

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2019

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DOMESTIC ABUSE – OLDER PEOPLE AND PERPETRATOR UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update as requested by the Cabinet Equalities Committee on domestic abuse and older people; and the perpetrator intervention (Choices) in Bridgend.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:-

1. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background.

3.1 The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 requires relevant authorities to work to improve the arrangements for the prevention; protection; and support of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

3.2 Bridgend provides a robust range of services for victims of domestic abuse in order to protect victims, prevent abuse and violence and support those affected by domestic abuse using a trauma-informed approach and to aid the recovery process.

3.3 Anybody can be a victim of domestic abuse irrespective of their age, sexuality, sex, (dis)ability, ethnicity, cultural or religious beliefs and nobody should be subjected to abuse and violence. It is further a violation of human rights and is an abhorrent and insidious crime that affects children and adults alike and will not be tolerated in Bridgend.

3.4 **Perpetrator** – 2017-2018, the Assia Suite supported 973 female victims of abuse (compared to 153 male victims). There are a number of theories why people become abusers such as, learned behaviour - witnessed abuse and violence in the home while growing up, power and control, ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). There would be no victims without perpetrators and it is recognized nationally and locally that to protect and assist victims a perpetrator intervention is paramount. Perpetrators are often serial in nature using abusive tactics in all their relationships which can result in multiple victims, multiple child victims with long-

lasting effects through society. It is recognized that in order to keep victims and children safe and to minimize the long term effects of living in situations of domestic abuse (ACE agenda) for children and victims, it is fundamental that the destructive behaviours of perpetrators are also addressed. In order to assist victims, perpetrators and children living within households where abuse and violence exists, a perpetrator intervention called 'Choices' is funded by the local authority. The Choices programme is delivered by Calan DVS (Domestic Violence Service).

3.5 The model is based on a male perpetrator and female victim model, The intervention programme in Bridgend is an accredited programme (respect accredited) with a number of different key officers. It is important to take a whole family approach to service delivery and as perpetrators are complex the safety of the victim and children need to be the primary focus. A woman's safety worker supports the victim during the intervention and up to 6 months after the intervention has ceased, while two facilitators deliver the programme over a 32 week period. It is a lengthy programme and perpetrators have to recognize their abusive behaviour and want to change it. Unfortunately not all are suitable for the intervention and 1:2:1 in depth assessments are undertaken over a five week period to ascertain suitability. If the intervention is not appropriate for the perpetrator then techniques to reduce harm are provided during the assessment process.

3.6 Statistics for the Choices Intervention (from July 2018 – present) – **Appendix 1** contains further information.

Commence date: July 2018-present		
Number of referrals received	26	Males Only
Number undertaking the intervention	11	
Number of children supported (of perpetrator and/or victim)	14	47 sessions – participating age range 5-16 years
Number of ex/partners supported	11	58 1-2-1 sessions

3.7 **Older people** – are a vulnerable group and violence and abuse occurring within this cohort is under-reported. Older people can have different vulnerability factors that are age-associated such as disability, health issues, mobility problems, etc. The perpetrator may also be the older persons care giver and administer medication or withdraw their care and medication. SafeLives recognizes this vulnerable cohort and further requires MARACs (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences) to monitor the numbers of older people entering the MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment) process. National MARAC data analysis on high risk MARAC victims highlights show victims aged 61+ are:

- 7 times more likely to experience abuse from an adult family member than those 60 and under.
- More likely to experience abuse from a current intimate partner than those 60 and under.
- Older victims (68%) are less likely to attempt to leave their perpetrator in the year before accessing help than those 60 and under (27%).

- Older victims are 3.5 times more likely than those below 60 to be living with the perpetrator after getting support.
- Older victims are significantly more likely to have a disability – for a third, this is physical (34%).

3.8

Profile of clients	60 and under	Over 60
Perpetrator is current partner	28%	40%
Male clients	4%	21%
Adult family member is the primary perpetrator	6%	44%
Multiple perpetrators	9%	7%
Attempted to leave the perpetrator	68%	27%
Average length of abuse	4 years	6.5 years
Physical abuse	69%	69%
Sexual abuse	25%	10%
Harassment and stalking	73%	57%
Jealous and controlling behaviours	83%	73%

Source: Safe Lives, 2019

3.9 Bridgend Data Snapshot

Older People and Domestic Abuse (60+)

Standard and Medium Risk	2017-2018 (Apr - Mar)	2018-2019 (Apr – Jan)		
Number of victims	64 45 female 19 male	69 52 female 17 male		
High Risk	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of victims	6	10	17	12

An older person is defined as over 60 years of age.

2016-2017 – victims aged 55+ was 23 – data collection methodology changed in 2017.

Further supporting information is contained within **Appendix 2** of this document.

- 3.10 Domestic abuse and older people is a priority for the ‘Older People’s Commissioner Wales’ along with Bridgend County Borough Council referring to the ‘Aging Well in Bridgend’ information platform for mature citizens.
(link: <http://www.ageingwellbridgend.co.uk/>).

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 In order to address the issue of older people and domestic abuse, the Community Safety Partnership undertakes domestic abuse awareness raising sessions on a weekly basis. This engagement work has been undertaken in urban, rural and valley locations – Garw Valley; Maesteg and Caerau, Nantymoel with older people in mind and how and where they are likely to access services and spaces, such as, the bus station in Bridgend town centre, during the day time in a variety of supermarkets, in Civic offices, YMCA in Porthcawl, slimming clubs in the evenings, Princess of Wales Hospital, Caerau Community Centre and Young at Heart (cancelled due to the snow but will be re-arranged) along with other intelligence-led community locations. Links are well established to the ‘Local Community Coordinators’.
- 4.2 To accommodate older people, the Assia Suite will undertake domestic abuse assessments and offer support to older victims in a location of their choice and one that is suitable to them during a time that also suits their needs.

Support can include:

- Support in the community
- Target hardening
- Police Watch/Cocoon Watch/property markers
- Personal alarms
- Identifying abuse –
financial/economic/emotional/psychological/sexual/physical
- Housing-related support including refuge
- Safety advice

This can be at a time when the perpetrator is not at home, at a day centre that they attend, GP or hospital appointment, for example. Assia Suite staff will collect the victim and bring them to a safe place or to Civic to provide them with support based on their needs and level of risk. The service is flexible in its approach to service delivery with the service user at the heart of the service. Equality is mainstreamed into the domestic abuse services, for example, to take into account the different needs of the older population and the experiences and difficulties they face due to their age, mobility and age-related illnesses. Should an older victim be engaged with Adult Services, support workers will work jointly to assist the victim.

- 4.3 The high risk IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates) will be an advocate for older victims through the criminal justice system and the Crown Prosecution Service will arrange transport to and from court upon request. This applies to any risk level and the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) is held in Cardiff every Monday.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 There will be no direct effect on the Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

6. The Equalities Impact Assessments

6.1 The work undertaken by this service is in line with the Authorities duties under the Equalities Act. If necessary, assessments will be undertaken on a case by case basis.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

7.1 The wellbeing goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievements of the wellbeing goals or objectives.

8. Financial Implications.

8.1 There are no financial implications identified as this is an information/update report.

9. Recommendation.

9.1 The Cabinet Equalities Committee notes the update in relation to the requested submission/update and progress made.

Mark Shephard

Interim Chief Executive – Chief Executive’s Directorate.

Date: 26 March 2019

10. Contact Officer:

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Background documents

Appendix 1 - Supporting document attached – perpetrator update from Calan DVS.

Appendix 2 - Supporting document attached – Safe Lives Older People.