

15 June 2023

Update on Domestic Abuse strategy and delivery

Purpose / Recommendation

1. The Health Improvement Board is asked to note and comment on the annual delivery plan for the Oxfordshire domestic abuse strategy.

Background

2. Background and Context

Domestic abuse is a crime that can affect anyone, having devastating impacts on the lives of victim-survivors and their families. People who have been affected by domestic abuse often experience poor health and wellbeing, and in extreme cases, death. Women and girls are more likely to be affected and die from the impact of domestic abuse. The consequences extend to the family, as children affected by domestic abuse experience the adverse effects on their mental and physical health and other factors such as educational attainment. Additionally, harmful effects can last over a lifetime and into future generations, including impacts on attitudes to relationships, mental health and self-esteem.

3. Domestic abuse and HIB priorities

The Health Improvement Board priorities for 2019 – 2024 include reducing the impact on health outcomes through community safety risks, including domestic abuse. At the forward planning workshop in March 2023, HIB members agreed this continued to be a priority for the board.

4. Legislation

On 29 April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent. It brings wide reaching changes in protective legislation and provides a new definition of domestic abuse, which also recognises children as victims in their own right. Part 4 of the Act introduces a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide safe accommodation support services to victim survivors.

The Act places duties on Oxfordshire County Council to:

- Appoint a multi-agency domestic abuse local partnership board consisting of a minimum defined membership which it must consult as it performs certain specified functions
- Assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all victim-survivors and their children who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area. This should ensure the needs of all victims, including those with protected characteristics are considered.
- Develop and publish a Safe Accommodation Strategy having regard to the needs assessment.

On 14 April 2021, Oxfordshire County Council appointed the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board (ODASB) as its multi-agency domestic abuse local partnership board.

5. Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

The strategic board have launched two strategies, informed by a comprehensive local needs assessment, which meet the statutory requirements of the DA Act and provide a more overarching Public Health approach to addressing domestic abuse.

The Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy, published January 2022, sets out the key strategic objectives in relation to providing safe accommodation for victim-survivors of Domestic Abuse.

The Oxfordshire Overarching Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy, published July 2022, sets out how as system how we will ensure joined up quality services are provided for people who are victim-survivors of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire.

The strategies are arranged under 4 pillars :

- Prevention
- Provision
- Pursuing
- Partnership



1. PREVENTION

Preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.



2. PROVISION

Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur.



3. PURSUING

Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.



4. PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims-survivors, children and their families.

In November 2022 (postponed from September due to the death of Her Majesty the Queen) Cllr Lygo officially launched the strategies at County Hall, Oxford with key local partners in attendance.

6. Commissioned services

Many of the strategic objectives covered the scope and reach of Domestic Abuse services. These services were recommissioned from April 23, and a summary of these is in Appendix 1

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) have been successful in a bid for Home Office funding to commission perpetrator services for people who are high risk offenders in the Thames Valley for 2023-2025. These services will be expected to be delivered from the Autumn 2023, and will provide information to inform future commissioning intentions.

Key Issues

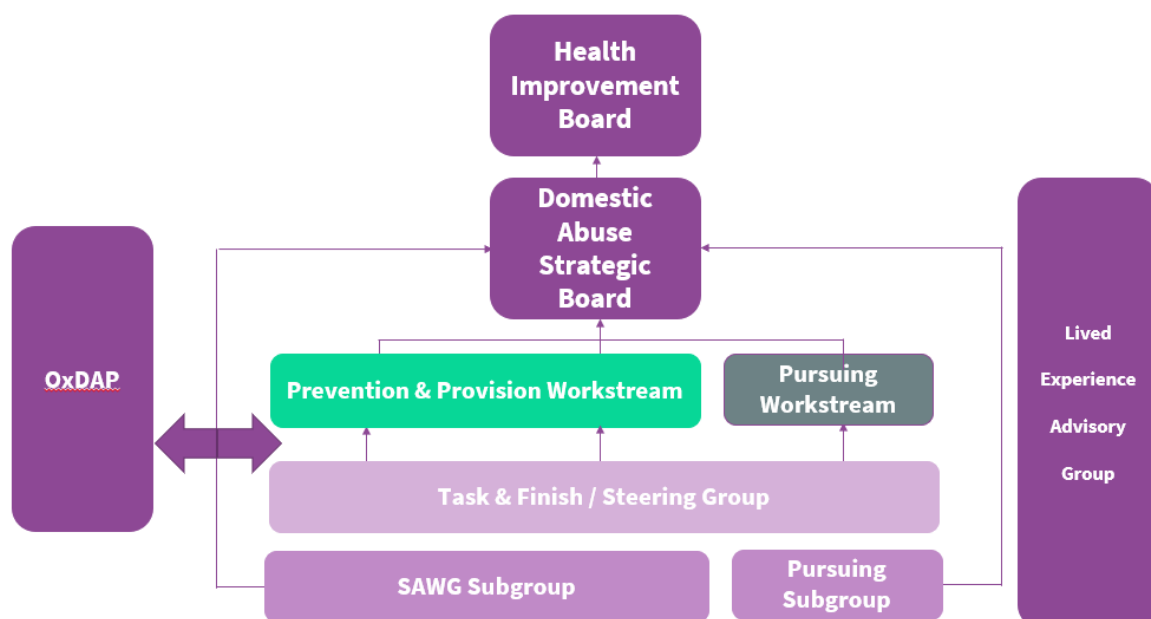
7. The Board and Subgroups

The Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board has been developing an annual delivery plan to deliver the aims set out in the strategies.

The board held an away morning in February of this year taking the opportunity to review the function and operation of the Board, agree on actions to deliver the strategic recommendations and priorities for 2023/2024, and develop delivery groups. These are reflected in the proposed governance arrangements, below.

8. Task and Finish Groups

The proposed structure for Task & Finish Groups reporting to the board is as follows:-



9. Mobilisation of Task and Finish Groups

Further to the April board meeting work has begun to mobilise the Task and Finish groups that will deliver actions on behalf of the board. The Task & Finish Groups will be chaired by a member of the strategic board, with members of the Board, OxDAP and other partners if relevant. They will agree actions to deliver against the strategic priorities set out in annual delivery plan. The Lived Experience Advisory Group will provide input into the groups where required to ensure the perspective of the victim - survivor is taken into consideration.

10. OxDAP (Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership)

OxDAP is a forum where providers of domestic abuse services come together with members of local authority, police, health, and other key partners to discuss intelligence on the ground relating to domestic abuse, and lead actions where required. OxDAP reports any key findings to the strategic board. OxDAP members will have a key role in Task and Finish subgroups to deliver the annual delivery plan.

11. Lived Experience Advisory Group

The domestic abuse agenda in Oxfordshire has been supported by a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), led by independent consultant Lisa Ward. This group is funded using the DLUHC grant and have provided vital insight at development stages for the strategy, service development and board development. The board's intention is to adopt a co-production approach, where strategy and delivery plans are developed together, rather than consulted on after decisions have been made. LEAG members sit on the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board and OxDAP.

12. Safe Accommodation Working Group (SAWG)

The Safe Accommodation Working Group is a subgroup of the main board and delivers actions pertaining to the Safe Accommodation Strategy. The group were pivotal in the data collection and submission to the Department of Levelling Up last year. This year the group are focussing on referral pathways in and out of domestic abuse services, including safe accommodation.

13. The Delivery Plan

The domestic abuse annual delivery plan sets out how we will deliver the objectives, under the four pillars in the domestic abuse strategy. A summary of the deliverables are outlined below:

Prevention



- Implement robust County Wide Communications Plan to increase awareness of domestic abuse
- Review effectiveness of operation encompassed by commissioners' report coming to board
- Monitor provision of Healthy relationships programmes delivered to Children and Young People
- Strengthen employer response to Domestic Abuse
- Roll out Training packages targeted at the multi-agency workforce and Oxfordshire residents, on identifying and responding to Domestic Abuse

Provision



- Maintain links with Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards and Family Solutions Plus Service
- Design Events dedicated to Children and Young People
- Embed a whole system mapping of services in Oxfordshire
- Ensure connection with commissioned service

Pursuing



- Develop partnership working response with Office of Police and Crime Commissioner and Thame Valley Police
- Deliver actions to increase opportunity for Criminal Justice Intervention
- Link to the development of perpetrator service

14. Website

The new [website and animation](#) went live in April 2023. This has been promoted to partners via newsletters and partnership meetings, and sits on the OCC domestic abuse webpages.

Budgetary implications

15. Department of Levelling Up Housing and communities (DLUHC) Grant

The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have provided grants to Tier 1 and Tier 2 local authorities to support the delivery of duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Oxfordshire has received the following grants which have been used to fund and plan for domestic abuse services over the next few years. The grant has been confirmed only until 2025.

National Funding received by OCC from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities :

Domestic Abuse Grant 2021-2022	£1,141,151
Domestic Abuse Grant 2022-2023	£1,144,310
Domestic Abuse Grant 2023-2024	£1,167,200
Anticipated Domestic Abuse Grant 2024-2025	£1,167,200

16. Reporting to DLUHC

Each tier one local authority is required to provide an annual update report covering a refreshed needs assessment. This is in addition to submission of data regarding the provision and use of safe accommodation for people affected by domestic abuse to identify any gaps in provision and ensure these are taken into account in commissioning services and improving outcomes for delivery.

Additionally the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service is co- commissioned by County, district and city councils and the Office of the Police and Crime commissioner

Equalities implications

The annual delivery plan seeks to address the nuanced requirements of victim-survivors with protected characteristics.

Communications

A consultation was held in 2022 on the proposed Overarching strategy. In addition, the board benefits from engagement from people with Lived experience, on an ongoing basis in different strands of work. Newsletters are sent to key partners updating on developments in strategy, action delivery and services.

Key Dates

DLUHC data return will be submitted by end June 23

Report by

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02 June 23

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Appendix 1

Summary of new services following recommissioning which can be found in the Domestic abuse pages of the OCC website:

[Domestic abuse information for professionals | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

This new site includes information for people seeking help if they suspect domestic abuse, information for professionals, ongoing support, training, domestic abuse champions, partnerships

1. Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) provided by A2Dominion 01.04.2023-31.03.2026

This contract [Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service is delivered by A2dominion](#). It includes provision of safe accommodation for adults and accompanied children to include 2 refuges in Oxfordshire, 5 places of safety and support services from specialist domestic abuse practitioners. It also includes an advice line as a single point of contact for referrals to this accommodation and outreach support for people with specialist needs including those with protected characteristics. This new contract includes the provision of dedicated counselling for adults and specialist counselling for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. The practitioners liaise closely with primary and secondary health, social care, drug and alcohol and mental health services to support people to engage with this linked provision and engage with local community support prior to leaving safe accommodation. There is also a close working relationship with external specialist services for people with no recourse to public funds and members of racially minoritized communities requiring additional support.

2. Oxfordshire Independent Advocacy Service (IDVA) provided by Reducing the Risk 01.04.2023-31.03.2026

This [high-risk IDVA service](#) includes provision of highly specialist support for people affected by domestic abuse with a range of complex needs including safeguarding adults and children. The service includes dedicated IDVA provision for young people in addition to advocacy support for people affected by domestic abuse progressing through the court processes. The court based IDVA is independent of the court service, police and the criminal or civil justice system and supports victim-survivors going through the court processes. These IDVAS also liaise closely with other external specialist health and social care services.

3. Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Champions Network provided by Adolescent Safeguarding Consultancy 01.04.2023-31.03.2026

The Champions Network [Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Champions Network](#), is a space where anyone who supports families affected by Domestic Abuse in either a

professional or voluntary role can connect, be inspired, and learn. It provides a safe and supportive environment to continue their development in the field of Domestic Abuse. The Network includes access to tools, resources, and an open forum that can be used to help in day-to-day work. In the new Network there's an increased focus on professional development.

This Champions induction / orientation sessions can be accessed via the OSCB training website. Involvement in the network enables access to

- formally accredited training to support career development as Oxfordshire DA Champions
- 'train the trainer' resources to roll out to delegate's teams and organisations
- interactive workshops which explore different themes

4. Oxfordshire specialist Domestic Abuse Training modules delivered by a Consortium including [Social-led](#), [Oasis](#), & [H.O.P.E](#). 01.04.2023-31.03.2026

The Domestic Abuse training will provide professionals and interested community members with skills to respond to Domestic Abuse.

There are 7 modules available to book via the [OSCB training](#) site, the first being the pre-requisite for the 6 further modules.

1. Domestic Abuse: Basic Awareness
2. Domestic Abuse: The Impact on Children & Families
3. Domestic Abuse: Risk Assessment & Safety Planning
(For anybody who wants to become a DA Champion, these first 3 courses must be completed before you can do the Champion induction)
4. So-called Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage
5. Domestic Abuse - Child / Adolescent to Parent Violence & Abuse (CAPVA)
6. Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
7. The Intersection of Domestic Abuse & Protected Characteristics