

Item No. 16.	Classification: Open	Date: 18 October 2022	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to Recommendations from the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission Report: Domestic Abuse in Families	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Community Safety	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

I welcome the recommendations made in the health and social care scrutiny commission report: domestic abuse in families. Domestic abuse and violence against women and girls has been a council priority for a number of years. The last couple of years have been particularly challenging in this area with the complexities of the Covid pandemic; and enforced lockdowns making it more difficult for victims of domestic abuse to access help. We are now faced with a different crisis; increase in cost of living, which will impact the most vulnerable in society including those suffering from domestic abuse, who for financial reasons may now stay with their perpetrator rather than seeking help.

Abuse in all its forms is unacceptable. It affects all communities and has an incalculable impact on the lives of those individuals affected, their families and the wider community. Tackling violence against women and girls is therefore 'everybody's business'. Early intervention and prevention; working with families prior to point of crisis is key to our approach, identified as a priority area in our 5 year VAWG strategy (2019–2024). It is clear from the work identified by the scrutiny commission that good work is already being undertaken in this area by the council, working alongside statutory partners and the voluntary sector.

We are currently in the process of reviewing our current domestic abuse and violence against women and girls service offer with a view to developing a new service to be in place for July 2024. In addition the next 12 months will see the implementation of the new serious violence duty which requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including the development of a local strategy. The recommendations made by the scrutiny commission will be considered in the development our new VAWG service provision, and development of our new serious violence strategy.

I am confident with the priority focus given to VAWG by the council and other statutory partners that we have the tools to really make a change in this area and improve the lives of individuals and the community blighted by this issue. Building on the strong community foundations that we already have in place. I am confident that together we can make Southwark a safer place for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the cabinet notes the response to the Domestic Abuse in Families Scrutiny recommendations as set out in Table 1.
2. That the cabinet suggests that the commission invites the lead member back to the Commission to discuss this report, as well as follow up on previous reviews, and specifically the review completed in June 2019 by the Community Safety Scrutiny Commission on Violence Against Women and Girls.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The health and social care scrutiny commission report - Domestic Abuse in Families Scrutiny Review, was discussed at the cabinet meeting in June 2022 (agenda item 14).
4. 10 recommendations were made. This report sets out a response to each recommendation and details whether, when and how the recommendations will be taken forward.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The review put forward 10 recommendations under 3 themes. These are detailed in Table 1. below with the considered response.
6. Table 1. Response to Domestic Abuse in Families Scrutiny Recommendations

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people	
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
1. Extend work with Young people and families, including those who acting out under 16, and ensure this includes time and capacity to engage with partners.	<p>The council already commissions a number of services working with young people and families experiencing domestic abuse. This includes Yuva - service for young people using or experiencing violence in close relationships. At present the service works with 15 young people (11 to 18 years) per year. To extend their reach Yuva are currently developing an online parents programme. They are also looking to co-locate services at family and children’s centres within the borough.</p> <p>The Southwark Youth Justice Service (YJS) also works with children who</p>

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people	
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	<p>commit violence within the family against parents or siblings as either a prevention/early intervention case or where the police are prosecuting over 16's for domestic abuse. The YJS has recently obtained specialist input/training about child to parent violence, and with other colleagues from across children's services, will be developing an intervention response to this issue over the coming months. This will include engaging interested practitioners to become professional "champions" about implementing interventions with relevant families.</p> <p>In the short term consideration (via budget setting process) can be given to extending both the Yuva support offer and YJS training offer if additional funding is made available. Yuva service is currently delivered two days a week. If this were to be extended to three or four days this would require additional funding of between £10,000 to £20,000. For the YJS champions (4 to 8 individuals) the annual cost to ensure they remain up to date in terms of knowledge/practice would be in the region of £6,000.</p> <p>Longer term the council (Community Safety) are currently reviewing domestic abuse/VAWG provision for which this are will be considered in developing a new service to be in place for July 2024.</p>
Theme - Early focus on preventative work to prevent cycles of abuse, protect children and support mothers	
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
<p>2. Invest in Early Help, focusing on the first 1000 days in particular, to work to protect children at this developmental important moment.</p>	<p>Southwark LA are developing their Family Hubs and Start for Life programme with partners to improve outcomes for babies, children and families. The three principles of family hubs is access, connection and</p>

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	<p>relationship. Resources based within Southwark communities and local facilities to provide the right support at the earliest opportunity. Family Hubs are a way of delivering the Supporting Families vision of an effective early help system.</p> <p>Families with children under 5 already receive universal and targeted support in this area from the Children and Family Centres (CFC)s. There are strong established links between the Council’s Family Early Help (FEH) service and the commissioned CFCs. If a domestic abuse referral is received that does not meet the threshold for a Children’s Social Care assessment FEH and CFCs will work together to determine who is best placed to provide a whole family assessment, support and intervention.</p> <p>The Parenting team within FEH have begun to hold monthly drop in sessions for social workers and other key front line practitioners to promote parenting support and evidenced based group work as well as access to Reducing Parental Conflict online training. This online tool will be able assist practitioners in their interventions with parents including children and their families subject to statutory services.</p>
<p>3. Extend therapeutic support for children and adult victims/survivors.</p>	<p>Our current domestic abuse service offer includes child therapeutic support and adult survivor counselling offer. The child therapeutic service works with 20 children per year, 53 adults complete the counselling course per year.</p> <p>Short-term consideration can be given to extending these service(s) if additional funding is made available.</p>

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people	
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	<p>Longer term demand for these services and future provision will be reviewed as part of our VAWG recommissioning.</p>
<p>4. Support schools and the youth service to develop programmes that help young people to develop positive relationship skills and identify harmful behavior, in order to keep themselves and others safe.</p>	<p>Since September 2020 the delivery of Health Education and Relationships Education (primary schools) and Relationships and Sex Education (secondary schools) has been compulsory in all schools. The PSHE Association has provides a toolkit to assist delivery of PSHE for key stages 1 & 2 and 3 & 4.</p> <p>The Council (Community Safety) currently commission Bede House to deliver the SHER (Safe. Healthy, Equal Relationships) programme to secondary schools and youth groups (approximately 220 young people per year). This also comes with a toolkit available to all schools. This is funded through the Mayor’s Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) for which funding is confirmed until March 2025</p> <p>The FEH service promote a ‘team around the school’ (TAS) approach with schools (primary and secondary) in the borough. All schools were offered a multi-agency Team Around the School (TAS) meeting in 2021/22 academic year. 108 took place in 60% of schools (25% secondaries, 70% primaries). On average 386 vulnerable/at risk children were discussed each term making use of partnership resources to improve attendance, attainment and keeping children safe and in education.</p> <p>A group of multi-disciplinary specialists are working together in the Southwark secondary Alternative</p>

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	<p>Provision setting (SILs) for two academic years until September, 2024. This AP taskforce team are DfE funded focusing on reducing truancy, addressing harmful behaviours, preventing involvement in serious violence, keeping safe and improving mental health and well-being.</p> <p>The DfE have also funded a SAFE (Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed) taskforce which is group of Southwark secondary schools who have been invited to work together with other multi-agency structures, LA colleagues and local experts to support young people at risk of serious violence and exploitation and re-engage them in their education.</p> <p>The youth service provide open access youth provision for young people aged 11-19. One strand of the work they deliver is around building healthy relationships, workers work with young people to deliver this. In addition 21 voluntary and community sector providers are currently commissioned to deliver a range of open access and targeted provision, which includes incorporating building healthy relationships into their programmes. This includes targeted projects such as Proud to be Me, who work with young women, and Metro who provide support services to young people from the LGBTQ+ community.</p> <p>The Southwark Young Advisors assist the council to engage with young people at a peer level on a number of issues. This includes positive relationships. Earlier in the year in relation to our women’s safety work, they delivered a number of workshops, webinars, podcasts, mentoring to young people (total of</p>

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<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	<p>1,428). This included a video about street harassment. This activity was funded by the Home Office Safer Streets Three Fund.</p> <p>Southwark YJS continues to deliver its knife crime awareness programme at 3 secondary schools each term, assisting participants to develop ways of being safe which do not involve their carrying or using weapons. This intervention has been running for nearly 5 years and has been positively evaluated by Middlesex University. Funding from the Young Londoners Fund for this initiative will be ending shortly.</p> <p>Officers will continue to develop initiatives and identify funding opportunities for delivery in this area.</p>
Theme – Work with perpetrators and fathers	
<i>Recommendation - Council</i>	<i>Response</i>
5. Ensure that statutory services have the same expectations of fathers as mothers and they are held to the same standard of accountability.	Council officers work hard to ensure fairness of approach, based on the individual circumstances of the family that they are working with. It is recognised that more often than not the principal carer role falls to the mother. Where practical and circumstances allow (subject to safety planning), shared accountability is encouraged and put in place by officers.
6. Provide more support to women to develop autonomy and agency over safety.	Alongside the formal support that domestic abuse survivors are offered when engaging with our commissioned domestic abuse service, service users are also encouraged to access group work and peer mentoring programmes. This is a series of structured workshops and service user led support groups aimed at improving understanding of domestic and sexual abuse, providing longer term practical and emotional

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	<p>support to build resilience and confidence. This support helps survivors to develop more autonomy and agency, giving survivors the ‘tools’ to take more control of their situation and increased two way interaction in their engagement with services.</p> <p>FEH service works within a FAMILY model framework; a strength and evidenced based approach enabling children and families to create their own goals, and along with others agree what interventions and support would be helpful to engage. The whole approach is collaborative and aims to not just change the existing presenting problems, but also to coach families to understand and manage future issues themselves more successfully.</p>
<p>7. Commission courses and soft engagement programmes aimed at boys, men and fathers in particular, which promotes the importance of being a father, creating a safe environment for mothers and children, and which enables better conflict resolution and relationship skills . To enable maximum reach the Commission recommends that these are rolled out in Universal services as well as targeted services</p>	<p>Over the last few years council services have increased and expanded the service offer in this area, and although the majority are for targeted services, council officers will review opportunities for universal delivery.</p> <p>CFC offer a wide range of universal and universal plus parenting drop-ins and play activity programmes for all parents; with some specific sessions encouraging positive play and reading activities between fathers and children.</p> <p>Our Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) hub trains parents to deliver Being a Parent Together programmes for couples where parental conflict is a concern.</p> <p>A fathers group work programme is already in place, facilitated by a male</p>

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	<p>parenting practitioner from the parenting team in FEH. This programme addresses parental conflict and impact of conflict on children. The YJS is building links with this group to assist young men on the YJS caseload develop healthy approaches to becoming an adult male and becoming a father.</p> <p>Links are also being developed between the fathers group and the Councils commissioned domestic abuse perpetrator programme. In circumstances whereby a perpetrator has failed to engage with the perpetrator programme, but then engaged with the fathers programme, there have been some positive examples where the dynamics of the fathers group has enabled the perpetrator to develop insight and subsequently participate with the perpetrator programme.</p> <p>The council currently grant funds (via Common Purpose grant) the organisation Future Men to work with young fathers (up to the age of 25); the primary focus being on initiatives that will increase their involvement in their children's lives, focusing on particular phases of fatherhood.</p>
<p>8. Consider Implementing the DRIVE programme locally</p>	<p>The council currently commissions a perpetrator programme as part of our main domestic abuse service offer. This is a 26 week group programme.</p> <p>This service offer is being reviewed as part of our VAWG recommissioning, for a new service to be in place from July 2024. This includes a review of other perpetrator approaches including the DRIVE programme.</p>

Theme – Domestic abuse in families and preventative work with children and young people	
<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
<i>Recommendation – Safeguarding Board</i>	<i>Response</i>
<p>9. Increase opportunities for partnership communication between stakeholders to promote connectivity of services.</p>	<p>In April 2022 the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) which has the statutory responsibility for reducing crime and disorder including domestic abuse was removed from the governance of the Safeguarding Adults Board to be a standalone group in its own right. As part of this process, a review of the partnership membership and structure was undertaken. This also included a review of delivery groups to support the delivery of the themed partnership priority work areas. The new structure includes a VAWG Strategic Group which will report to the CSP.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this new structure will increase opportunities for partnership communication between stakeholders to promote connectivity of services.</p> <p>In relation to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership and the Adult's Safeguarding Board. Domestic abuse remains a joint priority the boards will continue their work in this area, which last year included a multi-agency thematic review into inter-familial violence.</p>
<p>10. Pay special attention in the partnership to the development of preventative work and follow up community work with perpetrators</p>	<p>As part of the refresh of the CSP and implementation of the new VAWG strategic group this will include a review of thematic priorities and formation of task and finish groups to deliver. Prevention and work with perpetrators will be considered for inclusion.</p> <p>These areas are already identified as priorities in the Council's VAWG Strategy for which the current service offer will be reviewed as part of our</p>

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<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Response</i>
	VAWG service recommissioning,

Policy framework implications

7. The new Domestic Abuse Act came in to force in 2021. Key measures include:
 - A new statutory definition of domestic abuse which includes economic abuse and coercive control and defines children as victims
 - Strengthened responses to perpetrators through the introduction of new civil orders
 - Establishment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner in Law
 - A duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities (the GLA in London) to provide support to domestic abuse survivors in safe accommodation.

8. In July 2021, the government published The Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. The strategy reiterated the framework of prevention, provision of services, partnership working and perpetrators as the model to tackle VAWG.

9. In 2018, The Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) published its strategic vision in “A Safer City for Woman and Girls”. The London Tackling Violence against Woman and Girls Strategy, 2018 – 2021 which detailed a framework for London to be at the global forefront of tackling VAWG. The consultation process for the new Strategy from 2022 onwards is currently underway.

10. Southwark’s five year VAWG strategy was approved by cabinet in July 2019. An associated five year delivery plan is being implemented which includes a commitment to review and redesign our local VAWG service offer.

11. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 contains a Serious Violence Duty on public bodies. It requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their strategy.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

12. An equalities analysis was undertaken in January 2022 as part of the developmental work for the recommissioning of VAWG services. The equality analysis demonstrates that the policy shows no potential for discrimination.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

13. Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, due regard has been given to the Council's decision making processes to the need to:
 - a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct.
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it
14. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The Public Sector Equality Duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to (a) above.
15. Officers have taken steps to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by the Equality Act 2010 as set out in the Community Impact Statement section above in particular:
 - In 2016/17, a Joint Service Needs Assessment (JSNA) was undertaken by Public Health of the wider health needs of victims/survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Needs analysis was also conducted to inform the development of the VAWG Strategy 2019-2024.
 - In the development of a new VAWG service an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was undertaken in January 2022. The recommendations within this report have been judged to have no or a very small impact on local people and communities.

Health impact statement

16. Domestic abuse and other VAWG related crimes have an enormous impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of survivors and their children. Both current service provision and future proposals are focussed on providing trauma-informed support with the aim of reducing short, medium and long-term harm and aiding long-term recovery.
17. Health impact has been considered and included in the revised EQIA of January 2022.

Climate change implications

18. None applicable

Resource implications

19. There will be additional short-term resource implications in the implementation of some of the recommendations, and these will be costed by the lead organisation/department.
20. Longer term there are plans to develop and procure a new transformational VAWG service to be in place from 1 July 2024 are underway. This will take into consideration the recommendations contained within this report. The new service will be subject to a separate report for consideration by cabinet and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

Legal implications

21. There are no legal implications arising from this report. Plans to develop and procure a new transformational VAWG service to be in place from 1 July 2024 are underway. This will take into consideration the recommendations contained within this report. The new service will be subject to a separate report for consideration by cabinet and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

Financial implications

22. There will be additional short-term financial implications in the implementation of some of the recommendations, and these will be costed by the lead organisation/department.
23. Longer term there are plans to develop and procure a new transformational VAWG service to be in place from 1 July 2024 are underway. This will take into consideration the recommendations contained within this report. The new service will be subject to a separate report for consideration by cabinet and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

Consultation

24. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission in undertaking their review under took widespread consultation and evidence gathering from council services, other statutory services, and community groups.
25. A comprehensive consultation is already underway in relation to developing a new VAWG service.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

26. Not applicable

Director of Law and Governance

27. Not applicable

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

28. Not applicable

Other officers

29. Not applicable

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet agenda 14 June 2022	160 Tooley Street London SE12QH	Paula.thornton@southwark.gov.uk
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=302&MIId=7337&Ver=4 (Item 14)		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Community Safety	
Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure	
Report Author	Sharon Ogden, Safer Communities Team Manager	
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Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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