

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Please complete this template using the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance document](#)

Version 4: January 2019

Title of proposal <i>(include forward plan reference if available)</i>	Extension of grant for the provision of community-based support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence
Directorate and Service Area	Domestic Abuse Team, Prevention and Protection
Name and title of Lead Officer completing this EIA	Maryrose Lappin Domestic Abuse Team Manager
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Names and titles of other officers involved in completing this EIA	None
Partners involved with the EIA where jointly completed	None
Date EIA completed	8 January 2021
Date EIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EIA	Neil Cox
Date EIA considered by Cabinet Member	24 February 2021

See [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for key prompts that must be addressed for all questions

1. The purpose of the proposal or decision required (Please provide as much information as possible)

The report seeks approval to extend of the grant for the provision of community-based support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence to Black Country Women's Aid for a period of three years from 1 April 2021 at a value of £287,268.

Cabinet granted approval on 31 January 2018 to undergo a competitive grant-making process for the provision of community-based support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Given the specialisms of this support, the outcome of that competitive process was that only the one application was received, this from Black Country Women's Aid (BCWA) who had been providing this support in Sandwell for many years.

BCWA were therefore awarded the grant for a period of three years. The current grant period expires on 31 March 2021. The extension of the grant will ensure that victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence are able to access appropriate community-based support.

2. Evidence used/considered

A Domestic Abuse Problem Profile was undertaken in 2020 which identifies that domestic abuse is a significant issue for Sandwell with reports of domestic abuse to police consistently increasing over the last 3 years.

Reports of rape and sexual violence to police have also consistently increased in Sandwell by 30% between 2017 and 2019.

Whilst the increase in reported incidents is of concern, it does indicate that more victims are being identified at an earlier point and coming forward for support and therefore proves evidence of the needs for the Councils continued investment in the support provided via this grant.

BCWA were awarded the grant for a period of three years which expires on 31 March 2021 and during this time have supported 4426 victims of domestic abuse and 478 victims of rape and sexual violence in Sandwell with 79% of victims reporting last year that their situation had improved following support from BCWA.

3. Consultation

Consultation to date has involved the current provider and a range of stakeholders who regularly refer clients and liaise with the provision regularly.

All partners involved in the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP) have supported the delivery of the 2017-2020 Domestic Abuse Strategy for Sandwell. Partners agreed to a model of Prevention, Provision, Protection and Partnership Working that incorporates the following elements:

- Refuge service
- Support to standard, medium and high-risk victims
- Targeted work to prevent the perpetration of domestic abuse
- A co-ordinated service working together in partnership

DASP recognises that short-term and insecure funding arrangements could have a detrimental impact on provision for victims and their children. The proposals outlined in this report to extend the grant for 3 years will assist in securing arrangements to support victims and children over the longer term and will reduce this key risk identified by DASP.

The 2020 Domestic Abuse Bill currently going through parliament will place a statutory responsibility on local authorities for the provision of support to victims and children in safe accommodation from April 2021. The draft statutory guidance which underpins the Bill also requires the provision of specialist support to victims and children to enhance their safety. The provision outlined in this report will assist Sandwell MBC in responding to the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

4. Assess likely impact

The extension of SMBC grant funding for a period of three years from April 2021 will enable the provision of specialist community-based support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence to continue without interruption. This will provide longer term stability and security for this provision for vulnerable victims and their families, avoiding risk due to short-term grant allocations with uncertainty about future availability. The grant-funded provision will be expected to reflect the cultural and demographic diversity of Sandwell and will be accessible to all victims and delivered in a sensitive way which considers individual needs in respect of age, ethnic origin, care and support needs, language, culture, religion or faith, sexuality, disability or any other lifestyle preference.

Please see further details below.

Please complete the table below at 4a to identify the likely impact on specific protected characteristics

4a. Use the table to show:

- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands (protected characteristics), that is it could disadvantage them or if there is no impact, please note the evidence and/or reasons for this.
- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within equality characteristics.

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
Age			✓	Anyone can experience domestic abuse or sexual violence. Overall in the UK, one in 4 women and one in 6 men will experience domestic violence and abuse in their lifetime, often with years of psychological abuse. It happens across all cultures and whether you are rich or poor. It happens in all kinds of relationships: heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Older victims are already less likely to report domestic abuse and sexual violence and seek help and support. The provision of specialist services would mean that opportunities for older victims to secure help and support are available. Domestic abuse also has a significant and detrimental effect on children's physical and mental health and well-being which have a long-term impact. The extension of the current grant provision will ensure there is no interruption in the delivery of support to victims aged 16 and over and their families. The current

				provider provides support which aims to meet the needs of all victims – male & female, BME, LGBTQ, care and support needs, learning or physical disability and older and younger victims.
Disability			✓	As above. National and local data inform that victims with a disability are often reluctant to ask for help and support. For example, their perpetrator may be their partner who is also be their provider of care. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for victims with a disability to secure help and support will continue to be available.
Gender reassignment			✓	As above. Victims who have gender reassignment are often reluctant to seek help and support and are under-represented in support services. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for victims with gender reassignment to secure help and support will continue to be available.
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	See above. People in civil partnerships, where two people are of the same gender are known to be less likely to report domestic abuse and sexual violence. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for those victims to secure help and support will continue to be available.

Pregnancy and maternity			✓	Domestic abuse often starts or escalates during pregnancy. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for pregnant victims to secure help and support will continue to be available.
Race			✓	See above. Victims from black and minority ethnic communities face additional barriers to reporting domestic abuse and accessing services. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for victims from BAME communities to secure help and support will continue to be available.
Religion or belief			✓	See above. Victims from particular communities, including communities of religion or belief, can face additional barriers to reporting domestic abuse and sexual violence and accessing services. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for victims from those communities to secure help and support will continue to be available.
Sex			✓	Whilst men do experience domestic abuse and sexual violence, the majority of victims reporting to police and seeking access to specialist services are women. Most perpetrators are men. To date, there have been thirteen victims of domestic homicide in Sandwell since April 2011 (the date when the statutory responsibility to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews came into place). Twelve of these victims have been women and the perpetrators have all been men. 2 women per week are killed in England and Wales by their partner or ex-partner. The provision will encourage referrals from both male and female victims and enable them to receive appropriate support.

Sexual orientation			✓	See above. Domestic abuse happens in all kinds of relationships: heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. However, those victims are often reluctant to report and seek help. The provision of specialist services will mean that opportunities for victims from those communities to secure help and support will continue to be available.
Other				

Does this EIA require a full impact assessment? Yes No ✓

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then you do not need to go any further. You have completed the screening stage. You must, however, complete sections 7 and 9 and publish the EIA as it stands.

If you have answered yes to the above, please complete the questions below referring to the guidance document.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

Not applicable

6. As a result of the EIA what decision or actions are being proposed in relation to the original proposals?

To continue with the recommendation.

7. Monitoring arrangements

The provider will be required to monitor the take up of the service by: gender, ethnicity, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, faith. The findings will be reported quarterly to the Council and discussed at grant monitoring meetings.

8. Action planning

None

9. Publish the EIA

This EIA will be published as part of the Cabinet Report and will be available on Corporate Management Information System of Sandwell Council.

Where can I get additional information, advice and guidance?

In the first instance, please consult the accompanying guide “Equality Impact Assessment Guidance”

Practical advice, guidance and support

Help and advice on undertaking an EIA or receiving training related to equalities legislation and EIAs is available to **all managers** across the council from officers within Service Improvement. The officers within Service Improvement will also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EIA documents.

Please contact:

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