



Chair confirmed she has been in contact with the Together Service but no relevant funding streams have been identified as yet, so it was requested that the action remain 'in progress'.

The Public Health & Housing Manager confirmed she has chased Toby Davies regarding the joint Community Safety Partnership and is waiting to hear back.

86. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

87. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items on the agenda.

88. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

For the benefit of the new committee members and the guest speakers the Committee introduced themselves. Councillor Leather joined the meeting at 14:10

89. LEESAR PARTNERSHIP - NDADA AND SPLITZ

Julie Reeves introduced herself as Manager at Splitz Service, which is the lead partner for the LEESAR partnership, and Heather Penny introduced herself as General Manager at North Devon Against Domestic Abuse (NDADA). It was explained that Splitz is a voluntary service commissioned through Devon County Council. NDADA is a charity which covers the North Devon and Torridge area.

The Splitz Manager provided members with some background on the formation of the LEESAR partnership in 2019, the membership and their ethos 'ending domestic and sexual violence abuse in Devon'. She explained the service provision of the 4 partners and how they work across the region. It was highlighted that today's presentation would focus on Splitz and NDADA, though Rape Crisis do cover all of Devon as well.

An overview of Splitz provision was provided. They provide family centered support for men, women and children. It was explained the person doesn't have to leave an abusive relationship but safeguarding issues will always be considered. Support is also provided to perpetrators who want to change their behaviours.

Splitz is primarily a crisis led service, they employ experienced staff who all have the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) qualification and are referred to as IDVAs - they work in partnership with many agencies and provide advocacy to those they support.

Support is provided over the telephone, one to one (though this has been impacted by Covid) and through group work. Direct support can be provided to victims who are 14 years and over and there are specialist IDVAs for this work.

Cases are determined by risk levels and Splits work with people who are High and Medium Risk – there is a family approach, so children and young people would be included in the support. All the people referred into the service are risk assessed and the very high-risk cases will be supported through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), which are held monthly in North Devon.

The Splits Manager explained their 'no wrong door' policy in relation to supporting adults. Referrals are accepted at all the services and people will be put in touch with local services that will meet their need, depending on risk.

NDADA are a funded charity and as a result the service is constantly adapting and maintaining funding streams.

They are a recovery led service and also run the local refuge provision for women and children. Alongside the refuge there are also smaller self-contained places of safety located across Devon, this means there is accommodation for men and for families with male children over 16 who are not able to access the refuge.

Currently NDADA have Court IDVAs to provide support to people through Family Courts, especially those with no access to legal aid. There are 3 Court IDVAs for all of Devon, excluding Plymouth and Torbay. There is a lot of demand for the service, which means the IDVAs must work with those with the most need, and there are capacity issues as a result. Family Court has moved online since Covid and this generated disadvantage, especially for those without the technology to access Court Hearings.

NDADA also have an IDVA based at North Devon District Hospital, predominantly they are based within A&E and Maternity Services. By evidencing outcomes and highlighting the positive work taking place NDADA now have this post funded through North Devon Health Care Trust – there is also a similar post within Exeter.

A significant number of people supported by NDADA and Splits will have varying mental health needs. Covid has exacerbated this due to the isolation people experienced and services having to reduce their provision. It was explained there are difficulties supporting people where there are domestic abuse and mental health concerns, both services explained how this can be challenging and they are holding people for longer.

NDADA also provide an overview of the group work provided locally for cases that are assessed as lower risk and how this has adapted since Covid.

The General Manager at NDADA mentioned the Finding your Voice service, which aims to aid recovery, and is one to one support provided when individuals

have left abusive relationships. There is also a free Counselling service, but this is currently over-subscribed. It was highlighted people are being held by the service for a longer time because it is increasingly hard to refer on - there is currently a 12-month waiting list.

The Pattern Change course was also discussed, due to Covid this program has been held virtually over Zoom for smaller groups and remains successful, from September face to face sessions will return alongside the option of Zoom sessions as well - keeping groups accessible.

The Manager of Splitz highlighted the Behaviour Change Service. This is an adult only service, which males and females can refer into. The service is looking for motivation to change from potential participants. They tend to work with those high-risk offenders who have a criminal background, so it sits in with Probation and the Integrated Offender Management Team. The programme is modular, and people are seen on a one-to-one basis. The team then meet to talk about the progress of participants and review any possible risks. An IDVA will support the non-abusive partner and children's workers are also allocated.

NDADA run the Refuge provision locally with 8 rooms and 25 bed spaces. This is communal living space and there are specialist children's workers and women's support worker based there. There are also individual places of safety around the county for male and female victims who are fleeing domestic abuse. One of these properties has been used during Covid as a place for people to stay whilst tests are completed.

Splitz have a small team who work with children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse within their families. Primarily referrals are received from the Behaviour Change Service. They also have an IDVA who works with young people, usually 14-18 years old, who are experiencing domestic abuse within their own relationship. The focus of the work is around risk, safety and health relationships and support tends to be longer term.

The General Manager for NDADA highlighted their group for children and families called Grow Together, developed by one of the children's workers and started in the Refuge. It's now moved into the community and has been run in other areas of the UK. The group works with mothers helping them to understand the effects of domestic abuse on family, helping to strengthen the relationship between them and their child/ren and empower change. There is also Grow Together side by side, which offers support to the child alongside the mother through play, arts and crafts.

Members were asked if they had any questions.

There was a query regarding referrals and whether either service would approach individuals or wait for self-referrals. The Manager of Splitz confirmed that they do receive referrals from other organisations, mainly the Police. However, there is a need for individual consent from that person because the services are voluntary not statutory.

It was confirmed that the places of safety were individual and self-contained properties, and the refuge provision was open ended, based on need – there is no time limit to a person's stay at a refuge.

There was a discussion around the work that takes place with children and young people and breaking the cycle. It was confirmed that the support offered to children and young people looks at healthy relationships.

Members asked how the staff coped and whether they had support. Splitz Manager confirmed that workers have access to Clinical Supervision, but they also discussed the resilience within the workforce and how staff provide a lot of support to one another as well. Covid and home working did impact on this peer support.

Members asked how support was provided to those with mental health concerns who do not recognise their problems. It was confirmed that all staff will have completed training around mental health. NDADA General Manager stated the service had more of an issue with people struggling to access support, as well as the closing and ending of their support and referral onwards. She explained that good pathways were being developed with Devon Partnership Trust.

There was a discussion regarding male victims of abuse and both services confirmed that, although the high proportion of work is with females, over the years more male victims were coming forward for support and as a result confidence was increasing.

Members asked whether awareness of their services provision could be better with some of the target groups. Both services agreed but highlighted positive work training GPs as part of the IRIS project and the IDVAs at the Hospitals. It was explained that the staff do need to be discreet, so they can support in the community.

There was a discussion regarding the services capacity in relation to the needs of the community and waiting lists. Splitz explained they do not have a waiting list for the high-risk cases, there are 5 IDVAs covering North Devon and they must manage cases between them. The medium risk clients do need to wait a little, though the target of attempting contact with high and medium risk cases is 5 working days and it was stated this is generally met. The Splitz Manager confirmed that they felt demand is increasing and the services are always looking for new funding streams to expand the service.

NDADA General Manager explained the frustrations for their service around demand and capacity. She explained the cases they work with will be accessing the service for recovery work and are experiencing the long-term effects of domestic violence. The service does not have anywhere to move people onto once they've completed their work. There are currently around 150 people waiting for Pattern Changing course.

Members asked how Councillors could respond if they had a feeling of concern when visiting a household. It was suggested that any concerns should not be raised until the person is alone/ away from the possible abuser, and then general open questions are best.

It was asked if there was any element of the work that needs developing, or that is most vulnerable. The NDADA General Manager stated from the point of view of the Recovery Service it would be capacity and resources, and this is managed by having a creative organisation and CEO.

Members asked how long the tender for Splitz Service from Devon County Council. This has been renewed since the original win in 2014 and there are 4-5 years remaining on the contract. This was explained as a one-on-one contract and Splitz must achieve the outcomes set by Devon County Council.

The Splitz Manager confirmed that they provide statistics to Devon County Council commissioners regarding the number of referrals they receive, and they also complete evaluations with people who use their services to measure outcomes.

There was a discussion about the uprooting of victims and children and young people and a perceived lack of consequence for perpetrators. This led into a discussion about the secrecy of Family Court.

The Chair mentioned Councillor grants and proposed that a request was put to all Councillors to contribute some of their grant for 2021-22 to fund a Pattern Changing course locally. Chair agreed to contact Vicky Fether at North Devon Plus and arrange for an email request to Councillors.

There was a further discussion regarding the Council budget setting for 2022-23 and the process for making a recommendation to allocate core funding. It was also suggested that the Town and Parish Councils have funding available.

Chair arranged to send Splitz Manager a list of the Town and Parish for autumn grants.

It was proposed by Councillor Leather, seconded by Councillor Harding and resolved –

A recommendation be put forward to Community & Resources that core funding is allocated at the Full Council budget setting meeting and used to run a Pattern Changing course in the Torridge area in the 2022/23 financial year.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

The Chair and members thanked both services for attending the Committee.

90. PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION

The Chair explained the Partnership Evaluation was added to the agenda in order to review the process now that Phil Topham had resigned as a member of the Committee.

It was agreed that Councillor Newton would take responsibility for reviewing the letter sent to partners before they attend the Committee, and the Chair would review the questionnaire and letter sent to partners following their attendance at a meeting. It was agreed this would be brought to the next Committee in October for an update.

Members requested that the minutes record their thanks to Phil Topham for all his support during his time as a member of the Committee. It was also requested that a letter of thanks be drafted and sent. Action for Democratic Services to draft a letter and send this to the Chair.

91. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

Members reviewed the Forward Plan.

There was a discussion in relation to joint meetings with North Devon and some suggestion of possible issues that should be considered. Members suggested Health and the amalgamation of the Boards should be considered – looking at the impact on services locally with commissioners and providers at the Trusts. It was agreed that this item would be added to the forward plan for the January Committee as a joint meeting. Chair and Democratic Services to look at who to invite to this.

The item 'Housing Environment / Biosphere / Drainage and Sewage – joint meeting with North Devon Council' was discussed and members discussed inviting South West Water and the Environment Agency regarding concerns about sewerage systems, surface water drainage and sewage discharging into sea and rivers – specific issues within Westward Ho! and Bucks Mills were highlighted. It was agreed that this item would be explored if the joint Community Safety Partnership doesn't take place in October.

Members discussed the Community Safety Partnership, and it was agreed that a pre-meeting would be arranged over Zoom to prepare in advance.

92. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no Part II items, so Chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 3.25 pm

Chair:

Date: