

## **Appendix 1**

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE - PART 4 DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021- DUTY ON LOCAL AUTHORITY – YEAR 2 FUNDING**

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

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- 1.1 To seek approval for a Section 31 grant received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to Birmingham City Council to discharge its duty under Part 4 Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The duty relates to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within safe accommodation. The value of the grant is £3,272,039.
- 1.2 Approves the delivery of this duty using the funding, as set out in this appendix, and delegates to Director of ASC to approve the contract variations and grants.
- 1.3 To provide an update to Cabinet on the progress made on implementing Part 4 of Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

#### **2. Background and context**

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- 2.1 Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a new duty on local authorities to ensure the provision of support to victims and their children within safe accommodation. The duty on local authorities aims to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse have access to the right support within safe accommodation when they need it.
- 2.2 The duty also places requirements on us as a tier one authority, to appoint a local partnership board, prepare and publish strategies based on robust needs assessments and give effect to these strategies To support the implementation of the new duty DLUHC issued statutory guidance for local authorities.
- 2.3 In implementing the above duty, significant progress has been made to date:
  - Birmingham's Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board formerly a shadow Board, has been in place now for a year. The Board is chaired by Councillor Brennan, Cabinet Advisor for domestic abuse with the Vice-Chair, Chief Executive of Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid. Membership includes a wide range of senior officers from key partner organisations from across the city, including statutory partners, specialist domestic abuse organisations and internal partners. The Board has responsibility and oversight for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act Part 4 and its associated duties.
  - Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) were commissioned to carry out a robust needs assessment that sought not only to consider support in safe accommodation as set out under the new duty but carry out a wider needs assessment, that considered the prevalence of DA and our response to it across the city. Initial findings highlight the need for more specialist support for victims with learning disabilities and other protected characteristics, DA training across statutory agencies to ensure consistent support and communications campaign to raise awareness of the services that support victims across the City.

- Following the finalised needs assessment, due within the next month, the Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy will be refreshed in light of the findings.

### **3. £3.2m New burdens funding Year 1 (April 2021/2022)**

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- 3.1 In April 2021, to discharge the new duty, Birmingham City Council were granted £3,272,039. This funding was for 1 year only and subject to review. In line with the new duty, funding was deployed to relieve pressure on existing services, by enhancing support provision/bridging gaps for victims in commissioned safe accommodation and enhancing delivery within Housing and Birmingham Childrens Trust. Existing contracts with domestic abuse commissioned providers were varied. Full details of this support can be found in Domestic Abuse - Part 4 Domestic Abuse Act 2021- New Duty on Local Authority Cabinet Report, October 2021. It is also attached in appendix 2.
- 3.2 This included Children and Young People's workers, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), a male support worker for male victims, and therapeutic support for victims. The need for such provision met gaps identified from the initial findings in the needs assessment.
- 3.3 A Community Grants Prospectus was also developed, with the aim of creating opportunities for specialist non-commissioned domestic abuse organisations, to bid for smaller grants to provide support to victims. Such organisations often do not meet council procurement thresholds yet provide vital support to victims and their children, who have protected characteristics. The grant call for this funding opened at the end of January with 3 lots namely; projects to provide support in safe accommodation under the new duty, projects that met other gaps identified in the initial needs assessment findings, and projects that provided prevention and early intervention support. The grant call was widely publicised to partners through the DA Local Strategic Partnership Board, the Councils website and BVSC community networks which reaches over 4000 providers in the City. An online forum for organisations interested in applying, outlining the guidance and process, and answering any questions, was also held to support organisations.
- 3.4 Following the grant call, 29 bids were received, from organisations across Birmingham. These bids were evaluated by a panel of officers, moderated by the Head of Service for Commissioning and approved by Adult Social Care, Social Justice Board on 10<sup>th</sup> May, chaired by the Assistant Director for Commissioning. Projects included night staff at refuge to ensure 24-hour support for residents with complex needs, support and awareness raising for victims with learning disabilities, and support for Asian, Black and marginalised ethnic women in refuge and in the community. Full details of successful projects can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 All of the above commissioned support provision and grants projects meet identified gaps as highlighted by the initial findings in the need's assessment.
- 3.6 Appendix 2 sets out the details of the support provision for the contract variations and community grants agreed by the Social Justice Board. The total value of the support provision is £ 2,752,592.66.

### **4. £3.2m New burdens funding Year 2 (April 2022/23)**

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- 4.1 In April 2022, Birmingham City Council were allocated a further £3, 272,039 (revenue funding) to continue to discharge its duty under Part 4 of the DA Act. The funding allocation is again for 1 year only and future allocation is dependent on the next comprehensive spending review. As a

result, DLUHC have advised Local authorities that this funding should be spent / committed within the financial year of 2022/23.

4.2 With the above 1-year allocation of funding, our approach continues to adopt a victim centred focus, and aims to embed support for victims of domestic abuse and their children as follows:

- Commissioned services, and organisations successful in the community grants bid, currently have a one-year contract variation/conditions of grant aid (COGA). In order to embed this support provision our intention is to extend the contract variations /COGA's subject to successful evaluation at the end of year 1.
- The contract variations are modifications to existing contracts that deliver housing and wellbeing support to victims of domestic abuse; project reference P0577. The contract period for these contracts is December 2019, for three years until the 30th November 2022, however subject to satisfactory evaluation, our intention will be to exercise the option to extend these contracts for a further 2 years. In line with this, the intention is to exercise the option to extend these contracts for a further 2 years. The cabinet report dated 16th April 2019 Putting Prevention First: Commissioning and Procurement Strategies for Vulnerable Adults Housing and Well-being Support delegated the approval of these extensions to the Cabinet Members for Health and Social Care, Finance and Resources jointly with the Director of Adults Social Care, in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer, City Solicitor and the Assistant Director of Development and Commercial (or their delegates) subject to funding availability and satisfactory performance.

4.3 The first round of community grants has met a wide range of support needs in the city including support for victims with learning disabilities and support for Asian, Black and marginalised ethnic women. However, some gaps in provision remain. In the immediate future, we would seek to work with partners to fill these gaps, for example Birmingham LGBT to enhance support for LGBT+ victims.

4.4 Once the needs assessment is complete, we would also seek to put out another grant call to community organisations to fill any further gaps identified.

4.5 We will also be holding an online development workshop with community organisations not successful in the first round to support their capacity to complete future bids, and to encourage and develop partnerships with domestic abuse organisations where they may lack specialist knowledge around domestic abuse.

4.6 The initial findings of the needs assessment indicated the need to have better communications about the range of domestic abuse services in the City including the support available for male victims and as a result we will also utilise funding to raise awareness of these services through a universal and targeted communications campaign.

4.7 The scope of the funding focuses on crisis support for those in safe accommodation, however where possible and within the parameters of the funding we will look to support projects that consider prevention and early intervention which aligns with the Council's Prevention and Early Intervention programme.

4.8 It is important to note that all support provision meets the requirements set out in the new duty and follows the statutory guidance as currently set out by DLUHC.

4.9 Approval of the spend will also be sought from the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board who under the Domestic Abuse Act, have oversight and responsibility to ensure the delivery of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act.

## **5. Recommendations**

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5.1 That Cabinet provides retrospective approval for the grant received by DLUHC of £3,272,039 to enable the Local Authority to discharge its duty under Part 4 Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5.2 It also notes the delivery of this new duty using the funding.

5.3 Delegates to Director of ASC to approve the contract variations and grants.