

Review of domestic abuse refuge provision



The Altogether Better programme is a new approach to providing better, more efficient and effective public services in Cheshire West and Chester. As part of this programme the Council, the Police, Cheshire Probation Service, NHS and other partners have reviewed how they respond to the serious issue of domestic abuse.

One element of this review involved the Council and partners engaging in consultation with providers and service users to understand their views on, and issues with, the current service, which has informed a new vision for the provision of refuges for women and their children fleeing domestic abuse. This new vision was published as part of the Altogether Better business case in October 2012.

The aim of this new service will be to meet the needs of male and female survivors, with the emphasis on providing safe and supported housing to survivors within twelve weeks of accessing the service.

Tell us what you think

This document outlines consultation carried out so far and key proposals for the new service. We would like your feedback to help us finalise what the new service will look like, and help us to understand which elements of the services are most important when deciding who should provide the new service from April 2014.

We would welcome your views on our vision. You can give us your views on our vision for Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation (DASA) in one of the following ways:

- Complete the feedback form, which begins on page 4 of this document, and return it to: Adult Safeguarding Unit, 4th Floor, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port CH65 0BE
- Complete the feedback form on line at:
www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/consultation
- Write to us at Adult Safeguarding Unit, 4th Floor, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port CH65 0BE (please mark for the attention of Gavin Butler)
- Email: cwacdap@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Consultation so far

An extensive programme of consultation has already taken place with a range of groups and organisations, including survivors and community and voluntary groups. This has included:

- Workshops and questionnaires with service users in Northwich and Ellesmere Port
- Workshops with a range of partners, including the Police, Council officers, local Councillors, Vale Royal Women's Aid, Cheshire Probation Service, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP), Chester Sexual Violence Support Service (CSVSS) and Catch 22
- Officer visits to current refuges to gather views on the new vision for the service from staff and current service users in Chester, Ellesmere Port and the Vale Royal area.

Proposals for a new service

Cheshire West and Chester currently commission three refuges for women fleeing domestic abuse, which are located across the borough. The current service has been valued and well used, but has the following limitations:

- There is no provision for male survivors
- Two of the three refuges cannot accommodate families with teenage male children
- The refuges currently accommodate about 60% of their tenants from outside the borough
- All three refuges have significant degrees of shared facilities, including kitchens and bathrooms
- Access to a support worker within the building is focused mainly on Monday-Friday during office hours.

Feedback from consultation with survivors indicates that they do not value shared accommodation and that there were risks of building dependence on services. Feedback from service providers shows that significant support time is spent on managing the conflicting interests and expectation of people sharing kitchen and communal spaces.

The initial proposal for the new service would be to support survivors to retain (and where required, regain) their independence and move into secure, appropriate tenancies within twelve weeks of accessing the service. This would help survivors and their children to access appropriate universal services such as school and childcare as well specialist programmes as appropriate.

The emphasis will be on delivering this outcome to survivors who are resident in the Cheshire West and Chester area, although there will be some provision for survivors who need to escape abuse from other authorities.

The main changes from the existing services would be:

- An end to shared kitchens and bathrooms
- A clearer emphasis on getting families into appropriate accommodation in the community within twelve weeks
- Support after move on
- A resource for male survivors
- A resource for families with children of any age or gender

The provision is likely to be made up of:

- a central building with approximately five self contained flats for individual women and their children, whatever the age or gender of their children
- some office and staff space
- an open access room for resident meetings, peer support and group work ,
- a number of dispersed flats and houses in the community
- six weeks support following move-on

No decision has been made about the location of the central building or the dispersed units, and locations will be regarded as sensitive to protect survivors throughout this approach and will not be generally disclosed.

Services to any male survivors would be in the community setting, rather than in the central building. The Council is keen to look at best practice before designing the specification and has been carrying out market testing to ensure the proposal can be delivered.

What will happen with the information you provide?

Council is very grateful for your time and input. All responses will be seen by a senior manager, and analysed. The results will be drawn together and used to inform the final specification that will go out to potential providers of the new service. A report based on the feedback that we receive will go to the Council's Executive in September, and this will inform all subsequent decisions.

The Council will communicate the new vision and the provider of the new service through its website and other media in January 2014.

How to complete this questionnaire

- Please cross one box per question unless otherwise stated
- If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, please feel free to leave them blank
- If you would like to make additional comments, please use a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this form
- You can also complete this questionnaire online by going www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/consultation.

The new approach to accommodation

A key element of the proposals for the new Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation is for one central building (or hub) for the whole borough of Cheshire West and Chester, some office and staff space, and an open access room for resident meetings, peer support and group work. There would also be a number of self-contained flats and houses within the local community, distributed across the borough. Support would be available for six weeks after move-on from the central building.

Q1. a) Do you agree or disagree that the new service should provide a range of housing options? (Please cross one box)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q1. b) Do you have any comments to make about this proposal? (Please write in the box below)

Q2. a) Thinking generally, which three of the local services or amenities below would you say are most important for the new Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation hub to be located close to? (Please tick no more than three options from those listed below)

GP/doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bus stop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Train station	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post Office	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Q2. b) Do you have any comments to make about your answers above? (Please write in the box below)

Q3. a) Do you agree or disagree that a member of staff should be available at the Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation hub 24 hours per day? (Please cross one box only)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3. b) Do you have any comments to make about this proposal? (Please write in the box below)

Q4. a) Do you agree or disagree that the Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation hub should have a common room to encourage peer support and group work? (Please cross one box only)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4. b) Do you have any comments to make about this proposal? (Please write in the box below)

Q7. b) Do you have any comments to make about this proposal? (Please write in the box below)

Q8 a) Currently, refuge services only meet the needs of women survivors. Do you agree or disagree that the new Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation service should be available for male survivors of domestic abuse? (Please cross one box

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

only)

Q8. b) Do you have any comments to make about this proposal? (Please write in the box below)

Q9. a) Currently the service only has limited availability for women with teenage male children. Do you agree or disagree the new Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation service should be available to families with children of all ages? (Please cross one box only)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9. b) Do you have any comments to make about this proposal? (Please write in the box below)

Q10. Do you have any other comments to make about plans for the new Domestic Abuse Supportive Accommodation service? (Please write in the box below)

About you

Q11. Are you....(please tick all that apply)

Survivor of domestic abuse

A provider of refuge accommodation specifically for survivors of domestic abuse
(Please write the provider you represent in the box below)

A representative of a partner agency that supports survivors of domestic abuse
(Please write the agency or organisation you represent in the box below).

Other (please write in the box below)

Thank you for taking the time to tell us your views.

**Please return the completed feedback form to Adult Safeguarding Unit, 4th Floor,
Civic Way, Ellesmere Port CH65 0BE (please mark for the attention of Gavin Butler)
by 4 August 2013**

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at **equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

Tel: 0300 123 8 123 **Textphone:** 18001 01606 867 670

email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk