



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Executive: 18 June 2025

Wards affected: All wards

Domestic Abuse Outreach Service Update

Report of Director Community Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To advise Executive of current trends, demand and work undertaken within the council's Domestic Abuse Outreach Service.

2. Recommendation

That Executive:

- 2.1 Acknowledge and endorse the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Acknowledge the demand for the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service and relevant service offers that provide support to residents of the borough.
- 2.3 Recognise the importance of the service to residents in any future LGR structure.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Domestic Abuse Outreach Service (DAOS) consists of one permanent staff member who is dedicated to the service full time.
- 3.2 DAOS is a neighbourhood-based offer for domestic abuse survivors. The service provides confidential help, advice, advocacy, emotional and practical support and guidance on how to deal with any instances of domestic abuse for those living or working within the borough. Residents wishing to engage with the service can self-refer or can be referred by other professionals with consent. The service offers one-to-one support or group support offers such

as Freedom Programme, Recovery Toolkit, and Healing Together (for children& their protective parents), alongside a peer support coffee morning.

- 3.3 The service has a yearly action plan which drives delivery and continuous improvement in the service.
- 3.4 The Council's Housing Options team have had a dedicated Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer (DAHOO) in place via Domestic Abuse Act Funding (MHCLG), since 2023. DAOS and DAHOO work collaboratively to provide a seamless and holistic offer of support for residents.

4.0 Updates for April 2024- March 2025

- 4.1 Between April 2024 and March 2025, DAOS received 167 referrals. Of the 167 referrals, 75 referrals required advice from the service, 31 survivors were seeking group support, 35 referrals wanted one to one support alone and 26 survivors wanted one to one support alongside group support offers. (Appendix A provides a full data summary for 2024/25).
- 4.2 During 2024/25 the DAOS conducted 578 one to one sessions/telephone calls with survivors and collaborated with fellow agencies on 81 complex cases.
- 4.3 In 2024/25, referrals submitted into DAOS by county commissioned Domestic Abuse (DA) Services have increased from last year's figures by 90%. DAOS have worked diligently with partner DA Services to ensure that residents receive support that they need in a timely manner.
- 4.4 In 2024/25 there has been significant uptake for group referrals, with an increase of 13%. Within this period there have been 4 domestic abuse support group programmes delivered, enabling support for 27 survivors. Alongside these programmes a peer support group/coffee morning offer has been developed to include parts of the Unbreakable programme, and this is held monthly. The Unbreakable programme is a short course that aims to reinforce positive self-image, confidence, self-esteem and promotes positive steps towards refocussing survivors on their own self development and wellbeing.
- 4.5 With support from the joint Community Safety Partnership (CSP), DAOS have collaborated with Blaby District Council to jointly deliver group support programmes for survivors in 2024/25. This offer allows ease of access into group support programmes for survivors from both districts, alongside offering support to each DAOS in terms of staffing, capacity and support to run group programmes. This is helpful given that both areas only have limited capacity, with 1 full time DAOS staff member in each area.
- 4.6 In 2024/25 DAOS held 3 multi-agency DA forums on behalf of Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby District. There is ongoing commitment from partners to attend and mental health professionals have become a further regular attendee of the forum. This network contributes towards an increased and proactive response to survivors within our borough. The DA forum allows

partners to raise key barriers for DA survivors, areas of future learning, consider recommendations from Domestic Homicide Review's (DHRs) and helps ensure that new information, support and signposting is shared at the earliest opportunity with all partners.

- 4.7 A highlight of 2024/25 for DAOS was the DA Networking Event that started the council's White Ribbon Campaign in November 2024. This networking event was co-ordinated by the service to bring key partners together that support survivors within our neighbourhood. Approximately 60+ partners attended the event, many holding stalls to share their service offers and work. Survivors with lived experience, with support from DAOS, created an interactive display for the theme of economic abuse. This interactive model was impactful on professionals attending the event and many reported that it had been a significant highlight (Please see Appendix B for qualitative feedback).
- 4.8 During the White Ribbon Campaign in 2024/25, DAOS alongside the dedicated DA Housing Options Officer (DAHOO) launched a target hardening offer for residents which was funded via the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner Community Safety Partnership funding. This offer provides survivors with access to a target hardening pack that includes a personal alarm, window alarm, alarmed door wedge, solar light, alongside a referral to the Leicestershire Fire Safety service. Additional offers to survivors supported by our Housing and Community Safety Teams also include access to electronic recording video doorbells and HBBC Lifeline.
- 4.9 In Q3 and Q4 of 2024/25 DAOS and the Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer (DAHOO) supported partners such as internal council teams, the Police, Family Help Service, Joint Action Groups and County Commissioned DA services to be able to refer survivors to access target hardening support. Stringent risk assessments are required to ensure that the target hardening support does not replace required safety measures and risk mitigation, such as temporary accommodation etc.
- 4.10 In 2024/25 we had 5 survivors referred for target hardening support. 4 survivors accepted the support offer, with one survivor declining due to the alleged perpetrator being remanded to prison and safety significantly increasing. Survivors that accessed this service reported via evaluation, both feelings of safety and security improving post receiving target hardening support. Qualitative feedback from survivors suggested that the council's DA workers "made me feel very heard and supported" (Appendix B).
- 4.11 Within 2024/25 DAOS and DAHOO colleagues worked hard to strengthen the working relationship between both services to provide a holistic and supportive environment for survivors fleeing domestic abuse. This collaborative approach has increased referrals to DAOS from housing by a further 5% on 2023/24 figures and ensured that high risk survivors have specialist housing support at point of crisis. It is also worthwhile to note that there has been a significant increase of nearly 30% of survivors contacting

housing options for support to flee from domestic abuse in comparison to 23/24 figures (Appendix A).

- 4.12 In Q3 DAOS streamlined, updated and produced a new service leaflet. This was done in conjunction with survivors. Survivors suggested key changes that were implemented to ensure that the DAOS continues to be survivor led. This leaflet version has been communicated to partners via post and email to raise awareness of updated information. A PDF version of this leaflet (please see appendix C) is available. Professionals have fed back on the leaflet and said they find the new version to be clearer and concise for survivors they are working with.
- 4.13 In Q4 DAOS reviewed and updated the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council website for domestic abuse support. The new web page gives survivors further choice on services that may be accessible to them, details of wider support and allows the referral process to be more accessible and efficient for survivors and professionals to utilise ([Domestic abuse | Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council](#)).

5.0 Aims for 2025-26

- 5.1 There are a further 3 domestic abuse support groups planned for 2025/26. DAOS also hope to sustain the peer support coffee morning, enabling ongoing ad hoc support for those survivors that need this within the community.
- 5.2 In 2025/26, after considering last year's data which showed that although we had a number of referrals from rural areas a high number of survivors accessing DAOS were living within the Hinckley area of Hinckley and Bosworth, the service plans to hold a campaign to increase the awareness of the DAOS and DAHOO offers within our rural areas. One of the planned actions will be for the DAOS and DAHOO to present and share awareness at the summer parish forum and ensure communication and relevant literature is available in places such as village noticeboards and other public facing rural venues.
- 5.3 When considering that for 2024/25 only 14% of survivors accessing DAOS were homeowners, an aim for 2025/26 will be for DAOS to support DAHOO to increase awareness for professionals of the housing options available to survivors. A planned update session around domestic abuse and housing, will look to give wider professionals an opportunity to engage with the council's DA support services and outline remits of both support offers, giving more knowledge to professionals working with survivors that may need financial and housing support to flee from abuse.
- 5.4 The current target hardening offer is to continue in 2025/26. DAOS have plans to extend the reach of target hardening support to professionals working alongside survivors and are actively engaging with partners to raise awareness of the support offer. Promotion for this will also reoccur with internal partners and teams to highlight the offer.

- 5.5 After positive partner feedback, DAOS plans to repeat the annual White Ribbon campaign in 25/26, which will include a further DA Networking event.
- 5.6 DAOS plans to refresh the DA Workplace Policy (2022). ([Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Staff Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure Final- 2022-25.pdf](#))
- 5.7 DAOS also have further DA forums in 2025/26, with the next date arranged for the 18th June 2025.

6. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 6.1 The report is to be taken in open session.

7. Financial implications [CS]

- 7.1 £35,188 of Domestic Abuse funding was received from MHCLG in 2024/25 & a further £35,662 has been received for 2025/26. This is being used to fund a dedicated Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer.

8. Legal implications [ST]

- 8.1 None.

9. Corporate Plan implications

- 9.1 This report relates to the priority ambition of 'People' within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2024-28.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The service uses survivor voice and those with lived experience to inform service delivery and associated literature.
- 10.2 Relevant council service areas have been consulted in the formulation of this report.
- 10.3 Qualitative feedback from survivors and partners is collected and used for informing service delivery.

11. Risk implications

- 11.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 11.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with

this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

11.3 No risks identified.

12. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

12.1 The service collects data and feedback which is used to inform the service.

12.2 Data is used to inform work to increase access to services, this is evidenced at 5.2 and 5.3.

12.3 Those with lived experience are actively involved in the development of the service.

13. Climate implications

13.1 Work will be delivered to limit carbon impact where possible, for example virtual methods of engagement and paperless systems.

14. Corporate implications

14.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers:

Appendix A - Domestic Abuse (DA) 2024-25 Data Summary

Appendix B - Survivor Voice & Feedback 2024-25

Appendix C - Domestic Abuse Outreach Service 2024-25 Leaflet

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