

**Subject: Domestic Abuse**

**Cabinet Member: Cllr Keazor**

**Executive Director: Tony Theodoulou**

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### **Purpose of Report**

- 1. To provide an update on work to tackle Domestic abuse (DA) and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).**

### **Relevance to the Council Plan**

2. Reflects the plans including the priorities of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) of “tackling violence in all its forms”. Enfield Council is a responsible authority within the SSCB which acts as the statutorily required Community Safety Partnership for Enfield.
3. ‘Keep people safe from domestic abuse’ is a priority in our Fairer Enfield policy.

### **Background**

The profile of the wide range of work to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls has been raised following some tragic recent events such as the deaths of Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry in June 2020, Sabina Nessa Sept 2021 and Sarah Everard in March 2021. VAWG is particularly pertinent now with widespread concerns around women’s safety and domestic abuse.

The report aims to provide some oversight of the work being undertaken to tackle DA and VAWG in public spaces. It will also provide examples of partnership work to reduce risks and support victims of DA and VAWG more broadly.

### **4. Perpetrator program**

- Enfield Council funded a pilot scheme in 2020 to provide a voluntary provision for perpetrators, which was particularly successfully taken up in Children’s Services and may be considered for future provision. This utilised Council funding to test the effectiveness for complementing existing services around support for victims of domestic abuse. The provider for the trial service (RISE mutual) has now been recommissioned using funding from the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime for a tri-borough project.

- Enfield has successfully bid along with two other boroughs for funding to develop a BAME-focused & coordinated family & community approach. The work will take account of the different effects of discrimination experienced by marginalised groups in working with families. RISE Mutual CIC (“RISE”) will provide domestic abuse interventions which engage the expertise and experience of local community organisations, to challenge perpetrators and support the emotional abuse experienced by victims and multi-victims. The service will be adapted and tailored to meet the specific profile and need of each borough. The project requires a small amount of match funding and will run until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.
- The programme will address different elements of the identities of domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, rather than just one – like race or gender. It will also help to break down some of the barriers to victims accessing support and help challenge and disrupt the abuse.
- The support programme – delivered through the social organisation, RISE began in November, and is open to people from BAME, minority and disadvantaged groups, including LGBTQ+. Enfield as part of the tri- borough will contribute to a report on uptake and effectiveness of the programme to the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime quarterly.

## **5. The Domestic Abuse Hub**

- The Enfield Domestic Abuse Hub was officially launched on 1st May 2020 in response to the emergent concern of increasing domestic abuse incidents in the Borough during the Covid -19 Pandemic. The local domestic abuse helpline was developed to provide easy access to tailored advice and support for victims of domestic abuse, particularly during the lockdown where there was forced isolation and limited access to mainstream support services.
- The Domestic Abuse Hub helpline continues to operate during weekdays between 9am to 5pm. Each victim is provided with tailored advice to their individual needs and can be referred on to other Agencies for further support. These agencies included MARAC, Solace and other specialist IDVA services, Housing, Drug and Alcohol Services and all concerns of Safeguarding nature are escalated to either Adult or Children Services on the same day.
- Actions which benefit the service users, are provided in coordinated way which is reflected in the range of skills engaged with the work. This has included information sharing or referrals being made to support services. There are no time constraints placed on calls, which allows survivors the time and space to talk about their experiences. The Hub has resulted in an improved service for clients.

## **6. Locks and Bolts**

- Enfield have funded a Locks and Bolt scheme which launched in June 2020. The Locks and Bolts scheme is available to individuals that have been a victim of crime. This can include repeat victim of burglary, domestic abuse or cases where the victim is vulnerable to further crime due to vulnerability factors. The scale of works carried out are small safety enhancing measures for vulnerable residents, that would not be included in the tenant's usual repairs process. This scheme covers all types of properties but is limited to most serious cases.
- The service works with vulnerable clients & their families to enable people to feel safe in their own homes. The service contributes to empowering victims of crime and build confidence through enhanced security. Keeping people safe at home is a key priority of the Enfield Community Safety Partnership and this service will contribute to this.

## **7. Resilience Team and DAHA Accreditation**

- The Resilience Team, which sits within Enfield's Housing Advisory Service (HAS), was formed in May 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and increase in domestic abuse within Enfield. The Resilience Team delivers a direct statutory homelessness service, comprehensive specialist domestic abuse assessments and casework (housing plans and safety/harm reduction plans), dispersed and female-only emergency accommodation and maintaining pathways with dedicated partner agencies to tackle domestic abuse. The Resilience Team adheres to the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Domestic Act 2021.
- Applicants can contact Enfield Council through HAS's emergency duty line to make a homelessness application and they also have a dedicated pathway for partner / third party referrals through the duty to refer route. We have created a tailored referral form which has been shared with partners to have a direct referral route in the Resilience Team. Since January 2021 to January 2022 the team have had 541 DA applicants approaching housing. The team has been positively welcomed by partners and partners have reported the referral pathway when a survivor needs to approach housing is easily accessible and cases are picked up and dealt with in a timely manner.
- Within the council a small group has been created via housing and community safety to achieve DAHA accreditation. DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. DAHA accreditation is recognised in the government's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy: 2016 to 2020. By becoming DAHA accredited we are taking a stand to ensure we deliver safe and effective responses to domestic abuse.

## **8. Safe Spaces**

In Enfield we also have "Safe Spaces" scheme which was set up by Hestia. UK SAYS NO MORE is working with Boots UK, Morrisons, Superdrug and Well

pharmacies, TSB banks and independent pharmacies across the UK to provide Safe Spaces in their consultation rooms for people experiencing domestic abuse. They provide a safe and discrete way to reach out to friends and family, contact specialist support services and start your journey to recovery. In Enfield we currently have 11 Safe spaces.

## **9. VAWG Strategy**

Enfield has a VAWG plan which is currently under review concurrently with the SSCB wider plan and the corresponding work regionally. The Domestic Abuse picture is a complex and fast moving one as aspects of the recent Domestic Abuse legislation are enacted.

## **10. Police VAWG plan**

The Metropolitan police are currently enhancing a tackling Violence against Women and Girls plan. The plan aims to look at four themes:

- Protecting women and girls in public spaces, at home and online
- Working with our partners and with women to improve prevention and victim care
- Bringing offenders to justice and improving criminal justice outcomes for victims
- Improving Met culture and professional standards

The plan will describe recent changes they have made and what else they are introducing to improve their response and raise confidence. Their approach will reinforce the importance of victim care, and places victims at the heart of all activity they undertake. We will work in partnership with the Metropolitan police to provide feedback on the local plan and its implementation.

## **11. Annual campaign**

- Last autumn we worked closely with the Enfield Youth Parliament to create a campaign to raise awareness around in public spaces safety and with a focus on challenging inappropriate behaviour. Working with the Youth Parliament has given us a great insight to the concerns of young adults around improving personal safety.
- This is a campaign to inspire action and seeks to help embed positive change and reflection which was launched on White Ribbon Day ( November 25<sup>th</sup> 2021). The key areas addressed are reflective of local and national priorities.
- All campaigns are distributed through a variety of mediums and are also shared via internal communications with our own staff.
- Enfield Council was the first London council to receive the title of White Ribbon Authority which raises awareness of male violence against women and girls back in 2010. Through our continued commitment and work we have again been successful in renewing our status as a White Ribbon

Borough. This involves developing an action plan for Enfield council to implement and to ensure we adhere to, raising awareness of the issue and continuing to work to stop male violence against women and girls.

## **12. Refuge**

The refuge is set up to support women and fleeing from DA and provide safe accommodation. Enfield currently has a 21-bed refuge in borough and continues to provide support to survivors of DA.

## **Main Considerations for the Panel**

**13.** To note the progress and invite further reports to the Crime Scrutiny

## **Conclusions**

**Tackling Violence will again be a priority in the SSCB plan and is aligned to the Policing and Crime Plan draft priorities for London**

**14.** The elements of work reported here are included to demonstrate that there has been progress in ensuring services are appropriately designed to support all communities and many are tailored to ensure that they are easily accessible.

**15.** Many of the responses featured have been designed and delivered within the context of the pandemic when demand was higher and delivery often more difficult.

We aim to improve some aspects of capturing data, either because it is not routinely requested or because it is not currently utilised.

For example, there is more work to do with faith groups and disability action groups in relation to working together to reduce vulnerability to harm.

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## **Appendices**

**None**

## **Background Papers**

N/A