



# **Bedfordshire Victim Needs Assessment**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**May – August 2015**

Shirley Magilton  
Sam Goodby

In April 2015, Police and Crime Commissioners became responsible for commissioning services for victims to enable them to 'cope and recover' from the effects of the crime. This Needs Assessment was undertaken between May and July 2015 to identify information on victims of key priority crimes, prevalence and existing service provision to support them. This is not a definitive document but rather 'a starting point'. It does however provide a wealth of facts that can inform future commissioning decisions and fascinating data that ranges from policy to operational details. It must be stressed from the very outset however, that nationally all crimes are significantly under-reported (approximately 40% are reported to the Police<sup>1</sup>) so it is difficult to ascertain a true picture of prevalence and thus plan for services to meet need. The following data begins to build up a picture:

- Victim based crime in Bedfordshire is 90% of all crimes (higher than the national average of 83%).<sup>2</sup>
- Bedfordshire recorded 62 offences per 1,000 population in 2014, the same as the national average.
- Victimization rates in Luton are 61 per 1,000 population (2010-15) - 47 per 1,000 in the rest of the county.
- Individuals more likely to be a victim of 'all crimes' are male, 20-35 years and from a Black ethnic background. Less likely are females, under 18 or over 55 years, from Mixed or Other ethnic backgrounds.
- Extrapolating from national data, the estimated number of victims with 'needs' ranges from 18,682 (CSEW) to 7,222 (Police Recorded Crime data).
- Bedfordshire is one of the most ethnically diverse Police Force areas nationally with variations between areas. More people in Bedfordshire do not have English as their first language than nationally; just over 20% in Luton. In addition, a quarter of all areas in Luton are in the top 20% most deprived (Index of Multiple Deprivation)

*The rest of this section presents the key findings of the quantitative and qualitative research. Many thanks go to over 50 professionals who were keen to contribute to this report. And most importantly, the victims who have allowed their stories to be told.*

### **Overall stakeholder views on commissioning and service delivery**

Stakeholders considered that strategic vision needed to be clearer and more 'joined up'; pan county strategies such as for Hate Crime were seen as the most effective way to support victims. Similarly, commissioning effectiveness was thought to be undermined by a lack of joined up, transparent working between organisations and between areas when appropriate. This sometimes put agencies in competition with each other, rather than working towards a shared goal. Provision of services was not equitable across areas – Luton has significantly greater provision. In addition, support for low to medium risk victims was less available. Despite this, there was clear evidence of functioning historical and emerging local partnerships.

Many examples of excellent service delivery were identified with committed staff with high levels of expertise – often working to the limits of their capacity. However, there was evidence that agencies did not always know what each other did, resulting in loss of potential support for victims. For victims, obtaining information about where to access support may be confusing – especially where agencies overlap with similar services. Interviewees highlighted that barriers to service access including lack of acknowledgement of what constituted a crime and cultural issues. Support for victims with No Recourse to Public Funds is a significant problem as is re-housing victims following refuge stays, due to legislative changes.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/stb-crime-march-2015.html>

<sup>2</sup> Inspire

## A. **DOMESTIC ABUSE: Bedfordshire - key points**

*Nationally, Government figures suggest that 1 in 4 women at least will be a victim of Domestic Abuse in their lifetimes. An estimated 14.7% of men have experienced Domestic Abuse since the age of 16 years (ONS 2014).<sup>3</sup>*

**Pan-county working:** Domestic Abuse is a priority in all CSP plans. Bedfordshire has a dedicated, weekly county Domestic Violence Court at Luton Magistrates Court. The Bedfordshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership brings together statutory and voluntary agencies. A MARAC is held in each area and each area has a Domestic Abuse Coordinator.

**Crime profile:** In 2014/15 Bedfordshire Police recorded nearly 11,000 Domestic Abuse *incidents*; 4,000 (approx 40%) were *crimes*. This resulted in 4,274 *victims* (25% increase since 2013/14), equivalent to 7 victims per 1,000 population. Domestic Abuse accounted for 11% of all crimes. 77% of crimes were committed by partners or ex-partners.

- Domestic Abuse is significantly under-reported. If nationally 60% of Domestic Abuse incidents are not reported to the police – this could mean that there are 28,000 incidents in Bedfordshire (based on 2014/15 Police data). Or, using CSEW and census data, 69,900 women and 35,200 men might be victims.
- 15% of risk assessed Domestic Abuse incidents were identified as high risk and 67% as medium risk.
- Likelihood of being a victim of Domestic Abuse includes being female, particularly aged 20-35 years.
- Repeat victimisation accounted for 60% of Domestic Abuse incidents. (ONS 2015)
- **MARAC:** 507 cases were referred to Luton MARAC, 305 to Central Bedfordshire and 259 to Bedford Borough in 2014/15. A total of 1,589 children were living in households on the MARAC caseloads.

### **Examples of service provision**

- **IDVAs:** Bedford Borough IDVAs received 229 referrals in 2014/15, Central 254 and Luton 769. In all areas the main ethnicity was White British and aged 20 to 40 years. Bedford Borough and Central take only MARAC cases, but Luton can take other cases. Luton IDVAs attended Children's Centres to increase accessibility for Asian women and the Luton and Dunstable Maternity Dept. to raise awareness.
- Luton All Women's Centre has significant numbers of Pakistani women accessing their service.
- Victim Support receive referrals for all Domestic Violence victims scoring less than 14 on the DASH score. Last year, 190 such victims were supported.
- The Bobby Scheme provides security support following assessments of property.
- ACCM works with victims of Domestic Violence that may be entwined with Honour Based Violence and received 43 referrals from Asian ethnicity women last year.
- Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire CCGs are to flag patient's notes to indicate Domestic Violence.

---

<sup>3</sup> HM Government (2010) Call to end violence against women and girls; strategic vision <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategic-vision>

## Issues

- Commissioning lacked transparency and collaboration causing disconnected and inequitable provision.
- Awareness training needed to be delivered continuously to catch all non-specialist staff in agencies.
- For some victims, agency support was perceived as 'Police' forming a barrier to access.
- Substance misuse was reported as frequently used as a 'coping mechanism' for Domestic Abuse victims.
- A small cohort, usually with complex needs, was presenting frequently with repeat victimisation and required a different way of working to reduce incidence of victimisation.

## Gaps in provision or uptake was highlighted for:

- Low-medium risk victims to prevent risk escalation.
- Victims not wanting to go down a Criminal Justice route.
- Children who had witnessed Domestic Violence.
- Schools based programmes.
- Victims with No Recourse to Public Funds.
- Men, victims with disabilities and LGBT victims.

## B. **SEXUAL VIOLENCE: Bedfordshire - key points**

*Nationally, the number of Rape offences recorded by the Police between April 2014 and March 2015 increased by 41% to 29,265.<sup>4</sup>*

**Pan-county work:** The Bedfordshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership brings together statutory and voluntary agencies. Only Central Bedfordshire has a Sexual Violence Coordinator. SOVA reported 27 investigations completed for alleged Sexual Abuse of adults with a Learning Disability in 2014/15.

**Crime profile:** Serious Sexual Offences accounted for 80% of 'All Sexual Offences' recorded by Bedfordshire Police (2014/15), resulting in 650 victims.

- Despite under-reporting, 'All Sexual Offences' rose by 32% in 2013/14 in Bedfordshire. As nationally, this is partly due to the effect of high profile cases and reporting of historical cases.
- Likelihood of being a victim of Serious Sexual Offence includes being female and aged under 30 years.
- **SARAC:** The SARAC is only used by Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. Low referrals from Bedford Borough (6 in 2014/15 compared to 18 from Central) may be due to a lack of promotion and 'champion'.

## Examples of service provision

- Central Bedfordshire CCG has commissioned a one-year Domestic and Sexual Abuse victim's counsellor.
- Luton Street Sex Worker Initiative is a multi-agency five year strategy to tackle street prostitution and Sexual Violence; this cohort also presents with entrenched substance misuse problems. The initiative has close links with CSE work to ensure exploited children do not become street prostitutes.
- Sorted and the Hope Programme provide countywide therapy for children and young people who are victims of Sexual Abuse. They are currently scoping and delivering further provision in

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/stb-crime-march-2015.html>

Bedford and rolling out to Central Bedfordshire. CHUMS Trauma Service provides this in Luton and Bedford Borough.

- The NSPCC run a specific 'Letting the Future In' programme for children with disabilities alongside their established programme. 33 children and young people from Luton accessed this in 2014/15.
- Victim Support report significant numbers of victims of historical abuse who take up their support.

### Issues

- Joined up commissioning is needed to combine Criminal Justice and Health funding, with an acknowledgement that many victims do not want to use the Criminal Justice route.
- The SARC has two ISVAs covering the county. Lack of service promotion may affect self-referrals and perception that it is 'Police' may also reduce referrals. 40% of SARC referrals were substance misusers.
- NSPCC intend to commence a programme for children and young people who have not disclosed abuse, but professionals think there is a high chance that this has occurred.

### Gaps in provision or uptake was highlighted for:

- LGBT groups
- Training and education in 'protective factors' and prevention were seen as key to reducing incidence of Sexual Violence – and should be part of all interventions.

### C. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: Bedfordshire - key points

*Nationally and locally, Child Sexual Exploitation is difficult to calculate; it includes a range of offences and data is not extensive or accurate.*

**Pan-county work:** Bedfordshire has a countywide, multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Panel. A countywide CSE Coordinator will be funded by the three Local Authorities and delivered through YouTurn. In 2014/15, the CSE Panel discussed 48 cases from Luton, 19 from Central Bedfordshire and 22 from Bedford Borough. The majority of cases are female, aged 14-16 years. Police and the LSCB are undertaking a review of referrals to ensure appropriate cases reach the Panel.

### Examples of service provision

- The NSPCC run the 'Protect and Respect' programme in Luton accessed by 29 young people in 2014/15.
- The Luton All Women's Centre has a dedicated CSE worker. They deliver 'This is Abuse' in schools and respond to safeguarding alerts from school staff.
- ACCM received 6 referrals in 2014/15 from male victims of CSE.

### Gaps and issues

- In Bedfordshire, there are very few referrals from health professionals to the CSE Panel.

### D. HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE: Bedfordshire - key points

**Crime profiles:** Honour Based Violence is frequently experienced with Domestic Abuse and/ or Sexual Violence. Bedford and Luton and Dunstable Hospitals reported 30 cases in 6 months up to March 2015. Nationally, the Fixed Marriage Unit supported 1,302 cases in 2013.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/322307/HMG\\_MULTI\\_AGENCY\\_PRACTICE\\_GUIDELINES\\_v1\\_180614\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf)

### Examples of service provision

- ACCM deliver support to women by first building up trust within their communities by facilitating weekly 'generic' health, fitness and nutrition sessions. Of 43 victims who self-referred due to Domestic Violence – all were victims of Forced Marriage. There were an additional 12 referrals for FGM.
- Luton All Women's Centre have a Forced Marriage lead worker; the agency deliver The Owl Project covering early interventions (including awareness raising in schools), crisis interventions and recovery work. 55 enquires to their general phone number were about Forced Marriage in 2014/15. An additional 61 were for Honour Based Violence.

### E. HATE CRIME: Bedfordshire - key points

**Pan county work:** Bedfordshire has a multi-agency countywide Hate Crime Partnership and Strategy.

**Crime profiles:** In 2014/15 Bedfordshire Police recorded 775 Hate *incidents*, of which 513 were *crimes* resulting in 505 *victims*.

- The Bedfordshire Hate Crime rate of .83 per 1000 population is higher than the .75 national rate.
- If only half of all Hate incidents are reported (CSEW)<sup>6</sup> this equates to 2,250 victims per year in Bedfordshire.
- Race was the overwhelming motivating factor for Hate incidents in Bedfordshire (91.6% in 2014/15).
- Half of all Hate incidents in Bedfordshire are in Luton (49.5% in 2014/15).
- The likelihood of being a victim of Hate incidents increases for individuals aged 25-44 from Black or Asian backgrounds. Although there are more male than female victims, this is not statistically significant.

### Examples of service provision

- The Bobby Scheme assesses victim's property for practical security measures.

### Issues

- Victims often 'normalise' Hate Crime, or confuse it as ASB.
- Embrace Life highlighted Hate Crime incidents against gay men and those who were HIV+.

### F. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: Bedfordshire - key points

**Pan-county work:** All three areas have ASB Teams. The countywide ASB Assessment Conference (ASBRAC) hears cases of high risk or vulnerability.

**Crime profile:** There were 20,748 incidents of ASB in 2014/15 – 34 incidents per 1000 population – 6% increase.

- According to CSEW estimates, 28% of the national adult population have experienced ASB.<sup>7</sup> This equates to 136,420 affected adults in Bedfordshire. Drink related behaviour is the most commonly cited issue.
- ASB acts 'like a magnet' for other crimes; 42% of victims of 'all crimes' were a victim of ASB in the same 12 months. (CSEW)<sup>8</sup>

### Examples of service provision

<sup>6</sup> College of Policing (2014) p48

<sup>7</sup> ONS (2015) Table 25 ONS *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending September 2014* [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778\\_392380.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_392380.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> ONS (2014) Table D10 *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending March 2014* [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778\\_371127.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_371127.pdf)

- Luton has an ASB ‘Champion’ and Central Bedfordshire a Victim Support ‘ASB Vulnerable Adults worker’. Both deal with high risk and vulnerability.
- The Bobby Scheme assesses victim’s property for practical security measures.

#### **G. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: Bedfordshire - key points**

**Pan-county work:** Youth Offending Services deliver Restorative Justice throughout the county. Wellspring are delivering a Restorative Justice pilot, starting in Luton but with a county roll-out.

#### **Issues**

- Restorative Justice takes a significant time to arrange to ensure safeguarding is appropriate.

#### **H. GENERIC SERVICES: Bedfordshire - key points**

**Examples of service provision:** A wide range of non-specialist services work with victims including: Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA), Victim Support, CHUMS, 4YP, Neighbourhood Watch, Mind, Substance Misuse Treatment Services and IAPT. Victim Support report that about 1 in 5 victims that are referred to them, take up the service (all crimes).

**Issues:** A significant number of victims of certain crimes such as Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence also have substance misuse problems. Translation is an ongoing concern.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
------------------------

Based on the evidence gained for this Needs Assessment, the following recommendations are made:

**Data and evidence gathering:** Continued and improved data gathering on prevalence and profiles is required to ensure provision is based on need; a robust activity dataset should be established and used for all services funded by the OPCC.

**Commissioning:** An increased commitment to joint and ‘joined up’, transparent commissioning is needed to ensure equitable service provision for the entire county that can also respond to specific area need. This should ensure that services are available for victims using Criminal Justice and non-Criminal Justice pathways. Improved links with health commissioning are required.

**Pan county strategy and champions:** Pan-county strategies are clearly valued; it is recommended that a strategic model of an overall county ‘champion’ per crime type is appointed together with area-specific ‘champions’ feeding into local multi-agency partnerships to ensure a proactive and joined up response.

**Low and medium risk levels:** It is recommended that provision ensures that low and medium risk victims can still access support to avoid potential escalation to greater risk.

**High risk repeat victimisation cases:** For all types of crime, especially Domestic Abuse, a small cohort of already high risk victims frequently report repeat incidents. This cohort requires a new model of intensive partnership working developing to reduce incidence and ‘pull’ on agency resources.

**Clustering:** Provision must acknowledge that many individuals are victims of a cluster of different crimes – such as Sexual Violence, Domestic Abuse and Honour Based Violence – and service delivery should be victim rather than crime-led in how they support an individual.

**Preventative work in schools:** Given that girls aged 14-16 years are at a high risk of victimisation of Sexual Violence and in some areas, Honour Based Crimes – partnerships need to proactively work with schools, colleges and academies to improve the take up of preventative programmes. In addition,

preventative work must tackle the 'normalisation' of peer to peer criminal behaviour. Bedfordshire's population of children and young people is higher than the national average and adequate service provision must be available for this age group.

**Children witnessing Domestic Abuse:** Good work is already taking place in the county, but it must reach all relevant children and young people in order to help them build healthy relationships themselves.

**Removing barriers to access:** Commissioning and delivery must strive to remove possible barriers to access. These may be due to diversity, culture, gender, sexuality, service structures or geography and need to be overcome with creative 'outside the box' thinking. This includes promoting the SARC to self-referring victims, and the Child Sexual Exploitation Panel to Health professionals.

**Post refuge re-housing:** Although difficult, strategic discussions are required to work out how to alleviate the 'bottle neck' that refugees experience regarding moving women on from their accommodation.

**Victim consultation:** This Needs Assessment was not able to comprehensively gather victim views. It is recommended that a plan is developed for a countywide victim consultation. The information gathered then must feed directly into service provision.

**Witness consultation:** Neither was this Needs Assessment able to investigate witness issues. Again, it is recommended that this is undertaken through a countywide consultation.

**Action Plan:** The above recommendations cannot all be actioned immediately. The OPCC therefore needs to develop a stepped action plan that clearly states how and when recommendations will be tackled.

# Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire

Bridgebury House  
Woburn Road  
Kempston  
Bedfordshire  
MK43 9AX

Email: [pcc@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pcc@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)  
Tel: 01234 842066 [www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk)