

## Community and Equality Impact Assessment

As an authority we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to both new policy development or changes to services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with **full guidance** to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010.
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Services (Social Value) 2012 Act

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

**About the service or policy development**

Name of service or policy	Domestic Abuse Commission Report
Lead Officer	Florence Henry, Domestic Abuse Commission Programme Manager
Contact Details	<a href="mailto:florence.henry@lbbd.gov.uk">florence.henry@lbbd.gov.uk</a>

Why is this service or policy development/review needed?
<p>The Domestic Abuse Commission brings together a panel of 12 national experts to look at the attitudes in the community to domestic abuse. The Commission was launched in September 2019 at Eastbury Manor House and will launch its final report at the end of February 2021, after the report is signed off at LBBB Cabinet.</p> <p>Separately, the council is publishing its response to the commission and will bring this to Cabinet in April.</p>

**1. Community impact (this can be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered).**

<p>What impacts will this service or policy development have on communities? Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?</p> <p><i>Consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National and local data sets</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Consultation and service monitoring information</li> <li>• Voluntary and Community Organisations</li> <li>• The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demographics</b></p> <p>Existing data was one of the reasons for launching the commission. Police reported data highlights that Barking and Dagenham has the highest police reported rates of domestic abuse in London and has done for the last 10 years. National data highlights that a huge amount of domestic abuse goes unreported to the police.</p> <p>National evidence highlights that women are more likely to experience domestic abuse, which is reflected in local data. MOPAC data showed that 78% of police-reported victims were female, and 22% were male, while 93% of perpetrators are male and 7% are female. Data from NELFT, which provides mental health services and health visiting shows similar figures – 82.7% of victims were female and 17.27% were male.</p>

## COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Another key set of data which was key in launching the commission was the 2017 and 2019 School Health Education Unit survey, commissioned by public health which found that in both years 26% of young people (from years 10 to 12) thought it was acceptable to hit your partner, with a higher acceptance of abusive behaviours for elements of coercive control. Again, the school survey data highlights the gender difference in domestic abuse - 9 per cent of female students thought it was sometimes acceptable to hit your partner, compared with 33 per cent of male students.

In terms of demographic backgrounds, national evidence highlights that domestic abuse does not impact one cultural background, more than other – domestic abuse is prevalent in all cultural groups. Any disparities in police reported data can be seen to, therefore, reflect the differences in reporting domestic abuse to the police, rather than with domestic abuse prevalence itself.

A key part of the commission's work has been consultation, so although there are gaps in national data sets, the commission has qualitative insight on the experiences of different groups in relation to domestic abuse that offer evidence in relation to this. This can be found in the commission's report, and is referenced below. The commission's chapter, cultures and communities talks about the qualitative insight gained for different communities in Barking and Dagenham and this is also referenced below. It's important not to let the need to differentiate between cultures provide an excuse to "other" violence against women and not recognise that both domestic abuse, and the sexist and oppressive attitudes that let it thrive, are present in all communities in the UK and in Barking and Dagenham. Within all communities, there is a need to make domestic abuse more visible and tackle it at its root. The overall conclusion of the commission's work looking at different cultures is that homophobia and racism can create additional barriers to seeking help – distrust of public services, past experiences and attitudes of frontline services can create an additional barrier to seeking help.

The commission's report is independent, and the council are currently formulating their response – the below impacts are written talking about the impact of the report itself, and assuming that the council takes on the overall 7 outcomes in the report, without going into detail of the impacts of individual recommendations as these are yet to be decided.

Potential impacts	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
<b>Local communities in general</b>	X			-In a borough with high police reported rates of domestic abuse, the report starts a journey of increased awareness of domestic abuse amongst community and residents – making it easier for people who are in abusive	The commission report recommends ensuring that survivor-led support groups, any community ambassador schemes and borough-wide campaigns need to reflect the diversity of the population. It is important for the whole community to feel represented in change and for it to be impactful.

**COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

			relationships to seek help from services and get the support that they need from public services. The report's recommendations also focus on stopping against the wide-ranging impacts of domestic abuse, including trauma, child survivors.	
<b>Age</b>	X		The commission spoke to a range of residents, and survivors throughout its work. Domestic abuse affects all age groups, so there is a need to ensure that awareness raising, and any survivor interventions work for all age groups.	The commission has spoken to a range of survivors of different ages through its work. The commission recommends that survivors of domestic abuse should be key to any approach moving forward – it will be important to ensure that survivors of different ages are represented.
<b>Disability</b>	X		The commission is aware of national evidence base of the additional vulnerabilities of those with disabilities. National evidence shows that those with disabilities are more likely to experience domestic abuse.	There are two related factors to disability to consider – the first is that national evidence highlights that those with disabilities and more likely to experience domestic abuse. Secondly, experiencing domestic abuse can have huge mental health impacts linked to the trauma it receives. This was really prominent in the commission's work with survivors of DA. The commission has a section on disability, acknowledging that there is more work to be done to ensure that disabled survivors of domestic abuse are heard, and supported.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	X	X	Evidence from the Scottish Transgender Alliance indicates that 80% of trans people had experienced emotional, sexual or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner.	The commission has suggested that there is a need for further engagement with the LGBTQ+ community to ensure that their lived experience of domestic abuse is understood. The commission has heard of homophobia within the response to LGBTQ+ survivors and not acknowledging that domestic abuse takes place in same sex relationships.

## COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>		X	The commission's work focuses on domestic abuse and raising awareness about unhealthy relationships and domestic abuse.	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	X		National evidence shows that domestic abuse can begin or escalate during pregnancy. Raising awareness of domestic abuse, and supporting survivors will have a positive impact on pregnancy and maternity through raising awareness of the issue, and supporting victims when domestic abuse does occur.	<p>The commission's report includes recommendations for all partners, starting with the council to lead the change. Importantly, the commission does recommend that all partners should adopt a 'we believe you' approach for survivors and undergo culture change training in relation to domestic abuse, including in health services which would improve the response to domestic abuse from health professionals when disclosing domestic abuse in pregnancy or maternity. Given that Barking and Dagenham has the highest birth rates in England and Wales and high rates of domestic abuse, the commission also has a specific recommendation that health partners should develop a specific perinatal domestic abuse approach locally.</p> <p>The commission's report will be discussed at partnership boards, such as Health and Wellbeing Board and local Safeguarding Boards to ensure that health partners are brought on board with the recommendations.</p>
<b>Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)</b>	X		Domestic abuse happens in all races and cultures – there is no evidence that it impacts one race more than another.	<p>The commission's work has shown that there is a need for all work to be culturally diverse – domestic abuse happens in all cultures, but it is important that people feel represented in community ambassador training, campaigns and support groups alike. This is why the commission</p> <p>Engagement with black communities, for instance, highlighted that they were less likely to report domestic abuse to the police because of the treatment</p>

**COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

				of Black African and Black Caribbean communities by the police. This is corroborated by national evidence which shows that victims are often concerned about reporting their black perpetrator to the police, because of the treatment that they might receive from police. The commission recommends police culture change on domestic abuse as a key recommendation, and also recommends a bottom up campaign where different communities can access seed-funding to tailor domestic abuse campaign messages. The commission also recommends a culturally diverse community ambassador scheme in the borough, to ensure that different communities feel represented.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	X		National evidence shows that domestic abuse happens in all faiths. It is important to ensure that message is clear.	<p>The work of the commission has highlighted that faith groups can play an important role in helping to create community change and spread key messages about domestic abuse. Linked to this, however, it is important to note that domestic abuse happens in all faiths and cultures – everyone has a responsibility to make domestic abuse more visible.</p> <p>The commission recommends that different faith groups should play a key role in programmes like community ambassador schemes and campaigns, helping to tailor messages to specific groups through bottom up campaigns on domestic abuse.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	X		Domestic abuse is a gendered crime, and disproportionately affects women. This is backed up by local data which highlights that women are more likely to be victims. National evidence highlights that women are more likely to experience domestic abuse, which is reflected	The commission has stated clearly in its report that domestic abuse is a gendered crime, which disproportionately affects women. It also acknowledges that there is a need to ensure that campaigns are tailored, and reach all within the community, with bottom up campaigns and diverse community ambassadors through-out the borough.

**COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

				in local data. MOPAC data showed that 78% of police-reported victims were female, and 22% were male, while 93% of perpetrators are male and 7% are female. Data from NELFT, which provides mental health services and health visiting shows similar figures – 82.7% of victims were female and 17.27% were male. The commission has looked at domestic abuse from both sexes, but does acknowledge that DA is a gendered crime.	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	X	X	X	National evidence from Galop shows that LGBTQ+ are more likely to experience domestic abuse, but that this is less likely to be reported to services.	The commission makes some specific recommendations about LGBTQ+ communities. It notes that the commission has found it harder to engage with LGBTQ+ communities, but did run 2 focus groups and an online survey to understand the lived experience of the LGBTQ+ community. The commission suggests moving forward that there is a need to ensure further consultation with the LGBTQ+ community, building on the good work of projects like the Be and Do project.
<b>Any community issues identified for this location?</b>		X		n/a	

**2. Consultation.**

Provide details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups?

The Commission has engaged with over 500 residents and professionals through over 55 focus groups from October 2019 to July 2020. Consulting both the whole community, and specific groups affected by the commission’s work has been a key part to the commission’s work.

As well as wider engagement, the commission recruited a survivors’ panel and had monthly prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown, and then bi-weekly virtually since March 2021. One of the key principles running through the commission’s work is that survivors of domestic abuse should be key to any approach, and any changes related to domestic abuse.

The commission also made a conscious effort to engage with those residents from under-represented and marginalised communities. We held an LGBTQ+ focus group, and carried out a survey to allow for those from LGBTQ+ communities to have a safe-space to discuss their experiences of domestic abuse. In light of the Black Lives Matter movement, we also held a specific focus group for black women to come together to share their experiences of domestic abuse. The commission has also engaged with different demographic groups in the borough – the commission has spoken to White British residents, Eastern European residents and Muslim residents to name a few. The commission report contains a chapter about the outcomes from each of these focus groups – it is also important for domestic abuse not to be othered, domestic abuse happens in all cultures and communities and there is a need to make it visible in all communities.

Survivors of domestic abuse have co-produced the commission’s recommendations – the commission’s report is structured around 7 survivor-based outcomes which focus on what life should be like for survivors of domestic abuse in Barking and Dagenham. The survivor voice is key for the narrative of the commission report, with each chapter starting with what survivors have told us about this issue. Consultation and co-production with survivors has led the commission’s work at every stage.



### 3. Monitoring and Review

<p>How will you review community and equality impact once the service or policy has been implemented?  <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in <b>Section 1 and 2</b> and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
To be re-looked at once council response to commission report has been formulated, to ensure that the community impacts are up to date.	April 2021	Hazel North-Stephens, Lead Commissioner for Community Safeguarding

### 4. Next steps

It is important the information gathered is used to inform any Council reports that are presented to Cabinet or appropriate committees. This will allow Members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template for sign off by the Strategy Team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
<p>The Domestic Abuse Commission report will have a positive impact on communities and equalities groups across the borough – by ensuring that there is increased awareness about domestic abuse, that survivors are believed and a key part of the response and by ensuring that all campaigns and community initiatives reflect the diversity of the borough and the different lived experience.</p> <p>The council to the commission is currently being worked through, working through which of the recommendations will be adopted, how and when. The council response will highlight the specific and detailed implications for residents in the borough, and different equality groups.</p>

### 5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Divisional Director who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role (e.g. project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Mark Tyson	Director of Strategy and Participation	