



**Name of meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**Title of report: Domestic Abuse Strategic Update**

**Purpose of report:** This report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee with a further update on the development of the Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy. It should be noted that a separate presentation will also be attached to this paper to inform the Committee specifically about the impact and response related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes/No or Not Applicable Report requested by Scrutiny
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Mel Meggs, Strategic Director <date>
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a>	Cllr Carole Pattison

**Electoral wards affected: All**

**Ward councillors consulted: N/A (only as part of the Place Based Work detailed below)**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered? Yes**

## **1. Summary**

Following the 2019-21 Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy being signed off in September 2019, it was agreed that a further update on the agenda would be routinely provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to ensure oversight and to highlight any risks. A separate presentation will be given specifically around the impact of Covid-19, as this has naturally affected progress on some areas of the strategy.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

None

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Working with People**

At the core of the Domestic Abuse Strategy is a model that was adopted from SafeLives which promotes a pro-active 'whole picture approach' to widen the response to domestic abuse, and ensure that the needs of the individual are not considered and acted on in isolation. The strategy has a particular emphasis on early intervention and prevention (ie. acting before someone harms or is harmed) which focusses on working far more with our communities, elected members, schools, health providers, businesses and the voluntary sector to raise awareness of the issue and increase confidence for people to report and confidence to respond when a disclosure may be made. It is paramount that communities and society are strengthened to support people experiencing domestic abuse to be safe, well and resilient, supported by a sustainable, strong infrastructure of services and for provision to be in place for those most vulnerable and at highest risk.

As this element of the strategy would have required a great degree of community engagement and projects and training to have physically taken place within communities, this has been significantly affected by the restrictions put in place throughout the pandemic. However, unintended consequences have meant that there has been more opportunities to promote domestic abuse services (both locally and nationally) through a range of communications and online platforms. This was helped to some extent by the National Campaigns and awareness raising around domestic abuse but it has also prompted a lot of work to take place with providers and partners to ensure that victims knew where to go to seek help, including key information being translated into a number of community languages. Other ways in which victims have been encouraged to come forward are through a dedicated online reporting tool developed by West Yorkshire Police and a live web chat facility being established by Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership. There was recognition at the start of lockdown that the priorities needed to be focussed on service continuity and ensuring the wellbeing of staff and service users so these pressures have meant that more innovative projects have been stalled. Work is, however, ongoing to consider how these could be delivered differently in the future.

### **3.2 Working with Partners**

The Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership is the lead group for the implementation and delivery of the Kirklees Strategy. It is widely recognised that domestic abuse truly is a partnership agenda as all parts of the system are points where disclosures could be made by someone of any age; have a role to play in preventative work and/or have a statutory duty. As a result of lockdown, key partners were asked to provide weekly data which was submitted in a timely manner; there were frequent meetings set up to discuss any specific pressures and examples of some reactive initiatives being made to respond to a changing situation. There continues to be strong connectivity between the Safeguarding Adults Board, Children's Safeguarding Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Boards, and again, throughout the pandemic, key messages have been shared widely and promoted through various groups to try and gain the maximum reach. Training packages have also been shared and quickly moved onto virtual platforms which have been disseminated to staff across the partnership, including staff who were deployed from their usual roles to upskill them in new frontline response settings.

### **3.3 Place Based Working**

The work around the Place Based Working continues to progress and various options have been presented to the Place Based Leads for them to consider, before a collective decision is reached. Again, some of the original options need further development in the context of whether delivery is feasible whilst restrictions are still in place. All seven areas are currently in the process of considering these through virtual meetings and it is hoped that a firm proposal around this spend will be available by the end of the year. It is recommended that this item comes back to Scrutiny in the future.

### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

None, except for the reduction in travel for staff and providers as a result of the pandemic

### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

Children can be significantly affected by domestic abuse which can go on to lead to life long issues. This is why the strategy places such a big emphasis on early intervention and prevention which includes the response to children; understanding the voice of the child and encouraging behavioural change where needed. Through joint work between Children's Services, the Children's Safeguarding Partnership and Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership, progress has been made in the following areas:

- Throughout Covid, the Vulnerable Adults and Children's theme group have provided regular safeguarding assurance sessions to the Council's Executive Team which has led to better joint working
- Review of Operation Encompass (schools notifications)

- Children's Practice Review learning sessions held and key themes to be acted on will now be implemented through a specific Task & Finish Group

### **3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions**

A new Domestic Abuse Bill is expected to be enacted in April 2021 which is firmly in view through the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership. The key areas to note can be found in the Government Factsheet, accessible here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>.

It should be noted that the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership is in the process of considering the roll out of training and awareness raising that will be needed across multi-agency settings and with Elected Members when the Bill is enacted so further information will be available on this earlier next year

There has been some recent personnel changes with key posts connected to domestic abuse but the transitional periods have been planned to ensure that the partnership remains strong, effective and able to collectively continue to drive the agenda.

## **4. Next steps and timelines**

- The Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership is next meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November to review the Action Plan and to set the priorities for 2021, especially in the context of the changing situation around Covid-19
- The data will continue to be monitored and should additional restrictions demonstrate any emerging trends, these will be picked up and acted on through the various reporting mechanisms
- The work around Place Based Working will continue to progress and a decision made on what Place Based Leads agree should be the focus of the committed spend (by Dec 2020)
- Work will continue around the roll out of the Domestic Abuse Bill (likely to continue from now for the foreseeable)

## **5. Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee:

- Notes the updates provided in this paper
- Notes the additional pressures that have been created as a result of the pandemic and the response from the partnership to mitigate these
- Considers receiving future reports with a specific focus, given that the area of domestic abuse is so broad (including Place Based Working)

## **6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

That the Cabinet Portfolio Holder:

- Notes the updates provided in this paper
- Notes the additional pressures that have been created as a result of the pandemic and the response from the partnership to mitigate these
- Considers receiving future reports with a specific focus, given that the area of domestic abuse is so broad (including Place Based Working)

## **7. Contact officer**

Alexia Gray - Head of Quality Standards and Safeguarding Partnerships (but was formally the Service Manager for Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Partnerships)

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## **8. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Previous Domestic Abuse updates were provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the following dates:

- 3 September 2018
- 5 November 2018
- 22 July 2019

## **9. Service Director responsible**

Jill Greenfield, Service Director, Customer and Communities