

18 December 2023**Agenda Item:****REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****DOMESTIC ABUSE STATUTORY DUTY FUNDING - ALLOCATION OF THE
UNDERSPEND****Purpose of the Report**

1. To gain approval for the reprofiling of domestic abuse statutory duty funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the continuation and extension of existing domestic abuse safe accommodation services.

Information

2. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 established a statutory duty on local authorities in England to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. Funding is provided to each Local Authority to support the delivery of this statutory duty. Nottinghamshire received £1.52 million in the first year of funding (2021/22) this has increased slightly each year with funding agreed to 31 March 2024 and future years expected at similar levels.
3. The new legislation requires local authorities to undertake a safe accommodation needs assessment, publish a strategy and to spend the funding in line with the findings. Nottinghamshire County Council worked with partners in early 2021 on a commissioning plan designed to meet the recommendations arising from the safe accommodation needs assessment. This plan gained approval from Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in July 2021 for a three year commissioning plan. This funding provided greater security to existing services as well as enabling some new services to be commissioned.
4. Due to commissioning and procurement processes and delays due to recruitment, a number of budget lines accrued underspends in year one (2021/22). This underspend of £500,000 has been carried forward each year and utilised within the existing commissioning plan. The underspend is currently estimated at £749,082 to be carried forward to 2024/25.
5. Table 1 shows the planned utilisation of the underspend for enhanced elements of domestic abuse support over the next three financial years (2024/25 to 2026/2027), this will then commit £711,000 of the underspend.

Table 1 Proposed allocation of Domestic Abuse Duty underspend

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Extend the contract length for the men's safe accommodation support service and flexible funding	£47,000	£47,000	£47,000
Helpline enhancement and promotion for men and women	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000
Enhance the training on offer from Equation to reach more professionals across Nottinghamshire	No additional	£30,000	£30,000
Additional units (maximum of 5*) of safe accommodation with support for both women and men and those facing barriers to accessing existing provision	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Increase in staffing hours (Band B increased from 0.6 to 1.0 FTE) and pay awards plus training	£25,000	£25,000	£30,000
Increasing Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Costs – support to District Councils for accreditation	£5,000	£10,000	£10,000
Total (annual)	£212,000	£247,000	£252,000
Total underspend to be committed (2024-2027)	£711,000		

*number based on size of unit and additional requirements of families

6. Future underspends are now less likely to emerge as allocations are set and commissioning plans are in place to reduce the likelihood of significant underspends emerging in future years.
7. All necessary legal and procurement advice regarding the contracting arrangements for domestic abuse services from March 2024 has been received and further information will be discussed with the Adult Social Care and Public Health Commissioning Board in January 2024 in order to transact the various call-offs and contract variations that would require extending, if this decision is approved.

Other Options Considered

8. Domestic Abuse Duty funding can only be used on activities that support the delivery of safe accommodation pathways for domestic abuse survivors. This funding cannot be used for the general domestic abuse support, limiting the options available.
9. The options presented in Table 1 maintain and enhance activity to support the established domestic abuse safe accommodation pathway, retaining staff. An alternative option would require new contracts and needs assessments to be completed.
10. There is a plan in place to use all the Domestic Abuse Duty allocation in 2024/25 and 2025/26 with further enhancements to refuge accommodation support, further reducing the potential of underspends emerging in the future.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. These proposals will support the delivery of our statutory duty and the aims of the domestic abuse strategy by providing additional support to men, supporting women with additional needs, enhancing helpline provision and increasing the specialist training available for domestic abuse support staff. These enhanced services will address gaps previously identified within the needs assessment / deep dives completed in 2022 and will help to improve domestic abuse outcomes for Nottinghamshire residents.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. 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.

Financial Implications

13. Funding is from the ring-fenced grant to deliver the Domestic Abuse Duty. Funding is provided annually from DLUHC.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. Reallocated funding supports the domestic abuse agenda by providing funding for services for men, women and children.

Human Resources Implications

15. The proposals will require an increase in staffing hours of an existing post from 0.6 to 1.0 FTE.
16. Trade Union representatives have been contacted and confirmed they had no comments.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

17. Reallocated funding supports the domestic abuse agenda by providing funding for services for men, women and children.

Implications for Residents

18. Reallocated funding supports the domestic abuse agenda by providing funding for services for men, women and children.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) Approve the reprofiling of Domestic Abuse Statutory Duty underspends to improve domestic abuse outcomes.
- 2) Approve the Council undertaking the necessary procurement activity and entering into the relevant contracts to give effect to the underspend reprofiling outlined in Table 1. Such

contracts will be finalised by the Director of Public Health in conjunction with the Group Manager for Legal and Democratic Services.

JONATHAN GRIBBIN
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Constitutional Comments (LPW 14/12/2023)

19. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health by virtue of their terms of reference.

Financial Comments (DG 13/12/2023)

20. The current underspend for the Domestic Abuse funding is £749,082 to be carried forward as part of the Public Health reserves into 24/25. Table 1 in para 5 details £711,000 to be utilised over the following 3 years which will leave a balance of £38,082 currently unallocated.

HR Comments (WI 14/12/2023) The HR implications are outlined in paragraphs 15 and 16. Where there is reference to an additional staffing resource requirement, this will be established and recruited to in line with the Council's relevant policy and procedures.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in July 2021](#)
 - Item 4 Improving outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse
 - Improving outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse - Appendix 1
 - Improving outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse - Appendix 2
 - Improving outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse - Appendix 3

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All