

Domestic Abuse Services

DomesticAbuse.ReviewAudit@tameside.gov.uk

Chair of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

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Date: 1 August 2019

To whom it may concern,

Future Delivery of Support to Victims and their Children in Accommodation-Based Domestic Abuse Services.

I write on behalf of Tameside Council's Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. The Panel seeks to submit a formal response to the consultation on the Future Delivery of Support to Victims and their Children in Accommodation-Based Domestic Abuse Services, which closes on 2 August 2019. This letter therefore aims to provide a summary of collective points and to express any areas of issue and concern. I would be extremely grateful if on receiving this letter you are able to take the appropriate action to ensure the response is suitably recorded and submitted to the consultation.

Domestic abuse is a complex issue and requires system-wide direction and leadership to address a range of contributing factors which include social, economic and health inequalities. In Tameside domestic violence and abuse remains a significant problem when we compare ourselves against national performance and statistical neighbours.

Recent data has shown a rise in the number of Tameside residents in need of support, which includes a 12 month increase of 17% in referrals to locally commissioned support services. Pressures have been identified in the number of high and medium level cases reported to the Police, as well as the amount of referrals to Children's Services. During 2018/19, Tameside Children's Services received more than 2700 referrals with a link to domestic abuse.

At a local level there have been unprecedented pressures with regards to year-on-year budget reductions and the impact on resource planning. Despite this, key stakeholders remain engaged and arrangements are in place to deliver a shared vision to pool budgets and jointly commission services.

The impacts of domestic abuse can be far reaching, with an ongoing need to support and nurture communities. The Council has recently refreshed its corporate priorities, with a commitment from elected members, senior leaders and partners to deliver improvements across the life course of residents.

A sector-led peer review was undertaken in Tameside during July 2019, which comprised interviews with over 30 partners and stakeholders, as well as a review of current strategic and operational documentation. Findings from the review will feed into the strategic planning for the assessment of need and to consider the equity of access to domestic abuse support services, part of which includes the demand for accommodation.

I have listed some of the main points below, which are to be viewed under the collective of Tameside's Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

- In addition to the commissioning of support services, the guidance must consider and prioritise health determinants and the support that is made available to the perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- In the event that additional responsibility and accountability is placed on local authorities, there is a need for this to be accurately reflected in the future allocation of funding and resource for domestic abuse provision.
- To review a correlation that appears to exist between domestic abuse prevalence within an area and the number of residents failing to complete treatments for mental health, alcohol and substance misuse. When compared to statistical neighbours Tameside has a higher level of domestic abuse; higher number of dependent drinkers and lowest completions for alcohol and drug treatments.
- To be truly effective a partnership must monitor and address the role of treatment within the recovery process, with a long-term ambition to reduce reoffending and the demand for crisis interventions and accommodation.
- Without effective and influential leaders domestic abuse partnerships could not achieve the required influence. Council's may need to review current governance arrangements to ensure domestic abuse receives the required levels of leadership from elected members, senior managers and stakeholders.
- All partnerships need to maintain strategic and performance oversight for the commissioning of support and accommodation for domestic abuse. Early intervention and prevention must remain a priority in the way that support is co-designed and delivered.
- There remains a clear and obvious role for future guidance to emphasise and harness the ability of individuals and the wider community in identifying and reporting the early signs of domestic abuse.

If further clarity is needed on any of the above points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Teresa Smith
Chair – Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel