

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE**

**22 MARCH 2018**

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

**DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE:  
UPDATE ON SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH.**

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet Equalities Committee of the issues faced by victims of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence in our communities, and to outline the support available.

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

The Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) is a statutory plan that impacts on the whole of the council. Within the SEP there are various strategic equality objectives that are linked to domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. The following Corporate Priority is also supported:

- Priority 2: Helping people to be more self-reliant.

**3. Background**

Since 2010, Cabinet Equalities Committee has been receiving regular reports and presentations from community representatives on topics relevant to equalities and diversity.

Domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence are collectively defined as:

**“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”**

This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

**Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour** is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. In the main, the impact on protected characteristic groups is as follows:

- **Women:** disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, with 1 in 4 women reporting. In the vast majority of cases, there exists the female victim male perpetrator dichotomy. Abuse in these cases is more severe and more frequent.
- **Men:** do not tend to report due to the stigma involved. The available data is therefore under-reported.
- **Disability:** disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as non-disabled women and are likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time with the injuries being more severe as a result of violence. In many cases, the abuser is the primary carer. It can be much more difficult for a disabled person experiencing domestic violence to protect themselves or access sources of help and support.
- **Ethnicity:** can involve one abuser, a whole family or a community. The data available is not accurate as incidences are under-reported. Language can be a barrier to reporting and to seeking support. There is a specific social context that oppresses Black Minority and Ethnic groups, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour-based violence.
- **Age:** older people can be victims of abuse as a result of withholding (or administering excess) medication, withholding care and the fear of other interventions in, for example, a nursing home.
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT):** issues within this group of people include a fear of being "outed" and a lack of LGBT specific services.

#### 4. Current situation / proposal

The council has developed the Assia Suite which is a "one stop shop" providing an integrated domestic abuse service. The Assia Suite is located at Civic Offices and provides a wide range of support services in relation to domestic abuse. The Assia Suite incorporates third sector provider, Calan DVS and ad-hoc Victim Focus that link in with statutory services such as, Housing and Social Services and also has strong links to the Community Safety Partnership.

The commissioned service provider, Calan DVS, deliver domestic abuse services to victims and children. By the end of March 2018 a perpetrator intervention will be in place.

We currently also provide a refuge for women, children and 'dependants'. We are

currently exploring a male refuge with Cardiff and the Vale local authorities.

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

The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules but is required to effectively implement the council's statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

Whilst no Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, this report provides the Committee with information which will positively assist in the delivery of the authority's equality duties. All services are offered in compliance with the public sector equality duty.

## **7. Financial Implications**

None in this report.

## **8. Recommendation**

That the Cabinet Equalities Committee notes the content of the report.

**Andrew Jolley**

**Corporate Director - Operational and Partnership Services**

**Date: 22 March 2018**

## **9. Contact officers**

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**Background papers:** None