

**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Richard Smith – Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health

**To:** Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 29 September 2021

**Subject:** **DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE INCLUDING STRATEGY ADDENDUM**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** Adult Social Care Governance Board

**Future Pathway of Report:** None

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** This report sets out Kent County Council's new responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and its progress against these new duties.

The new responsibilities of Tier 1 authorities include:

- to create a Local Partnership Board with responsibility for conducting a needs assessment
- commissioning activity in relation to accommodation-based services for both adult survivors and their children informed by the needs assessment.
- publication of a Domestic Abuse Strategy by October 2021

The council has been allocated over £3.1m in new funding for 2021/22 in relation to the new statutory responsibilities under the Act. In partnership with others, the council commissions a domestic abuse support service – the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service. The performance of this contract has been evaluated and found to be good. On 29 August 2021, the council exercised the option to use the first of the two, two-year options to extend the contract via a Key Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health. This contract is the ideal vehicle to use the new funding effectively and compliantly and this report updates on the progress of proposals.

It has not been possible to bring this item to an earlier Cabinet Committee due to the timing of the Domestic Abuse Act legislation and accompanying guidance.

**Recommendation(s):** The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the progress in relation to the domestic abuse agenda and **CONSIDER** the proposed commitments being consulted on.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the new responsibilities the council has under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 including funding, the status of the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse service (KIDAS) the proposed strategy addendum and updates on progress in relation to the Domestic Abuse (DA) agenda.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 **The Domestic Abuse Act** received Royal Assent on the 29 April 2021. Part 4 of the Act places a statutory duty on Tier 1 authorities to ensure there is domestic abuse support to meet the diverse needs of survivors and their children in safe accommodation, such as refuge. The draft statutory guidance is available to view via the following link [Domestic abuse support within safe accommodation: statutory guidance and regulations consultation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation-statutory-guidance-and-regulations-consultation)
- 2.2 To implement the Act, Kent County Council (KCC) has received £3,103,909 new funding for 2021/22 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The new funding must be spent in year, on domestic abuse support delivered within **safe accommodation** and cannot be used to support capital projects (such as accommodation).
- 2.3 A Key Decision was made by the Leader of the council in relation to the new £3.1 million Domestic Abuse Act funding setting out the principles by which it would be used: -
- A principle of additionality – the funding should be used to expand and enhance Domestic Abuse services, not replace existing funding.
  - The staffing costs associated with implementing the Act, including a Domestic Abuse Coordinator and project and analytical support, to run the (Local Partnership) Board and undertake the needs.
  - The commissioning and de-commissioning of services will be driven by the evidence in the new needs assessment.
- 2.4 The implementation of this decision is delegated to the Corporate Director of Strategic and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Corporate Directors of Adult Social Care and Health and for Children, Young People and Education respectively, with an update on progress being brought to the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee.
- 2.5 The definition of safe accommodation includes: -
- refuge
  - dispersed accommodation
  - sanctuary schemes (security provision within a survivor's home)
  - move on accommodation
- 2.6 The new allocation must be spent in full this financial year, in preparation for the government's spending review and the establishment of costs for future years.

- 2.7 Whilst funding is anticipated for future years, the exact amount is yet to be determined and will not be finalised until the spending review/settlement. The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy published on the 21 July 2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy> reconfirms the government's commitment to this agenda and possible future expansion of duties to include community-based services.
- 2.8 Prior to the legislation, the council and its partners have maintained a strong collective focus on the domestic abuse agenda, commissioning support services together and establishing the multi-agency Kent and Medway Executive and Tactical Groups over many years.
- 2.9 These groups include representation from local authorities in Kent and Medway including the districts and boroughs, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Kent Police, Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group, the National Probation Service, and Kent Fire and Rescue.
- 2.10 In preparation for the Act, the council appointed a Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator in 2020 and in January 2021, temporary supporting project officer roles were recruited to using DA Act Capacity Building funding made available from the Home Office.
- 2.11 These officers have been driving forward the DA agenda which includes the existing Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-23 and Action Plan. <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/community-safety-and-crime-policies/domestic-abuse-strategy>. These were developed in collaboration with all partner agencies and progression is monitored via the Tactical and Executive Groups. Successes include consistent messaging social media posts across all partners and funding being awarded following a joint bid to the Home Office for perpetrator support.

### 3. Current Situation

- 3.1 The council and its partners are in a strong position and have responded quickly to the new demands of the Act which include the requirement to:-
- create a **Local Partnership Board** with responsibility for conducting a **needs assessment**
  - publish a **Domestic Abuse Strategy** by October 2021
  - undertake **commissioning activity** in relation to accommodation-based services for both adult survivors and their children informed by the needs assessment
- 3.2 **Local Partnership Board (LPB)** - This is a new body which is a requirement under the Act. It has been established for Kent and the first meeting was held in May 2021. Focusing on support in safe accommodation, it is chaired by the Assistant Director (Countywide) Adult Social Care and Vice Chaired by the Head of Housing and Community at Maidstone Borough Council. The Board includes representation from each district and the Voluntary and Charitable Sector (VCS).

3.3 **Needs Assessment** - The Act requires all Tier 1 authorities to complete a needs assessment focusing specifically on support within safe accommodation. Prior to the Act, the council already had a needs assessment in place, completed by Public Health Observatory. This assessment has now been updated in line with the new legislative focus on support in safe accommodation [Domestic abuse - Kent Public Health Observatory \(kpho.org.uk\)](https://kpho.org.uk)

The findings include: -

- Support needs around mental health or drugs/alcohol can be a barrier to acceptance into some commissioned refuge services in Kent.
- A variation across the county in the provision of Sanctuary schemes. the new funding provides opportunities for these needs to be addressed.

3.4 **The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-23** – this was published in March 2020 following public consultation. It is a partnership strategy developed by all members of the Tactical and Executive Groups.

3.5 This strategy informs the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Action Plan and also feeds into the localised action plans managed by eight local domestic abuse forums.

3.6 In line with the Domestic Abuse Act and Needs Assessment findings, an addendum will be added to the existing strategy to ensure compliance in relation to safe accommodation.

3.7 The safe accommodation addendum is out to formal consultation until 27 September. [www.kent.gov.uk/domesticabuseconsultation](https://www.kent.gov.uk/domesticabuseconsultation).

3.8 The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to consider the proposed commitments being consulted on, which include working:

- towards the principles of a Whole Housing Approach to improve access to safe and stable housing options for those fleeing abuse, including those who choose to remain in their own homes.
- with survivors and their children to develop services; we will seek to further understand experienced barriers to accessing services and develop commissioning responses to these findings.
- to increase the support and understanding of people with multiple needs to allow them to take up placements in safe accommodation
- to ensure that all children in safe accommodation have access to support which is age appropriate and meets need.

3.9 The final strategy and addendum will be published, by 31 October 2021 in line with the deadline set out in the legislation. The strategy will be signed off through the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Group, Joint Kent Chiefs and Kent Leaders.

3.10 **Commissioning** - The county council's commitment to ensuring that survivors of domestic abuse are supported both in safe accommodation and in the community predates the recent legislation. Via this Cabinet Committee and in

partnership with other public bodies, the council commissions the countywide Kent Integrated Support Service (KIDAS) (Decision 16/00014).

- 3.11 Established in 2017, the KIDAS provides support for adult survivors (16+) both within the community and safe accommodation, including refuge for those fleeing domestic abuse and their accompanying children. The contract has recently been reviewed and found to be fit for purpose, delivering good outcomes for survivors and their children.
- 3.12 The KIDAS contract is the ideal vehicle to mobilise the 2021/22 new funding allocation effectively and compliantly to support the council in delivering its new statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 3.13 The Cabinet Member decision of 29 August (21/00063) takes advantage of the extension clause in the contract which enables the council to ensure a secure platform for future commissioning proposals relating to the new Act is in place
- 3.14 It was not possible to bring the decision to this Committee for consideration, due to the timing of the Domestic Abuse Act legislation and accompanying guidance. Whilst Domestic Abuse Act legislation received Royal Assent in April, the guidance about the new legal obligations was not published until mid-June and the government's consultation period on this guidance did not conclude until 27 July.
- 3.15 It is this guidance that enables the council to judge whether the existing contractual arrangements are best placed to meet its newly acquired responsibilities. With no cabinet committee date between June and September, taking the decision out of cycle gave members the most time to make any alternative recommendations.
- 3.16 Proposals for spending of the new funding are aligned with a Key Decision made by the Leader of the council on 19 March (21/00040) and follows the principle of additionality – 'the funding should be used to expand and enhance Domestic Abuse services, not replace existing funding'.
- 3.17 The proposals include: -
  - New safe accommodation support for those with additional and complex needs as highlighted in the needs assessment
  - Strengthening of support for those in their own accommodation as highlighted in the strategy
  - Additional specialist support to address trauma, including support for children
  - Reinvestment of the council's current expenditure in safe accommodation into the community support.
- 3.18 The reinvestment of the council's current commitment to funding in safe accommodation will enhance community provision and deliver projects that will.
  - increase outreach support available
  - improve the availability and access to advice services

- secure specialist training to increase the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors

#### 4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 **KIDAS Contract Extension (Decision 21/00063)** Via the Cabinet Member's key decision, the council has exercised the option to extend the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse (KIDAS) contract and delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health to use the second two-year option, subject to market testing and good performance, to 31 March 2026, should it be required.
- 4.2 The cost to extend until 31 March 2024, is £4,636,690. The second extension to run to 31 March 2026 is valued at £4,636,690.
- 4.3 **Domestic Abuse Act Funding Proposals** The allocation of the new funding for support in safe accommodation was approved via delegated authority on 29 June 2021, outlining the staffing and support required for this financial year, as in the table below, to ensure prompt compliance with the Act.

The new funding allocation of £3,103,909 is to be spent as follows:

<b>New Domestic Abuse Funding 2021/22</b>	<b>£3,103,909</b>
New safe accommodation projects	£1,325,500
Commissioned accommodation-based support services	£938,295
Resource costs	£501,802
Flexible Funding	£338,312

- 4.4 Funding of £1,325,500 will be spent on new safe accommodation projects to:
- fill gaps in provision as they have been identified
  - build on existing non-funded or partially funded services including play therapy and mentoring support for children and young people and Sanctuary support service.
- 4.5 The existing commitment of £938,295 for commissioned accommodation-based support in the current contract would be met from the new funding, releasing this amount to be reinvested in new community services.
- 4.6 Of the new funding, £501,802 has been allocated for staffing costs in 21/22 including temporary, time-limited roles to enable the council to boost the intense activity required to achieve its ambitions within the time constraints outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding that accompanies the funding and the Act. A successful recruitment campaign has been run and it is anticipated that the majority of staff required to support the responsibilities will be in post by October 2021.

- 4.7 The remaining balance of £338,312 will be used flexibly to support the council's plans in this area including improving integration with services for those with more complex needs, ensuring the voices of survivors are heard and improving data and systems to ensure the council is able to comply with current and future reporting requirements.
- 4.8 Progress on these projects is on track, an update on these workstreams can be found in Appendix A
- 4.9 The existing **community** offer within the KIDAS contract costs £1,361,705 and it is proposed that this should remain in place.
- 4.10 To deliver on the requirements of the Act and adhere to the principles of additionality set out in the Leader's Key Decision, the current contribution of £938,295, made by Adult Social Care to safe accommodation via the KIDAS contract has been reinvested to build the community offer, bringing the total investment available in community-based support to £2,318,345.
- 4.11 The community support reinvestment projects include:
- an increase in capacity of the outreach service
  - the development of consistent and modernised One Stop Shop
  - equipment costs related to the improvement in the Sanctuary offer
  - the development of a user voice approach and
  - workforce development capacity to ensure Kent has a suitably qualified workforce to deliver its ambitions.
- 4.12 The reinvestment projects total £917,671 leaving £20,624 flexibility for additional requirements including work to improve data and systems items.

<b>Community Support Funding</b>	<b>£2,318,345</b>
Current KIDAS contract value for community-based support	£1,380,050
Community reinvestment projects	£917,671
Flexible Funding	£20,624

- 4.13 Progress on these projects is on track, an update on these projects can be found in Appendix B.
- 4.14 The increased investment in DA services totals £5,422,254 which includes new funding associated with the DA Act and contributions from other partners towards the KIDAS contract.

Support in Safe Accommodation	£3,103,909
Community-based Provision	£2,318,345
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>£5,422,254</b>

- 4.15 Whilst it is understood that a future government announcement will detail funding for subsequent years at similar levels, at the point of writing, there are no indicative figures available for monies to be made beyond the current financial year.
- 4.16 Should the level of government funding in subsequent years be less than the current allocation, the proposals for staffing, safe accommodation and community projects can be scaled back accordingly.

## **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 Under the new statutory duties from the Domestic Abuse Act, KCC must ensure appropriate and adequate support within safe accommodation that meets the needs of all survivors.
- 5.2 The council has a significant advantage in its ability to meet the requirements of the Act by having the existing KIDAS contract, which is being used as an efficient vehicle for the delivery of many of the commissioned proposals. The Cabinet Member's Key Decision in August to extend this contract secures a means to deliver future responsibilities in an efficient and compliant manner.
- 5.3 The implementation of the Leader's Key Decision in March to accept the new funding is delegated to the Corporate Director of Strategic and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health and the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education with an update being shared at the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee.
- 5.4 Subject to future funding announcements, any spending proposals beyond March 2022 will require a further Key Decision.

## **6. Equalities implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Quality Impact Assessment is in place for the commissioning of the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service and the strategy. An assessment will be undertaken for the additional commissioned elements.

## **7. Data Protection Implications**

- 7.1 There are no anticipated data implications, as there will be no change to current services, or the data collected or shared, and therefore this will be covered under existing contract clauses.
- 7.2 A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been conducted for the strategy and needs assessment.

## **8. Other corporate implications**

- 8.1 As the domestic abuse agenda is cross cutting, other directorates and divisions are involved and supported by the contract, including Children Young People and Education and Community Safety

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1 This report sets out the new responsibilities the council has under the Domestic Abuse (DA) Act 2021 including funding, the status of the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse service (KIDAS) the proposed strategy addendum and updates on progress in relation to the DA agenda.
- 9.2 Under the DA Act, the responsibilities of Tier1 authorities include:
- to create a Local Partnership Board with responsibility for conducting a needs assessment
  - commissioning activity in relation to accommodation-based services for both adult survivors and their children informed by the needs assessment.
  - publication of a Domestic Abuse Strategy by October 2021
- 9.3 The council has been allocated over £3.1m in new funding for 2021/22 in relation to the new statutory responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Act.
- 9.4 KCC, in partnership with others, commission a domestic abuse service – the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service. The performance of this contract has been evaluated and found to be good. The council exercised the option to use the first of the two, two-year options to extend the contract. This contract is the ideal vehicle to use the new funding effectively and compliantly and this report updates on the progress of spending proposals.
- 9.5 The council and its partners are in a strong position and have responded quickly to the demands of the Act.
- 9.6 The Local Partnership Board has been established for Kent and the Kent Public Health Observatory have updated the needs assessment in line with the Act.
- 9.7 The strategy's safe accommodation addendum is out to formal consultation until 27 September and is on track to be published, in line with the requirements, by 31 October 2021.
- 9.8 In accordance with the delegated powers set out in the Leader's Key Decision, the allocation of the new funding was agreed on 29 June 2021 and progress on these projects which include staffing, safe accommodation and community are on track.
- 9.9 The total investment in support to survivors of domestic abuse totals £5,422,254 which draws together the new funding associated with the DA Act, with funding from the county council and contributions from other partners towards the KIDAS contract.
- 9.10 Whilst it is understood that a future government announcement will detail funding for subsequent years at similar levels, at the point of writing, there are no indicative figures available for monies to be made beyond the current financial year.

9.11 Should the level of government funding in subsequent years be less than the current allocation, the proposals for staffing, safe accommodation and community projects can be scaled back accordingly.

## 10. Recommendation

10.1 Recommendation(s): The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** the progress in relation to the Domestic Abuse agenda and **CONSIDER** the proposed commitments in the strategy currently being consulted on.

## 11. Background Documents

Decision to Commission an Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (16/00014)  
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1981>

Decision to accept Domestic Abuse Act New Burdens Funding (21/00040)  
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2485>

Decision to extend the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) contract (21/00063)  
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2513>

## 13. Report Authors

Rachel Westlake  
Commissioner (Adults) – Strategic and Corporate Services  
03000 413106  
[Rachel.westlake@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.westlake@kent.gov.uk)

Kellie Pettet-Steele  
Senior Commissioner (Adults) – Strategic and Corporate Services  
03000 418425  
[kellie.pettet-steele@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kellie.pettet-steele@kent.gov.uk)

Serine Annan-Veitch  
Domestic Abuse Coordinator – Strategy Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance  
03000 415782  
[serine.annan-veitch@kent.gov.uk](mailto:serine.annan-veitch@kent.gov.uk)

### Relevant Directors

Jeanette Young  
Interim Head of Adult Commissioning  
03000 418087  
[jeanette.young@kent.gov.uk](mailto:jeanette.young@kent.gov.uk)

David Whittle  
Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance  
03000 416833  
[David.whittle@kent.gov.uk](mailto:David.whittle@kent.gov.uk)