

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES**  
**17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES**

**SUPPORT IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**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 and a cross cutting issue that impacts on the whole of the council. Within the SEP are various strategic equality objectives that are linked to domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence. Additionally, the following Corporate Priorities are supported:

- Priority 3: Working with children and families to tackle problems early;
- Priority 4: working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent;
- Priority 6: working together to make the best use of our resources.

**3. Background.**

- 3.1 Cabinet Equalities Committee receives regular reports and presentations on topic areas relevant to their remit. Community representatives present on relevant topics at meetings to achieve a broader overview of issues and wider engagement.

**4. Current situation / proposal.**

- 4.1 Domestic abuse is 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:

- 4.2 **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.
- 4.3 **Men:** do not tend to report due to the stigma involved. The available data, therefore is under reported.
- 4.4 **Disability:** Disabled women 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.
- 4.5 **Ethnicity:** more than one abuser which can involve 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.
- 4.6 **Age:** Older people can be victims of abuse as a result of the withholding (or administering excess) medication, withholding care and the fear of other interventions in, for example, a nursing home.
- 4.7 **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB & T):** issues within this group of people include a fear of being "outed" and a lack of LGB & T specific services.
- 4.8 The council has developed a "One Stop Shop" to provide an integrated Domestic Abuse Service. The "One Stop Shop" is located at Civic Offices and provides rational, integrated support on housing and social services provision with links to the Safety Partnership Integrated Domestic Abuse Service. The "One Stop Shop" incorporates agencies from the statutory and third sector including Calan DVS.

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

- 5.1 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.

**7. Financial Implications.**

None in this report.

**8. Recommendation.**

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this report.

**Sarah Kingsbury**

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**Date: 25 August 2015**

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**Background papers: None.**