

OFFICER DECISION RECORD 2 FORM

This form should be used to record Officer Decisions which have a financial impact (income/expenditure) between £25k - £100k.

Decision Reference No: AHWB.030.2020 Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead

BOX 1.

DIRECTORATE: Adults Health and Wellbeing **DATE:** 13/11/2020

Contact Name: Bill Hotchkiss **Tel. No.:** 01302 737831

Subject Matter: Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead

BOX 2

DECISION TAKEN:

To approve Doncaster Council to undertake the following:

To recruit to the temporary post of Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead

Box 3

REASON FOR DECISION AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

Domestic abuse has been identified as a Council and Partnership priority and we have in place a very thorough and comprehensive Strategy, which is due for renewal next year.

The Covid emergency has led to a large increase in the number of reports we have received in relation to Domestic Abuse, placing increased pressures on our resources, which are operating in a largely virtual way, apart from those cases where personal contact is necessary.

The Covid restrictions have placed increased pressures on households and families and have created an environment where abusers and victims are within the same household for long periods. This in itself is an issue in terms of delivering support and making contact with victims.

During the current situation there is also a recognition that mental health issues are becoming more prominent, as well as increased levels of drinking in the home environment. Both of which are known risk factors to consider within Domestic Abuse cases. As children are also spending more time at home, potentially witnessing abuse, we cannot ignore the impact upon children. There is an expectation that demands upon our services will continue to increase and we have plans in place to ensure we are able to meet this demand. For example

recruiting additional staff into the Domestic Abuse Hub and Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) capacity.

Reported cases into the Partnership Domestic Abuse hub and Domestic Abuse Caseworker (DAC) referrals have increased by nearly 20% during the COVID emergency and the table below provides an illustration of this change from 2019 to the same period in 2020. The Domestic Abuse Caseworkers deal with medium and standard risk cases.

HUB/ Domestic Abuse Caseworker Referrals	2019	2020
Quarter 1 April to June	252	490
Quarter 2 July to September	439	470
Total	691	960

The Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) who deal with high risk victims, have also seen similar increases of approximately 25% compared to the same period last year.

IDVA Referrals	2019	2020
Quarter 1 April to June	235	317
Quarter 2 July to September	260	336
Total	495	653

The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) deal with those cases, where the victim is assessed as being at the highest risk. These meetings (which are held fortnightly) are now dealing with over 30 cases at each meeting, which require close professional scrutiny by partners. The administration of the MARAC is co-ordinated and managed by Doncaster Council Domestic Abuse services and accounts for a significant investment of time and professional oversight by our theme manager. The theme manager also chairs the Domestic and Sexual Abuse theme group, significant operational resources and the on-going Domestic Homicide Reviews.

A newly established Domestic Abuse Chief Officer Strategic Board with revised terms of reference has identified a number of important work streams, which have been identified as a priority:

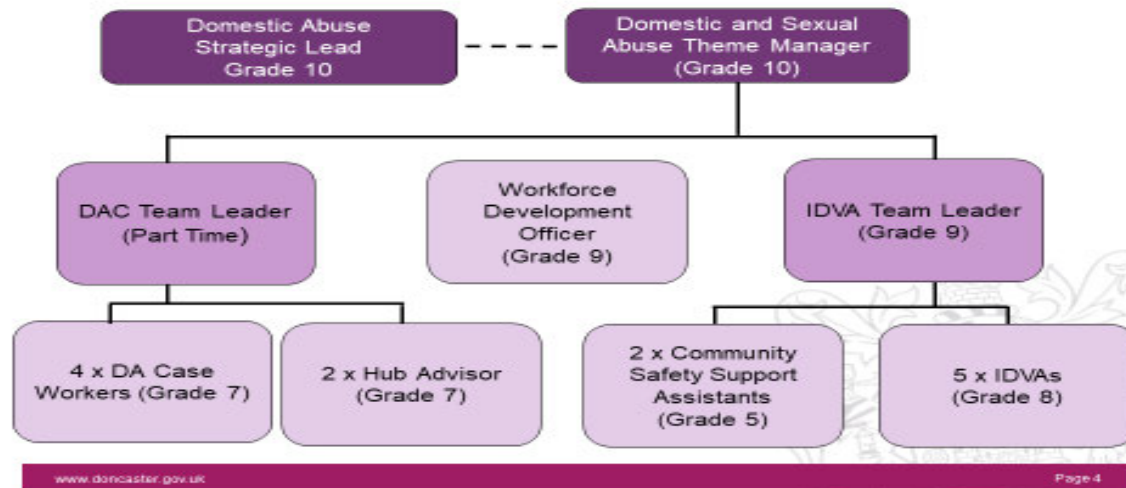
- Strategically leading and coordinating work to prevent and tackle domestic violence and abuse, on behalf of the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership and wider partners.
- Working across partnerships to deliver the priorities within the Domestic Abuse Strategy and other protocols relating to this important agenda.
- Developing a revised Domestic Abuse strategy, the existing strategy identified as being well evidenced, but is due for renewal at the end of this year.
- The development of a Domestic Abuse performance dashboard, which identifies key areas of priority and focus.
- Ensure that the whole family approach (reflected in our current strategy) and the needs of children are properly considered within all our services, referral mechanisms and pathways.
- Implement the key actions arising from the new Domestic Abuse Bill, which includes a number of commitments and statutory duties.

Discussions within the Strategic Board and wider Partnership have identified the need for additional capacity, with the appointment of a dedicated individual to

lead and drive this activity. The Partnership were conscious of the amount of work involved and how current workloads and priorities impact upon the ability of existing theme managers to undertake this work.

Below is a structure chart, which outlines how the new temporary role will link in with our existing services and management.

Current Structure- Council DA Services



A job role summary has already been developed for this new and important role and has been evaluated as a Grade 10. More details of the costs are included within the financial section of this report.

It is proposed that funding of the role will be made available from existing underspends within the Directorate.

The following options have been considered:

Option 1: Do Nothing

As outlined above, Domestic Abuse is a key issue for Team Doncaster and the Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership. Not appointing to this role may prevent or delay important work streams we need to take forward to tackle Domestic Abuse, placing vulnerable victims and families at further risk.

Option 2 Manage within Existing Structures

Manage the additional work within existing theme groups and existing management structures. This has been fully considered, but has been rejected as a viable option, due to existing capacity issues which is preventing the required strategic focus.

Option 3: Appoint a Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead

This is the recommended option and will enable strategic work streams to continue, supporting the strengthened Governance arrangements that have been established and enabling Doncaster Council and key partners to deliver on our key priority.

Recommendation – To Appoint to the Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead Post for a period of 12 months

**BOX 4
BACKGROUND PAPERS**

YES/NO (If YES please list and submit copies with this form)

**BOX 5
INFORMATION NOT FOR PUBLICATION:**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is in the public's interests for this decision to be published in full, redacting only the signatures.

Name: Gillian Parker_ Signature: _by email_ Date 17/11/2020_

Signature of FOI Lead Officer for service area where ODR originates

**BOX 6
AUTHORISATION:**

Name: _Phil Holmes__ Signature:  ate: 17/11/2020

Director of Adults Health and Wellbeing

Does this decision require authorisation by the Chief Financial Officer or other Officer?

YES/NO

If yes please authorise below:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Chief Executive/Director/Assistant Director of _____

Consultation with Relevant Member(s)

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Designation _____

(e.g. Mayor, Cabinet Member or Committee Chair/Vice-Chair)

Declaration of Interest YES/NO

If YES please give details below:

**PLEASE NOTE THIS FORM WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE
IN FULL UNLESS IT CONTAINS EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Once completed a PDF copy of this form along with any relevant background papers should be forwarded to Governance Services at Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk who will arrange publication.

It is the responsibility of the decision taker to clearly identify any information that is confidential or exempt and should be redacted before publication.