

## London Borough of Enfield

Crime Scrutiny Panel – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

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**Subject: Domestic Abuse**

**Cabinet Member: Cllr Needs**

**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, Sarah Everard in March 2021 and Zara Aleena June 2022. VAWG is particularly pertinent now with widespread concerns around women’s safety and domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse reports account for approximately one quarter of all crime reported in Enfield. However, this figure is very likely to be under representative of the true levels of domestic abuse. The scale of the problem is significant as statistics show only a partial picture due to low levels of reporting and high levels of normalisation and minimisation.

As well as physical violence, domestic abuse can involve coercive control, and/or psychological, emotional, and financial abuse. Nationally, on average it takes 50 separate incidents of domestic abuse for a victim to contact support services.

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

- 4. Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (commissioned service)**

- An IDVA is a specialist professional who works with victims and survivors of domestic abuse to develop a trusting relationship. They will support victims/survivors with everything they need to become safe and rebuild their life and represent their voice at a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), as well as helping them to navigate the criminal justice process and working with the different statutory agencies to provide wraparound support.
- In Enfield, we have a team of 4 IDVA's and a part time floating support worker who work with high-risk victims of DA.
- Additionally, we also have 2 IDVA's who will work with the police and support men and women fleeing DA.
- During the financial year 2021-22 over 840 referrals, including self-referrals were received by our commissioned IDVA service. Timely support and advocacy are provided by the IDVAs to ensure that ongoing risks are identified and help, and advice provided to improve a client's safety.
- The Change and Challenge team which are part of Enfield Councils Early Help Team work with families to find solutions to concerns they are having and focus on preventing them from becoming more difficult to manage. The team consists of Early Help Caseworkers and an IDVA.

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

- The Enfield Domestic Abuse Hub was 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 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.
- Since May 2022 – October 2022 the DA hub has received 41 calls – both enquiries and self-referrals. Of these calls 15 of them were referred into other services.

## **6. Locks and Bolts**

- Community Safety 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. Works include safety enhancing measures for

their homes 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.
- We have supported some high-risk cases where a refuge is not the best option to remain in their homes with enhanced security measures as part of a support package. The "Locks & bolts" service has been running since July 2020 and has assisted 89 Enfield residents since the start of the project until October 2022. The vast majority are female.

## **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 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. The HAS provide a dedicated pathway for partner / third party referrals through the duty to refer route. During October 2021 to October 2022 the team had 627 DA applicants approaching housing.
- Housing is leading on the DAHA accreditation with support from Community Safety. There is a task and finish in place working on the DAHA accreditation. DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. By becoming DAHA accredited, the Council is taking a stand to ensure there are effective and safe responses delivered consistently to domestic abuse.

## **8. Perpetrator program**

- Enfield in partnership with two other boroughs have been successful for funding a perpetrator program in August 2021. The program is focused specifically on supporting perpetrators from Black, African and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. It takes account of the different effects of discrimination experienced by marginalised groups in working with families. RISE Mutual CIC ("RISE") provides 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 programme addresses 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. Last Quarter July 2022 – September 2022 the program received 14 referrals and 11 DA victim referrals.
- This is in addition to a mandated program linked with sentences at court and delivered by national probation service.
- Locally this general provision augmented by family-based solutions.

## **9. Work place policy**

- Last year, the Council produced a domestic violence and abuse work place policy. The aim of the policy is to ensure all staff working in the organisation are aware of security and support that is available for victims/survivors of domestic abuse. The policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to challenging the social issue of domestic violence and abuse; that we value, and are prepared to support, staff during difficult periods by adopting the requirements outlined within this policy providing a coordinated and effective standard of response.
- The policy provides guidance to managers and support to help team members who are experiencing DA.

## **10. Night Time Safety Charter**

- The Council have signed to the London Mayors Women's Nigh-time Safety Charter. Any organisation that operates at night can sign-up to a voluntary pledge, acknowledging the issues faced by women and girls and making specific commitments to prioritise women's safety to help women to feel confident and safe at night. The charter requires an organisation to commit to seven elements of work that include for example training staff, designing public spaces and work places to make them safer for women at night, encourage reporting by victims and bystanders as part of communications campaign and having a nominated champion to promote women's night safety.
- A named champion has been appointed who will oversea the work and drive implementing the charter. There will be a survey undertaken, encouraging all employees to feed back on how they view safety and security within the organisation. This will be followed by an action plan.

## **11. 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.

## **12. White Ribbon Day**

- 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.
- Recruitment is progressing within the Council to encourage men to sign up to become the White Ribbon Ambassadors to stand up against male violence towards women. We are promoting through our Domestic Violence Strategic group for more members to sign up to become Ambassadors. Ambassadors are there to inspire and lead by example, actively promoting gender equality and the White Ribbon message.
- Every year Community Safety run an event to mark the day and to raise awareness around male violence against women and girls. This year, Enfield Council will mark 19<sup>th</sup> event, which is being held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022. This year's conference will concentrate on the impact of male violence on young women and girls and actions to prevent it.

## **13. VAWG Strategy**

The Domestic Abuse picture is a complex and fast moving one as aspects of the recent Domestic Abuse legislation are enacted. Enfield has a VAWG strategy which is at draft stage. The strategy has been shared with the wider partnership for final comments and this will be shared in conjunction with the white ribbon day.

## **14. Police VAWG plan**

The Metropolitan Police are currently working on their 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.

## **15. Walk and Talk**

The Council are supporting and promoting the Met Police “Walk and Talk” initiative to create productive discussion about women’s concerns of safety in public spaces. The Met Police are inviting women to come along and share their thoughts on women safety. They would like to hear experiences and concerns women may have.

## **16. Annual campaign**

- Last autumn Community Safety 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. This was a campaign to inspire action and seeks to help embed positive change and reflection. 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. We are currently working on our 2022/23 campaign.

## **17. Refuge**

The refuge is set up to support women and fleeing from DA and provide safe accommodation. Enfield Council commissions Refuge provision. There is a 21-bed refuge in borough that continues to provide support to survivors of DA.

## **Main Considerations for the Panel**

**18.** 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**

- 19.** 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.
- 20.** Despite all of the work we are still facing extreme challenges exacerbated by the cost-of-living impact
- 21.** We are working with our commissioned services to capture the impacts hardship on victims and survivors of DA.
- 22.** Through data we understand and see the need to have an independent sexual violence advocate in the borough. Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) play an important role in providing specialist tailored support to victims and survivors of sexual violence. An ISVA is an adviser who works

with people who have experienced rape and sexual assault, irrespective of whether they have reported to the police. We are working with providers to understand costings.

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### **Appendices**

**None**

### **Background Papers**

N/A