

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

10th DECEMBER 2021

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021 – DOMESTIC ABUSE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD

REPORT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM - LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board (LSCSB) with a summary of the work undertaken to date to meet the statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including the establishment of a Domestic Abuse (DA) Local Partnership Board.

Notable developments and challenges:

2. The DA Act received royal assent in April 2021. The Act places a duty on tier one local authorities 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/borough councils), to co-operate with the lead local authority.
3. A Strategic Needs Assessment must be undertaken to assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support across Leicestershire for all victims. This work has been completed with data having been collated from numerous agencies and engagement with victims and survivors of DA having been ongoing to collate information about their experiences. The national DA charity SafeLives undertook this Needs Assessment with us. The Needs Assessment is attached at Appendix A.
4. This Needs Assessment has informed the development of a Strategy for the provision of support to cover Leicestershire and inform commissioning / de-commissioning decisions.
5. Funding has been allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support all of this work; Leicestershire County Council has received £1,127,205 whilst each district/borough has received approximately £33,000. The spending review will inform whether further funding will be allocated.
6. A County DA Act and Funding Group has been convened to support the response to the DA Act across Leicestershire; membership includes all

Districts, Leicestershire County Council (Children and Family Service, Adult Social Care and Public Health), Police and DA Service Providers.

7. It is a requirement of the DA Act 2021 to produce a DA Reduction Strategy and to consult on this in order to retain the £1.1m. The draft Strategy was required to be published by 26th October 2021. The final Strategy must be published by 5th January 2022 and the funding must be spent or at least allocated with a comprehensive budget plan devised by 31st March 2022.
8. The draft Leicestershire DA Reduction Strategy 2021-24, attached at Appendix B, has five priorities:
 - i. Early Intervention and Prevention
 - ii. Targeted Support
 - iii. Reachable Services
 - iv. DA Act (Part 4) - Safe Accommodation
 - v. Strong Partnerships
9. On 26 October 2021 the Leicestershire County Council Cabinet gave approval to the proposed approach to developing the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2021-24.
10. An 8-week public consultation is taking place, this commenced on October 26th and will run until December 21st with feedback being sought on the draft Strategy. Feedback from the consultation will be incorporated into the final Strategy. You can view the draft strategy and fill in a short questionnaire on the five priorities it contains here www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-engagement/domestic-abuse-strategy
11. The consultation, which is required by legislation, has to date involved:
 - The County Council's Scrutiny Commission;
 - DA Locality Board members;
 - the district councils and other key stakeholders;
 - Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs);
 - Victims and survivors;
 - "By and for" organisations;
 - Communities across Leicestershire.
12. The draft Strategy will be developed further over the coming weeks based on feedback received from the consultation.
13. A Delivery Plan will be developed to deliver the Strategy. Progress against the Delivery Plan will be monitored through Leicestershire County Council's governance arrangements and through the DA Local Partnership Board. Progress information will also be shared with partners and key stakeholders to ensure alignment across the system.

Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

14. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to be appointed consisting of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims and their children. This is to include one or more representatives from or on behalf of:
 - The County Council.
 - District councils in the area including Housing Services.
 - The authentic voice of adult victims of domestic abuse.
 - The authentic voice of children victims of domestic abuse.
 - Charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in the area.
 - Persons who provide, or have functions relating to, health care services in its area.
 - Persons with functions relating to policing or criminal justice in its area.

15. The Local Partnership Board will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified functions, which will include the following:
 - To assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims.
 - To support the development and publication of the required Strategy.
 - To give effect to the new strategy (through monitoring commissioning / de-commissioning needs).
 - To ensuring representation of marginalised groups and those who are underrepresented in local services.

16. The proposal is for the DA Local Partnership Board to have a similar membership to the LSCSB, as detailed above, with the addition of housing services, the authentic voice of adult and child victims and survivors and voluntary sector services who work with victims of domestic abuse.

17. In order to ensure Leicestershire County Council complies with the DA Act and is able to discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Cabinet will be asked to approve the proposals at its meeting on the 14 December 2021.

18. In light of the fact that the majority of the membership will also sit on the LSCSB, each Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board meeting will be held for an hour either prior to or after the LSCSB meeting.

19. The DA Act and Funding Officer Group, responsible for progressing the priorities agreed by the Board, will also continue to meet.

Recommendations for the Board

20. It is recommended that the proposals outlined in the report concerning the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board be supported,

noting that the Cabinet will be asked to approve the proposals at its meeting on the 14 December 2021.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Needs Assessment

Appendix B – Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-25