

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

REPORT TITLE:	DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Adult Social Care and Health Committee with an introduction to the 5-year partnership strategy, *Domestic abuse - No excuse*. It provides an overview of the co-production process, strategic priorities, delivery plan, and phased approach to reducing domestic abuse whilst improving support for people affected.

The report and strategy are aligned to priorities of Wirral Council's Plan 2025:

- Working for brighter futures for our children, young people and their families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and raising the aspirations of every child in Wirral
- Working for safe and pleasant communities where our residents feel safe, and where they want to live and raise their families

This matter affects residents across the borough.

This report does not relate to a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Adult Social Care and Health Committee is requested to:

1. Support the partnership strategy *Domestic abuse- No excuse*.
2. Note and endorse the partnership delivery plan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 In Wirral during the period 01 February 2019 to 21 January 2020, there were 8,410 individuals known to have been affected by domestic abuse. This includes 2,786 who were victims, 2,844 perpetrators and 2,780 children who were referred to Children's Services due to being impacted by domestic abuse. These individuals require access to a co-ordinated, accessible and effective support offer, which the partnership domestic abuse strategy will enable.
- 1.2 Domestic abuse is an important issue for all public services, with far-reaching implications and high cost to both the public purse and life chances. A strategic approach to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in Wirral requires a strong partnership strategy and delivery plan.
- 1.3 The previous partnership strategy, *Zero Tolerance to Domestic Abuse*, was one of a suite of pledge strategies relating to the Wirral Plan 2020, which has reached its conclusion. There is a requirement to build on the work of the previous strategy with a new approach aligned to the Wirral Plan 2025.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Not supporting the Domestic abuse – No excuse Strategy and Delivery Plan would lead to disconnection within the public services partnership and voluntary sector. Lack of co-ordination and direction would have a detrimental impact on residents of Wirral who are affected by domestic abuse.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 It was agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held in November 2019 that the new strategy for domestic abuse should be co-produced. It is highlighted by national bodies and research agencies, such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), that co-production can lead to better services for people, improved relationships at community level, better collaboration between organisations and contribute to financial savings. Most importantly, co-production creates a different relationship between those providing and receiving services, one based on the following principles:
 - (i) Equality- everyone has something to give and no person or organisation is more important than others;
 - (ii) Diversity- it should be easy for everyone to be part of co-production and it is important to include everyone; and
 - (iii) Access- it should be easy for everyone to take part in co-production activity.

3.2 As detailed in Section 8 of this report, co-production activity involved all members of the Domestic Abuse Alliance, local organisations delivering domestic abuse support, and 92 individuals who are or have been affected by domestic abuse.

3.3 In addition to the co-production workshops and conversations, a number of activities were completed to inform the strategy, as follows:

3.3.1 Data collation and analysis

To understand the prevalence of domestic abuse across Wirral and demand for services, a 12-month analysis of data was undertaken. This covered the period 01 February 2019 to 31 January 2020, providing a recent sample, but without any disturbance to regular trends through Covid-19 lockdown period. The analysis provided valuable information on victims, perpetrators, impact on children, characteristics of those affected, and highlighted some key areas that the strategy addresses.

3.3.2 Learning Review

A thorough review of a 'typical' case was undertaken to fully consider the experience of a victim of domestic abuse through the statutory child protection process. The review considered how well professionals understood the impact of domestic abuse on the victim and child, as well as the extent to which the parent was able to engage in the statutory process. The parent provided a full and detailed account of their experience, and this learning has informed the strategy.

3.3.3 Outcomes and Dataset

A task and finish group has considered a revised dataset which will provide meaningful key performance information to the Domestic Abuse Alliance. It is intended that in addition to 'hard data', an 'Outcomes Star' will be used for both children and adults to provide insight into their experience and how it changes through support and intervention. The task and finish group also analysed the academic outcomes for children living in a family affected by domestic abuse. They found that there is a gap of over 30% in achievement at Key Stage 4 and specific activity to address this is detailed within the strategy and delivery plan.

3.3.4 Resources

An overview of existing resources has been collated, outlining the Local Authority and partnership resource as well as the Local Authority's current commissions for domestic abuse services.

3.3.5 Inspection Readiness

The Domestic Abuse Alliance notes that the partnership offer for domestic abuse will be subject to scrutiny through a range of inspection processes, including Ofsted, CQC and JTAI (Joint Targeted Area Inspection). It is the intention of the Domestic Abuse Alliance, through a task and finish group, to ensure that the strategy, delivery plan and partnership are inspection-ready.

3.4 The *Domestic abuse – No excuse* strategy is written 'to' people affected by domestic abuse. This is a deliberate shift in format from previous strategies, and a direct result of the co-production approach. The strategy is purposefully written to make it accessible and meaningful to those people in Wirral who are victims, survivors, perpetrators, their children, friends and family.

3.5 The ambition of the strategy is as follows:

We want to Wirral to be a place where as few people as possible are affected by domestic abuse, but those who are can get help to end the abuse and go on to live the lives they want.

3.6 The ambition will be realised by focussing on five priorities:

1. Be there when we're needed
2. Increase safety for those at risk, without adding to their trauma
3. Reduce opportunities for perpetrators to abuse
4. Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs
5. A better, kinder future for the next generation

3.7 For each priority the strategy details why these are priorities and how we will address them. The delivery plan provides further information on the activity to be undertaken in relation to each priority.

3.8 This is a 5-year strategy which will be delivered in 3 phases, as follows:

3.8.1 Years 1 & 2 – Transformation Phase

Activity in this phase will focus on improving our response, standardising practice, workforce development and implementing new approaches and delivery models.

3.8.2 Year 3 – Adjustment Phase

Activity in this phase will focus on learning from the previous phase, evaluating pilots, implementing findings from service reviews, and transferring leadership from services to Peers and Supporters.

3.8.3 Years 4 & 5 – Embedding Phase

Activity in this phase will focus on getting it right consistently, delivering high quality services, and increasing the pace and intensity of media campaigns for long-term, sustainable cultural change.

3.9 Co-production will continue throughout the 5-year plan by establishing Voice Groups that are led by Peers, an online forum to update on progress, and membership of the Domestic Abuse Alliance including lay members with personal experience. In addition, an email account wecantalkaboutit@wirral.gov.uk has been activated to allow feedback or comments at any time.

3.10 The Domestic Abuse Alliance will provide oversight of the strategy and delivery plan. Governance will be provided through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, with scrutiny provided by the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Adult Health and Care Committee. Reports will be provided to Safer Wirral Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Partnership for Children and Families as requested.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The first two years of the strategy are described as a Transformation phase, as there is significant activity planned to introduce new approaches, standardise practice and

invest in workforce development. External funding is being sourced to deliver pilots, through the National Lottery, Community Safety Partnership, What Works for Children's Social Care, Police and Crime Commissioner and Violence Reduction Unit.

- 4.2 Additional funding will be required to enable workforce development, system learning and practice improvement during the Transformation Phase. It is intended to submit an application for Capital Funding as an *Invest to Save* approach. At present the Council spends £424k on domestic abuse services, which would appear to be significant underinvestment. In the Transformation Phase a thorough cost modelling exercise and needs analysis will be completed to understand funding requirements.
- 4.3 The Children's Joint Commissioning Forum and Clinical Commissioning Group will be asked to provide a funding contribution to the Transformation Phase, based on learning from the cost modelling and needs analysis work.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are a number of commissioned services for domestic abuse which will be reviewed as part of the commissioning cycle, being informed by the needs of the Partnership Offer. This will take place within the existing timeframes for contract renewal and use the existing Council Procurement processes.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Council's resource for domestic abuse will be reviewed in year 1. This includes the Family Safety Unit, which provides Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and co-ordinates the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Safer Wirral Hub Early Intervention Team, which has Family Workers and Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) delivering early help interventions. A formal consultation and review will take place, working with Human Resources and Trade Union colleagues to deliver a more effective service as per the agreed partnership offer.
- 6.2 Engagement with Merseyside Police regarding the PCSO resource have commenced. Merseyside Police are committed to the partnership approach and the role and responsibilities of the PCSOs will be considered as part of the formal review.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failing to deliver the strategy will be mitigated through management oversight and scrutiny arrangements. Oversight of the strategy and delivery plan will be provided by the partnership's Domestic Abuse Alliance. It is essential that the forum has the correct membership for relevant agencies at a senior level, with appropriate arrangements for Chairing, Vice-Chair and administration.

- 7.2 An extraordinary meeting of the Domestic Abuse Alliance will be held in November 2020 to review membership, chairing arrangements, performance management, and relevant sub-groups, as per detail in the delivery plan.
- 7.3 It is necessary to acknowledge the current financial pressures facing the Council and its partners as a risk. Any future funding discussion must consider cost-benefit analysis and the need for invest to save approaches. Domestic abuse has wide reaching detrimental impact on health, mental health, housing, Criminal Justice System, children's outcomes, unemployment and adult health and care systems. The Home Office report, *The Economic and Social Cost of Domestic Abuse* (2019), estimates the cost of physical and emotional harm to victims in the UK equates to £47 billion annually. The report states that the next highest cost, of £14 billion annually, is for lost output relating to time taken off work and reduced productivity afterwards.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Domestic abuse – No excuse strategy has been co-produced. Initial engagement with people affected by domestic abuse commenced in February 2020. The planned schedule of activity, which was outlined to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2020 had to be revised due to Covid-19 and lockdown conditions. The Domestic Abuse Alliance agreed for local voluntary sector organisations to undertake co-production activity on its behalf as these groups have continued, Covid-secure contact with people affected by domestic abuse.
- 8.2 Over the months, July-August 2020, five local voluntary organisations engaged with 92 individuals on behalf of the Domestic Abuse Alliance. Each organisation used a standard presentation and collection tool to gather feedback, views and experience in relation to the priority areas. In addition, participants were asked for input on branding, straplines, Voice groups and how they would like to continue to be involved in co-production. The contribution by service users was of excellent quality and has had significant influence on the final strategy.
- 8.3 During August 2020, professionals and volunteers from a range of local services and organisations took part in four workshops, using the standard presentation and approach as with the service-user groups. The feedback from these workshops was collated and merged with that from service-users to confirm the strategic priorities and outline activity to be included in the delivery plan.
- 8.4 It is the intention of the Domestic Abuse Alliance to hold, when safe to do so, a partnership event to launch the strategy, involving all those who have contributed.
- 8.5 Co-production will continue throughout the lifespan of the strategy and is detailed within the Participation section of the delivery plan.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 It is recognised that a disproportionate number of victims of domestic abuse have protected characteristics of the nine groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. A

full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the strategy and delivery plan and can be found via the following link:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017-1>

- 9.2 The strategy recognises the need to further explore the prevalence of domestic abuse in underrepresented groups such as those with special educational needs and disabilities, elderly residents, those in LGBTQ groups, and those living in more affluent areas. It is intended that expertise is secured from within existing organisations to advise on any adaptations to the support offer and services.

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental and climate implications arising from this report. It is anticipated that the domestic abuse strategy will have no impact on the emission of greenhouse gases.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Domestic abuse – No excuse Strategy 2020-25
Appendix 2 – Domestic abuse – No excuse Delivery Plan 2020-25

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Economic and Social Cost of Domestic Abuse, The Home Office (January 2019) can be accessed at www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse

The previous domestic abuse strategy, delivered through the Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision, can be accessed at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/wirral-plan-2020-vision/wirral-plan-strategies#overlay-context=about-council/wirral-plan-2020-vision>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee	November 2019
Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee	February 2020

