

# Swindon and Wiltshire Strategy to Reduce Domestic Abuse 2015 – 2017

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 9 March 2016

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Author:	Head of Housing and Community Safety
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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## 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To inform the Health and Wellbeing Board about the 2015 – 2017 Swindon and Wiltshire Strategy to reduce Domestic Abuse (attached at Appendix 1 to the report).
- 1.2 The Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships are committed to reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in our local communities.

## 2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the 2015 – 2017 Swindon and Wiltshire Strategy to reduce Domestic Abuse.
- 2.2 Recommend to the NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group that they adopt this strategy which was adopted by Swindon Borough Council Cabinet on 9 December 2015.

## 3. Detail

- 3.1 Domestic abuse continues to be a complex and challenging priority; it is a crime, as well as a social and public health issue, cutting across all geographic and cultural groups. The impact on those living with its effects is long lasting and devastating.
- 3.2 Victims experiencing domestic abuse may suffer not only physical violence but also be subject to long systemic periods of psychological and emotional assaults, financial control and threats. The impact extends to their families and includes children and young people.
- 3.3 It is largely hidden and under-reported; a victim may experience around 35 incidents of abuse before talking to anyone. Only one in five incidents of domestic abuse will be reported, with many more people presenting at hospitals or GP surgeries as a result of injuries caused by a current or former partner.
- 3.4 The Swindon and Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships are committed to reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in our local communities.

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- 3.5 This strategy has adopted the definition of domestic abuse, as set out by the Home Office:
- “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, financial and emotional.”
- 3.6 This definition incorporates abuse between family members (including children to parents/grandparents, between siblings), partners in intimate relationships and includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. It is clear that victims are not confined to age, gender or ethnic group.
- 3.7 The strategy will tackle domestic abuse across five identified priorities and will set out how we will work with:
- 3.7.1 **Victims and Survivors**, Swindon and Wiltshire agencies will work together in partnership to meet the needs of all victims and survivors to ensure access to quality appropriate support.
- 3.7.2 **Children and Young People**, to recognise the specific needs of and provide support for children and young people whose lives are affected by domestic abuse.
- 3.7.3 **Perpetrators of domestic abuse**, to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and brought to justice, using both supportive and enforcement approaches to reduce offending behaviour and harm.
- 3.7.4 **Training and Awareness Raising**, to increase the local communities and organisations understanding and awareness of the extent and impact of domestic abuse.
- 3.7.5 **Continuous improvement**, in both statutory and voluntary agencies, sharing skills, resources and good practice to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse.
- 3.8 The strategic aims will be achieved through actions which will be set out in the localised Community Safety Partnership implementation plans for Swindon and monitored by the newly established multi agency Domestic Abuse Board.
- 3.9 The strategy recognises Adults, Children and Young People as either *direct* or *indirect* victims and/or survivors who have been either living with or witnessing domestic abuse.
- 3.10 The strategy will ensure that we:
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- 3.10.1 Take a victim focused approach, in order to prevent domestic abuse, increase confidence in reporting and to protect victims from experiencing further harm.
- 3.10.2 Take positive action in assisting and supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse by working in partnership with local agencies to keep them safe and further reduce the risk of re-victimisation.
- 3.10.3 Ensure appropriate and sustainable provision of specialist support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
- 3.10.4 Recognise the needs of children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse by providing preventative measures and support.
- 3.10.5 Provide preventative approaches through early interventions and awareness.
- 3.10.6 Recognise that in addition to adult perpetrators of domestic abuse, young people may be identified as having or developing abusive behaviours.
- 3.10.7 Work with perpetrators of domestic abuse, both convicted and non-convicted to reduce risk of reoffending and harm and recognise and understand their own behaviour and the impact that it has.
- 3.10.8 Work to increase understanding and awareness of the extent and impact of domestic abuse in local communities, agencies and organisations and develop a coordinated approach for domestic abuse awareness raising opportunities.
- 3.10.9 Strengthen existing partnership working to prevent and tackle domestic abuse across Swindon to protect victims.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Not to support the Swindon and Wiltshire Domestic Abuse Strategy.

## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Although there are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from development of the strategy Domestic Abuse the financial and social cost to both public sector agencies, the wider community and those directly affected are significant.

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## Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human rights have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations within this report are compatible with Convention Rights.

## All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There should be no significant staffing or other implications arising from this report.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed by the Community Safety Team in respect of the Strategy. Changes to the Strategy have been made to encourage a broader understanding and awareness of the impacts of domestic abuse. Page 7 of the Strategy refers to not only raising public awareness but also to undertaking targeted campaigns in local communities to raise awareness that domestic abuse is not restricted or confined to age, gender or particular ethnic groups. A copy of the DIA is available from the Community Safety Team or from the Head of Housing and Community Safety.

## Risk Management

- 5.5 No specific risks were identified at this stage for the report. However not addressing issues around domestic abuse is likely to have a negative impact on health outcomes for all concerned.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1. Swindon and Wiltshire Strategy to reduce Domestic Abuse.