

Update on Domestic Abuse Strategy

Purpose

This report is intended to provide Oxfordshire's Health Improvement Board with an update on progress on development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Context

One of the recommendations from the 2016 Strategic Review of Domestic Abuse was to develop a 5-year strategy for domestic abuse. This is now underway and the Strategic Board for Domestic Abuse has been working to develop this strategy to set out our strategic approach for 2019-2024. In February the Health Improvement Board requested an agreed framework for the Strategy and a Year 1 Delivery Plan and corresponding dashboard be brought to their May meeting.

Progress

We have been working hard to develop an informed and clear Strategy that is fit for purpose and meaningful for all those who work to tackle domestic abuse in Oxfordshire. To do this effectively we needed to hear the views of as many workers and agencies as well as victims of abuse. In addition to consulting with our domestic abuse partners who attend our Strategic and Operational Domestic Abuse Boards and a range of other meetings where key stakeholders are in attendance, we held three Domestic Abuse Strategy Consultation Events across Oxfordshire to gather expertise and guidance. The events were very successful, all well attended with a broad range of agencies represented, and including participation by Experts by Experience. The key messages gathered from these events (see Key Messages document attached) have informed our Strategy framework (see below) and the new delivery plan (also attached). A summary of the approach is set out below.

Framework for the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-24

After consulting on what should be our approach for Oxfordshire we have concluded that taking the central Government approach of a Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy is not right for us. While there was some support for broadening the strategy to include other strands of the Violence Against Women & Girls agenda it was felt that a strategy that overtly focuses on women and girls was exclusionary and not in accordance with our need to be inclusive of people of all genders and family members affected. Furthermore, the title was viewed as regressive with the use of the term violence rather than abuse. We were told that our strategy needed to be shaped by a focus on people experiencing abuse, their children, *and* people perpetrating abuse – rather than the continuing to place the focus and onus on victim/survivors.

Consequently, our strategy is aimed at addressing all forms of domestic abuse with Prevention, Provision, Partnership and Pursuing as the key strategic aims underpinning the framework. The Strategy will ensure a consistent focus on all domestic abuse including Coercive control, Honour Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage and Stalking and Harassment. There will be a strong

focus on perpetrators as well as considering the wider needs of families and those recovering from the impacts of domestic abuse. All activity will be set out under one of these four strategic aims. The aims may be defined as follows:

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

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

Pursuing: Taking action to reduce the harm to victims of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.

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

Year 1 Delivery Plan

The Delivery Plan includes work that is already in progress including the Peer Audit of Young People and Domestic Abuse, the continued delivery of our co-commissioned specialist services, the Young People Domestic Abuse Training and the multi-agency domestic abuse training modules that are being rolled out via our domestic abuse training pool.

The Plan also includes many new initiatives such as the development of new training on coercive control, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Abuse, a focus on support for victims giving evidence at court, supporting prevention work going into schools and access to recovery programmes and counselling for victims and children. We will also be looking at access to Sanctuary Schemes across the County to ensure victims and children can be supported to remain safely at home where possible, ensuring there is a focus on addressing the needs of the whole family and using police and criminal justice tools and processes effectively to hold perpetrators to account protect victims and change or avoid harmful behaviours wherever possible.

A dashboard which corresponds to the activity set out in our delivery plan will be circulated to key partners at the end of quarter 1 once data has been collected from the various agencies involved in delivery.

Conclusion

The key to successfully tackling domestic abuse really is effective partnership working and this strategy will enable us to ensure that we are working collaboratively and constructively to address the widespread and long-term impacts of domestic abuse for our local population.

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8 May 2019

Domestic Abuse Strategy Update
Health Improvement Board, May 2019

Accompanying papers:

1. Year 1 Delivery Plan
2. Key messages from 5-year DA strategy consultation events
3. Domestic Abuse Annual report (March 2019)

Annexes

- Partner update February 2019
- Partner update March 2019
- Partner update April 2019