

SURREY DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES

Head of Service/Contact: Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) no

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annex 1 - Funding arrangements for Surrey Domestic Abuse Service

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

Following a shortfall in the funding for Surrey Domestic Abuse Services, the Committee are asked to consider mitigating the shortfall, through a contribution to the service.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee approves a financial contribution of £6,120 in 2019/20 towards the funding shortfall of Surrey Domestic Abuse Service.

1 Implications for the Council’s Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 Provision of the Surrey Domestic Abuse Service to residents supports our Corporate plan key priority of “Supporting our Community”.

2 Background

- 2.1 Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) provides valuable outreach support and advice to those who experience or are at risk of domestic abuse. Core services provided include advice, advocacy and support in relation to criminal and civil law, benefits, housing, safe planning and children.
- 2.2 Where appropriate, Council Services will refer people directly to the SDAS Service as well as work alongside them in arranging suitable safe accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse and in co-ordinating safe sanctuaries.

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- 2.3 The right support for survivors is proven to be essential to their safety and effective prosecution of offenders. The SDAS achieves positive outcomes, including survivors feeling empowered to take action. The service helps survivors feel more informed about their options and rights as well as informs them about being safe and keeping others safe and able to live a healthier life.
- 2.4 The SDAS also offers a range of complementary services to needs of their clients such as mental health support, children's services, counselling, Surrey helpline and support for Multi-Agency Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.
- 2.5 A Service Level Agreement (SLA) exists for the provision of SDAS core services. Funding of £382,000 is provided by Surrey County Council (SCC), Surrey Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
- 2.6 Surrey Community Safety Board provides strategic leadership and direction to tackle crime and disorder across Surrey and is currently chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey Police.
- 2.7 The Chair of Surrey Community Safety Board has reported the future provision of SDAS in its entirety is experiencing very significant demand as well as a growing funding shortfall and is not sustainable.
- 2.8 Consequently, the Board's Chair has requested a financial contribution for 2019/20 from each partner organisation, including this Council, to sustain this service.

3 Service demand

- 3.1 In March 2019 the Office for National Statistics reported a national increase of 24% in domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes compared to the preceding year
- 3.2 Locally the level of demand on the SDAS is reported to have more than doubled in the last 10 years. In 2017/18 it is reported the SDAS received a record 4753 new referrals, of which 89% engaged in support. This represents a 25% increase on the previous year and does not include any on-going cases.
- 3.3 The Council's Housing Service frequently works closely with SDAS and officers recognises the reported growth in the levels of reported domestic abuse and related homelessness and that domestic abuse issues are common within the borough.
- 3.4 The reasons for the apparent rise in domestic abuse remains uncertain, but it is understood that the growing awareness of domestic abuse, the willingness to listen to survivors and improvements in police practice in identifying and recording domestic abuse offences may contribute to the reported rise.

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4 Funding shortfall

- 4.1 Funding for the SDAS has been gradually eroded over the years, with loss of significant partnership and central government funding and no inflationary increase since 2008/9.
- 4.2 As a consequence, the Trustees of the SDAS have relied on funding from reserves for many years, operating in deficit, (£280,000 in December 2018), to continue to support the provision of services to domestic abuse survivors.
- 4.3 In making the request for financial contributions, the Chair of the Community Safety Board acknowledges the need to examine a longer-term commissioning plan for the provision of domestic abuse services. This work is underway in readiness for April 2020.
- 4.4 The funding of the core provision of the SDAS, are provide through a services level agreement (SLA) between:
- | | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Surrey County Council | £222,000 |
| Surrey Police | £90,000 |
| OPCC | £70,000 |
- 4.5 In addition, the SDAS relies on additional income for services outside the Service Level Agreement. Currently this Council does not contribute financially to the provision of SDAS services. The other funding sources are outlined in Annex 1.

5 Proposals

- 5.1 The proposed funding contribution for 2019/20 is set out below:

| Organisation | Contribution |
|---|----------------------|
| Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner | £10,000 |
| Surrey County Council | £10,000 |
| Surrey Police | £10,000 |
| Borough and Districts | £6,120 (per Council) |
| TOTAL | £97,320 |

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- 5.2 The implication from the proposal is that this Council would contribute £6,120 in 2019/20 towards the provision of the SDAS. Funding for this contribution could be allocated from the Council's Community Safety Reserve.

6 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 6.1 Currently the Council makes no financial contribution to the SDAS service.
- 6.2 Should the recommendation of this report be agreed, this would not incur any commitment for similar funding in future years.
- 6.3 The Community Safety Reserve currently holds an unearmarked balance of £57,700, which will reduce to £51,580 if the £6,120 contribution is agreed for 2019/20.
- 6.4 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** Should the Council be required to make a financial contribution to SDAS in subsequent financial years, funding will need to be identified within the service area.

7 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 7.1 The Council is not a party to the Service Level Agreement for the funding of services by the Surrey Domestic Abuse Service.
- 7.2 The Council does however benefit from the services from the SDAS through the North Surrey Domestic Abuse service.
- 7.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

8 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 The provision of support for domestic abuse survivors makes a positive contribution to community safety. Domestic abuse is a priority area for the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership.

9 Partnerships

- 9.1 The Council is an active member of the East Surrey Community Partnership, which includes representation from Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Surrey Domestic Abuse Service.
- 9.2 Community Safety Partnerships are an important feature of the network of partnerships that help to tackle crime and reduce reoffending and were set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

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10 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 The services provided by the SDAS are key to the delivery of services to those fleeing domestic abuse, including those at risk of homelessness. Whilst not contributing financially as set out in 5.2 above is unlikely to impact directly upon our service users, the sustainability of suitable services to those experiencing domestic abuse and the assistance in managing associated homelessness is significant to the Council.

11 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 11.1 The services provided by SDAS are critical to those experiencing domestic abuse and demand for such services remains high.
- 11.2 The Council currently makes no direct financial contribution to the provision of SDAS services.
- 11.3 The recommendation of this report is that the Committee approves the financial contribution of £6,120 in 2019/20 towards the funding shortfall of Surrey Domestic Abuse Service

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);