



Author/Lead Officer of Report: *Alison Higgins,
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Report of: *Alexis Chappell*

Report to: *Councillor for Health and Social Care*

Date of Decision: *25.10.21*

Subject: *Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy
2021-2024*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>People</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Overview and Scrutiny Management</i>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number) 252 and 915</i> <i>In relation to the main Sheffield Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2018-2022 and the allocation of funding under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		

Purpose of Report:

- To seek approval for publication of the new Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy for the City as required under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This is an addendum to the Sheffield Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2018-2022. Both strategies will be aligned in 2023.

Recommendations:*Individual Cabinet Member to*

Approve for publication and adopt the Sheffield Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-24, which is attached to this report along with the corresponding executive summary.

Background Papers:*(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)*

Executive Summary Domestic Abuse
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Anna Beeby
		Legal: Louise Bate
		Equalities: Ed Sexton
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	John Macilwraith
3	Cabinet Member consulted:	George Lindars-Hammond Alison Teal
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Alison Higgins</i>	Job Title: <i>Strategic Commissioning Manager, Domestic and Sexual Abuse</i>
Date: 14th October 2021		

1. PROPOSAL

1.1

On 29th April 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act (DAA) became law and under Part 4 of the act new duties were placed on local authorities with Sheffield City Council now required to:

- Assess or make arrangements for the assessment of, and the need for, accommodation based support in its area in relation to domestic abuse
- Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area and,
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
- Establish a local partnership board

1.2 This strategy will be refreshed and aligned to Sheffield's main Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy in 2023.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

2.1 The strategy ensures that the council are complying with the new duty placed upon it by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

2.2 The strategy will contribute to the Council's One year plan primarily in relation to Communities and Neighbourhoods, ensuring safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse and supporting the Education, Health and Care objective by enabling survivors of domestic abuse and their children to live the life they want to live.

2.3 It is estimated that domestic abuse affects around 20,000 adults and up to 28,000 children in Sheffield each year. This means that there is a high demand for domestic abuse safe accommodation and support. This is addressed in the strategy and work undertaken during its course will aim to ensure that safe accommodation is straightforward to access and support is readily available to those who need it.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 The strategy is informed by the lived experience of survivors of domestic abuse in Sheffield and there have been a wide range of consultation activities undertaken as follows:

- Stakeholder engagement event to gather both stakeholder and provider views on the development of the strategy and inform the Needs Assessment
- Citizenspace public consultation held with the aim of informing the strategy and Needs Assessment
- Consultation on the draft strategy with members of the Domestic Abuse Service User Reference Group
- Individual and group consultation sessions with survivors of domestic abuse who have used safe accommodation in the city to understand their experiences and their views on the support they received.

- Draft strategies were presented to the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Provider Consultation Group, Joint Commissioning Group and Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategic Board
- Draft strategy presented to the Equality Partnership Hub meeting for feedback

3.2 Feedback from consultation tells us that survivors of domestic abuse can find the pathways into safe accommodation challenging to navigate, and that once they are in safe accommodation they feel that increased wrap around support for themselves and their children would help them to recover more quickly from their experiences of abuse.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 In exercising discretion, the local authority must always be mindful of their duty contained in section 149 of the equality Act 2010, that is the duty to have due regard to the need to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited or under the Act:
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This includes having due regard to the need to:-

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by relevant protected characteristic that are connected characteristics from the needs of the persons who do not share it.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.

Section 158 of the Equality Act 2010 permits the taking of positive action where this is proportionate means of meeting the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic which are different from the needs of persons who do not share that protected characteristic.

Equalities Impact Assessments were undertaken for the main Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy¹ and for the allocation of central government funding for support in safe accommodation under the DAA. and the findings of these suggested that the impact on all protected groups would be positive and this applies equally to this strategy addendum.

¹ Reference numbers 252 and 915

4.1.2 The strategy commits us to ensuring that our safe accommodation and corresponding support is accessible to all of those who need it, irrespective of their individual circumstances and/or any protected characteristics they may have. This includes, but is not limited to, addressing the needs of victims of all genders, all ages, all sexualities, people with physical and learning disabilities, people with mental health issues, substance misusers and people of all ethnicities and migrants.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 The local authority has been awarded £1.32 million in new burdens funding from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities until the end March 2022. It is not clear whether this financial allocation will be at the same level in future years as this is contingent on the Central Government spending review, this impacts on our ability to commission long term at present.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires the Council to appoint a domestic abuse local partnership board for the purposes of providing advice to the Council about the exercise of its housing related domestic abuse functions and the provision of other local authority support in its area. As soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year the Council must submit to the Secretary of State an annual report in relation to the exercise of its functions under Part 4 of the Act. In exercising its functions under Part 4 the Council must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

4.3.2 The Act also requires the Council to assess, or make arrangements to assess, the need for accommodation-based support in its area; prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area; and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. Before publishing a strategy the Council must consult with Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board established under section 58 of the Act and such other persons as the Council considers appropriate.

4.3.3 The Act also requires the Council (from 01.10.2021) to provide support to victims of abuse and their children living in refuges, specialist safe accommodation, dispersed accommodation, sanctuary schemes and second stage accommodation. Under the duty the Council must provide support for children, counselling and therapy, housing related advice and support, communication with other health and social care providers, specialist support for victims with complex needs and/or

protected characteristics, and help for victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships to prevent victimisation.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 *None*

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The development and publication of a Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy is a statutory duty placed on the local authority therefore no other options were able to be considered.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The wording for the draft strategy has been approved by the Strategy Leadership Board and has been consulted on widely with stakeholders, providers and both current and former service users.

It will provide a strategic plan for the city to address issues around domestic abuse safe accommodation and specialist support that affect thousands of people in Sheffield each year. Its aim is to ensure that Sheffield continues to provide high quality domestic abuse safe accommodation with specialist support to enable victims / survivors and their children to recover from the harm caused by domestic abuse.