

## Community Impact Assessment

### Relating to: Specialist Domestic abuse Services

**Date:**

Introduction

This Impact Assessment supports the County Council in meeting its legal obligations under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**, now contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Duty ensures that public bodies consider the needs of *all* individuals whether developing policies, making decisions, delivering services, or in relation to an organisation's own employees.

Section 149 provides that in exercising its functions an authority must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and others who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and others who do not share it involves having due regard (in particular) to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it involves having due regard (in particular) to the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding.

It is important to note that the requirements of the duty may involve a degree of positive discrimination, particularly in respect of the disabled.

The protected characteristics to which the duty applies are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, also marriage and civil partnership but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

Having **due regard to** means consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making, when the proposals are still at a formative stage, and before a decision is reached. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies. The Equality Duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a condition criterion or practice is applied which would put people with one of the protected characteristics at a disadvantage, and the imposition of that condition, criterion or practice is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, i.e. it cannot be objectively justified.

It is important to understand and consider how different people will be affected by the decisions the Council makes, so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

This assessment will help you think about the potential impact your proposals will have on all sections of the community. Recognising these impacts early on in the process of developing policies will assist good decision making and ensure that the County Council delivers services appropriate to people's needs. Remember that the Equality Duty involves having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, as well as eliminate discrimination.

### 1. Person responsible for undertaking this assessment:

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<b>Service: Supporting People/Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence County Co-ordinator</b>	<b>E-Mail: <a href="mailto:louise.clack@gloucestershire.gov.uk">louise.clack@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a> Faye.Kamara@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk</b>
	<b>Date of Assessment: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011</b>

## 2. Name and brief description of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function: (indicate whether new or revised)

Tendering of specialist Domestic Abuse services throughout Gloucestershire to enable more flexible provision and earlier intervention to a broader spectrum of victims and their families, to support victims to live independently and improve outcomes for children. These services to be delivered within a changing financial framework which involves changing the existing model of services, with a reduction in levels of fixed refuge spaces and loss of second stage move on accommodation services and a local dedicated helpline.

## 3. Briefly describe its aims and expected outcomes

In line with the Supporting People Strategy and the DASV task and Finish Group, a re-provision of domestic abuse has been proposed, to provide more prevention and early intervention, alongside crisis intervention and accommodation options. This way we can look to provide more services to victims of domestic abuse within a reducing budget and changing financial framework.

The Council's investment in specialist services to support victims of domestic abuse for 2011/12 has been £926k funded through Supporting People budget and Home Office grant (formerly Area Based Grant). Grant income is reducing significantly and is expected to cease in 2013/14. In accordance with reductions in budget agreed as part of the Supporting People Strategy, the total available budget for these services per annum will not exceed £640k from Supporting People budget. The new model does however enable delivery of improved outcomes for children who have been exposed to domestic abuse incidents and as a result has attracted an allocation of no more than £280k from the Early Intervention grant, to give a total of maximum value of £920k per annum.

The impact of moving to the new model from the existing model is to reduce the need for families to stay for long periods of time in high cost places of safety (refuges) to receive necessary support – such places of safety will still be available but we need to release support from fixed bed spaces including the ending of second stage move on accommodation services, to increase investment into community based services that can support people to stay in their own home wherever safe to do so, thus preventing the need for high cost crisis intervention. Should a short term place of safety be necessary, then the community based support service needs to assist people to return to previous community or connect to a new community as soon as possible.

The designated local telephone helpline currently available during office hours will no longer continue but the model will require the publicising of a single telephone number to access information and advice.

Working in partnership with other funders via the Community Budget, will lead to utilising funding from the Early Intervention Grant to facilitate an increased level of community based holistic support approach for families linked into locality teams; so as to seek to reduce the cost of domestic abuse in terms of both financial and human costs.

The objectives of the tender process is to secure services that will:

- intervene at the earliest possible level to prevent escalation;
- support access to and provide places of safety in crisis where necessary;
- support families back into communities following crisis and link them into other local services;
- contribute to safeguarding children by supporting stability in families and offering specialist advice to other professionals.

#### **4. Describe how this policy will impact on the Council's duty to:**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Identify what particular groups of people will be affected by this policy.

Victims of domestic abuse and their children, the holistic approach to the community based support services linked into locality teams will ensure that childrens' needs are better met

The majority of reported incidents of domestic abuse victims are of women and their children. As such many services have been developed at a national and local level who support women and their children only, the current model in Gloucestershire does include women only refuges and will continue to do so but at a reduced level .

The proposed new model will extend further opportunities to support victims in response to their individual need as opposed to household profile, by enabling support to be provided to victims in their own homes when ever safe, and in cases where a move is necessary, support can be provided to a broader range of housing options.

We are also proposing that services work with and inform development of other programmes, including specifically addressing issues related to perpetrators in an effort to reduce the patterns of abuse.

Existing service users of the current model of services

**5. Provide details of the evidence you have gathered in making this assessment, including data sources, consultation undertaken and the outcome/s of this.**

Extensive consultation has been undertaken as part of developing the Supporting People Strategy. In addition, a partner questionnaire exercise has been undertaken and a stakeholder conference was held in May 2011. The common view was that there is a need to increase the focus on prevention through early intervention with families experiencing domestic abuse, and achieve more joined up support for the whole family. The conference also highlighted the lack of support for perpetrators in the current model of services. There was support for reshaping existing services as well as recognition of the tough financial context.

A programme of survivor consultation events was undertaken during the summer 2011. Messages from survivors included the desire for a variety of services throughout the county which victims could access; more support for perpetrators earlier on in order to prevent families leaving their homes and being separated; and a request for services to be advertised more clearly and be better coordinated, with face to face support being the preferred method of delivery.

**Main consultees include:**

- Gloucestershire Safer, Stronger Justice Commission
- Supporting People Partnership Board
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board
- Police
- Probation
- PCT
- District councils
- CYP service manager localities
- VCS Provider representatives
- Survivors and service users

**6. Is this Policy affected by, or will it have an impact on other Meeting the Challenge proposals? Yes/No. (If yes, please specify relevant project and indicate how it is affected).**

This is part of the wider Supporting People Strategy which works towards Meeting the Challenge. There is a reduction in funding as defined by needs modelling and the indicative budget. However we will be able to provide more service for the money by redefining the specification and how services are delivered and therefore attracting Early Intervention Grant funding.

**7. Where any particular group is affected differently by the policy in either a negative or a positive way, if you identify a negative impact, explain what actions you have undertaken or you plan to undertake, including consideration of any alternative proposals, to lessen or negate this impact.**

	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Evidence	Mitigating actions where a negative impact has been identified	How will the mitigating action be monitored/evaluated, including who will be responsible for monitoring.
<b>Age</b>				<p>The model will provide an increased focus on improving outcomes for children via expanded community based holistic support for families at the earliest possible intervention and also when in crisis, so that disruption and disconnection from schooling, family and friends and an escalation of harm can where ever possible be prevented or be reduced in terms of length of time and impact</p> <p>In some cases the needs of existing households of fixed accommodation based support services can pose a challenge for accommodating a household with an older male child subject to the needs and issues of other resident victims.</p>	<p>In cases of an identified issue with another household sharing communal spaces, the flexibility of this model should enable a household with an older male child to access alternative suitable accommodation with support</p>	<p>Supporting People Performance returns</p> <p>DARP</p>

<p><b>Disability</b> (indicate different impacts on different types of disability)</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>Fixed based accommodation based support services can be restricted in terms of accessibility.</p> <p>People with sensory disabilities may experience difficulties with accessing services</p>	<p>The new service will enable access to appropriate accommodation options with a 'wrap around' support service to meet specific needs of the victim. Reshaped service to continue to link with other relevant support services required to meet specific needs of victim and family.</p> <p>Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.</p>	<p>Supporting People Performance returns</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b></p>		<p>X</p>		<p>Pregnancy is a high risk indicator of domestic abuse</p>	<p>Being linked into locality teams more focussed early intervention and prevention will support reduced escalation to crisis.</p> <p>Tender to include approach to informing operational and strategic practices of other organisations.</p>	<p>Supporting People Performance returns</p>
<p><b>Race</b> (including Gypsy &amp; Traveller)</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>There are no specific specialist Domestic Abuse services for individual racial groups</p>	<p>Increased flexibility of services will enable a focussed response to specific needs. Reshaped service will continue to be required to be culturally sensitive and link to other services to meet the specific needs of the victim in an holistic manner.</p> <p>Access and inclusion issues via</p>	<p>Supporting People Performance returns</p>

					development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.	
<b>Religion or Belief</b>			X	There are no specific specialist Domestic Abuse services to cater for individual religious beliefs	Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.	Supporting People Performance returns
<b>Sex</b>				The majority of reported victims of domestic abuse are female, however it is acknowledged that there is a large number of male victims that do not report issues. This has led to women only services being developed at both a national and local level especially with regard to refugees and fixed accommodation based services.  The National resources of domestic abuse specific helplines do still only provide 24/7 response to women and their children, whereas male equivalent helplines are time restricted.	The new model will continue to provide women and children only fixed accommodation based support services for crises at a reduced level, however the remainder of the model will be able to support all victim profiles including males.  The specification of the service will include the need to increase male victims with accessing services.  Reshaped service to continue to link with other relevant support services required to meet specific needs of all victims and their families.  Publicising of telephone number to access information and advice	Supporting People Performance returns
<b>Sexual</b>		X		As above	Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and	Supporting People



Orientation						Performance returns
<b>Marriage or Civil Partnership</b>	X			As above	appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process. Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.	Supporting People Performance returns
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	X			As above	Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.	Supporting People Performance returns
<b>Indirect Discrimination</b>			X		Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.	Supporting People Performance returns
<b>Other groups: e.g. rural isolation, long term unemployed, health inequality, carers</b>	X			Plan with current providers transitional process to ensure that needs of current service users continue to be met in new model	Supporting People Core strategy group and Domestic abuse and Sexual Violence Board	Supporting People Core Strategy Group March 2012
<b>Existing users of current model of services</b>						
<b>Community Cohesion</b>		Provide details of any ways in which the proposed activity would promote equality in the community between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and how it would promote good relations between such groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there equality between those</li> </ul>	The services will be aimed at the community and will work with families and households to keep them in their own communities (where it is safe to do so) and to have family and friends around who can offer other forms of support.	Access and inclusion issues via development of flexible and appropriate provision to be tested via tendering process.	Supporting People Performance returns

	<p>who will and won't benefit from the proposal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there strong relationships between groups and communities in the area affected and will the proposed action promote positive relationships?</li> <li>• Does the proposal bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other?</li> </ul>	<p>Some victims wish to be provided with anonymity from both perpetrator and the community the perpetrator is connected to. Distance in terms of geography and/or communities of interest can be provided by removing the victim to a place of safety often disconnected from all points of reference for the victim.</p>	<p>Retaining some fixed accommodation services in the new service arrangement can result in the immediate neighbourhood understanding vulnerable women and families are being accommodated and supported in a scheme and can provide some level of safeguarding by understanding and being aware of the associated issues the family is trying to be protected from. It can also provide peer and group support which is valued by some victims.</p> <p>If people have to move away due to high risk of harm, the service will work with them to re-connect either back into their original community following crisis or indeed into a new community and support them to build sustainable support networks and connections of their own in their new neighbourhood so as to promote integration and stability within communities</p>	
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## Declaration

We are satisfied that an Assessment has been carried out and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact where possible.

Where the impact on equalities of the policy or proposals is very significant, and mitigating actions do not sufficiently lessen the impact, or mitigating actions cannot be identified, we have considered whether to go ahead with the original proposal at all, or whether to reformulate it.

We understand that the Community Impact Assessment is required by the County Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed by: *Ed Kees* Date: *23.11.11*

Role: *Lead Commissioner Supporting People*

Countersigned by Head of Service: *Wade Green* Date: *23/11/11*

Name of relevant Portfolio Holder/Cabinet Member: *PAUL MCGAIR*

I confirm that I have examined and understood the potential impact of the proposal and confirm that I have taken account of the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

*Paul McGair* ..... Portfolio Holder/Cabinet Member Date: *23 Nov 11* .....

Please forward an electronic copy to the Equalities Team by emailing [equalities@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

October 2011

