

**Meeting:** Council

**Date:** 19 April 2018

**Wards Affected:** All

**Report Title:** Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy 2018-2022

**Is the decision a key decision?** Yes

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** Immediately

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## 1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 It is proposed that the strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) be incorporated into the Council's policy framework. The current strategy 2014 – 2019 has been refreshed to set out the Council's and partnership commitment to addressing domestic abuse and sexual violence which is firmly identified as an area of high prevalence and impact in Torbay and across public services.
- 1.2 Whilst proposing the strategy sit within the Council policy framework, it would also double as a partnership commitment to tackling DASV and drive collaborative efforts to tackle DASV across Torbay. The attached report has been formulated in consultation with a wide variety of partners. Torbay Council has provided leadership in the areas of DASV but recognise that it requires robust commitment from a variety of areas to create an effective and responsive 'system' that incorporates prevention, support, intervention and challenge.

## 2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 A lot of work has been undertaken to highlight the need for DASV to be recognised as a priority area of activity, given how prevalent they are and the harm caused. There has been some key areas of progress towards achieving this, a refreshed multi-agency approach is an important part of securing this commitment going forward. It also is an appropriate time to take this step for reasons continued below.
- 2.2 Domestic abuse services are near to re-commissioning, the policy and supporting work will help inform this process and ensure services in Torbay provide the maximum impact.

- 2.3 The Government released a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) National Strategy 2016 - 2020 which describes clear areas of activity to end violence against women and girls.
- 2.4 Children's Services inspection by Ofsted highlighted areas for improvement around domestic abuse.

### **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

- 3.1 That the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy set out at Appendix 11 to the submitted report be agreed and adopted within the Council's policy framework.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy 2018 - 2022

## Section 1: Background Information

1.	<p><b>What is the proposal / issue?</b></p> <p>Torbay experiences higher than average volumes of domestic abuse than other areas with a similar profile, with continued increases in the number of recorded domestic abuse related crimes and sexual offences throughout 2016/17. Rates of crime, and in particular sexually violent crime, are higher in Torbay than the England and Wales. Local analysis shows that between 30 and 40% of Children's Social Care activity (including Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection) is related to domestic abuse and a high proportion of referrals into the Sexual Assault Referral Centre are for children and young people under 18 years old. In 2016 / 17 Torbay Domestic Abuse Services outreach workers (not including high risk victims) assisted 430 clients with whom there were 496 children. There were 309 referrals of high risk victims of domestic abuse for support from their Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, 283 of which engaged with support. It is estimated that in 2016 / 17 there were 2597 female victims of domestic abuse and 1437 male victims in Torbay.</p>
2.	<p><b>What is the current situation?</b></p> <p>Domestic abuse and sexual violence have been identified as a priority and of concern by the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership's Stronger Board, Safeguarding Adults Board and Torbay Safeguarding Children Board. The current strategy is until 2019 but significant change has taken place across partnerships since 2014 and new priorities identified to meet current challenges.</p>
3.	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p>Governance and leadership around DASV had been unclear which this strategy seeks to resolve and clarify. The governance structure around DASV has been amended to provide more assertive senior leadership, as such an Executive Group has been formed to lead the delivery of the policy with the assistance of an operational group.</p> <p>A Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator has been employed since July 2017 and gives vital capacity to driving the agenda forward. They have been instrumental in conducting mapping work and producing the attached policy.</p>
4.	<p><b>How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan?</b></p> <p>The three corporate principles are all referred to and guiding themes within the proposed strategy.</p> <p>The strategy also directly works towards the targeted actions of:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Protecting all children and giving them the best start in life</i></li> <li>• <i>Promoting healthy lifestyles across Torbay</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring Torbay remains an attractive and safe place to live and visit</i></li> <li>• <i>Protecting and supporting vulnerable adults</i></li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>How does this proposal contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?</b></p> <p>Working more collaboratively to address domestic abuse and its impact should reduce the instances of the Council taking corporate parental responsibility.</p>
6.	<p><b>How does this proposal tackle deprivation?</b></p> <p>Police reports relating to domestic abuse indicate prevalence across Torbay's most deprived wards and (for those exposed to DA) is known to increase a child's chances of more negative life outcomes. Tackling domestic abuse therefore helps address some of these inequalities and promotes better chances of positive outcomes within the most deprived areas of Torbay.</p>
7.	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</b></p> <p>Despite being a Council-led strategy, it is a partnership commitment to tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence. Those affected include statutory agencies, third sector and voluntary organisations, businesses and the public.</p> <p>A consultation process took place between 12/2/18 – 23/3/18 comments from stakeholders and the public have been reviewed or included in the final report.</p> <p>Key stakeholders include: Devon and Cornwall Police, OPCC, CCG, CRC, NPS, TDAS, Devon Rape Crisis, Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Devon Partnership Trust, ICO, IYSS.</p>
8.	<p><b>How will you propose to consult?</b></p> <p>The consultation included publication on the Council website and stakeholder engagement events during the month period.</p>

## Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

9.	<b>What are the financial and legal implications?</b>  Not applicable.
10.	<b>What are the risks?</b>  The primary risk is Torbay failing to effectively coordinate a response to the harm that is caused by domestic abuse and sexual violence, which already creates a huge demand on public services and perpetuates cycles of negative outcomes for future generations.  There is also the very real risk of domestic homicides given the evidence around risk posed by partners / ex-partners to female victims.
11.	<b>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</b>  Not applicable.
12.	<b>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</b>  The DASV Co-ordinator has undertaken a mapping exercise of the current 'system' and prevalence data where available. This has involved meeting with a wide range of services and organisations to understand what the current offers and gaps are across the partnership. This complements work already undertaken in the form of a Health Needs Assessment (Public Health) and victim survey via the <a href="http://www.areyouok.co.uk">www.areyouok.co.uk</a> website. Inevitably this work has also demonstrated the areas in which we have insufficient information and require corrective action.
13.	<b>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</b>  Comments from stakeholders and the public have been reviewed or included in the final report.
14.	<b>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</b>  N/A

## Equality Impacts

15	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact &amp; Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Neutral Impact</b>
	Older or younger people	Specific actions include reducing risk to this marginalised groups e.g. older people who are less likely to seek help. Young people can witness and can become victims of domestic abuse. Aim to increase their awareness of abuse within relationships and other forms of violence. The strategy has actions intended to have a positive impact in addressing these issues.		
	People with caring Responsibilities	Aim to educate and support carers through Champion Network and free training provided to be able to identify and support at an earlier stage.		
	People with a disability	The need to address recognition of the added barriers to disabled people receiving an equal service as carers are often family members and this can increase the hidden nature of domestic abuse.		
	Women or men	Domestic abuse disproportionately impacts on women. The plan is gender inclusive recognising that both women and men are victims. It also recognises that women and girls are often exposed to serious		

	forms of violence such as domestic violence, sexual violence and harassment, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of honour and female genital mutilation. However, the prevalence, intensity, impact and consequence of violence against men are very different to violence against women and girls.		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	Ethnicity can increase vulnerability due to the isolated nature of some communities. This is particularly relevant in "honour based violence". The lack of education and training for professionals can result in an adverse impact.		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		Currently there is no monitoring data on client's religion/belief.	
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Is an issue in LGBT community, but is a developing area of the service. It is recognised that there are significant barriers to reporting for this group.		
People who are transgendered	All identified victims are offered equally accessible services, which meet their needs.		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	Aims to improve the detection of DASV so that more cases can be identified, or support given to those experiencing, witness or perpetuate it.		
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Aims to improve the detection of DASV so that more cases can be identified, or support given to		

		those experiencing, witness or perpetuate it.		
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Has an enormous economic impact from increase health care and service costs, workplace issues and productivity as well as human and emotional costs.		
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Impacts can be long-term and may cause or worsen chronic health problems. Can also have an enormous effect on mental health both on the victim and also those that witness it. Strategy aims to prevent and reduce impacts.		
<b>16</b>	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	<p>Potential impact on Housing Options services who may see an increased demand for support against an additional demand pressure with the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act. Demand on domestic abuse service such as IDVA's seeing more clients due to publicising more about DASV.</p> <p>The implementation of this strategy relies on appropriate resources to deliver. Further austerity measures may have an impact. Hence this should be regularly reviewed to ensure effective resources management and potential for cost shunt or demand shift.</p>		
<b>17</b>	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	<p>The implementation of this strategy relies on partnership resources to deliver. Further austerity measures may have an impact. Hence this should be regularly reviewed to ensure effective resources management and potential for cost shunt or demand shift.</p>		