

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

29th SEPTEMBER 2023

LSCSB UPDATE: PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE – DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the domestic abuse and sexual violence services commissioned by Public Health. A previous report was presented to the Board in December 2021 providing details of the procurement with commissioning partners, Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. See the following link: https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s165549/DSVA%20Recommissioning%20Update_LSCSB_20211210.pdf

Background

2. New contracts for domestic abuse and sexual violence services have been in place since April 2022. The Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) service system was commissioned by commissioning partners Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). These services replace the UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse) service that operated for several years across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. The DSVA Service System comprises of;
 - Helpline and Engagement Service provided by Free from Violence and Abuse (FreeVa) – commissioned by OPCC for LLR;
 - Domestic Abuse Locality Service provided by Living Without Abuse (LWA) – commissioned by Public Health for Leicestershire and Rutland; Leicester City have a separate contract for this service
 - Sexual Violence Support Service provided by FreeVa – commissioned by OPCC for LLR;
 - Leicestershire Safe Accommodation Support Service provided by Women's Aid Leicestershire Limited (WALL) – commissioned by Public Health for Leicestershire. Leicester City have a separate contract for this service.
3. The DSVA Service System is funded from existing budgets from each commissioning partner and does not include funding provided to the local authority from the central government Domestic Abuse Act 2021 funding grant.

4. Whilst each commissioning partner has their own contracts and separate contract management processes there is a Joint Working Agreement between commissioning partners that outlines how all partners will work together. As a part of that Joint Working Agreement there are regular joint commissioner's meetings where overall performance is monitored and issues and concerns can be discussed and resolved.

Progress:

5. All contracts and services in place for 1st April 2022. There were initial challenges for all services and commissioners to ensure that the individual services worked as a coherent whole/system, whilst delivering services to their individual service specifications.
6. To support the transition it was agreed that the Domestic Abuse Helpline number (0808 802 0028) would remain the same and that the Helpline and Engagement Service would be the access point to all services, undertaking the assessment and initial support.
7. Extensive promotion of the new service system took place during the first year of the contracts and all the services delivered information sessions to a range of partners and organisations.

Performance

8. There were initial concerns that there were difficulties in calls being answered by the Helpline and Engagement Service and this had an impact on referrals and performance of both the Domestic Abuse Locality Service (DALs) and the Accommodation Related Support Service. This was related to recruitment and staffing challenges at the start of the contracts. However, the percentage of calls answered has improved significantly and this is no longer a concern.
9. Domestic Abuse Locality Service - overall the service is performing well and has seen a steady increase in the number domestic abuse victims starting support each quarter. Whilst there has been a drop in referrals from Helpline + Engagement Service each quarter there has been a corresponding increase in referrals from other sources.
10. The service is now approaching capacity and individual caseloads are higher than ideal. This is due to the continued increase in referrals received and the high number of cases that need longer term intensive support. As a result, there are fewer cases being closed and individuals exiting the service. The service is managing this by introducing a stratification/prioritisation process and ensures that all high-risk cases are offered support within 24 hours.
11. Accommodation Related Support Services – overall the service is performing well. However, there are a limited number of referrals that are received via the Helpline and Engagement Service with a majority of referrals being received from other agencies.

12. A performance summary for the first year of the contracts 2022-23 by quarter is attached as an appendix at the end of this report.

Challenges

13. During the procurement process the government announced additional funding for all local authorities as part of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This funding announcement occurred too late to be included within this procurement. The Domestic Abuse Act funding, which amounts to approximately £1.1m each year for the council, is managed within Children + Family Services. This means there is a separate workstream of commissioning and service delivery related to the Domestic Abuse Act funding. The challenge is how to ensure a co-ordinated and coherent service pathway for victims of domestic abuse.
14. As previously mentioned, the Domestic Abuse Locality Service is reaching capacity and whilst the service is developing innovative ways of managing referrals, caseloads and risk it is likely that they will have to operate waiting lists at some point in the near future.

Future Plans

15. As previously mentioned, commissioning partners will be developing an overarching Performance Dashboard that contains key indicators from each element of service system. Work has started on this process but has been delayed due to staffing changes and a review currently being undertaken by one of the commissioning partners.
16. The Joint Working Agreement was written and agreed at an early stage of the procurement and will be reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Recommendations for the Board

17. It is recommended that the Board notes the content of the report.

Report Author

Debra Cunningham- Public Health Strategic Lead (Health Related Harms)

Public Health, Leicestershire County Council

Tel: 0116 305 2684

Email: debra.cunningham@leics.gov.uk

Appendix A - Performance Summary 2022/2023

APPENDIX

Table 1: Domestic Abuse Locality Service provided by Living Without Abuse (LWA)

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total Q1-Q4	
Engagement	Number of referrals accepted into the service	115	263	198	164	740	
	Number of referrals not accepted into the service	5	9	42	27	83	
	Contact made following referral	Within 48 hrs	91	233	168	131	623
		Within 72 hrs	4	5	5	3	17
72 hrs +		19	25	25	30	99	
Outcomes	Victims with positive case closure	Number	23	19	3	20	65
		%	89%	87%	100%	83%	90%
Exits	Number of service users exiting the service within the quarter	Planned Exit	109	66	88	74	337
		Unplanned Exit	100	62	26	32	220

Table 2: Leicestershire Safe Accommodation Support Service provided by Women's Aid Leicestershire Limited (WALL)

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total Q1-Q4	
Engagement	Number of referrals accepted into the service	7	7	5	3	22	
	Number of referrals declined	0	0	0	0	0	
	Number of hours of support per quarter	191	330	158	193	872	
Outcomes	Victims with positive case closure	Number	5	3	4	5	17
		%	100%	50%	100%	100%	85%
	Clients moved to appropriate housing within each time frame	6 months or less	0	3	1	1	5
		6-9 months	0	1	3	0	4
		9-12 months	0	0	0	1	1
12 months +		2	0	0	3	5	
Exits	Number of clients exiting the service	Planned Exit	4	5	4	5	18
		Unplanned Exit	1	1	0	0	2