

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet Council	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	2 February 2023 2 March 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Adoption of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy		
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director of People (Communities)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	Yes	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

### Summary:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (DA) places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to

- Form a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAPB)
- Conduct a Local Needs Assessment
- Develop and Publish a Strategy
- Give effect to the Strategy
- Monitor Strategy effectiveness
- Report back to government via the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office.

Sefton has had a Domestic Abuse Strategy for several years. We have taken the opportunity, following the statutory duty placed on the LA following the DA Act, to refresh the existing strategy to not only meet our statutory requirements but to reach much further in addressing such an important issue.

### Recommendation:

#### Cabinet:

That Cabinet recommend to Council, as per the Constitution, the adoption of the 5-year Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy as part of its statutory responsibilities.

#### Council:

That Council approve the adoption of the 5-year Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy as part of its statutory responsibilities.

### Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

By adopting the strategy, the Council can bid for additional funding streams that will serve to address the priorities contained within. The strategy will also ensure compliance

with statutory requirements and prevent any intervention from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

By adopting the strategy, the Council, and wider partnership, will have an overarching strategic document to inform the delivery of services and can bid for additional funding streams that will serve to address the priorities contained within .

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** (including any Risk Implications)

The alternative option is to not adopt the strategy which will leave the Council vulnerable to future funding allocations and risk Domestic Abuse Commissioner intervention.

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs**

The Council will receive **£619,418** in New Burdens Funding for 2023/24 in order to discharge its duty under Part 4 of the DA Act.

The Council also funds the following Domestic Abuse related activity :-

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors
- Management oversight
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Coordinator
- Commit to Change Coordinators and facilitators
- Services from Sefton Women and Children’s Aid (SWACA)

**£737,920 Total**

**(B) Capital Costs**

None

**Implications of the Proposals:**

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
None	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
None	
<b>Equality Implications:</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment Included at Appendix 2	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes

Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes

In adopting the strategy this will have a neutral effect on the climate emergency.

**Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:**

Protect the most vulnerable:  The delivery of the strategy aims to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the impacts of living within a household experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities:  The delivery of the strategy will ensure a wide range of services are in place to support and protect victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, including children.
Commission, broker and provide core services: N/A
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener N/A

**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

**(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7091/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5291/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

**(B) External Consultations**

External consultations with stakeholders has taken place.

**Implementation Date for the Decision**

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Steve Martlew
Telephone Number:	07973 988996

Email Address:	steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk
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## **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers:**

There are no background papers available for inspection.

### **1. Introduction/Background**

1.1 The DA Act came into force in April 2021 and is the biggest piece of DA legislation ever. It introduced several new measures that can be broadly broken down into 3 categories

- Governance
- Support for victims/survivors, their children, and families
- Strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators

1.2 The statutory responsibility placed on the LA by the Act are:

- Formation of Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAPB). Sefton's LDAPB was formed in March 2021 with Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing as Chair.
- Conduct a Needs Assessment. An external consultant was appointed to complete this work and this was completed and signed off in September 2022.
- Develop & Publish a Strategy. Sefton has a published strategy and has done for several years. The purpose of this report is to adopt the refreshed version which meets the requirements of our statutory responsibilities but reaches much further.
- Give effect to the Strategy. Once adopted the New Burdens funding will be used to commission services to address the gap in service provision for DA victims, their children, and their families.
- Monitor Strategy effectiveness. We are developing a data dashboard to support the work of the board.
- Report back to government via the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office. We are required to submit an annual report to the Commissioner and engage with their regional office.

### **2. Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028**

2.1 The Sefton Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028 is a multi-agency partnership document developed by Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board following the completion of a comprehensive local domestic abuse needs assessment which helped identify what we need in Sefton and builds on work of the previous local Domestic Abuse Strategies. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all key stakeholders in Sefton have a consistent understanding of the issues surrounding domestic abuse and their roles and responsibilities in addressing them. Domestic abuse cannot be tackled in isolation. It requires joint

working across a wide range of departments, agencies, and partnerships, including those beyond the usual statutory and specialist organisations associated with domestic abuse. The Strategy is attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 At its core is the need to ensure the voices and experiences of domestic abuse survivors shapes Sefton's approach to the development and delivery of services so that they provide what is needed. This includes ensuring there are a range of specialist support services available to address a wide variety of needs. It means really listening to what it feels like for victims of domestic abuse and understanding the challenges and barriers they face across all services and not just related to specialist domestic abuse support. It includes being able to challenge perpetrator behaviours safely and working to hold them to account.

2.3 This strategy sets out how we will do this in Sefton over the next five years. It outlines the key themes partners will focus on and identifies priorities which will be translated into practical areas for action which will be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The strategy is based around three strategic themes:

- **Prevent** – Early intervention and prevention to reduce the cycle of abuse.
- **Protect** - Keeping victims and their families' safe whilst challenging the behaviour of perpetrators.
- **Repair** - providing ongoing support beyond crisis intervention and developing resilience for the future.

It also incorporates the elements of Sefton's Safe Accommodation Strategy for victims of domestic abuse which the local authority is required to have as part of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

2.4 Domestic abuse is a key element of the Violence Against Women and Children (VAWG) agenda. However, it is acknowledged that VAWG also includes a range of other linked but separate subjects, such as human trafficking and modern slavery, honour-based violence harmful practices and child exploitation. These areas will be covered in the Safer Sefton Together Strategy 2023-2026.

2.5 Domestic Abuse cannot be addressed in isolation and therefore the strategy also includes a list of boards, partnerships and strategies, together with a list of other legislation where the work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board overlaps and a strategic link needs to be maintained.

2.6 Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will be responsible for the monitoring of the Strategy and will oversee the development of a Strategy Action Plan and Performance Framework which will set out the detail of how the priorities will be delivered.

The Partnership will also review the strategy on an annual basis and will consider:

- Progress made against the strategy's objectives.

- The overall impact and effectiveness of the strategy measured through the strategy outcomes
- New legislation or government directives for incorporation in the strategy.
- Local need and any other emerging priorities.