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**To: Coventry Health and Wellbeing Board**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**From: Rachel Chapman, Consultant in Public Health**

**Title: Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy**

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## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To inform the Health and Wellbeing Board of the results of the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment, the updated Domestic Abuse Strategy and progress in delivery of the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the results of the needs assessment, the updated Domestic Abuse Strategy and the action plan.

## **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 In June 2021 the Health and Wellbeing Board received a report on the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The report set out the wide range of provisions and responsibilities in the Act to protect victims and children, including the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board as a statutory board of the Local Authority.
- 3.2 Under the duties set out by the Act, a needs assessment for domestic abuse support for victims and children in Coventry has been carried out. The needs assessment incorporated a comprehensive engagement exercise which included surveys completed by 71 survivors and 51 practitioners, multiple focus groups and more than 30 interviews with stakeholders. The intelligence from this was supplemented with data from multiple sources and a literature review. While the initial focus of the needs assessment was on accommodation-based support, the information gathered enabled analysis of current needs across the wider agenda of domestic abuse. The full needs assessment can be found at [https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/5118/domestic\\_abuse\\_strategy\\_2018-2023](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/5118/domestic_abuse_strategy_2018-2023)
- 3.3 The Executive Summary (appendix 1) contains the key findings and 23 recommendations across a number of areas:
- Criminal and civil justice system
  - Perpetrators
  - Health services
  - Safe accommodation for victims and families
  - Support for victims and their children
  - Housing

- Individuals with no recourse to public funds or language challenges

3.4 A series of actions have been developed in response to the needs identified (included in Appendix 2) with lead agencies nominated to take the work forwards. Delivery of the action plan will be monitored by Domestic Abuse Steering group, reporting to the Local Partnership Board.

3.5 The current Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023 was reviewed in light of the findings of the needs assessment. The current 4P framework of Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue supports a systematic multi-agency approach to tackling Domestic Abuse and fits well with the needs assessment findings. The strategy has been extended to 2025 to enable delivery of the action plan.

3.6 The needs assessment, action plan and strategy extension have been noted and approved at Cabinet and full Council and are being brought to the Health and Wellbeing Board to inform and update partners.

3.7 The Act places a duty upon local authorities to provide safe accommodation for victims and their children, and a range of specialist support for victims in safe accommodation. 'Sanctuary schemes', whereby victims are helped to remain in their own home by providing extra domestic security and support, are included within the definition of safe accommodation. The Government provided Coventry City Council with a grant of £849,930 in 2021/22 to "*fulfil the functions of the new statutory duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation*". The funding for future years is dependent on the new burden assessment. The following additional provision has been commissioned using the grant:

- Continuation of funding of 13 units of accommodation previous funded by a limited-term MHCLG grant.
- Introduction of a discretionary grant scheme to support victim/survivors in safe accommodation with a broader range of help including, for example, translation services and support to access move-on accommodation.
- Widened eligibility of the current WISH service providing emotional and therapeutic support to children experiencing domestic abuse to all children in safe accommodation
- Introduction of specialist legal support for all victims in safe accommodation with insecure immigration status in safe accommodation
- Introduction of family support workers to provide a range of interventions with parents and children in specialist supported accommodation, including support in relation to parenting and encouraging good school attendance
- Introduction of a specialist counselling and mental health support service for adult victims in safe accommodation

#### **4 Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

4.1 The option of maintaining the current strategy timeline of 2018-2023 was considered. The needs assessment was comprehensive and looked at needs beyond those specified in the Domestic Abuse Act. It also included significant input from survivors, service providers and other professionals. It was agreed that the current framework was still relevant and that partners' resources would be better focused on delivering the recommendations and the

action plan. The strategy can now be refreshed once the actions and commissioned services have been implemented and can be evaluated.

- 4.2 There is no national commitment of funding beyond 2021/22. The needs assessment, strategy addendum and evaluation of delivery of services this year will help to inform longer term needs.

**Report Author(s): Rachel Chapman**

**Name and Job Title: Consultant in Public Health**

**Directorate: Public Health**

**Telephone and E-mail Contact: Rachel.chapman@uhcw.nhs.uk**

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Coventry DA needs assessment key findings

Appendix 2: DA Action plan