

GROWTH, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
19 MARCH 2024	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman, Executive Director, Place & Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Peter Hiller, Cabinet member for Housing, Growth and Regeneration	
Contact Officer(s):	Vickie Crompton, DASV Partnership Manager Rob Hill, Service Director Housing and Communities	Tel. 01733 707070

DOMESTIC ABUSE GUIDANCE FOR PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Rob Hill, Service Director, Housing & Communities Vickie Crompton, DASV Partnership Manager</i>	Deadline date: <i>19th March 2024</i>
It is recommended that the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee review and comment on the proposed Domestic Abuse Guidance for Peterborough City Council Members.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following the Motion from Cllr Trust on 1st November 2023, which asked that scrutiny committee consider guidance in relation to domestic abuse for members.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 To consider and comment on the Domestic Abuse Guidance for Peterborough City Council Members.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by the Council:

3. Equalities

2.3 How does this report link to the Children in care Promise?

Following the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, children who hear, see, or witness domestic abuse from parents or care givers are considered victims of domestic abuse.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Domestic Abuse is prevalent across all communities.

According to Office of National Statistics, in the year ending March 2022, an estimated 2.4 million adults (1.7 million women and 699,000 men) had experienced domestic abuse and the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by police in England and Wales increased by 7.7% compared with the previous year. Those from minority backgrounds (for example the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities) experience domestic abuse disproportionately.

In Peterborough in 2022-23 there were 2,387 police incidents which were “non crimes”, such as “verbal non crime domestic abuse” - and 4,160 crimes recorded which were domestic abuse related. We know that the majority of people subjected to domestic abuse do not report this to police, and from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, there were estimated to be 7,000 people aged 16 years and over, subjected to domestic abuse in 2022/23 in Peterborough.

Domestic abuse is a gendered crime which disproportionately affects women, with the majority of perpetrators being male. Domestic abuse cuts across all cultures, communities and class, and is a concern to all agencies across the city.

4.2 There are a range of specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence support services in the city, funded by Peterborough City Council, Public Health, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. These include:

- The Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Service
- The Domestic Abuse Support Service
- Peterborough Women’s Aid Dahlia Project, B-United and specialist outreach
- Provision of one refuge and 3 units of dispersed safe accommodation.
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- Peterborough Rape Crisis

4.3 At Cabinet on 1st November 2023, Councillor Trust present a motion highlighting the following:

“Members are often the first point of contact in the local community; some are subject to and most deal with domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment reports from residents.”

The motion proposed that the Council develop member specific domestic abuse guidance, to include the support available for members when dealing with residents who report domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The motion was unanimously supported by all councillors, and resolved to:

- *Refer the Domestic Abuse and Guidance for Members to the relevant committee for consultation.*

4.4 The proposed guidance can be seen at Appendix One. In summary, it sets out the following -

- An overview of what is domestic abuse
- The support available for employees and Councillors subjected to domestic abuse
- How to support those in the community who may be subjected to domestic abuse
- Local resources and support services

4.5 Member Training

Members will be offered training/awareness for alongside this guidance, provided by officers from the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership Team.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 This work links to the following corporate priorities:

1. Our Places and Communities: creating healthy and safe environments where people want to live, work, visit and play, enabled by effective community engagement and strong partnerships.
2. Prevention, Independence and Resilience: help and support our residents early on in their lives and prevent them from slipping into crisis.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation has occurred with the following:

Corporate Leadership Team – October 26th 2023

Full Council – November 1st 2023

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 This policy will be used to ensure members have guidance to respond appropriately to disclosed or suspected domestic abuse. The policy will inform the training that members can receive.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Cllr Trust's Motion of 1st November 2023 set out the following:

"Members are often the first point of contact in the local community; some are subject to and most deal with domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment reports from residents".

Therefore, this recommendation is necessary for all members to receive guidance and awareness regarding domestic abuse and their response to it where this is disclosed or suspected.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 To have no guidance in place for members to refer to.

DISCOUNTED – Cllr Trust's motion recognised the benefit from developing a members' policy to ensure Councillors were more aware of domestic abuse challenges and able to signpost support where required.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 *No financial implications.*

Legal Implications

10.2 *No legal implications.*

Equalities Implications

10.3 Peterborough City Council recognises that survivors' experiences of domestic abuse may in part be defined by their background and this intersectionality is recognized. Certain individuals may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and be more likely to experience domestic abuse. The groups at greater risk include women, low-income households, those who are pregnant or recently given birth.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 [Councillor Trust's Motion](#) 1st November 2023

3. Motion from Councillor Trust - The Council notes:

- The issue of domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment remains prevalent in our communities.
- According to Office of National Statistics, in the year ending March 2022, an estimated 2.4 million adults (1.7 million women and 699,000 men) had experienced domestic abuse and the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by police in England and Wales increased by 7.7% compared with the previous year.
- Those from minority backgrounds (for example the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities) experience domestic abuse disproportionately.
- Members are often the first point of contact in the local community; some are subject to and most deal with domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment reports from residents.

The Council believes:

- No one should experience or live in fear of violence or abuse.
- All reports of domestic abuse should be taken very seriously and consider the needs of individuals by working in partnership with specialist agencies to provide to a coordinated response.
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence strategies across the Council and city are raising 98 awareness, supporting victims and providing opportunities for training for all.
- The Domestic Abuse and Guidance for Members (draft enclosed) sets out our commitment to support members and provide guidance on dealing with residents who report domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The Council resolves to:

- Refer the Domestic Abuse and Guidance for Members to the relevant committee for consultation.
- Encourage members to take part in training sessions to consolidate understanding of the guidance when it is implemented.
- Encourage male members to take the White Ribbon Pledge to support the eradication of violence against women and girls.
- Improve communication of ongoing events, support services and make information on domestic violence more visible on the front page of the Council website.
- Support the ongoing work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership to:
 - o Deliver Peterborough's Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) project, to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process.
 - o Deliver targeted strategies and interventions that prevent future harm, in accordance with the findings of the Violence against Women and Girls Needs Assessment.

12. Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Member guidance