



Title: **Remodelling Domestic Abuse Accommodation Services**

Wards Affected: **All Wards in Torbay**

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Board** On: **27 November 2013**

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1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 Torbay Council undertook a consultation into a proposal to remodel accommodation services for victims of domestic abuse.
- 1.2 The consultation undertaken evidenced little support for the proposal.
- 1.3 The outcome of the consultation and previous overview and scrutiny meetings has been to develop a collaborative process for designing future domestic abuse services, including accommodation and outreach support.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This report is for information and provides an update on the current position of commissioning domestic abuse services in Torbay.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Domestic Abuse Steering Group developed the Torbay Domestic Abuse Strategy in May 2013.
- 3.2. Supporting People currently commission a seven bed refuge and 50 units of outreach support for victims of domestic abuse. The services support victims to achieve positive outcomes in the areas of stay safe, economic well being, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and be healthy.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. As part of the commissioning process for domestic abuse services, the Domestic Abuse Steering Group requested a review of the current accommodation model (i.e. refuge).
- 4.2. Between 27 August and 30 October 2013, Torbay Council undertook a consultation into refuge accommodation for female victims fleeing domestic abuse and proposed a model of emergency accommodation.
- 4.3. The consultation included a questionnaire to partner organisations and the current provider, an online questionnaire, focus groups and telephone interviews with clients who had used local domestic abuse services.

- 4.4. The results from the consultation on the proposal are available at Appendix 1 and detail the full findings. This information has been used to update the Equality Impact Assessment, available at Appendix 2.
- 4.5. A summary of the key findings are available below:
- The refuge provides peer support for women and friendships and support they receive in the refuge continue when they move into the community.
 - There is on-site specialist support available at the refuge for women and children which may not be available through a different model.
 - The refuge is safe and a nationally well recognised model of support for women.
 - The current model of refuge provision does not match accommodation to need and there should be a variety of provision available.
 - Concerns regarding the proposals included a lack of detail available, the lack of specialist on site support and a lack of provision for women who need to leave their homes urgently.

5. Next steps

- 5.1. The Stronger Communities Board met on 23 October 2013 and agreed a review of the Torbay Domestic Abuse Strategy to ensure it met future need prior to final sign off.
- 5.2. Membership of the Domestic Abuse Steering Group has been reviewed to ensure relevant stakeholders, including the current service provider, are represented. The Group met on 5 November 2013 to review the Strategy and identified it was not fit for purpose. The Group undertook a workshop session to identify key priorities.
- 5.3. The Executive Head of Community Safety agreed to revise the Strategy and to lead on a consultation process prior to sign off by the Stronger Communities Board.
- 5.4. Supporting People, working together with the current provider of the refuge and outreach service, organised a service specification workshop meeting for 20 November 2013. This has since been cancelled due to very low confirmed attendance rates.
- 5.5. The Domestic Abuse Steering Group will convene regularly and prioritise the following work: appropriate involvement of stakeholders in the planning and design of future domestic abuse services and allocation of funding including, seeking partner contributions for domestic abuse services. The detail of the accommodation model will be developed jointly to ensure consideration is given to the consultation findings so that any future service appropriately meets the needs of people fleeing domestic abuse.
- 5.6. A consultation session will be planned for January 2014 to meet with potential providers to develop further aspects of the specification and support market development.

5.7. Supporting People will lead the procurement process for the new domestic abuse service, with a planned start date of July 2014.

Frances Mason
Head of Supporting People

Appendices

Appendix 1 Consultation report
Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Documents available in members' rooms

None

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

None