

Report by: Public Health and Housing Manager
To: Full Council
Subject: Consultation of the Strategy for Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation in Devon 2021
Date: 20th September 2021 **Ref:**

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

1. To consult Members on the County Council Strategy for Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation in Devon.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021. Part 4 of the Act places a new duty on tier one/County Councils in England to support victims of domestic abuse and their children by commissioning services and/ or safe accommodation.

1.2 The Act requires local authorities to:

- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it must consult as it performs certain specified functions.
- Assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all victims (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area (annually).
- **Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area having regard to the needs assessment (every 3 years).**
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions).
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Report back annually to central government.

1.3 TDC have been involved in the Devon Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which has been set up by the County Council to address this new duty. Data has been provided by District Councils, the Police and domestic abuse support services across Devon to provide context and understanding of the situation across the County as a basis of developing this Strategy. This draft strategy requires review and endorsement by all of the partners on the board. DCC has a statutory duty to finalise and publish this strategy by the end of October.

2 REPORT

2.1 The draft Strategy for Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation in Devon 2021 is attached in full to this report.

2.2 Partners are being asked whether they agree with the following 8 outcomes, and the associated objectives against each of these which is given in the Strategy document. The outcomes are as follows:

Outcome 1: Victims (and their children) who are fleeing domestic abuse can access good quality safe accommodation that is appropriate to their individual needs.

Outcome 2: Victims experiencing domestic abuse who wish to remain in their home can do so safely to prevent them from becoming homeless and/or their risk escalating.

Outcome 3: Victims get the support they need to leave their relationship

Outcome 4: A range of trauma informed therapeutic support is available to victims (and their children) to support recovery and break the cycle.

Outcome 5: Victims (and their children) have appropriate support to live safely, free from abuse

Outcome 6: Victims (and their children) receive person centred response that is tailored to their own wants and needs.

Outcome 7: Services are domestic abuse informed and work collectively to support the victim and their family.

Outcome 8: Devon County Council and the Local Partnership Board have access to consistent, up-to-date data and the lived experiences of victims (and their children) to ensure that the Needs Assessment and Strategy for Devon is continuously developed and monitored over time to add further insights, learn from mistakes and to improve outcomes.

2.3 Devon County Council have been allocated £1.4 million by the Government in 2021-22 to deliver the Council's duty to provide domestic abuse support in safe accommodation. Funding for future years will be allocated within the government spending review due in autumn 2021. It is intended that this strategy will inform the allocation of resources through commissioned services to address the agreed outcomes and priority actions. At this stage in the development of the delivery plan, no specific levels of funding have been allocated to the outcomes put forward. These will be progressed at a later stage through the Partnership Board.

2.4 Members should note the new duty involves a broad definition of 'safe accommodation' where there is a duty to provide support, however it does not include temporary accommodation, such as bed & breakfast and hotels. The Government have made it clear however that support in safe accommodation, where this new duty resides, should sit alongside and complement the support that is already available to victims. Therefore services and processes relating to

domestic abuse where victims are placed in our temporary accommodation should not be impacted.

3 IMPLICATIONS

Legal implications

This report relates to a new legal duty on tier one authorities.

Financial and Human Resources implications

There are no direct financial or staffing costs associated with the implementation of this strategy.

Sustainability/biodiversity implications

N/A

Equality/Diversity

The strategy states that where references are made to victims (and their children), it refers to all victims of domestic abuse, including people without children; people who have had their children removed; people from marginalised communities and / or with protected characteristics (e.g. our LGBT+ communities, our BAME communities and our disabled communities).

Risk Management

N/A

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

N/A

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

N/A

Climate Change

N/A

Lead Member Views – Cllr Clarke

I note the new duty on the Devon County Council for the provision of domestic abuse support provision across Devon and welcome the partnership approach to addressing this serious and increasingly prevalent issue. I would like to endorse the outcomes and objectives given in this strategy proposal which, if implemented, will provide a holistic and consistent approach across the county. We look forward to cooperating with Devon County Council on the delivery of this strategy.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Draft Strategy for Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation in Devon 2021 will be the basis for the future provision of domestic abuse support services where this new County Council duty applies. As one of the partners supporting this new duty, we are being asked to respond to the consultation on the strategy.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That members note the new duty on Devon County Council brought about by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 5.2 That members review the outcomes and objectives given in the Strategy for Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation in Devon 2021 attached to this report and provide any comments that can be included in our consultation response. Members are being invited to support the outcomes and objectives given in the strategy.
- 5.3 That members support the involvement of TDC with the Devon Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and will seek to cooperate going forward to ensure that effective domestic abuse support services relevant to this new duty are delivered locally.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 6.1 Consultations: Housing Options Manager
- 6.2 Contact Officer: Janet Williams Public Health and Housing Manager.