



Title: **Remodelling Accommodation Services for Victims of Domestic Abuse**

Wards Affected: **All Wards in Torbay**

To: **Overview and Scrutiny Board** On: **9 October 2013**

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1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 In July 2013 the Domestic Abuse Steering Group recommended a consultation on the delivery model of accommodation services for women and children fleeing domestic abuse.
- 1.2 The proposal was to change the delivery model from a refuge to a women and children only emergency accommodation service with outreach support.
- 1.3 A consultation was undertaken from 27 August to 25 September 2013 to establish views on the proposal with a variety of stakeholders, including current and past service users.
- 1.4 A decision on the proposal was due to be made at a meeting of the Council on 17th October 2013. This item has been deferred to allow more time for further consultation to be undertaken and a detailed specification to be developed in conjunction with our partners, including Westcountry Housing.
- 1.5 Feedback received to date as part of the consultation included views about the current model of service as well as the proposed model, the consultation report which outlines the preliminary findings is available as supporting documentation to this report in appendix 1.
- 1.6 A draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has also been undertaken in relation to this proposal and has been updated to include the consultation responses received to date. A final EIA will be completed once the extended consultation period has closed. The draft EIA is attached in appendix 2.
- 1.7 The decision to be made by Council will be on the outline specification (commercially confidential), procurement timetable and indicative budget.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Torbay Council currently commissions 7 refuge spaces and 50 domestic abuse

outreach places (this means 50 people are supported in the community at any one time as well as those in the refuge). The contract is held by Westcountry Housing and has been in place since April 2009. The contract was issued for 3 years with the option to extend for a further 3 years.

- 2.2. The Domestic Abuse Steering Group discussed commissioning plans in their meeting in July 2013. This included agreement that future services should include all three strands from the Domestic Abuse Strategy, i.e. interventions for perpetrators, support/recovery for victims and supported accommodation.
- 2.3. The Domestic Abuse Steering Group held a meeting in July 2013 on what the future supported accommodation model could look like. The meeting agreed a process of consultation was required on a proposal to alter the model from a refuge to emergency accommodation.

3. Consultation Process

- 3.1. Following the development of the proposal, consultation was undertaken with those people and key stakeholders who would be affected should the proposal be implemented. Consultation was carried out with the following groups:
 - Current provider of the refuge, Westcountry Housing
 - Women currently accommodated in the refuge and those who have previously stayed in refuge accommodation
 - Local and national partner organisations
 - Wider members of the public.
- 3.2. A summary of the feedback received to date can be found in both the attached consultation report and EIA. The key issues raised in relation to this proposal include the following:
 - There will be a lack of an all inclusive accommodation service where women can access other services.
 - Accommodation services need to be matched against the needs of the clients.
 - The refuge is part of national, recognisable model of service provision.
 - There is the potential for increased demand on other services.
 - There is the potential for an increased risk to women's safety.
 - The refuge currently provides services for children.
 - Women need to be able to access accommodation outside of the areas in which they live.
 - The proposed model may provide more flexibility and targeted support.
- 3.3. In response to feedback received the consultation period for this proposal has been extended and will now remain open until 30th October 2013. Consideration is being given to whether any further targeted consultation needs to take place in addition to the on-line questionnaire.

4. Planned Next stages

- 4.1. Co-production of an outline specification to include key partners, stakeholders, people who have used services, the current provider, and potential providers.

- 4.2. Council Members to make a decision on 5th December 2013 on the outline specification (commercially confidential), procurement timetable and indicative budget.

Name of Head of Business Unit	Frances Mason / Caroline Taylor
Title of Head of Business Unit	Head of Supporting People / Director of Adult Services

Appendices

Appendix 1 Consultation report

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Documents available in members' rooms

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Not applicable