

Health Improvement Board

18th November 2021

Strategic update for Domestic Abuse

Purpose / Recommendation

1. **HIB members are asked to**

- Note the update on statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act following publication of guidance for Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act
- Note the publication of draft safe accommodation strategy for consultation
- Note for timetable for strategy development

Executive Summary

2. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (“the Act”) was introduced in April 2021, and statutory duties came into force on 1st October 2021. The statutory guidance highlights the specific scope and contents for the safe accommodation strategy, which is required under the Act. An overarching needs assessment and strategy is currently being worked on in Oxfordshire. However, to ensure we could meet the Act requirements, Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board published separate draft Safe Accommodation Strategy, which is currently out for consultation.

Background

3. This paper is to update the Health Improvement Board, following the publication of the statutory guidance outlining the local authorities’ duties under the Domestic Abuse Act, and is an addition to the HIB update given in September 21.
4. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was introduced in April this year. It requires each tier one local authority to lead a strategic board consisting of membership from a range of organisations from the system, including tier two local authorities. The local authority and strategic board are required to organise a local needs assessment with the following scope: “comprehensive assessment of need for support in safe accommodation in your area”, and then use this to inform a safe accommodation strategy.
5. Statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for English local authorities on their functions pursuant to Part 4 of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act (“the Act”) was published on 1st October 2021, when the duty came into force.

[Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014113/dluhc-domestic-abuse-act-2021-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf)

6. A grant of £1.1million has been awarded by MHCLG (now known as DLUHC) to OCC for delivery of the duties under this Act. Further grants have been awarded to tier two local authorities.
7. Work is currently underway to develop a needs assessment and strategy review with a wider remit than the stated requirement around safe accommodation. This work is being undertaken by an external Public Health agency, PHAST, and is supported by a local expert, to ensure the strategy reflects a good understanding the Oxfordshire system.

Key Issues

8. **Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy**

Following the publication of the statutory guidance for Part 4 of the Act, which provided details of the required scope and content of the “domestic abuse support in safe accommodation” strategy, and use of MHCLG funding, the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board agreed to publish a separate strategy to meet these requirements.

9. The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy was produced in draft on 26th October 2021, and is currently under consultation according to the guidance, which states “Tier one authorities must consult with the Board, tier two authorities within the area and such other persons as they consider appropriate, before publishing their strategy.”
10. The consultation is live from 27th October to 24th November 2021.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-strategy-2021>

11. The delivery plan for the safe accommodation strategy will developed by the Safe Accommodation Working Group’ (SAWG) and approved by the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board in 2021/22. This will include developing and agreeing baseline measures and targets to monitor the impact of the Oxfordshire Domestic. This will also work to address the gaps in data which have been highlighted in the needs assessment.

Budgetary implications

12. The funding allocation from MHCLG (DLUHC) of £1.1 million should be used to support the implementation of the statutory duties, as defined in the guidance. The publication of the guidance has provided clarity on the scope of activities that can be funded. Discussions are in progress between tier 1 and tier 2 local authorities, to ensure the funding is distributed appropriately.

Equalities implications *[considering the impact of the policy on our customers]*

13. The Act states there should be dedicated provision of specialist support for people with protected characteristics, or needs in drug and alcohol, mental health, physical health, interpreting, and specialist counselling.

Sustainability implications

14. No sustainability implications arise from this paper.

Risk Management

Risk	Action
Data: The safe accommodation needs assessment highlighted the difficulty in collecting data which helps to identify specific need.	The Safe Accommodation Working Group, will be tasked with identifying and addressing this challenge.
Delivery: Following publication of the guidance, providing clear scope for use of the MHCLG funding, there is a very short timeframe to allocate and spend the funding.	Further discussions are being held to allocate funding from tier 1 to tier 2. Short timeframe flagged with MHCLG, and clarity requested on future funding plans.

Communications

15. In the development of the needs assessment, a number of interviews have been conducted to understand views from different stakeholders. Outcomes of these have been included in the safe accommodation strategy.

16. The safe accommodation strategy is currently out to consultation on the OCC “Let’s Talk” portal.

Key Dates

26th October 2021 – Draft Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation strategy published, for consultation with tier 2 local authorities, the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board and other relevant stakeholders.

5th January 2022 – Final Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation strategy published.

January 2022 – Draft overarching Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy put out for consultation.

March 2022 – Final overarching Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy published.

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