

To the Chair and Members of the Cabinet

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STRATEGY 2017 - 2021

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor McGuinness	Chris	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the new 2017-2021 Domestic Abuse Strategy.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This is not an exempt report

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Cabinet Members are asked to comment and endorse the content of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-2021.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. This partnership Strategy reflects the co-ordinated response to domestic abuse in Doncaster, led by the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership (SSDP). One of the most important aspects of responding effectively to domestic abuse is that it cannot be achieved by any single agency operating in isolation.
5. Following an independent review of Domestic Abuse in Doncaster in 2012 the Partnership have made significant progress to bring partners together to tackle this important and cross cutting issue. Key achievements have included improved governance and strategic leadership, a re-commissioned service for victims, increased awareness raising and lower risk victims receiving better support through specialist caseworkers, who also work in hospitals and GP surgeries.
6. The Growing Futures programme has enabled Children and families affected by abuse to now have access to a single lead professional co-ordinating work through a whole family approach, delivering therapeutic and educational programmes to help victims and children recover.

7. A new voluntary perpetrator programme has also been established with over 490 referrals being made and 116 service users successfully completing the programme. Intervention at this level has made a difference to families affected by abuse, who now feel safer as perpetrators now have the opportunity of changing their behaviour. This successful programme is now in the early stages of being replicated across the County, based upon the innovative approach we have taken.

BACKGROUND

8. The strategy sets out the detail of how we want everyone who works with families experiencing domestic abuse to work together. It sets clear expectations and a course of action which we believe will make a difference. Bridging the gap between strategy and action is crucial to empowering and supporting people to change their lives.
9. The overall wider annual cost of Domestic Abuse in all cases for Doncaster has been independently estimated by Safe Lives to be over £122m, with the cost of support for children and young people known to children's social care, calculated at £7.5m. This represents a significant effect upon Partnership services with huge potential to reduce this impact. Reported Police incidents in Doncaster have flattened over the last three years against a continued increase in the rest of South Yorkshire. Whilst this indicates some progress has been made there remains much more to do.
10. The strategy focuses upon three key outcomes:
 - Communities and families no longer experience domestic abuse
 - Families who are vulnerable to or experience domestic abuse are identified earlier and receive effective support to stay safe; reduce repeat victimisation and recover.
 - People who use abusive behaviour are challenged and provided with effective support to change or face the consequences of their actions.
11. Our Partnerships commitment to protecting and supporting families experiencing domestic abuse recognises that we must also work with perpetrators to support them to change their behaviour, and at the same time work to change the culture of acceptance of abuse, through education public awareness and so enable earlier intervention.
12. We recognise that the real experts in what works are the people who have used our services and one of the key planks of the new strategy is providing the opportunity for service users to participate in the planning, commissioning and delivery of our services. Recently a new website has been launched which has been shaped and designed with the involvement of service users.

13. Likewise we know that domestic abuse isn't isolated as a single issue in families lives, in many cases it is coupled with mental ill health substance misuse and other complicating factors including the effects of poverty and disadvantage. It can happen anywhere to anyone and can take many forms from physical to emotional abuse and coercive control.
14. Domestic abuse is everyone's business and it is essential that we work together in a coordinated way ensuring that everyone understands what domestic abuse is, knows how to respond to it and where to get support if they need it.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option A

15. Do nothing - this is not a realistic option given the wide ranging impact of DA in Doncaster and the significant cost to individuals and partnership agencies.

Option B

16. Gradual or partial implementation of the strategy – there is an option to choose elements of the strategy to progress, which would achieve some positive outcomes but the impact would be significantly reduced and would take some time to achieve the transformational change required.

Option C: Recommended Option

17. Full implementation – this will require significant leadership and buy in from partners as well as tough choices and decisions about commissioning services in the future. However outcomes can continue to be achieved in the short medium and long term for victims, families, our communities and partner agencies.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

18. Option C would mean that we can ensure from the outset that the work is fully supported by a range of partners and there is commitment to embed and integrate domestic abuse into commissioning and mainstream service provision, programmes and planning. It will also enable us to get on with some immediate tasks, continuing to work with Growing Futures, who have been a key contributor to this strategy.

Evidence clearly shows that the whole family approach is working and we need to ensure we maximise our resources, eradicate any duplication, respond to the gaps we have identified and improve our understanding of what works through focusing on outcomes.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

19.

	Outcomes	Implications
1.	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>The integrated and longer term vision if this strategy will impact upon all of the Councils key priorities. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the cost of DA to the economy, to public services, young people and individuals and the community.
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>Significant impact on children and young people, safeguarding serious cases.</p> <p>Major impact on health (A & E admissions, mental health, substance misuse and GP attendance)</p>
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>Supporting people to be in work and economically active, helping them resolve home related issues and thus facilitating them into work where appropriate.</p> <p>Improving community environments including reducing anti-social behaviour and levels of crime.</p>
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>Identifying victims and perpetrators or potential perpetrators at a much earlier stage and preventing escalation of issues. The provision of therapeutic support to victims and families will significantly reduce the impact enabling families to thrive.</p>
	<p>Council services are modern and value for money.</p>	<p>The Strategy has included an examination of best practice to ensure we are using the very latest thinking to produce modern and value for money services.</p>
	<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.</p>	<p>The governance arrangements proposed within the strategy will ensure effective and strong leadership of the priorities and actions.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

20. All risks and assumptions will be outlined in the detailed action plan and overseen by the relevant accountable board.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. Local Councils play a vital and central role in tackling domestic abuse.
22. The council has statutory obligations surrounding the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the council may have statutory homelessness duties to some victims of domestic abuse under part vii of the housing act 1996 (as amended).
23. The decision maker must be aware of their obligations under section 149 Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It obliges public authorities, when exercising their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to: Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct which the Act prohibits; Advance equality of opportunity; and Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.
24. The relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.
25. The decision maker must ensure that they have seen the due regard statement. The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour, and with an open mind and is not a question of ticking boxes. It is for the decision-maker to decide how much weight should be given to the various factors informing the decision, including how much weight should be given to the PSED itself. The duty is a continuing one and there should be a record/audit trail of how due regard has been shown. It is not sufficient for due regard to be a "rear-guard action" following a concluded decision. The decision maker must also pay regard to any countervailing factors and decide the weight to be given to these, which it is proper and reasonable to consider; budgetary pressures, economics and practical factors will often be important.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

26. Currently DMBC contribute almost £1m towards Domestic Abuse Services. This £1m is funded by a variety of sources, mainly Public Health, Police & Crime Commissioner and DMBC General Fund. There is a risk that some elements of this funding will not continue beyond 16/17 and this may impact upon DA services in the future.
27. There was an anticipated reduction in funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to support the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programme and therefore plans are now in place to develop a county wide programme, offsetting the local impact in Doncaster.

28. A decrease in funding from Public Health may have an impact on the provision of caseworker support to victims and the delivery of training to partners. A business case has been submitted to the Better Care Fund Board for consideration of alternative funding.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

29. On-going training for the workforce will be required to ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to identify the different forms of domestic abuse they are likely to encounter. In addition, the workforce will benefit from training to enable them to work towards changing the current culture of behaviour and acceptance of domestic abuse in Doncaster. Managers will need to work with human resources to influence and support the development and updating of policies and procedures in the workplace to ensure employers meet their duty of care for their employees' wellbeing.
30. Reductions in funding may have implications for DMBC staff and these will be considered in line with our own internal Policies.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

31. There are no specific technology implications at this stage. The planned new integrated solution for LOCYP, AHWB and DCST aims to seamlessly join up case management, with new processes, higher quality data and intelligence, directly supporting the delivery of Outcome 2 of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. Planned integration with partners, also puts us in a strong position to deliver this more effectively through the use of technology specifically procured for this purpose instead of having to work around legacy not fit for purpose systems.
32. The planned Single Business Intelligence Store project together with the delivery of the Data Quality Action Plan will also support the objective outlined in the Strategy to 'Improve the quality and use of data, research and local intelligence across the partnership to inform commissioning and target resources more effectively and efficiently to address levels of need and risk'.
33. Where additional requirements are identified for new, enhanced or replacement technology to support the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2016-2020, these would need to be considered by the ICT Governance Board (IGB) in line with the agreed ICT governance processes.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

34. A full equality impact assessment has been completed as a consequence of this strategy and all relevant considerations have been undertaken as part of this assessment.

CONSULTATION

35. There has been consultation with key agencies, services, front line workers, key stakeholders including some members and service users as part of the development of the strategy. There would need to be further consultation as the strategy is implemented.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

36. None.

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