**Domestic Abuse and Impact on Children**

Extract from the pilot of **Caring Dads** programme:

*Caring Dads is a group intervention programme originating from Canada, for men who have abused or neglected their children, or exposed them to domestic violence. Caring Dads first came about following an observation from one of the programme authors – Tim Kelly. Tim had facilitated groups for men who had abused their intimate partners and noticed he was seeing a second generation of violent men – sons of men who had been in past groups. Realising that there were no models of intervention to address the behaviour of perpetrators he set about writing a programme where the main aim was to help men become better fathers by hopefully preventing the repeating intergenerational cycle of violence and ultimately improving the lives of children.  The programme also helps men to take accountability for their abusive actions and doesn’t place the entire onus on mothers to be responsible for the health, safety and well-being of their children.*

*Caring Dads is devoted to ensuring the safety and well-being of some of the most vulnerable children through working with fathers (including biological, step or common law) who have been abusive, neglectful or violent in their families or who are deemed to be high-risk for these behaviours through delivering a 17 week group intervention for 2 hours per week.*

*The Caring Dads Programme was introduced in Calderdale as a result of discussions within the Family Intervention Team regarding a gap in services for men who are perpetrators of domestic abuse. Workers within the team found they were being asked more frequently to work with perpetrators but didn’t necessarily have the skills to do this and also address the impact their abuse may be having on their children and partners. During supervision between one of the key workers (Andrew Griffiths) and his manager, he expressed an interest in developing further training in this area to try and fill this gap in provision and after further investigation in neighbouring authorities, found the Caring Dads programme in Leeds. Andrew completed his training in February 2018 but had to wait for management approval for two more facilitators to be trained and for the course to run. Subsequently, the pilot was delivered in March 2019.*

*At the end of the 17 weeks, findings indicate that Caring Dads has had a positive impact on all of the families. There was a 50% retention rate. (6 fathers starting the course, 3 completing) and from these 3 families, 14 children who could potentially benefit from better fathering. 9 referrals were received but only 6 were suitable for the course at that time.*

*In order to evaluate the programme, the fathers were encouraged to complete Parenting Style Questionnaires (see pg. 31). At the end of the programme, all the fathers scored highest in the assertive and positive parenting styles and their aggressive style of parenting decreased.*

*In terms of DA notifications from the police, during the 17 weeks of the course, there were no DA notifications and there weren’t any in the 3 months following the end of the course.*

*Comments from the fathers about the course were as follows:*

*“Consistency in the group is key”*

*“Stick to it”*

*“Real nice people who can help you”*

*“Trust others as well as the facilitators”*

*“It will only work if you are willing to change”*

*“They are great people, I feel a lot better about myself and my issues”*

*“It made me a better man and father to my kids”*

*We have 3 more trained facilitators and are starting discussions about what we can offer virtually moving forward.*

Case Studies



For more information and to see a copy of the full report contact:

Joanna Dunkley-Pritchard (FIT Manager)

Office: 01422 392681

E-mail: Joanna.Dunkley-Pritchard@calderdale.gov.uk