

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 19 September 19
SUBJECT:	Make A Stand
LEAD OFFICER:	Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director of Place Hazel Simmonds, Executive Director of Gateway, Strategy and Engagement
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Hamida Ali, Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities Cllr Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON A critical priority in Croydon Council’s Corporate Plan is to ensure everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home. The recommendations in this report will help raise awareness on domestic Abuse and will help reduce crime and domestic and sexual violence in the borough.	

FINANCIAL IMPACT No financial impact as a result of these recommendations.
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: 1519CAB This is a Key Decision as defined in the Council’s Constitution. The decision may be implemented from 1300 hours on the 6 th working day after it is made, unless the decision is referred to the Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee by the requisite number of Councillors.

<p>The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below</p> <p>1. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That Cabinet:</p> <p>1.1 Signs up to the Chartered Institute of Housing’s “Make A Stand” pledge on behalf of the Council to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>1.2 Notes that the Council already complies with three of the elements of the pledge;</p>
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| 1.3 | To appoint the Cabinet Member of Safer Croydon and Communities, to own the activity around supporting those experiencing domestic abuse to adhere to the final element of the pledge; |
| 1.4 | Agree to publicise the signing of the pledge through the Council website and social media. |

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the Chartered Institute of Housing's "Make a Stand" pledge and the four commitments entailed.
- 2.2 It recommends that the Council to sign up to the initiative in order to support residents experiencing domestic abuse.
- 2.3 It identifies actions already undertaken which comply with the pledge and an additional action required by the Council to meet the four commitments.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1 Croydon, as per our Corporate Plan, is dedicated to making sure everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home. Continuing to address sexual and domestic abuse is a critical priority for the Council.
- 3.2 The Council's new Violence Reduction Network (VRN) is aiming to focus on tackling the root causes of violence as well as preventing or mitigating its impact. The VRN recognises that early help, prevention and an integrated, whole systems approach is critical. This pledge and the connected commitments reflect the values of the VRN and the Council's approach to reducing violence across the borough. The VRN has therefore been given oversight of this report.
- 3.3 The VRN will oversee the implementation of the Council's public health approach to reducing violence, including domestic abuse in Croydon. The pledge will help support that work and complement the services that Croydon already has in place to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse – set out in the following paragraphs
- 3.4 Croydon has many measures in place that look to support victims of domestic abuse. Some key examples include:
- The work of the FJC (formerly Family Justice Centre) who deliver multi-agency training and have placed independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs) across several services.
 - Our DRIVE project, commissioned via Rise Mutual, which looks to find long term solutions to domestic abuse, reduce the number of victims and challenge perpetrators to stop. Croydon is the only site in London to pilot this project.

- The FJC has increased the provision of community based support by placing IDVAs at Croydon University Hospital, within Croydon police station and across the community within the borough.
- Our support of the White Ribbon campaign that looks to end male violence against women.
- Croydon possesses a Domestic Abuse ambassador programme to support staff who are or have experienced domestic abuse. The programme has been set up to reduce the fear and lack of understanding around engaging with someone with domestic abuse and to encourage who are reluctant to seek help. There are currently 40 ambassadors in total.

3.5 The FJC had 2,066 visitors between April 2018 and March 2019. Cases with the highest risk were referred to Croydon's Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and were allocated an IDVA to work with the victims to eliminate risk of abuse.

3.6 This pledge therefore represents further commitment from the Council to support those experiencing domestic abuse and build on the effective work already being carried out.

3.7 The Council works closely with several housing partners who operate on a local and national level. On review, the Council understands 50% of our top housing providers have already signed up to the pledge. As a part of our partnership working with Housing Associations the Council will spread awareness of the pledge and encourage organisations who have not yet signed up to do so to ensure organisations across the borough

3.8 The Safer Croydon and Communities Cabinet Member is also considering pursuing Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation to further commit to support those experiencing domestic abuse in the borough. The VRN will review what external accreditation and validation we should seek for our domestic abuse work.

4. Pledge Commitments

4.1 The Pledge and commitments recognise the significance of domestic abuse as an issue and the need for the Council to continue to raise awareness and take effective action to ensure all our Council residents can live safe lives.

4.2 By signing up to the pledge the Council is committing to carrying out the following:

- Put in place and embed a policy to support council residents who are affected by domestic abuse.
 - The Council has published a domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy (DASV) 2018-2021 which helps guide the FJC's work to support those experience domestic abuse. The strategy combined with the duties carried out by the FJC through measures such as MARAC, DRIVE and IDVAs represents an operational policy that protects and supports council residents affected by domestic abuse.

- Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on the Council's website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff
 - Information about the FJC and the national domestic abuse helpline is available on the Council webpage and advertised through posters and campaigns.
- Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
 - As part of the councils commitment to staff health and well-being, a DASV policy (DASV) was implemented to support any staff members who had experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence. The policy details the full support given to staff including the development of a specific DASV toolkit to help assess risk, within the tool kit there is a step by step guide for professionals. It also describes the councils understanding of the impact of DASV on employees as well as their understanding of the impact it may have on work colleagues who are close to the victim. There is also a specific guide for managers which talks about managers following the '4Rs'. Recognise, Respond, Refer and Record.
- Appoint a champion at a senior level in the organisation to own the activity the Council is undertaking to support people experiencing domestic abuse.
 - The Council does not currently have an appointed champion that oversees activities carried out to support those experiencing domestic abuse. It is recommended that this be the Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities.

5. Financial and Risk Assessment Considerations

5.1 No Impact expected

Approved by: Ian Geary, Head of Finance, Resources & Accountancy

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of Director of Law and Governance that there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1 There is a workforce policy in place which provides advice and guidance to managers and staff on domestic abuse. The council also has an employee assistance scheme to offer confidential advice and support to employees.

Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 No negative impact expected on groups that share a protected characteristic
- 8.2 We are aware that Croydon is a diverse Borough and will ensure we take the necessary steps to support all residents experiencing domestic abuse. This will help the Council meet its Equality objective to increase the percentage of domestic abuse sanctions
- 8.3 We will ensure information about national and local domestic abuse support services is accessible to all.
- 8.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and outlines that these recommendations will have a positive impact only. For instance, the Equality Impact Assessment identifies that the pledge is likely to benefit women more as they are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse compared to men.

Approved by: Yvonne Okiyo – Equalities Manager

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 No environmental impact expected

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 The recommendations suggested would demonstrate further commitment from the Council towards ensuring Croydon's residents are safe and those experiencing domestic and sexual abuse are supported. The appointment of a champion, recommended to be the cabinet member of Safer Croydon and Communities, will help the Council work better in partnership to support those affected by this critical issue.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 11.1 The recommendations will help ensure that awareness around domestic abuse is raised within the borough and will ensure a champion is in place to manage activities. The proposed decision therefore, will help support vulnerable residents and will help the Council meet its commitment, as per the corporate plan 2018-2022, to ensure everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 No other options considered

13. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

No

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT: "Chartered Institute for Housing – The Pledge" - <http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/1Makeastand%20pledge%20FINAL.pdf>