

Update on the development of Oxfordshire's 2019-2024 Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Domestic Abuse Strategic Board's annual report presented at the November 2018 Health Improvement Partnership Board gave a full update on work that has been delivered over the past year or more. That report specifically referenced the nine recommendations set out in the 2016 Strategic Review of Domestic Abuse for Oxfordshire.

This current report is aimed to provide further information on the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board's development of a 5-year Strategy for Oxfordshire for 2019 -2024 which was set out in recommendation 8 in the Strategic Review.

Introduction

The strategy aims to set out our local position in tackling domestic abuse, it highlights the impacts for our residents affected by domestic abuse, including current and longer-term impacts for families and the needs that they have as a result. The Strategy also sets out the ways in which this critically important area of work intersects with other policy frameworks both locally and nationally. This of course includes central Government's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy as updated in 2016. In practice our local strategy will provide an opportunity for longer term planning and guide our multi-agency approach to this very complex issue. Most importantly it will assist us to work effectively in partnership to deliver the best outcomes for people living in Oxfordshire affected by domestic abuse.

What should a Domestic Abuse Strategy cover?

One of the important questions the Strategic Board will need to make in relation to this Strategy is whether the time has come to broaden focus from domestic abuse to a Violence Against Women and Girls agenda as favoured by the current Government. There are of course pros and cons to taking this approach. We must both acknowledge that domestic abuse is indeed evidenced as a seriously gendered issue but also be careful not to minimise the experiences of male victims and also the needs and experiences of the LGBT+ communities. There is arguably merit in linking domestic abuse with other strands included in the definition of Violence against Women and Girls as we know there are huge overlaps between domestic and other areas of abuse such as Sexual Violence and Child Sexual Exploitation. These and other issues such a shift would involve will need careful consideration by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board and key partners.

The Strategy will incorporate the key principles set out in our Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Vision Statement 2016 and explain how these are to be delivered in an appended Action Plan that will be updated annually. This action plan will directly link to the HIB Performance Indicators for Domestic Abuse. Alongside this there will be a Dashboard which will be a high-level reporting mechanism to inform key partners on progress on a six monthly or more frequent basis.

How is the Strategy being developed?

We started the process at our last Strategic Board meeting in November and agreed to develop a first draft by mid-December using

- Our Strategic Vision Statement
- A review of progress on our recommendations from the 2016 Strategic Review
- A desk top review of best practice Domestic Abuse and VAWG strategies from other areas in the UK
- Central Government's VAWG Strategy

We also agreed that we would hold an extended Strategic Board meeting in February to develop the Strategy further and incorporate feedback from other partners.

The draft Strategy document has been discussed with our Operational Board members, which includes Experts by Experience, with a focus on ensuring the document is meaningful for our delivery partners. Community Safety Partnerships have also been asked to comment on key priorities for their area to help inform the approach to reporting on delivery of the action plan and dashboard indicators.

Next steps

A second draft of the Strategy will be developed at the extended Domestic Abuse Strategic Board meeting on 13 February after which we will decide the next steps before publishing the document in early Spring 2019.

We aim to bring the completed Strategy to the next Health Improvement Partnership Board meeting for comment and sign off.

Sarah Carter
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If you have any questions or comments in relation to the any of the above or a related topic please do not hesitate to contact me:

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