



Communities Overview Committee	<u>Item</u>
23 November 2022	<u>6</u>
	<u>Public</u>

Tackling Domestic Abuse

Responsible officer

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1.0 Summary

1.1 This paper provides the committee with an update on work within the Shropshire local authority area to fulfil the duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee members to:

- note the work completed to set up a domestic abuse local partnership board
- further note the production of the needs assessment and safe accommodation strategy and
- identify any areas for further development.

3.0 Background

3.1 Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out new duties for local authorities. In summary these are to:

- appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (in line with core membership set out in the Domestic Abuse Act and statutory guidance), which will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified functions
- assess the need for safe accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area
- in consultation with the partnership board, develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality – which is based on the needs assessment, is implemented through commissioning decisions, and includes monitoring and evaluation

3.2 The most recent Shropshire Council Domestic Abuse Strategy & Action Plan (2018-2020) was approved by the Council's Cabinet and the Community Safety Partnership. It aimed to improve services for victims of domestic abuse within Shropshire and to respond effectively to domestic violence and abuse.

The priorities set were to:

- Prevent domestic abuse
- Ensure co-ordinated and sustainable services are delivered to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse

Tackling domestic abuse has been a priority for the council and all statutory and community sector partners in Shropshire for several years. The strategy lapsed as the country went into lockdown and other priorities took over, which resulted in Shropshire working to an action plan only, although partners continued to work well together.

- 3.3 The Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) comprises the Local Authority, Integrated Care System, Fire Service, Police and the Probation Service. As a collective they hold the responsibility for Shropshire's statutory duties around adults, children, criminal justice and health via the SSCP Strategic Board which is chaired by an independent person. In preparation for the Domestic Abuse Act coming into force, the Domestic Abuse County Forum evolved and became the SSCP Domestic Abuse Priority Group.
- 3.4 The SSCP Domestic Abuse Priority Group fulfils the functions of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) as required by the Domestic Abuse Act. The local authority chairs the group, ensuring the action plan enables the partnership to meet statutory duties, and ensuring all services respond effectively to domestic abuse. Shropshire Council also works with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.
- 4.0 In May 2022, Shropshire Council commissioned Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) to complete a needs assessment to inform commissioning of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation as per Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act. In addition to supporting Shropshire Council to meet the statutory duty, STADA were commissioned to deliver a review that would inform wider strategy and the development of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse. The needs assessment is attached as **appendix 1**.
- 4.1 The needs assessment has consequently informed the Shropshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022, which is attached as **appendix 2**.
- 4.2 Work is now underway to produce an overarching strategy that will seek to prevent domestic abuse, as well as providing comprehensive services for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence,

List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Home Office *Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance* July 2022

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

All

Local Member

All

Appendices

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

Shropshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022