

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

14 FEBRUARY 2023

WORCESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD

Board Sponsor

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Author

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Priorities

This report is relevant to the following Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Homes Communities and Places

Safeguarding

This report has a direct impact on safeguarding adults and children.

Community safety work will involve a focus on children and young people young individually or as part of their family circumstances and safeguarding of vulnerable adults is a significant consideration for the SCB and its areas of responsibility

Item for Decision, Consideration or Information

Consideration

Recommendation

- 1. The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is asked to:**
 - a) note the content of the report, aimed at highlighting the role of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board (SCB), updating on current activity and key areas of focus for all partners; and**
 - b) continue to support the work of the SCB, both collectively and as individual agencies and Responsible Authorities.**

Background

- 2. In two tier Local Government, under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the Act), there is a requirement for a county group to take strategic oversight of community safety matters. This complements the work and duties of the statutory Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's), which are set up in north and south Worcestershire and led at District Council level.**
- 3. The SCB discharges its role through an annual Community Safety Agreement and action plan, the oversight of several priority areas and the governance of groups working on domestic abuse, substance misuse, reducing offending and Prevent and**

Protect (counter terrorism). It is attended by the Director of Public Health as Chair, the Chair of the HWB and supported by Public Health Safer Communities officers.

4. Section 30 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, places upon the Director of Public Health, a responsibility for their Local Authority's role in co-operating with the police, the probation service and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent or sexual offenders. They should also work with local criminal justice partners and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to promote safer communities. As such, community safety is a category of activity that can be funded by Public Health Ring Fenced Grant.

5. "Responsible Authorities," are, under the Act, currently required to exercise their functions with due regard and to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reduce reoffending. The Responsible Authorities are members of the SCB (and CSP's) and in Worcestershire comprise of:

- Worcestershire County Council (WCC).
- six District Councils (represented by the two CSP chairs).
- West Mercia Police.
- Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.
- NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire (the Integrated Care Board); and
- the Probation Service.

6. There are also additional senior representatives from Worcestershire Children First, West Mercia Youth Justice service, the PCC's office, and the Voluntary and Community Enterprise Sector.

Sub-group activity

7. The SCB is positioned to take strategic oversight at Worcestershire County level and has five strategic sub-groups; summarised below, with an update on recent activity, priorities and changing legislation.

Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

8. Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB) is the co-ordination point for supporting a partnership approach to domestic abuse in Worcestershire. Progress is being made to implement the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. A Domestic Abuse Strategy for Worcestershire is in place and there are a range of actions being developed to ensure that its ambitions are met. Current activities include Public Health commissioning a new county wide Sanctuary scheme to enable victim/survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their own home with enhanced security provisions; the commissioning of a Lived Experience advisory service with Herefordshire Council and a new Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, (MARAC), governance group chaired by Public Health and reporting to the DAPB.

9. A refresh of policy and procedure on Domestic Homicide Reviews has also been completed and as previously reported, common themes from Reviews are people suffering with mental health problems and substance misuse issues. There are currently 11 unpublished Domestic Homicide Reviews at various stages of progress, representing a significant pressure on partner staff resources.

Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group

10. Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group's current activity includes delivering the duties described in the Counter Terrorism Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty Guidance, as part of the Government's CONTEST Strategy. The focus is on training of staff of Specified Authorities (again includes Local Authorities and NHS bodies) and revised Home Office training packages are about to be introduced. WCC has built these packages into its corporate mandatory staff training arrangements. The new Counter Terrorism Local Profile for Worcestershire is presented to senior officers on 13 February by West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit and will help frame the Prevent Strategy Group actions for 2023/24. A new Problem-Solving Group has been established to share local information and identify risk of radicalisation. This has led to successful collaboration with a Further Education college, Community Safety Officers and Police in North Worcestershire where there had been right wing graffiti and stickering at a Further Education college.

Worcestershire Protect Group

11. The Government is due to legislate on a new "Protect Duty," which will require improved protective security and preparedness at certain buildings and open spaces, to mitigate the impact of any potential terror attack to places where the public have access. The responsibility for oversight and implementation of the duty will be clarified in the legislation (potentially to be enacted by late 2023). However the Government has begun to clarify the likely key elements of the Act and the attachment, (Martyn's Law Factsheet), sets these out in more detail. To date it has been primarily the Local Authorities who have been carrying out initial preparatory activities, including co-ordinating security and safety training programmes provided by West Midland Counter Terrorism Police and started to consider the impact on their own buildings and public spaces. However, this duty will apply to other Board member organisations, in particular the NHS, and clarification has been sought as to whether the Department of Health has been providing guidance and advice. The key points relate to certain eligible premises where qualifying activities take place. This would include municipal buildings, retail premises, education and health buildings amongst others and standard tier requirements would apply to buildings with capacity over 100 and an enhanced tier with over 800 capacity. The next steps are to try and ensure there is a robust but proportionate approach in preparing for the Protect duty based on current guidance.

Worcestershire Substance Misuse Oversight Group

12. Worcestershire Substance Misuse Oversight Group oversees criminal justice and health issues in relation to drugs and alcohol misuse and it has oversight of the new Drugs Strategy and its implementation. A new Herefordshire and Worcestershire Combatting Drugs Partnership Board, led by the West Mercia PCC, has been established, following national Home Office requirements. An action plan is being developed following a Local Authority needs assessment, with reporting back to the Home Office on outcomes against national priorities.

Worcestershire Reducing Reoffending Group

13. Supporting activity to reduce reoffending is a duty for CSPs and this group has oversight of strategic activity in that regard. A current focus for the group is to implement recommendations from a locally commissioned assessment on offender housing and support pathways. This is a significant cross cutting piece of work that is designed to try and reduce offending behaviours and provide a better and stable accommodation platform for people with multiple offending and health issues. A forthcoming workshop is designed to make practical progress in finalising and embedding this new pathway approach.

Areas of development

14. A new Serious Violence duty is set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, with its focus being on an evidence-based approach to preventing and reducing serious violence. All organisations and agencies subject to the Duty, the “Specified Authorities”, (Chief Officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Integrated Care Boards, local health boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services), will be accountable for their activity and co-operation. Initially a needs assessment will be required, with the publication of a strategy by January 2024, overseen by local CSPs. The three national success measures are: (1) a reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object; (2) a reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police; and (3) homicides recorded by the police. A support framework has been established with a national provider, Crest, to assist Specified Authorities with implementing the duty and will involve local consultation, briefings advice and support on assessing needs and developing plans.

15. Strategically, there has not been a fully co-ordinated partnership response to tackling sexual violence, for instance by comparison to the effective domestic abuse partnership working that is embedded in the system. To address this there has been the recent setting up of the West Mercia Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy Board, under the PCC, which will have action plans to ensure that key agencies consider their individual and collective responsibilities, starting with a prevention focus, awareness raising and training, through to direct support for victims. The focus will be on criminal justice, the commissioning of rape and sexual assault services and psychological and counselling services. Key commissioning of services primarily sits with NHSE, the H&W ICB, the PCC and Ministry of Justice. There will also be a focus on sexual violence under the new serious violence duty.

Conclusion

16. The SCB provides significant governance, system oversight and opportunities for joint agency working. There is already well-established co-operation and practical interventions that take place, but there is always more that can be achieved and that would both improve community safety and health and wellbeing. The common themes of mental health, substance and alcohol misuse, and domestic abuse will be areas where both the HWB and SCB members will want to continue to focus their strategic and commissioning intentions. New and forthcoming community safety related legislation, the development of the Integrated Care System arrangements, and a stronger focus upon the partnership support and commissioning responsibilities for victims of sexual violence will be continued areas of interest to the HWB.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

17. There are no legal, financial or HR implications arising from this report.

Privacy Impact Assessment

18. There is no privacy impact resultant from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. There are not recommendations arising from this report requiring an Equality Impact Assessment at this time.

Supporting Information:

[Martyn's Law Factsheet - Home Office in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Contact Points

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