Domestic violence services

Context

The provision of domestic abuse services is one of the priorities within the Safer Ealing Partnership Strategy specifically relating to tackling vulnerability and building confidence and resilience. It is also one of the strands outlined within Ealing’s Violence against Women & Girl’s Strategy.

The provision of these services for residents of Ealing supports the Future Ealing objectives in relation to supporting those who are vulnerable and reducing crime.

The effects on children living with the experience of domestic violence are diverse and profound and can have both short and long term cognitive, behavioural and emotional effects. Having a service which provides skilled and specialist therapeutic support to children and young people helps to reduce the impact domestic violence has on their lives.

The provision of the service for children supports the Future Ealing objectives in relation to supporting safeguarding children and keeping them free from harm.

Budget

The proposed budget for domestic violence services from 2019 is £0.260m per year for 4 years (2019/20 to 2022/23) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

The Council want to ensure victims of domestic violence have access to a service that safeguards the safety of the victim and their children and empowers them to begin the process of re-building their lives to become independent and resume control of their lives.

The funding provided for domestic abuse services will continue to ensure access to

- A general domestic abuse service for men and women offering support, safety planning for victims and their families for a period of twelve weeks.

- A specialist domestic abuse service for the BME community offering support, safety planning for victims and their families for a twelve week period recognising that in some cases a longer period may be required for complex issues which specifically affect BME communities.

- A service providing therapeutic support to children and young people experiencing the effects of domestic violence referred via social care, schools or other professionals or by self-referrals by parents. The service will include parenting support to help parents understand the impact of domestic violence on family life and supports them to make new arrangements for their children.

These services will be free to victims and their families at a point where many are at their most vulnerable.

Main changes from 2015/19 funding arrangements

It is proposed that the generalist and specialist domestic abuse services continue to be funded at their current level; however, as agreed in a Cabinet Report – Approval to procure
advocacy services – (Item 17 - November 2015), it is proposed that services will move from grant funding to funding through a contact. The Dynamic Purchasing System for independent advocacy services (DPS) enables the Council to choose the most appropriate provider based on specialism/quality/price for specific needs.

The intention to move these services from grant funded services to contracts will ensure that the available money is protected for the provision of these services. It also enables the council to include specific targets and objectives to ensure the funding is directed at the identified needs of the borough. Being part of the DPS will also open up the possibility of working with other providers offering specialist advocacy such as mental health to provide a holistic service utilising agencies expertise and offering the possibilities of sharing resources as well as pooling budgets.

This change will have an impact on those organisations which are currently providing these services via grant funding for 2015-19 as, in order to bid for a contract, all potential service providers for domestic abuse services are required to register under the DPS scheme. There are advantages however to being a part of the DPS as this will open up other contract opportunities for them.

Therapeutic support services will continue to be provided but it is not intended that this service would move to the DPS due to the need for services to be imbedded within children social care and for there to be clear and ongoing referral pathways.