

Information needed	Details
Report To:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	18 th June 2024
Subject:	Slough Domestic Abuse Strategy
Chief Officer:	Tessa Lindfield – Director of Public Health & Public Protection
Contact Officer:	Lisa Spall - Community Safety Partnership Manager Public Health & Public Protection
Ward(s):	All
Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix 1. Slough Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023-2026,• Appendix 2. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1. This report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with the background of Slough's Domestic Abuse Strategy, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (The Act), and to ask for the Board support the strategy.
- 1.2. It highlights the Council's statutory duties contained within The Act, and how the strategy will deliver to prevent domestic homicides and violence across Slough. These duties are detailed within the body of this report. (see 1.3 and 3.2).
- 1.3. Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires public bodies in a local authority area to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, places a duty on local authority's services that when making decisions on the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and re-offending in its area.

1.2 Recommendations:

- 1.2.1 Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
 - a. Note and support the Domestic Abuse Strategy,
 - b. Note that regular oversight of the Strategy will be governed by Slough Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, that reports into the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) Board.

1.3 Reason: Under Part 4 of The Act, all councils are required to publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy.

1.3.1 Reducing and preventing domestic abuse will improve outcomes for families and residents living in Slough. By supporting the Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Board will be working alongside our Safer Slough Partnership, Youth Justice Board and Safeguarding Partnership Board. All key statutory partners that will aim to reduce the incidences of domestic abuse, to include children as victims. We want to better support victims and empower them to come forward and report in an environment where they will feel confident to take perpetrators to justice.

‘Slough is a place where domestic abuse is not tolerated, where everyone can expect respect in their relationships, and live free from domestic abuse’ (Strategy front page)

2. Report - Introductory paragraph

2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board plays a fundamental role in the overall Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) response to domestic abuse, providing the leadership, support and co-ordination in accordance with its statutory responsibilities. This report therefore welcomes the support from the Health and Well Being Board.

2.1.1 The overarching strategy is based upon a public health prevention approach to domestic abuse, that reflects local need, current best practice and statutory guidance. The strategy also joins up and supports Slough’s Wellbeing Strategy, and the four priority areas the Board seeks to address. Key to our success is by working in partnership, that will help us to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Slough together and, save lives.

2.1.2 This local strategy will work in partnership and contribute towards the delivery of the Council’s Vision and Corporate Priorities 2023 to 2027.

- i. A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives,
- ii. A borough for children and young people to thrive,
- iii. Enabling residents and communities,
- iv. Strengthening partnerships,
- v. Resident focused,
- vi. Building trust.

The Act specifically notes that children, who witness domestic abuse are treated as victims.

2.2. Background

2.2.1 The current situation for Slough.

2.2.2 This local strategy places the voice of the victim/survivor at its heart. We are committed to ensure their voice drives change. Our priority, therefore, is to adopt the definition of domestic abuse, introduced by The Act as follows:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory definition of domestic abuse is:

“Any single incident or a course of conduct of physical or sexual abuse, violence or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 or over

who are or have been personally connected to each other". (page 7 of the strategy)

2.3 Why change is needed?

2.3.1 To help us understand domestic abuse locally, the domestic abuse needs assessment was significant in guiding us to prepare our three-year strategy. The following illustrates why change is needed.

2.3.2 **National context:** In the course of one year, it is estimated that 2.1 million people aged over 16 experienced domestic abuse (Crime Survey for England and Wales). Two thirds of victims are women.

2.3.3 In the year ending March 2021, police crime recording data showed almost half of adult females killed in England and Wales were killed as a result of domestic violence.

2.4 Local context: Findings from our local needs assessment showed that over the four year period 2019-2022, there were on average 4,800 domestic incidents, of which the proportion classified as crimes has risen from 2,614 to 3,017.

2.4.1 The proportion of repeat domestic incidents has grown over the 4 years, from 20% to 30% of all incidents. In 2022, there were 17 addresses with at least 10 repeat calls in a year.

2.4.2 The proportion of victims is approximately 73% women and 27% men.

2.4.3 The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) data indicates under-representation for victims across a range of protected characteristics, such as disabilities and LGBTQ+.

2.4.4 In Slough, our local domestic abuse specialist provider received 598 referrals in the most recent financial year (2022/2023). This has grown for each of the last 3 years.

2.5 Consultation and victim voices - Local survivors and community voice

2.5.1 As part of developing the needs assessment and this strategy, multiple methods of engagement were employed to seek the views of partner organisations, front-line staff, survivors, and voluntary and community sector providers, including:

- A public consultation/survey
- Presentations to and discussions with local professionals
- One to one and group meetings with survivors.

2.5.2 Further research was also implemented, together with a local EIA (appendix 2) to help us gain insight of the diverse needs of those accessing support within safe accommodation and, opportunities for earlier intervention. Findings can be found on page 12 of this strategy.

2.6 Our Vision and Priorities

2.6.1 Our vision is ambitious and cannot be achieved by one organisation alone. It requires true partnership of agencies and communities working together as mandated by s17

Crime and Disorder Act 1998. To be successful, will mean that domestic abuse must become everyone's business.

2.6.2 To do this, our strategy and delivery plans are based upon a prevention model, focusing on four key prevention priorities. (see page 13)

- Priority 1 - Changing attitude,
- Priority 2 – Early identification and intervention,
- Priority 3 – Safety and Support,
- Priority 4 – Work with abusers.

2.6.3 The first three are frequently referred to as a pyramid of need, from universal through to secondary and tertiary prevention, and tend to be victim focused.

2.6.4 This strategy recognises that long-term change cannot be achieved without focusing on the behaviour of the abuser, hence a fourth clear priority related to perpetrators.

2.6.5 A detailed delivery plan is underway, led by Slough Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, who will be the governing body to monitor the implementation of the strategy.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 This strategy has no financial implications.

3.2 Legal implications

1. The Act received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021, and defines domestic abuse (Section 1) and children as victims (Section 3).
2. The statutory guidance is intended to increase awareness and inform the response to domestic abuse and conveys standards and promotes best practice. This has provided a useful reference for the council in designing its approach to tackling domestic abuse.
3. The Act sets out the duties of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the duty of public authorities, including local authorities and partners, to cooperate with the Commissioner.
4. Section 57 (in force 01.10.2021) sets out the duties of local authorities to provide support to victims, to prepare and publish a strategy for such and to monitor and evaluate the strategy's effectiveness.
5. Section 58 requires local authorities to appoint Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards to advise local authorities about the exercise of their Section 57 functions.
6. Section 59 requires local authorities to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State at the end of each financial year.
7. Section 60 requires local authorities to exercise their functions under The Act in accordance with statutory guidance (published on 08.07.2022).
8. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, creates a serious violence duty requiring local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities and others to work together. Their duty is to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and

implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those issues. Domestic abuse features within that duty.

9. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, places a duty on local authorities services that when making decisions on the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and re-offending in its area.
10. Safer Slough Partnership (statutory Community Safety Partnership body) has agreed that domestic abuse and serious violence are local priorities. See page 22, of the strategy to illustrate all legislation linked to Domestic Abuse.

3.3 Risk management implications *[Mandatory]*

- 3.3.1 There are risks for the Council if we do not meet our Statutory Duties outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 3.3.2 Continued delivery of Domestic Abuse Services to Slough residents and those fleeing into Slough for their safety and protection. Without this service residents suffering with domestic abuse may be at risk of harm or death.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Residual risk
Death or serious injury to victims of domestic abuse	Inadequate delivery of support services due to ineffective partnership working and lack of intelligence information sharing.	Strong partnership working across all services and agencies. Backed up by a strong and effective strategy. Apply all statutory legislation for sharing information to reduce and mitigate risks.	High
Strategy does not get implemented.	Once written the Strategy does not get embedded into partner agency's day to day business and therefore does not effect change.	The Slough Domestic Abuse Partnership Board meet quarterly to review progress against the Strategy. Senior representation from key partners is represented at the Board to help ensure that decisions are made and, issues become resolved. Governance – reports are submitted quarterly to the Safer Slough Partnership Board for approval and, support/guidance where required.	High
Failing to comply with The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (CDA98) requires each authority to exercise its functions to prevent crime and disorder.	Failure to delivery full responsibility /duties within the Statutory partner agencies.	Slough has a robust and effective Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) in place to fulfil this function. The commissioning of domestic abuse services forms an integral part of the approach to domestic abuse, that is an SSP priority. Domestic abuse reports are submitted on a quarterly basis providing strategic oversight.	High

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 There are no Climate Change and Environmental Implications arising from this report.

3.5 Equality implications *[Mandatory]*

3.5.1 This strategy strengthens our shared delivery by working together across our services and with our partners. It reaches out to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, including children and young people and male victims as well as those from the LBGTQ+ “community”, BAME communities and those with disabilities, that may not have accessed or aware of our services before. Appendix 2 EIA.

3.5.2 The findings of this EIA have been integral to informing this strategy.

4. Background Papers

Appendix 1. Slough Domestic Abuse Strategy,



Final Domestic Abuse
Strategy January 2024

Appendix 2. Domestic Abuse Equality Impact Assessment



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