

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	19 SEPTEMBER 2023	9

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021 – PART IV DUTIES

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of Lead Member for Social Wellbeing (Councillor Chris Dixon).

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1. To update the Executive Committee on the work of the Housing Service to meet our Statutory Duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021; and
2. To request approval of a fully funded revenue budget increase for the total of £35,030 to be met by DLUHC New Burdens Domestic Abuse Grant in 2023-2024.

New Burdens Funding is provided for accommodation-based support provided by Local Authorities to victims of domestic abuse under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021(2023-24). Following the introduction of the Act Fylde Council have been awarded £33,196 in 21/22, £33,224 in 22/23 and £35,030 in 2023/24.

Fylde Council will continue to work in partnership with Wyre Council and Fylde Coast Women's Aid (FCWA) to support victims and their children by the provision of a Housing Outreach Worker to engage and support female and male victims and their children. The post is employed by FCWA with the remaining funding being used to enhance other support services in place to enable victims to either, remain in their own homes or set up a new home.

RECOVERABILITY

This decision is recoverable under section 7 of part 3 of the constitution.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approval of a fully funded revenue budget increase for the total of £35,030 to be met by DLUHC New Burdens Domestic Abuse Grant 2023 – 2024.

REPORT

Part IV Duties Domestic Abuse Act 2021

1. Four main objectives of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 are to:
 1. **Promote awareness** – to put domestic abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, and raise public and professional awareness
 2. **Protect and support** – to enhance the safety of victims and the support that they receive

3. **Transform the justice process** – to prioritise victim safety in the criminal and family courts, and review the perpetrator journey from identification to rehabilitation
 4. **Improve performance** – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas, agencies and sectors
2. Fylde Council's duties under the Domestic Abuse Act fall under Part IV under which the new burdens funding is provided. This includes the provision of outreach support, emergency accommodation provision, operation of a sanctuary scheme and assistance with securing accommodation.
 3. In order to take forward the duties under Part IV Fylde Council work in partnership with Wyre Council and FCWA to employ a Housing Outreach Worker to engage and support female and male victims and their children since November 2021. The role undertakes support for victims who have remained in their own homes or been accommodated in emergency temporary or Refuge accommodation.
 4. Fylde Coast Women's Aid (FCWA) offers free advice and support to individuals living in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, stalking and child sexual exploitation. Initially a service level agreement (SLA) was in place for a 12 month period to 31/03/2023 to undertake the Housing Outreach Worker project. A new SLA has been signed to continue the project for a further two years 23/24 and 24/25.
 5. The project provides training for housing staff and other teams within the local authority who may come across domestic abuse situations and require an insight into the warning signs, support required and actions to take.
 6. Initially a legal expenses budget was held by FCWA to assist clients where applicable with non-molestation orders, occupation orders and prohibited steps. The Legal Fund has been reduced in this year's SLA to £1,000 as FCWA have found that it is rarely used, the main reasons for this are;
 - There is no fee to issue an injunction and workers are trained to help clients complete the forms
 - Most of the clients that FCWA support through child contact orders etc. are either on benefits or low incomes and are entitled to legal aid
 - FCWA workers utilise the 30 mins free advice service that solicitors offer
 - FCWA also hold a legal clinic for clients each Thursday when a solicitor attends the office, this must be prearranged.
 7. A Sanctuary Scheme is operated via Preston Care and Repair connected to the Handyperson service. This service supports households experiencing domestic violence to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so and where it is their choice. The service also ensures that when clients move into their new home security measures can be installed.
 8. In 22/23 the Housing Outreach Worker supported 43 clients who approached the Homeless Service fleeing Domestic Violence. In Quarter 1 23/24 the service has supported 21 clients. Appendix 1 contains case studies of two recently supported clients.
 9. Table 1 below details the support provided for clients since 22/23. The provision of emergency accommodation if clients have fled their own homes is essential and though clients are requested to consider a Refuge placement due to the specialist support they would receive, the majority of clients refuse this as an option. In addition Refuge placements will not accommodate clients with a history of drug or alcohol misuse.
 10. Since 22/23 to the end of quarter 1 23/24 the Service has supported 15 clients into alternative accommodation the majority being successful in securing accommodation with a Registered Provider. Two of these clients have been supported into the private rented sector with Rent Bond and Rent in Advance.
 11. The Sanctuary Scheme provided by the Handyperson arrangement with Preston Care and Repair will complete home security assessments and complete required works. If the accommodation is owned by a Registered Provider they will complete the works. The uptake of this service has increased significantly over the past 18 months.
 12. Household items includes carpets, furniture and white goods.

Table 1 : Support provided for under Part IV Domestic Abuse Act

	Provision of emergency accommodation	Removals, storage and kennelling	Rent Bond/Rent in Advance	Households items	Sanctuary Scheme Health Home Assessments with Security Measures	Supported into alternative accommodation
22/23	5	5	1	4	11	12
Qtr 1 23/24	3	4	1	0	11	3

13. The Domestic Abuse Act places a Duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities to appoint a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. Fylde Council attend the Board to represent the interests of Tier 2 Local Authorities from the North region and report back on measures in place in Fylde to meet Part IV duties. This is a multi-agency board that undertakes specific functions; assessing the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support; developing and publishing a Domestic Abuse Strategy for the provision of support; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Strategy; and, returning data sets for Lancashire to DLUHC.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	√
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	√
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

IMPLICATIONS

Finance	The committee is requested to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase for the total of £35,030 to be met by DLUHC New Burdens Domestic Abuse Grant in 2023-2024.
Legal	Duties under Part IV Domestic Abuse Act
Community Safety	Sanctuary Scheme in place
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

[Finance and Democracy 30th Jan 23 – Domestic Abuse Act Funding 22/23](#)

[Environment, Health and Housing – 24th Jan 2023 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Update](#)

[Finance and Democracy Committee – Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Funding for enhanced support](#)

[Finance and Democracy Committee – 7th October 2021 – Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

[Environment, Health and Housing 2nd September 2021 – Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

[Environment, Health and Housing 15th June 2021 – Fylde Council handyperson and sanctuary pilot scheme](#)

BACKGROUND PAPERS REVELANT TO THIS ITEM

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	2021	Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Domestic abuse - Lancashire County Council

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Kirstine Riding	Email & Tel 01253 658569	23/08/2023

Attached documents
Appendix 1 – Case studies

Appendix 1

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 19TH SEPTEMBER 2023

Case Study – Clients supported via Housing Outreach Support Worker

CASE STUDY 1

Client referred to FCWA following approach to Fylde Housing Service. Female with 2 young children. Client identified as high risk domestic abuse case, client placed in emergency temporary accommodation due to no availability in refuge in the Fylde Coast area. Emergency Wi-Fi provided due to children needing it for homework. Client supported to apply for a non-molestation order, prohibitive steps order and child arrangements order with Legal Aid through a Solicitor.

Assessment completed and joint working with Fylde Council Housing Service client referred to Lancashire Victim Support, Lancashire Women and Minds Matters. Client accepted for a social housing property and funding sourced for 3 seater sofa, double bedding pack, 2 medium rugs and a set of pans. Sanctuary security measures have been installed in new home. Case now closed.

CASE STUDY 2

Client approached Fylde Housing Service and assessment attended by Housing staff and FCWA Housing Outreach Worker. Female with one child. Client identified as high risk domestic abuse and referred to IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service at FCWA.

Safety plan completed with client in temporary accommodation.

Social housing property secured and safety plan updated. Shortly after safeguarding concerns raised in new home due to Perpetrator finding out where they lived and continuing threats including threats from a third party. Refuge placement offered, but refused.

North West Fire and Rescue Service attended to secure electric and letter-box. Sanctuary Scheme assessment completed and new measure installed.

TAF (Team around the Family) established by Social Services and ongoing support with FCWA continues. Options to change child's school being considered.