

Tilley Award 2006

Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the Guidance. Please complete the following form in full and within the word limit. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to Tricia Perkins; patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All entries must be received by noon on Friday 28th April 2006. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262. Any queries regarding other aspects of the awards should be directed to Michael Wilkinson on 0207 035 0247 or Lindsey Poole on 0207 035 0234.

Please tick box to indicate whether the entry should be considered for the main award, the criminal damage award or both;

Main award

Criminal Damage Award

Both Awards

1. Details of application

Title of the project

SAL'S PLACE (SAFE AT LAST)

Name of force/agency/CDRP: **Lancashire Constabulary/Lancaster District Community Safety Partnership**

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors): **Inspector Steve Anderton**

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Acting Deputy Chief Constable Adrian Mc Allister

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Acting Deputy Chief Constable – HQ Corporate Services Directorate

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s)

Lancashire Constabulary HQ, PO Box 77, Hutton, Preston, Lancs PR4 5SB

2. Summary of application

In no more than 400 words please use this space to describe your project. Include details of the problem that was addressed a description of the initiative, the main intervention principles and what they were designed to achieve, the main outcomes of project particularly in relation to the problem, evidence was used in designing the programme and how the project is evaluated.

Lancaster District had the highest rate of Domestic Violence (DV) reporting in Lancashire. A fragmented approach was in place between organisations assisting DV victims. Victims often having to relay their story several times.

The average rate for reported incidents of domestic violence in Lancashire 2003/04 was 10.4 per 1000 population. The Lancaster average was 16.4.

On average 12 DV incidents are reported daily to Lancaster Police. Research indicates that less than 35% of actual domestic violence is reported to the police, some surveys put it as low as 11%. SAL's Place aims to improve that figure.

A large proportion were repeat DV victims, often abused more than three times. The number of known repeat victims in the District increased from 109 in 2001 to 352 in 2003.

There is a way out from a Domestic abuse situation. Victims needed somewhere to go where their problem would be faced in a compassionate way.

Multi-agency meetings involving relevant stakeholders took place and the idea of SAL's Place, a one-stop domestic abuse centre was developed. The Project Implementation Team identified a business case, project risks, costs, timescales and responsibilities. Funding was secured, a project manager sourced and suitable accommodation identified.

St. Leonard's House was chosen due to its' proximity to the town centre, transport links and affordability. The premises were refurbished in a client friendly manner to create an informal atmosphere, equipped with IT and made secure.

Information-sharing protocols were agreed and client consent forms, child protection policy and process map were drawn up. Agencies identified existing staff to work within SAL's, created an appointment timetable for surgeries and a client liaison post was established.

A communications strategy was devised including development of an internet site and publicity materials. A high profile launch including media coverage was organised.

Funding was secured for Lancaster University to provide an evaluation of the project using an action research model.

The 'one-stop shop' facility has established clearer links and improved communication with referral agencies for victims of domestic abuse. Improved quality and sharing of information between agencies has provided a much more cohesive service. Repeat victimisation in the district has reduced in the last year.

Information provided to the evaluators, including a comment '*I really felt that without this place they wouldn't have got free of their situation...*' has demonstrated an increase in satisfaction and confidence of victims due to the improved quality of service provided.

3. Description of project

Describe the project following the guidance given in no more than 4000 words (excl. footnotes and appendices)

SCANNING

The Problem

Domestic Violence exists in all communities across the world. Due to its nature it is a 'hidden crime': it occurs behind closed doors within a private setting, making it difficult to judge the exact levels being experienced. Research indicates that victims will have suffered 35 instances of domestic violence before they make a complaint with only 20% of victims ever reporting the crime. Only 10% of domestic violence victims report incidents to the Police on the first occasion¹.

Evidence from America² suggests that the harder it is to report, the more people will be inclined to remain in a violent relationship. At present it could take up to five different visits to support services, to access and obtain the help and assistance needed.

During research for Lancaster District's Crime and Disorder Audit 2004, it became evident that the reported level of domestic violence in the Lancaster District was much higher than the Lancashire average, with some Wards experiencing double the Lancashire rate. This was not the case for all other types of crime. The statistical evidence, coupled with the national research (around domestic violence reporting) highlighted a significant ongoing problem for our district.

Wider issues

Domestic Violence presents communities with issues far wider than just the physical and emotional abuse the individual is experiencing. Those living in abusive relationships face decisions as to whether to tell anyone about their situation, who to confide in, as well as dealing with the logistical and emotional consequences of leaving a relationship.

Where there are children involved, this results in further consequences for both the family and for society as a whole. Children within the household may be witnessing or experiencing abuse themselves – concurrent child abuse and adult domestic violence is common. Witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse could have consequential affects on the child's ability to perform at school. Behavioural problems displayed by children who witness domestic violence include bullying, stealing and illegal substance misuse.³

¹ <http://www.met.police.uk/dv/index.htm>, accessed 29/04/05

² Presentation by representatives from San Diego Family Justice Centre, May 2004 to senior representatives of Lancashire Constabulary

³ McVeigh, Hughes, Bellis, Reed, Ashton and Syed; (March 2005), Violent Britain – People, Prevention and Public Health; Liverpool JMU; p.g. 37

Impact on resources

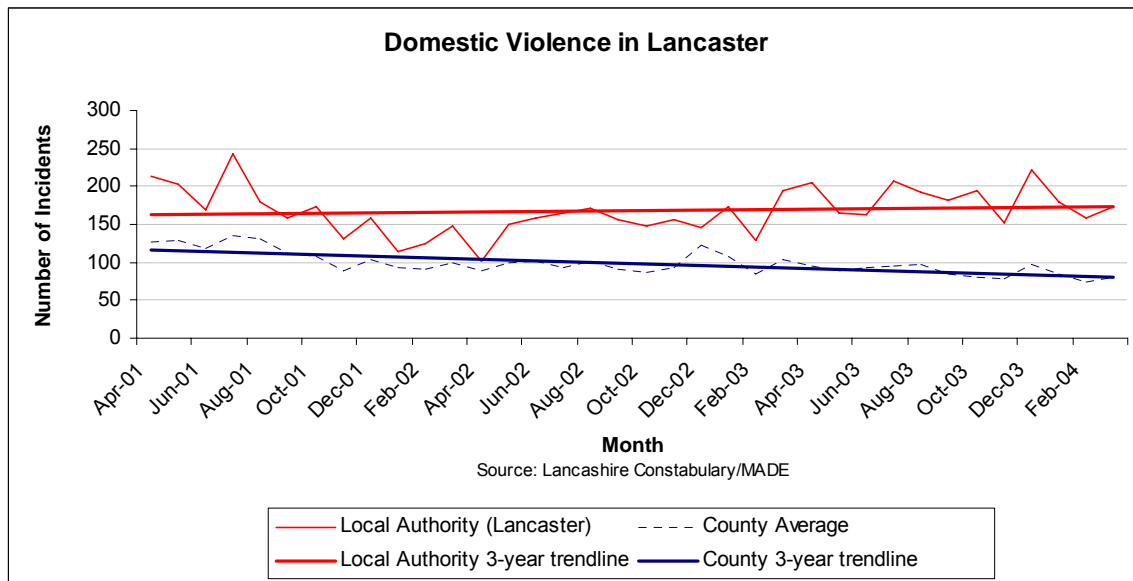
Whilst local agencies were committed to working together to reduce a shared problem, there was no cohesive operational working agreement in place. All partners agreed that the overall service provided for domestic violence could be improved. Existing practices resulted in victims having to trail between agencies to get the assistance they needed, relating their often painful circumstances numerous times. This situation caused further trauma to the victims, deterred them from attending appointments and in some cases resulted in a breakdown of cases being brought to justice or not being reported at all.

The high number of domestic violence incidents being reported to the Police meant that the Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLOs) were spending a significant amount of time on the support side of cases rather than focussing on the detection and prosecution of offenders.

ANALYSIS

Location

	April 2001 to March 2002	April 2002 to March 2003	April 2003 to March 2004
Number of Incidents	2017	1849	2195
Lancaster Rate per 000 Population	15.1	13.8	16.4
Lancashire (Rate per 000 Population)	13.2	11.6	10.4



Source: Lancashire Constabulary/MADE⁴

As the graph and table above demonstrate the Lancaster average was much higher and steadily increasing compared to the Lancashire average.

Six wards had a higher rate of domestic violence than the county average, in particular Dukes(20.35), Heysham Central(20.01) and Heysham South(19.00). Duke's ward(Lancaster Town Centre) has a relatively low population(2064) and is a very popular area for evening entertainment with its high volume of pubs and clubs. Time analysis has shown that the peak time for reported incidents of domestic violence is in the evening – around 9pm⁵.

⁴ Multi-Agency Data Exchange. Based within Lancashire County Council this project collates and disseminates crime and disorder statistics and analysis for all Lancashire district CDRPs.

⁵ Lancaster CSP Crime and Disorder Audit 2004, Safe and Secure Homes

On average 12 incidents of Domestic Violence are reported to Lancaster Police per day. Research tells us that less than 35% of actual Domestic Violence is reported to the police with some surveys putting it as low as 11%⁶. With significantly lower reporting by males, same sex partners and ethnic minorities.

Victim

▪ **The individual experiencing the abuse**

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence. Research shows the victim is usually female; one in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime⁷ and women aged 16-29 are at the greatest risk of experiencing domestic violence, with 40% starting during pregnancy. Women who are unemployed or housewives have been found to have the highest risk of domestic violence, but there are a number of ways this can link to vulnerability. These include a lack of financial resources to leave their relationship, greater social isolation, less access to informal and formal support networks and potentially more forms of abuse available to the perpetrator. Some victims from minority ethnic groups may experience particular social isolation due to racism, language, cultural, religious or immigration issues that can all be barriers to reporting violence or seeking help.⁸

▪ **Repeat victims**

The number of repeat victims in the district has increased over the past three years from 109 to 352. The Women in Safe Environments Survey found that 10% of all respondents in Lancaster had experienced Domestic Violence, only 36% had reported the crime and of these a large proportion were repeat victims, with repetition being more than three times. Victims of Domestic Violence are often not able to identify their situation. Those who have suffered from psychological abuse are often fearful of a future without the offender or they are unsure of who to turn to for support or the offender regains their trust and the victim retracts their complaint. Repeat victimisation is not helped by the lack of co-ordination and information sharing between agencies.

▪ **Children**

The person suffering the abuse is not the only 'victim' of Domestic Violence. In 2003/4 106,118 children received support for Domestic Violence in England⁹. Concurrent child abuse and adult domestic violence is also common. Antecedents to domestic homicide often include both a history of child abuse and a history of adult domestic violence in the family.¹⁰

⁶ Crime in England and Wales, Home Office, July 2002

⁷ Council of Europe 2002; BMA 1998; Home Office Research Study, 1999

⁸ ACPO (2004), Guidance on Investigating Domestic Violence, p.g. 30

⁹ www.thehideout.org.uk, accessed 29/04/2005

¹⁰ ACPO (2004), Guidance on Investigating Domestic Violence, p.g. 29

▪ **Local agencies**

The Home Office have estimated that domestic violence costs the country around £23bn a year, of which £3bn falls to public services¹¹. Domestic violence impacts on the resources and service delivery capabilities of local agencies.

Offender

Offenders of domestic violence are primarily male. It has been suggested that men in poverty show power through violence in the home. This is demonstrated locally with the highest number of incidences occurring in areas of social deprivation.

Offenders who have a history of physical and sexual assault or animal abuse are at the highest risk of committing domestic violence which results in harm or homicide. Other risk factors include substance misuse and mental health problems as well as previous criminality.

Years of systematic abuse can result in a victim retaliating and the victim could then become the offender.

¹¹ ¹¹ <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/dv01.htm>, accessed 11/04/06

RESPONSE

Domestic Violence is an issue that affects all agencies and therefore an issue that is ideally suited to Partnership working. To ensure an effective approach to tackling domestic violence it was essential that agencies were involved from the start of the response process.

Stakeholder agencies:

Lancashire Constabulary
Lancaster District Women's Aid
Sure Start
Morecambe Bay PCT
Morecambe Bay Hospitals Trust
Lancaster City Council
Citizens Advice Bureau
Family law solicitors
Victim Support
Male Rape Support Association
Witness Care Unit
Lancashire County Council
Lancashire Probation Service
Lancaster University



Learning from Existing Practice

A multi-agency meeting was arranged where the statistical analysis, current service provision, proposals of what could improve both the service to individuals and to reduce the damage caused by domestic violence on the community was discussed. Previously representatives from the Family Justice Centre in San Diego, America, had presented their experiences to senior officers of Lancashire Constabulary. This project involved all agencies of the criminal justice service in San Diego being co-located in one premise. Local agencies agreed that this would be an ideal model to replicate on a smaller scale in Lancaster.

Research was instigated on existing practice within the UK. 'My Sister's Place' in Middlesborough was visited by a multi-agency group to learn from their processes and experiences. Best practice on multi-agency working around domestic violence was also sourced from Cardiff.

Project Outcomes

Before the project was developed agencies agreed on the outcomes that the project had to meet. These were:

- To reduce the percentage of repeat domestic violence incidents
- To create clearer links and improved communication with referral agencies

- Improved quality of information between agencies resulting in improved interventions
- Co-ordinated approach and response by multi-agencies
- Improved quality of service and satisfaction to victims
- Improved confidence and experience for victims
- Improved confidence in the Criminal Justice System in the communities of the Lancaster District

SMART Targets

From these project outcomes, clear, specific and measurable **targets** were identified in order to assess the success of the project:

1. To increase the number of under-reported domestic abuse incidents (utilising the figures provided by the police from April 2004 – 31st March 2005 as a baseline). **10% increase in reports of domestic violence incidents** (April 2005 – 31st March 2006)
2. Reduce the number of repeat victims of domestic violence (utilising the figures provided by the police from April 2004 – 31st March 2005 as a baseline). **3% reduction in the number of repeat victims.** (April 2005 – 31st March 2006)

A further target was also agreed:

3. **Improved quality of service and satisfaction to victims**

Project Implementation

Multi-agency meetings involving the stakeholders took place and the idea of SAL's Place (Safe at Last) 'a one stop' domestic abuse support centre was developed. A project initiation document was drawn up identifying the business case, project risks, costs, timescales and individual responsibilities and an experienced project manager identified. It was agreed during early implementation meetings that the Police would act as the lead agency.

Funding

Funding was secured from various sources. The total cost of the project, in addition to the resources made in kind by individual agencies, amounted to £42,000. These costs included the refurbishment of the premises, IT and security, rent and ongoing costs to provide emergency client expenses and run the office.

Procedures

The service delivery of the project hinged on agreeing an information sharing protocol between agencies. Unlike in other similar projects in the UK, the Police were the lead agency in Lancaster. This provided new challenges to agencies and tested multi-agency working. To effectively manage these difficulties a [process map](#) was devised which clearly identified roles and responsibilities of agencies as well as the tracking the route any client accessing SAL's could take.

Due to the likelihood of children accessing SAL's a child protection policy was devised and implemented.

Human Resources

Officers from Lancashire Constabulary were identified from existing staff to work in SAL's, including a client liaison officer, a manager and a Domestic Violence Investigator (DVI). Lancaster District Women's Aid provided a member of their counselling staff to provide ongoing support and assistance to female clients. All these staff would be available during opening hours to work within SAL's. The centre is open between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday.

As well as staff based in SAL's on a day to day basis, other agencies agreed to conduct 'surgeries' at the centre. Based on an appointment timetable, clients requiring specialised support could return to the centre at a convenient time. Those agencies providing a surgery include: Lancaster City Council providing a homelessness surgery, local Family Law Solicitors, staff from the local Citizens Advice Bureau, Sure Start providing support for children and Victim Support available to provide support on a referral basis for male clients.

Lancaster District has recently opened a Witness Care Unit to support aggrieved parties and witnesses through the criminal justice system. The staff within this unit, from both the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, aim to increase the number of cases brought to justice and reduce witness retractions by offering their full support.

Relate Lancashire and Morecambe Bay PCT also agreed to provide support on a referral basis to their services.

Accessibility

The findings of the district analysis showed that the key to reporting incidents was the accessibility of the centre. Therefore a suitable venue needed to be identified which was accessible to all agencies, close to the town centre and transport links as well as being situated within affordable premises. Once the project team had identified such a location (within Duke's Ward), the premises were refurbished in a client friendly manner, to create an informal atmosphere, child friendly environment, equipped with IT and made secure.

Victims, both male and female, are able to contact the centre by phone, fax, e-mail, in person and also by text reporting. Leaflets were distributed widely and SAL's stickers placed on toilet doors in all pubs and clubs in the district to raise awareness of the high rate of domestic violence related incidences late at night. Links have been made to GP surgeries, hospitals and schools to provide a network of referral points.

Information leaflets on the services SAL's provides were translated into a number of languages, representatives from SAL's attended an Asian women's event and Polish translated leaflets were hand delivered across the West End of Morecambe (incl. Heysham South and Heysham Central Wards) to target immigrant families new to the area.

Media Strategy

A communications plan was devised including development of an internet site and publicity materials. A high profile launch including media coverage was organised. Sally Lindsay, a popular Coronation Street actress who was

playing the part of a domestic violence victim, agreed to participate in a promotional film. Ongoing publicity is provided by the Police's Communications Manager.

Various presentations at doctors' surgeries, workplaces and community groups were conducted to advertise the facility and raise awareness.

High Risk Client Meetings

Successful advocacy and crisis management was identified as good practice. Lancashire Constabulary introduced a risk assessment document for victims of domestic violence. SAL's clients that are classified as high risk are discussed by agencies at a monthly meeting and appropriate interventions are agreed.

Strategic Overview

The local Domestic Violence Forum's Executive Group act as the 'Project Board' providing strategic support, sourcing funding and promoting the service on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation

Funding was attained from the Lancashire Criminal Justice Board to enable an independent assessment of the project over the first twelve months of operating. Evaluators from Lancaster University's Department of Applied Social Science were employed early in the response stage.

Assessment

The evaluation remit was to assess the project and the implementation of SAL's. This aspect was proof of concept concentrating on the project outcomes and targets.

The targets that were identified and the statistical results are as follows:

- To increase reports of Domestic Violence incidents to the Police by 10% between April 2005 and March 2006 - the number of reports between April 2004 and March 2005 being 3449 compared to 3305 in 2005/6.
- To reduce the number of repeat victims by 3% between April 2005 and March 2006 – the number of repeat victims between April 2004 and March 2005 being 380 compared to 333 in 2005/6. Resulting in a 14% reduction of repeat victimisation.
- To improve the quality of service and satisfaction to victims – the feedback from clients and agency staff has evidenced a much improved quality of service able to be provided to victims in a much more cohesive approach.

The first target was intended to increase the awareness of domestic violence in the area. However, the considerable reduction in repeat victims has had a direct effect on the total number of incidents recorded. Such a significant reduction was not anticipated at the time of target setting. In terms of success, this is not seen as a negative result as the number of victims has reduced. The direction of Police DVIs has been much more offender focused resulting in a number of repeat offenders being imprisoned subsequently reducing the reporting of incidents and also repeat victimisation.

Whilst SAL's cannot be attributable to achieving the above targets alone, however, it has supported over 200 victims attending the centre, whilst also assisting many others who have received telephone advice. Extensive publicity has increased public awareness of domestic violence and has been directly linked to referrals from agencies.

Other project outcomes that have been achieved through the implementation of SAL's are:

- Clearer links and improved communication with referral agencies
- Improved quality of information between agencies resulting in improved interventions
- Coordinated approach and response by multi-agencies
- Improved confidence and experience for victims
- Improved confidence in the Criminal Justice system in the Lancaster district

Methodology

The researchers utilised an action research approach¹² - the evaluators continually considered the thoughts and perspectives of the professionals and the service users who are involved in the project at various levels. Written and verbal reports were submitted periodically during the early stages of SAL's. The combination of the rolling reports and discussions with the staff incorporated the evaluation into the development process of the project as a tool to reflect upon and inform the progress of SAL's. Clearly there were many advantages to this rolling evaluation as the evaluators provided regular information to the commissioning body and practitioners. This approach raised ongoing issues and examined the project's developmental phase in the kind of detail that would be lost in an end of project review. As such action research reports were useful to inform on the development of the project.

Methods employed included regular observation of the day to day business of SAL's; attendance and observation of meetings, including: Domestic Violence Executive Group, Domestic Violence Forum, high risk and any other relevant meetings; semi-structured interviews with project staff and the statutory and voluntary agencies engaging with SAL's; and monitoring data to identify patterns and trends.

Comments from an interview with a SAL's member of staff regarding the effect the centre has had on some of the clients were: *'I really have felt that without this place they wouldn't have got free of their situation.....we've been able to offer them support that they didn't realise was there...'*

She also related the case of a retired female client who had left a long term abusive situation after picking up a SAL's Place leaflet in her doctor's surgery: *'She was of a different generation. She didn't think that she could ever move on but she did. She's different now...I think she would never have gone to the police station because when we first mentioned the police she didn't want them involved, she was terrified. It was a long process because she wasn't able to leave the house for very long without him... She knew that if she never did anything about it, it wouldn't matter. It would to us but we wouldn't force her to do anything'*. The client had never reported her abuse to any agency before her visit to SAL's but after consultation with, and support from the agencies at SAL's she left the abusive situation. Her evidence led to an arrest and the perpetrator was charged with assault.

Difficulties Encountered

A major hurdle at the start of the process was to identify which organisation was to lead the project. There was an initial conflict of interests between the Police and partner agencies in that the Police's position with regards dealing with domestic violence was always to take positive action as per Force Policy, whereas partner agencies stated that they were more victim focused and that should a victim be unwilling to pursue a prosecution, they would respect this and would not divulge information to the Police. It was agreed that a [Client Confidentiality Consent Form](#) would be

¹² Action research draws on the work of Schon's book 'The Reflexive Practitioner: How professionals think in action' (1983).

introduced so that before a victim divulged any information they would be informed of the possibility of any disclosures being shared between agencies.

To date only a small number of victims have refused to sign the consent form. They would always be referred to Lancaster District Women's Aid (LDWA) to provide support.

Securing the computer systems was an issue for the Police, as the office is outside the Police Station. Different networks were set up for the police and other agencies with a database devised specifically for SAL's clients.

Data collection has been an issue due to disclosure protocols. Client data is necessary because of the multiplicity of agencies using SAL's. If there is not enough information on the records then clients may have to keep repeating their case history, which is one of the factors that SAL's hoped to eliminate. The database still requires further improvement to enable this issue to be completely removed.

It may be that some of the clients that are using SAL's would not normally be reporting their cases to the Police because it is something that has not happened recently, the abuse is emotional or mental and therefore they feel that the Police cannot deal with it or they may not want to report their partner or ex-partner because of fear, embarrassment or for various other reasons. Nevertheless, the project appears to be drawing increased numbers of people in from the district.

Partnership working

Partnership working is never an easy process and despite a lot of time and effort being put in to the planning stages by the stakeholder agencies, there have been some difficult times where individuals are also working to their own organisation's guidelines. The agencies have worked together to resolve issues resulting in a mutual respect being developed between agencies, with much more awareness of the capabilities of each service. One interviewee said *'Multi-agency work is the way forward...but it just makes it so much harder... the best way isn't always the easiest way.'*

All of the key agencies are totally committed to helping end domestic abuse and supporting people who are in abusive situations, this underlying dedication has ensured that any issues have been kept in perspective.

A comment was made by one of the project team before the launch, that SAL's had the 'recipe to be one of the most challenging projects' the Police had undertaken partly because it was being funded on a low budget, the IT issues of information sharing and the issue of police databases in non-police facilities.

At the launch of SAL's, Baroness Ruth Henig stated that *"in all aspects of community safety, multi-agency working is clearly the way forward. No one agency or voluntary group can make a real impact on its own and in no area... is this truer than domestic abuse"*.

LDWA have seen a significant increase in their workload and have increased the number of staff as a result with the potential for future expansion. Other agencies have continued offering their services through a surgery on a weekly basis or by referrals. This support network is to continue with staff at SAL's also promoting the use of other agencies.

There have been a number of success stories, where initial crisis intervention has been implemented. For example a client who attended SAL's, having experienced a violent relationship in the presence of her young son, was immediately able to gain a refuge place. Since then the client has obtained a flat and employment outside the area.

Male Victims within the area had not been previously accommodated by any support organisation. SAL's fully intended to offer the support of domestic violence victims whatever gender they happened to be. Local Victim Support workers were trained to offer counselling and also a Male Rape Support Association(MRSA) have offered to provide support on a referral basis. Very few males have attended SAL's and there has not been the necessity to make any referrals to these other agencies. Further publicity and awareness will assist promote this service.

The Future

Staffing costs have been mainstreamed already and funding has been secured from the Community Safety Partnership for running costs for 2006/7.

Further analytical work within the division has identified the fact that expansion of this project into the Morecambe area would only improve the service to victims in the district. Enquiries are ongoing to progress this concept.

The centre is approaching its first anniversary in May 2006 and a further publicity event is planned to include all partner agencies. The aim being to raise the awareness of the improved services provided to victims of domestic violence and celebrate SAL's successes over the past year.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

Child Protection Issues to be considered at all stages of process

