

**EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROCUREMENT**

16 - 23 DECEMBER 2021

**ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION OF THE DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2021-
2024**

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

On 14 December 2021, the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report on the Adoption and Publication of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024, and unanimously supported the Recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.

The following points were highlighted:

- Clarity was sought around the number of safe accommodations that could be accessed throughout the county and if there were any plans to provide any additional accommodation. Assurance was provided that within the strategy and under the commissioning section, advised of that the services currently commissioned in Lincolnshire were an Outreach and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service (IDVA) as well as a Refuge Service to support individuals experiencing domestic abuse and their children. In addition to the commissioned services there were other non-sustainably funded provision provided in the south of the county by a local charity SoLDAS. The Committee was advised that the intention was for further accommodation to be commissioned in line with the Domestic Abuse Act and funding availability, to ensure future consistency and standard across the county. A new refuge unit and dispersed accommodation was also coming into place in March 2022.
- Reference was made to disabled persons being at risk of abuse as highlighted in the report. Assurance was given that reporting of domestic abuse and data collection were featured in the strategy and there was acknowledgement that people that have disabilities, both physical and otherwise, do suffer from domestic abuse. It was also reported that the figures for Lincolnshire were not above the average in comparison to national figures. The strategy was inclusive of all individuals and victim groups, including people with disabilities.
- Lincolnshire was below the national average in terms of the number of individuals who speak a foreign language as their main language and it was highlighted that 69.3% of those who speak English well, was below the national average. It was felt that could be associated with the rurality of the county. Further information was sought as to, what mitigations were in place to ameliorate the risk of abuse suffered amongst those individuals. Assurance was provided, that translation services were available in any areas of the county where it was needed and that this was a key priority to the

partnership. Moreover, the partnership was working with workers from certain cultural backgrounds to mitigate risks and provide support.

- Members requested for further information around staffing numbers within the department, whether there were vacancies, and if younger people were encouraged to enter the sector. Assurance was offered in terms of the central partnership team that worked within Lincolnshire County Council which supported this agenda and pushed elements forward, in light of the £1.4m and the responsibilities under these statutory duties, that team was being expanded and recruitment was imminent in the coming months. In terms of the commissioned service and other services within Lincolnshire (charity-based organisations), there was staff turnover due to the nature of the work. Assurance was also provided that as part of the recommissioning process, staffing level capacity, future training opportunities for individuals looking at joining this area as well as wages were being reviewed.
- Members requested more information on the support available to staff working in this particular area, including mental health support. Assurance was provided, that this was being investigated for staff who may not be working directly with victims but were however exposed to information that can be traumatising. The commissioned service offered one-to-one provision and regular supervision not only in relation to workload but also in regard to their emotional and well-being needs. This was being monitored through official commissioning arrangements.