

Appendix 2 - Progress on work to implement the Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support for Sussex; and to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls

1. Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support

- The Pan-Sussex Strategic Framework for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2021-24 has been refreshed following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the National Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy. The East Sussex Action Plan has been developed with key stakeholders and will be monitored through the East Sussex Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Management Group.
- Plans from all three Sussex authorities will be overseen by the newly established Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. An independent Chair has been appointed and is due to start in August.
- The Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support (published January 2022), follows the comprehensive needs assessment of support in safe accommodation commissioned by the three Sussex upper tier local authorities, and produced by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.
- One of the priorities identified by the needs assessment is to ensure that domestic abuse safe accommodation meets the needs of children and young people; including those with disabilities and protected characteristics. The Council has commissioned a Children and Young People's Service within East Sussex refuge with New Burden's funding attached to the Domestic Abuse Act through Clarion Housing, as the commissioned refuge provider. The service is being developed with engagement from children and young people in refuge.
- The Strategy commits local authorities and their partners to be 'responsive to disadvantage, establishing specialist provision to support victims/survivors with specific needs, including multiple and complex needs (MCN). This is a priority for East Sussex and a model to commission support in up to 12 units of safe accommodation for those with MCN for the next five years has been worked up in partnership with District and Borough colleagues. The model of support has been integrated with the Respite Rooms pilot (for homeless women at risk of domestic abuse) and the Changing Futures Programme in East Sussex.
- The needs assessment also identified the need for a broader menu of safe accommodation options which meets the needs of those with protected characteristics and from marginalised groups. Further units of dispersed accommodation with specialist floating support is being explored, with further engagement from those with lived experience.
- Additional roles have been recruited to support with the implementation of the Act:
 - Pan Sussex Community Development Worker to develop a Pan-Sussex Lived Experience Board to amplify the survivor voice at a strategic, commissioning and governance level.

- A Senior Practitioner in the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Development Team to focus on and support the development of a 'whole housing approach'.

2. Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

- Collaborative working with Sussex Police to tackle VAWG includes shared data capture of VAWG-related incidents and linking police colleagues with leads in other agencies to ensure initiatives and actions on the East Sussex Police VAWG Plan are co-ordinated and to avoid any potential duplication e.g. VAWG educational packages delivered both by the police and ESCC to secondary schools.
- ESCC has completed the accreditation process for White Ribbon and a three-year action plan has been developed, focused on engaging with men and boys both in terms of prevention and early intervention to address VAWG, and in raising awareness of VAWG within communities.
- As part of the East Sussex Youth Cabinet Domestic Abuse Campaign, a survey for young people was developed and distributed to East Sussex secondary schools for year 9 pupils and above. The survey incorporates questions on VAWG, including street harassment, and the results will help to inform the response to VAWG for young people in East Sussex.
- Awareness raising of forms of VAWG and the National VAWG Strategy to professionals and the public.
- Over the coming year, the following will be delivered in response to VAWG in East Sussex:
 - Multi-agency delivery of VAWG training, including harmful practices to ESCC staff and key agencies, as well as dedicated training sessions in schools and colleges
 - Supporting delivery of the multi-agency Pan Sussex Harmful Practices Strategy 2022-2025
 - Regular communications to key stakeholders and ESCC staff on all forms on VAWG, resources, guidance and support available. This includes a review of the Safer East Sussex website VAWG pages currently underway.
 - Delivery of Year 1 commitments within the East Sussex White Ribbon Action Plan