

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: REGULATORY

1. DECISION TAKEN

- 1.1 The allocation of £33.5k of grant funding, received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA), who provide the district's existing specialist service for victims of domestic abuse.

2. DECISION TAKER

- 2.1 Ian Fullstone, Service Director – Regulatory

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

- 3.1 21 December 2022

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 The Council has received funding of £33.5k from the DLUHC to enable it to fulfil its obligations under the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 4.2 The funding has been provided specifically to support domestic abuse safe accommodation support services, which in North Herts are provided by SADA. The additional funding will be used to bolster the existing SADA service in accordance with grant requirements.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None. The funding has been provided specifically to support domestic abuse safe accommodation support services in North Herts, which is provided on behalf of the Council by SADA.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 The Leader of the Council, Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg and the Deputy Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, Cllr Alistair Willoughby, have both been consulted and are supportive of this decision.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (enacted 29 April 2021) was introduced to strengthen the support available for victims of domestic abuse and to improve the effectiveness of the justice system in bringing perpetrators to justice. Of direct relevance to the Council is the new provision that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse

automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance and will therefore be owed accommodation duties. Previously, victims of domestic abuse had to be assessed as being 'vulnerable' because of domestic abuse in order to be identified as having a priority need, a much higher threshold to reach. In addition, county councils have a new statutory duty to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. District and borough councils are required to cooperate with county councils, so far as is reasonably practicable.

- 8.2 The government has provided additional funding to local authorities to help them to meet these new provisions. The grant to the Council for 2022-23 is £33,516 to ensure continuity of provision where existing domestic abuse safe accommodation support services are already commissioned. In North Herts, this service is provided by Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA).
- 8.3 The SADA service is embedded within the Council's housing service, with all clients, on approach to the Council and suffering or at risk of domestic abuse being referred directly to SADA for triage, advice and support as appropriate. The SADA service includes crisis intervention with emergency accommodation ('Safe Space' units) available both locally and across the county as well as an out of hours support service. SADA has been funded by the Council to provide a specialist service for people experiencing domestic abuse in the district since November 2019 and their contract has been renewed for a further three years until 31 March 2024 (as per the delegated decision made on 10 March 2021).
- 8.4 Over 2021/22, the Council's housing team made over 170 referrals to the SADA service. In over one-third of cases, clients were able to return home safely or find alternative safe accommodation (including emergency accommodation) following assistance from SADA whilst a further quarter of cases were referred on to either NHDC or another council for follow-up homelessness assistance in line with homelessness legislation.
- 8.5 The additional grant funding awarded to the Council will be used to bolster the existing SADA service in the district in line with grant conditions, which will include additional community work in areas where there is under-reporting of domestic abuse, to improve engagement with and awareness of the service.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Local authorities' homelessness duties are contained within the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which placed significant new duties on English local housing authorities.
- 9.2 When agreeing the Adoption of a new Housing Strategy (2019-2024) in March 2019, the Cabinet also resolved the following:

In the event the MHCLG provides homelessness funding beyond the financial year 2019/20, the Cabinet authorises the Service Director – Regulatory, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, to decide on the specific allocation of the funds in order to meet homelessness priorities, for the duration of the Strategy.

- 9.3 The interventions detailed at paragraph 8.5 meet the DLUHC requirements for use of the grant and are also consistent with the aims and objectives of the Housing Strategy (2019-2024), that has a specific focus on actions regarding the provision of support for victims of domestic abuse.
- 9.4 Following completion and approval of the necessary procurement process, a funding agreement will be produced to cover the duration of the augmented SADA service.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The 2022/2023 DLUHC grant funding of £33,516 has been provided specifically to support existing domestic abuse safe accommodation support services in North Herts.
- 10.2 This will supplement £20k of grant funding already agreed for the SADA service in 2022/23 (delegated decision taken on [10 March 2021](#) refers, which approved a total allocation of £50k of grant funding for the SADA service over 2021/22 – 2023/24). In total therefore, SADA will receive grant funding of £53,516 for 2022/23.
- 10.3 There are no specific capital implications.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Victims of domestic abuse require specialist support and the SADA service provides timely interventions, dedicated resources and a variety of housing options to achieve this.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no equalities implications arising as a result of this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no human resource implications.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 DLUHC Domestic Abuse Duty – 2022/23 Funding Allocations: [Local Authority Domestic Abuse Duty: 2022 to 2023 funding allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

17. APPENDICES

- 17.1 None.

NOTIFICATION DATE:

Signature of Executive Member Consulted: Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg confirmed her support via email on 20/12/22

Date: 21/12/22

Signature of Decision Taker: 
Service Director - Regulatory

Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS