

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 5 September 2023

**Subject:** Domestic Abuse and Safety of Women and Girls

**Report of:** Strategic Director - Neighbourhoods

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### Summary

This report requested by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee summarises recent and current work to address Domestic Violence and Abuse, including implementation of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and victim voice work. The report also updates on ongoing work to promote the safety of women and girls in the city.

### Recommendations

The Committee are invited to consider and comment on the information contained in this report.

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### Wards Affected:

All Wards

**Environmental Impact Assessment** - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

None identified.

<b>Our Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The report describes some of the initiatives designed to support victims into recovery and move on from their experience, to include opportunities for employment and training
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	

A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The Domestic Abuse Strategy aims to improve the lives of those in our city that are affected by domestic violence and abuse through better co-ordinated services that safeguard and support victims and any children impacted by living with abuse.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The report references wider work of the Council on the VAWG agenda, which is intended to contribute to the city being a place where women feel safe in their neighbourhood, the city centre or anywhere else they may visit
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

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### Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2021-2024

GM Gender Based Violence and Abuse Strategy

Safer Parks – Improving Access for Women and Girls

Women’s Night-Time Safety Charter

Good Night Out Guide

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1.1 This report seeks to provide Committee members with an update on progress during the latter half of 2022, and in 2023 to date on the various aspects of the domestic violence and abuse agenda.
- 1.1.2. In particular, the report updates Committee members on early progress with the Victim Voice initiative, which colleagues from CAHN (Caribbean African Health Network) will describe in more detail during the meeting.
- 1.1.3 The report also provides an update on wide ranging work to promote the safety of women and girls who live, work in and visit our city.

### **1.2 Understanding the issue**

- 1.2.1 During late 2022 we completed the first annual refresh of our Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment. This document is required of us as part of the Safe Accommodation Duty that was a product of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We took the process further and widened the scope to capture data about all aspects of domestic abuse, not just refuge and accommodation provision.
- 1.2.2 In addition to the Needs Assessment, which captures data on demographics crimes and incidents, referral traffic and engagement with services, our Data and Information Managers also produce for the Community Safety Partnership an annual Strategic Assessment, within which domestic abuse is a key featured topic.
- 1.2.3 Supplementing these information gathering exercises are four quarterly Performance Bulletins, within which a mix of data and narrative serve to regularly paint the picture of demand on our services, the work they are carrying out and the outcomes being achieved.

### **1.3 Data snapshots (taken from Needs Assessment, STA, Performance Bulletins)**

- 1.3.1 Domestic abuse, in all its forms, remains a significant issue for the Council and partners. In the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) recorded 14020 domestic incidents, of which 3359 were incidents where children were present. This compares with 14005 incidents of which 4683 were incidents where children were present in the previous year.
- 1.3.2 The majority of victims continues to be female (75% of all offences recorded during 2022-23), though the remaining proportion that are male is not insignificant. The proportion of male victims within all victims aged over 50 is increased, to just over one third.
- 1.3.3 There continue to be strong correlations between high volumes of domestic abuse incident and areas of the city with the highest deprivation scores

relating to income, employment, education and skills, and health and disability. The five worst affected wards in 2022 were Miles Platting & Newton Heath, Harpurhey, Clayton & Openshaw, Gorton & Abbey Hey and Charlestown.

- 1.3.4 While the age profile of domestic abuse victims tends to mirror the city's relatively young age profile, with the majority of victims being in the 30-45 age range, 14% of all domestic abuse offences recorded by GMP in 2021-22 concerned victims aged over 50.
- 1.3.5 Ethnicity breakdowns of domestic abuse victims largely correspond with the general age profiles, with greatest proportions of Black and Asian victims being seen in the 20-40 age range. Numbers of Asian victims in the 40-49 age do not fall as sharply as they do in respect of those who are Black or White. People identifying as Asian/Asian British: Pakistani made up 12.9% of referrals for safe accommodation during 2022-23 (up slightly from 12.0%), while those identifying as Black African/Caribbean/Black British accounted for 12.44% (up markedly from 9.65%)
- 1.3.6 64 people referred into the city's MARACs (Multi agency Risk Assessment Conference) during 2022-23 had a registered disability. 48 people supported into temporary accommodation via the Homelessness Duty had a physical mobility issue, 14 had a learning disability and 97 had mental health issues. Of the 102 people directly accessing Manchester Women's Aid's safe accommodation, 4 reported a physical disability or mobility impairment.
- 1.3.7 The Independent Choices Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline dealt with 1010 calls for help and support during the same period, of which 399 (39.5%) were specifically from Manchester citizens. Their EndtheFear website saw 8029 visits from people looking for advice, support or information.
- 1.3.8 The Helpline staff collect a range of data to help them and us understand the demographic of callers and the issues that are of most concern to them. For example, in 2023-24 quarter 1:
  - 94% of callers were women, 5% men.
  - 55% of the female callers were from a non-white background.
  - 12% of the female callers were aged over 45.
  - 9% of all callers reported that financial hardships were making their situation worse.
  - 76% of all callers were searching for refuge or other safe accommodation.
  - 15% of callers had no recourse to public funds.
  - Of the calls specifically from Manchester residents, the majority (227 of 399) came from the Central area of the city, with 87 and 85 coming from North and South respectively. We are doing some further work with the Helpline to better understand this recent change in distribution of volumes.
- 1.3.9 The city's three MARACs (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference), which discuss and agree support and service interventions for high-risk victims, dealt with 580 new cases during the quarter, of which 227 (39.13%) were repeat

cases. This compares with 633, of which 281 (44.1%) were repeats, in the corresponding quarter of 2022.

1.3.10 The inward traffic figures for MARAC, and the percentage of repeat cases, show a modest but steady year-on-year decrease since 2021, reflecting some signs of impact of collective work of Council colleagues, GMP and other partners to promote earlier identification and intervention, before risk and impact escalates to the highest level.

1.3.11 The IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) service dealt with 626 new referrals during 2023-24 quarter 1, up from the 516 received in the same quarter of 2022-23 but still well below the 949 seen in quarter 1 of 2021-22. The work of the IDVA service and some recent challenges are further detailed in section 6 below.

## **2. Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy in action**

### **2.1 The Strategy**

2.1.1 Manchester's updated Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy' was launched on 26 November 2021.

2.1.2 The strategy is the product of partnership, between Council colleagues and those from our partner agencies, but also with service providers, community and voluntary organisations, elected members and, most importantly of all, people with lived experience of domestic abuse.

2.1.3 The strategy is rooted in the 'Our Manchester' priorities, values and behaviours, and aligns with the Greater Manchester Gender-based Abuse Strategy.

2.1.4 It also recognises the diverse range of people who are, or may become, victims of domestic abuse, that they need to be able to see themselves in the support and services we offer, and that those services need to be accessible and meet the needs of our citizens.

2.1.5 The strategy has three ambitions, which are to:

- Prevent abuse and promote healthy relationships.
- Identify abuse and intervene as early as possible.
- Support victims with their recovery

2.1.6 The partner agencies and providers that make up the Domestic Abuse Forum are working on implementation of an action plan derived from the strategy and organised in accordance with the three ambitions. Progress on those actions is reported quarterly to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

### **2.2 Preventing abuse and promoting healthy relationships**

#### **Raising awareness and encouraging reporting across all communities**

- 2.2.1 We organised and promoted a wide range of awareness raising activity across the city to coincide with White Ribbon Day and the 16 Days of Activism that follow through late November and early December. This included community events, a dedicated White Ribbon stall on the Christmas Market, a display at Piccadilly Rail Station and a Women's Day at FC United of Manchester, who also had a dedicated White Ribbon match day.
- 2.2.2 We have continued to amplify the Greater Manchester Mayor's 'Is that OK?' awareness raising campaign throughout the city and national campaigns such as 'Safe Spaces', in which pharmacies (Boots, Superdrug, Morrisons in-store) and banks (TSB, Metro Bank) provide places of safety for victims of domestic abuse to make calls to support services. Staff are trained to recognise where people may be seeking such support and respond appropriately.
- 2.2.3 We are currently working with management colleagues in the Council's Libraries and Parks departments to develop a similar Safe Spaces concept, training staff in basic recognition and response, and arming them with knowledge of available services to share with victims who may make themselves known on a visit to their buildings or facilities. It is hoped that this scheme will be operational by November this year.
- 2.2.4 We have worked to ensure that the experiences of victims help to shape our ongoing response to domestic abuse and to wider violence against women and girls by launching in February a Victim Voice initiative, in conjunction with colleagues at CAHN (Caribbean African Health Network). Using a range of engagement methods, a panel of nine people from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities and areas of the city has been recruited and held its first meeting in April. The panel discussed a range of topics, including:

- Current service provision (what and where)
- Provision of services that are culturally sensitive.
- Provision for specific groups, e.g., LGBTQ+, disabled people, young people
- Legal provisions, including police approach to victims and pursuing prosecutions.
- The victim's journey.

Sandy Koujou, Head of Community Empowerment and Advocacy, at CAHN, will talk further about the scheme at the Committee meeting.

### 2.3 **Identifying abuse and intervening as early as possible.**

#### **Training and development**

- 2.3.1 Promotion and delivery of multi-agency training on domestic abuse was impacted upon by the Covid pandemic, which severely restricted the scope to bring professionals and partners together for training events and workshops.

- 2.3.2 Work has been ongoing during recent months to update the training content, in order to reflect introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act and some of the key changes within it, not least the widening of the definition around issues such as economic abuse and identifying children as victims in their own right.
- 2.3.3 Colleagues in the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (MSP) have also been working to refresh the training pool, to ensure that we have sufficient suitably qualified staff to deliver the training on a regular basis to meet demand.
- 2.3.4 Training is now being re-promoted on the MSP website for colleagues to book on. In addition to the MSP training, an extensive programme of training for Council staff and partners in trauma informed practice continues, delivered by Thrive Manchester and co-ordinated and promoted by our Adult Social Care colleague Gareth Nixon.
- 2.3.5 We were able to re-commence our programme of Domestic Homicide Review learning events late last year and ran two such events that were well attended by professionals from across the spectrum of agencies involved in tackling domestic abuse. More such events will take place later this year, to disseminate the learning from reviews recently completed and approved.

### **Early Help**

- 2.3.6 The work of colleagues in our Early Help Hubs is crucial to intervening early and dealing with domestic abuse before risk and impact escalate. By the time a victim is at such high risk that they have to be referred into MARAC, the process of hearing their case and putting in place necessary support and safety measures is estimated to cost in the region of £1,850 per referral.
- 2.3.7 Over 3500 cases per quarter are discussed at the daily Domestic Abuse / Child Concern meetings (DACC) across the city. Children concerned are recorded either onto the Early Help system or, if they already have an allocated social worker, the Children's Social Care system. Agency representatives at the meetings work together to put measures in place, with Manchester Women's Aid's DA Outreach Workers being integral to that process.
- 2.3.8 In quarter 1 of 2023-24, over 200 children went on to receive direct support from the Early Help Hub, with 479 receiving support offers from partner agencies such as Manchester Women's Aid or The Children's Society. That support may take the form of counselling, play therapy or psychosocial intervention, which all empower them to develop resilience, identify support networks and build personal safety plans.

### **Work with perpetrators**

- 2.3.9 We have continued to commission, in conjunction with GMCA, our range of behaviour change provision from Talk Listen Change (TLC). During 2022-23, 28 adult perpetrators completed the 40-week intervention, with 58% of those

worked with on the programme (and its integrated victim service) indicating that abusive behaviour had decreased.

2.3.10 49 young people have been referred onto the Encouraging Healthy Relationships programme, while over 160 referrals were received for the Respect Young People's Programme, which works to address behaviours of young people who use violence towards their parents or other carers. Two lots of groupwork programmes have now been completed, with good qualitative outcomes being reported by the young people, their parents, and siblings.

2.3.11 Talk Listen Change have also continued to deliver the DRIVE behaviour change programme in the South of the city, funded through a Home Office grant administered by GMCA. That specific funding is due to cease in October 2023 and colleagues within the Community Safety Team are in dialogue with counterparts in GMP and Talk Listen Change about development of a replacement that will be put in place across the whole of the city.

2.3.12 That replacement approach is intended to be based on the MATAAC (Multi Agency Tasking & Co-ordination) model of tackling perpetrators that has been in place to good effect for some years in the North East of England, and which has been adopted successfully on the Wigan Division of GMP. The principles are robust targeting, monitoring and disruption of high risk, high harm, serial perpetrators of domestic abuse, with the facility to encourage their take-up of available behaviour change provision.

## 2.4 **Supporting victims with their recovery.**

### **Work to support children and young people.**

2.4.1 ASSIST is a pilot service commissioned from the New Burdens Funding allocation that accompanied introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It is delivered by The Children's Society, in conjunction with Manchester Women's Aid's Reach service. It aims to improve the emotional wellbeing of children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse and who are in safe accommodation or have been dispersed to temporary accommodation.

2.4.2 During 2022-23 Q4, from January – March 2023, the service supported 20 children and young people from 15 families that were referred in. Over 200 structured sessions were delivered with children and young people during this time, contributing to some positive outcomes:

- 97% of those children and young people indicating their wellbeing had improved.
- 100% felt they had gained knowledge and skills that would help them in future.
- 100% felt that they were listened to by their worker.

2.4.3 Sample feedback from young people included:



“Looking at emotions and understanding these really helped, I feel looking at coping strategies was also helpful. In addition, I liked talking through the safety plan as I learnt new things”.

“Really liked working on sibling conflict”.

“I think my worker is very understanding and is interested in what I say. I feel more supported and know where to go at school now if I need any help or support.

#### 2.4.4 Sample feedback from parents included:

“They’re very supportive and helpful they make you feel comfortable in order to ask for support”.

“Assist Staff were excellent with my daughter, always listened and were on hand if I needed to talk but always kept my daughter’s sessions confidential. Excellent service”.

“Helped my children so much in a short amount of time, children do things they have learnt with me”.

### **Support and services for victims of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)**

2.4.5 The ‘Aspire, Inspire’ project, delivered by NESTAC, has continued to carry out wide ranging and effective work in raising awareness of the issue of FGM and working with victims to support their recovery and move on from such experiences.

#### 2.4.6 Services and initiatives delivered during Q1 of 2023-24 have included:

- Online group therapy sessions (over 20 attendees during the quarter)
- Online individual emotional support sessions (20 women during the past 12 months)
- Therapeutic and psychosexual interventions, as part of a FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) pilot clinic at St Mary’s Hospital and within NESTAC’s own cervical screening project
- Further networking with third sector organisations, hostels for asylum seekers and places of worship, with delivery of FGM and cervical screening awareness sessions
- Hosting of a FGM Conference, with Manchester University, during Refugee Week

2.4.7 NESTAC is also part of a consortium that brings together five organisations across Greater Manchester in a hub to support women who have been affected by gender-based violence and abuse. Within the hub there is a post established to work with women who have suffered sexual trauma, FGM, honour-based abuse and other harmful practices.

### **Support and services for male victims**

2.4.8 We know from our latest Needs Assessment that, while the vast majority of victims of domestic abuse are female, there are a considerable number of male victims seeking support, services and safe accommodation in the city and across Greater Manchester. During 2022-23:

- The Independent Choices GM Helpline supported 59 male victims seeking initial advice, support and safe accommodation.
- Manchester Women's Aid supported 109 clients who identified as male.
- Our IDVA service provided advocacy and support to 253 male victims.
- During Q4 of 2022-23, the LGBT IDVA service received referrals from 23 victims, of which 13 were male.

2.4.9 A Greater Manchester Male Victims Working Group has been established to better understand the nature and extent of male victims' issues, map available provision, identify shortfalls and work to improve the support offer across the city region. One of the first significant pieces of work of the group has been to collaborate on and share the cost of establishment of a GM Male Victims Refuge. This facility, based in Trafford but accessible to male victims from anywhere in GM, was opened in April and is already fully occupied.

### **3. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021- Safe Accommodation Duty and New Burdens Funding**

3.1 We have been able to make good use of an underspend that arose with this funding stream, due to the timing of DLUCH (Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing) allocation processes.

3.2 This additional money enabled us to provide almost 20 grants ranging from £500 up to £75,000 to a wide range of our VCSE organisations and service providers to enhance their offer or pilot new initiatives, many enabling us to expand our reach and provision of support further into communities that reflect the diversity of our city. Some examples:

- £75,000 awarded to Manchester Women's Aid, Saheli and The Children's Society to further support their work with children, as part of 'Our Year', the initiative to support the city's children and young people recover from the pandemic. This money was spent by the three organisations on a vast range of activities, events, trips and opportunities to try and learn new skills. One such example was an opportunity for a talented young person to engage in a programme of 30 contemporary dance lessons.
- £10,000 awarded per refuge to help families to be able to more easily move on after a stay in refuge. The funding helped families with purchase of essential items such as carpets, fridges and washing machines. Argos vouchers were able to be purchased for help with general household items. Saheli were also able to put together 'welcome packs' for women entering their refuge as they often flee without any basic necessities and in a difficult situation emotionally and financially. Manchester Women's Aid used their funding in similar ways, including purchase of supermarket

vouchers, for buying essentials of their choice. They were also able to help with sorting ID issues out, in the form of passports and birth certificates, and purchase a laptop for a child who was being home schooled and hadn't been able to bring their own laptop with them to refuge.

- £30,000 to Manchester Deaf Centre to help them in providing advocacy services for deaf victims of domestic abuse and to put on training for local partners to raise awareness of the particular issues and challenges deaf victims face.
- £30,000 to LGBT Foundation, to help them put together home starter / home decoration kits and deliver wraparound therapy sessions, including dedicated sessions for Trans people.
- £49,000 to Vesta / Europia to enable them to recruit a Polish speaking DA worker and housing advisor, and to set up a peer support group.
- £50,000 jointly to Independent Choice and Safety for Sisters, to help them set up a fund for emergency financial support (travel, taxis, phone cards etc) and provide immigration legal advice, training and interpretation for women presenting with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)
- £50,000 awarded to CAHN for the Victim Voice work described earlier in paragraph 2.2.4.

#### **4. Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews**

- 4.1 The Community Safety Team continues to ensure that Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) are undertaken and progressed as required and in line with the statutory guidance.
- 4.2 DHRs are a statutory process and must be undertaken if the circumstances of a death meet Home Office criteria. There are currently two DHRs in progress, though both are reaching a conclusion and are expected to be sent off to the Home Office for quality assurance shortly.
- 4.3 Three DHRs have been completed during 2022-23, and the processes are now under way to ensure that actions arising for agencies and services are promptly discharged, and that learning for professionals and providers is disseminated, through face-to-face group learning events, learning reports and '7 Minute Briefings' on particular themes or topics.
- 4.4 As part of the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner's range of functions, we are now obliged to share completed review reports with her office, in order that they contribute to the recently launched national repository of learning and have the potential to shape change in policy and practice at a national level.

4.5 In order to streamline the conduct of statutory reviews across the Council, Community Safety Partnership and Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, colleagues have been working on merging of processes and documentation. It is intended that this will bring about greater efficiency of process and improve the learning experience for professionals and partners where domestic abuse, adult and child safeguarding issues overlap.

4.6 The pool of individuals available to perform the role of DHR Chair / Author remains limited, though measures taken to improve the range of available authors have been successful.

## **5. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) update**

### **5.1 Women's Night-time Safety Charter**

5.1.1 The Women's Night-time Safety Charter was launched in September 2022 and is a call to action for all businesses and groups that operate in the night-time economy, to contribute to making women's safety a priority in the city.

5.1.2 The Charter has 7 'pledges' which encourage businesses to consider women's safety in their workplace and what to do if their employees witness or have an incident reported to them. A Charter toolkit and face to face training on vulnerability, welfare and being an active bystander is offered to all businesses who sign up, to help them work through the pledges and implement them.

5.1.3 Since the initial launch, there are now over 300 signatories and over 500 frontline staff have been trained in welfare and vulnerability. An e-learning package is due to be launched in September 2023, to support the face-to-face delivery, with encouragement to all staff working in the night-time economy to access package and understand both the importance of spotting vulnerability and knowing when and how to intervene.

5.1.4 In July 2023 the Charter held its first 'Women's Night-time Safety Charter Summit' with 50 representatives from businesses and groups coming together to discuss and consider the development of the Charter, the further steps to be taken to improve safety for staff and customers, how more signatories can be engaged, and how we can continue to support those who have already pledged their commitment.

### **5.2 Good Night Out Guide**

5.2.1 Work is underway to relaunch the Good Night Out Guide (GNOG), initially launched in September 2022 to offer advice and information to new students in the city. The first edition of the Guide was very well received by students and partners. The refresh and relaunch are planned for September 2023, with a campaign including posters on bus stops along the Oxford Road corridor and on digital screens across the city to promote the messages in the guide.

- 5.2.2 Over the summer the GNOG campaign also partnered up with LadBible and Parklife to promote messages during the music festival weekend. These messages were displayed on screens at the festival and in the city centre, providing advice and information on where to find help and support and how to have a safe night in the city.
- 5.2.3 To coincide with the relaunch of the GNOG, work is underway to highlight and promote the Safe Spaces across the city, to ensure visitors to the city know where they are, and how they can utilise them. The city centre police station is due to be reopened to provide a further, 24/7 staffed, safe space.
- 5.2.4 GMP will also be running police operations to focus on the night-time economy as part of their ongoing efforts to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), with the aim of ensuring those who are out at night are safe, protected and supported. In Summer 2022, across Greater Manchester, previous operations saw excellent results in terms of positive interventions, stop searches, over 250 arrests for VAWG related crimes and a marked reduction in VAWG related incidents. Officers will work closely again with partner agencies and have a visible presence in town centres, licensed premises and on public transport, as they tackle issues including sexual harassment, drink spiking and predatory behaviour.

### 5.3 **Parks and Libraries**

- 5.3.1 Council colleagues are considering what steps to take in response to the recently published [Safer parks](#) report, generated from the research completed by Leeds University. Manchester has 143 parks across the city, operated by 61 staff and receiving over 4.7 million visitors every year. However, it is widely recognised that access to parks is not equal, with women and girls highlighting significant barriers of concerns for safety, ASB, crime and lack of available help and support should they need it. One of the recommendations from the report the promotion of staff training to help identify predatory behaviour and understand when to intervene by being an active bystander. From September a training offer will be made to all staff working in parks and to volunteers.
- 5.3.2 Another action being developed, in conjunction with colleagues in our Libraries Service, is the establishment of libraries and park buildings as 'Safe Spaces', in line with the national 'Ask for ANI' / Safe Spaces initiative that already incorporates pharmacies, banks and other retail premises (see also 2.2.3 above).

### 5.4 **Youth intervention**

- 5.4.1 In July 2023 three grants were awarded to successful bidders following a round of funding. The applications focused on development of approaches to support young women and girls at risk of violence or unhealthy relationships. Three projects have been funded: Manchester Youth Zone in the North of the

city, M13 Youth in the East area and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group which covers parts of South Manchester. These projects allow youth providers to work closely with young women and girls and understand the challenges they face and the individual support they need.

5.4.2 Work with young men and boys continues to be offered through '10 Dialogues', a schools programme available to all schools in the city. The 10 Dialogues programme aims to explore what is safe for teenage boys: physiologically, legally, emotionally, sexually and to help them understand that all men can play a part in delegitimising violence and challenging harmful values and behaviours. This project is completed by working over ten weeks with small groups of boys aged between 13 and 16. A number of Manchester schools have taken this offer up and engaged with the programme.

## 5.5 **White Ribbon**

5.5.1 Following the council's announcement of becoming White Ribbon accredited in March 2022, work continues to deliver the action plan and encourage all directorates to promote engagement and involvement with it across the council and with our partners. Since becoming accredited several key partners in the city have also become White Ribbon accredited, increasing the awareness and importance of this work and supports delivery across the city and Greater Manchester.

5.5.2 Work is underway to prepare for the next White Ribbon Day, in November, where a wide range of activities, events and awareness raising initiatives will be delivered, in conjunction with other accredited Councils and partner agencies, and with local groups and organisations.

5.5.3 Any Members who may be interested in following Councillor Rahman in becoming a White Ribbon Ambassador are invited to contact any of the Contact Officers named on the opening page of this report for further information.

## 6. **Current issues and challenges**

6.1 The first Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment refresh has further helped us to understand the domestic abuse landscape in the city, but we are still keen to richen the picture even further, so we know all there is to know about the nature and impact of domestic abuse in Manchester and can direct our funding and other resources as effectively as possible.

6.2 Many of the programmes and services set out in this report of this report have been made possible through the significant allocation of Council funding agreed by Members back in 2020. That commitment has been hugely welcome and has enabled more victims to be supported, more children to receive counselling and therapy, and our work to challenge the behaviour of perpetrators to markedly develop.

- 6.3 The early allocations of New Burdens funding enabled us to be able to put in place many of the services described in section 3 above. We will only know year to year, however, whether the amount allocated to the city will increase with inflation, remain the same or even decrease.
- 6.4 Work on the broader VAWG agenda and action plan (see section 5 above) is being supported by funding agreed by Members, and, given the intertwined nature of this and the domestic abuse agenda it is likely that there will be some residual benefit in terms of awareness raising / prevention work and support to victims.
- 6.5 Demand upon our services remains high and, while our commitment remains to promote awareness and encourage reporting of all forms of domestic abuse and VAWG, that situation is unlikely to change significantly in the coming year. Given this, it is important that our IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) service is fit and able to effectively meet that demand and give victims the support they need in a timely manner.
- 6.6 The IDVA service has experienced some staffing challenges through the second half of last year and the whole of this year to date. These have had an impact on response times for victims and have resulted in a build-up of significant waiting lists for support. These challenges have been discussed at the DA Partnership Board and at the Community Safety Partnership Board, both of whom are closely and regularly monitoring the impact of a service recovery plan that has been set in motion.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Committee are invited to consider and comment on the information contained in this report.