

REPORT TO: Housing and Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10th June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Domestic Abuse Service

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members of the Board on strategic and service developments in delivering the Council's duties on domestic abuse.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) The Board comment on delivery and the forward programme.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Strategy

The boroughs Domestic Abuse strategy expired in 2024, the document has been renewed to the end of 2026 and is appended to the report (appendix one). The four strategic priorities remain the same: -

- Act before someone is harmed.
- Identify & stop harmful behaviours.
- Increase safety for those at risk.
- Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs.

- 3.2 The strategy adopts and focusses on the Safelives whole system approach: -

- Whole person
- Whole family
- Whole community
- Whole society
- Whole picture

- 3.3 The strategy also sets out a whole housing approach to accord with the requirements set out in the Domestic Abuse Act and the governance

arrangements to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board; the board approved the strategy on 14th April 2025.

3.4 Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, updated in 2024 sets out core requirements to: -

- Promote awareness.
- Protect & support victims.
- Hold perpetrators to account.
- Transform the justice response.
- Improve performance.

3.5 The act requires a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is in place, a needs assessment is completed every three years, a strategy is in place (detailed in 3.1) and appropriate accommodation offers to support victims and families and report annually to the Secretary of State.

3.6 Halton's need assessment requires updating, this will be completed by the end of 2025 to inform strategy development in 2026 to support the emerging strategy from 2026 onwards.

3.7 Halton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board has reset to ensure delivery on the statutory requirements and strategy priorities. The membership of the board has been reviewed ensuring senior level representation from across Halton's partner organisations to provide a whole system approach. The board have agreed to develop their delivery plan and sub-structure to deliver on the boards strategic priorities across prevent, prepare, pursue and protect. The next steps are mobilising the sub-groups with terms of reference and develop the work programmes to report into the board, to be established and embedded by autumn.

3.8 A priority of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is to review Halton's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference framework (MARAC); multi-agency Chair training was delivered in April, further training on MARAC will be delivered in the summer months leading to the development of a MARAC steering group.

3.9 The accommodation needs for domestic abuse victims and families have been fed into the current housing needs assessment work to inform the boroughs future housing strategy.

3.10 A piece of work to consider supported accommodation across vulnerable cohorts in Halton has progressed and capital monies secured to invest in two of the borough's assets. This will enhance the supported and step-down offer to aid cohort needs; building resilience and empower independence. The work programme is being

developed, and update reports will be provided as this becomes established.

3.11 White Ribbon

Members are aware; the Council supported a motion to protect women and girls in October 2018 which included accreditation to White Ribbon: -

<https://councillors.halton.gov.uk/documents/g8904/Printed%20minutes%2018th-Oct-2023%2018.30%20Council.pdf?T=1>

3.12 The Board received an update on White Ribbon in February 24, SAF 16: -

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Safer Policy and Performance Board, 04/02/2025 18:30](#)

3.13 A White Ribbon steering group is established, firmly embedded and meets every two months. The steering group has signed off the action plan (appendix two) on 7th May and submitted to White Ribbon to complete the last stage of accreditation.

3.14 Harm Reduction

The Police & Crime Commissioners Office have secured additional resources for Halton to deliver a harm reduction initiative that is being mobilised by the summer. The initiative is focussed on breaking the cycle of abuse and aims to: -

- Establish a pilot project to be delivered in Halton which looks to develop a multi-disciplinary support service which will implement a contextual safeguarding approach to address Domestic Abuse.
- Develop a behaviour change programme which provides immediate and longer-term support to both Perpetrators and victims of Domestic Abuse.
- Ensure that the behaviour change programme is suitable for perpetrators at all risk levels and is able to offer support and actively engage the victim and whole family.
- Reduce reoffending, make victims and children safer and support families to stay together, where appropriate.

3.15 The initiative will work across the wider system with health, housing, criminal justice agencies, drug & alcohol services and local authority departments engaged with commissioned services on targeted delivery. Review and evaluation will be conducted to understand impacts and outcomes and will be included in future reports.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Ensuring the Council is meeting statutory requirements set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (updated 2024) and Halton's Domestic Abuse Strategy which accords with the statutory obligations.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None to report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The impacts of domestic abuse are far reaching significantly impacting the health system and wellbeing of those effected by Domestic Abuse. The Iris work described in the report will directly support GP Surgery staff to have increased awareness and offer support to victims at earlier points in the victim journey.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The service has created additional roles and secured additional resources to roll out training and awareness of Domestic Abuse supporting collaborative learning across Halton's system in better understanding Domestic Abuse and the impacts.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Domestic Abuse impacts children and young people's life chances. The awareness raising aims to change behaviour thus improving outcomes for future generations of children and young people.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Domestic abuse occurs across all cohorts in the community however, this is increased for deprived communities and vulnerable persons. Anyone becoming a victim of domestic abuse are in need hence, the services are supporting victims and families recover from trauma and navigate through criminal justice, court arrangements and resettlement.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The service works with commissioned providers on accommodation and will be the work on the borough's assets will include an energy efficient approach.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Halton experiences high risk, high harm, high volume domestic abuse which impacts neighbourhoods and communities. Measures to raise awareness and tackle domestic abuse are pivotal in striving to build strong resilient communities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Failure to adequately respond to domestic abuse victim needs and statutory requirements would contribute to unsafe environments and increased levels of harm.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 None at present.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The refurbishment of the Council assets will consider sustainable methods energy efficiency.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’