

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 14 March 2019**

Time: **10.00 am**

Place: **The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet

Membership

Chairperson Councillor JG Lester, Leader of the Council
Vice-Chairperson Councillor NE Shaw, Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor H Bramer
Councillor BA Durkin
Councillor DG Harlow
Councillor PD Price
Councillor P Rone
Councillor EJ Swinglehurst

Agenda

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.

3. MINUTES

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2019.

QUESTIONS DURING THE 'PURDAH' PERIOD

In the run up to the local government elections on 2 May 2019, known as the "purdah" period, questions may be rejected if they affect support for a political party or candidate, or if the response could not be given without breaching the guidance on publicity during this sensitive period.

Guidance is available on the Herefordshire Council website at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/16017/pre-election_guidance_purdah_2018.pdf

4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive questions from members of the public.

Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Friday 8 March 2019.

Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.

Please see <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved> for information on how to submit a question.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions from councillors.

Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Friday 8 March 2019.

Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.

6. DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2019-2022

To approve the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-2022 and governance arrangements for implementation of the strategy.

Pages

To Follow

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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The Chairperson or an attendee at the meeting must take the signing in sheet so it can be checked when everyone is at the assembly point.

Guide to Cabinet

The Executive or Cabinet of the Herefordshire Council consists of a Leader and Deputy Leader and six other Cabinet Members each with their own individual programme area responsibilities. The current Cabinet membership is:

Councillor JG Lester (Leader) (Conservative)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Councillor NE Shaw (Deputy Leader) (Conservative)	Finance and Corporate Services
Councillor H Bramer (Conservative)	Contracts and Assets
Councillor BA Durkin (Conservative)	Transport and Regulatory Services
Councillor DG Harlow (Conservative)	Economy and Communications
Councillor PD Price (Conservative)	Infrastructure
Councillor P Rone (Conservative)	Health and Wellbeing
Councillor E Swinglehurst (Conservative)	Children and Families

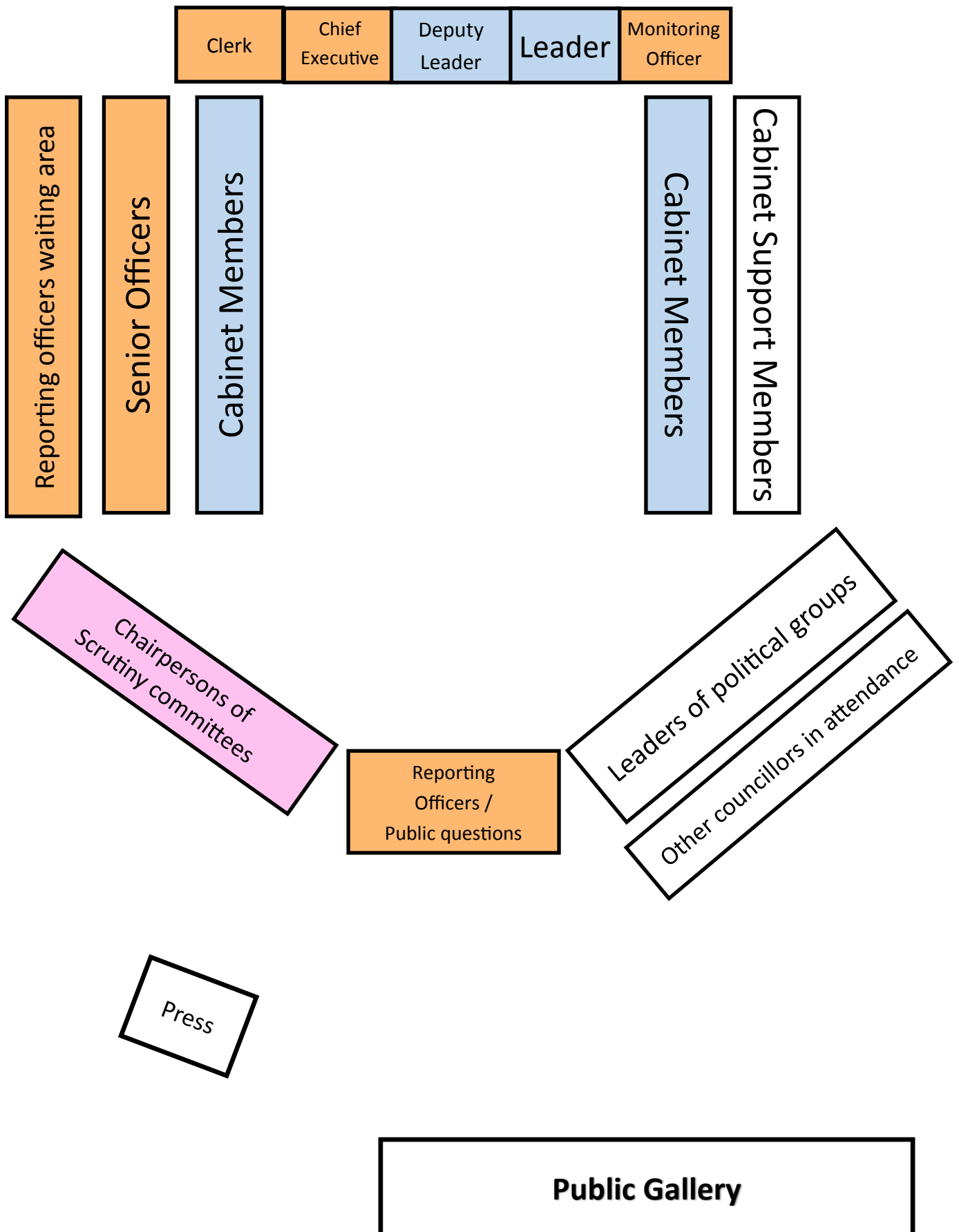
The Cabinet's roles are:

- To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, it will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;
- To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies;
- To identify priorities and recommend them to Council;
- To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;
- To give guidance in relation to: policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day to day implementation issues;
- To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives;
- To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews.

Who attends cabinet meetings?

On the next page you will find a layout plan of the room showing who is sitting where. Coloured nameplates are used which correspond to the colours on the plan as follows:

Pale blue	Members of the cabinet, including the leader of the council and deputy leader – these are the decision makers, only members of the cabinet can vote on recommendations put to the meeting.
Orange	Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
Pink	Chairpersons of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
White	Political group leaders – attend to present the views of their political group on the item under discussion
	Other councillors may also attend as observers but are not entitled to take part in the discussion.





Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 14 March 2019
Title of report:	Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2022
Report by:	Cabinet member health and wellbeing

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to:

- the strategic nature of the decision, and
- the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

All wards(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To approve the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-2022 and governance arrangements for implementation of the strategy.

Domestic abuse is a complex and pervasive issue which cannot be addressed fully by any single organisation. The overall purpose of the strategy is to provide direction to partner organisations on how they can work collaboratively to prevent, identify and respond to domestic abuse.

The strategy builds upon learning from the former 2014-2017 strategy adopted in 2014. It includes a shared vision, priorities and outcomes developed collaboratively with partner organisations and service users, updated national and local context and clarified governance arrangements to ensure delivery of the strategy.

The vision of the strategy is that domestic abuse is unacceptable to people and communities in Herefordshire.

There are four priorities under the shared vision:

- Priority 1 – Prevention: The aim is that individuals and communities understand domestic abuse and the harm it causes and have the skills to build, and a culture that supports, healthy relationships.
- Priority 2 – Provision of service: The aim is that when domestic abuse is disclosed, identified or reported, those affected by domestic abuse can access timely and effective information, advice and support.
- Priority 3 – Partnership working: The aim is to work together across organisations in an efficient and effective way to prevent, and protect those experiencing, domestic abuse, ensuring that organisational barriers do not have impact on those affected by domestic abuse.
- Priority 4 – Pursuing perpetrators: The aim is that the tools available are used effectively and consistently and those experiencing domestic abuse see the police and criminal and civil legal systems as working to protect them and their children.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will be responsible for strategic delivery and leadership of the strategy. The CSP will task the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Delivery Group (DADG) to develop and deliver annual action plans to implement the strategy. The action plans will need to take account of plans, opportunities and resources available within each partner organisation. Successful delivery of the action plans, and subsequently the strategy, will depend on the continued commitment and engagement from partner organisations.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the Multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-2022 at appendix 1 be approved;
- (b) the response at paragraph 36 of the report to a recommendation made by the Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is agreed.

Alternative options

1. Not to adopt a Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire. This option is not recommended. Domestic abuse is a challenge which cuts across many organisations, sectors and professional roles. A shared strategic approach which provides clear priorities, roles, responsibilities and pathways is therefore crucial to ensure domestic abuse can be prevented and identified, and that those affected and their children receive safe and timely interventions at the earliest opportunity.

Key considerations

2. Domestic violence and abuse can occur within any familial, partner or ex-partner relationship from any culture. The government defines domestic abuse as occurring between individuals aged 16 years or over, while the adverse impact upon children who

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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have witnessed domestic abuse is becoming increasingly understood. These factors are captured within the scope of the revised strategy.

3. The human cost of domestic abuse is devastating to those affected and their children, with significant impact upon their safety and mental and physical wellbeing. Domestic abuse often remains undisclosed for many reasons, including fear or repercussions from the perpetrator, concerns about rejection by family and friends, reliance upon the perpetrator for financial stability or concerns over custody or access to the children. Under-reporting therefore means the true cost to resources across organisations is unknown but estimated to be significant both in the short and long term.
4. In Herefordshire 3,071 victims made disclosures to the police in the year ending March 2017, with approximately two thirds being female (these counts are not unique individuals, but rather include multiple counts of repeat individuals). As a significant amount of domestic abuse is known to go unreported to organisations, a more accurate prevalence can be estimated by applying national, self-reported prevalence rates to the Herefordshire population. Through this method, it is estimated that in 2016/17 there were 5,900 victims aged 16-59 in the county. The true figure is likely to be higher.
5. The number of children exposed to domestic abuse in Herefordshire has been estimated to be 300-400 children per month (some of these will be repeat exposures for the same children). Around 850-900 children are known to be in the households of those accessing domestic abuse support services each year, including around 250-300 children in households of high risk cases discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference each year
6. All people affected by domestic abuse are vulnerable in some way. However, there are people who can be connected to one or more groups who are harder to reach due to additional vulnerabilities or cultural challenges who are identified within the strategy. These groups are:
 - Men
 - Older people
 - People with physical or mental health illness or learning disabilities
 - People from the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBT) community
 - People from ethnic minority groups
 - People living in rural communities

The strategy specifies that all organisations involved in tackling domestic abuse need to consider people within these hard to reach groups when planning how to prevent, identify and respond to domestic abuse.

7. Our aim is to make Herefordshire a place where domestic abuse does not take place. Successful delivery of the strategy will require strong leadership, commitment and engagement from partner organisations. No organisation can fully tackle domestic abuse alone. A collaborative response to preventing, identifying and responding to domestic abuse in all of its forms is required through a shared vision and priorities.

8. The strategy has been developed primarily through engagement with stakeholders through workshops and more specific engagement activity. The strategy has also been informed by research, including the law, local and national policy and guidance, data and research analysis, review of comparative strategies and learning from the former strategy as set out in appendix 2.
9. The research has been presented to stakeholders through engagement discussions, stimulating views on good work and areas for improvement in Herefordshire. Stakeholders included people who have used the local domestic abuse support service and professionals from partner organisations including West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, providers of health services, housing, social care and probation.
10. The feedback provided has been grouped into four broad themes to inform the priorities. Objectives and outcomes under the four priorities are further broken down in a table as appendix 1 to the strategy to ensure all feedback has been captured. This approach ensured views from stakeholders were captured effectively and could subsequently be translated into actions pertinent to some or all organisations, while ensuring all organisations kept a shared strategic vision and priorities.
11. The strategy sets the direction and vision for tackling domestic abuse in Herefordshire over the next four years. Strategic leadership and monitoring of delivery will be overseen at a partnership level by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which will have a specific operational group to develop and put into place annual action plans.
12. The action plans will need to take account of plans, opportunities and resources available within each partner organisation, as well as identifying data available as a benchmark to measure success of actions. The annual action plans are intended to be working documents which are subject to regular review and adaptation while ensuring accountability. Successful delivery of the action plans will depend upon a continued commitment and engagement from several partner organisations, including the allocation of professionals' time and a review of, and willingness to change, practices.
13. It is not possible to set an overall effectiveness measure for the strategy itself as this will depend on the annual work progress, plans and resources available within each partner organisation. Additionally, measures are specific to actions; there is no uniform approach which can be adopted. For example, domestic abuse is under-reported; a successful awareness campaign would result in increased reporting, therefore an increase in numbers would be a positive indicator. However, other prevention measures may require a reduction in numbers to denote success.
14. Appendix 2 sets out learning from the former strategy. The 2019-22 strategy has retained the previous four key priorities in recognition that they are golden threads to tackling domestic abuse and remain relevant given feedback during engagement and current research. However, aside from updated data and research, a key change in the strategy is the use of a specific plan to ensure delivery and accountability, which is aligned to the priorities and outcomes.

Community impact

15. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, the long-term nature of many of Herefordshire Council's responsibilities means that we should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the council's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. The council is committed to promoting a positive working culture

that accepts and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review.

16. The council's corporate plan includes a commitment to enabling people to live safe, healthy and independent lives. A collaborative approach with other public and emergency service organisations with a shared vision and priorities is therefore key to ensuring those affected by domestic abuse and their children are safe, identified at the earliest possibility, offered good quality advice and support and enabled to build their resilience to avoid the cycle of abuse being perpetuated.
17. The strategy will have a positive impact upon the role of the council as a 'corporate parent' to 'looked after children'. The strategy provides a focus on early identification of children exposed to domestic abuse and interventions which reduce the impact.
18. The strategy will support the achievement of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Adults Wellbeing Plan 2017-20 and the Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 by:
 - enabling people affected by domestic abuse to lead fulfilling lives, to be emotionally and physically healthy and to feel safe and secure through prevention, education and services which enable them to cope and manage the risks;
 - offering children and families affected by domestic abuse access to early help and the troubled families programme;
 - ensuring intelligence is shared promptly between agencies where children and their families are in need of safeguarding.

Equality duty

19. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
20. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Domestic abuse is experienced by people across all parts of the population including those with protected characteristics.
21. Research for the strategy included the domestic abuse needs assessment undertaken in 2013 and subsequently updated in 2017. The assessment included specific demographic data around those affected by domestic abuse and perpetrators of abuse in

Herefordshire. The strategy considers how partner organisations can respond to the needs of those affected by domestic abuse with protected characteristics based upon the specific demography of Herefordshire, including people in hard to reach groups as detailed in paragraph 6.

Resource implications

22. Delivery of the strategy will require officer time and will be delivered within existing resources. The annual action plans developed by the DADG will need to take account of plans, opportunities and resources available within each partner organisation.

Legal implications

23. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 councils have a statutory duty to work with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder in their local area. Domestic abuse constitutes a significant proportion of all recorded crime in the UK.
24. Any service strategy should take account of the needs of different groups of the community in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
25. There are no other significant legal implications identified from this report.

Risk management

26. Implementing the strategy relies upon continued commitment from stakeholders to engage and implement the strategy through the DADG and within their own organisations. This could be impacted by conflicting demands placed on resources.
Mitigation: Engagement with stakeholders in developing the strategy has secured a commitment to implementing the priorities and action plan. A pragmatic approach has been taken to minimise demand upon resources.

Consultees

27. Engagement with stakeholders has formed the basis of the strategy. Views captured during engagement have been taken into account and themes developed in terms of the priorities and outcomes.
28. People who had accessed the local domestic abuse service provided insight into their experiences of universal and specific domestic abuse services. Ten service users attended; the feedback was used to inform stakeholder workshops, commissioning and the strategy. Emerging themes included concerns about communication between organisations, lack of confidence in the criminal justice system and the importance of the domestic abuse support service.
29. Two stakeholder workshops, including the police, probation, fire and rescue, housing, social care and health services were completed in July and October 2018. This directly informed the shared vision, the four draft priorities and the plan detailed in appendix 1 of the strategy.
30. Professionals from West Mercia Women's Aid were asked for their insight into successes and where improvements could be made across organisations under the four priorities. Their feedback was used to inform the strategy detail. Feedback included a general sense of good local partnership working but challenges around raising awareness amongst professionals and also locating suitable housing.

31. A workshop for joint Scrutiny Committee Members was completed in July 2018. This provided background into the national and local context, invited comments on the commissioned service and the approach to developing the strategy. A further workshop for all Members was completed in October 2018. At this workshop, Members were given the opportunity to discuss and feed into the identified priorities. Specific comments were received around the importance of education for professionals and children, creating the environment for disclosure of abuse and challenges and opportunities related to technology.
32. Political groups were consulted in August 2018 on the both the proposed recommissioning of a domestic abuse support service and the outline of the strategy. No comments were received with regard to the strategy.
33. Eight West Mercia Women's Aid service users attending a programme of support and parents attending groups at children's centres in Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross provided feedback on the priorities within the draft strategy in December 2018. Their feedback corroborated the approach in the strategy and informed the detail under the objectives. Emerging themes included concerns about the role of children's services, difficulties in identifying abusive relationships when the abuse isn't physical and professionals not fully understanding the impact of controlling behaviour by perpetrators.
34. Professionals attending the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference were consulted in December 2018. Their comments included a need for a commitment to delivering the strategy, strategic leadership across all organisations and the requirement for those in positions of leadership to communicate and influence change at an operational level.
35. The Community Safety Partnership was consulted in January 2019. Comments were received about strengthening the language used in the shared vision and some suggested amendments to wording in other sections of the strategy were offered. The draft strategy has been amended accordingly.
36. Members reviewed the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy at the Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in January 2019. Members from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee were also in attendance. The recommendations were:
 - a. Specific consideration will be given to communicating details of the domestic abuse support service in rural areas.
Response: It is proposed that the domestic abuse support service, recommissioned from 1 April 2019, includes the recommendation within its communications plan. It is also proposed that more broadly, the Domestic Abuse Delivery Group will consider how to reach those in rural areas through culture change and joined-up media campaigns.
 - b. An update be provided to committee members on progress with the implementation of the strategy during 2019/20.
Response: It is proposed that an update is provided to committee members in March 2020 to allow time for the Domestic Abuse Delivery Group to develop and commence implementation of annual plans.
37. Political groups were further consulted on the draft strategy in February 2019. It's Our County responded to state that they broadly support the strategy but have concerns about partner organisations' capacity to engage. Specifically:

- National Probation Service and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company - Concerns were raised around their effectiveness and ability to monitor offenders effectively since the changes to a two-tier model.
- West Mercia Youth Offending Service – Concerns were raised around the drive to keep young people out of the criminal justice system, leading to a situation where parents are becoming afraid of their children.

Response: The comments relate to operational working and effectiveness of these organisations and therefore fall outside the scope of the strategy. All of the named organisations have made a commitment to delivering the strategy.

Additionally It's Our County made comments about strengthening the connection between domestic abuse and mental health earlier on within the strategy.

Response: The wording in the foreword section of the strategy has been amended to include the impact of domestic abuse on mental wellbeing.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-2022

Appendix 2: Learning from the former Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

None identified.

Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22

Add organisations who are signed up to the strategy

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1. Foreword

Domestic abuse has a huge impact on society and is one of the most pervasive of all social problems. It causes pain and suffering for those affected and their family, and has a significant cost to public services and the local community. It is often a hidden crime, with people experiencing domestic abuse reluctant to report their situation and friends, neighbours or family hesitant to get involved.

People who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse may be affected in a number of ways, including significant and lasting impact on physical and mental health, homelessness, loss of income or work and isolation from families and friends. Children can experience both short and long term cognitive, behavioural and emotional effects as a result of witnessing domestic abuse. The definition of domestic abuse includes controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as physical and sexual abuse, and these negative impacts on adults and children may occur with any type of abuse. The breadth of the impact on individuals and families results in needs arising across a wide-range of public services, from police and health care through to education, housing support and criminal justice. We recognise that a collaborative approach to developing and delivering the priorities is fundamental to preventing and responding to domestic abuse in the most effective way.

This multi-agency strategy and accompanying live action plan builds on learning from the 2014-17 strategy. The documents have been developed through multi agency stakeholder workshops and engagement with those who have been affected by domestic abuse. Agencies need to work together to ensure a robust approach to tackling domestic abuse. This strategy aims to bring a strategic direction to the work to tackle domestic abuse and to make Herefordshire a place where domestic abuse is totally unacceptable. Successful delivery will require strong leadership, commitment and engagement from partner organisations.

Partner agencies who have adopted this strategy and will be instrumental to its delivery are:

- Herefordshire Council
- West Mercia Police
- Wye Valley NHS Trust
- 2gether Foundation NHS Trust
- NHS Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Taurus Healthcare
- West Mercia Women's Aid
- West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre
- National Probation Service
- West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company
- West Mercia Youth Offending Service

Further partner agencies who support the strategy and will be instrumental to its delivery are:

- West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

[DN: Work to gain official sign up from partner agencies is ongoing. Only those agencies who have confirmed adoption or support of the strategy will be listed at the time of

publication. The exact wording for the statement 'Further agencies who ...' may be altered if requested by partner agencies ahead of publication].

2. The Shared Vision

The shared vision is that domestic abuse is unacceptable to people and communities in Herefordshire.

Domestic abuse and the harm it causes will be prevented as people and communities:

- Understand and have the skills to establish healthy relationships
- Recognise and reject all forms of domestic abuse
- Seek, are offered and receive effective help and support early

The long-term desirable outcome is a reduction in the incidence of domestic abuse. Such an outcome is however difficult to quantify and long term, likely beyond the duration of this strategy.

The objectives and outcomes within this strategy will ultimately contribute to the overall impact of reducing the number of domestic abuse incidences in Herefordshire.

Two nearer term outcomes of importance are:

- Increase in the number of domestic abuse cases that are identified
- Reduction in the harm caused by domestic abuse, through early intervention and access to support

3. The Priorities

There are four priorities under the shared vision:

- Priority 1 – Prevention
- Priority 2 – Provision of service
- Priority 3 – Partnership working
- Priority 4 – Pursuing perpetrators

3.1. Priority 1 – Prevention

The aim is that individuals and communities understand domestic abuse and the harm it causes and have the skills to build, and a culture that supports, healthy relationships. Preventing domestic abuse is key to delivery of our vision.

Objectives:

Partner agencies will:

- Use data effectively to create a shared understanding of domestic abuse in Herefordshire.
- Work collaboratively across organisations to support culture-change in the population to be one that recognises and rejects all forms of domestic abuse.
- Create an environment throughout universal services and others that supports early disclosure of domestic abuse by those affected and provides a high-quality and consistent initial response.
- Increase awareness amongst those who work with people with additional vulnerabilities to ensure domestic abuse is identified with an effective initial response.
- Support young people, children and families to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and understand that harm it causes as well as the positive impact of disclosing abuse.

Outcomes for Priority 1:

- Increased recognition by the population of all forms of domestic abuse and the harm it causes to children.
- Increased understanding by professionals of the signs, symptoms and appropriate response to domestic abuse.
- Decrease in the impact of domestic abuse on children, through reduction in the number of children affected, improved early identification and reduction in repeat incidents affecting children.

3.2. Priority 2 - Provision of Service

The aim is that when domestic abuse is disclosed, identified or reported, those affected by domestic abuse can access timely and effective information, advice and support. This support should meet the needs of the affected individual and any children, seeing them as a unit to be supported.

Objectives:

Partner agencies will:

- Ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse can easily and safely contact and access specialist domestic abuse services, including those with additional barriers
- Ensure that children exposed to domestic abuse are supported in the best possible way
- Ensure that housing advice, emergency and other appropriate housing solutions are available to those experiencing domestic abuse, and where appropriate support those affected by domestic abuse and their children to remain in their homes safely.

Outcomes for Priority 2:

- Those affected by domestic abuse and their families are supported to improve their resilience and to understand healthy relationships.
- Those affected by domestic abuse and their families are safe from harm.

3.3. Priority 3 - Partnership Working

Domestic abuse has impact across multiple agencies who therefore each play a key role. These include primary and secondary health care, police, early years, children's social services, adult's social services, schools, courts and probation. There is no single place that a person might disclose domestic abuse and no single agency that can provide a full response. Close partnership working is essential, with a shared vision, strong leadership and clear pathways. **The aim is to work together across organisations in an efficient and effective way to prevent, and protect those experiencing, domestic abuse, ensuring that organisational barriers do not have impact on those affected by domestic abuse.**

Objectives:

Partner agencies will:

- Ensure there is strong leadership across all organisations on domestic abuse.
- Work collaboratively across organisations to create clear pathways for supporting those experiencing domestic abuse.
- Ensure that front line staff (for example, staff who work in primary care, emergency department, children's centres, children's social care, adult social care, fire service)
 - i) have a good understanding of domestic abuse;
 - ii) see it as their role and responsibility to reduce the harm of domestic abuse; and
 - iii) understand the tools/resources available to them to do so.

Outcomes for Priority 3:

- Improved shared understanding of the whole system response to domestic abuse.
- Reduction in cross organisation barriers to an effective response to domestic abuse.

3.4. Priority 4 – Pursuing perpetrators

There are many tools available to the police and court system to prevent and deter perpetrators from domestic abuse. **The aim is that the tools available are used effectively and consistently and those experiencing domestic abuse see the police and criminal and civil legal systems as working to protect them and their children.**

Objectives:

Partner agencies will:

- Support those experiencing domestic abuse to use the various tools available to prevent further offending (e.g. Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, Clare's Law), Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders).
- Use the criminal justice system to its full effect to deter offending and bring perpetrators to justice.

- Make available effective, evidence-based programmes to help change perpetrator behaviour, where perpetrators have the capacity to change.

Outcomes for Priority 4:

- Reduction in re-offending by perpetrators
- Victims of domestic abuse are aware of the range of prevention tools available and supported to access them

The vision, priorities and objectives have been developed through working with and gaining the views of professionals, stakeholders and groups from across Herefordshire, and those who have experienced domestic abuse.

Appendix 1 gives further detail on each of these objectives. These details capture the input from stakeholders in developing the strategy and will be used as the basis for action planning.

4. Delivering the Strategy

4.1. Strategic Leadership and Delivery

Domestic abuse is not an issue which can be meaningfully and sustainably tackled by any single organisation working alone. To most effectively prevent and respond to domestic abuse, strong leadership is required across the system and within organisations to prioritise this work. Organisations (including providers and commissioners, specialist and non-specialist services) must work in partnership, both at the strategic and operational level.

Key components of the strategic leadership and delivery of this strategy are:

- Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will be responsible for strategic leadership and the delivery of this strategy
- CSP will task the Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Delivery Group (previously called the Domestic Violence and Abuse Group) to develop and implement annual detailed action plans, building on the objectives to implement this strategy
- CSP will retain strategic oversight and provide leadership to the delivery group
- The DA Delivery Group will report to the CSP on a quarterly basis
- The DA Delivery Group will deliver and monitor the effectiveness of identified actions.

The CSP and Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Delivery Group are multi-agency groups.

4.2. Action Planning

The multi-agency Domestic Abuse Delivery Group will develop a live action plan for each year of the strategy, identifying the most important objectives and actions for that year. This action plan will build upon the objectives and further detail included in this strategy. These

objectives have been developed with the input of partners working across the system and from discussions with those affected by domestic abuse and key groups. The action plan will be agreed with the CSP. Action plans will need to take account of plans, opportunities and resources available within each partner organisation.

Successful delivery of the action plans will depend upon a continued commitment and engagement from partner organisations, including the allocation of professionals' time and a review of, and willingness to change, practices.

4.3. Measuring impact

The key outcomes are defined as:

- Increase in the number of domestic abuse cases that are identified
- Reduction in the harm caused by domestic abuse, through early intervention and access to support

These are outcomes which are difficult to accurately and truly quantify and are inter-related. For example, domestic abuse is under-reported; a successful awareness campaign would result in increased reporting, therefore an increase in numbers would be a positive indicator. However, other prevention measures may require a reduction in numbers to denote success.

It is important that caution is applied in interpreting the available data on domestic abuse; such data can only be used as a marker of the levels of support provided and action taken by the relevant organisations; it cannot be used to measure the true extent or patterns in domestic abuse.

The action plan will specify for each action the outputs and logic by which these outputs are expected to impact on one or more of the above outcomes.

5. Definition of domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic abuse is given in Box 1. This strategy adopts this definition, which recognises that abuse takes many forms including coercive and controlling behaviour and that abuse can occur not just between partners and ex-partners but includes other family relationships. This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence (HBV), female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that domestic abuse is not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Herefordshire's response to HBV, FGM and forced marriage is co-ordinated under the domestic abuse agenda by the Community Safety Partnership.

Box 1. UK Cross Government Definition of Domestic Abuse, revised 2012:

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
- economic
- emotional

Controlling behaviour can involve 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.

6. Domestic Abuse in Herefordshire

6.1. Domestic abuse incidence and prevalence

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime and many incidents go unreported. Using data from different sources enables a fuller picture to be understood, including reported crime, self-reported histories and service use data.

In the year ending March 2017, West Mercia police recorded 3,071 victims in Herefordshire: 2,024 (66%) females and 1,047 (34%) males (these counts are not unique victims, but rather include multiple counts of repeat victims). Many incidents are known to not be reported to the police.

A more accurate prevalence can be estimated by applying national, self-reported prevalence rates to Herefordshire population. Through this method, it was estimated that in 2016/17 there were 5,900 victims aged 16-59 in the county; nearly double the number of victims recorded by the police.¹

¹ DRAFT Domestic Violence and Abuse: Evaluation of the local response in Herefordshire, 2017, Herefordshire Council

Key facts from the Crime Survey for England & Wales, year ending March 2018²:

- 7.9 per cent of females aged 16-59 and 4.2 per cent of males aged 16-59 experienced domestic abuse during the last year in England and Wales.
- Since the age of 16 year, 28.9% of women and 13.2% of men experienced domestic abuse at some point.
- Partner abuse is most common form of domestic abuse.

In Herefordshire, over a six year period (2011/12-2016/17) there were five domestic homicides. In England and Wales, over the last three years of available data there have been a total of 400 domestic homicides (average 133 per year), representing 25% of homicides of over 16 year olds.³ The majority of victims were female (73%, 293). 82% of female victims of domestic homicides were killed by a partner or ex-partner and 18% by a family member, whilst for males 42% were killed by a partner or ex-partner and 58% by a family member. Although domestic homicide reviews can be conducted for deaths by suicide where there are circumstances that raise concern, these deaths are not captured in the above data. It has been estimated that there are approximately 200 deaths by suicide for women a year in the UK.⁴

The number of children exposed to domestic abuse in Herefordshire has been estimated to be 300-400 children per month (some of these will be repeat exposures for the same children). Around 850-900 children are known to be in the households of those accessing domestic abuse support services each year, including around 250-300 children in households of high risk cases discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference each year.⁵

Local data suggests that the number of reported incidents is increasing over time, as also seen nationally. This is likely to reflect an increase in reporting rather than incidents, and indeed national survey data suggests a very slightly decreasing trend in incidence.

Evidence suggests that anyone is vulnerable to domestic abuse. There are however certain circumstances known to increase the risk of domestic abuse. These include pregnancy, mental health conditions, alcohol and substance misuse, low income, separation.⁶

² Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusefindingsfromthecrimesurveyforenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

³ Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Office for National Statistics.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

⁴ Walby S. The cost of domestic abuse. 2004.

http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/55255/1/cost_of_dv_report_sept04.pdf

⁵ DRAFT Domestic Violence and Abuse: Evaluation of the local response in Herefordshire, 2017, Herefordshire Council

⁶ SafeLives. Who are the victims of domestic abuse? <http://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/who-are-victims-domestic-abuse>

Of all age groups, the Crime Survey of England and Wales found that in 2016/17, 16 to 19 year olds were the most likely to say they had experienced domestic abuse in the last year (11% women, 7% men). Herefordshire has an older age structure than England and Wales as a whole, meaning that Herefordshire is expected to also have an older age profile of potential domestic abuse victims compared with nationally. Older people experiencing abuse are considered a hidden group. Barriers faced by older people include carer relationships, abuse being hidden behind other physical and mental health conditions, services typically being set up with younger clients in mind, older people being less likely to call 999, cultural or generational attitudes towards marriage and family life, and a lack of awareness among some professionals.⁷

Herefordshire is a rural county which brings additional barriers for those experiencing domestic abuse, including recognising abuse, asking for help, accessing support and fleeing the abusive relationship.⁸ Domestic abuse in rural communities is no less prevalent but can be less visible. Women living in rural areas have been found to particularly value the importance of health practitioners, especially GPs, in providing confidential and safe services for women compared to women living in urban areas. Such women have been found to express concern about the confidential nature of services they received in their community, not echoed by women living in urban areas.⁹

These data suggest that key issues for Herefordshire include:

- Recognition that domestic abuse is under-reported and this might be even more so in certain population groups and due to rurality which is likely to have a big impact in Herefordshire
- Whilst young people are most likely to experience domestic abuse, the demographics of Herefordshire mean there will be a high number of older people affected by domestic abuse
- Many children experience domestic abuse (see impact section)
- There are key vulnerable populations in Herefordshire who might find it harder to recognise or escape abuse, including, traveller communities, rural communities older adults (e.g. dementia)

⁷ SafeLives. Guidance for multi-agency forums: older people.

http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/NSP%20Guidance%20Older%20People%20FINAL_0.pdf

⁸ SafeLives Herefordshire MARAC review, 2018

⁹ McCarry M and Williamson E. Violence against women in rural and urban areas.

https://www.thewi.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/49874/vawruralandurbanareas.pdf

Groups with Additional Vulnerabilities in Herefordshire

All people affected by domestic abuse are vulnerable in some way. However, there are certain groups of people who are harder to reach due to additional vulnerabilities or cultural challenges:

- There are fewer known cases of men reporting domestic abuse than women. 1.7% of high risk cases discussed by MARAC were male, whilst the expected proportion is 4-10%. There are very few men accessing the local domestic abuse support service provided by West Mercia Women's Aid.
- Older people are less likely to make disclosures of domestic abuse, further exacerbated by health conditions such as dementia or physical disability. People in such circumstances are more likely to be isolated and reliant upon their partner or family for their care, while the demands upon their carer can cause additional pressures and a shift in the dynamic of their relationship.
- Similarly, people with physical or mental health illness or learning disabilities can be additionally vulnerable to domestic abuse due to isolation or a reliance upon their family or partner as their carer.
- People from the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBT) community are less likely to report domestic abuse. Local data provided by West Mercia Women's Aid shows low numbers of people in lesbian, gay or bi-sexual relationships accessing the service and similarly lower than expected numbers of LGBT cases are considered in MARAC (<1% of all high risk cases) than would be expected (≥5%). The West Mercia and Warwickshire Police Draft Domestic Abuse Threat Assessment 2017 reports for couples in a same sex relationship, females accounted for 7% of reported offences and males for 8%. This would indicate that proportionately, those in same sex relationships are not accessing domestic abuse support services.
- People from ethnic minority groups may be reluctant to report abuse due to fear of isolation or repercussions, or due to a lack of understanding about domestic abuse, UK law and the support available. Key communities to consider in Herefordshire include the Eastern European and Traveller populations. People affected by domestic abuse in both these communities might face additional challenges which make it harder to identify abuse for both the person affected and agencies, and more difficult to leave. For example, lack of trust in police and other professionals, being ostracised from their own community if women leave a marriage, traditional established roles for men and women, lack of culturally-appropriate refuge accommodation
- People living in rural communities may face additional challenges to accessing services, or have concerns about their information being shared with others in their community should they make a disclosure.

A new approach is required across organisations to ensure people with additional vulnerabilities and those who are harder to reach are given special consideration. They must be enabled and encouraged to access services, and the system must be prepared to respond to their individual needs and vulnerabilities.

6.2. Impact of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is devastating to those affected and their families.

For the person directly affected the impact can be physical and mental.¹⁰ Physically there can be short term injuries and long-term physical health problems for example, asthma, bladder and kidney infections, cardiovascular disease and reproductive health problems have all been associated with domestic abuse. Mental health issues are extremely common (40% of high risk people affected by domestic abuse reported mental health issues and 16% reported having considered or attempted suicide). Psychological problems include anxiety, depression, suicidal behaviour, low self-esteem, lack of ability to trust others, flashbacks, sleep disturbances, and emotional detachment.

Children exposed to violence in the home may suffer a range of severe and lasting effects. Evidence ¹¹ suggests that:

- Children who grow up in a violent home are more likely to be victims of child abuse. Even where a child does not suffer direct abuse, the impact of violence in the home can be devastating and long-term.
- The stress caused by being exposed to violence in the home can harm the development of the brain and impair cognitive and sensory growth.
- Children who are exposed to violence in the home may have difficulty learning and limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behaviour, suffer from depression or severe anxiety, excessive irritability, sleep problems, emotional distress, fear of being alone, immature behaviour, and problems with toilet training and language development.
- Children in the earliest years of life are particularly vulnerable: studies show that domestic violence is more prevalent in homes with younger children than those with older children.
- Several studies also reveal that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to be affected by violence as adults – either as victims or perpetrators.
- There is also evidence that children try to prevent the violence, get outside help or protect the victim.

In addition to the impact on those experiencing domestic abuse and their families, domestic abuse also has a large impact on services. Data from children's services suggests that domestic abuse is a factor in approximately 50% of vulnerable children cases in

¹⁰ SafeLives. How widespread is domestic abuse and what is the impact? <http://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/how-widespread-domestic-abuse-and-what-impact#physical> impact

¹¹ UNICEF. Behind Closed Doors: the impact of domestic violence on children, 2006
<https://www.unicef.org/media/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>

Herefordshire.¹² Furthermore when there are children in the household, the majority witness the violence that is occurring and in about half of all domestic violence situations, the children are also being directly abused themselves. Police data shows that domestic violence accounts for between 16% and 25% of recorded violent crime and 10% of emergency calls.

It is also known that those experiencing and perpetrating domestic abuse often experience multiple issues e.g. alcohol and/or substance misuse, mental health issues. In Herefordshire, 31% of domestic violence crimes had alcohol identified as an issue and 5% had drugs identified as an issue (February 2014).

The importance of identifying, and effectively supporting those affected by, domestic abuse at the earliest possible opportunity is highlighted by the severity of its impact. Universal services, such as GPs, schools, health visitors, midwives, domiciliary care, residential care, carer support, have a key role to play in this.

6.3. Preventing domestic abuse

Primary prevention of domestic abuse is key. This means preventing abuse before it happens. There are several broad categories of interventions that work at primary prevention level. These include¹³:

- Early childhood and family-based approaches: not only, as described above, does witnessing abuse have a direct impact on child development, but it is in early childhood that children learn a range of skills and attitudes. Skills such as problem-solving, emotional management, and social skills, alongside attitudes to gender roles, relationships and acceptability of aggression and violence, form the basis of future relationships. Children learn much of this from the behaviour of people around them. Positive parenting and safe and supportive home environments are therefore crucial to pro-social behaviour and healthy relationships.
- School-based approaches: school based programmes to prevent abuse should be part of broader community based prevention strategies. Evidence suggests that most effective programmes are those that aim to change attitudes and norms, rather than provide information, and should address both boys and girls.
- Interventions to reduce alcohol and substance misuse: alcohol and drug use are a situational factor that contribute to the severity of abuse, or a coping mechanism for ongoing abuse, rather than being the primary cause. Alcohol harm reduction strategies, although not addressing the underlying cause, can still lead to improvements in preventing abuse.

¹² Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership. Domestic violence and abuse needs assessment. 2013

¹³ World Health Organization. Primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence: Background paper for WHO expert meeting May 2–3, 2007
https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/IPV-SV.pdf

- Public information and awareness campaigns: such campaigns are a common approach to preventing domestic abuse, to try to break the silence and influence attitudes and social norms. Communications strategies based on a social marketing framework are more likely to be effective in changing individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and social norms.
- Community-based approaches: such approaches include interventions targeted at subgroups of the population (such as group education for people at risk) and comprehensive community-wide mobilisation interventions. Comprehensive programmes are designed to effect social change by creating an enabling environment for changing individual attitudes and behaviour. This approach requires multiple components, often including participatory education or training, public awareness campaigns, and social marketing techniques. These approaches can be particularly challenging as they rely on long-term, participatory engagement with high-quality facilitation and are most effective where there is community ownership.
- Structural and policy approaches: working towards strengthening gender equality can have fundamental impact on domestic abuse whilst improving criminal justice system responses is a key part of a comprehensive approach.

This overview, based on international research, outlines the range of activities required across the system to effectively prevent domestic abuse and the importance of the wider work of organisations, such as Herefordshire Council. This strategy and the identified priorities include primary prevention strategies, alongside early identification and harm-reduction after domestic abuse incidents have taken place.

6.4. Understanding the needs and views of those experiencing domestic abuse

As part of developing this strategy, we sought the views of those who have experienced, or continue to experience, domestic abuse to provide valuable insight into their journey. We also sought the views of parents with young children, various professional working closely with those who have experienced domestic abuse.

The key themes that have emerged from our conversations include:

- Recognition of abuse: People understand that domestic abuse is not just violence, however people affected by domestic abuse found it difficult to identify whether things they were experiencing or witnessing constituted abuse or were just typical relationship issues.
“When should alarm bells ring and who do you talk to, to check it out?”
- Fear of losing children: There was a deep fear of children’s social services or intervention into family matters. This was driven by the concern that children will be taken away or custody issues. Perpetrators often use children as leverage to exert power and control and persuade someone to stay in the abusive relationship.
- Crisis point: The majority of those affected waited until things reached crisis point and the police or social services became involved before they sought help.

- Cycle of domestic abuse: many (but not all) of those affected by domestic abuse reported coming from abusive families, and had experienced multiple abusive relationships.
- Feeling that no-one is on their side: those affected reported that as a parent, once you have been identified as a victim, you are continually seen as the bad guy by the authorities who are checking up on your parenting skills; by the police who don't believe you unless there's hard evidence (and perpetrators are usually very good persuaders); by their families who think you should keep the family together; and by the criminal justice system which fails victims with perpetrators who receive a conviction getting more lenient sentences for physically assaulting a member of their family than they would receive if they had attacked a stranger.
- Housing concerns: Property rights and tenancies are used as another manipulation tool.
- Impact on children: The impact of domestic abuse on children, whilst the parent affected by domestic abuse was with them, was not recognised – with the parent feeling they could protect the child(ren) from harm. People affected by domestic abuse reported concern about the impact on their children who remained living with their abuser.
- Organisations could work better together: reports of organisations continuing to work in a fragmented way, leading to confusion and conflicting information.

6.5. Challenges in addressing domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is often a hidden experience, with those affected fearful of repercussions such as reprisals from their partner, loss of their children and loss of home being deterrents from reporting the abuse (as highlighted above). This is further exacerbated by low self-esteem and lack of control which results from domestic abuse. The abuse itself therefore directly affects the ability of the person affected to identify and address the situation.

For the system, challenges arise from cross organisational barriers and different risks and focus of the agencies involved. For example, and simplistically, children's services focusing on the risk to children, police and probation focusing on the risk from the perpetrator, specialist support services focussing on the risk to the person affected by domestic abuse. Whilst each is a valid angle with which to view the situation, it takes all angles to form a comprehensive picture from a family-centred view.

Men affected by domestic abuse, whilst fewer in number, are arguably less well supported by the system. There are not for example, designated local refuge facilities and local support programmes.

As outlined above (see Box "Groups with additional vulnerabilities in Herefordshire"), certain groups, such as people with dementia or learning disabilities, can be disproportionately affected by domestic abuse and face additional barriers to access support and services.

Technology offers both a means to help those affected by domestic abuse seek information and support, but also provides perpetrators with more ways to control, coerce and threaten. Research undertaken by SafeLives found half of those affected by domestic abuse were monitored online or with technology, through trackers, apps or internet blockers. This included controlling social media interactions, monitoring locations and for those who tried to leave, tracking them through technology. Many had been traced, either through social apps such as Facebook, through dedicated tracking apps, or through online bank statements and phone bills. In extreme cases, tracking devices were placed in cars and cameras were placed around the house. The research found that despite the risks, victims often remained online and technology offers a key source of information and advice, when this can be found safely and quickly. Practitioners have reported that the power of technology can be harnessed to enable those affected by domestic abuse locate support services, share tips on staying safe, recognise abuse, communicate more easily with services, improve their own safety and to seek peer support.¹⁴ It will be important that local initiatives that use technology, whether that be campaigns, universal or specialist services, understand and take steps to ensure their offer meets the needs of those affected and helps them stay safe.¹⁵

7. Context

This strategy builds on the work of the previous Herefordshire Multi Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy (2014-2017), evidence and data from the Domestic Violence and Abuse Needs Assessment, July 2013 and the Draft Domestic Violence and Abuse: Evaluation of the local response in Herefordshire, 2017, as well as national policy.

7.1. 2014-2017 Herefordshire Multi Agency Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy

The outcomes within the 2014-2017 domestic violence and abuse strategy were informed by both national policy and the result of a local needs assessment completed in 2013. Significant progress was made to achieving the outcomes within the 2014-2017 strategy, including:

- A new refuge building for Herefordshire with increased capacity and individual flats which better support women affected by domestic abuse and their children, including by being able to accommodate older male children.
- Helping Hands (4-11 year olds) and CRUSH (13-19 year olds) programmes delivered to children who are or had experienced, witnessed or were at risk of domestic abuse.
- Recognition that clearer and more consistent data were required. Data recording was improved across agencies. Funding was provided by the Community Safety Partnership to create a central Intelligence Team covering the West Mercia policing

¹⁴ SafeLives Tech Vs Abuse: Research Findings.

<http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Tech%20vs%20abuse%20report.pdf>

¹⁵ SafeLives Tech Vs Abuse Design Challenges <https://www.techvsabuse.info/design-challenges>

area footprint to improve consistency. A domestic abuse triage worker was included in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to support the flow of information

- Improved understanding of Early Help and the Troubled Families programme, increasing pathways and referrals from across agencies.
- Amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure domestic abuse victims have higher priority
- A specific worker within the Housing Solutions Team with specialist knowledge, training and experience around domestic abuse
- Agreement by the Community Safety Partnership to commence the 'Inspiring Families' pilot project, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner due to commence in January 2019. The programme is aimed at female victims and male perpetrators who have children and wish to remain in a couple. The project adopts a 'whole family' approach; working with children to reduce the impact of being exposed to domestic abuse, the victim to build resilience and safety and the perpetrator to address attitude and behaviour.
- Implementation of 'Operation Encompass' – a secure established flow of information about domestic abuse incidents involving children from the police to the relevant school/s
- The roll out of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) training to professionals.
- Two conferences on 'Silent Victims', looking at additional barriers for people with additional vulnerabilities, including those from black and minority ethnic communities.

Some of the actions identified within the 2013 domestic abuse needs assessment (updated in 2017) have been addressed to some extent but remain outstanding and will be considered by the Domestic Abuse Delivery Group to inform the action plan. These include:

- A specific domestic abuse service for males (support and signposting is currently available)
- Awareness raising, culture change and education in communities, including black and minority ethnic communities.
- Robust education for professionals around the identification of and provision of initial advice to those experiencing domestic abuse
- Clarity between organisations which undertake assessments to create a mutual understanding of thresholds and how assessments should be interpreted.
- Better information sharing arrangements between key agencies (substance misuse services, sexual health services, general health services, social care, schools etc.) where safeguarding does not apply, including compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Many of these actions have been brought forward to this strategy, but some remain a particular challenge, specifically domestic abuse services for males and culture change.

7.2. Other local policy context

The priorities within this strategy align with key organisations' plans and strategies.

This strategy aligns with Herefordshire Council's corporate plan and plans for adult and wellbeing and children and young people:

- Herefordshire Council's Corporate plan priorities:
 - Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives
 - Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
 - Support growth of our economy
 - Secure better services, quality of life and value for money.
- Herefordshire Council's Adults and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2020:
 - *All adults in Herefordshire live healthy, happy and independent lives within their local communities, for as long as possible with support when they need it.*
- Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18:
 - *We want all children and young people in Herefordshire to have the best start in life and grow up healthy, happy and safe within supportive family environments. We want them to have the best possible health, education and opportunities to enable them to reach their full potential.*

It also aligns with West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer West Mercia Plan 2016-21 vision:

- Putting victims and survivors first
- Building a more secure West Mercia
- Reforming West Mercia
- Reassuring West Mercia's communities

[Drafting note: sign up to be confirmed] A number of agencies are committed to delivering the vision and priorities within this strategy. These include:

- Herefordshire Council
- West Mercia Police
- Wye Valley Trust
- 2gether Mental Health Trust
- The Clinical Commissioning Group
- Taurus Healthcare GP Federation
- West Mercia Women's Aid
- West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre
- National Probation Service
- West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company
- West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

- West Mercia Youth Offending Service

7.3. National policy

7.4. National context

In 2016 the government released the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-20. Although it is recognised that domestic abuse can affect any person, the strategy recognises that violence in general is disproportionately skewed towards women and girls. The strategy provides an overview of the wide range of actions the government is taking to tackle violence against women and girls between 2016 and 2020 and includes forced marriage, sexual exploitation, honour based violence and female genital mutilation. The priorities within the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016, taken with the local context, evidence and research, have informed the priorities for this strategy.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produced guidance for Domestic Violence and Abuse: Multi-Agency Working in 2014. This provided 17 recommendations, including local strategic multi-agency partnerships, integrated care pathways, joint-commissioning of services, creating an environment and culture for domestic abuse to be disclosed, better information sharing, training for frontline staff in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and providing specialist domestic abuse services to adults and children. All of the recommendations have been considered in drafting the strategy and action plan.

8. References and further information

[Herefordshire DVA Needs Assessment 2013](#)

[Understanding Herefordshire 2013](#)

[Women's Aid Website](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-to-2020>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH50>

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1500/corporate_plan_2016-20.pdf

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10458/adults_and_wellbeing_plan_2017_to_2020.pdf

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5211/children_and_young_people_s_plan_2015-2018.pdf

9. Appendix 1

The table below gives further detail of each objective, capturing the full discussions of stakeholders. It is proposed that the action plan will be built upon these details.

	Objectives Partners will:	Further detail
Prevention	Use data effectively to create a shared understanding of domestic abuse in Herefordshire.	Share, analyse and use sub-county (e.g. locality) level data on DA
		Share appropriate data on individual cases to ensure all agencies have necessary information and take appropriate action (e.g. Operation Encompass), with any necessary agreements in place
	Work collaboratively across organisations to support culture-change in the population to be one that recognises and rejects all forms of domestic abuse.	Co-ordinate our approach to public awareness on DA, with sign-up from wide range of partners
		Work to ensure the system supports the prosecution of cases, which itself will help support a culture of non-acceptance (link to perpetrators)
	Create an environment throughout universal services and others that supports early disclosure of domestic abuse by those affected and provides high-quality and consistent initial response.	Work across wide range of universal services likely to encounter DA to equip professionals to encourage disclosure and respond appropriately (link to professional enquiry). Such services include police, schools, GPs, dentists, social landlords, sexual health services, benefits officers, vets, hairdressers
Increase awareness amongst those who work with people with additional vulnerabilities to ensure domestic abuse is identified with an effective initial response	Work with partners and colleagues to increase DA awareness amongst those who work/support those with additional vulnerabilities (e.g. dementia, LD);	

	Support young people, children and families to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and understand that harm it causes as well as the positive impact of disclosing abuse.	<p>Work across the system to increase awareness about healthy relationships in children and young people and to not accept DA</p> <p>Work to support early intervention with children who have experienced or are beginning to perpetrate DA, both by DA specialist and wider services</p>
	Objectives Partners will:	Further details
Provision of services	Ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse can easily and safely contact and access specialist domestic abuse services, including those with additional barriers	<p>Support access to specialist and refuge services with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - easy access to specialist and refuge services especially those who face additional barriers - supporting access to relevant health and wellbeing services and for those affected by DA - supporting those affected, and other services, of the financial provision and availability of services particularly for those with no recourse to public funds - increasing provision of and access to solicitors who support women through legal aid and have specialist knowledge of DA <p>Identify children exposed to domestic abuse at the earliest possible opportunity</p> <p>Work to understand where inconsistencies lie in the response to domestic abuse across both the criminal justice and civil legal systems and work to address these</p> <p>Work as a partnership to respond to funding initiatives/calls to bring additional money into Herefordshire to address DA and support those affected.</p>

	<p>Ensure that children exposed to domestic abuse are supported in the best possible way</p>	<p>Work across the system to increase awareness of the negative impact of domestic abuse on children</p> <p>Work to adopt a family-centred approach, supporting the non-abusive parent to protect and support their child(ren)</p> <p>Work with specialist services to ensure the additional needs of children and young people accessing services are met</p>
	<p>Ensure that housing advice, emergency and other appropriate housing solutions are available to those experiencing domestic abuse, and where appropriate support those affected by domestic abuse and their children to remain in their homes safely.</p>	<p>Work to support those affected by domestic abuse to be safe in their own homes</p> <p>Ensure that those who are forced to leave their homes due to domestic abuse are a housing priority, have access to timely advice and have access to a housing solution.</p> <p>Work with housing and ensure civil/criminal orders/tenancy agreements are used to maximum effect to ensure that perpetrators are made to leave their homes as opposed to the victim and children.</p>
	<p>Objectives Partners will:</p>	<p>Further details</p>
<p>Partnership working</p>	<p>Ensure there is strong leadership across all organisations on domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Ensure that the governance and delivery arrangements are fit for purpose and that organisations make a high level commitment to seeing through the implementation of the DA strategy both across Herefordshire and within their organisation.</p> <p>Ensure there is a whole-system understanding of each agency's key offer, through, for example developing a domestic abuse glossary and system overview</p> <p>Ensure there is effective strategic oversight of systems and processes with support from multi agencies</p>
	<p>Work collaboratively across organisations to create clear pathways for supporting those experiencing domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Ensure systems and processes are in place to facilitate multi-agency cooperation at all appropriate levels.</p>

		Ensure there are clear, cross-organisational pathways for victims which include robust systems to ensure victims don't fall between the gaps (especially where these are between agencies)
	Ensure that front line staff i) have a good understanding of domestic abuse, ii) see it as their role and responsibility to reduce the harm of domestic abuse and iii) understand the tools/resources available to them to do so.	Work to ensure all organisations are clear about their role and offer around domestic abuse and that of partners.
		Ensure universal services have appropriate training and tools available to identify and respond to domestic abuse. This will include understanding the resources available to different professions and any gaps.
		Ensure that systems are established within organisations to support staff delivering front line services to enquire as part of their normal work
	Objectives Partners will:	Further details
Pursuing perpetrators	Support those experiencing domestic abuse to use the various tools available to prevent further offending (e.g. Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law), Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Domestic Violence Protection Orders).	The police, supported by other organisations, will use the full range of powers available to them to reduce incidence of DA
		Probation services, supported by other organisations, will work to ensure the safety of victims of DA
	Use the criminal justice system to its full effect to deter offending and bring perpetrators to justice.	Work with the courts to identify any areas for improvement in training or elsewhere to support court proceedings result in sentences for perpetrators that reflect the impact of DA and act as a deterrent.
	Where perpetrators have the capacity to change, partners will make available effective, evidence-based programmes to help change perpetrator behaviour.	Develop a good understanding of perpetrator behaviour and drivers of behaviour, and the evidence-base and effectiveness of behaviour change programmes

		<p>Work to deliver effective behaviour change support for perpetrators of domestic abuse who have and have not been convicted, and for the range of relationships (not just intimate partners). This will require a focus both on the effectiveness of programmes and identification of potential funding sources.</p>
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Appendix 2 – Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-22

Learning from the Former Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

The 2014-2017 Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire contained **four outcomes** and **four objectives**:

Outcomes	Objectives
Prevention: to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse and to provide advice and guidance on healthy, respectful relationships	Victims of domestic violence and abuse are protected and live in safety
Provision of Service: to ensure that people affected by domestic violence and abuse have access to appropriate advice and services	Fewer children and young people experience domestic violence and abuse
Partnership Working: to ensure that partner agencies work together, taking a whole system and family centred approach to dealing with domestic violence and abuse	Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse control their behaviour
Criminal Justice: to ensure effective use of the criminal justice system in bringing perpetrators to account, as well as to ensure that victims are given the support they need on their journey through the criminal justice system.	Increased awareness of domestic violence and abuse, which leads to a culture where it is not accepted.

In the broadest sense, the outcomes detailed in the 2014-17 strategy remain current and aligned to national priorities. This is not indicative of any failures but recognition that the four outcomes are ongoing 'golden threads' to tackling domestic abuse.

When the learning is considered in more detail, analysis of the local action plan in relation to domestic abuse provides a fuller picture. The action plan was informed by both the former Domestic Abuse Strategy and a local domestic abuse needs assessment completed in 2013 (updated in 2017) and resulted in the following new or increased services:

- A new refuge building (9 self-contained units)
- Helping Hands and CRUSH programmes delivered to children
- Improved domestic abuse data recording across agencies
- A triage worker in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to support the flow of information

Appendix 2 – Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-22

- Ongoing support for families through Early Help and the Troubled Families Programme
- Amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure domestic abuse victims have higher priority
- A specific worker within the Housing Solutions Team with specialist knowledge around domestic abuse
- A perpetrator programme, trialled in Herefordshire
- A draft multi-agency domestic abuse risk and referral pathway was created
- The creation of a Domestic Abuse Delivery Group to drive forward partnership working
- Implementation of 'Operation Encompass' where the police inform the MASH about domestic abuse cases and the MASH alerts the school.
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) training has been rolled out to professionals.

The following actions remain outstanding:

- A specific local domestic abuse service for males.
The level of need for male victims remains poorly understood nationally. In Herefordshire the current local domestic abuse helpline provides initial advice to male victims and signposting to relevant local or national organisations. All organisations will be expected to raise the profile of male victims in order to encourage disclosures and build a more accurate picture of demand.
- Awareness raising and education for professionals and in the full diversity of Herefordshire communities.
People with protected characteristics and those living rurally are at higher risk of isolation. The revised strategy considers which tools are required to enable professionals to identify those at risk of domestic abuse and how respond to disclosures.
- Clarity around various assessments used and how they translate between services.
There is recognition that different assessment tools are used across organisations which is sometimes unhelpful in terms of understanding thresholds. The revised strategy includes actions around sharing of information, shared pathways and mutual understanding of roles and remits.
- Better information sharing arrangements between key agencies (substance misuse services, sexual health services, general health services, social care, schools etc.), including data protection considerations.

Appendix 2 – Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-22

Improvements are already underway with compulsory joint working across commissioned health services being written into service specifications. However, there is a recognition that information sharing becomes challenging where safeguarding does not apply and the revised strategy explores how information can be shared legally and proportionately.

The revised strategy considers the outstanding actions set-against the current national and local context. Since the former strategy was written in 2014, there has been a significant change to the way partners such as the police and health services deliver their services both strategically and operationally. Revising the strategy has provided the opportunity to review the way partners deliver services, ensuring there is a shared sense of purpose.

Additionally, learning has come from professional stakeholder engagement. It is clear that all organisations understand the risks associated with domestic abuse and the necessity to address the associated challenges collectively. It has also been recognised that a commitment from leaders across organisations is required to ensure the priorities and actions within the strategy are driven through to implementation.

Equality Analysis (EIA) Form

A) Description

Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed

Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2019-2022

Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)

Adults and Communities

Date of assessment

31st January 2019

Names and job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Danielle Mussell, Senior Commissioning Officer

Accountable person

Danielle Mussell, Senior Commissioning Officer

What are the aims or main purpose of the service, function or policy? What does it provide and how does it provide it?

The strategy recognises that there is no single place where a person or child experiencing domestic abuse might choose to make a disclosure, and no single organisation which can provide a full response. The aim of the revised Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2022 is therefore to provide a clear vision and priorities to local partner organisations on how to tackle domestic abuse.

Location or any other relevant information

Once the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy is approved it will be displayed on the Council's website.

List any key policies or procedures to be reviewed as part of this assessment.

None

Who is intended to benefit from the service, function or policy?

All residents of Herefordshire

Who are the stakeholders? What is their interest?

- Adults and children who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse

Partner organisations who have signed up to delivering the strategy:

- Herefordshire Council
- West Mercia Police
- Wye Valley NHS Trust
- 2gether Foundation NHS Trust
- NHS Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Taurus Healthcare
- West Mercia Women's Aid

- West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre
- National Probation Service
- West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company
- West Mercia Youth Offending Service

B) Partnerships and Procurement

If you contract out services or work in partnership with other organisations, Herefordshire Council remains responsible for ensuring that the quality of provision/delivery meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ie.

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity between different groups
- Fosters good relations between different groups

What information do you give to the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act? What information do you monitor from the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act?

Not applicable

Are there any concerns at this stage that indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? For example: complaints, comments, research, and outcomes of a scrutiny review. Please describe:

Not applicable

C) Information

What information (monitoring or consultation data) have you got and what is it telling you?

Both national and local data research and analysis suggests that domestic abuse remains a hidden issue, with many instances of domestic abuse going unreported. It is a pervasive challenge which can affect any person regardless of any protected or other characteristic.

Research also suggests that older people, men, those from the LGBT and ethnic minority communities are less likely to report domestic abuse and therefore form part of a 'hard to reach' group. Additionally, there are increased risks to those with additional vulnerabilities, such as people with learning or physical disabilities, people with mental health illness such as dementia or any other health condition, meaning they are at increased likelihood of isolation and reliance upon their partner or family member for their care.

Local research suggests that there were approximately 5,900 victims of domestic abuse in Herefordshire for the year ending March 2017. The true figure is likely to be much higher.

The service currently commissioned by Herefordshire Council to deliver a domestic abuse support service in Herefordshire is provided by West Mercia Women's Aid. Data suggests that the service's 24 hour Helpline is well used, having received 1640 calls between April and September 2018. However, the service receives few calls from men and more work needs to be completed on ensuring details of those with other protected characteristics is captured accurately. Capturing such information can be challenging given the sensitive nature of the calls to the service.

D) Assessment/Analysis

Describe your key findings (eg. negative, positive or neutral impacts - actual or potential). Also your assessment of risk.

Strand/community	Impact
Age Disability Gender re-assignment Marriage & civil partnership Race Religion and belief Sex (males in particular) Sexual orientation	Positive. The strategy recognises that domestic abuse in all of these strands/communities is under-reported and places a responsibility up on all partner organisations to consider how to prevent, identify and be responsive to domestic abuse for these hard to reach groups.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral. It is already recognised across organisations, such as the police and maternity services, that pregnant women and those with very young children are at increased risk of domestic abuse. Access to maternity and health visiting services creates a unique opportunity for women to disclose abuse. The strategy endorses this recognition and supports continuing work to identify all pregnant women at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse.

E) Consultation

Did you carry out any consultation?

Yes **No**

Who was consulted?

Service users accessing the domestic abuse support service
Families attending groups at children's centres in Ross, Ledbury and Leominster
Professionals from across health, social care, police, housing, probation, youth offending and the domestic abuse support service.
Elected members via two workshops and the Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Professionals attending the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
Professionals from the Community Safety Partnership

Describe other research, studies or information used to assist with the assessment and your key findings.

- DRAFT Domestic Violence and Abuse: Evaluation of the local response in Herefordshire, 2017, Herefordshire Council
- Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Office for National Statistics
- Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. Office for National Statistics.
- SafeLives. Who are the victims of domestic abuse?
- SafeLives. How widespread is domestic abuse and what is the impact?
- UNICEF. Behind Closed Doors: the impact of domestic violence on children, 2006
- World Health Organization. Primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence: Background paper for WHO expert meeting May 2–3, 2007
- SafeLives Tech Vs Abuse: Research Findings.
- SafeLives Tech Vs Abuse Design Challenges
- Herefordshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Needs Assessment 2013
- Understanding Herefordshire website

- Women's Aid website
- The government's Strategy to end Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-20
- Nice Guidance PH50
- Herefordshire Council - Corporate Plan 2016-20
- Herefordshire Council - Adults and Wellbeing Plan 2017-20
- Herefordshire Council – Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18

Do you use diversity monitoring categories? Yes No

(if No you should use this as an action as we are required by law to monitor diversity categories)

If yes, which categories?

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion & Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

What do you do with the diversity monitoring data you gather? Is this information published? And if so, where?

Monitoring data is captured by the commissioned domestic abuse support service which is not published. There is wider data around the local population and domestic abuse for Herefordshire captured by various organisations including the police and Herefordshire Council. This information is available on the West Mercia Police website and the 'Understanding Herefordshire' website.

F) Conclusions

	Action/objective/target OR justification	Resources required	Timescale	I/R/S/J
a)	The shared vision, priorities and outcomes are to be considered by the Domestic Abuse Delivery Group (DADG) to inform annual action plans	Professionals from the DADG	To commence following approval for adopting the strategy by Cabinet, scheduled for March 2019.	R/S
b)				
c)				
d)				

(I) Taking immediate effect.

(R) *Recommended to Council/Directors through a Committee or other Report*.*

(S) *Added to the Service Plan.*

(J) *To be brought to the attention of the Equality Manager.*

*Summarise your findings in the report. Make the full assessment available for further information.

NB: Make sure your final document is suitable for publishing in the public domain.

