

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD

19 OCTOBER 2023

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE REPORT

Summary

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) is asked to consider the annual update on developments in relation to Community Safety in Worcestershire.
2. Key partners involved in community safety have been invited to attend this meeting.

Background

3. The OSPB has been designated by the Worcestershire County Council (the Council) as its statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and is responsible for the consideration of Crime and Disorder matters. As part of this responsibility, OSPB meets on an annual basis with Crime and Disorder partners, to discuss issues of mutual interest.
4. Community Safety responsibilities are primarily set out under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act details the requirement for Responsible Authorities (Local Authorities, the Police, Fire and Rescue, the Integrated Care Board (formerly the Clinical Commissioning Groups) and the Probation Service) to develop policy and operational approaches to prevent crime and disorder, combat substance misuse and reduce reoffending.
5. Community Safety is not a specific “service” as such and the wide-ranging Section 17 requirements are carried out through a range of Council and Worcestershire Children First (WCF) duties and activities.
6. These include some significant commissioned services. Activities for instance include the wider safeguarding management responsibilities within the People Directorate and WCF (such as the GET SAFE child criminal exploitation services and tackling issues such as modern slavery and trafficking). There is strong partnership working which extends into the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and private sector. Much of the work is about systems leadership, coordination, and reassurance, to ensure that these responsibilities are brought together as appropriate and co-ordinated in a way that helps protect the local population. There are good working relationships with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) across the Council and WCF, with excellent

examples of co-operation in commissioning of services relating to child exploitation and domestic abuse.

7. At County level, in two tier Local Government, there is a requirement for a group to take strategic oversight of community safety matters, although it does not have the same operational duties that are required of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). The Worcestershire Safer Communities Board (SCB) discharges the statutory duty under S17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (within two tier authority areas) to provide strategic coordination and support to community safety and criminal justice activity, in Worcestershire, taking account of national legislation and guidance. It produces an annual Community Safety Agreement and action plan and has oversight of several priority areas overseeing the work of subgroups on domestic abuse, substance misuse, reducing offending and Prevent and Prepare (violent extremism). The SCB is chaired by the Director of Public Health (PH) and administered by dedicated officers in the PH team.
8. Members of SCB have key strategic roles and are responsible for reporting back to their own organisations. They are also engaged in other, related, forums such as the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel, the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, the Health and Well-being Board, Worcestershire Adults Safeguarding Board and Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Key points to note

9. There are some key points for OSPB to note regarding significant activity within the Council's PH Community Safety Team and broader partnership:
 - **Drugs and Alcohol**
 - The significant increase in Continuity of Care engagement
 - Drug Death Group now operational
 - Drug Alert process refreshed and operational
 - Needs Assessment underway
 - Worcestershire Strategy now in place (attached as Appendix 1)
 - **Contest Strategy**
 - positive feedback on assurance and structures
 - **Domestic Abuse**
 - Sanctuary Scheme now in place
 - Lived Experience Advisory Group delivering Domestic Abuse Act duty requirements
 - Needs Assessment underway to support service development.

Drugs and Alcohol

10. According to Home Office ministers, the government's 10-year drug plan, [From Harm to Hope](#), is one of their 'top priorities'. Its ambition to build a world-class treatment and recovery system guides important commissioning activity for PH. The other two ambitions are breaking supply chains and reducing demand.
11. Current commissioning expenditure (to five providers) across Worcestershire is funded by the Public Health Ringfenced Grant (PHRG) and additional Government grants, as follows:

Grant	Duration	Purpose	2023-24	2024-25
The Councils PHRG	2020-2025	Drug and Alcohol Service, Cranstoun	£3,883,536	£3,895,480
Government grant, Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant	2022-2025	Additional funding to support growth and improvements in substance misuse treatment.	£1,038,940	£1,705,375 (indicative)
Government grant, Inpatient Detox Grant	2021-2025	Inpatient detox (commissioned through a West Midlands consortium).	£78,631	£78,631
Government grant, Individual Placement Support (IPS)	2024-2025	To fund a dedicated employment support service.		£158,000
Government grant, Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant	2023-2025	To help support people who sleep rough, or who are at risk of sleeping rough, to access substance misuse treatment and longer term accommodation	£420,205	£420,205 (indicative)
Total			£5,421,312	£6,257,691

12. Whilst the primary outcome for the substance misuse treatment and recovery services is predicated upon reducing people's drug and alcohol use, a potential wider benefit to society is a reduction in offending behaviour. There is encouraging evidence in the Ministry of Justice report, [The impact of community-based drug and alcohol treatment on re-offending](#), 2017. In this national two-year study, a reduction of 33% in offences was recorded among pre-treatment offenders.
13. Some individuals will enter prison with opiate addiction issues (which may have led them to commit volume crime). A high-profile objective of all substance misuse treatment services across England, therefore, is to engage drug/alcohol-dependent prison leavers into treatment, who are at higher risk of reoffending and overdose or death by drug poisoning having acquired a naivety to opiates. There have been encouraging results in Worcestershire with the rate of engagement more than doubling in the last two years (from 18% to 52%), now higher than the England average. Cranstoun is the substance misuse treatment provider whose designated staff are part-based at Hewell prison delivering this continuity of care from prison out into the community.

14. Other targeted commissioned activity in Worcestershire includes harm reduction among opiate and crack users, who may not be engaged in substance misuse treatment and are a higher risk of committing acquisitive crime (e.g., shop lifting). Distribution of the medicine naloxone, which rapidly reverses opioid overdose, has saved lives in Worcestershire, and remains vital as the supply of more toxic synthetic opioids increases across the Western world. Related is the Council's commissioned work in Worcester City targeted at people rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. This started early in 2023 and engaged 14 new people into substance misuse treatment in quarter one of 2023-24. This, again, is encouraging not only to reduce individuals' drug use but to enable access to sustainable accommodation and physical or mental health support. These are key building blocks to people's recovery and active citizenship.
15. The Substance Misuse Oversight Group is the partnership forum where issues of drug and alcohol abuse are discussed and addressed. It additionally discharges some of the responsibilities of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Combatting Drugs Partnership.

Combatting Drugs Partnership

16. Recent Government guidance, that sits alongside its Drugs Strategy, outlined the structures and processes through which local partners in England should work together to reduce drug-related harm. To assist with the delivery of the strategy, a Combatting Drugs Partnership has been formed covering Worcestershire and Herefordshire and chaired by the PCC. This partnership has:
 - conducted a joint needs assessment, reviewing local drugs data and evidence; and
 - produced a local performance framework to monitor the implementation and impact of local plans (this aligns with the Worcestershire Drug and Alcohol Strategy and Action Plan.)
17. Worcestershire's Drugs and Alcohol Strategy was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2023 (attached at Appendix 1).

Drug and Alcohol Related Death Group

18. The Drug and Alcohol Related Death Group is now in operation. Information on suspected drug related deaths is provided by the Coroner's Office following toxicology reports. Multi-agency reviews are now taking place, with the overall aim to reduce drug related deaths in Worcestershire. As of September 2023, there have been 12 suspected drug deaths this year – the majority occurring in the home. Substances vary and include opiates.
19. Overall, 40 deaths are on the system, which date back to April 2022. Reviews are focussing on the most recent deaths with an examination of agencies involvement with the deceased, together with consideration around the problem substance(s) involved in the death. Although in the early stages, themes are already being identified, which include mental health, domestic abuse and issues around engagement.

Number of cases	Average days for Coroners outcome	Number of drug related deaths	Number of Alcohol related specific death.	Number of Drug and alcohol related deaths	Number of drug death reviews
40	107	15	1	3	4

Drug Alert System

20. Since OSPB last considered the Worcestershire Drugs and Alcohol Strategy in January 2023, the local Drug Alert process has been reviewed and updated to ensure partners are briefed and able to rapidly disseminate concerns about dangerous substances that present a threat to those who are vulnerable. The intentions are to assess the risk, communicate the threat and mitigate the threat.
21. Since June 2023, this system has warned of a number of instances of synthetic Opioids coming to light (including a number of overdoses) as well as adulterated/counterfeit Pregabalin, a prescription drug that is misused for recreational purposes.

Contest Strategy

PREVENT

22. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 sets a duty (the PREVENT duty) on specified authorities; education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group's role is to provide strategic co-ordination and support to the Government's PREVENT agenda, in Worcestershire, taking account of national legislation and guidance. It receives an annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile for Worcestershire. From this, a local risk assessment has been created and the annual action plan has been developed.
23. The Independent Review of PREVENT was released earlier this year. This recommended that PREVENT should go back to first principles and reassert its objective of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This has led to new PREVENT duty guidance, which becomes statutory in January 2024. The revised Contest strategy published in July 2023 highlights that the threat from terrorism is enduring and evolving, the threat is dynamic and complex, and the risk is rising.
24. In Worcestershire, the Prevent Strategy Group supports the national picture whilst remaining focussed on issues relevant to Worcestershire. This year on the advice of the Home Office Regional Advisor, all organisations have been asked to produce an Annual Assurance Statement, which records activity around PREVENT. This includes training, referrals, and senior leadership responsibilities. This year's action plan considers how referrals can be increased to tackle the Islamist threat, it also examines the issue of mental health and its impact on radicalisation. A PREVENT Problem Solving Group shares information on current extremist activity in Worcestershire, which currently relates to far right stickering.

25. Although activity suggests the most significant threat to Worcestershire is from the Far Right it is also important to raise awareness of the ongoing national threat from Islamist Extremism. The Prevent Strategy Group is also sighted upon issues such as violence towards women and girls in education settings which may lead to radicalisation.
26. The Independent Review of PREVENT has led to national developments in training which is forthcoming and will include face to face inputs. Until this is released, training continues as business as usual. 201 Council employees were trained in PREVENT between April 2022 and 2023. A Synergy event was held at County Hall in July, regarding the Far Right, including a briefing on signs and symbols of the extreme far right, and Incel behaviour. There were 31 attendees from the Council.
27. Worcestershire Channel Panel continues to receive referrals from a wide spectrum of sources. Advice from the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism is that it is inappropriate to share statistics, but common themes include an increase in Right Wing referrals and a consistent issue with individuals with mental health issues and learning difficulties.
28. The Council has issued the Annual Assurance Statement regarding Channel Panel which captures its compliance with the requirements relating to Channel panels. It is based upon a self-assessment for local authorities. The Statement considers processes and whether the Chair and Deputy Chair have the appropriate skills and authority to discharge the duties of the Panel. This document was endorsed by the Council's Chief Executive and returned to the Home Office on 10 May 2023.
29. The Home Office Lead formally observed a Channel Panel meeting in June 2023 and fed back their satisfaction to the Chairman with a request that the Council share the iterative agenda and minutes process to be used as best practice.

Protect

30. The Protect Strategy Group continues to meet in preparation for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill. This has now been released and scrutinised by the Home Affairs Select Committee; therefore the final legislation is unlikely to change.
31. To prepare for this legislation, local Counter Terrorism Security Advisors have provided SCan (See, Check and Notify) training to Council staff and are now expanding this to the district councils. A presentation has taken place at Worcester City and events are planned in Pershore and Malvern during this Autumn.
32. The Council is supporting the National Protective Security Authorities current briefing for Local Authorities on the misuse of household chemicals. This 15-minute packages explain to staff who visit homes what to look out for that potentially could be evidence of explosive or drug manufacture. The inputs have been well received. To date, Redditch and Bromsgrove Housing staff have been briefed, as have Malvern and Wychavon, while further agreement has been reached to brief 200 social workers.

Serious Violence Duty

33. The new Serious Violence duty is set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and requires changes to Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensuring that preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for CSPs.
34. Three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence are:
- a reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object;
 - a reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police; and
 - homicides recorded by the Police.
35. Statutory Guidance has been released setting out in detail the requirements placed on “specified authorities”, (Chief Officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Integrated Care Boards, Local Health Boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services). All organisations and agencies subject to the Duty will be accountable for their activity and co-operation.
36. It requires specified authorities for a local government area to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult secondary group known as the relevant authorities, which includes educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area, in the preparation of their strategy.
37. Specified authorities must identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area, and, so far as it is possible to do so, identify the causes of that violence. This requires an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence within their area and use this analysis to develop a local strategic needs assessment which should inform the local strategy.
38. The local strategy, which specified authorities must prepare and implement, should contain bespoke solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. This must be kept under review, which should be done on an annual basis and updated when necessary. The final date for publication is **31 January 2024**.
39. The duty requires CSPs to formulate and implement strategies to prevent people from becoming involved in, and reduce instances of, serious violence in the area. As CSPs are subject to both the new Crime and Disorder Act requirements and the Duty, this will enable them to escalate local serious violence issues to a higher strategic level where necessary, which would in Worcestershire be the Safer Communities Board. This will ensure that CSPs have accountability for ensuring that a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence is in place even if they are not the partnership arrangement chosen to deliver the Duty.
40. PCCs, are not specified authorities under the Duty. However, they are strongly encouraged to take on a role as lead convener for the local partnership arrangements for the Duty in order to support the development and implementation of Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance 13 the local strategy. Locally, the West Mercia PCC has led on very short timescale bids for funding to implement the new Duty.

41. To ensure consistency, a Council Senior Public Health Practitioner represents the views of the two CSPs, acts as liaison with the PCC's office and has drawn together a Serious Violence group to agree activity. This will feed into a data led, supportive approach to reducing serious violence.

Youth work and diversionary activity

42. A new model of youth commissioning started in September 2023. The model allows decisions about youth services to be made at a more local level within the mix of universal fixed location, detached and targeted youth work to be delivered. All of these have a role to play in crime prevention.

43. Youth work will use recreational and educational leisure-time activities as a conduit to improving social and emotional learning. The overall aims of commissioned youth services are to:

- Improve access to youth services for those at risk of poorer outcomes and minority groups
- Improve mental and physical health for young people
- Improve young people's skills for life and work; and
- Increase opportunities for, and engagement by, young people connecting with and making a positive contribution in their communities.

44. The expected outcomes of commissioned youth work are:

- Quality youth service provision
- Improvements in young people's social and emotional learning, behaviours and mental health; and
- An increase in young people's engagement with their local communities.

45. There is also a requirement for youth workers to have undertaken children's safeguarding, PREVENT and Get Safe training.

46. The youth provision requirements to support positive social and emotional learning for young people and for them to be involved in positive engagement with their local communities are both strategies that prevent crime. In addition, youth services offer young people meaningful and enjoyable activities allowing them to develop and explore opportunities that fulfil their lives.

47. This youth provision is complemented by the Respect diversionary activity within Channel (targeted at young people who are at risk of radicalisation) funded through Counter Terrorism Policing Targeted Initiative Fund.

48. The labour costs funded through the Serious Violence Duty for Worcestershire will be used in similar fashion to the Respect programme, through the Worcestershire Reducing Youth Violence Programme. Hosted by Redditch Borough Council and administered by Redditch Community Safety Officers, this programme will provide a prevention and early intervention service for young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence.

Trading Standards

49. The Strategic Assessment for the Council's Trading Standards Team has the following areas as key priorities relevant until next financial year:

- Doorstep Crime and Scams
- Illegal Tobacco
- Product Safety
- Protecting animals and the food chain
- High value incidents of consumer detriment

50. In the last 12 months, the service has:

- Removed 205,499 cigarettes and 32kg of hand rolling tobacco from the marketplace, with 4 prosecutions resulting in community punishments and one suspended prison sentence
- Removed 12,132 non-compliant vapes from the marketplace and worked with PH colleagues to develop materials for schools and colleges to help reduce the likelihood of young people starting to vape. The primary purpose of work with schools was to raise awareness of vaping and illegal vapes with teachers and parents so they could report any underage sales to us.
- Undertaken 8 sessions of underage sales test purchasing activities, with 33 premises tested and 5 sales (one of alcohol, the others vapes).

51. Whilst the Team has yet to formally map any organised crime groups, the distribution of illegal tobacco is this type of activity, with links to other groups outside of the County. In 2022/23 four defendants were found guilty of involvement in these activities with 536 hours of community punishment, £2024 in fines and £14,679 being awarded in costs.

52. With regard to doorstep crime, rogue traders approaching older and vulnerable consumers about unnecessary home improvements remained a focus for the team. Also, dealing with the victims of mailing and telephone scams, with 114 local people being spoken to about changing their behaviour in relation to postal scams. These tend to originate overseas, outside of UK legal jurisdiction, meaning persuading people not to respond is the only solution. One trader accepted a simple caution in relation to the sale of an unroadworthy car, which constitutes an admission of guilt that can be cited as a previous conviction if the person re-offends in the next two years.

53. Illustrating the breadth of the service, the Trading Standards Team have also:

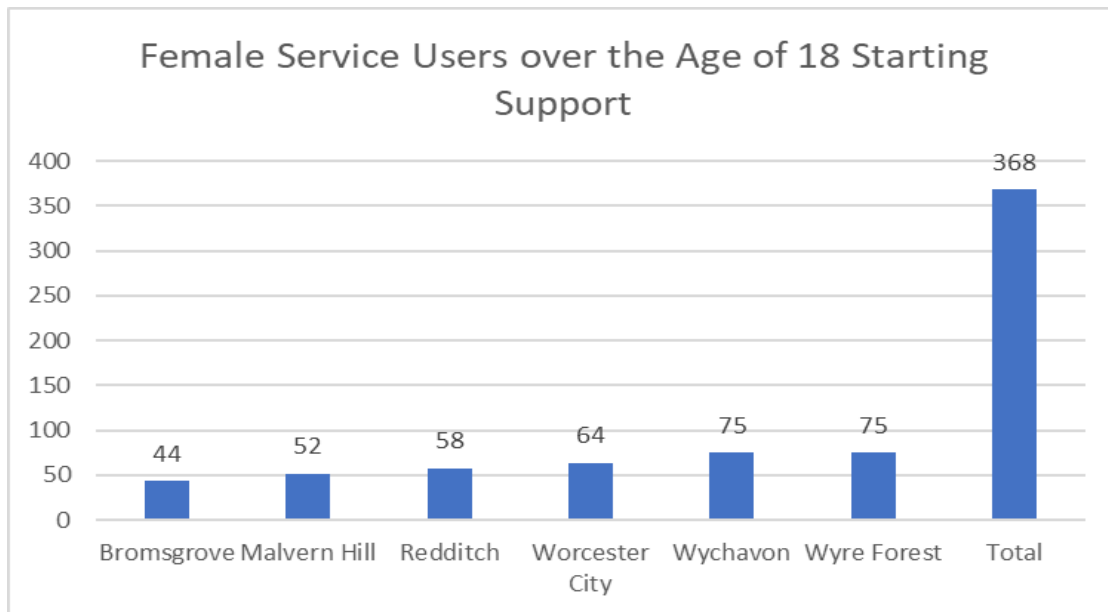
- Dealt with allegations of the supply of contaminated human breast milk products,
- Addressed several incidents or near misses with food allergens, fortunately none of which had serious consequences,
- Worked through one bird-flu outbreak,
- Identified 87 food business that were not compliant with labelling requirements and five farms where welfare and disease control measures were not being observed,
- Signed up to the Trading Standards Southwest No Proof, No Sale scheme to allow free training for businesses in the County on preventing sales to minors; and

- Found that 9 out of 15 businesses using large weighbridge scales for trade or ensuring the safe road-weight of vehicles, had inaccurate equipment that had to be rejected, requiring the businesses to have them fixed.

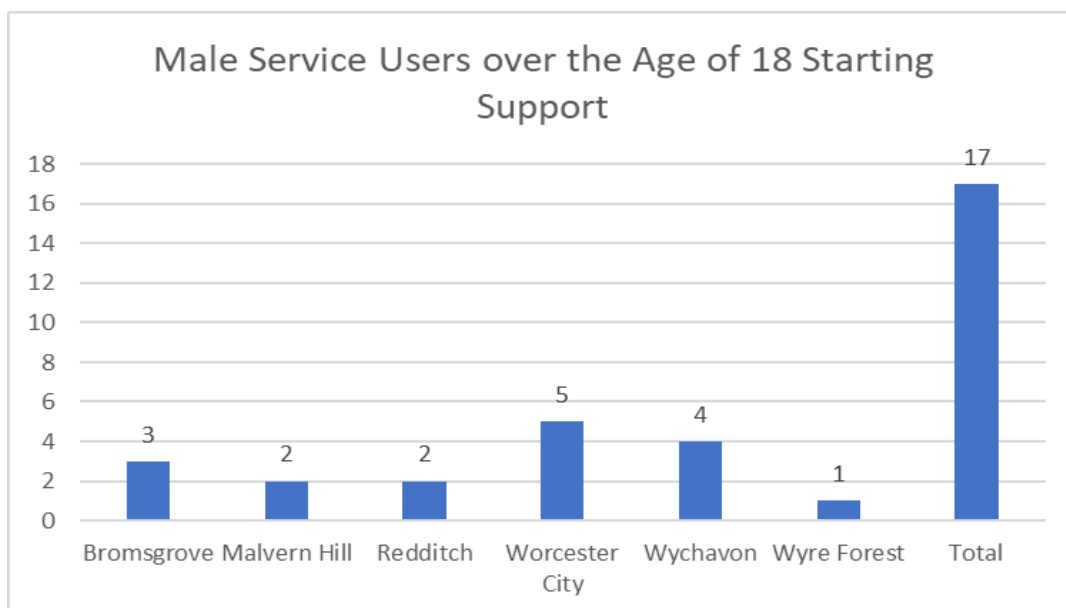
Domestic Abuse

54. Last year OSPB were provided with details of the duties imposed by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the activities that were taking place as a direct result of the publication of the Act.
55. The Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB) includes partners from the Council, West Mercia Police, the PCC, NHS, the National Probation Service, WCF, specialist providers and District Councils and is supported by people with lived experience.
56. The DAPB is responsible for overseeing the development and scrutiny of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and the actions associated with it. The contract for locally commissioned Domestic Abuse services is for three years to the 31 March 2025 (with an option to extend).
57. A Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment has commenced which will allow the Council to review current delivery, the gaps, advise on any recommendations moving forward and will shape service provision post March 2025. This needs assessment should be complete by the end of the year and will draw upon qualitative as well as quantitative data.
58. The existing Domestic Abuse Advice and Support Service (DAASS) is commissioned to West Mercia Women's Aid and provides a range of support including refuge services, support into Safe Accommodation, Help line, one-to-one support, and children's play therapy. Referrals into the service are increasing, with many referrals extremely vulnerable and in need of multi-agency specialist support.
59. To allow the Council to review that the DAASS is being delivered consistently across Worcestershire in their reports WMWA include the number of female, male, and young people starting a provision of support per quarter per district. The graphs below represent data from April – June 2023 and give an overview of the service users receiving support. The graphs illustrate that 368 female service users, over the age of 18, accessed support and 17 male. In addition, 28 service users under the age of 18 accessed support.

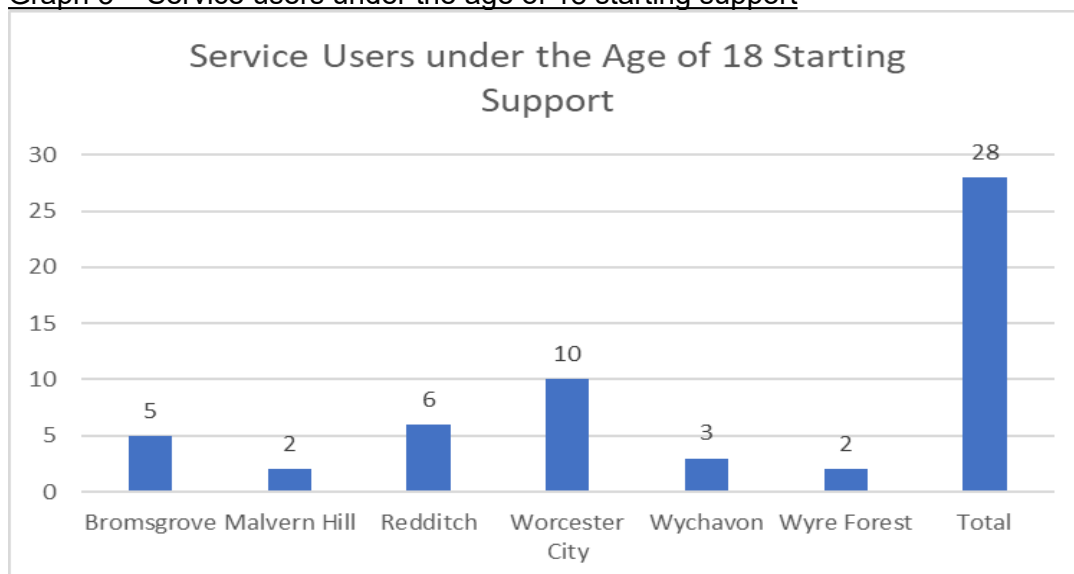
Graph 1 – Female service users over the age of 18 starting support



Graph 2 – Male service users over the age of 18 starting support



Graph 3 – Service users under the age of 18 starting support



60. Current commissioning expenditure across Worcestershire is funded by the PHRG and additional government grants, via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), as follows:

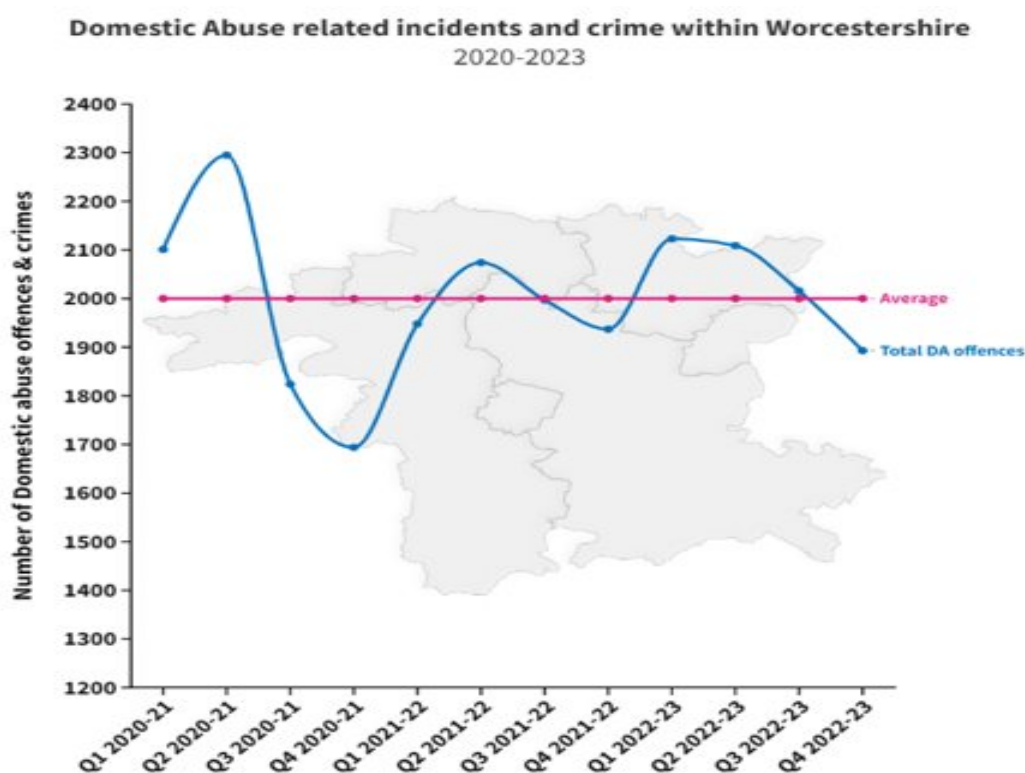
Grant	Duration	Purpose	2023-24	2024-25
DLUHC	2022-25	West Mercia Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Advice and Support Service (including refuge and trauma informed support to children)	637,000	637,000
DLUHC	2022 - 25	Council Social Worker - Adults with health and care needs. Enhanced Domestic Abuse and housing support.	52,892	52,730
DLUHC	2022-25	Domestic Abuse Training - Mandatory training to frontline social care, elected members and nominated partners	30,000	30,000
DLUHC	2022 - 25	Domestic Abuse Housing Officers - Supporting the victims of DA in/into safe accommodation	202,000	202,000
DLUHC	2023-24	Lived Experience Advisory Group - Understand the experience of DA Survivors and particularly those from groups with protected characteristics	30,000	
DLUHC	2022 - 25	Domestic abuse element(s) of Family Safeguarding Model - Supporting the tripartite activity in support of families experiencing DA	150,000	110,000
PHRFG	2023 – 25	Domestic Abuse Working Network (DAWN) - Support for victims of Domestic Abuse in the South of the county – designed to reduce the demand and impact upon children's services	125,630	94,222
PHRFG	2023 - 25	Sanctuary Scheme - Target hardening accommodation, enabling survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes.	97,500	100,000
PHRFG	2022 - 25	DRIVE - Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programme to address behaviours, reduce risk and reoffending.	185,815	185,815
Total			1,510,837	1,411,767

61. This commissioning activity is supported by a partnership, Joint Commissioning Group involving the Council, the District Councils, the PCC and the Integrated Care Board.

62. Historically, disaggregating Worcestershire's data from that of West Mercia has proven difficult. This data is presented as a result of work currently being conducted between PH analysts and West Mercia.

- In West Mercia there were 32,601 domestic abuse related incidents and crimes recorded in the year ending March 2022.
- The rate of police recorded domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in West Mercia is 25 per 1,000 of the population.
- This is similar to both West Midlands (28 per 1,000) and England and Wales (25 per 1,000).
- In West Mercia 53% of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes were classified as domestic abuse-related crimes.

Graph 4 – Domestic Abuse Related Incidents and Crime 2020-2023



63. The number of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes within Worcestershire have been broadly stable during the period 2020 to 2023, aside from a notable reduction in reporting during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic (Q2-4 2020/21).

64. In July 2023, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner published a report around the failings of the family court system and the impact this can have on the survivors and their families. Through the Local Family Justice Board and, following a meeting with Judge Plunkett at the family court to discuss the experiences of survivors and how this process can be improved, a working group has been set up to discuss and tackle this issue. This is a key area of focus for the DAPB action plan.
65. The Domestic Abuse Lead for the Council, an Advanced Public Health Practitioner is working with Herefordshire Council to prepare for the White Ribbon Campaign 2023, with a particular emphasis on reaching out to businesses across the counties and their role in identifying, supporting, and signposting those suffering abuse.

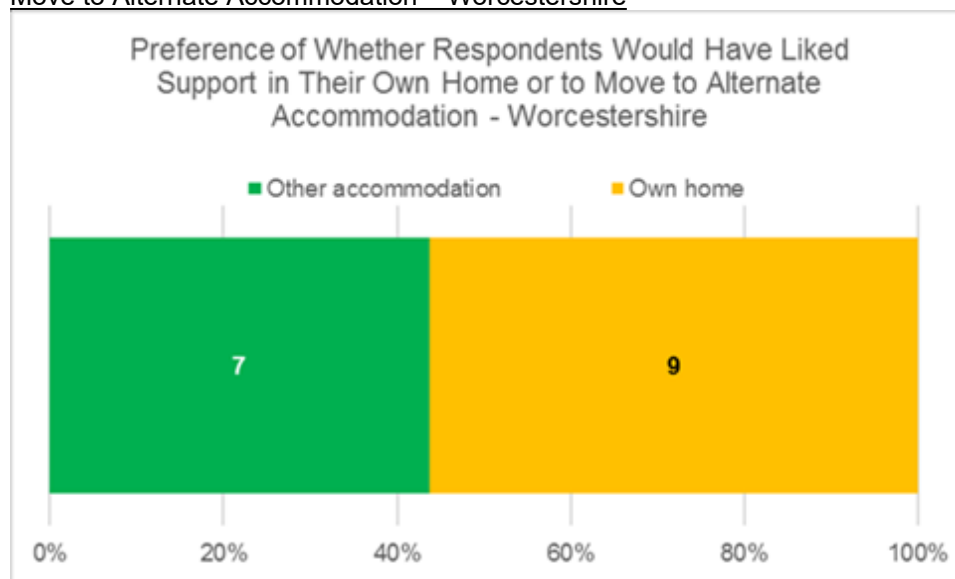
The Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG)

66. In partnership with Herefordshire County Council, and with the intention of meeting specific requirements in part iv of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, a Domestic Abuse Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) has been commissioned and is being delivered by West Mercia Women's Aid. A LEAG Coordinator has been recruited who is actively recruiting members to the group. The breakdown of the membership is:
- Total membership – 23 (12 Worcestershire, 11 Herefordshire)
 - Highest level of engagement (have attended an induction day) – 13
 - Lower level of engagement (remote involvement through survey completion etc) – 10
67. This group will provide a core element of the Needs Assessment and informing the service specification and activity going forward.
68. The first survey supported by the group focused on local housing provision, while the current work focuses on children in domestic abuse situations.

Sanctuary Scheme

69. Many victims of domestic abuse leave their own homes and uproot their lives to escape a perpetrator. Through the housing survey it was important to explore ways in which those experiencing domestic abuse can be supported to remain safely in their own homes.
70. The graph below demonstrates the number of Worcestershire respondents who would prefer to remain at home rather than be supported to enter alternative accommodation such as Refuge. This table is included as under the Sanctuary Scheme this level of provision is provided to victims of domestic abuse.

Graph 5 – Preference of Whether Respondents Would Have Liked Support In Their Own home or the Move to Alternate Accommodation – Worcestershire



71. At its meeting on 20 October 2022, the OSPB discussed the introduction of a Sanctuary Scheme. The scheme aims to provide survivors and their families with a safe place to live. The target hardening element of the scheme has been commissioned to a provider named, 24/7 locks, and delivery commenced on the 1 April 2023. Activity is taking place to raise awareness of the Scheme which will increase referral numbers. Research and feedback from victims indicate that Cyber Abuse is an increasing issue, where perpetrators can continue to control and abuse victims albeit remotely. Discussions are taking place to advise how this issue can be tackled moving forward.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

72. The duty to carry out statutory Home Office Domestic Homicide Reviews sits with the two CSPs. In Worcestershire it has been agreed through the SCB, that these will be co-ordinated at County level, with PH Community Safety Officers leading as its contribution to the DHR process.

73. Sadly, since last year's annual update to the Board, there have been 3 Domestic Homicide Review referrals that have been identified as meeting the criteria for review. This presents a considerable commitment for Public Health and its Safer Communities Team.

74. More positively, a backlog of Domestic Homicide Reviews have been completed, though there is now a similar backlog within the Home Office which is delaying their review of the material submitted to them.

Sex Workers

75. The Lead Member for Crime and Disorder has raised concerns about how partners work together in Worcestershire to provide support to Sex Workers as victims.

76. It is proposed that this will be explored separately through a workshop supported by Public Health and that the Board will be informed of the findings in due course.

Purpose of the Meeting

77. The Board is asked to consider:

- The Annual Update on developments in relation to Community Safety in Worcestershire;
- Whether it wishes to make any comments to the Cabinet Member for Health and Well-being, or partner agencies; and
- Whether there are any issues which should be the subject of future scrutiny work.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Worcestershire Drug and Alcohol Strategy

Contact Point

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Agenda and Minutes for Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 20 October 2022](#)
[Agenda and Minutes for Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 30 January 2023](#)

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)