

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 24 December 2021

Report Title

Domestic Abuse Additional Funding Proposals

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal assent in April 2021. As the Act creates new statutory duties for Local Authorities, 'new burdens' funding has been provided by the Government.

In an August 2021 report to Cabinet, the majority of funding was allocated, however, a remaining underspend of £134,000 was delegated for a future officer decision to be taken by the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. In addition to the unallocated funding, some of the projects are now projecting an underspend. This report presents proposals for further expenditure in relation to those underspends and unallocated funds in order to ensure funding is utilised within this financial year, in line with Government requirements. The proposals within this report have been developed with partners through the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and have been agreed by the Chair.

Recommendations

1. That the recommended funding proposals, totalling £255,570 are agreed by the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment.

List of Appendices Included

Background Papers

[Draft Statutory Guidance](#)

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Fact Sheet](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Name of Committee – Click here to enter a date.

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Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Domestic Abuse Additional DLUHC Funding Proposals

1. Background

1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act places a range of new statutory duties on Local Authorities and as a result, Government have provided £125m nationally to support the new burdens. The grant amount for Rotherham is £618k for the year 2021/22 and whilst not yet confirmed, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have indicated it is likely to continue at similar levels for at least the next three years.

1.2 The total current budget, including commissioned services, in house provision, oversight and management is in the region of £839k. With the addition of the DLUHC new burdens funding, the budget is now in the region of £1.5m.

1.3 Various items of spend have been previously agreed as detailed below; however, the allocated funding must be spent in full by 31st March 2022 meaning further spending should be considered as a matter of urgency.

1.4 The options have been informed through a range of processes which includes a full Domestic Abuse Service review conducted in 2019, which took account of the views of service users, victims and survivors. In addition, officers have consulted with various Council departments and both the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and the Cabinet Member for Domestic Abuse Strategy.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The funding allocation (£618,000) must be spent within the 2021/22 financial year. Whilst ideally services need to conduct a thorough needs assessment, reshape the local strategy, and then make longer term decisions in relation to funding of services, the conditions in relation to the funding means that it has to be spent and therefore quick decisions need to be made.

2.2 The following table details the spend previously agreed by Cabinet and the projected actual spend to 31st March 2022.

Agreed	Value	Projected Spend to March 22	Provider
Maintain 5 council properties for support of DA Victims	£50,000	£50,000	Council
Increase contract value for refuge provision to increase support levels.	£60,000	£60,000	Rotherham Rise
Safer Options Project	£88,000	£88,000	Rotherham Rise
2x 12 Month DA Homeless Roles	£69,000	£17,500	Council

Homeless Prevention and Safe Accommodation Fund	£15,000	£15,000	Council
CSU Service Manager Role	£20,000	£20,000	Council
Domestic Abuse Analyst	£35,000	£9,000	Council
LGA Graduate	£29,000	£29,000	Council
Domestic Abuse Strategy Lead	£49,000	£12,500	Council
Domestic Abuse Coordinator on Partnerships and Quality	£49,000	£49,000	Council
Communications/Campaigns	£20,000	£5,000	Council
Total Commitment as per Cabinet Paper	£484,000	£355,000	-

2.3 As can be noted from the table above, a number of initiatives which involve recruitment have been delayed and in one case, no suitable applicants were found. These posts are likely to be filled in the new year and as a result the projected spend above totals £355,000. This leaves a total projected underspend on the £618,000 allocation of £263,000.

2.4 In some areas, further costs have been identified which are incurred by the Council in relation to delivery of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provisions. In particular this relates to the delivery of the Safer Options Project where the budget is requested to be reprofiled in order to cover the full costs incurred as a result of this project during the current financial year. The budget agreed by Cabinet was £88,000, whilst the full year cost of the project is £137,375 meaning a further £49,375 is required. Prior to the funding award the Council had incurred these costs directly and hence the reprofiling of the expenditure.

2.5 As a result of the projected underspend the Council has worked with partners through the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to develop a range of further proposals in order to meet local need whilst also delivering on relevant aspects of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The following table briefly outlines the proposed additional activities that are recommended for approval, including the reprofiling of the Safer Options Project as referenced above.

2.6

Proposed	Value	Provider
Safer Options Budget Reprofiling	£49,375	Rise
4x People Upskilled to Support All Risk Levels	£9,600	Council
Festive Period DA Out of Hours Support Car	£8,648	RR/ITC/SYP
Weekend DA Out of Hours Support Car Pilot	£30,270	RR/ITC/SYP

Safe Accommodation Counselling Support	£4,427	Rothacs
Safe Accommodation Individual Counselling Pilot	£11,250	Rothacs
Upskilling Workers to Trauma Informed	£5,000	Rise
10x CEASE Perpetrator Intervention Programmes	£6,000	Remedi
Administrative Support – Existing Resource	£30,000	Council
8 Council Properties for Support of DA Victims	£56,000	Council
Accredited Online Upskilling for DA Professionals	£25,000	Rise
DA Children and Young People Support	£20,000	Rise
Total	£255,570	-

2.7

Upskilling to Support All Risk Levels

- 4 workers will be upskilled so that they are able to support victims at all risk levels.
- Statutory guidance under the Domestic Abuse Act states that expert help should be provided to all victims, this upskilling would help towards ensuring these workers can provide expert help to victims at all risk levels.
- Priority 3 of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027 details the Council's commitment to provide relevant training that will help minimise harm to victims.

2.8

Upskilling Workers to Trauma Informed

- Trauma informed whole service training for DA services – this evidence-based training will be delivered in January and February by My Sisters Place. This will be for the whole workforce at Rotherham Rise to ensure that the organisation works in a trauma informed way.
- Statutory guidance states that where gaps in support are identified, commissioning authorities should explore the use of training for services already commissioned to ensure needs are being adequately met.
- In the Domestic Abuse Strategy, we are asking agencies to provide strategic training for their workforces; this should be something we look to support.

2.9

Festive Period DA Out of Hours Support Car

- The support car will engage both victims and perpetrators via the immediate provision of face-to-face specialist support, contributing to the risk assessment process, providing necessary safeguarding intervention.
- The car will run from Monday 20th December – Monday 3rd January.

- The purpose of the car will be to offer additional support to DA victims at the time of incident to help reduce repeat victims; it is not to take away from the existing role/response of 24/7 police. The Police and DA Car interventions should complement each other to provide an enhanced service, not to duplicate any work.
- This joint agency piece of work is in line with priority 1 of our Domestic Abuse Strategy to Drive Change Together.

2.10

Weekend DA Out of Hours Support Car Pilot

- As above, but during the weekends from January through to the end of March. If the pilot is successful, we will look to fund this long-term using further rounds of funding.

2.11

Safe Accommodation Counselling Support – Space to Breathe

- Rothacs will provide a session once a week that can be accessed by those living in safe accommodation.
- The mid-week session will be for one and a half hours where tenants of the safe accommodation facilities can come to the Rothacs building and talk freely to their therapeutic session provider. There will be workshops and sessions planned but the time will be led by the individuals allowing them to choose the trauma informed practice they want to work on that session.
- Sessions will be loosely based around the current pre-therapy course.
- Statutory guidance states that counselling and therapy, including emotional support, fall under relevant support in safe accommodation.

2.12

Safe Accommodation Individual Counselling Pilot

- A specialist domestic abuse trauma counsellor will provide individual counselling to people identified from the accommodation project. They will assess their suitability and if agreed they will provide up to 5 sessions (to end of March 2022) of individual trauma counselling without the need to refer into the traditional referral route to Rothacs.
- If this pilot is successful, Rothacs will look to employ a counsellor for 4 days on a long-term basis utilising further rounds of DLUHC funding.

2.13

10x CEASE Perpetrator Intervention Programmes

- 10 CEASE group programmes will be delivered in January 2022 to 15 young people at a time. This work is done on a targeted basis with children and young people in the early stages of involvement with Domestic Abuse and/or those young people displaying controlling and coercive behaviour or identified as 'at risk' of involvement due to their peer group, previous incidents and/or the level of their vulnerability.
- Priority 2 of the Domestic Abuse Strategy outlines our commitment to prevention and early intervention offering pathways to support to potential perpetrators.
- Perpetrator interventions form a vital part of the holistic strategy for tackling domestic abuse in the Borough. The government has recently called upon local authorities to implement holistic strategies.

2.14

Administrative Support – Existing Resource

- 2.15
- Moving over existing administrative costs from April 2020 – April 2021.

8 Council Properties for Support of DA Victims

- 2.16
- Expanding the previously agreed proposal of 5 houses to incorporate a further 8.

Accredited Online Upskilling for DA Professionals

- An accredited online upskilling course will provide DA professionals with specialised knowledge and skills to work with DA victims. The course will take a holistic approach covering issues including housing and court hearings.
- There will be 20 places provided, 8 of which will be made available to statutory partners in Rotherham.
- Statutory guidance states that where gaps in support are identified, commissioning authorities should explore the use of training for services already commissioned to ensure needs are being adequately met. This course will ensure DA professionals across Rotherham are up to date and fully equipped in the work with victims.

2.17 DA Children and Young People Support

- Support will be provided to children and young people (CYP) (and their families), who are affected by Domestic Abuse as direct victims or witnesses with both immediate and delayed reactions.
- Delivered using as a child centred and trauma informed approach, the project involves a range of community-based interventions:
 - 1:1 bespoke support for CYP 5-18 years
 - Work with CYP to improve their understanding and ability to communicate their feelings and experiences in a safe environment.
 - Delivery of Up2U Youth programme 1-1 / group
 - Drawing and talking child/parent narrative therapy.
- The Domestic Abuse Act guidance details how provision of support should be for all victims of domestic abuse and their children. Children's support, including play therapy and child advocacy, is listed as one of the key priorities for local authorities regarding the new burdens funding.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 The Council has considered a range of options to meet the needs of victims and the new duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 however, due to the short timescales relating to the current funding the Council has focussed on initiatives that are deliverable within the timescales.

3.2 It is recommended that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment, following the consultation carried out with the Cabinet Member and local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, approves funding options for the current financial year with any further underspends used to support

staffing costs incurred by the Council in order to deliver the Domestic Abuse Act requirements. Implementation will take place immediately following approval.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The options have been informed through a range of processes which includes a full Domestic Abuse Service review conducted in 2019, which took account of the views of service users, victims and survivors. In addition, officers have consulted with various Council departments and both the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and the Cabinet Member for Domestic Abuse Strategy. These proposals have been agreed by the Chair of the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and developed with partner members of the Board.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Implementation will be immediate, following approval.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 The financial information is set out within the report and the commitments sought are in line with the existing revenue budgets that are in place.

6.2 The proposals indicated at section 2.6 in this report are on the basis of grant funding arrangements and as a result there are no direct procurement implications. Grant funding arrangements are used to support activity being undertaken by an organisation, but where the nature of the legal relationship created is to spend the money in accordance with the grant conditions specified.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 As noted within the report the Council has statutory duties to fulfil in relation to Domestic Abuse. Details of the links between the proposals and the relevant duties are covered within the body of the report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 Human resource implications are outlined in the report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Improvements to the domestic abuse offer will have a positive impact on both

children and vulnerable adults.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Enhancing the service offer seeks to improve accessibility to services. Within both core services and any housing related offer equalities are actively considered to ensure the service is accessible for all. The proposals have been developed on the back of a robust needs assessment, which is a requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no additional implications brought about by this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1. Domestic Abuse requires a partnership effort in order to have a positive impact. Many of these proposals seek to positively enhance relationships with partners, such as the joined-up response car pilot which involves both victim and offender-based services.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There remains a risk that all funding may not be spent by the 31st March 2022 deadline however, this will be closely managed and mitigation bought forward if required.

14. Accountable Officers

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

