

**REPORT TO:** Safer Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 19 July 2022  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Community and Environment  
**PORTFOLIO:** Community Safety  
**SUBJECT:** Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence  
**WARDS:** All

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board in relation to the activities being supported across the Borough in response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

**2. RECOMMENDATION: That members of the Board consider and comment on any aspect of this report.**

**3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**3.1 Whole Family Response to Domestic Abuse support and service provision.**

Executive Board met on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022, a report outlining an overview of a revised approach to delivering specialist domestic abuse support and services in Halton that align with our local whole picture approach received support.

The Board agreed:

- i) To take forward the proposal to ensure a full service offer for victims, children and perpetrators of domestic abuse that is more fit for purpose and will deliver a saving of £39,605 over a two year period.
- ii) To approve the commencement of a procurement exercise for two separate commissions firstly, the Halton Domestic Abuse Specialist Accommodation Service and secondly, a separate Specialist Children and Young Peoples Domestic Abuse Service.
- iii) To approve Community Support provision being brought in house.

The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy 2022-24 adopts the SafeLives Whole Picture Approach, considered to best practice when

developing effective domestic abuse service models that respond to the needs of the individual, the family, the community and wider society.

The Domestic Abuse Act places a statutory duty on local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation. The Duty also requires that domestic abuse support will include advocacy, prevention advice, and specialist support for victims with relevant protected characteristics and / or complex needs. Children's domestic abuse support including play therapy and child advocacy; Housing-related support. Counselling and therapy.

Covid-19 has led to an increase in domestic abuse. In Halton more cases have been identified as high risk, Per 10,000 adult female population (16+), Halton had the highest rate of cases discussed at MARAC in Q3 2021/22 (23.23) [20.06 in Q3 20/21] compared to Cheshire (10.44) [10.53 in Q3 20/21]. This follows a national Domestic abuse narrative where cases are escalating in severity more quickly to become complex and serious, with higher levels of physical violence and coercive control.

The Halton Domestic Abuse Service, a whole family provision is currently externally commissioned as a single contract delivered by one provider. This contract comes to a natural conclusion in January 2023.

Domestic abuse affects Halton communities disproportionately, Per 10,000 adult female population (16+), Halton had the highest rate of repeat cases discussed at MARAC (7.06) [9.29 in Q3 20/21] in comparison to Cheshire [2.58 (3.40 in Q3 20/21)]. Halton Borough Council has taken into consideration the impact of Covid as well as the statutory duty and taken a wider look at the corporate response to domestic abuse. Overall, this proposal outlines a blended service model that adheres to the principal of the Whole Picture approach, which is responsive, inclusive and an overall wider service offer which will offer specialist domestic abuse provision to victims, children and challenge the behaviour of those who harm.

**Halton domestic abuse accommodation service** – Accommodation for individuals and families who are at risk of further harm if they do not move out of their home to and to a place of safety. This is a more diverse and inclusive offer of domestic abuse specialist accommodation and notably will consist of:

- Self-contained units, available to both male and female victims who need short term safe accommodation.
- Community-based accommodation, additional safe spaces.
- The House for Life model will assist those who require longer

- term support to enable them to take over a full tenancy.
- Safe supported accommodation for those previously unable to access support due to financial constraints.

**Domestic abuse service for children, young people and families-**experiencing domestic abuse to ensure a co-ordinated approach for families offering additional support to children and families affected by domestic abuse. An additional element of therapeutic and counselling for children and young people affected by domestic abuse will enhance this service offer.

### **The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner – Funding**

Back in April 2022, The Police and Crime Commissioner, John Dwyer launched a needs assessment of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse services across Cheshire. This was as a direct result of the MoJ announcing an extension of funding for services in communities and providing IDVA and ISVA services. Halton submitted a bid to further improve the local service offer for victims in Halton specifically those who have been subjected to historical domestic abuse that would not be eligible for domestic abuse support within the current commissioned service. A total of £163,200 has been awarded over a three year period.

In addition £20,000 per annum over the next three years has been awarded to support and assist with the recovery toolkit and counselling work.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

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There are no policy implications contained within this report.

### **5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Domestic abuse has a detrimental impact on employment. Among employed women who suffered domestic abuse in the last year 21% took time off work and a further 2% lost their jobs (Walby and Allen 2004). The impact of Covid linked to unemployment, furlough programs and redundancies and extended periods being locked down in abusive relationships is yet to be understood.

To maximise an individual's potential to increase and manage their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services assisting victims to develop better financial management skills and to address debt through appropriate sign posting.

### **5.3 Children and Young People in Halton**

Children and young people in Halton are emotionally, physically and sexually healthy and Children and young people will feel safe at home, in school and in their communities. For example, ensuring homes are healthy safe environments through offering support to parents and providing access for aftercare support for victims of sexual violence whether a child or young person.

#### **5.4 A Safer Halton**

To understand and tackle the problem of domestic abuse in all its forms. For example, through ensuring adult victims have access to protective and supportive measures reduces the level of domestic incidents and the subsequent impact on the environment with regards to crime and ASB.

#### **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

These are contained within the report.

#### **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Domestic Abuse Bill Policy Equality Statement Demonstrating Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904500/ANNEX\\_B- Policy\\_Equality\\_Statement- Domestic\\_Abuse\\_Bill\\_July- FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904500/ANNEX_B- Policy_Equality_Statement- Domestic_Abuse_Bill_July- FINAL.pdf)

#### **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act