

Cabinet

12th July 2022

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor A S Khan

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Approval of Accommodation-based support Grant 2022 -2024: Part 4 duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Is this a key decision?

Yes - the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on residents in two or more electoral wards in the city.

Executive summary:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced several new duties and a range of implications for local authorities including safe accommodation strategic planning, safe accommodation provision and support for victims, and the prioritisation of domestic abuse victims within homelessness applications.

Coventry City Council has been provided a grant of £852,283 in 2022/23 to continue 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 and further grant funding is due 2023/24.

Due to the time required for the acceptance of the grant award expiring prior to the date of this meeting, the Council constitution in paragraph 2.3.2 (c) of Part 3F permits the relevant Director (in this case being the Director of Public Health) in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair to accept the grant and thereafter to be reported to Cabinet retrospectively.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Note the acceptance of the grant of £852,283 in 2022/2023 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 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: and

- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, to approve further grant due for 2023/24 up to a maximum of £2.5 million pound.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018 – 2023
Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment
Coventry's Domestic Abuse Strategy refresh addendum

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

Yes:

Domestic Abuse - A Briefing Note and Presentation was considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 30 June 2021

Domestic Abuse – Safe and Supported Accommodation - was considered by Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Board in March 2022

Domestic Abuse Strategy – An update was considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 22 June 2022

Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board has oversight of the grant award and commissioning plans. These were outlined in a closed session at the Board on 25 April 2022

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Approval of Accommodation-based support Grant 2022 -2024: Part 4 duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

1. Context (or background)

Following the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act on 29th April 2021, in June 2021 Cabinet previously:

1. Approved the proposal to create The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board as a statutory board of the local authority.
2. Approved acceptance of the grant of £849,930 in 2021/2022 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 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.
3. Noted the Council’s new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Following this, a full needs assessment was undertaken, the Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan was refreshed and extended to 2025 and additional specialist Domestic Abuse services were commissioned. Cabinet approved the refreshed strategy and action plan in November 2021. The newly commissioned services to support victims and children living in relevant, safe accommodation were in response to needs identified in the needs assessment and were required to ensure the Council complies with its new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The details of the newly commissioned services in response to the needs assessment are below:

<p>Family support worker (FSW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 x FSW at Valley House and project costs • 2 x FSW at Haven and Panahghar 	<p>Supporting 150 parents (and 250 children) in specialist accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Positive Parenting Programmes and other parenting support • Assess child’s needs and focus on school attendance, child development and therapeutic issues • Complete Early Help assessments • Liaison with universal services and facilitate development activities with external agencies where appropriate • Consult with children to ensure their voices are heard within the Partnership
<p>Counselling / emotional support for children and young people in safe accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x 0.8WTE (2x30 hrs) WISH Practitioners 	<p>Supporting 100+ children and young people in safe accommodation with counselling and emotional support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2-1 support for children including domestic abuse awareness, equality and respect in relationships and safety • Delivery of You, Me and Mum and joint sessions between child and parent • Facilitate access for other specialist counselling • Advocating for children • Aftercare

<p>Mental health support and counselling for adult victims, specialist provision from Coventry and Warwickshire Mind</p>	<p>Supporting 180 victims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 102 victims receiving (trauma informed) counselling • 78 victims supported with lower level needs via engaging with community assets • Professional advice around mental health
<p>Coordination of legal support for victims with insecure migration status or no recourse to public funds (NRPF), specialist provision from Panahghar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x ethnic minority groups immigration specialist practitioner (regulated immigration adviser – level 2 Office of Immigration Services Commissioner to be able to practice as a Solicitor) 	<p>Supporting 50 victims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destitution Domestic Violence concessions applied within 24 hrs • direct immigration advice across various visa forms, plus divorce advice • coordinate network of solicitors who have legal aid contracts or offer pro bona work <p>Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advice and training to partners agencies • immigration surgeries
<p>Extend capacity for additional 100 clients pa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x specific support workers worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sanctuary scheme capacity from 100 to 200 premises secured per year enabling 100 additional households to access the additional support provided by the WISH service and Coventry and Warwickshire Mind.
<p>Discretionary fund held by LA and dispersed via commissioned services from individual applications</p>	<p>Supporting clients in various ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved re-settlement / move on of victims (200 people @ £200 pp) • Support people with assets to access supported accommodated (e.g. where Housing Benefit cannot be claimed) • Meeting legal fees for immigration cases which where pro-bono / legal aid work cannot be sourced • Potential to support interpreting costs

The grant also funds a domestic abuse programme manager to co-ordinate delivery of the strategy and action plan across the partnership.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

This grant is specifically provided to support the Council's new duties to support victims in safe accommodation as laid out within the Act.

It is proposed that the grant continues to fund the services detailed above and to extend the eligibility of these services to households that are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse and who are provided temporary accommodation until the housing duty can be discharged through provision of settled accommodation. To support this, it is proposed that the grant also funds an Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) to work within the Council's Housing function, an extension of the WISH provision for children and young people and part-funds a specialist post within Change Grow Live (CGL) for victims requiring support with substance misuse issues. Appropriate contract monitoring and evaluation will be developed to assess the effectiveness of the new provision.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. A full needs assessment was undertaken in 2021 by an independent agency and included consultation with victims and partner agencies. This informed the development of the addendum to the strategy and the commissioning of the new services. The needs assessment was published in October 2021. A working group continues to meet, as part of the strategy, to ensure that both adult and child victim of domestic abuse are consulted with appropriately and their voices heard. The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board meets regularly and oversees the strategic direction, the local authority's new duties and commissioning intentions and evaluation of services.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The implementation of the refreshed strategy and action plan has already taken effect. This matter currently relates to the New Burdens Grant funding for 2022 – 2024.

5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

The Government has provided Coventry City Council with a grant of £852,283 in 2022/23 for the Council to fulfil the relevant functions under the duty and it is expected that similar funding will be provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2023/24. Funding of this grant, as with other similar grants such as the Public Health Grant, for 2023/24 is subject to Treasury approval.

5.2. Legal Implications

This grant is provided under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The grant covers revenue expenditure relating to the functions set out in the statutory duty (within the Domestic Abuse Act) on Tier 1 Local Authorities, relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation and other statutory duties.

The proposals in this report ensures that the Council will be able to meet the statutory responsibilities imposed by Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, relating to the provision of support for all victims of domestic abuse and their children.

The Council's constitution requires formal Cabinet approval prior to agreeing to receive external grants in excess of £500,000. If no time to go to Cabinet, the decision can be taken by the relevant Cabinet Member (or the Leader in their absence) in consultation with the relevant Scrutiny Chair; if no time to go to Cabinet Member, the decision can be taken by the relevant Director in consultation with relevant Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair, to be reported to Cabinet retrospectively.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Acceptance of the grant will support the One Coventry Plan vision to help to make communities safer, improve the health and wellbeing of local residents and protect our most vulnerable people by keeping children and adults safe from harm and improving services for people experiencing domestic abuse

6.2. How is risk being managed?

Governance is provided by the statutory Local Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, which is responsible for supporting Coventry City Council in meeting its duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None at this time.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

Duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 were discharged during the re-procurement of safe accommodation services in 2019, including the completion of an Equality Consultation Analysis. A further EIA was completed in October 2021 following the completion of the needs assessment and strategy addendum.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

No Implications.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

The majority of the funding will be dispersed through existing commissioned providers including specialist domestic abuse services who work with a range of partner organisations.

Report authors:

Jayne Ross
Domestic Abuse Programme Delivery Manager

Paul Hargrave
Public Health Commissioner

Rachel Chapman
Consultant in Public Health

Service:

Public Health and Wellbeing

Tel and email contact:

Tel: 02475 381285

Email: Jayne.Ross@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to Jayne Ross

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Jim Crawshaw	Head of Housing and Homelessness	Adult Services and Housing	17/06/22	17/6/22
Ewan Dewar	Finance Manager	Finance	17/06/22	17/6/22
Abbie Box	Public Health Programme Officer	Public Health and Wellbeing	17/06/22	17/6/22
Michelle Salmon	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	09/06/2022	09/06/22
Names of approvers for submission: (Officers and Members)				
Allison Duggal	Director of Public Health and Wellbeing	-	6/06/22	06/06/22
Oluremi Aremu	Head of Legal and Procurement Services	Law and Governance	17/06/22	20/06/22
Barry Hastie	Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 officer)/Director of Finance	-	17/06/22	21/06/22
John Gregg	Director of Children's Services	-	17/06/22	17/06/22
Andrew Walster	Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services	-	17/06/22	17/06/22
Sally Caren - on behalf of Pete Fahy, Director of Adults Services and Housing	Head of Adult Social Care and Support	-	17/06/22	20/06/22
Councillor A S Khan	Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities	-	10/06/22	10/06/22
Councillor M Ali	Chair of Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)	-	20/06/22	21/06/22

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