

# Introducing New Statutory Partners

**There are currently over 50 organisations from the statutory, voluntary, community and business sector represented on the Blackpool Community Safety and Drugs Partnership.**

The Police Reform Act (2002) created new “responsible authorities” within the Partnership. These are the Primary Care Trust, Police Authority and Fire and Rescue Service. These new partners joined the responsible authorities identified in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, the Council and the Police. In this section, the new partners describe their role within the Blackpool Community Safety and Drugs Partnership.

A full list of Partner Organisations can be found at the back of this document.

### **Blackpool Primary Care Trust - Crime and Health**

**Crime poses a serious threat to health and has a substantial impact on the demand for health services. Violent crime results in physical and psychological injury, which can require emergency treatment and long term intervention.**

Theft and burglary can materially affect living standards and have psychological effects for the people involved, with consequences for health and health services. The fear of being a victim of crime can lead to a wide range of psychological disorders and self limiting mobility.

Violence disproportionately affects certain groups in society, including young people and those who are deprived. The British Crime Survey shows that these unequal risks extend to other types of crime, such as burglary and vehicle related theft. In many ways these inequalities mirror those which are found in health, suggesting that crime is likely to be a contributory factor in the substantial and widening health inequalities that exist.

There is evidence of the extent of injury resulting from domestic violence, with women and children particularly at risk. Estimates as to the incidence of domestic violence can vary considerably and research suggests that much is still unreported and also that, unlike most stranger assaults, domestic violence victims often endure repeated attacks.

Individuals who have been the victims of violence and other forms of crime often suffer damage to their health beyond the immediate injuries. Damage to physical health can result from the stress caused by the experience of victimisation. For example, the heart attack suffered by the elderly victim of a domestic burglary or the self harm induced by abuse.

The lifestyle changes reported by victims of stalkers and by those who are frightened of crime, may also have significant effects on health. In particular, older people, women and children may become constrained in their use of public spaces and make more use of cars as a form of transport. They may withdraw from social life, including interaction with neighbours and avoid going out at night.

They may take protective or defensive action which can in itself pose a threat to health, for example carrying a weapon or barricading themselves in their home.

Exposure to crime may increase the incidence of health damaging behaviour such as smoking or excessive alcohol consumption.

Individual targets of specific criminal acts are victims, but they are not the only ones. There may be secondary victims such as witnesses or those who live in communities that suffer high levels of criminal and / or nuisance activity.

Children who witness domestic violence, older people in areas where the risk of assault or burglary is perceived to be high, and those working in emergency services responding to the consequences of violence, can all be victims and suffer what are often unrecognised and neglected health problems.

Crime and the fear of crime is undoubtedly detrimental to health and has substantial costs to society. For example in 1996 in the London Borough of Hackney, it was estimated that domestic violence cost the local health service more than £3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> million.

### Lancashire Fire Authority

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is available on a 24 hour, 365 days a year with 39 Fire Stations in Lancashire, 63 pumping appliances and a selection of special appliances.

In Blackpool there are 3 Full time Fire Stations housing 4 appliances. In addition, a specialist rescue appliance is situated at South Shore Fire Station, whilst a high level rescue appliance is based at Bispham Fire Station.

National changes outlined within the recently published 'Fire and Rescue Services Bill' are driving forward the Government's plans for a more preventative and risk based Fire Service.

In response to the national changes, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service have completed an Integrated Risk Management Analysis for the whole of Lancashire. As a result of this exercise a comprehensive action plan for the period 2004 – 2009 outlined challenging targets in terms of Fire Prevention and Community Safety activities.

In Blackpool between 2000 / 2003 there were 701 Accidental Dwelling Fires, which resulted in 10 Deaths and 178 casualties. Fire related accidents and injuries have a major impact on other services, particularly the National Health Service.

## Crime, Disorder & Drugs Audit 2004

None of the dwellings where the 10 deaths occurred had a working smoke alarm, whilst the estimated time from ignition to discovery of the fire, was in most cases in excess of 30 minutes.

The primary aim for the Fire Service in Blackpool is to reduce death and injury as a result of Accidental Dwelling fires. Our aim is that all domestic dwellings in Blackpool have a working smoke alarm. In addition Blackpool fire crews will target 'Hot Spot' areas where there are high incidents of this nature.

Deliberate fires in buildings provide another challenge, and for the period April 2000 to March 2003, 399 fires were started deliberately in buildings within Blackpool.

The most costly types of deliberate fires occur in commercial and public sector properties. For the year April 2000 to March 2001, the cost of fires attributed to public sector buildings totalled £2.1 million out of a total building fire cost of £3.5 million. From April 2001 to March 2002, commercial and public sector property accounted for £2.8 million out of a total of £4.5 million.

More recently, damage caused by fires at the Devonshire Road School and the Sure Start building on Mereside, are estimated to run into millions of pounds.

Fire officers are working with statutory partners and other voluntary groups within the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership to target persistent offenders who are responsible for the majority of deliberate fire setting.

Deliberate 'Secondary' fires involving rubbish, discarded furniture, fly tipped material and waste building materials form the bulk of the workload for the Fire Service in Blackpool. The characteristics of these offences indicate a motive of fire vandalism, which is anti-social behaviour usually carried out by older adolescents.

This is a major concern to residents of particular communities within Blackpool and detracts from the preventative work which fire officers undertake. Fire crews are actively engaged with a number of interventions in Blackpool to reduce deliberate 'Secondary' fires, thus releasing their time for more preventative activities which are the key focus.

## Lancashire Police Authority

Until 1995, police services were run through local authorities, just like other local services such as education or housing. But from 1995/96, separate police authorities were set up, whose sole responsibility is to “secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police force for their area”.

These authorities normally have a membership of 17 individuals nine nominated by the local authorities of the area, three by the magistrates and five independents who are directly appointed. They receive most of their funding from the Government, but set their own police council tax for the area as well.

Police authorities are one partner of what is called the “tripartite structure” for governing policing in England and Wales. The other elements are the Home Secretary (responsible for national planning and financing) and the Chief Constable for the area (responsible for all operational matters).

The specific roles of a police authority are to:

- Set and monitor the police budget
- Appoint the Chief Constable and senior officers
- Consult widely with local people about the policing of their area
- Set local policing priorities and targets for achievement

- Monitor what the police do and how well they perform against the targets set by the authority
- Publish a three year and annual plan which tells local people what they can expect from their police service, and report on achievements every year
- Make sure local people get “best value” from their local police
- Oversee complaints against the police.

A police authority is rather like a board of non-executive directors to the local police service, but with some significant executive task to do at a strategic level as well.

The Police Authority has always worked closely with the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership in Blackpool, and is pleased to be one of the statutory partners as a result of the Police Reform Act (2002). Joint consultation exercises will continue to take place between the Police Authority and the Partnership, and both plans will complement each other.