

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 9 DECEMBER 2021

ABERDEENSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE HOUSING GUIDANCE

1 Reason for Report/Summary

- 1.1 To set out the response of Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service (the Service) towards preventing and addressing domestic abuse and to advise how all service users will be offered focused domestic abuse support services.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Provide comments on the draft domestic abuse housing guidance.**
- 2.2 Agree with the proposal to have focused domestic abuse support services to ensure support is available to anyone affected by domestic abuse.**

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 Housing Support Services (Homelessness) Scotland Regulations 2012 placed a duty on local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. These regulations were implemented in June 2013.
- 3.2 The Service has worked for many years with Grampian Women's Aid to provide support services to women who are victims of domestic abuse. This included the provision of specialist hostels in Aberdeenshire however in conjunction with Grampian Women's aid these have been closed to ensure services have the flexibility to provide outreach support to victims in a location that works well for them.
- 3.3 This approach also aligns with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which was approved by Communities Committee in 2019 and which also receives annual updates. As part of the RRTP the Council committed to reviewing our outreach support services to ensure they are appropriate and aligned to our aims.
- 3.4 In 2019 the Service entered into a spot purchase agreement with SACRO to provide specialist domestic abuse support to male victims and the LGBT+ community. This service is called Fear Free.
- 3.5 To comply with Procurement legislation the current domestic abuse support contracts require to be tendered. As part of this process the Service entered discussion with Aberdeen City Council and the Health & Social Care Partnership to assess if this could be a joint project. As part of this process a survey was

conducted which had a good response rate. The report for Aberdeenshire is attached at Appendix 5 and these responses have helped inform our guidance and future approach. In addition the Aberdeen City responses which included a number around provision for Male and LGBT+ specialist services has also assisted in informing the guidance. After further discussion the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council aims differed and both authorities agreed to tender separately however the housing service have agreed to jointly tender with the H&SCP to have one overall service.

- 3.6 The Chartered Institute of Housing has a Make a Stand campaign that asks all housing organisations to have a housing domestic abuse policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse. The domestic abuse housing guidance has been developed in line with this.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The Service has developed Domestic Abuse Housing Guidance which is attached at Appendix 1
- 4.2 In addition the Service has also developed a Domestic Abuse Housing Procedure which is attached at Appendix 3. The Procedure details some of the more practical assistance the Service can offer to victims including what the Service will do to comply with The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill which will enable the police and courts to ban suspected abusers from re-entering a home for up to three months. This will enable time to consider the best housing outcomes for the victim which may include remaining in the home and identifying alternative accommodation for the perpetrator from the home.
- 4.3 The Service recognise that domestic abuse predominantly affects women and children and is perpetrated by men. Future support provision and funding will take account of this.
- 4.4 It is the intention of the Service to tender for a specialist outreach service for women or anyone who identifies as a women and wants to access this service. This will be a jointly tendered service with H&SCP and the majority of funding will be provided to this service. There will be no reduction from previous funding. The financial details of the tender will be included within the Housing & Building Standards Annual Workplan in February 2022.
- 4.5 The Service also intends continuing with the spot purchase arrangement with the Fear Free service for men or anyone who identifies as a man along with specialist support for the LGBT+ community. As this is a small-scale specialist project with low levels of funding this service does not need to be tendered.
- 4.6 By ensuring both services are procured in this way the Service recognises where the majority of funding is required but also takes account of the legislative requirements to ensure specialist support services are available to all.

- 4.7 The proposed guidance has been shared with the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership for comment including the Chair Leigh Jolly, Chief Social Worker and these comments have been incorporated into the document.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 The future housing support services will help to deliver Aberdeenshire Council's priorities.

Our People – Education, Health and Wellbeing
Our Environment – Infrastructure, resilient communities
Our Economy – Economy and Enterprise, Estate Modernisation

The service is required to be person led and outcomes focused, delivering on the themes set out in the Aberdeenshire Council Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Reducing Poverty in Aberdeenshire - Housing support services will help clients with budgeting, accessing food supplies where required, promoting and supporting to live independently in their tenancy learning skills such as cooking, etc which in turn all reduces child poverty.

Connected and Cohesive Communities - Ensuring people are supported to live independently in their tenancy in an area close to their support networks and encouraging them to play an active part in their community and encourage things such as being a good neighbour, seeking volunteering and employment opportunities and accessing any support services they require based in their local area.

Mental Health and Metabolic Health – Although the service provides low level housing support many clients will have mental health issues. The support will encourage and enable clients to access the correct services.

Aberdeenshire Council Local Housing Strategy (**LHS**) sets out the strategic vision and priorities for the future delivery of housing and housing related services. The local housing strategy aims to deliver the following strategic outcomes that this service will support to deliver.

Homelessness

Improve Outcomes for Homeless People
Provide a Holistic Approach to specialist Housing Support Services

Energy Efficiency, Fuel Poverty and Sustainability

Assist Households to Maximise their Income
Reduce Fuel Costs for households across all tenures
Change Behaviours

- 5.2 Housing Support Services aim to work collaboratively with services from health and social care to achieve positive individual outcomes providing low level housing support to clients when they need it. The Health and Social Care

Partnership (**HSCP**) have five strategic aims which this service will help to support. These aims are currently under review and this service will be expected to adapt to meet the reviewed aims.

- **Prevention and Early Intervention**
- **Reshaping Care**
- **Engagement**
- **Tackling Inequalities and Public Protection**
- **Effective use of resources**

5.3 The housing support duty underpins the requirement to deliver services, while the **LOIP, LHS** and **HSCP** Strategic plan are the principles that drive the service requirement and the ways in which it is expected to operate.

5.4 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Climate Change and Sustainability		IIA attached as Appendix 1	
Health and Wellbeing	IIA attached as Appendix 1		
Town Centre First		IIA attached as Appendix 1	

5.5 There are no staffing or financial implications in this report.

5.6 There are identified risks and implications from the integrated impact assessment (Appendix 4)

5.7 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level; ACORP002 – Changes in Government Policy, Legislation and Regulation ACORP005 – Working with other Organisations ACORP006 - reputation management (including social media), and ACORP007 - social risk (e.g. population changes, poverty & social inequality, demographic changes, crime, antisocial behaviour)

6 Scheme of Governance

6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated

within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Sections B1.2 and B11.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the Committee's powers to consider, comment on and make recommendations to Services and any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts its area; and consider and comment on proposals to amend Council policy and/or develop policy in line with the Policy Development and Review Framework and make recommendations to the relevant Policy Committee.

Alan Wood
Director of Environment & Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Allan Jones, Housing Manager (Options and Homelessness),
Date 8 November 2021

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Domestic Abuse Housing Guidance
- Appendix 2 – Domestic Abuse Housing Pathway
- Appendix 3 – Domestic Abuse Housing Procedure
- Appendix 4 – Integrated Impact Assessment (PDF)
- Appendix 5 – Survey report

Appendix 1 – Domestic Abuse Housing Guidance

1. Purpose Statement

This guidance sets out the response of Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service towards preventing and addressing domestic abuse.

We recognise the impact domestic abuse has on those directly affected by domestic abuse and their families. We are committed to protecting our tenants and service users, ensuring that they are aware of the range of services available to them and how as a landlord we will assist.

We also recognise that domestic abuse predominantly affects women and children and is perpetrated by men.

This guidance reflects the aim of the Equally Safe strategy, to work collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sectors to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls and the Aberdeenshire Violence Against Women & Girls (AVAWG) Strategy and Action Plan 2019 -2021.

It recognises that the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 makes domestic abuse involving a partner or ex-partner, whether physical, emotional or coercive control a criminal offence.

Both the legislation and this guidance apply equally to all victims of domestic abuse, irrespective of gender.

This guidance is aligned to the Chartered Institute of Housing's Make a Stand campaign towards supporting those experiencing domestic abuse.

2. Definition

This guidance adopts the Scottish Government's definition of domestic abuse (also agreed by the AVAWG partnership) and takes into account the existing legislation:

“Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate those experiencing domestic abuse and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends)”

3. Scope

This domestic abuse guidance is intended to include current and future tenants of Aberdeenshire Council. The principles of this guidance will be incorporated into relevant organisational procedures including for example Housing Management, Homelessness, Housing Allocations, Anti-Social Behaviour and Repairs & Maintenance to ensure that we address any form of domestic abuse as part of our mainstream services.

The guidance is supported by a detailed procedure (**Appendix 3**)

4. Equalities and Human Rights

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out. This is to ensure that appropriate responses are in place to support the differing and intersecting needs of people with protected characteristics and that individuals' human rights are recognised and respected.

We seek to promote equality and diversity by minimising the risk of gender-based violence, whilst ensuring support is available to anyone who needs it.

5. Guidance Statement

The main aim of this guidance is to ensure that tenants and service users feel safe and are aware of the range of services available to them if they are at risk of domestic abuse.

By working in partnership with other agencies we will enable victims of domestic abuse to access information, advice and support concerning their housing options and the choices available to them.

Providing a sensitive and supportive response towards any household experiencing domestic abuse which is appropriate to their needs is in line with best practice. This includes sustaining their current accommodation, where possible, and preventing the need to present as homeless.

Adopting an early intervention approach will reduce the risk of harm and enable victims to avoid the potential trauma of emergency accommodation, living in an unfamiliar area (away from existing support networks), and reducing the likelihood of financial hardship associated with homelessness.

Considering action against perpetrators of domestic abuse where there is the power to do so and with the consent of the victim is consistent with the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and this guidance will be updated regularly to take account of the implementation of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act and any further guidance or legislation.

5.1 Prevention and Early Intervention

In collaboration with the Aberdeenshire Violence Against Women Partnership, we will work to change the attitudes, behaviours and structures that underpin domestic abuse by raising awareness and promote a pro-active partnership approach.

We will ensure that we provide information, and through training and communications, raise awareness of domestic abuse amongst housing staff and tenants, current and future - as well as the broader community. We will provide access to services and support and signpost appropriately to other organisations.

A proactive housing approach that promotes and strengthens the rights of victims of domestic abuse to remain in the home may include:

- Statement on domestic abuse within the tenancy agreement and within the tenant handbook
- Promotion through information, leaflets and online material
- Statement on actions that may be taken against a perpetrator of domestic violence
- Adopting an `eyes and ears approach` to reporting concerns

5.2 Housing Options

Victims of domestic abuse will be offered a range of housing options and advice, based on their individual circumstances and assessed needs. These options will include

- Supporting victims to get appropriate information and advice to ensure they understand their rights and Housing Options, including legal advice as necessary
- Supporting victims to remain in their home if that is their choice. This may include signposting to sources of funding for additional security measures, providing support to transfer the tenancy to their name or rehousing the perpetrator.
- Maximise the flexibility of the housing options available to those experiencing domestic abuse including management transfers to support victims to make planned moves and avoid homelessness.
- Enable victims to access focused domestic abuse support as required

5.3 Homelessness

We will reduce the impact of homelessness as a result of domestic abuse by:

- Removing potential barriers in accessing the waiting list or registering interest in properties advertised through CBL by ensuring support is available where required
- Taking account of legitimate safety concerns regarding any property offered or its location to minimise risk
- Liaising with partners, including Education to facilitate children remaining at the same school, where possible, to maintain social contacts and continuity of learning.
- Reducing the financial consequences of homelessness arising from domestic abuse by:
 - Providing removal and storage facilities to enable victims and children to keep their possessions
 - Providing access to appropriate financial advice and assistance to address any debt issues and to plan for future.
 - Removing the rental charge overlap on two homes when moving from temporary to permanent accommodation
 - Facilitating access to Community Care Grants
 - Taking domestic abuse into account as a special circumstance when considering whether to recharge victims for repairs required to a property

5.4 Action against perpetrator

We will consider appropriate action against perpetrators of domestic abuse which may include:

- An offer of alternative accommodation to perpetrators who are willing to move on a voluntary basis if they are engaging with housing staff
- Converting the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) of a perpetrator to a Short SST where there is a conviction committed in or around the tenancy that the perpetrator remains a tenant of.
- Raising an action, in exceptional circumstances, to seek possession of tenancy where there is sufficient evidence of a relevant ground for repossession.

6. Confidentiality

We recognise the importance of confidentiality to those who experience domestic abuse.

We promote the ability to make homeless presentations in ways that best suit the individual, including by telephone. Those experiencing domestic abuse are not required to disclose the reason for their visit in public areas or repeat their stories to different members of staff.

It is essential that the Domestic Abuse Housing Guidance is underpinned by robust information sharing.

Information sharing will be in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 as appropriate and proportionate in order to access suitable housing and support.

7. Support

It is vital that victims of domestic abuse can access appropriate levels of suitable support, aimed at ensuring the best possible outcomes. We recognise that a partnership approach is the best way to support victims and intervene with perpetrators. By working with partners victims can receive support and advice while housing issues are resolved and long-term support to recover.

We are working with Aberdeenshire HSCP to jointly commission a service that will provide outreach floating support to ensure practical and emotional support and advice and advocacy on matters such as housing, safety planning, risk management, legal options and health and welfare issues.

Intensive support may be required at the initial point of presentation, with ongoing outreach support available at times of transition, and when move-on accommodation is identified. This will be prioritised and made available through the commissioned domestic abuse service.

We will ensure we have specialist domestic abuse support services to meet the needs of Woman, Men and the LGBT+ community.

8. Systematic Approach

This guidance will be delivered in accordance with agreed pathway and protocols.

This will be achieved by:

- Provision of Plain English information that outlines agreed processes, roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring that all staff have a consistent understanding of domestic abuse is and how to respond appropriately to support victims in relation to housing.
- Management and monitoring of the Domestic Abuse Housing guidance by the Housing Management Team

9. Training

To ensure the delivery of a consistent systematic approach to domestic abuse, an e-learning awareness raising course developed by Safelives with support from the Scottish Government has been made available on ALDO. This is available to staff within the Housing Service and to other partners.

The domestic abuse awareness raising tool (DAART) provides information on the definition and prevalence of domestic abuse, general awareness and identification, the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and safe responses and referral pathways.

This will be supplemented by delivery of the Housing Options Toolkit, an online staff resource that includes modules covering accessing and maintain existing accommodation and specific information on domestic abuse and VAWG.

Any commissioned domestic abuse service will be expected to deliver training and awareness sessions for staff as required.

10. Collaborative/partnership working

We will continue to work alongside relevant third sector partner agencies and statutory services to ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse receive consistent and effective support. Housing services are also key partners in the violence against woman and girls partnership.

A representative of Housing will attend multi-agency meetings such as Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Multi Agency Tasking and Coordinating meetings (MATAC) to ensure that relevant information is shared between partners.

We will provide relevant information in relation to the housing situation of the person who is experiencing domestic abuse, perpetrator or any other individual deemed relevant within the referral. We will provide an informed opinion about actions that housing can take to mitigate the risk to the person experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse cases highlighted through the regular Anti-Social Behaviour Hubs are followed up with an offer of support if required.

11. Information and advice

It is important that victims of domestic abuse can access information and advice in a variety of formats.

Written information on domestic abuse is available in a variety of formats and written in Plain English. This includes both leaflets and on-line information.

Translation services will be provided where required.

12. Risk management

Housing staff will be trained to identify the signs of domestic abuse and encouraged to explore this with individuals in a sensitive manner. This includes potential, perceived or real risks. As well as identifying risk, housing staff are expected to make timely referrals where appropriate for assistance with housing and/or support

13. Responsibilities

The Housing Management Team will review this guidance in line with changing legislation and feedback from staff, partners and those directly affected by it.

14. Legislative context

- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/5/contents/enacted>
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/13/contents>
- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2001/14/contents>
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1987/26/contents>

Appendix 2 - Pathways for victims of domestic abuse

Where a victim of domestic abuse no longer feels safe in their existing home, three options exist, depending on whether they are at immediate risk of harm:

- 1. Accessing emergency accommodation** (available to all victims of domestic abuse, regardless of tenure)
 - Contacting Council Options & Homelessness team to make homeless presentation to access the most suitable/available emergency accommodation based on assessed need and risk (during office hours only)
 - Contacting the Out of Hours Service (after office hours or weekends)
 - Accessing support
 - Continuous review of the placement with a view to moving to more/less supported accommodation as appropriate
 - Consideration of converting suitable temporary accommodation to a secure tenancy, with an alternative property being offered back to the Temporary Accommodation Service

- 2. Management transfer**
 - Assessing the victim's existing tenancy to establish if criteria are met to put forward for a Management Transfer.

- 3. Permanent re-housing**

Maximise opportunities for re-housing.

Where a victim needs to be permanently re-housed this may be achieved by:

- Bidding /being allocated a suitable property through Aberdeenshire Council or RSL partner
- Accessing alternative tenures e.g. private rented accommodation, mid-market rent etc.

Appendix 3

Domestic Abuse: Procedure for Housing Staff

1. General principles

- 1.1. All housing staff to receive appropriate induction and ongoing training and be alert to the signs of domestic abuse and how to obtain specialist advice and support.
- 1.2 Victims of domestic abuse need to feel safe and supported in order that they can talk about their experiences. The initial response from housing staff is important and may determine the actions that the victim takes.
- 1.3 Discussion to take place where the victim feels safe and comfortable and where confidentiality can be assured.
- 1.4 It can add to distress to be asked to repeat details of domestic abuse. Where written consent has been given information can be shared with partner agencies to enable access to services.
- 1.5 Victims may be concerned about losing their home, possessions, family support, friends, social networks and employment; as well as the upheaval of having to potentially move and change their children's schools. They may have also been financially dependent on the abuser and are worried about future income and resources. Being drug and alcohol dependent as a way of coping with the situation could also be a sign of abuse.
- 1.6 A person-centred approach recognises that victims may have communication difficulties or their first language is not English. Their support needs may differ due to their age, disability, gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender. They may also fear reporting will bring unwanted attention to their personal circumstances (e.g. their sexual orientation)

2. Advice and Assistance – no immediate need for accommodation

- 2.1. Clear advice and assistance on the range of housing options open to should be provided during a Housing Options interview. This will include advice to prevent homelessness and enable victims of domestic abuse to remain safely in their home where possible. It will include the following:
 - Access to independent information and advice including legal advice
 - Support remaining at home
 - Signposting and assisting to access additional security measures
 - Assistance to bid for property through CBL or to access the Private Rented Sector through use of the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and input from Housing Officer (PRS)
 - Signposting to an appropriate agency and services for advice and safety planning depending on their particular needs and circumstances. Where the victim is a woman or someone who identifies as a woman this would be Womens Aid, for men and members of the LGBTQ+ community it would be Fear Free.
 - Referral to outreach floating support

3. Homelessness – immediate need for accommodation

- 3.1 Should a homeless application need to be taken the following measures will help to reduce the impact of homelessness and domestic abuse

- Temporary Accommodation will be available and accessible 24 hours per day with follow up the next working day by the Housing Officer who will deal with the assessment and management of each case through to it being closed with homelessness resolved.
- Use of Hostel type accommodation should be avoided where it is possible to do so as this can increase the fears of someone having to share spaces with others.
- Where temporary accommodation is provided – it should meet the Unsuitable Accommodation order, time spent in temp should be kept to a minimum and breaches should be avoided.
- If a child is displaced from their local school area discussion should be had with social work and education to consider travel warrants to enable education to continue as consistently as possible.
- Homeless case management will include assisting with bidding, addressing safety concerns regarding potential allocations and liaising with agencies to meet the needs of children.
- Victims of domestic abuse who are unable to remain permanently within their existing accommodation will not be required to occupy temporary accommodation to receive a statutory homeless determination. The service understands some victims will remain in their home to protect themselves and/or their children and by not wanting to move to temporary accommodation does not suggest they are not a victim.
- If required removal and storage of personal belongings and furniture will be provided and depending on circumstances this will be free or at a reasonable cost.
- Access to financial advice and assistance should be provided through referral to the Welfare Rights Officer or other independent advice agencies including CAB.
- Consideration will be given to addressing any overlap in rental charges when moving from temporary to settled, permanent accommodation. Consideration can also be given to providing a rent free period whilst someone moves from their family home.
- Access to Community Care Grants will be facilitated by referral to Housing Officer (CCG) and should be marked as a priority.
- Conversion of temporary accommodation to a Scottish Secure Tenancy (flipping) will be considered where appropriate and with agreement of the occupant.
- Access to the prevention fund to flexibly assist victims of domestic violence and to aid resettlement and tenancy sustainment should be considered where required.
- To ensure digital inclusion access to IT equipment and services should be considered as part of any move.

4. Tenants of Aberdeenshire Council

- 4.1 Tenants will be assured that domestic abuse will be taken seriously. It is anti social behaviour and it can constitute a breach of tenancy and grounds for repossession.
- 4.2 Tenants affected by domestic abuse will be provided with comprehensive housing options advice including the management transfer process.
- 4.3 Households affected by domestic abuse may require temporary accommodation to be provided to allow them to enforce or secure their legal rights to a tenancy. We will provide the necessary support to enable this to be explored.
- 4.4 Tenants affected by domestic abuse may request assistance to secure their property. This may include changing or adding locks or providing additional security measures. These requests will be considered and actioned as appropriate

- 4.5 Where there are repeated repair requests involving damage to the property this may raise concerns and front line staff will be encouraged to flag these to enable appropriate support to be made.
- 4.6 It may not be appropriate in all cases for damage to property to be recharged. Any costs will be considered in line with any known information about domestic abuse. These costs should be recorded differently.
- 4.7 A victim-centred approach will be taken to support any legal or other action necessary to transfer a tenancy to the victim of domestic abuse and to rehouse the perpetrator where they are willing to move and engaging with housing staff.
- 4.8 Police action will be supported where appropriate

5. Survivors with no recourse to public funds

- 5.1 Customers with no recourse to public funds are not eligible for council housing. We understand that this can create a difficult situation however the housing service has no control over this. Although the Housing Service cannot provide accommodation we will work with colleagues and other agencies on a case by case basis to enable provision of appropriate support and advice and the housing service should also consider the Foreign Nationals guidance alongside this.

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Assessment Required in relation to new Domestic Abuse Guidance in Housing and Domestic Abuse Outreach Floating Support Service.

During screening 6 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 3 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities

In total there are 12 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by rob.simpson2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	No Negative Impacts Identified
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	Not Required

4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe	Yes			
Healthy	Yes			
Achieving	Yes			
Nurtured	Yes			
Active		Yes		
Respected	Yes			
Responsible		Yes		
Included	Yes			

4.2. Rights Indicators

UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy	Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 19 - Protection from all forms of violence Article 27 - Adequate standard of living
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4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Achieving	Children living within a household where domestic abuse is taking place may experience emotional or psychological effects that can have a detrimental effect on all aspects of their life including low self esteem and anxiety. Identifying and supporting households affected by Domestic Abuse - providing access to stable accommodation and signposting to appropriate support can address this.
Healthy	Identifying and supporting victims of domestic abuse enables children within those households to receive appropriate advice, assistance and access resources, including suitable accommodation, that promotes wellbeing both physically and emotionally
Included	Supporting households affected by Domestic Abuse to access appropriate services and practical assistance and to move on with rebuilding their lives will enable children within those households to be helped to overcome social, educational and economic inequalities and feel accepted within the community in which they live and learn
Nurtured	Providing access to support and appropriate resources for victims of domestic abuse with families allows the needs of the children to be met. When safety and health needs are identified and met, when parents feel supported and safe then children can feel nurtured.

Impact Area	Impact
Respected	Access to Domestic Abuse services and appropriate support for households that include children, enables them to have the opportunity to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them
Safe	The Domestic Abuse Housing Policy sets out a clear response towards preventing and addressing domestic abuse and recognising the impact it has on victims and their families. Harm on children is recognised in the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. Children are negatively affected by seeing or hearing abuse and can be described as the `forgotten victims` of domestic abuse.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Online Survey	During June/July 2021 an online survey was conducted to gain views from those affected by domestic abuse in relation to what support and assistance they would require from a local authority. This was a joint survey with Aberdeen City Council. 4 respondents of the survey were aged 16-26 and 48 survey respondents had children.	We were able to collect views from those affected by Domestic Abuse.

4.5. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

An online survey took place between 10th June 2021 and 16th July 2021 to gather views on what requirements may be in relation to the support service we would like to commission. 111 responses were received and some of these respondents were young people who had been subject to domestic abuse.

4.6. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

For children, it is recognised that exposure to Domestic Abuse can have negative effects on behaviour, mental health, education and future relationships. It is important that by assisting those affected by domestic abuse to move to or remain in secure settled accommodation and access the appropriate support it will improve outcomes overall for children and young people within the family unit or young people who have been subject to domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse policy has been shared with the Violence against Women and Girls partnership in Aberdeenshire and comments incorporated into the policy.

4.7. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

By supporting anyone affected by domestic abuse we aim to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse. The service we are procuring will support children in the family home as well as the parents.

4.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

By ensuring a holistic service is provided to the family unit of anyone affected by domestic abuse there are no negative impacts identified. The service safeguards children and young people within the family and provides safety planning and support to women.

5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)		Yes		
Age (Older)		Yes		
Disability		Yes		
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth		Yes		
Material deprivation	Yes			
Area deprivation		Yes		
Socioeconomic background	Yes			

5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Low income	Those affected by Domestic Abuse can sometimes be living in poverty or have their income restricted by the perpetrator. By providing Support to those affected by Domestic Abuse we can ensure they are aware of their rights and help with income maximisation.
Material deprivation	The Domestic Abuse Housing Policy considers access to appropriate accommodation and the measures that will be considered to assist households to successfully manage moves and to promote tenancy sustainment. There is recognition that households may require access to community care grants, digital equipment, specialist money advice and measures that will minimise the financial negative impact including free removal and storage of household belongings, removing rental charge on two homes and reviewing recharges where damage has arisen due to domestic violence.

Impact Area	Impact
Socioeconomic background	By ensuring support is given to those who are subject to domestic abuse or have been subject to domestic abuse we can improve life chances for those accessing our services. This may or may not include assisting someone to leave their family home and move to a new location for a fresh start. Support is provided in relation to all aspects of the person's life which includes accessing additional support services in relation to mental health, wellbeing and education and employment support.

5.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Domestic Abuse Survey	<p>Over the course of June/July 2021 a domestic abuse survey was carried out and 111 responses were received. This was a joint survey with Aberdeen City Council. A summary of the survey is as follows:</p> <p>111 responses were received and 85 of the respondents had been subject to domestic abuse. 100 respondents identified as female, 10 identified as male and 1 as other.</p> <p>The main areas affected in their lives were mental health and confidence. This was closely followed by engagement with the Local community.</p> <p>64 of the respondents had talked to someone about the abuse and most had spoken to friend or family, closely followed by a professional and only 8 had talked to homelessness services.</p> <p>Most advised they wanted emotional support, closely followed by safety planning and help to leave their abuser.</p>	All of the results of the survey have been considered by staff preparing the new tenders for housing support and staff involved in working in options and homelessness and the survey will inform the contents of both the service specification for support services and the domestic abuse housing policy.

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Consultation	Internal Trickle Employee Engagement Platform	<p>A post was placed on our internal employee engagement platform asking for views on how domestic abuse support services should be provided in future.</p> <p>Responses were received from staff with an interest in the subject and staff felt it was important to get services for both men and women and that safety planning was an important feature of any support offered.</p> <p>Support needs to be easily accessible and support should be at the victims own pace and they should be able to drop in and out of support as required.</p> <p>Consideration of access to the service outwith office hours.</p> <p>Inclusion of LGBTQ and gypsy traveller communities.</p>	It is important staff have a say as to what is required as they are working in services who offer advice, assistance and support to victims of abuse on a regular basis.
Internal Data	MARAC Statistics 2020	In the Calendar Year 2020 1956 incidents of domestic abuse were recorded via Police Scotland in Aberdeenshire. Of these 746 victims were male, 1479 were female and 1 identified their gender as other. Not everyone reporting a domestic incident seeks assistance from services and a number of those who responded to our online survey had not contacted police scotland.	MARAC data is a good way of identifying the need for services in Aberdeenshire but we must also acknowledge that not all victims report the abuse to Police Scotland.

