

## **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**6 FEBRUARY 2017**

### **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES**

#### **DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY - UPDATE**

##### **1. Purpose of Report.**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the progress made on the current 2016-2017 Domestic Abuse Strategy and to highlight the proposed objectives and priorities for the strategy for 2017-2018 in alignment with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV).

##### **2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 Both the Local Housing Strategy 2016-2018 (approved by Cabinet on 8 June 2016); and the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2013-17 (approved by Cabinet on 10 December 2013); highlight the work currently and planned to be undertaken to address domestic abuse issues. Both documents assist the Council in meeting all three of its Corporate Plan priorities:-
- Supporting a successful economy
  - Helping People to be more self-reliant
  - Smarter Use of Resources

##### **3. Background.**

- 3.1 The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 received Royal Assent on the 29th April 2015 and consultation and the subsequent guidance on the various elements of the Act is ongoing.
- 3.2 The Act places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare, publish and implement a National strategy and on local authorities to prepare, publish and implement a joint local or regional strategy in conjunction with the local health board. The latest date provided by Welsh Government for this to come into effect is March 2018.
- 3.3 The Authority has a local VAWDASV Strategy for 2016/17 (progress given below) and the 2017-2018 strategy will build on the work already undertaken and at the same time prepare the Authority for its statutory duties cited within the VAWDASV Act.
- 3.4 The Authority will be required to submit quarterly progress reports to Welsh Government along with financial information relating to grant funding received in

relation to the domestic abuse co-ordination role, based on the priorities set by the partnership Domestic Abuse Steering Group. This Group consists of Authority representatives (Housing; Community Safety; Social Services and Wellbeing - Adult and Childrens Safeguarding; and Youth Offending Service) as well as third sector organisations (such as Welsh Women's Aid, Victim Support), NHS Wales, South Wales Police, South Wales Fire & Rescue, ABMU and Probation Services Wales.

#### 4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 The current strategy although entitled the 'VAWDASV' strategy (2016-2017) has a focus on domestic abuse rather than the wider VAWDASV agenda although it does seek to align the Authority with the VAWDASV Act. The current Strategy (2016/17) has six principle areas of development and these are listed below together with a position update as at the end of the third quarter of the 2016/17 year. A summary of this update is included at Table A below with more detail given below.

**Table A**

<b>Areas of Development</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>RAG status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Ensuring the smooth and effective roll out of VAWDASV Act within the local authority and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement National Training Framework (NTF)</li> <li>• Implement VAWDASV Workplace Policy</li> <li>• Respond to Consultations</li> <li>• Develop Regional Strategy by 2018</li> <li>• Align National Indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amber</li> <li>• Amber</li> <li>• Green</li> <li>• Amber</li> <li>• Amber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline of 31/3/18</li> <li>• Awaiting template from WG for consistency</li> <li>• Deadline of 31/3/18</li> <li>• Awaiting WG publication of indicators</li> </ul>
Strategic Equality Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure VAWDASV is considered when undertaking and reviewing policies and strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> </ul>	
Raising awareness of VAWDASV and VAWDASV Act (Wales) 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend multi-agency Meetings</li> <li>• Awareness Events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> <li>• Green</li> </ul>	
Safer Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement Target Hardening Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> </ul>	
Domestic Abuse One-stop-shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop one stop shop 'Assia Suite'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> </ul>	
High Risk Crisis Intervention Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA)</li> <li>• Undertake MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) co-ordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> <li>• Green</li> </ul>	

## **4.2 Ensuring the smooth and effective roll out of VAWDASV Act within the local authority and partners**

- 4.2.1 **National Training Framework (NTF)** - In accordance with Welsh Government's timescales, Strategic and operational group meetings have been held with key partners (such as Welsh Government, ABMU, Police, South Wales Fire & Rescue) to develop and ensure that the training to be delivered will meet the requirements of the NTF to ensure that it is delivered in a consistent manner.
- 4.2.2 The next stages will be to develop a local training plan that feeds into a regional training plan to be rolled out to all BCBC staff. A pilot of the e-learning module has been undertaken by BCBC Housing Solutions Team before wider rollout to the rest of the workforce to meet the Welsh Government target of April 2018.
- 4.2.3 The Spectrum Project is a national training programme funded by Welsh Government to raise awareness of domestic abuse and associated issues and is offered to all primary and secondary age children. The training provided by Hafan Cymru, is being offered to all schools in the Borough (currently 75% of secondary schools have taken up the training); however it is unknown whether this will be repeated/continued in 2017/18.
- 4.2.4 Calan Domestic Violence Services (DVS) provide and collate data on training provided in the Bridgend area. This training meets the requirements of the VAWDASV Act. Bridgend Police teams are currently receiving training on the newly introduced coercive control legislation which consists of defining and identifying coercive control.
- 4.2.5 A National Training sub group was set up at the beginning of the year consisting of representatives from human resources, safeguarding, training and development and social services. This group will oversee delivery of the 'groups' of training within the Act and ensure the Authority meets the time scales set by Welsh Government.
- 4.2.6 **National Indicators** – The Welsh Government have indicated that they will be producing a set of national indicators to report on domestic abuse. Upon receipt of the national indicators from Welsh Government, the Authority will ensure that this data collection will align with data currently collated by Calan DVS on behalf of BCBC on domestic abuse.
- 4.2.7 **VAWDASV Workplace Policy** – The Authority has a current Domestic Abuse workplace policy that contains information on services relating to the VAWDASV agenda. Welsh Government will advise if the current policy is sufficient moving forward. The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator is awaiting guidance from Welsh Government for a Wales-wide policy template to provide consistency to victims in the workplace across Wales and throughout the public sector.
- 4.2.8 **Consultations** – The Authority has responded to a number of consultations, guidance and other inquiries from Welsh Government on the various elements of

the Act which have been distributed to partners both internal and external for their views. These have included;

- Draft statutory guidance on Ask and Act (under section 15 of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act and section 60 of the Government of Wales Act 2006).
- Information and guidance on domestic abuse and sexual violence: Safeguarding older people (60+) in Wales.
- National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence – statutory guidance.
- Post-legislative Inquiry into the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 (Welsh Local Government Authority).
- National Strategy on VAWDASV – A framework for delivery 2016-2021.
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Topic Paper 8

4.2.9 **Regional Strategy** - there is a requirement under the Act that a local or regional strategy with Abertawe, Bro Morgannwg University Health Board is set in place by March 2018. Currently links have been built with regional partners and early stage meetings held as to how the Authority can potentially take this forward. Progress will depend on the outcome of these discussions.

### 4.3 Strategic Equality Plan

4.3.1 **To ensure VAWDASV is considered when undertaking and reviewing policies and strategies** – The domestic abuse co-ordinator has made recommendations for the inclusion of violence against women in the Strategic Equality Plan.

### 4.4 Raising awareness of VAWDASV and VAWDASV Act (Wales) 2015

4.4.1 **Meetings** - The domestic abuse coordinator continues to attend multi-agency meetings (such as Bridgend Equality Forum, MASH development meetings etc.) in order to raise the profile of the VAWDASV agenda on both a local and regional (Western Bay) basis.

4.4.2 **Events** – Calan DVS as the commissioned domestic abuse service participate in key events to raise the profile of the agenda, such as college fresher's week, International Women's Day, White Ribbon Campaign. There is an ongoing communication strategy for social media where relevant articles and advice are shared with the public and partners. Bridgend County Borough Council has official White Ribbon Town status and organises events, such as town centre mobile stands to publicise the Campaign and BCBC Status.

### 4.5 Safer Homes

4.5.1 **Target Hardening Project** – Cabinet on 1 September 2015, agreed grant funding for the works required to fit measures to increase security in the homes of victims of domestic abuse where they have private rented or home owner/occupier status, Registered Social Landlords applying security measures on behalf of victims residing in these properties. This, along with one-off Western Bay regional funding has enabled 107 households (June – December 2016) to remain within their family home.

### 4.6 Domestic Abuse One-stop-shop

4.6.1 **Assia Suite** the Authority has developed a one-stop-shop with third sector and statutory services working together to provide a wraparound service to victims of domestic abuse and their children – the Assia Suite, based at the Civic Centre. This service aims to be immediate, to ensure information sharing with partners and to ensure that service delivery becomes a seamless service, with the victim able to tell their story only once and then to have holistic support services tailored to their needs without being referred to a number of agencies and which also gives the victim the confidence to pursue that support.

#### 4.7 High Risk Crisis Intervention Service

4.7.1 **Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA)** – the Authority has implemented an IDVA service that is robust and resilient to meet the needs of high risk victims of domestic abuse and it meets the need of the area in line with Safe Lives IDVA caseload guidance. In addition, the service includes MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) co-ordination capacity and is based in the Assia Suite.

#### 4.8 Next stages

4.8.1 The Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2017/18 is currently being drafted (draft copy attached at Appendix 1) and will follow the format proposed by Welsh Government in accordance with VAWDASV. Welsh Government have therefore proposed that a Strategy should follow the 6 objectives of the Act

- Objective 1** Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the population of Bridgend County Borough Council
- Objective 2** Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong
- Objective 3** Increase focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety
- Objective 4** Make early intervention and prevention a priority
- Objective 5** Ensure relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors
- Objective 6** Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Bridgend County Borough

4.8.2 The Strategy 2017/18 will continue to develop the services currently within the 2016/17 strategy together with ensuring that new and enhanced local priorities are met. Particular focus will be placed upon ensuring the work for the National Training Framework is rolled out to all staff in order to meet the target of April 2018.

4.8.3 In addition, particular emphasis will also be given to working with partner organisations and working groups to promote the awareness of domestic abuse

issues. In particular, the Authority will be working with neighbouring Councils, Police and Health Board to ensure that a regional strategy is in place by the Welsh Government timescale of March 2018.

**5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.**

5.1 There is no effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

**6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 The VAWDASV 2016/17 was equality impact assessed whilst being drafted and there are no equality impact implications arising from this report.

**7. Financial Implications.**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report and the implementation of the 2017/18 Strategy will be met from existing resources

**8. Recommendation.**

8.1 The Committee is recommended to note and comment on the contents of this report.

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**10 January 2017**

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**Background documents**

None