

Cabinet – 20 October 2021

Domestic Abuse Strategy

Portfolio: Councillor Perry, Deputy Leader, Resilient Communities

Related portfolios: Councillor Wilson, Children's Services
Councillor Martin, Adult Social Care

Service: Resilient Communities

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

1.1 To put in place a Strategy to tackle Domestic Abuse.

2. Summary

2.1 The impact of Domestic Abuse on the health and wellbeing of our residents is both damaging and costly. A Strategy that reduces Domestic Abuse, especially one that has the full support of partner organisations alongside a commitment to a whole system multi agency approach is a prerequisite to delivering effective activity and achieving measurable outcomes.

2.2 The Domestic Abuse Strategy is driven from a strategic need assessment carried out in 2021. It also fulfils our obligations under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021).

2.3 It is recognised that victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse can well be A "public health approach" is a methodology that, in this case, treats violence and exploitation like an infectious disease. It suggests that policy makers should search for a 'cure' by using scientific evidence to identify what causes violence exploitation and find interventions that work to prevent it spreading.

2.4 Our aim is to prevent Domestic Abuse in all its forms, reduce the harm caused, and thus improve health and wellbeing across Walsall Borough.

2.5 If approved an action plan will be prepared and governance of the plan will sit with the Safer Walsall Partnership.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet approves the Domestic Abuse Strategy (**Appendix 1**).

4. Report detail - know

- 4.1 Domestic Abuse (DA) affects a significant number of people in Walsall every day. Walsall Council has committed to ensure “*The most vulnerable are protected from avoidable harm, including caring for people in a safe environment and building Safer Communities*”. This document outlines how a co-ordinated agency and community response, underpinned by national legislation, will challenge the causes and effects of domestic abuse across Walsall.
- 4.2 The Strategy recognizes that a significant number of men and boys also experience violent and abusive crimes that are the subject of this Domestic Abuse Strategy. We do know that these crimes disproportionately affect women. However, this Strategy sets out our approach for supporting all victims and survivors of domestic abuse including men and boys. Our work going forward will take into account the specific challenges male victims face and will recognize that individual victims will have individual experiences. This Strategy includes male victims and does not presume the sex of the perpetrator.
- 4.3 The Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out the collective priorities of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group and the key areas of action for the next three years. This Strategy aligns with the wider priorities identified within the national and regional Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategies.
- 4.4 The Strategy builds upon the findings of the Walsall Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2021 and incorporates the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It recognises there is a need to develop a broader response to domestic abuse and areas for improvement and development.
- 4.5 Our vision is for Walsall to become one of the safest places in the West Midlands where domestic abuse is not tolerated whether at home or on the streets of Walsall. Our ambition is to develop a co-ordinated, multi-agency and community response to end domestic abuse in Walsall. Over the next three years, we will work towards this vision by:
 - a) Working in Partnership to develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.
 - b) Developing robust Prevention and early intervention approaches which reach everyone including those with protected characteristics.
 - c) Ensuring our support provision is tailored, and survivor led to meet the individual needs of every victims/survivor.
 - d) Ensure that our approach provides Protection to all those affected by domestic abuse and holds perpetrators to account.
- 4.6 Partnership working and prevention is at the forefront of our approach to tackling domestic abuse, early identification and intervention to prevent people becoming victims and/or perpetrators in first instance is at the very heart of our partnership.

4.7 Governance of Strategy

The governance of this Strategy sits with Safer Walsall Partnership, which is the Community Safety Partnership for Walsall. An annual action plan and regular reporting on development and progress will support this Strategy. The commitment of, and engagement from partners and stakeholders, will be supported and driven through wider partnership boards. This Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects the current issues.

4.8 Council Corporate Plan priorities

The Strategy will contribute to the following Council's priorities:

Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses – domestic abuse exploitation, in all its forms has a negative impact on confidence both at a personal and community level. A reduction in domestic abuse will see an improvement in confidence.

People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities – Reducing exposure to domestic abuse will have a direct effect on an individual's victim health, particularly mental health.

4.9 Risk management

This Strategy will help to reduce the human cost associated with all domestic abuse, and will assist in developing policies and approaches that more effectively deliver and support those impacted by all age exploitation.

4.10 Financial implications

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has issued an un-ring-fenced grant to Walsall Council covering the Safe Accommodation Duty - Domestic Abuse Grant of £690k. Governance of this strategy and allocation of the grant sits with Safer Walsall Partnership board.

4.11 Legal implications

The requirement for a strategy is included in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). This strategy fulfils that requirement.

4.12 Procurement Implications/Social Value

There are no direct procurement implications for this report and any resulting procurement processes will comply with the Council's Contract Rules.

4.13 Property implications

There will be no direct implications from this report.

4.14 Health and wellbeing implications

The Marmot objectives are key objectives in relation to this Strategy. Reduction in domestic abuse helps to ensure that individuals have the best environment to maximise their potential.

Providing children and adult victims with timely help and support will allow those individuals to get the best start in life, or be helped to get other traumatic exploitation experiences.

It would be expected that work with young people recognises that DA is one of the key Adverse Childhood Experiences.

4.15 Staffing implications

There will be no direct implications from this report.

4.16 Reducing Inequalities

An EQIA has been completed alongside this Strategy and is attached as **Appendix 2**. The Strategy aims to reduce the impact on all residents. However, it is recognising the importance to support victims of exploitation in all its forms.

4.17 Consultation

The members of the Safer Walsall partnership and their organisations have been part of the co-design of this Strategy. The development of this Strategy has culminated in its approval by the Safer Walsall Partnership.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Domestic Abuse Strategy, which is attached as **Appendix 1**.

6. Respond

- 6.1 This Strategy has been approved by the Safer Walsall Partnership at the meeting in September 2021. Once approved, an action plan will be prepared to deliver the Strategy.

7. Review

- 7.1 This Strategy and resultant action plan will be monitored by the Safer Walsall Partnership on a six-monthly basis. The Safeguarding Board will be asked to review progress and provide comment as part of this monitoring.

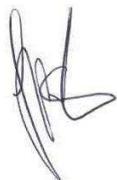
Background papers

Domestic Abuse Strategy – **Appendix 1**
EQIA – **Appendix 2**

Author

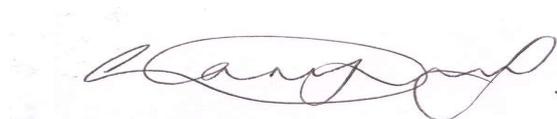
Paul Gordon
Director of Resilient Communities
✉ paul.gordon@walsall.gov.uk

Gordon Falconer
Community Safety Manager
✉ gordon.falconer@walsall.gov.uk



Simon Neilson
Executive Director

6 October 2021



Councillor Perry
Portfolio holder

6 October 2021