

16 March 2020**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS PROJECT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise Committee of the progress on the violence against women and girls (VAWG) project, and on the evaluation so it can be shared with the Home Office.
2. To approve the recommendations proposed by officers in response to the evaluation report (paragraph 17) and identify any additional work required.

Information**Strategic Context**

3. Ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) forms part of the agenda to tackle domestic abuse, sexual violence and child and adult safeguarding.
4. In the UK, 1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse (equating to 56,756 women in Nottinghamshire). The Crime Survey of England and Wales estimates 20% of women have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims with 5 out of 6 victims (83%) not reporting their experiences to the police. An estimated 3.1% of women (510,000) aged 16-59 experienced sexual assault in the last year.
5. The Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (2016 – 2020) set the national ambition to eliminate violence against women and girls. By 2020 it aimed to reduce the prevalence of all forms of VAWG, as well as increase reporting, police referrals, prosecutions and convictions (HM Government, 2016). This was completed through partnership working with local authorities, the NHS, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), the specialist VAWG sector and other local partners to create a secure foundation for a range of support and educational services.
6. In 2017 Nottinghamshire County Council partnered with Nottingham City Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner and secured three years funding to deliver services across the city and county from April 2017 to March 2020. As part of this bid there was a requirement to evaluate the work undertaken.

Evaluation approach

7. The evaluation was managed by Nottinghamshire County Council's Public Health Division between August to September 2019. The aims were to:
 - Explore the work undertaken by the three delivery organisations
 - To evaluate the objectives of the funding award
 - Identify needs and recommendations
 - Identify areas for improvement
8. The evaluation utilised a mixed method approach gathering quantitative data from each service, supplemented by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with service/project managers.
9. The remainder of this report summarises the evaluation which was undertaken specifically in relation to structure and the outcomes from the project. (Full details in Appendix 1)

Structures

10. The Nottinghamshire partnership initially received £445,822 split over three years. In 2018/19 an additional budget of £36,980 was provided by the Home Office to increase provision in year, which created the new budget total of £482,802. The funding was secured to deliver services to address some of the local gaps and inconsistencies in support available to women and girls and invest in prevention work. No funding was allocated for evaluation or the management and administration of the fund. The evaluation was completed by an external medical student on a professional work rotation placement within the Nottinghamshire Public Health Team.
11. The funding was used to ensure there was consistent, coordinated and equal provision of services across the County and City. It was provided to three organisations;
 - Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Service (NSVSS)
 - Juno Women's Aid previously known as Women's Aid Integrated Services (WAIS)
 - Equation
12. Independent advocates were appointed to give a voice to those who feel voiceless, enabling victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence to pursue justice and put the building blocks in place to begin a new life, free from fear, abuse and violence.
13. Independent advocates also play a crucial role in the community. They provide essential training to key agencies such as the police and the Crown Prosecution Service, which greatly improves the way they respond to cases of domestic violence. These are the Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs).

Outcomes

14. In accordance with Home Office requirements organisations were performance managed at six monthly intervals. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that over the course

of the project there was an increase in the demand and need across the services with an increase in the number of ISVA posts used to support clients.

15. Positive impacts were noted with clients, particularly on their emotional and mental wellbeing. Positive feedback was received from teachers and pupils in relation to the prevention work in schools. The partnerships that had been developed with key organisations were identified as strengthening service provision for clients.
16. The evaluation also identified challenges for women and girls trying to access mainstream mental health services to address the trauma incurred from their domestic or sexual abuse. The VAWG funded services partially bridged this gap.
17. The evaluator provided four generic recommendations for consideration by the Home Office and local commissioners. Following a review of the evaluation and further consideration of implications, it is recommended that the authority will;
 - Ensure all vulnerabilities are considered and risks to prevent violence and provide support to women and girls are listed within domestic abuse and sexual abuse service specifications, future developments and within the Violence Reduction Strategic Needs Assessment.
 - Ensure that prevention services build upon the information in the evaluation report by promoting and targeting resources to schools and communities, recognising the positive impact services make on children and young people.
 - Write to the ICS highlighting the current challenges for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse accessing support from mental health services and notify the ICS of the end of the funding and potential increase in demand.

Financial Implications

18. The Home Office funding ends in March 2020, closing the VAWG grant, and terminating the specialist provision.
19. Financial options to draw on the work established over the past three years through the VAWG grant, the evaluation and recommendations are being considered in collaboration with the partner commissioning organisations. This includes:
 - Domestic abuse support services in the County have recently been re-commissioned including IDVA provision for high risk survivors. The learning from the specialist approach provided through the VAWG funding to be shared.
 - Similarly, an established broad Prevention, Promotion and Training contract with a £20K annual budget and a £35K single year (Sept 2020/Aug 2021) additional allocation to deliver preventative training to children affected by domestic abuse, has been procured, enabling the continuation of the domestic abuse work already established through the VAWG funding.
 - The commissioning of a new sexual violence and abuse (SVA) service for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is being led by the OPCC who have successfully applied for additional funding through the NHSE high volume fund.

20. It is noted that the VAWG strategy aligns with the agenda established in the draft Domestic Abuse Bill (2019). It is anticipated this Bill will be reinstated into the parliamentary programme. Following its approval, the Bill will establish the national direction and finance for this work.

Reasons for Recommendations

21. To share the report with the Home Office, highlighting the valuable contribution of the VAWG funding in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, in reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls.
22. To highlight the partnership and collaborative success achieved in securing and delivering this programme, through the shared engagement between the three statutory commissioners in relation to the VAWG agenda; Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
23. To build on the learning from the evaluation report to influence future service developments and commissioning.
24. To share the identified local concerns regarding the implications of ending this specialist grant in light of the increased demand and complexity of women's situations being reported by the IDVA and ISVA services. Also, the concern regarding the future sustainability of effective tailored engagement with young women and men through the preventative workshops, as well as the sustainability of the broader community initiatives that challenge unacceptable behaviour and introduce empowering and inclusive cultural norms that is fundamental to ending violence against women and girls in Nottinghamshire.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) To approve the recommendations identified by public health for the authority
 - Ensure all vulnerabilities are considered and risks to prevent violence and provide support to women and girls are listed within domestic abuse and sexual abuse service specifications, future developments and within the Violence Reduction Strategic Needs Assessment.

- Ensure that prevention services build upon the information in the evaluation report by promoting and targeting resources to schools and communities, recognising the positive impact services make on children and young people.
 - Write to the ICS highlighting the current challenges for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse accessing support from mental health services and notify the ICS of the end of the funding and potential increase in demand.
- 2) To identify any additional work required from officers arising out of the evaluation report
 - 3) To approve and share the evaluation with the Home Office who provided the funding to Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 06/03/2020)

26. The report falls within the remit of Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee under its terms of reference.

Finance Comments (DG 13/02/2020)

27. There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report. Domestic abuse support services in the County have recently been re-commissioned at an annual cost of £1.4m, funded from the Public Health Grant.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All