

Update on the Recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 02/03/2021 concerning the Domestic Abuse Review Group report, 5 April 2022

Response provided by Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford, Councillor Louise Upton

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Council formally adopts the definition of ‘domestic abuse’ included within the Domestic Abuse Bill, and reviews its usage of the phrase ‘domestic violence’ in its policies and literature to ensure correct usage.	Agree	The definition is very wordy so we have adopted a Thames Valley version which includes everything but is easier to read. Part of the DAHA accreditation is to check wording and definitions in any relevant documents; the new definition will be used.
2) That the Council requests from the County Council early monitoring data from the Family Solutions Plus domestic abuse perpetrator monitoring programme and includes that information within its six month review of progress made on agreed recommendations from this report.	Agree	The County have extended the Elmore Community Services contract for another year to provide domestic abuse element of the Family Solutions Plus model.
3) That the Council engages with Thames Valley Police and provides appropriate support for the development of a universal domestic abuse perpetrator programme.	In part	The Oxfordshire DA Strategy is currently being drafted and is out for consultation. The Needs Assessment has included a review of perpetrator programmes across the country to determine which one will suit Oxfordshire. Further consideration is whether or not the new contract for the domestic abuse services in Oxfordshire, from 2023 will include a community based perpetrator programme
4) That the Council works with partners for the development of additional group work programmes for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and that these programmes be	Agree	Complete

<p>embedded within the broader multi-agency framework for managing domestic abuse.</p>		
<p>5) That the Council reviews the recommendations and outcomes of the Barking and Dagenham Domestic Abuse Commission, and as part of the Review Group's six-month progress update reports on the steps it has taken to adopt and implement learning and actions from the Commission into the Council's own activity.</p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	
<p>6) That the Council works with strategic partners to review and, if necessary, strengthen the connection between existing lived-experience groups and the Council's services.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The County have commissioned a specialist who has established a lived experience group to help inform strategy and operational response in Oxfordshire. SAFE will also be feeding into this by raising the voices for children.</p>
<p>7) That the Council trains the staff at its hubs to recognise domestic abuse and know how to respond, to know who to speak to in the event of a disclosure, and to be able to signpost appropriately to support services.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Some of the Locality Hub staff have already been trained. There are also 3 Domestic Abuse Champions working in the Locality Hubs. Further training will be provided in the coming year.</p>
<p>8) That the Council makes available training and resources to Councillors to enable them to recognise domestic abuse and know how to respond, to know who to speak to in the event of a disclosure, and to be able to signpost appropriately to support services.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This has not been actioned yet due to capacity but will take place over the next year</p>
<p>9) That the Council continues to work with ODAS and the County Council to explore the suitability of its own current or future housing stock being recommissioned as a 'place of safety'.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Complete</p>

10) That the Council contacts the County Council with its concerns over the safety of vulnerable women from predatory behaviour by men at the Bullington Road Young Mothers project.	Agree	Complete
11) That the Council seeks that steps are taken to ensure that houses designated as 'places of safety' do not become well-known as such and a target for predatory behaviour.	In part	Complete
12) That the Council refreshes its allocations scheme to change references from 'domestic violence' to 'domestic abuse', and that when it is adopted as law, the definition of domestic abuse as included within the Domestic Abuse Bill be included as an 'exceptional circumstance' in relation to housing prioritisation.	In part	One of the priority areas for the DAHA Accreditation is policies. All relevant policies will be reviewed for the accreditation and will include the statutory definition.
13) That the Council increases the priority for move-on accommodation of women who have been facing domestic abuse for as long as the availability of refuge provision remains historically further beyond supply.	Not Agreed	
14) That in the absence of other mitigating factors, the Council will pursue a policy of seeking to remove a perpetrator from the home in situations where a perpetrator is adjudged to be a high risk to the victim.	Not Agreed	
15) That the Council reviews the strength of the clause(s) regarding anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse in Council tenancies and provides a model paragraph for inclusion in tenancies let via housing associations/private landlords with the aim to make it easier to evict	Not Agreed	

tenants who perpetrate domestic abuse.		
16) That the Council seeks DAHA accreditation for its housing services	Agree	Oxford City Council will be undertaking the accreditation. We are currently working on the governance structure for the DAHA accreditation.
17) That the Council, once the work of its Domestic Abuse Specialist in mapping pathways and experiences of victims who engage with the Council's work is complete, engages closely with specialist domestic abuse support providers to improve the outcomes and experience of victims in their interaction with the Council.	Agree	A priority for the DAHA accreditation is partnership working. The Domestic Abuse Housing Link workers will be working closely with specialist services and ensuring there is a robust pathway.
18) That the Council develops a clear domestic abuse pathway for managing housing of domestic abuse victims	Agree	This will be part of the DAHA Accreditation
19) That the Council takes proactive steps to ensure appropriate cultural support is available to individuals moving out of Oxford.	Not Agreed	
20) That the Council includes within its budget provision for the cost of the Sanctuary Scheme for the duration of the next Medium Term Financial Plan, rather than reconfirming its funding year on year.	In part	The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 makes it a statutory duty to provide safe accommodation, this includes the Sanctuary Scheme.

21)That the Council runs a mapping and awareness-raising exercise of the opportunities in Oxford for ESOL classes, aimed particularly at its community centres users and grant recipients.	In part	Complete
22)That the Council raises with the BAED Worlds Group, including the County Council representative, the existence of 14 previously trained community interpreters, with a view to investigating whether and how their services may be used to improve access for non-native English speakers to domestic-abuse related support.	Agree	Complete
23)That the Leader writes to the minister at MCHLG to highlight the impact that the huge cuts to English languages classes have on domestic abuse victims.	Agree	Not actioned
24)That the Council makes a public statement confirming that it will not share immigration status information with the Home Office when individuals come forward for support with domestic abuse, and that it takes steps to publicise this amongst relevant community groups locally.	Agree	This has already happened and can be stated again when there is relevant communications sent out
25)That the Council, in the development of networks to support homeless people with no recourse to public funds, ensures that the remit is extended to ensure the specific needs of those made homeless from fleeing domestic abuse are incorporated.	Agree	Complete
26)That the Council contacts Manchester City Council to understand the overall cost of providing support for those with no recourse to public funds who are in destitution.	Not Agreed	

27) That the Council investigates how Slough Borough Council offer support to those with no recourse to public funds.	Not Agreed	
28) That the Council works with relevant local and national organisations to lobby government for an exemption to allow those experiencing domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds to access public support.	Not Agreed	
29) That the Council investigates the legalities and cost of implementing a Flexible Funding scheme, with a view to one being established if practicable and legal.	In part	Complete
30) That the Council, as part of its upcoming grant funding review, increases the funding available to domestic abuse services, particularly around BAME access to support.	In part	Due to cuts in grants and increase in demand this is not possible at the moments. However the current funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence has been ring fenced for 3 years.
31) That the Council is proactive in providing support to those organisations which provide domestic-abuse related activities but struggle to attract external funding to identify and successfully apply for external grant funding.	Agree	Community Services will be having a monthly drop in for small organisations and community groups to have assistance with applying for grants. They will have access to other funding streams both locally and nationally.
32) That the Council continues to support grant funding to 'by and for' organisations, but that for domestic abuse-related applications it is mindful of the need to situate 'by and for' support within the wider overall framework for supporting domestic abuse victims.	In part	Complete
33) That the Council includes within its grant funding application forms a question along the lines of "Does this funding intend to support positive family relationships? If so, how?"	Agree	

<p>34)That the Council identifies and requires levels of organisational awareness and capacity around domestic abuse prevention and support which is reasonable relative to the size of organisation, size of grant sought and the purpose of the grant.</p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>This will be considered within the DAHA accreditation process</p>
<p>35)That the Council includes in its guidance for grant applicants links to appropriate resources through which organisations may support positive family relationships.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	
<p>36)That the Council extends its definition of social value in procurement to include opportunities for companies to support positive family relationships.</p>	<p>In part</p>	
<p>37)That the Council uses the existing draft domestic abuse policy as its template, to be updated, for its to-be-developed Domestic Abuse in the Workplace Policy.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Part of the DAHA Accreditation is to ensure there are DA policies in place, both for staff and customers.</p>
<p>38)That the Council gives its to-be-adopted policy on domestic abuse a clearer title, such as 'Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy'</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be decided when the relevant policy is completed</p>
<p>39)That the Council includes a section within its domestic abuse policy to provide guidance to staff if, in the course of their job, they suspect or know that someone is a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be included in the policy</p>
<p>40)That the Council at its next review of its constitution gives consideration to the practicability of including an explicit expectation that Councillors will not perpetrate domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	

41) That the Council as shareholder of its wholly-owned companies implements domestic abuse policies in those companies	In part	This is on-going
42) That the Council, as part of its People Strategy, initiates a project to provide enhanced awareness, resources, and capability to recognise and support victims of domestic abuse, and engages with safeguarding and domestic abuse specialists to identify good practice and best resources.	Agree	Complete
43) That the Council improves the detail of the support it provides staff facing domestic abuse on the staff intranet.	Agree	Complete
44) That the Council reviews the adequacy of the internal training it provides for all staff, line managers and elected members on domestic abuse	In part	DA training has been developed and delivered to teams in the council. More training is being organised. All delegates are asked for feedback. The feedback from the first cohort has been overwhelmingly positive
45) That the Council makes domestic abuse awareness and management training mandatory for all those in the Council with line-management responsibility.	In part	We are working with the County Council on this.
46) That the Council reviews its HR processes around sickness, lateness, time off and performance management to ensure they are capable of supporting staff involved in either side of domestic abuse.	Agree	This will be part of the DAHA accreditation
47) That the Council includes within domestic abuse awareness and management training for managers training on identifying the appropriate level of training required for the staff in their team	Not Agreed	

<p>regarding domestic abuse.</p>		
<p>48)That Council training provided to staff and elected members on domestic abuse considers, at a level relevant to type of training, training which is sensitive to specific cultural contexts and working with a diverse range of communities, and culturally-specific issues which can increase vulnerability amongst specific minority community members.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be part of the DAHA Accreditation</p>

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