



Meeting: Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

Date/Time: Friday, 18 March 2022 at 9.00 am

Location: Microsoft Teams

Contact: Euan Walters (0116 3055483)

Email: Euan.Walters@leics.gov.uk

AGENDA

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>
1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.	
2. Approving Terms of Reference for the Board.	(Pages 3 - 6)
<i>Gurjit Samra-Rai, Community Safety Manager, Leicestershire County Council will present this item.</i>	
3. Appointment of Vice-Chairman.	
<i>Nominations are sought from all Board members.</i>	
4. Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment.	(Pages 7 - 40)
<i>Gurjit Samra-Rai, Community Safety Manager, Leicestershire County Council will present this item.</i>	
5. Theory of Change.	
<i>Sabrina Hussain, Domestic Abuse and Housing Officer, Leicestershire County Council will present this item.</i>	
6. DLUHC Domestic Abuse Act Spend Plan.	(Pages 41 - 50)
<i>Gurjit Samra-Rai, Community Safety Manager, Leicestershire County Council will present this report.</i>	
7. Any other Business.	



8. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Friday 17 June 2022 at 9.00am.

Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

Terms of Reference

Purpose and Role

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board is a partnership group responsible for supporting Leicestershire County Council in meeting its duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Board will work together to support, advise, and work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within relevant safe accommodation services. The Board will establish an equitable partnership that reflects the needs of those impacted by domestic abuse in the local area and works to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to appropriate and specialist support within relevant safe accommodation services.

The Board will work together to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support within relevant safe accommodation services.

Frequency of meetings

The Board will meet quarterly.

Membership

The Board is made up of a number of responsible bodies and agencies that by law, must be represented:

Tier one local authority representative/s:

Cabinet Lead Member for Community Safety, Leicestershire County Council.
Assistant Director, Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care, Leicestershire County Council.
Public Health, Leicestershire County Council.

Tier two local authority representatives:

Lead member safer communities Blaby District Council / CSP Chair
Lead member safer communities Charnwood Borough Council / CSP Chair
Lead member safer communities Harborough District Council /CSP Chair
Lead member safer communities Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council / CSP Chair
Lead member safer communities Melton Borough Council /CSP Chair
Lead member safer communities North West Leicestershire District Council /CSP Chair
Lead member safer communities Oadby and Wigston District Council / CSP Chair
Director (Community Services) Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council / Chair of Districts Chief Housing Officer Group)

Representatives of victims of domestic abuse:

Healthy Homes Officer, Public Health, Leicestershire County Council.
Voluntary Sector Providers.

Representative/s of children of domestic abuse:

Women's Aid Leicestershire.

Representative/s for charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in the area], including specialist and by and for services:

CEO, Women's Aid Leicestershire
CEO, Living Without Abuse
CEO, Freeva
Project Officer, GATE
CEO, LGBT Centre
CEO, Panaghar
CEO, Zinthya Trust
CEO, New Dawn New Day

Representative/s for health care services:

Clinical Commissioning Groups (or any successor body).

Representative/s for policing or criminal justice:

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire
Leicestershire Police
National Probation Service

Chairing the Board

The Board will be chaired by the Cabinet Lead Member for Community Safety, Leicestershire County Council.

The Vice Chair of the Board will be appointed at the first meeting of every municipal year.

Members of the Board are responsible for ensuring they report back and feed into the Board on behalf of their represented group / body.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board will:

Provide advice and data to support Leicestershire County Council to undertake a robust local needs assessment to identify and understand the needs of domestic abuse victims within relevant safe accommodation, in their area (including those that present from out of area).

Provide expert advice and data to support the development of a local strategy, agreeing the appropriate steps needed to meet the needs identified – ensuring the needs of all victims, including those with protected characteristics and / or additional complex needs, are represented and met through the strategy.

Support Leicestershire County Council to effectively engage with domestic abuse victims and expert services in understanding the range and complexity of needs.

Support Leicestershire County Council to make commissioning and decommissioning decisions (where appropriate). This can include when and how commissioning is undertaken to ensure the best and most appropriate services are made available for victims.

Note: local authorities should take into consideration that some Board members may have a conflict of interest. Domestic abuse relevant safe accommodation service providers will not be involved with local commissioning decisions in relation to this duty.

Support in ensuring join up across other related areas such as alcohol and drug treatment services, housing, health, early years and childhood support, social services and police and crime services [not limited to].

Advise and support in dealing with issues raised and identified from engagement through formal and informal routes.

Provide advice to Leicestershire County Council about the provision of other local authority domestic abuse support.

All issues will be escalated to the Leicestershire County Council Scrutiny Commission.

Tier one authorities should agree a clear escalation process, with the Board, which members and other local organisations can utilise to raise concerns in regard to the implementation of the duties.

Voting

One representative from each of the responsible bodies and agencies that by law must be represented on the Board is entitled to vote on any matter under discussion by the Board, with the exception that if the vote relates to commissioning or decommissioning of services, Voluntary Sector Service Providers will not be entitled to vote on that matter.

Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the Board will be a minimum of 6 voting members, this to include one representative from Leicestershire County Council and representatives from a minimum of 3 other partner agencies.

Agendas

Members will be able to put forward suggested agenda items for consideration. The secretariat will circulate final agendas 5 working days ahead of meetings.

Standing agenda items will include:

- Data Report;

- Authentic Voice;
- Updates from commissioned services. 6

Absence

Where members are unable to attend a meeting, they are responsible for informing the Board ahead of the meeting and, as far as possible, should ensure a representative is present on behalf of the organisation / body.

Reporting

The Chair / Board will report back to:

- The Leicestershire County Council DA Strategy Working Group (quarterly);
- Leicestershire County Council Scrutiny Commission (annually);
- The Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) (Biannually).

The Board will support Leicestershire County Council in reporting back to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on delivering the duty in line with statutory guidance and the standardised reporting form.

Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-2025



Foreword



Councillor Deborah Taylor

(Lead Member Children and Family Services and Chair of the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board)

I am delighted to present the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy, which outlines how Leicestershire County Council will work with partners to meet new duties to provide safe accommodation and support in Leicestershire for adult and child victims of Domestic Abuse (DA) as part of the Council's statutory requirements within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

We will work to ensure that all victims are supported to remain safe in their own home if they wish and it is safe to do so, or access alternative safe accommodation and support. The Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy outlines how agencies will work in partnership to provide victims with a range of options, enabling them to make the choices that they feel are right for them.

The Women's Aid Annual Audit 2021 presents information on the provision and usage of domestic abuse services (both accommodation and community support services) in England:

- It is estimated that 10,592 women and 12,710 children were supported by a refuge in 2019/20.
- There are 3,935 refuge spaces in England, falling short of the number of spaces recommended by the Council of Europe by 30%.
- It is estimated that a total of 24,748 referrals were received by refuges, meaning that 57% of all referrals received for refuge were rejected. 32% of rejections was due to a lack of space or capacity.
- 63% of women in refuge services had children and 6% were pregnant.
- 48% of service users in a refuge reported feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts because of the abuse.
- 26% of women at refuge services have a disability; most common were mental health disabilities, 7% had a physical disability.

There are many further barriers to victims accessing refuge support with many victims having complex needs; I am committed to ensuring that we do all we can to support and protect all victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse and their families.

I do not believe that in Leicestershire, homelessness, inappropriate accommodation or remaining in an abusive relationship is a choice that any victim should be faced with.



Jane Moore
(Director Children
and Family Services)

Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Service is committed to becoming a trauma informed responsive department where we believe ***"we are stronger together"***. Our culture is one of partnership where we look for solutions and recognise the potential impact of trauma on the children and families we work with in Leicestershire.

The DA Act 2021 states: ***"Children and young people are deemed to be victims under the 2021 Act as a result of seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to at least one of them whether that be the victim or perpetrator"***.

The Leicestershire Needs Assessment undertaken by SafeLives in 2021 demonstrates a year-on-year increase in under 18's becoming victims of DA; in 20/21 this increase equated to almost a doubling on the previous year. The highest prevalence of child victim age in both 18/19 and 19/20 was 6-11year olds, changing to 0-5year olds in 20/21.

In 20/21 we changed our practice in the Children's Social Care Assessment Team to include other children in the family as part of all case management records; this saw the number of children being identified as victims of DA increase dramatically, enabling us to identify over three times as many children requiring support, in line with the requirements of the new DA Act (2021).

We are committed to protecting and supporting vulnerable children and families; we will strive to create a safe, compassionate, healing environment demonstrated through relationships based on trust, respect hope and empathy.

Introduction

The Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-25 outlines how Leicestershire County Council (LCC) will work in partnership to reduce Domestic Abuse and support victims and how the statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation will be implemented, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

This Strategy adopts the Government definition of domestic abuse which is outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The new definition emphasises that domestic abuse is not only physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour, and economic abuse.

It describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines five objectives that will be the focus of delivery:

- 1. Early Intervention and Prevention**
- 2. Targeted Support**
- 3. Reachable Services**
- 4. DA Act (Part 4) - Safe Accommodation**
- 5. Strong Partnerships**

Background

Domestic Abuse causes significant harm to individuals, children, families, and communities.

The scale and impact is vast. The SafeLives prevalence tool shows that 98,350 of adults in Leicestershire have experienced Domestic Abuse at some point in their lives since the age of 16, with approximately 15% experiencing both partner and family abuse. Furthermore 28,360 adult victims have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year with approximately 8% experiencing both partner and family abuse.

The overall number of victims has increased year on year, with a 4.9% increase in 19/20 and 7.6% increase in 20/21 on the previous year.

The increase in the 20/21 year can be attributed to a change in practice by Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) Children's Social Care (CSC) assessment team to 'including other children in the family' as part of case management records. Victims being assessed by LCC's CSC increased by 218%. This change in practice enabled CSC to identify over three times as many children as victims of DA in 20/21 in line with the requirements of the new DA Act (2021).

This puts LCC in good stead to ensure information is gathered to support the authority to respond effectively to the DA Act 2021 S.3(181) - "Children and young people are deemed to be victims under the 2021 Act as a result of seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to at least one of them whether that be the victim or perpetrator".

In respect of the highest prevalence of child victim age in both 18/19 and 19/20 this was 6-11 year olds (2.7% and 3.1%) but in 20/21 this changes to 0-5 year olds (6.8%).

Using the SafeLives prevalence tool the research shows 4080 older people (55+ year olds) in Leicestershire experienced Domestic Abuse in 20/21; only 802 older people accessed services for support around DA.

A Delivery Plan will be developed to deliver the Strategy. Progress against the implementation plan will be monitored by the Director of Children and Family Services (CFS) and the CFS DA Strategic Group, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Targeted Early Help and Social Care. Progress information will also be shared with partners and key stakeholders to ensure alignment across the system and monitored by the DA Local Partnership Board.

DA Act 2021

The DA Act places a statutory duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation. Part 4 of the 2021 Act introduces a new statutory duty on local authorities which places clearer accountability on local areas to ensure the needs of victims within refuges and other forms of domestic abuse safe accommodation are met in a consistent way across England.

Under the new duty in the 2021 Act, Tier One authorities in England will be required to appoint a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to provide the governance for this work.

The Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance describes Domestic Abuse Support within safe/relevant accommodation as:

- **Overall management of services within relevant accommodation** - including, the management of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a Service Manager).
- **Support with the day-to-day running of the service** - for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff).
- **Advocacy support** - development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and Social Workers, welfare benefit providers).
- **Domestic abuse prevention advice** - support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.
- **Specialist support for victims**
 - Designed specifically for victims with protected characteristics (also known as by and for), such as faith services, translators and interpreters within BAME-led refuges, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to].
 - Designed specifically for victims with unique and / or complex needs such as mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, including sign-posting accordingly.
- **Children's support** - including play therapy and child advocacy.
- **Housing-related support** - providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.
- **Advice service** - financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements.
- **Counselling and therapy** - including group support for both adults and children, including emotional support.

Funding Allocations

The Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing (DLUCH - formerly MHCLG) has allocated funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty under the DA Act. Leicestershire County Council has been awarded £1.126 million, with each district receiving £33k.

It is unclear whether the financial allocation awarded in 2021/22 will be reflected in subsequent years of this strategy. Both years 2 and 3 are tied to a Central Government spending review. A joint financial plan will be developed alongside this strategy and will outline how funding will be allocated.

The Priorities

1. Early Intervention and Prevention

Where we are now:

- United Against Violence and Abuse (UAVA) Service (including a helpline giving advice and support about domestic abuse; Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and outreach workers).
- Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services provide a range of support to families to recognise and respond to the early signs of domestic abuse and provide support to families in need, including a new toolkit for practitioners and work to recognise and alleviate family conflict.
- Leicestershire Police and other criminal justice agencies deploy a range of tools and powers, which includes but is not limited to: Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Notices, Non-Molestation Orders, Integrated Offender Management and promotion of Claire's Law (Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme).

What we want to achieve:

- Victim-survivors (adults and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain in their homes if this is what they want and importantly if it is safe to do so. This includes the use of civil remedies such as non-molestation orders and occupation orders and holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour through the criminal justice process.
- Promote prevention from an early age through education, including working with schools.
- Upskilling front-line officers/staff from statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations.

How we will get there:

- Build further capacity within service provision.
- Improve and support options and choices for victims to remain in their homes.
- Raise awareness and deliver education on healthy relationship and DA.
- Multi Agency workforce DA Training.
- Healthy Schools Work.
- DA Toolkits and Champions within organisations.
- Promotion and implementation of Trauma Informed Practice and Services.
- DA Support Policy's for Staff.
- DA awareness programmes for victims/survivors.
- Manage and work with perpetrators through criminal justice agencies and Voluntary Sector Providers.

2. Targeted Support

Where we are now:

- The Needs Assessment has highlighted that within the datasets, data capture for certain categories is lacking. This includes:
 - **Ethnicity:** Different ethnic groups have different experiences of services and experience different barriers. It is important to ensure that ethnicity is captured appropriately to fully understand the demographic and needs of Leicestershire.
 - **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:** Those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services. It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and needs of Leicestershire.
 - **Socio Economic status:** Research in the UK has consistently found vulnerability to DA to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt.

What we want to achieve:

- A clear understanding of need through robust data collation and authentic voice work.
- Targeted and appropriate support services for all communities.

How we will get there:

- An Equality Impact Assessment will accompany this Strategy.
- Targeted Services will be commissioned e.g. specialist support for Black, Asian and multi ethnically diverse victims; victims with substance misuse and mental health; young people; older victims; victims with disabilities, LGBT+ victims etc.
- Good quality data capturing by all partner agencies and service providers.
- Further engagement with “by and for services”.



3. Reachable Services

Where we are now:

- Leicestershire is a large rural county where victims may feel isolated due to the lack of local services within their immediate vicinity.
- The impact of Covid-19 across all services is yet to be fully understood, it is something LCC will continue to assess.
- Insights from front line specialist DA services highlight numerous factors, including the closure and/or reduced capacity of services (including the courts) means they must hold clients for longer and provide more time intensive support than previously.

What we want to achieve:

- Victims and professionals know how to access services and are aware of safe accommodation options, both inside and outside of Leicestershire.
- Victims can access services when and where they need them at reachable moments.

How we will get there:

- Co-ordinated Community Response including Community Champions such as hairdressers and community groups.
- Build capacity in the local DA helpline.
- Work with partnerships to deliver services in localities.
- Consideration of Impact of Trauma.
- Making Every Contact Count (MECC).
- Engagement through Authentic Victim Voice.
- Robust Communication Plan for communities and professionals.

4. DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation

Types of safe accommodation:

- Refuge accommodation.
- Specialist safe accommodation - dedicated specialist support to victims with relevant protected characteristics and/or complex needs such as specialist refuges for Black, Asian and multi ethnically diverse, LGBT+, and disabled victims and their children.
- Dispersed accommodation - safe self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge.
- Sanctuary Schemes - may also be called Target Hardening scheme. A survivor centred initiative which aims to enable a victim to remain in their own home by installing additional security to the property and perimeter.
- Move on and/or second stage accommodation - accommodation temporarily housing victims, who no longer require the intensive support provided in a refuge, but still require a lower level of domestic abuse specific support before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. May include support accommodation schemes and resettlement schemes.
- Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation - a safe place with support given victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to consider and make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe.

Safe accommodation is not generic temporary accommodation which is not solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse. It is important to note that those experiencing Domestic Abuse may well be in standard temporary accommodation but may not have been identified as such or may have been placed in this accommodation due to the Homelessness Duty.

Where we are now:

- There are currently 21 safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire. The Council of Europe recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population. The population of Leicestershire is 706,155 therefore the recommended number is 70 spaces. The current provision available in Leicestershire is below the recommended level.
- Referrals for Safe Accommodation Increased significantly (by 339%) from 67 in 2018/19 to 281 in 2019/20. There was a small decrease to 252 in 2020/21. In 18/19, 49.3% of referrals were successful, in 19/20, 49.1% of referrals were successful and in 20/21, 51.2% were successful.
- The average length of stay in Safe Accommodation across Leicestershire ranges from 102 days in 2018/19 to 110 in 2019/20 and 113 in 2020/21. Consideration is given for recovery support that will enable survivors to move on to suitable accommodation and free up space for higher risk victims to access.

- Across all three years, almost half of referrals to safe accommodations have been refused with the main reasons being “client does not want support or client disengaged”. This will be explored further in order to gain understanding.
- Several victims were unable to access safe accommodation due to the accommodation not being suitable, size of accommodation, communal spaces, location etc. This will be explored further to understand the reasons for refusals and the barriers for victims as this may include location of accommodation and therefore be due to lack of available space in an area.

What we want to achieve:

- Current provision will be increased from 21 spaces to 70 spaces as recommended by the Commission for Europe (1 space per 10,000 population).
- Alternative forms of safe accommodation more suited to those who cannot access a refuge such as dispersed accommodation or a Housing First scheme, where wrap-around support for complex and additional needs will be provided.
- Consideration regarding the location and size of safe accommodation to be given as safe accommodation is not available across all 7 districts.
- Consider how any further barriers preventing families from accessing refuge accommodation can be overcome (such as Pet Sanctuaries).
- Appropriate support for victims and survivors using a holistic approach to ensure their needs are not treated in isolation but are seen in the context of a whole person.
- Support to return home or move on from refuge accommodation: victims are supported to return home safely or move into alternative permanent accommodation.
- Enable/support victims and families to remain in their home where it is safe to do so.
- Provide accessible supported accommodation (for older victims or those with disabilities).
- DA support, including therapeutic and peer support.

How we will get there:

- Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA) – The Domestic Abuse and Housing Alliance accreditation framework for local authorities and social housing providers are based on standards of good practice in response to domestic abuse in a total of eight priority areas, which are: policy & procedure, case management, risk management, partnership working, perpetrator management, inclusivity & accessibility, staff training, and publicity & awareness. The purpose of accreditation is to professionalize the housing response to domestic abuse and embed culture and system change.
- Leicestershire Housing Reciprocal – The Leicestershire housing reciprocal intends to increase safer options, offer choice and an alternative route to homelessness in the hope of preventing long spells in “temporary accommodation” such as Refuge accommodation (safe house’s). Housing Reciprocal is a scheme that means people with social tenancies who are at serious risk of harm, can access another social tenancy in a different borough and remain safe.
- Enhanced service provision.

5. Strong Partnerships

Where we are now:

- Leicestershire has strong partnership arrangements in place to share information and develop joint plans to protect victims and survivors and hold perpetrators to account – the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings take a joint approach to risk assessment and safety planning for victims living in Leicestershire. There is currently a review of the MARAC underway.
- Agencies work together to consider the wishes of the victim, options for keeping individuals safe in their own home and powers that can be used to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour.
- Strong governance arrangements across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland ensure a strong partnership to support victims and survivors and the management of perpetrators.

What we want to achieve:

- Improve data quality: The police submitted the largest data set for this needs assessment and their records highlight over the three-year period they reduced the number of unknowns (934, 599, and 554). It is recommended across all services that teams are regularly trained on expected practice standards and the importance of accurately recording data of victims accessing help. An ‘unknown record’ is a chance lost in better understanding a victim’s needs.
- Develop a relationship support pathway for families with the goal of reducing the impact of harmful conflict between parents on children.
- Victim needs will be met by effective, collaborative multi-agency support.
- A proactive DA Local Partnership Board (Act).
- Strong Resilient Partnerships.
- Multi agency response to Domestic Homicides / post separation abuse.

How will we get there:

- LCC and the DA Local Partnership Board will ensure that an appropriate and consistent approach to collecting data is adopted across all districts and partner agencies to confirm that all demographics are captured. This will provide a clear understanding of victim’s characteristics, areas of multiple disadvantage and complex needs, which will in turn, inform a comprehensive strategy for domestic abuse and ensure that services delivered can meet identified needs.
- MARAC review recommendations are implemented.
- Domestic Homicide Review Recommendations are actioned.
- LLR strategic, tactical and operational groups will drive this work forward collaboratively.
- LCC Children and Family Service DA Strategy Planning Group (Chaired by AD CFS) will drive this work forward within the Council.

How will the Strategy be Delivered?

- Leicestershire County Council's DA Strategy Planning Group, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Social Care in Children and Family Services (CFS), will develop and implement a delivery plan, that is annually refreshed and reviewed by the Director of CFS and the DA Local Partnership Board quarterly. This will identify short-term transitional arrangements and improvements as well as medium to long term work that is required to deliver the strategy. A set of measures will be developed to monitor the impact of the strategy.
- The Leicestershire Officer DA Act Working Group which includes membership from the Voluntary Sector Providers, 7 Districts, police, public health and social care for children and adults will drive and support implementation of the Delivery Plan across the Partnership.
- To address current gaps, service commissioning options for additional safe accommodation and support will be developed and delivered.
- A financial plan will be developed for the tier 1 safe accommodation funding allocation. This will be spent on safe accommodation and accompanying DA support as defined by the Statutory Guidance and will be annually refreshed.
- Awareness raising, training and communications on the safe accommodation offer will be delivered for professionals across Warwickshire's agencies.
- We will raise awareness of Domestic Abuse and communicate safe accommodation and the broader DA offer to residents of Leicestershire as well as communicating all new provision to professionals.
- Progress against the Strategy will be monitored and reported back to the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and other relevant Boards on a quarterly basis and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) when required.

For further information about this Strategy please contact: communitysafety@leics.gov.uk

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Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA)

This Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) will enable you to assess the **new, proposed or significantly changed** policy/ practice/ procedure/ function/ service** for equality and human rights implications.

Undertaking this assessment will help you to identify whether or not this policy/ practice/ procedure/ function/ service** may have an adverse impact on a particular community or group of people. It will ultimately ensure that, as an Authority, we do not discriminate and we are able to promote equality, diversity and human rights.

Please refer to the EHRIA [guidance](#) before completing this form. If you need any further information about undertaking and completing the assessment, contact your [Departmental Equalities Group](#) or equality@leics.gov.uk

***Please note: The term 'policy' will be used throughout this assessment as shorthand for policy, practice, procedure, function or service.*

Key Details

Name of policy being assessed:	Leicestershire DA Reduction Strategy 2022-25
Department and section:	CFS
Name of lead officer/ job title and others completing this assessment:	Anita Chavda Projects & Planning Officer, CST.
Contact telephone numbers:	0116 3057662
Name of officer/s responsible for implementing this policy:	Head of Service - Gurjit Samra-Rai DA Act Officer - Sabrina Hussain
Date EHRIA assessment started:	Jan 2022
Date EHRIA assessment completed:	

Section 1: Defining the policy

You should begin this assessment by defining and outlining the scope of the policy. You should consider the impact or likely impact of the policy in relation to all areas of equality, diversity and human rights as outlined in Leicestershire County Council's [Equality Strategy](#).

1	<p>What is new or changed in the policy? What has changed and why?</p> <p>New: <i>Statutory Duty under the DA Act 2021, places a duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation. Part 4 of the 2021 Act introduces a new statutory duty on local authorities which places clearer accountability on local areas to ensure the needs of victims within refuges and other forms of domestic abuse safe accommodation are met in a consistent way across England.</i></p> <p>The Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-25 outlines how Leicestershire County Council (LCC) will work in partnership to reduce Domestic Abuse and support victims and how the statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation will be implemented, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p> <p>Under this new duty, tier one authorities in England will be required to appoint a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to provide the governance for this work. The statutory guidance describes Domestic Abuse Support within Safe/ relevant Accommodation as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall management of services within relevant accommodation – including, the management of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a Service Manager) • Support with the day-to-day running of the service, for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff) • Advocacy support – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and Social Workers, welfare benefit providers) • Domestic abuse prevention advice – support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation. • Specialist support for victims • Designed specifically for victims with protected characteristics (also known as by and for), such as faith services, translators and interpreters within BAME-led refuges, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to]. • Designed specifically for victims with unique and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, including sign posting accordingly. • Children's support – including play therapy and child advocacy. • Housing-related support – providing housing-related advice and
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support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.

- Advice service – financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements.
- Counselling and therapy (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.

The strategy has adopted the Government definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the DA Act 2021. The new definition emphasises that domestic abuse is not only physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour, and economic abuse. It states: "Children and young people are deemed to be victims, as a result of seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to at least one of them whether that be the victim or perpetrator".

This strategy will work to ensure that all victims are supported to remain safe in their own home if they wish and it is safe to do so, or access alternative safe accommodation and support. It outlines how agencies will work in partnership to provide victims with a range of options, enabling them to make the choices that they feel are right for them.

It describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines five objectives that will be the focus of delivery, these include: **Early Intervention and Prevention, Targeted Support, Reachable Services, DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation, Strong Partnerships**. Each of these priority areas outlines within the [DA Reduction Strategy 2022-25](#) outlines: where we are now, what we want to achieve and how we will get there.

A new Delivery Plan will deliver the Strategy. Progress against the implementation plan will be monitored by the Director of Children and Family Services (CFS) and the CFS DA Strategic Group, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Targeted Early Help and Social Care. Progress information will also be shared with partners and key stakeholders to ensure alignment across the system and monitored by the DA Local Partnership Board.

Previously partnership arrangements and delivery were undertaken through an LLR Approach for the delivery of DA Services. At this time the service provision needs were informed by the Joint DA/SV Needs Assessment 2019 This Needs Assessment identified gaps in services and CFS undertook further data analysis within the department and identified a strategic approach for responding to domestic abuse. During 2020/21 CFS were working to the 2020/22 delivery plan and delivered against the following priorities:

- Implementing a strategic approach aligned with LCC needs.
- Using DATA to understand local need and measure impact
- Effective Recognition and prevention
- Risk Assessment, Intervention and Planning
- Clear, effective pathways

The majority of objectives under these priority areas have been met and those still outstanding will be rolled over within the new delivery plan.

The Delivery Plan for the new Leicestershire DA Reduction Strategy and the

	<p>commissioning process is being led by the CFS Commissioning team. Under targeted support this new strategy will take into consideration the needs of those victims with protected characteristics.</p>
2	<p>Does this relate to any other policy within your department, the Council or with other partner organisations? If yes, please reference the relevant policy or EHRIA. If unknown, further investigation may be required.</p> <p>This is a New DA Reduction Strategy based on the DA Act 2021 statutory requirements.</p> <p>As a requirement under this new duty, a new Leicestershire Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2021. It demonstrates a year-on-year increase in under 18's becoming victims of DA; in 20/21; this increase equated to almost a doubling on the previous year. The highest prevalence of child victim age in both 18/19 and 19/20 was 6-11year olds, changing to 0-5year olds in 20/21.</p> <p>In 20/21 LCC, changed practice in the Children's Social Care Assessment Team to include other children in the family as part of all case management records; this saw the number of children being identified as victims of DA increase dramatically, enabling us to identify over three times as many children requiring support, in line with the requirements of the new DA Act (2021).</p> <p>The priorities that form the new Strategy align closely with the vision and aims set out in the County Council's revised draft Strategic Plan (2022-26),. The draft Strategic Plan is based on five strategic outcomes which reflect the Council's vision for Leicestershire. Each outcome is accompanied by specific aims and actions to deliver the outcome over the next four years. With the strongest links to the DA Strategy is the 'Keeping People Safe and Well' outcome, which covers the outcome with the strongest links to the DA Strategy is the 'Keeping People Safe and Well' outcome, which covers people being safe and well in their daily lives, as well as the Council's safeguarding duties to protect vulnerable people.</p> <p>This outcome includes a sub-outcome 'People at the most risk are protected from harm', an aim for vulnerable people to be identified and protected from harm and abuse. This is supported by an action for the County Council to focus on combatting sexual violence and domestic abuse by developing a DA Strategy, protecting all survivors and their families in safe and appropriate accommodation and improving our understanding of perpetrators and how to respond to them.</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Service is committed to becoming a trauma informed responsive department where "we are stronger together. The culture is one of partnership where we look for solutions and recognise the potential impact of trauma on the children and families we work with in Leicestershire." The new DA Strategy Reduction Strategy is intrinsically linked within this approach.</p> <p>In February 2021, the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LLR) Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) accepted the recommendations of a document, 'Update of a Trauma-informed System'. LCC is a partner in this initiative and</p>

	<p>are working with partner agencies to take this work forward.</p> <p>Since the launch in March 2021, the Children and Family Department is working to implement this into everyday practice. The following definition of trauma is the one that we are working to:</p> <p>Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.</p> <p>What do we mean by becoming a trauma informed, responsive organisation?</p> <p>The term trauma-informed describes an approach that recognises the pervasiveness and potential impact of trauma on our children and families, our staff, our organisation, and our communities and means we are committed to ensuring that this understanding is incorporated into every aspect of our administration, culture, environment, and service delivery. It acknowledges that every interaction is an intervention that relationships are at the core of the work, that everyone contributes to the experience of the service everyone in the organisation has a role to play.</p> <p>Trauma from oppression and discrimination and under the areas we lead on we ensure we focused on equality, Diversity and inclusion as a workforce led by the Director and Deputy AD with the Race Inclusion Board. A trauma-informed organisation actively works to decrease traumatisation and supports resilience, healing, and well-being. A trauma-informed perspective supports the resilience of people and communities through the work they do and the way they do it. It incorporates core principles of safety, trust, collaboration, choice, and empowerment and delivers services in a manner that avoids inadvertently repeating unhealthy interpersonal dynamics in the practitioner/family relationship</p> <p>There is a plan of how CFS will deliver trauma informed practice across the service. The work is led via a strategic Group that meets on a monthly basis chaired by our Assistant Director with representatives from across the services that drives the work that is taking place across the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Physical Environment • Workforce Development • Engagement & Participation • Language & Communication • Policies and Procedures • Commissioning • Staff wellbeing • Supervision • Recruitment & Retention • Partnership working • Assessment & Interventions
3	Who are the people/ groups (target groups) affected and what is the intended change or outcome for them?

	<p>A Leicestershire DA Needs Assessment has been carried out by SafeLives in line with this new duty and it identified that people from protected characteristics were under presented.</p> <p>The Needs Assessment has highlighted that within the datasets, data capture for certain categories is lacking. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity: Different ethnic groups have different experiences of services and experience different barriers. It is important to ensure that ethnicity is captured appropriately to fully understand the demographic and needs of Leicestershire. • Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services. It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and needs of Leicestershire. • Socio Economic status: Research in the UK has consistently found vulnerability to DA to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt. <p>In tended change / outcome: targeted support will be planned within the commissioning process and outlined within the delivery plan.</p>		
4	<p>Will the policy meet the Equality Act 2010 requirements to have due regard to the need to meet any of the following aspects? (Please tick and explain how)</p>		
	Yes	No	How?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	✓		Appropriate outreach and intervention support /services to be commissioned in line with the new DA Act Duty to ensure appropriate housing accommodation and outcomes are reached for Victims of DA under the strategies 5 priorities.
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups	✓		This will be achieved by targeting support to the groups identified from the 2021 DA Needs Assessment as outlined above.
Foster good relations between different groups	✓		Aim to provide appropriate support to all DA Victims including focusing on targeted support.

Section 2: Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) Screening

The purpose of this section of the assessment is to help you decide if a full EHRIA is required.

If you have already identified that a full EHRIA is needed for a policy/ practice/ procedure/ function/ service, either via service planning processes or other means, then please go straight to Section 3 on Page 7 of this document.

Section 2A: Research and Consultation

5.	Have the target groups been consulted about the following?	Yes	No*
	a) their current needs and aspirations and what is important to them;	✓	
	b) any potential impact of this change on them (positive and negative, intended and unintended);	✓	
	c) potential barriers they may face	✓	
6.	If the target groups have not been consulted directly, have representatives been consulted or research explored (e.g. Equality Mapping)?	NA Done by Safe Lives	
7.	Have other stakeholder groups/ secondary groups (e.g. carers of service users) been explored in terms of potential unintended impacts?	All Public Survey done	
8.	*If you answered 'no' to the questions above, please use the space below to outline either what consultation you are planning to undertake or why you do not consider it to be necessary.		

Section 2B: Monitoring Impact

9.	Are there systems set up to:	Yes	No*
	a) monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups;	Yes	
	b) enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities	Yes	

*Note: If no to Question 9, you will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics.

Section 2C: Potential Impact

10.	Use the table below to specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the ' protected characteristics ' may potentially be affected by the policy and describe any positive and negative impacts, including any barriers.		
	Yes	No	Comments
Age	✓		Positive impact on this group - The strategy describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines five objectives that will be the focus of delivery, these include: Early Intervention and Prevention, Targeted Support, Reachable Services, DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation, Strong Partnerships.
Disability	✓		Positive impact on this group - The strategy describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines five objectives that will be the focus of delivery, these include: Early Intervention and Prevention, Targeted Support, Reachable Services, DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation, Strong Partnerships.
Gender Reassignment	✓		Positive impact on this group - The strategy describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victims and survivors will be provided over the next three years and outlines five objectives that will be the focus of delivery, these include: Early Intervention and Prevention, Targeted Support, Reachable Services, DA Act (Part 4) – Safe Accommodation, Strong Partnerships.
Marriage and Civil	✓		Positive impact on this group -

	Partnership			as above
	Pregnancy and Maternity	✓		Positive impact on this group - as above
	Race	✓		Positive impact on this group – as above
	Religion or Belief	✓		Positive impact on this group - as above
	Sex	✓		Positive impact on this group - as above
	Sexual Orientation	✓		Positive impact on this group - as above
	Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	✓		Positive impact on this group - as above
	Community Cohesion	✓		Positive impact on this group - as above
11.	<p>Are the human rights of individuals potentially affected by this proposal? Could there be an impact on human rights for any of the protected characteristics? (Please tick)</p> <p>Explain why you consider that any particular article in the Human Rights Act may apply to the policy/ practice/ function or procedure and how the human rights of individuals are likely to be affected below: [NB: include positive and negative impacts as well as barriers in benefiting from the above proposal]</p>			
		Yes	No	Comments
	Part 1: The Convention - Rights and Freedoms			
	Article 2: Right to life	✓		
	Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way	✓		
	Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/ forced labour	✓		
	Article 5: Right to liberty and security	✓		

Article 6: Right to a fair trial	✓		
Article 7: No punishment without law	✓		
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life	✓		
Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	✓		
Article 10: Right to freedom of expression	✓		
Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association	✓		
Article 12: Right to marry	✓		
Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against	✓		
Part 2: The First Protocol			
Article 1: Protection of property/ peaceful enjoyment	✓		
Article 2: Right to education	✓		
Article 3: Right to free elections	✓		

Section 2D: Decision

12.	Is there evidence or any other reason to suggest that:		Yes	No	Unknown
	a) the policy could have a different affect or adverse impact on any section of the community;			✓	
	b) any section of the community may face barriers in benefiting from the proposal			✓	
13.	Based on the answers to the questions above, what is the likely impact of the policy? (Please tick)				
	No Impact	Positive Impact ✓	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact or Impact Unknown	
Note: If the decision is 'Negative Impact' or 'Impact Not Known', an EHRIA Report					

is required.

14.	Is an EHRIA report required?	Yes	No ✓
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Section 2: Completion of EHRIA Screening

Upon completion of the screening section of this assessment, you should have identified whether an EHRIA Report is required for further investigation of the impacts of this policy.

Option 1: If you identified that an EHRIA Report **is required**, continue to Section 3 on Page 7 of this document.

Option 2: If there are no equality, diversity or human rights impacts identified and an EHRIA report **is not required**, continue to Section 4 on Page 14 of this document.

Section 3: Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) Report

This part of the assessment will help you to think **thoroughly** about the impact of the policy and to critically examine whether it is **likely** to have a positive or negative impact on different groups within our diverse communities. It should also identify any barriers that may adversely affect under-represented communities or groups that may be disadvantaged by the way in which we carry out our business.

Using the information gathered either within the EHRIA Screening or independently of this process, this EHRIA Report should be used to consider the impact or likely impact of the policy in relation to all areas of equality, diversity and human rights as outlined in Leicestershire County Council's Equality Strategy.

Section 3A: Research and Consultation

When considering the target groups, it is important to think about whether new data needs to be collected or whether there is any existing research that can be utilised.

15.	Based on the gaps identified either in the EHRIA Screening or independently of this process, how have you now explored the following and what does this information/ data tell you about each of the diverse groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) current needs and aspirations and what is important to individuals and community groups (including human rights); b) likely impacts (positive and negative, intended and unintended) to individuals and community groups (including human rights); c) likely barriers that individuals and community groups may face (including human rights)
16.	Is any further research, data collection or evidence required to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known affects of the policy on target groups?
<p>When considering who is affected by this proposed policy, it is important to think about consulting with and involving a range of service users, staff or other stakeholders who may be affected as part of the proposal.</p>	
17.	Based on the gaps identified either in the EHRIA Screening or independently of this process, how have you further consulted with those affected on the likely impact and what does this consultation tell you about each of the diverse groups?
18.	Is any further consultation required to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the policy on target groups?

Section 3B: Recognised Impact

19.	Based on any evidence and findings, use the table below to specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any 'protected characteristics' are likely to be affected by this policy. Describe any positive and negative impacts, including what barriers these individuals or groups may face.
	Comments
Age	
Disability	
Gender Reassignment	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Pregnancy and Maternity	
Race	
Religion or Belief	
Sex	
Sexual Orientation	
Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	
Community Cohesion	
20.	Based on any evidence and findings, use the table below to specify if any particular Articles in the Human Rights Act are likely to apply to the policy. Are the human rights of any individuals or community groups affected by this proposal? Is there an impact on human rights for any of the protected characteristics?
	Comments
Part 1: The Convention - Rights and Freedoms	
Article 2: Right to life	
Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way	
Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/ forced labour	

Article 5: Right to liberty and security	
Article 6: Right to a fair trial	
Article 7: No punishment without law	
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life	
Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	
Article 10: Right to freedom of expression	
Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association	
Article 12: Right to marry	
Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against	
Part 2: The First Protocol	
Article 1: Protection of property/ peaceful enjoyment	
Article 2: Right to education	
Article 3: Right to free elections	

Section 3C: Mitigating and Assessing the Impact

Taking into account the research, data, consultation and information you have reviewed and/ or carried out as part of this EHRIA, it is now essential to assess the impact of the policy.

21.	If you consider there to be actual or potential adverse impact or discrimination, please outline this below. State whether it is justifiable or legitimate and give reasons.
NB:	
i.	If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal , you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
ii.	If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate , you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its

	effect on those groups of people.
22.	<p>Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) include any relevant research and consultation findings which highlight the best way in which to minimise negative impact or discrimination b) consider what barriers you can remove, whether reasonable adjustments may be necessary and how any unmet needs that you have identified can be addressed c) if you are not addressing any negative impacts (including human rights) or potential barriers identified for a particular group, please explain why

Section 3D: Making a decision

23.	Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Leicestershire County Council's responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity, community cohesion and human rights.
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Section 3E: Monitoring, evaluation & review of the policy

24.	Are there processes in place to review the findings of this EHRIA and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?
25.	<p>How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?</p> <p><i>e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems</i></p>

Section 3F: Equality and human rights improvement plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Objective	Action	Target	Officer Responsible	By when

Section 4: Sign off and scrutiny

Upon completion, the Lead Officer completing this assessment is required to sign the document in the section below.

It is required that this Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) is scrutinised by your Departmental Equalities Group and signed off by the Chair of the Group.

Once scrutiny and sign off has taken place, a depersonalised version of this EHRIA should be published on Leicestershire County Council's website. Please send a copy of this form to the Digital Services Team via web@leics.gov.uk for publishing.

Section 4A: Sign Off and Scrutiny

Confirm, as appropriate, which elements of the EHRIA have been completed and are required for sign off and scrutiny.

Equality and Human Rights Assessment Screening

Equality and Human Rights Assessment Report

1st Authorised Signature (EHRIA Lead Officer):

Date:

2nd Authorised Signature (DEG Chair):

Date:

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**LEICESTERSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP
BOARD**

18th MARCH 2022

**DEPARTMENT FOR LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES
DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT FUNDING SPEND PLAN**

Introduction

1. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a number of statutory duties on the County Council primarily to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
2. This will be achieved through the requirement to undertake a needs assessment, publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy and establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. The Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing (DLUCH) has allocated funding to each local authority to assist in discharging the duties.

Background

3. The Domestic Abuse Act received royal assent in April 2021. The Act places a duty on tier one local authorities (the County Council) to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability, requiring tier two councils (district councils), to co-operate with the lead local authority.
4. In line with the Domestic Abuse Act, the County Council is also required to produce a Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy which sets out a partnership approach to tackling Domestic Abuse (DA).
5. The duty on the County Council is to prepare, give effect to and monitor a strategy based on an assessment of the need for accommodation-based support for victims of domestic abuse in the Council's area.
6. To help deliver the Strategy, a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board must also be established, consisting of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims and their children.

7. Funding by way of a three-year grant has been allocated by DLUHC. The County Council received £1,127,205 in year one (2021/22), whilst each district council received approximately £33,000. The funding allocated to the County Council will form part of the Children and Family Services directorate budget overseen by the Director of Children and Family Services and the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board will monitor outcomes against the use of these funds.

Needs Assessment

8. A Strategic Needs Assessment has been undertaken to assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support across Leicestershire for all victims. The national DA charity SafeLives assisted with this Needs Assessment.
9. Key points from the Needs Assessment have been included in the Strategy to evidence need:
- 98,350 adults in Leicestershire have experienced Domestic Abuse at some point in their lives since the age of 16 with approximately 15% experiencing both partner and family abuse.
 - 28,360 adult victims have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year with approximately 8% experiencing both partner and family abuse.
 - The overall number of victims has increased year on year, with a 4.9% increase in 19/20 and 7.6% increase in 20/21 on the previous year.
 - Victims being assessed by the County Council's Children's Social Care (CSC) service increased by 218% (this can be attributed to a change in practice by the CSC assessment team to 'including other children in the family' as part of case management records). This is welcomed and puts the County Council in good stead to ensure the gathering of information in response to the DA Act 2021 S.3(181) - "*Children and young people are deemed to be victims under the 2021 Act as a result of seeing, hearing or otherwise experiencing domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to at least one of them whether that be the victim or perpetrator*"
 - Victims accessing DA support outreach services Increased by 5.3%
10. The Needs Assessment has informed the development of the Strategy with regard to the provision of support to cover Leicestershire and will inform commissioning / de-commissioning decisions.

Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy

11. The DA Reduction Strategy outlines how the County Council will support victims of DA and how it will fulfil its safe accommodation duty as set out in the DA Act 2021. The Strategy has been informed by the Needs Assessment and will be implemented through commissioning the £1,127,205 DLUHC allocation.
12. The Leicestershire DA Reduction Strategy 2022 – 2024 has five priorities:

- i. Early Intervention and Prevention
 - ii. Targeted Support
 - iii. Reachable Services
 - iv. DA Act (Part 4) - Safe Accommodation
 - v. Strong Partnerships
13. As part of the development of the final Strategy a full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has been undertaken to identify equality and human rights issues that needed to be incorporated into the final Strategy. The findings from the EHRIA have been embedded in the Strategy's subsequent implementation plan and will be regularly reviewed as part of the performance monitoring arrangements
14. A Delivery Plan has been developed to deliver the Strategy. Progress against the Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Director of Children and Family Services, the Family Services DA Strategic Group, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Targeted Early Help and Social Care and the DA Local Partnership Board. Progress information will also be shared with partners and key stakeholders to ensure alignment across the system.

Funding

15. Funding by way of a three-year grant has been allocated by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Of this the County Council has received £1,127,205 for 2021/22 with a further (approx) £33,000 being allocated to each district. This funding allocated to the County Council, will form part of the Children and Family Services directorate budget overseen by the Director of Children and Family Services and the DA Local Partnership Board will monitor outcomes against the use of these funds.
16. Tier one authorities have now been informed as to the amount of grant funding to be received for year two; Leicestershire County Council has been allocated £1,130,326. Tier two authorities have been allocated: Blaby £33,318; Charnwood £32,322; Harborough £33,576; Hinckley and Bosworth £32,757; Melton £32,364; North West Leicestershire £32,598; Oadby and Wigston £32,328.
17. A spend plan has been developed alongside the new Strategy and this will outline how the County Council funding will be allocated to the specific requirements of the new duties. (Appendix 1)
18. The services to be commissioned include therapeutic, specialist and advocacy support services as per the grant conditions and not for accommodation itself (which would create a longer-term funding risk).

Approach

19. A collaborative approach has been taken with this work to ensure alignment across the system. A Leicestershire DA Act and Funding Group has been established in April 2021, which initially had open and closed sessions to

enable commissioning discussions. Membership includes district and borough councils, police, health, Public Health and the voluntary sector.

20. Leicestershire County Council's DA Strategic Group, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Targeted Early Help and Social Care has been meeting monthly in order to drive this work forward within DLUHC specified timescales.

Conclusion

21. Robust Monitoring and evaluation processes are being established within all commissioning arrangement in order to inform future decision making across the system. Data will be used to identify any patterns, changes or gaps and presented to the Board at every meeting.
22. Work has commenced on the spend plan for year 2 (2022/23) and progress on this will be brought to the next Board.

Recommendations

23. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The Board notes the content of this report;
 - (b) The Board approves the spend plan attached at appendix A.

Officer to Contact:

Gurjit Samra-Rai
Service Manager (Safer Communities)
Gurjit.samra-rai@leics.gov.uk

Appendix

DLUHC Domestic Abuse Act Funding Plan 2021/22

APPENDIX

Local DA Partnership Board

DLUHC Domestic Abuse Act Funding Plan 2021/22

Total Allocation: £1,127,205 (Leicestershire County Council)

Support Service	Rationale	Service Provider	Time Period
Domestic Abuse Coordinator - Community Safety Team, Children and Family Services	This post will enable the work to be driven by a dedicated officer, in line with DLUHC timescales and requirements.	Leicestershire County Council	2 years (fixed term)
Commissioning Officer (Domestic Abuse Commissioning) – Commissioning Service, Children and Family Services	This post will enable the commissioning processes to be driven by a dedicated officer, in line with DLUHC timescales.	Leicestershire County Council	2 years (fixed term)
Specialist DA Substance Misuse Support for Victims	There is currently a lack of support for victims with complex needs, including substance misuse; they are not able to stay in refuge accommodation due to their addiction.	Turning Point	2 years (+1 year extension)
Specialist DA Support for Victims from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities	The Needs Assessment highlighted the low number of BAME victims seeking support; furthermore the SPB has analysed data from the GRT community which highlights the prevalence of DA, the lack of information about it and the fear associated with reporting it.	Leicestershire GATE	2 years (+1 year extension)
Specialist DA Support LGBT+ Victims	The Needs Assessment highlighted the low number of LGBT victims seeking support; the MARAC review has also highlighted this issue.	Leicestershire LGBT Centre	2 years (+1 year extension)

Support for male victims of DA - Helpline Worker	The Needs Assessment highlighted the low number of male victims seeking support; the MARAC review has also highlighted this. A worker at the helpline will ensure male victims receive support at the "front door".	Freeva	2 years (+1 year extension)
Support for male victims of DA - Outreach Worker	The Needs Assessment highlighted the low number of male victims seeking support; the MARAC review has also highlighted this. An outreach worker will ensure ongoing support to victims.	WALL	2 years (+1 year extension)
BAME specialist advisor	The Needs Assessment highlighted the low number of BAME victims seeking support; the MARAC review has also highlighted this. A worker at the helpline will ensure BAME victims receive support at the "front door".	Freeva	2 years (+1 year extension)
Counselling Services	There are currently excessive waiting lists for counselling; the new commissioning arrangements do not have provision for counselling, which means some victims must contribute towards any therapy. This provision will ensure timely support to all victims who seek counselling.	Freeva	2 years (+1 year extension)
JADA+	A child-centred approach where children have a voice, placing the child's needs at the heart of support around the child/family	WALL	1 year
Dispersed Supported Accommodation for victims of DA (support element) – different types of units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist accommodation for BAME victims 	To build the number of safe accommodation units across the County: There are currently 21 safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire. The Council of Europe* recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000	To go out for a formal tender process	3 years

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-sized/flexible units (inc. suitable for older children particularly boys) • Units for families with pets • Accessible accommodation for older victims/victims with disabilities 	<p>population. The population of Leicestershire is 706,155 therefore the recommended number is 70 spaces.</p>		
County Family Service	<p>Increase capacity to welcome referrals from professionals (at the moment only support children whose parents are receiving support in our adult services) This will provide 1-1 support to children between the ages of 5-18 to understand healthy relationships, communication and to work through their feelings and the impact domestic abuse is having on their lives.</p>	LWA	2 years (+1 year extension)
Young Person's IDVA	<p>Intensive support for high-risk young people who are victims of DA delivering safety support to those who have witnessed or suffered domestic abuse.</p>	LWA	2 years (+1 year extension)
Outreach Workers	<p>Build capacity - the waiting list is currently over 100 for standard risk cases this funding will reduce the waiting lists and manage capacity.</p>	LWA	2 years (+1 year extension)
Enhancement of Operation Encompass	<p>A co-ordinator to analyse data and support schools where Op Encompass reports of DA are high; enabling schools to better support child victims of DA.</p>	Leicestershire County Council	2 years (fixed term)
Contribution to the MARAC manager and MARAC Administrator costs	<p>The MARAC review highlighted the need for consistent officer to support the partnership across Leicestershire; this includes supporting housing options teams in districts to refer cases into the</p>	Police	3 years

	MARAC		
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Robust monitoring and evaluation will be built into each contract for every service.

Districts Total Allocation c £33k each

District	Service	Provider
Blaby	Pooled funding with Hinckley to recruit a DA Housing Link Worker and a DA Co-Ordinator	District Council
Charnwood	Plans underway to recruit a dedicated DA Housing Options Officer	Borough Council
Harborough	DA / Housing Link Worker	District Council
Hinckley and Bosworth	Pooled funding with Blaby to recruit a DA Housing Link Worker and a DA Co-Ordinator	District Council
Melton	Plans underway to recruit a dedicated DA Housing Options Officer	Borough Council
North West Leicestershire	DA Housing Link Worker recruited	WALL
Oadby and Wigston	Plans to extend the contract for the existing DA Housing Link Worker	WALL

The DA Act 2021 places a statutory duty on Tier one local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation. Part 4 of the Act introduces a new statutory duty on local authorities which places clearer accountability on local areas to ensure the needs of victims are met in a consistent way.

- Safe accommodation:** There are currently 21 safe accommodation spaces across Leicestershire. Recommended number is 70. Women's aid audit states 57% of all referrals received for refuge were rejected; the main reason for rejection was a lack of space or capacity.
- Targeted Support:** Those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services. Public Health England (2015) report that disabled people experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse. There is limited data/engagement from BME and GRT communities. Male victims are less likely to approach DA services that appear to be designed for females. The highest prevalence of child victim age in 2020/2021 is 0–5-year-olds (6.8%)
- Reachable services:** Leicestershire is a large rural county where victims may feel isolated due to the lack of local services within their immediate vicinity.
- Early intervention and Prevent:** Victims not knowing where to access support. Limited services available in certain areas and long waiting lists. Clients not able to relocate due to commitments or trauma. Not having funds to cover legal fees to stay in family home, therefore, staying with alleged perpetrator.
- Strong partnerships:** Gaps in data from services.. Recommendations within the MARAC review..

The Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing (DLUCH) has allocated funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty under the DA Act. Leicestershire County Council has been awarded £1.126 million, with each district receiving £33k.

- To commission more safe & specialist accommodation units across Leicestershire-a minimum of 20 in the 1st year.
- To commission specialist services to create a more inclusive community.
- LGBT+ worker& counsellor.
- GRT specialist post.
- BME outreach worker.
- Increase capacity in the local outreach service.
- Substance misuse worker
- Therapeutic support for both adults and children
- Male victims' helpline & Outreach support
- Training across Housing teams
- Development of inhouse training

- Increase in accommodation =more victims are being supported
- Specialist support is being provided to those who have not engaged with services previously. Future data to help understand the needs of Leicestershire better.
- To upskill housing staff- ensure victims/survivors are being supported in a trauma informed way.
- Supporting male victims reach the correct support in a safe environment. It will also allow future statistics.
- Reducing outreach waiting lists will mean service users will get the right support sooner.
- Having working groups across County will enable better communication and data which has been lacking previously.
- LGBT roles will create better engagement and therefore, victims/survivors more likely to go through with criminal justice system.
- Appropriate Housing across Leicestershire

- STRATEGIC**
- Professionals delivering TIP
 - Professionals actively involved in working together
 - Resources targeted at areas with greatest needs
- OPERATIONAL**
- Increased multi-agency collaboration and delivery
 - Partners/professionals understand and are better able to respond to individual/local needs
 - Increased efficiency and effectiveness of interventions and services
- COMMUNITIES**
- Improved understanding of and confidence in support available
 - Improved knowledge of DA and increased skills/tools
 - Community Leaders, parents and carers are better able to respond to individual/community needs
 - Increase in community-led solutions to preventing DA
 - Waiting list has reduced.

- Whole systems approach adopted and sustained through: organisational cultural change and effective multi-agency working
- Reduced waiting lists
 - Victims having more support and options to leave abusive relationships
 - Services accessible to victim
 - Victims able to access therapy in a timely manner
 - Reduction in repeat DA cases
 - Improved life outcomes across Leicestershire
 - People better informed about DA enabling friends and family to support and signpost victims (bystander approach)
 - Specialist support for children
 - Victims with protected characteristics confident to access support
 - A trauma informed response to DA

Assumptions and Risks

Assumption: Better community and partnership response to DA

Challenge/risk: Lack of collaborative working;

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