

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

10 March 2020

Title:	Domestic Abuse Update
Report of the Health and Wellbeing Board	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: ALL	Key Decision: No
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Sponsor: Elaine Allegretti, Director for People and Resilience Mark Tyson, Director of Policy and Participation	
Summary: Domestic abuse is a priority for both the borough and the Health and Wellbeing Board as outlined in the 2018-2022 Health and Wellbeing Strategy. There is important work going on in this area which partners are asked to note and provide any comments on. Firstly, the borough has launched a Domestic Abuse Commission which brings together a panel of national experts, chaired by CEO of Shelter Polly Neate, to understand the attitudes, perceived normalisation and tolerance of domestic abuse in the community. The commission will be working until October 2020 and presenting a series of recommendations on how to tackle the issue in the borough. Secondly, after a competitive tender process, Refuge Charity have been awarded the contract for a new domestic and sexual violence service in Barking and Dagenham – the new service started on 1st October 2019 and will run for three years with the possibility of a 2-year extension. This report provides a brief of the new service. Finally, a brief update of the wide range of work happening across the system in relation to domestic abuse.	
Recommendation The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to: (i) Note the updates relating to domestic abuse (ii) Provide any comments	

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is a key priority for the Council. Domestic violence and abuse have been a longstanding problem for Barking and Dagenham. Figures from the Metropolitan Police Service, Barking and Dagenham has consistently had the highest recorded rate of domestic abuse for the last 10 years compared to other London boroughs. Prevalence is reported 23 incidents per 1000 of the population.
- 1.2 The 2019 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy was approved by Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2018. It outlines four priorities – support survivors, educate and communicate, challenge abusive behaviours and include lived experience.
- 1.3 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023 also contains Domestic Abuse as a separate outcome as outcome 7 – a borough with zero tolerance to Domestic Abuse that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators and empowers survivors.
- 1.4 This covering report provides an update on two key developments around Barking and Dagenham’s approach to Domestic Abuse – firstly, a domestic abuse commission looking specifically at the attitudes around domestic abuse in the community sponsored by Councillor Maureen Worby, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration and Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board. Secondly, the new strategic partner following a competitive tender process in Refuge.
- 1.5 In addition, a brief update on several pieces of work across wider systems in Barking and Dagenham is offered.

2 Updates: Domestic Abuse Commission

- 2.1 The Domestic Abuse Commission has been launched by the borough to look into the attitudes around domestic abuse, and perceived normalisation and tolerance of abusive behaviours. The commission brings together a panel of national experts to explore the attitudes in the borough around domestic abuse and make a series of recommendations. The commission was launched in the borough on 25th September and aims to publish a report with a series of recommendations by around October 2020.
- 2.2 This report provides an update of the 25th September and the emerging and ongoing work as part of the commission. On 25th September, commissioners were taken on a bus tour of the borough and took part in a workshop with the Borough Expert Panel. There was then an evening launch event at Eastbury Manor House to launch the commission to wider stakeholders and the local press.
- 2.3 The chair of the commission, Polly Neate, CEO of Shelter and former CEO of Women’s Aid has invited a range of commissioners who reflect the areas which interlink with the issue of Domestic Abuse. As well as those from the domestic abuse sector, the commission brings together those with backgrounds in key issues that interlink with domestic abuse, such as poverty, homelessness, mental

health and local government to get a range of perspectives. It was also key for the commission to ensure diversity in the commissioners.

- 2.4 The confirmed commissioners represent a range of high profile and national experts, which will help the commission to gain national attention for the work it is doing. The full list of 12 confirmed commissioners is as below:

Polly Neate - Chair and CEO of Shelter, former CEO of Women's Aid

Donna Hall - Former Chief Exec of Wigan Council and chair of New Local Government Network

Simon Blake - Chief Executive of Mental Health First Aid and is also Deputy Chair of Stonewall

Amna Adbullatif - Community psychologist who is currently working as national lead on children and young people for Women's Aid

Nicki Norman - Director of Services Women's Aid/acting co-CEO of Women's Aid

Becky Rogerson – Chief Executive at My Sister's Place and acting Director at Wearside Women in Need

Sarah Hughes – CEO of Centre for Mental Health

Raji Hunjan – CEO of anti-poverty charity, Z2K (Zacchaeus 2000 Trust).

Jo Todd – CEO of Respect

Jess Phillips – MP of Birmingham Yardley, Chair of APPG on Domestic Violence and Abuse

Rick Henderson – CEO of Homeless Link

Junior Smart – Founder of SOS Project, Director of SmartCC

- 2.5 Alongside the commissioners, importantly there is a Borough Expert Panel who are providing expertise on the borough, and the connections needed to support the commission. The second meeting of the Borough Expert Panel took place on 4th December and will work through activities relating to who in the community we need to ensure we are engaging with, and how we should be framing these conversations. Members of the Borough Expert Panel will also be invited to the next meeting of the commission to give evidence to commissioners.

- 2.6 We are also in the process of recruiting to a survivor panel to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse can play a key role in the work of the commission.

- 2.7 As well as the local launch, given the national significance of the commission, a central London launch is being planned to launch the commission to the press and the wider Violence Against Women and Girls sector. As the first of its kind in the country, the launch will ensure that the commission gains national recognition. We have now arranged a Central London Launch through our London Assembly member, Unmesh Desai to take place at City Hall. The event will take place on 4th February and will be an evening event for 80-100 people with speeches. Invites have been circulated to Cabinet members, our commissioners, the Borough Expert Panel members, the survivor panel, senior council officers, the press and domestic abuse sector.

2.8.1 **Workstream 1: Quantitative data**

Currently, the understanding of domestic abuse in the borough focuses on police-reported data. Part of the work of the commission is to deepen our understanding of

the issue of Domestic Abuse. Data requests have been submitted to NELFT, the Police, BHRUT, and CCG around Domestic Abuse.

Alongside these requests, the commission will use data on domestic abuse from B&D One View. Further analysis of council data including social care data, homelessness data and wider service-level data is also underway.

The 2019 School Survey was completed in the summer term, and the full results have now been sent by the provider. As headline figures these show that similar percentages of young people think that abusive behaviours are sometimes acceptable – across age groups, in 2017 26% of secondary school students think it's sometimes acceptable to hit your partner, and in 2019 this figure is 28%. The survey provider, SHEU have provided a breakdown of the acceptance of abusive behaviours for a range of characteristics including gender, LGBT, Free School Meals and those from single parent families which the commission will analyse to understand the acceptance of behaviours further.

2.8.2 Workstream 2: Understanding residents' experiences and attitudes

Quantitative data around resident attitudes around domestic abuse will be collected as part of the commission. Qualitative insight will be key as part of the commission. - Community Engagement Officer is in now in role and will be in post until June. The Community Engagement Officer has been making connections in the borough to engage with residents and interviewing frontline staff.

2.8.3 Workstream 3: Cultures and history

This workstream came from a question at the workshop around how the culture, history and oppression in the borough links to domestic abuse. This workstream will explore the different cultures which exist in communities in Barking and Dagenham and engage in conversations around how domestic abuse remains hidden in different communities. For instance, the chair of the commission has met with representatives from the Hive Women's Group at Al Madina Mosque to discuss how to engage with women at the Hive around domestic abuse.

In addition to this, as part of this workstream, the commission have visited the borough archives to explore gender roles and gender violence and see how this has been presented in the borough previously. When exploring the borough archives around domestic abuse, became reminded that the first appearance of violence against women in Parliamentary politics was in 1976 when Jo Richardson introduced a bill to give women who suffered from domestic violence the right to apply for an injunction, in partnership with the local Women including the below quote from Jo Richardson in Barking and Dagenham Post in 1986:

“Women's lives are being made a misery and Barking is no better or worse than elsewhere in London. But people in Barking tend to sweep it under the carpet and pretend it isn't happening here. I see many women in my surgery who are desperate to be rehoused because of their husband's violence”

2.8.4 Workstream 4: Future proofing

This workstream focuses on how in the context of huge growth in the borough, how we can ensure that the work of the commission has a legacy and in the long-term helps to create a borough where domestic abuse is not tolerated. Part of this work includes looking at how the regeneration of the borough can benefit women and create spaces in which women feel safe. Specifically, this will include looking at the ask around domestic abuse within the social value policy which the Inclusive Growth team are currently working through. This will enable the council to use its commissioning powers to have a positive impact on domestic abuse in the longer term.

This workstreams also includes understanding and working with young people in the borough. As a borough with the highest proportion of under 16s in England and Wales, we have a great opportunity to change the attitudes of our young people. A Votes for Schools session with young people is being planned for January, a range of events are planned in the Youth Zone during the 16 days of activism and further engagement is ongoing with Healthy Schools leads.

2.8.5 Workstream 5: National best practice

Although the commission is the first of its kind nationally, there is a range of academic research on areas relating to domestic abuse which the commission can learn from. As well as producing a literature review, the commission will engage with key academics about the work of the commission. The commission will also look at national best practice from within the women's sector and beyond. The commission will look at key learnings from campaigns and successes to change attitudes around areas such as mental health and drinking.

2.8.6 Workstream 6: Staff

Within the council, just under 40% of council staff work for the borough. Although, we don't have the figures for partner agencies, the council and its partner agencies play a key role in training their staff. A mapping of the training offer for frontline council staff around domestic abuse is underway, and questions have been planned with the chair of commission and council Behavioural Insight Lead for the upcoming staff temperature check.

We will also be engaging with partner agencies to understand their training offer around domestic abuse, and the attitudes of staff. The Community Engagement Officer has also been conducting and arranging interviews with frontline council staff.

2.8.7 Workstream 7: Creating a national methodology

Part of the work of the commission is to add to the national dialogue around how a local area can tackle the issue of domestic abuse at its root. The commission will therefore make sure that it keeps a note of the work its done, any lessons learnt and challenges so that it can provide a blueprint for other local areas. Officers working on the commission have already had conversations with the Violence Reduction Unit at the Mayor of London's Office, who are interested in the work of the commission and how the learning can be shared across London and beyond.

3. NEW Domestic and Sexual Violence Service

- 3.1 Following a competitive tender process Refuge Charity have been awarded the contract for a new domestic and sexual violence service in Barking and Dagenham – the new service started on the 01st October 2019 and will run for three years with the possibility of a 2-year extension.
- 3.2 Refuge opened the world's first safe house for women and children escaping domestic violence in Chiswick, West London, in 1971. Since then, Refuge has led the campaign against domestic violence. They have grown to become the country's largest single provider of specialist domestic and gender-based violence services
- 3.3 On any given day Refuge supports more than 6,000 clients, helping them rebuild their lives and overcome many different forms of violence and abuse; domestic violence, sexual violence, so-called 'honour'-based violence, human trafficking and modern slavery, and female genital mutilation
- 3.4 The new Barking and Dagenham Domestic and Sexual Violence Service replaced the existing refuge accommodation service and independent advocacy delivered by Hestia and Victim Support respectively.
- 3.5 Under the new 3-year contract, Refuge Charity will be delivering the following:
- **One front door, no wrong door:** *With one phone number (0300 456 0174), one referral form making it easy to refer and easy to self-refer.*
- 3.6 **Support for Victim/Survivors:** *Four IGVAs (Independent Gender Violence Advocates). The service will work with all victims of gender-based violence at all risk levels; allowing for consistency of support across the victim/survivor journey to recovery; following timelines dictated by the service-user. The team won't just be there to respond to crisis situations, but to help victims recover and rebuild their lives. Each of the IGVAs will have extensive specialist training to represent different responses to different community groups. This includes specialisms in approaches for LGBT people, men, disabled people, and BME people particularly where there is NRPF support required.*
- 3.7 **Support for Children:** *Children's support includes access to a Children's outreach worker who will work across the service to support recovery and rebuild relationships, working one-to-one with young people and supporting younger children alongside their non-abusing parent. They will work alongside partner agencies including children's centres, social care and schools to provide a holistic package of support. This worker will work with 0-11 year olds.*

There is also an Early Intervention Worker (EIW) who will provide one-to-one support to 11-17-year olds who have witnessed or experienced abuse. The EIW will support young people to build resilience, act for themselves, keep safe and become more independent through:

- Advocating for their needs
- Providing emotional support; boosting mental health and resilience
- Establishing boundaries

- Discussing healthy relationships
- Sexual health advice
- Advising how to use technology safely

3.8 **Perpetrator Intervention:** *The perpetrator service will work with perpetrators identified by care management in children's care and support. A practitioner will be embedded within children's care and support, facilitating partnership working and providing advice and support. The service will work with perpetrators using an intensive case management approach, co-ordinating a multi-agency response to disrupt abuse and drive attitudinal and behaviour change.*

3.9 **Sanctuary Schemes:** *Victims at risk of domestic violence often have to leave their homes because of the risk of repeat incidents of abuse. Refuges and other forms of emergency and temporary accommodation can provide a safe and supportive environment for households fleeing violence, but many victims do not wish to leave their homes or choose to return to their homes after a short stay in temporary accommodation despite the risks. Sanctuaries are an additional accommodation option for households at risk of domestic violence which can, where suitable and appropriate, offer households the choice of remaining in their homes.*

The service will provide a range of security installations including door and window locks (for emergency support only, the locks will be changed. This can be done in 4 hours), security lights, letterbox protectors, personal attack alarms. All necessary security installations will be completed within 5 days from referral.

3.10 **Refuge Accommodation:** *The service maintains and supports the existing capacity of 13 bed spaces across two venues in the borough (one in Barking and one in Dagenham). One space is fully disabled access and some spaces allow room for two to three children. 2.5 FTE Refuge staff will ensure the smooth running of the refuges, providing 1:1 case management, group work, support planning and housing management.*

The service will run a 6 month move-on policy to ensure enough time for women to access support to keep safe but to allow for a throughput that helps as many women as possible.

3.11 **Schools Support:** *The service managers will also work with schools to build capacity to deliver healthy relationships workshops. Refuge will work with school safeguarding leads to provide support to families flagged by Operation Encompass. As an aside, the Health Education Partnership have separately been funded to deliver whole school approach to domestic abuse across 15 schools in the borough. The two offers are linked to ensure cross referrals and consistent messaging is robust.*

3.12 **Employment Support:** *Refuge's employability programme will facilitate return-to-work pathways, linked to local employers, developing understanding of the needs of VAWG survivors, with a focus on creating tailored, meaningful employment opportunities.*

3.13 **Community Champions Training:** *To build capacity in the community Refuge will deliver a programme of training to agencies, voluntary sector organisations and local businesses in Barking and Dagenham: training individuals to act as champions*

within their organisation; providing ongoing support through the service as required. Training will include prevalence and dynamics of gender-based violence, understanding risk, responding safely (including to children) and referring to appropriate services. Refuge will also be able to offer bespoke training for specialist community groups in Barking and Dagenham depending on need.

- 3.14 **Peer Mentors:** *There will be opportunities to volunteer through Refuge's peer mentor programme. The peer mentor team will be a valuable asset for supporting victim/survivors to engage in community activities, whether by accompanying a client to existing assets, or giving a tour of the borough. This will begin to be developed towards the new financial year.*

Barking and Dagenham survivors will receive training and supervision to become peer mentors too; providing aftercare activities including organising workshops, speakers, activities, providing practical and emotional support. This will be a high value volunteering opportunity, offering genuine opportunities for progression: former Refuge peer mentors are now volunteering on the National Domestic Violence Helpline, working in Refuge's services and receiving media training to act as ambassadors for Refuge.

- 3.15 **Tech Abuse Team:** *Technology facilitated abuse is evidenced throughout Refuge's national caseloads and Refuge have funding from Google for a Tech Abuse Team which will provide support for complex cases in Barking and Dagenham, reducing pressure on the team.*

Barking and Dagenham will have access to tech empowerment workshops, and the service will have a trained tech champion.

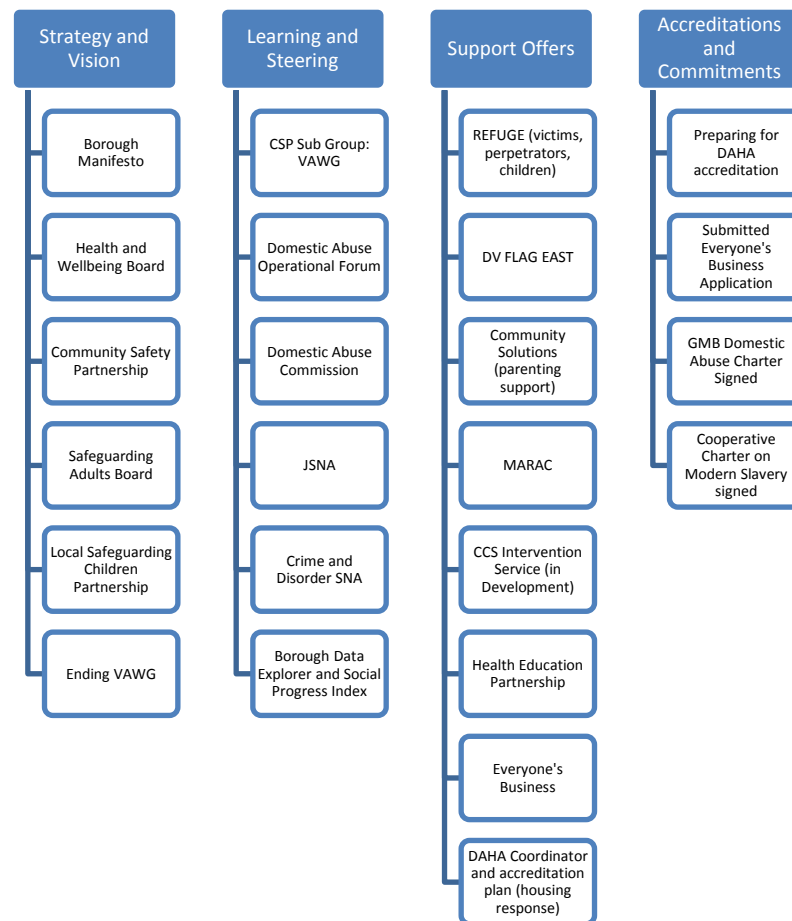
Refuge's tech and economic empowerment training programme will be delivered across Barking and Dagenham on a rolling basis to raise awareness of the impact of tech abuse and how to remain safe whilst being empowered to use technology safely in everyday life.

4. Whole System Updates:

- 4.1 The Health Education Partnership will be working in 10 local primary schools and 5 local secondary schools to develop a whole school approach to domestic abuse, including advice around policy and strategy, workshops with key stakeholders: governors, teachers, parents and young people. This is an exciting piece of work running as a pilot for one year from September 2019, and Refuge will be linked in to ensure pathways into specialist support are supported through the work.
- 4.2 The Violence Reduction Unit announced on 25th November that they have awarded £1m to social enterprise IRISi (which enables IRISi to work with local partnerships to deliver their flagship intervention across seven boroughs until the end of 2020/21). IRISi is an evidence based, domestic violence and abuse training, support and referral programme for general practice. Barking and Dagenham is one of the seven boroughs in which the service will be rolled out. Connections have already been made to link IRISi into the CCG and social prescribing clinical and council leads, and we are hoping to mobilise working with a local specialist service provider by the new financial year.

- 4.3 DV FLAG East (family law access group). DV Flag East is run by Citizens Advice Barking & Dagenham. Local accredited experienced family solicitor firms volunteer to provide free independent confidential advice to people experiencing domestic abuse. Visit www.dvflageast.org.uk for further information. This is funded by social value monies raised by the Barking and Dagenham legal team who are also volunteering their own time alongside local family solicitors to develop a best practice pro bono model for families that fall out of scope of the limited legal aid eligibility.
- 4.4 We have recruited a domestic abuse housing coordinator to work with housing colleagues in Community Solutions to prepare us for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation process. This is funded through the MHCLG. A steering group has come together, and the next 12 months will be used to take stock of our approach and explore ways to adopt best practice in our housing response to domestic abuse.
- 4.5 Community Solutions have been delivering community ava groups from September 2019: a group work weekly programme for young people who have experienced domestic violence. A concurrent mothers group runs alongside it and the aim is to create a space where mothers and their children are able to contextualise their experiences and develop renewed bonds. Feedback has been excellent and the domestic abuse have recruited several women to take part in the Survivors Panel in 2020.
- 4.6 Huggett Women's Centre continues to deliver East London Rape Crisis services, although currently it is not running group work or drop ins as a result of funding coming to an end in July 2019. Ashiana Network are delivering VAWG counselling services in the centre.
- 4.7 A new women's hub has been initiated at Al Madina Mosque. It is called The Hive and consists of several women coming together and leading projects for the local community. The main focus is on empowering women in order to empower the wider community. A soft launch was held in August 2019 alongside Eid celebrations, and a more formal launch is being planned. The Hive is offering several strands of support based on what local women want and need, including parenting groups, links to permaculture and the natural environment, sport and leisure activities and awareness of social inequality factors such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- 4.8 The LBBB Addressing Domestic Abuse at Work Statement and Guidance has been launched, and 17 supportive points of contacts known as staff advocates have been trained to support employees across the workforce experiencing domestic abuse. This has been made possible by working with everyone's business, an initiative looking at addressing domestic abuse in the workplace. We also have access to a workplace independent domestic violence advocate (for men and women) and up to 18 weeks counselling through Women's Trust for women who have experienced domestic abuse. As part of this area of work the Council has also signed up to the GMB Domestic Abuse Charter and have submitted an application to Everyone's Business as part of a best process accreditation process and are planning to submit an application to the Excellence in People Management Awards in 2020.

4.9 There is a significant amount of work happening in relation to domestic abuse. For ease of reference the graphic below attempts to help focus the golden thread from vision to strategy to operational support.



5. Mandatory Implications

5.1 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2018 has a section on domestic abuse, detailing the health impacts for children experiencing domestic abuse and the impact on social care, such as an estimated 32% of children living in income deprived families. It also outlines adverse childhood experiences, and how these are linked to multiple health risk factors and poor health outcomes in adulthood.

5.2 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy focuses on three themes – giving children the best start in life, early diagnosis and intervention and building resilience. Within resilience, there is a specific outcome relating to Domestic Abuse. A borough with zero tolerance to Domestic Abuse that tackles underlying causes, challenges perpetrators and empowers survivors.

5.3 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implication arising from this report

Implications completed by David Folorunso, Finance Business Partner

5.4 **Legal Implications**

Implications completed by Lindsey Marks, Deputy Head of Law.

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5.5 **Risk Management**

Through approaches to service commissioning, there are mechanisms for ensuring that the risks around individuals who have experienced domestic abuse in any form and managed, jointly as necessary with the systems in place for perpetrators of domestic abuse

The VAWG CSP sub-group will have in place a risk management system to ensure that delivery remains on track and action can be taken as necessary.

6 Non-mandatory Implications

Crime and Disorder

- 6.1 Domestic and sexual violence impacts on many other types of crime and is correlative with all types of violent crime, anti-social behaviour and offending. There are clear correlations with child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and youth violence.
- 6.2 Under the Community Safety Partnership, work is taking place to design preventative approaches to tackling violent crime, including domestic and sexual violence which is underpinned by trauma informed ways of working, and recognising the damaging impacts of childhood adversity.

Safeguarding

- 6.3 Domestic and sexual violence presents a range of behaviour that pose a risk to the individuals themselves and others around them and can give rise to a range of safeguarding concerns.
- 6.4 The strategy recognises the impacts of domestic violence on children in the home and recommends working closely to support the victim to safeguard their children, whilst tackling the risk: the perpetrator. Working with the whole family provides a framework to reduce risk, reduce the use of abusive behaviours, and to address trauma experienced by the victim and children.
- 6.5 The borough's systems for reporting and investigating both adult and child safeguarding concerns have established links to specialist support services, and the Strategy recognises the need for commissioning interventions to continue to foster these links and provide training for those involved in safeguarding.