

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD – WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2020

**TELFORD & WREKIN COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - DOMESTIC ABUSE
PROGRESS REPORT**

**REPORT OF LIZ NOAKES, DIRECTOR HEALTH, WELLBEING & COMMISSIONING
(STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH)**

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR RICHARD OVERTON

CABINET CHAMPION - CLLR RAE EVANS

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

This report updates the Health & Wellbeing Board on the work of the Domestic Abuse Subgroup in terms of the local response to the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the progress being made towards implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2021.

- The coronavirus pandemic has clearly been an especially worrying time for victims of domestic abuse. Therefore the Council and partners have ensured a particular focus as part of the COVID-19 response at both the Council’s internal gold command group and the multi-agency Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Tactical Coordinating Group.
- Regular data updates from West Mercia Police indicate that there has not to date been an increase in the number of domestic abuse crimes and incidents reported compared to the equivalent period in 2019/20.
- Research suggests that there is likely to be an increase in domestic abuse reports once the Government’s ‘Stay at Home’ guidance is lifted. In anticipation of an increase Telford & Wrekin Council has committed additional funding to directly support victims of domestic abuse, including for West Mercia Women’s Aid Live Chat Service and Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service – Supporting People 1:1 and Helpline Service.
- As part of the Government’s public awareness raising campaign ‘You are not alone’ the Council launched a number of initiatives, including: refresh of the web pages, promotional video by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service, press release with a call to action for people to share a heart palm symbol on social media and posters highlighting local and national support for supermarkets for NHS hospital and community settings.
- Progress continues on key priorities within the local domestic abuse strategy, including identification of funding: to support children and young people affected by domestic abuse, for the commissioning of pilot family and perpetrator programme and improved support in safe accommodation for victims, linking to the Domestic Abuse Bill.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Health & Wellbeing Board is asked to recognise: the arrangements in place to assess the impact of domestic abuse locally in light of the pandemic, the additional support and awareness raising and the further progress being made in implementing the Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2021.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective (s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and support our most vulnerable children and adults • Put our children and young people first • Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Domestic Abuse can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, and it occurs across all of society. However certain people are disproportionately affected, such as women, young people under 25, those with disabilities or mental health problems. Domestic Abuse can have a long-term and devastating impact on families and particularly children.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	<p>Fortnightly meetings are in place with police and safeguarding colleagues to understand local intelligence and analyse data. This arrangement will stay in place until agreed to step down the local response by the Safeguarding Partnership Executive.</p> <p>The domestic abuse action plan is being regularly updated and implementation will continue to be monitored and reported over the lifetime of the strategy until March 2021.</p>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>In 2020/21, the Council has invested an additional £40k from its resources in services that directly support domestic violence victims as part of the local response to the Coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>In support of some of the key priorities of the Domestic Abuse strategy additional funding is also available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £250k from Council resources over a two-year period to support children and young people affected by domestic violence and a pilot perpetrator scheme. • Grant from the Council's successful bid to the MHCLG 2020-2021 fund, (circa £65,000) to support victims of Domestic Abuse within safe accommodation linking to the prospective Domestic Abuse Bill.

		Any additional services identified as being required as the action plan is progressed will need to be met from within the partners existing resources. If additional funding is required, there will be discussion amongst partners and a request will have to be made through the relevant governance arrangements of each organisation. TS 01/06/2020
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council has a duty to take steps to improve the wellbeing of those within its borough. The DA strategy assists the Council in meeting this statutory obligation. The strategy will also assist the Council in being able to work with partners in implementing the Domestic Abuse Bill which is anticipated to be brought into force within the next 12 months. AL 03/02/2020
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Borough-wide impact is expected, but particularly wards with highest levels socioeconomic deprivation and health inequalities.

4. PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1 COVID-19 Response

The Stay at Home guidance element of the Government's COVID-19 response, is well recognised as potentially causing levels of stress which impacts on mental health in families. It is recognised this is likely to lead to an overall increase in domestic abuse incidents, with national charities warning of a potential 30% rise in domestic abuse reports once the lockdown ends.

Domestic abuse has been a particular focus at both the Council's internal gold command COVID-19 response group and the multi-agency Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Tactical Coordinating Group.

The Domestic Abuse Subgroup is a wide partnership group, therefore a smaller core group has been formed during the pandemic, with representatives from the police and safeguarding teams meeting fortnightly to understand the local picture and any changes.

In anticipation of the increased demand for local support services the Council has allocated additional funding to support victims of domestic abuse, in partnership with specialist domestic abuse services such as;

- West Mercia Women's Aid – Live Chat Service
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service – Supporting People 1:1 and Helpline Service

In light of the Government's announcement for a public awareness raising campaign 'You are not a lone' and to promote local support services, the council launched a number of initiatives;

- New content on the councils COVID-19 web page, which has been viewed 3,300 times. The website also including a video developed by Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service promoting the local support, as well as advising people on how to stay safe. The video has been viewed 8,000 times since the 'stay at home' guidance was launched
- Joint press release with Shropshire Council with a call to action for people to share a heart palm symbol on social media
- Posters highlighting Local and National support displayed in Telford's supermarkets, GP practices and NHS hospital and community settings

4.2 Incident Reporting

We are receiving regular data updates on crimes and incidents involving domestic abuse recorded by West Mercia Police as follows;

- Data does not show an increase in the number of crimes and incidents reported compared with the equivalent period in 2019/20
- The number of recorded crimes involving domestic abuse and domestic abuse incidents in the 2020/21 financial year is 9% fewer than in 2019/20
- Data for the 2020/21 financial year to date (1 April to 18 May) shows that the number of recorded crimes involving DA was 13% lower (53 crimes) than in 2019/20
- The number of domestic abuse incidents (i.e. where no crime was recorded) over the same period was 3% (8 incidents) lower than the equivalent weeks in 2019/20
- Compared with March 2020 there was a decline in referrals into Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service in April, with referrals into the service in April 42% lower than they had been in March

4.3 Domestic Abuse Strategy Implementation 2019-2021

The Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Subgroup works to develop and deliver on the action plan to address the safeguarding issues and challenges defined by the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership Executive and Community Safety Partnership. Progress is being made on the key priorities of the strategy as follows;

- Funding has been secured to support children and young people affected by domestic abuse linking to existing programmes delivered by the council such as 'power to change' and 'freedom programme'. This Funding will also allow for the commissioning of an evidence based pilot perpetrator programme with a family focus

- Telford & Wrekin Council has been successful in gaining MHCLG 2020-2021 fund, (circa £65,000) to support victims of Domestic Abuse within safe accommodation linking to the prospective Domestic Abuse Bill

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

HWB Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2021 – Progress report - 11 February 2020

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Report prepared by Stacey Norwood, Senior Public Health Commissioner and Helen Onions, Consultant in Public Health Email: Helen.Onions@telford.gov.uk