

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	18 December 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Services to support those experiencing domestic abuse
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr I Ahmed - Community Cohesion, Public Health, Public Protection, Leisure and Planning
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Stephen Taylor – Monitoring Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Garry Tallett - Community Safety Service • Regulatory Services Team
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	Yes
<b>Appendices:</b>	None

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report provides a strategic update on the services that the council commissions for victims/survivors of domestic abuse and the wider partnership support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse in Slough. This includes the vital role of independent domestic violence advocacy services and a recommendation to agree a short-term extension with the current provider, pending a more detailed review of provision.

#### Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a. Note the work taking place in respect of domestic abuse, the council's statutory responsibilities and a summary of an overarching needs assessment completed earlier this year.
- b. Agree to extend the period of the existing contract for domestic abuse service by Hestia for one year until 31st December 2024, as part of a wider strategic approach to domestic abuse at the same value as the current agreed contractual rate.
- c. Agree that officers shall bring a further report to Cabinet in March 2024 to provide an update on progress, together with a completed Safer Accommodation Strategy and other linked strategies to enable a decision on further recommissioning of the

independent domestic violence advocacy (IDVA) service to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

#### Reason:

- 1.2 The Domestic Abuse Act places statutory obligations on Tier 1 local authorities including completing a Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment and associated strategy. This work is due for completion in December 2023.
- 1.3 The council currently commissions independent domestic violence advocacy (**IDVA**) services to survivors of domestic abuse who are at heightened risk of serious harm or homicide. These services are part of a wider eco-system that tackles domestic abuse. The current contract ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. IDVA services provide an essential service to those at risk of serious harm/homicide and is an essential part of the council's strategy to tackle domestic abuse.
- 1.4 An overarching domestic abuse needs assessment was completed earlier this year that has informed a partnership domestic abuse strategy due to be presented at Safer Slough Partnership (**SSP**) in January 2024 for onward approval by Cabinet. It is important that to align all areas of DA work to enable alignment of resources and commissioning of future services. Pending this more detailed review, it is recommended that a 12-month extension is granted to the current IDVA providers.

#### Commissioner Review

This report has been reviewed by Commissioners who have no specific comments to make.

## 2. Report

#### Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 The council plays a lead role in the overall SSP partnership response to domestic abuse, providing the leadership and co-ordination in accordance with its statutory responsibilities. The Council needs to complete further work to ensure compliance with its statutory duties and this work is scheduled for completion in December 2023. A further overall assessment will be completed to inform a future strategy with a view to seeking Cabinet approval for this in the Spring 2024.
- 2.2 The **Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027** includes two priorities that link with Domestic Abuse:
  - A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives.
  - A borough for children and young people to thrive. The Domestic Abuse Act specifically notes that children who witness domestic abuse are treated as victims.

#### Options considered

Option	Description
A	Slough Borough Council does not extend the existing contract and end provision of local support to those at high risk of serious harm or homicide with effect from 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2024.

	<p>The council's budget for domestic abuse services is £253,700 per annum, that may in effect be saved if local support is not funded.</p> <p>Failure to provide appropriate support risks the lives of victims/children and further cost to the council and wider public purse.</p> <p><b>This option A is not recommended.</b></p>
<b>B</b>	<p>Slough Borough Council extends its existing contract until 31<sup>st</sup> June 2024 to enable the decommissioning and end of existing service provision.</p> <p>This option ensures continuity of service to victims of domestic abuse.</p> <p>There is significant demand on advocacy services that are delivered locally to survivors.</p> <p><b>This option B is not recommended.</b></p>
<b>C</b>	<p>Slough Borough Council extends its existing contract until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. (This will enable a later and separate decision to be made on whether to pursue a recommissioning and market testing of advocacy services for 2025 onwards.)</p> <p>This option ensures continuity of service to victims of domestic abuse.</p> <p>It ensures that appropriate, professional, and local advocacy is in place to meet the needs of those at high risk of serious harm.</p> <p>It enables the alignment of a 'to be completed' Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment and Strategy (Statutory requirement) with an existing needs assessment and mapping of services to design and commission a new service.</p> <p>It ensures local service provision to those at high risk of serious harm/homicide.</p> <p><b>This option C is recommended.</b></p>

## Plan

2.3 The full plan is shown at Appendix C but is summarised against key milestones below.

Completion of Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment, Equalities Needs Impact Assessment and Strategy to align with overarching DA strategy.	December 2023
Options for commissioning domestic abuse services (including advocacy)	January 2023
Safer Accommodation Strategy (the Statutory obligation) and associated strategies to Cabinet	March 2023
Procurement approach finalised	April 2023
New domestic abuse services commence	January 2025

## **Background**

- 2.4 The Domestic Abuse Act imposes several statutory obligations on Tier 1 local authorities in England and Wales, including:
- Assess the need for accommodation-based support in its area, known as a ‘Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment’;
  - Prepare and publish a ‘Safer Accommodation Strategy’ for the provision of such support in its area;
  - Appoint a domestic abuse local partnership board to oversee the delivery of the strategy;
  - Co-operate with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, an independent public official who monitors the response to domestic abuse across sectors;
  - Recognising domestic abuse as a ground for priority need for homelessness assistance.

## **Strategic Oversight**

- 2.5 Such is the cross-cutting nature of Domestic Abuse, it features as a priority area within the SSP and Safeguarding Partnerships. Adopted as a priority of the SSP, a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board was formed in 2022, initially chaired by the Director of Children’s Services.
- 2.6 Whilst the SSP is a stand-alone statutory partnership, there are direct lines to other partnership boards including local Safeguarding arrangements and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.7 Now chaired by a local senior police officer, the board has overseen the production of a local domestic abuse needs assessment, and an overall domestic abuse strategy that will be presented to the Safer Slough Partnership in January 2024.
- 2.8 The council has a statutory obligation under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to report progress of the domestic abuse board to both central government and the Domestic Abuse Commissioners office.

### **(a) Current Situation – Service Provision**

- 2.9 The council commissions core advocacy (**IDVA**) services from Hestia, in the same way that other councils fund such services across England and Wales. Even though there is no statutory obligation under the Domestic Abuse Act to provide IDVA services, the role of the IDVA is recognised as best practice, and their importance and status are recognised by professionals from all disciplines and referred to in the current statutory guidance (July 2022).
- 2.10 The council currently commissions Hestia to provide advocacy (IDVA) services to high-risk victims of domestic abuse. These services have been provided by the council since 2018 and the contract ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. This is funded entirely from council general fund budgets. . . Hestia Housing and Support (Charity no 294555 and Company number 020020165) is a well establish company with a reported £42m turnover in 2021/22 and provides services for many other local authorities and central government, including services supporting victims of Domestic Abuse.

- 2.11 An IDVA is a specialist professional who provides high-risk victims of domestic abuse with a tailored and person-centred safety and support plan so that victims and their families are protected from abusive behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, immediate risk assessment, safety planning, advocacy, emotional support, and empowerment. They can help a victim to become safe and rebuild their life and represent their voice at a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (**MARAC**), as well as helping them to navigate the criminal justice process and working with the different statutory agencies to provide wraparound support.
- 2.12 The council also ensures emergency refuge accommodation is available to survivors of domestic abuse, through the provision of three premises at a significantly reduced rent (peppercorn rent) to DASH, a local charity, funded via government grant. These arrangements had not been subject to contractual or service level agreements until recently and are now continued on an annual basis only. The lease situation regarding the premises is currently being reviewed and will inform future commissioning options as described at 3.8.
- 2.13 There are, outside Slough Borough Council provision, other domestic abuse services that are available/accessible to victims/survivors nationally, regionally (Thames Valley), and locally in Slough. These are bespoke services, and do not provide the immediate local contact for medium and high-risk cases. The provision is mainly short term and dependent on grant funding.

***(b) Needs Assessment and Strategy Development***

- 2.14 The local domestic needs assessment (**NA**) that has informed the development of an overarching domestic strategy results from work drawn from across a range of partnership disciplines, including Council services, Slough Children First, primary and secondary healthcare, the voluntary sector, and commissioned providers.
- 2.15 The NA was structured across the following elements.
- **Data:** Information from sources such JSNA, crime and health data. It was also informed by information from children’s and adults social care and commissioned / non-commissioned services.
  - **Opinion:** The views of survivors, professionals and communities were sought via workshops and a public consultation.
  - **Service Provision:** An assessment of what is available in Slough and more widely.
  - **Best Practice:** The NA drew together information from a variety of sources, such as the Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance, Domestic Abuse Commissioners office, and other academic sources of evolving practice.
- 2.16 In Slough, the volume of domestic incidents has remained relatively static, and domestic abuse crimes has risen steadily as shown below.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Incidents	4668	5010	4699	4807
Crimes	2614	2791	2894	3017

2.17 The commissioned provider, Hestia, advocate for the majority of survivors and their children. There are annually, over 200 cases heard at the MARAC panel as shown in the table below.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Adult survivors	239	264	213

2.18 The needs assessment also showed that children were listed as present in a high proportion (c50%) of domestic abuse occurrences (Incidents and crimes), and that high numbers of children were associated with Marac cases.

2.19 The needs assessment found a strong correlation between locations and indices of deprivation indicating opportunities to consider how to ensure localised service provision.

### Service Provision

2.20 Service provision may be broken down into three parts: (a) crisis support; (b) emotional, therapeutic support and other specialist support; and (c) universal prevention initiatives.

2.21 Crisis support falls into two main categories, that of independent advocacy for those at medium and high risk of serious harm, and also emergency accommodation for survivors and children fleeing high risk domestic abuse.

### Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA)

2.22 The current service provides three IDVAs, an outreach practitioner who deals with lower risk clients and management support.

2.23 Annually the current provider (Hestia) has supported over 600 survivors each year, as shown below.

Year	2020-21	2021-2022	2022-23
Survivors supported by IDVA	482	539	598
Survivors Supported in Total	62	690	765

2.24 The Hestia work with clients for anywhere between 1 and 3 months. Performance across a range of KPIs is subject to quarterly contract meetings, that ensures adherence to minimum standards and delivery of outcomes such as risk reduction. It should be noted that the original contract value has reduced over time as planned and also that no uplift has occurred over that time and therefore a 5.7% inflation uplift was awarded for 2023/24 and the provider is managing the pressures. The extension of the contract will provide time for the strategic basis for services to be completed and which will inform the later configuration and tender of the service given pressures and the evaluation of needs going forward.

### Emergency Accommodation provision

2.25 Fourteen (14) units across three premises (6,5,3 beds respectively) are available across Slough. Slough receives a wide range of clients typically from London and home counties due to the transport and travel links and being out of London. This accommodation is not typically used by Slough residents owing to the heightened risk

that survivors face from perpetrators. Slough residents are typically accommodated off borough in other counties or London. Demand for refuge space is high, though with an estimated national shortfall of 30. The number of units the council provides is proportionate to population levels.

2.26 DASH have supported 97 survivors over the 3 years of 2020-2022 inclusive. This is in accordance with general standards of a survivor staying in accommodation for 6 months, receiving support until such time they can move on to permanent accommodation.

### Other Service Provision

2.27 There are a variety of other support services available locally, nationally and Thames Valley wide. It is recognised the pivotal role that these agencies play in supporting survivors of domestic abuse, though they do not provide the essential local support for those at medium or high risk of domestic abuse. The range of these services includes dedicated outreach that includes services for Black, Asian, Ethnic Diverse communities, counselling, legal, sexual violence services, interventions for perpetrators and services for children who have witnessed domestic abuse. It is a legal duty for the Council to provide services for children and acknowledge them as victims in their own right.

2.28 The funding provision for all these projects is complex, with the council, DULUC, OPCC and other funding streams paying for the variety of services. (See Appendix A)

2.29 One example is the 'BRAVE project' funded by the OPCC. This is a Berkshire wide service which provides mental health support for men and women who have been victims of domestic abuse. This project is led by psychologists, is trauma informed and provides a 12-week intervention with wider opportunities to become ambassadors for domestic abuse and work within the community to help achieve long term change.

### Survivor Opinion

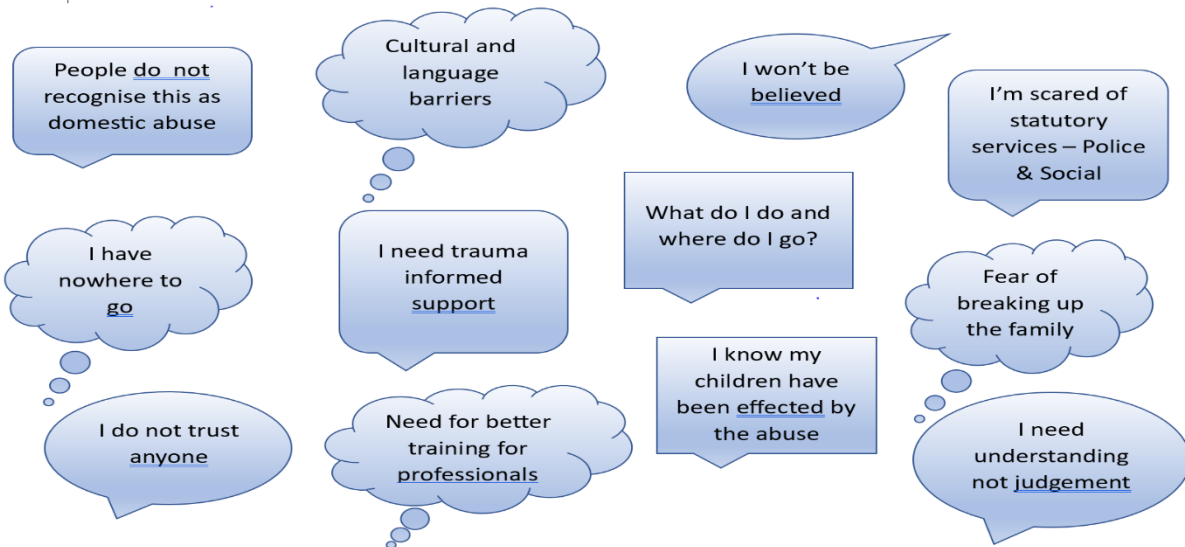
2.30 A number of means of consultation were made available to seek the opinion of communities, professionals, and survivors. Below provides a summary of two aspects of feedback.

2.31 Within the consultation, several questions were tabled, one of which related to what the biggest barriers are preventing people reporting their experiences. In order, these were:

- fear of agencies such as police and social care
- fear of not being believed
- fear of breaking up the family
- fear of bringing shame on the family.

2.32 In response to question about what is needed to break down the barriers, the word cloud below summarises the responses:

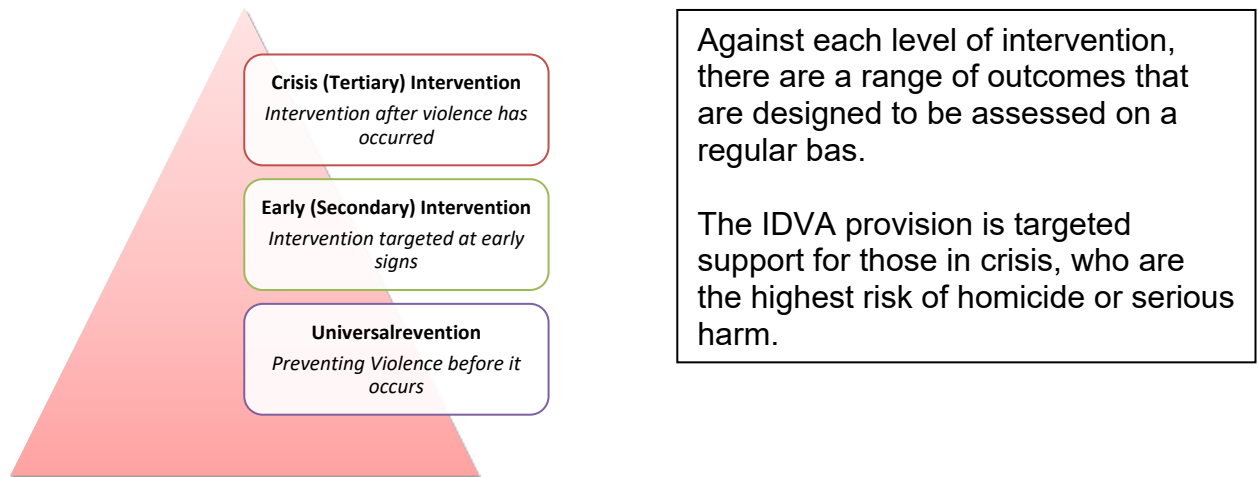
Survivors Voices – Slough Survey- 2023



2.33 A similar question about the best services from statutory/and or voluntary agencies firmly placed advocacy services at the heart of being the best service.

Strategy

2.34 The overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy noted at 2.7 is based upon a public health prevention approach to domestic abuse, that reflects local need, current best practice and statutory guidance. The strategy includes universal prevention, early intervention and crisis intervention.



2.34 The strategy should align with other Council's strategies including the Early Help Strategy and with priorities in the new Corporate Plan. The strategy should be multi-agency where possible.

**Summary of Why the IDVA Service is Required**

2.35 Specialist advocacy services are essential to the safety of victims/survivors and their children, to provide the safety planning and risk management that risks personal harm/homicide and cost to services.



2.36 Whilst a domestic abuse needs assessment has been completed, the completion of the Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment and associated Strategy are required to inform future service provision. Pending completion of this strategy, it is recommended that the current IDVA service is continued for a further 12 months.

2.37 The extension will enable the design of a service specification that addresses the identified needs, and fits with the wider strategy. Future options could include potential integration of domestic abuse commissioned services such as advocacy and emergency accommodation to one strategic development partner.

### 3. Implications of the Recommendation

#### 3.1 Financial implications

##### Base Budget funding, costs and risks

3.1.1 The IDVA service current contract is funded from a total budget of £253,700 for 2023-24.

3.1.2 The contract value commenced at a value of £263,268.24 in 2018/19 and included planned reductions in subsequent years. For 2022/23 the contract was set at a value of £214,443 per annum in accordance with the service specification. Given cost pressures and noting the provider has been managing considerable caseload pressures a 5.7% inflationary award was made for 2023/24 and it is proposed to keep this uplifted value through the 12-month extension and yet not to increase further at this stage. This remains within the overall budget.

Financial Year	Contract Values £
2018-2019	263,268
2019-2020	263,268
2020-2021	230,042
2021-2022	214,443
2022-2023	214,443
2023-2024 (End Dec)	170,000
<b>Total Contract Value</b>	<b>1,355,465</b>
Extend:1 year to 31/12/24	226,667
<b>Revised Contract Value</b>	<b>1,582,132</b>

3.1.3 The overall budget position of the recommended decision is shown in the table immediately below and is within the current budget;

<b>Budget Impact - Extension</b>			
Financial year	Contract	Budget*	Underspend
2023/24 Full year	226,667	253,700	(27,033)
2024/25 (9 months budget and costs only)	170,000	190,275	(20,275)

- 3.1.4 2023/24 includes 5.7% contract uplift already agreed and 3 months of the extension proposed and recommended in option C. The budget for 2024/25 is shown as a pro rata for 9 months to align with the contract extension. The further report and strategy will inform the later decision as to further procurements of an ongoing IDVA service for commencement 1/1/2026. It should be noted that this is for comparison purposes only, due to the work that is needed to reconsider our provision from 1/1/2026.
- 3.1.5 The council receives an annual government grant of £348,559 for 2024/25 (and £355,136 for 2025/26) which is used for provision of support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation. This grant is specifically in regard to support when IN accommodation which restricts use for the IDVA service. It would be more difficult to run and signpost to the accommodation provision without the IDVA service operating in full though. There are funds from prior years still available of £202,455. Consideration must be given to how these funds are best utilised to ensure that best value is achieved in delivering a complete IDVA service and this has to form part of the review that is reported to cabinet in March 2024.
- 3.1.6 The total value of extensions is £396,666.40 consisting of the 9 months of 2023/24 to December and the 12 months to December 2024/25. Which represents less than 34% of the original contracts and therefore is within regulations and below 40%. There is a small risk of challenge from other providers by awarding this extension, however, the existing market for service provision is narrow and this has to be the final extension given.
- 3.1.7 If options A or B (which are not recommended) are chosen then as well as other risks mentioned above, there are clear potential risks that there may be other costs and impacts on the wider council services. For instance potential impacts in social work teams both in Children's and Adults may occur if IDVA's are not in place. The management of the existing grant and accommodation and other resources may become less effective (compounding the general lack of local refuge accommodation). This would require further detailed work to identify issues and plan out possible systems to manage and mitigate. It is unlikely that impacts will all be mitigated. If options A or B are chosen then service officers will need to urgently commence such work in detail. The obvious budget saving on an annual basis of either A or B would be the current contract value, however this is not the recommended course given the likelihood of creating pressures in other budgets and cost the council more overall.

## 3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act sets out statutory responsibilities on relevant authorities. This includes convening a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, assessing the need for, preparing and publishing strategies and commissioning support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation services in their areas.
- 3.2.2 The legislation also states that 'the relevant authority must keep under review any effect of the strategy on the provision of other local authority support in its area'.<sup>1</sup> This is important in respect of services such as advocacy as these are linked to, but not specifically designed for, those living in safe accommodation.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

- 3.2.3 The Domestic Abuse: statutory guidance is intended to increase awareness and inform the response to domestic abuse and conveys standards and promotes best practice. This has provided a useful reference for the council in designing its approach to tackling domestic abuse.
- 3.2.4 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 creates a serious violence duty requiring local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities and others to work together to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those issues. Domestic abuse features within that duty.
- 3.2.5 Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires public bodies in a local authority area to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities when making decisions on the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.
- 3.2.6 Safer Slough Partnership has agreed that domestic abuse and serious violence are local priorities.

The current contract with Hestia can be extended for 12 month period under Regulation 72(1)(b) (Modifications of contracts during their term) of the Public Contracts Act 2015. A notice will be published setting out the required details of the modification.

### 3.3 Risk management implications

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Residual risk</b>
Service disruption – in the event of cessation of the IDVA services	High	Engagement with local voluntary organisations, and national domestic abuse services. A comprehensive communications plan across partners and communities to appraise them of service availability and alternative support pathways. Revised systems and mitigations will be needed and an impact review as to other teams and areas of the council. Workflows around the existing grant and accommodation will need revising.	High
Public perception and/or confusion as to service provision.	Medium	A comprehensive engagement and communications plan to ensure that communities and partners are aware of new arrangements and to	Low

Risk	Rating	Mitigation	Residual risk
		allay any concerns as to service provision.	
Service disruption – transfer of services, current clients, and prospective clients in the period of transition from old to new provider	Medium	A comprehensive project plan, that builds upon the phased plan outlined at Appendix B. This will involve engagement with partners, communications with current clients, and a wide-ranging communications plan.	Low
The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (CDA98) requires each authority to exercise its functions to prevent crime and disorder.	Medium	Slough has a robust and effective Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) in place to fulfil this function. The commissioning of domestic abuse services forms an integral part of the approach to domestic abuse, that is an SSP priority. Domestic abuse reports are submitted on a quarterly basis providing strategic oversight.	Low

### 3.4 Environmental implications [Mandatory]

3.4.1 There are no immediate implications, though the planned recommissioning of services to start in January 2025 will ensure environmental considerations and carbon footprint are embedded in the invitation to tender and service specification.

### 3.5 Equality implications [Mandatory]

3.5.1 In accordance with the public sector equality duty, an equalities impact assessment has been undertaken, and is provided as **Appendix B**. The findings of this EIA will inform the final service specification.

### 3.6 Corporate parenting implications

3.6.1 The seven principles of corporate parenting<sup>2</sup> will inform the design and service specification design for future domestic abuse services. Children’s social care are an integral part of the team looking at options for designing the specification.

### 3.7 Procurement implications [Discretionary]

3.7.1 The recommissioning of advocacy service from 2025 will be procured in full compliance with the council’s Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141227/2023-09-14-Applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers.pdf) (Accessed November 2023)

Regulations 2015. Officers will engage both the council's procurement team and HB Public Law early in the recommissioning timetable to advise on the procurement and required contractual documentation.

### 3.8 Property implications

- 3.8.1 At the current time Slough Borough Council own three properties representing 14 bed spaces which are leased to the DASH Charity as refuge accommodation for women fleeing domestic abuse and are part of the national refuge referral system which offers reciprocal arrangements across the UK. Two of the properties were purchased with funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005 with the express conditions that they were used for refuge purposes. The third was already owned by highways.
- 3.8.2 The lease arrangement is currently being reviewed in terms of the continuation of the leases and our future commissioning plans for domestic abuse Safe Accommodation plans as these properties are due to have their leases renewed in the near future.
- 3.8.2 Once the position on leases is understood, this will inform service specification design options.

## **4. Background Papers**

None *[or list background papers]*

## Appendix A – Service Provision

This is not an exhaustive list.

Intervention Level	Description	Funding Source	End Date
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Advocacy Specialist Service (Hestia)	SBC	31/12/2023
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Advocacy Over 55 (DASH)	MOJ via OPCC	31/03/2025
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Advocacy Diverse Community (DASH)	MOJ via OPCC	31/03/2025
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Advocacy (Wexham Park Hospital)	Frimley Trust	ongoing
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Complex Needs Advocacy (Hestia) Ealing/Harrow Partnership)	DHLUC via SBC	31/03/2024
Crisis / Secondary	Sanctuary Scheme (Target Hardening) Housing	SBC Housing	ongoing
Crisis / Secondary	Refuge Provision (DASH)	DHLUC via SBC	31/03/2024
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Stalking Service (Aurora New Dawn)	OPCC	31/03/2025
Crisis / Secondary	Specialist Sexual Violence Service (Thames Valley Partnership)	OPCC	31/03/24
Crisis / Secondary	The Solace Centre (SARC based in Slough)	Multiple	ongoing
Early / Secondary	Building better relationships (Probation) court appointed intervention via criminal justice system	MOJ	Ongoing
Early / Secondary	Shine Project (Children First)	DLUCH and SCF	31/03/2024
Early / Secondary	Family Support (Children First)	SCF	Ongoing
Early / Secondary	1:1 Perpetrator Worker	SCF	Ongoing
Early / Secondary	BRAVE Project (Psychological Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse)	OPCC	31/03/2025
Early / Secondary	Psycho-educational Programme (Hestia)	SBC	31/12/2023
Early / Secondary	SAFE! Project (Support for Children as victims of domestic abuse)	OPCC	31/03/2025
Early / Secondary	Sehali Project (Support for South Asian women)	SBC	31/12/2023
Early / Secondary	Safety Planner (via Victim First Hub)	OPCC	Ongoing
Early / Secondary	SAFE! Project (Support for Children as victims of domestic abuse)	DHLUC via SBC	31/03/2024
Early / Secondary	Emotional Support & Counselling Service (via Victim First Hub)	OPCC	Counselling is ongoing. VFESS is 31/03/24
Universal	School based Emotional Coaching (For staff)	OPCC	31/03/2024
Universal	Telephone Helpline (via Victim First Hub)	OPCC	Ongoing
Universal	Choices Programme (Healthy Relationships Schools)	OPCC	31/03/2024
Universal	Free Legal Advice (via Victim First Hub)	OPCC	31/03/2025

## Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

## SUMMARY RAG RATING

The outcome of this EIA has been assessed to be:	
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## SECTION 1:

Title	Domestic abuse advocacy / support services
What are you analysing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the policy/project/activity/strategy looking to achieve?</li> <li>Who is it intended to benefit? Are any specific groups targeted by this decision?</li> <li>What results are intended?</li> </ul>	<p>The current domestic abuse advocacy and support services contract ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.</p> <p>This analysis is based upon a current needs assessment that is being used to design the service specification/requirements that providers will be invited to tender for.</p> <p>The decision to proceed with the invitation to tender or not, will therefore affect victims of domestic abuse in the future.</p> <p>The needs assessment and this analysis make comments in respect of under and over-represented sections of the community.</p> <p>The result is (a) to clearly identify challenges, and (b) ensure that the service specification clearly states intent to provide accessible services and work with other agencies working in the space of 'domestic abuse service provision'.</p>
Details of the lead person completing the screening/EIA	<p>(i) Full Name: Mark Wolski / Garry Tallett</p> <p>(ii) Position:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Mark Wolski – Community Safety Partnership Manager</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Garry Tallet - Group Manager – Community Safety, Housing Regulation &amp; Enforcement</p> <p>(iii) Unit: Place &amp; Community Directorate</p> <p>(iii) Contact Details: Mark.Wolski@slough.gov.uk</p>
Date sent to Finance	04/09/2023
Version number and date of update	V2 – 04/09/2023

*You will need to update your EIA as you move through the decision-making process. Record the version number here and the date you updated the EIA. Keep all versions so you have evidence that you have considered equality throughout the process. However only the most updated version will be saved in the Equalities SharePoint folder.*

**SECTION 2: Do you need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?**

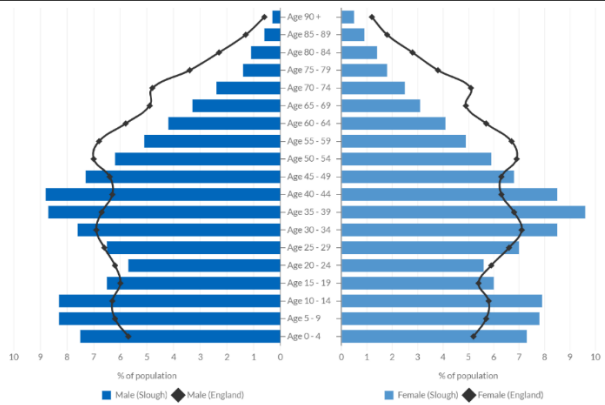
Not all proposals will require a full EIA, the assessment of impacts should be proportionate to the nature of the project/policy in question and its likely impact. To decide on the level of detail of the assessment required consider the potential impact on persons with protected characteristics.

<p><b>2.1</b></p>	<p><b>Please provide an overview of who uses/will use your service or facility and identify who are likely to be impacted by the proposal.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If you do not formally collect data about a particular group then use the results of local surveys or consultations, census data, national trends, or anecdotal evidence (indicate where this is the case). Please attempt to complete all boxes.</i></li> <li><i>Consider whether there is a need to consult stakeholders and the public, including members of protected groups, in order to gather information on potential impacts of the proposal.</i></li> </ul>											
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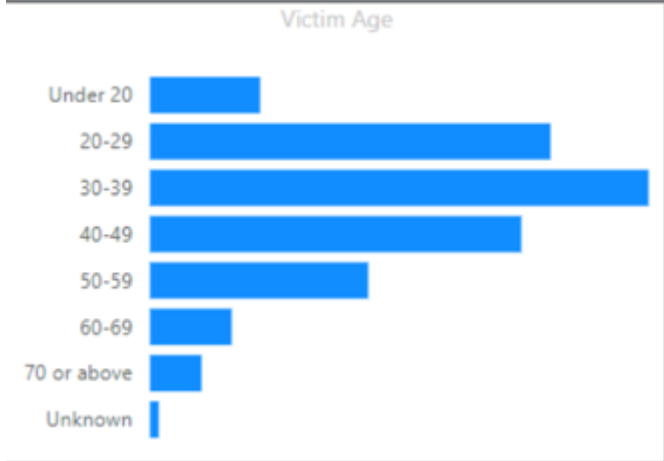
<sup>3</sup> Source: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/575232/HO-Domestic-Homicide-Review-Analysis-161206.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575232/HO-Domestic-Homicide-Review-Analysis-161206.pdf) (Accessed October 2021)



	<p>experience domestic abuse within the last year than those in the Black or Asian ethnic groups” <a href="#">Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</a></p>	
Disability	<p><u>Police crime recorded data</u> is not reliable.</p> <p><u>Police MARAC data and Service User data</u> shows disabled victims are under-represented versus the 11.3% of adult Slough residents reporting a disability.</p> <p>MARAC data shows 1% of cohort were disabled.</p> <p>Service user data shows c7% reported a disability.</p> <p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that men and women aged 16 to 74 years with a disability<sup>1</sup> were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without. <a href="#">Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England, and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</a></p>	<b>Under-represented</b>
Sexual orientation	<p><u>Police crime recorded data</u> is not reliable.</p> <p><u>Police MARAC data and Service User data</u> shows under-representation for groups that are not heterosexual.</p> <p><u>Slough population</u>  Heterosexual: 88.2%, LGB+: 3.2%  Gay or Lesbian: 1.5%, Bisexual:1.3%, Pansexual: 0.3%</p> <p>MARAC data shows 1.6% of cohort were LGBT.</p> <p>Service user data showed very low percentile representation. Eg. Dip sample of three quarters worth of data from Hestia, only two clients from around 400 were from LGBT.</p> <p>Academic research indicates higher rates of domestic abuse in LGBTQ+ communities, such as “In a US study “Violent Victimization by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 2017–2020”, it reported ‘The rate of violent victimization of lesbian or gay persons (43.5 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 16 or older) was more than two times the rate for straight persons (19.0 per 1,000)” <a href="#">Violent Victimization by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 2017–2020 (ojp.gov)</a></p>	<b>Under-represented</b>
Age	<p>The two charts below show the population profile for Slough and the victim profile for domestic abuse.</p> <p>Whilst arguably the profile is broadly representative to age 60, it is less clear over 70, where further examination of victim profile is required.</p>	Whilst exact data is currently being produced, the graphical representations indicate that elderly populations are under-represented within the victim profile



**Victim Profile**



for domestic abuse.

This would reflect academic research that indicates systemic invisibility of the elderly when considering DA.

Religion or belief

It is expected that the demographic of service users reflects the Slough population levels. Neither the police, MARAC nor service provider captures this information.

Slough Borough Make Up

- Christian 32%
- Muslim 29.4%
- No religion 13.1%
- Sikh 11.3%
- Hindu 7.8%
- Not answered 5.4%
- Other religion 0.5%
- Jewish
- 0.1%

Whilst victim data is not captured, attention is drawn to the ethnic make up of the borough where certain groups are under-represented across MARAC and service user profiles.

**Under-represented**

Gender Identity

It is expected that the demographic of service users at least, reflects the Slough population levels. Neither the police, MARAC nor service provider captures this information.

- As registered at birth 93.5%
- Trans woman 0.2%
- Trans man 0.1%
- Non-binary 0.1%

**Under-represented**

	<p>Academic research suggests that those whose sexual identity is different from that at birth, face additional barriers and isolation from seeking support as victims of domestic abuse. In an article Domestic Violence in the Transgender Community “Transgender people may face unique barriers in seeking help for domestic violence. According to the Williams Institute report, they may experience: The risk of rejection and isolation from family and friends if they “out” themselves” <a href="http://DomesticViolenceintheTransgenderCommunity(domesticshelters.org)">Domestic Violence in the Transgender Community (domesticshelters.org)</a></p>	
Pregnancy/Maternity	<p>It is expected that the demographic of service users reflects the Slough population levels. Neither the police, MARAC nor service provider captures this information.</p> <p>Whilst data is not captured, there is academic research, and it is professionally accepted that pregnant women are statistically more likely to be a victim of domestic abuse, hence the common practice for routine screening in health environments.</p>	<b>Over-represented</b>
Marriage/Civil Partnership	<p>Neither the police, MARAC nor service provider captures this information.</p> <p>The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that adults aged 16 to 74 years who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed. <a href="http://Domesticabusevictimcharacteristics,England,andWales-OfficeforNationalStatistics(ons.gov.uk)">Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England, and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Harmful traditional practices including Forced Marriage data is captured by the current provider, with low rates. (1% of case load)</p> <p>Studies show that forced marriage is a challenge in South Asian communities, and therefore one may expect to see further cases in Slough.</p>	Representative – see comments opposite

**2.2 Are there any groups with protected characteristic that are overrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population? If so, this could indicate that the proposal may have a disproportionate**

Yes, please see details above at 2.1 for greater detail.

- 1) Gender,
- 2) Pregnancy/Maternity,
- 3) Marriage – in terms of forced marriage

<p><i>impact on this group even if it is a universal service.</i></p>																															
<p><b>2.3 Are there any groups with protected characteristics that are underrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population? If so, this could indicate that the service may not be accessible to all groups or there may be some form of direct or indirect discrimination occurring.</b></p>	<p>Yes, please see details above at 2.1 for greater detail.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ethnicity,</li> <li>2) Disability,</li> <li>3) Sexual orientation,</li> <li>4) Religion or Belief,</li> <li>5) Gender identity</li> </ol>																														
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<sup>4</sup> Disability discrimination is different from other types of discrimination since it includes the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

	particular children, under 21s and over 65s)				
	People who are intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Impact due to pregnancy/ maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	People of particular faiths and beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	People on low incomes*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>2.5</b>	<b>Based on your responses, should a full, detailed EIA be carried out on the project, policy, or proposal</b>
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Provide brief reasons on how you have come to this decision?</b>
	The detail at 2.1 identifies a number of local challenges for populations of different protected characteristics, whether under or over-represented.

**If the answer in 2.5 above is “No” then sections 3 and 4 are not required to be completed.**

### SECTION 3: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

In order to be able to identify ways to mitigate any potential impact it is essential that we know what those potential impacts might be. Using the evidence gathered in section 2, explain what the potential impact of your proposal might be on the groups you have identified. You may wish to further supplement the evidence you have gathered using the table below in order to properly consider the impact.

Protected Group		Positive impact?			Negative impact? If so, please specify the nature and extent of that impact	No specific impact	If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated? Please specify any mitigation measures and how and when they will be implemented.	What, if any, are the cumulative effects of this decision when viewed in the context of other Council decisions and their equality impacts
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations				
Gender	Men	X	X				The service specification will require accessibility for male victims	
	Women		X				The service specification recognises the gendered nature of domestic abuse	
Race	White					X		
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	X	X	X			The service specification will require culturally sensitive and accessible services	

	Asian/Asian British	X	X	X			<p>The service specification will require culturally sensitive and accessible services.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	X	X	X			<p>The service specification will require culturally sensitive and accessible services.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	
	Gypsies / travellers	X	X	X			<p>The service specification will require culturally sensitive and accessible services.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	

	Other ethnic group	X	X	X			<p>The service specification will require and be informed by further break down and understanding of Black African populations such as the Somali population. Specifically, the service specification will seek to address intersectionality of other themes, such as mental health and poverty.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	
<b>Disability</b>	Physical	X	X				<p>Research will be required in respect of types of disability, in order to understand impact/effect on survivors of disability.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p>	



							Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.	
	Sensory	X	X				As above	
	Learning Difficulties	X	X				As above	
	Learning Disabilities	X	X				As above	
	Mental Health	X	X				As above	

Protected Group		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated? (action)	What are the cumulative of effects
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations				
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual	X	X	X			<p>The service specification will require services that are accessible to all clients with varied protected characteristics including sexual orientation.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	
<b>Age</b>	Older people (50+)	X	X	X				
	Younger people (16 - 25)	X	X	X				
	Children (under 16)	X	X	X				

<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	X	X	X		<p>The service specification will require services that are accessible to all clients with varied protected characteristics including those who have undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	
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<p><b>Impact due to pregnancy/maternity</b></p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>The service specification will require services that are accessible to all clients with varied protected characteristics, including those who are pregnant and undergoing fertility treatment.</p> <p>The service specification will require the service to engage with and build positive relations with health services, in particular, maternity departments, and GP practices.</p> <p>Specialist organisations will be invited to form part of a community domestic abuse forum.</p> <p>Pathways to specialist organisations will be made very clear.</p>	
<p><b>Groups with particular faiths and beliefs</b></p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>The service specification will require culturally sensitive and accessible services, and a programme of community engagement including with different faith groups</p>	

<b>People on low incomes</b>	X	X	X			The service specification will require seeking ways of working in areas of high deprivation, such as one-stop shops, or via other accessible public services.	
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## SECTION 4: ACTION PLAN

<p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p>Complete the action plan if you need to reduce or remove the negative impacts you have identified, take steps to foster good relations or fill data gaps.</p> <p><i>Please include the action required by your team/unit, groups affected, the intended outcome of your action, resources needed, a lead person responsible for undertaking the action (inc. their department and contact details), the completion date for the action, and the relevant RAG rating: R(ed) – action not initiated, A(mber) – action initiated and in progress, G(reen) – action complete.</i></p> <p><b>NB. Add any additional rows, if required.</b></p>						
	<p><b>Action Required</b></p>	<p><b>Equality Groups Targeted</b></p>	<p><b>Intended outcome</b></p>	<p><b>Resources Needed</b></p>	<p><b>Name of Lead, Unit &amp; Contact Details</b></p>	<p><b>Completion Date (DD/MM/YY)</b></p>	<p><b>RAG</b></p>
<p>The service specification will require accessibility for male victims, but also to work with all other specialist agencies that work in Slough</p>	<p><b>Gender (Men)</b></p>	<p>Service accessible to men, with higher rates of men seeking assistance</p>	<p><b>Nil additional</b></p>	<p>Rachel Axtell  <a href="mailto:Rachle.Axtell@slough.gov.uk">Rachle.Axtell@slough.gov.uk</a>            Community Safety Slough</p>	<p><b>01.03.2024</b></p>		
<p>The service specification will require culturally sensitive and accessible services, but also to work with all other specialist agencies that work in Slough.</p> <p>Local culturally sensitive DA services will be consulted on specification.</p> <p>Best practice in commissioning culturally</p>	<p><b>Race/Faith</b></p>	<p>Service accessible to all races of Slough</p> <p>Proportion of service users will be representative of population</p>	<p><b>Nil additional</b></p>		<p><b>01.03.2024</b></p>		

	sensitive services will be sought						
	<p>The service specification will require services that are accessible to all clients with varied protected characteristics, including disability.</p> <p>Research and advice will be sought in regard to the various 'themes' of disability, in writing the service specification.</p>	<b>Disability</b>	<p>Service accessible to all communities of Slough</p> <p>Proportion of service users will be representative of population</p>	<b>Nil additional</b>		<b>01.03.2024</b>	
	The service specification will require services that are accessible to all clients with varied protected characteristics including sexual orientation.	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>Service accessible to all communities of Slough</p> <p>Proportion of service users will be representative of population</p>	<b>Nil additional</b>		<b>01.03.2024</b>	
	<p>Exact comparison of population versus victim breakdown required.</p> <p>The service specification will require capacity to work across all age groups, but also to work with all other specialist agencies that work in Slough</p>	<b>Age</b>	<p>Service accessible to all communities of Slough</p> <p>Proportion of service users will be representative of population</p>	<b>Nil additional</b>		<b>01.03.2024</b>	
	The service specification will require capacity to work	<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Service accessible to all communities of Slough	<b>Nil additional</b>		<b>01.03.2024</b>	

	across communities, but also to work with all other specialist agencies that work in Slough, and in particular clinicians such as GPs		Proportion of service users will be representative of population				
	<p>The service specification will require capacity to work with all women, but also to work with all other specialist agencies that work in Slough, and in particular clinicians within maternity units and GPs.</p> <p>Service provider specification will require training inputs to clinical staff, to encourage 'routine enquiry'</p>	<b>Pregnancy</b>	<p>Service accessible to all communities of Slough</p> <p>Policy changes in due course across GP practices.</p>	<b>Nil additional</b>		<b>01.03.2024</b>	



## Appendix C Timetable

Phase	Activity	Outcome	Deadline
1	Understanding service demand and need in Slough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Needs Assessment (NA)</li> <li>▪ Equalities Impact Needs Assessment (EINA)</li> <li>▪ Public Survey/Consultation</li> </ul>	End January 2023  (Complete)
2	Agreeing strategic partnership approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partnership DA Strategy</li> </ul>	End October 2023 <i>(Complete, to SSP January 2024)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council Safer Accommodation DA Strategy</li> </ul>	End November 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serious Violence Strategy Draft</li> </ul>	End November 2023
3	Design of service specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service Design Options for Specification</li> <li>▪ Ensuring EINA observations accounted for</li> </ul>	End January 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service Specification Agreed</li> </ul>	Mid-March 2024
4	Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment and Strategy and decision paper on further procurement for commencement 2025.</li> </ul>	Mid-March 2024
5	Finalise Procurement Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supplier warm up,</li> <li>▪ PIN notice</li> </ul>	End April 2024
6	Market warm-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage prospective providers.</li> <li>▪ Warm up event</li> <li>▪ Procurement system intention</li> </ul>	Mid-May 2024
7	Invitation to tender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Includes qualitative questionnaire</li> </ul>	End May 2024
8	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On written submission</li> <li>▪ On Presentation</li> <li>▪ Tender evaluation report</li> </ul>	Mid-August 2024
9	Award of contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preferred provider awarded contract.</li> <li>▪ Appeal period</li> <li>▪ Commence fortnightly project mobilisation meetings</li> </ul>	End August 2024
10	Mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop implementation plan.</li> <li>▪ Develop communication plan.</li> <li>▪ Manage HR and TUPE</li> <li>▪ Agree working arrangements (People &amp; Place)</li> </ul>	September 2024
11	Go live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily meetings for two weeks.</li> <li>▪ Weekly meetings for eight weeks</li> <li>▪ Monthly meetings for three months</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2025

**THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER**

**FULL NAME:** Ketan Gandhi.....

**SERVICE AREA:** Place Regulation.....

**EMAIL:** ketan.gandhi@slough.gov.uk.....

**DATE (DD/MM/YYYY):** 6/01/2023.....