickers for hot equipment such as cookers and kettle
- lockable medicine boxes.

Key indicator :

Numbers of pre 5 children attending St. John's A & E as a result of burns and scalds, and poisonings

Violence and crime

This Strategy focuses on violence and crime which damage or threaten community safety. This includes all crimes which cause harm to individuals or undermine people's sense of security in their homes and their wider communities. It also includes violent and criminal activity which may not be reported to the Police.

Reported violent crime has dropped in each of the last four years while solvency has always remained in excess of 60%. Similar drops have been experienced in the other crime categories, although there was a slight increase in year 2006/2007 from previous year figures in relation to sexual crime and the groups of crime which include vandalism. In the year 2007/2008 however, all recorded crime categories have shown a reduction in recorded crime levels from four years ago. Break-ins to domestic dwellings have also seen a significant and general downward trend over the previous four/five years.

Research throughout the UK has confirmed that the level of reported crimes of violence seriously underrepresents the extent of violent behaviour in the community (confirmed locally by data from the alcohol and violence research described above, and nationally by the Scottish Crime Survey). Research also shows that effective support for victims increases individual and public confidence to report crime.

The key priorities of Lothian and Borders Police include

- serious violence
- drugs
- public protection – vulnerable adults/ domestic abuse/child protection
- anti-social behaviour
- hate crime (a specific West Lothian priority).

Lothian and Borders Police are committed to crime prevention and early intervention based on intelligence gathering, and enforcement. The Police will continue to acquire and develop intelligence on violent criminals and locations where violent incidents occur and focus police activity in line with identified trends and patterns of violence.

An example of preventative work done by the Police is the help given to design professionals to produce building plans which are likely to prevent or reduce crime. The Police have also developed the "Best Bar None" initiative working with the licensed trade to promote best practice in pubs and clubs.

Onward referral to Victim Support and other agencies ensures that the needs of victims of crime are addressed.

There is a significant level of partnership work through Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to protect vulnerable people and the general public from violent and sexual offenders.

In the longer term, the partners intend to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviours which make violence an acceptable response in some communities and for some families and individuals. This is a long term project which will involve all the Community Safety Forum partners and will be developed as this Strategy is implemented. In the shorter term, we will explore the potential for developing a multi-agency violence reduction strategy.

Four specific areas of activity have been identified for immediate and continued action over the lifetime of this Strategy. These action areas have been selected because

- there are identified problems or gaps in services
- they fit with other priorities identified in the Single Outcome Agreement
- partnership working has the potential to make a real difference on these issues to an extent that no single partner organisation working in isolation could achieve.

The four specific priority areas are

- domestic abuse
- hate crimes
- violence and crimes that target vulnerable people or groups
- young people

Domestic abuse

Given the high incidence and pervasive and harmful impact of domestic abuse on individuals, families and communities, West Lothian Community Planning Partners identified domestic abuse as a high priority for Community Safety at a partners meeting in January 2008.

The Police Domestic Abuse Liaison Officer in West Lothian processes around 200 incidents per month, with approximately 85-100 child referrals to social work (involving 130-150 children).

The West Lothian Domestic Abuse Service (known as the DAS, established in 2007) was set up to develop an integrated response for those experiencing abuse, with a particular emphasis on improving services to children.¹ The West Lothian Domestic Abuse Screening Group, managed by the DAS, provides a multi-agency response to children identified as experiencing domestic abuse. In 2007-08, the Screening Group managed over 2100 referrals for more than 1800 West Lothian children. (Most referrals arise from police calls to domestic abuse incidents.)

The West Lothian Council Criminal Justice Social Work Service works with the full range of serious violent offenders on a statutory basis. This includes sexual offenders, those convicted of serious violence, life prisoners and domestic abuse perpetrators. Domestic abuse has posed a considerable challenge, as over the last 5 years this category of offender has increased from around 6% to around 25% of the workload of the Probation Supervision Team. Criminal Justice Social Work Service provides an intervention with domestic abuse perpetrators on orders on either a group or one to one basis.

Effective joined-up working offers an opportunity to enhance criminal justice outcomes for domestic abuse. This partnership includes the Police, the Procurator Fiscal, Women's Aid, and the Victim Support Witness Service. Effective actions to improve outcomes in this context, based on lessons from the evaluation of the domestic abuse court in Glasgow and elsewhere, include

- immediate and sustained support to survivors throughout the court process, including support to help them provide accurate and consistent testimony

¹ It is important to note that West Lothian established a Violence against Women Strategic Group in 2007 to take forward the broadening of the anti-violence agenda and in particular to address the serious gap in services for rape and sexual assault survivors. Identifying domestic abuse as a strategic priority reflects a commitment to making particular progress (and delivering related outcomes) that builds on strong existing relationships; the strategic work on the broadened agenda will continue as part of our core commitments.

- enhanced evidence collection
- rapid prosecution of the case
- better partnership working with sheriffs.

Key indicators :

Convictions as a % of prosecutions

% of reported incidents going to prosecution

Rate of re-offending

Hate crimes

A hate crime is any crime or incident which is motivated by the prejudice of the offender against the victim. Examples include crimes where the offender is motivated by racism, prejudice against people because of their religion, prejudice against people because they have a disability or prejudice against someone because of their sexual orientation.

The recorded level of hate crimes in West Lothian is low (228 in 2006/07), but partners believe that this is, to a large extent, due to under-reporting of such crimes.

West Lothian Community Planning Partnership has adopted a Hate Crime Victim Care Policy which addresses information sharing and support for repeat or vulnerable victims of these crimes. A multi-agency Hate Crimes Working Group co-ordinates this work.

Our objectives for hate crime include:

- in the course of 2008/09 and 2009/2010, we will review and renew the current remote reporting system which aims to promote recording of hate crimes and take action to make it more effective
- we will identify hate crime cases of young offending reported to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), fast-track cases, design and deliver a multi-agency response.

- we will examine the lack of reports to SCRA of children as victims of hate crime.
- in the medium term, we will work to secure integration of work on hate crimes with mainstream equality and diversity work across partner organisations and within the Community Safety Forum.

Key indicators:

Levels of repeat offending and repeat victims

More effective reporting of hate crimes (indicator to be developed)

Integration of hate crimes work and mainstream equality/diversity work (indicator to be developed)

Crimes that target vulnerable people or groups

Vulnerable people and groups are often the victims of crime, and are often preyed upon by certain types of criminals. The types of crime which fall into this category change over time as social trends develop and society changes. For example, certain types of crimes against older people, people with mental illness, and people with physical and learning disabilities have been a concern for many years, and will continue to be so. People trafficking, trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation, and crime against migrant workers have become much more significant in recent years due to the expanding global sex industry, the enlargement of the European Union, changes in the labour market and changing patterns of migration.

Being vulnerable may mean that a victim of crime may suffer injury or harm where a less vulnerable person may not, and the impact of crimes can be particularly severe for some vulnerable people.

Lothian and Borders Police will respond to all reports of criminal activity. There are however, some categories of crimes against vulnerable people where multi-agency work can help to prevent or tackle criminal activity. These include

- Doorstep crime. Some criminals target vulnerable older people, often through bogus calling at their homes. We will design and implement a multi-agency approach which provides doorstep skills for older people.

- Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation. A multi-agency protocol for delivering services to women and children in West Lothian who have been trafficked is currently being developed. The protocol will need to be agreed, implemented and reviewed by key partners, in particular, West Lothian Council, the Community Health and Care Partnership, and Lothian and Borders Police.

Key indicators :

Door step crimes against older people

Partner organisations adopting and implementing the protocol for delivering services to women and children in West Lothian who have been trafficked

Young people

Although young people are often depicted as the instigators of crime and anti-social behaviour, they are more likely to be victims of crime than offenders. Some groups of young people will be more vulnerable than others – for example young people who have been in care, young people with disabilities and young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. Territorialism in certain areas of West Lothian may threaten the safety of young people and certainly reduces their quality of life.

Historically, the main community planning partners have not collected statistics on young people as victims of crime and anti-social behaviour so it is difficult to quantify the problem or to describe its specific characteristics. The Community Safety Strategic Assessment, which will be available early in 2009, will have a specific focus on young people and the community safety issues they face.

When the data from that assessment are available, we will develop the community safety action plan to address the issues of young people as victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.

6. Community safety strategic assessment

West Lothian Council is in the process of commissioning consultants to deliver a community safety strategic assessment. The overall purpose of the exercise is to assemble and develop datasets which will inform policy development, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation in relation to the community safety services being delivered or planned by the Council and its Community Planning partners.

The consultants will examine the availability and fitness for purpose of existing datasets relating to anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths, and violence and crime and will carry out additional primary research where it is necessary and appropriate. The data from the assessment will inform action planning in year two of the Strategy and will be central to the second version of the Strategy which will be developed in 2010/11. The data will also contribute to the developing Anti-social Behaviour Strategy.

Appendix : Community safety in the community planning structures

