

<b>31 January 2020</b>		<b>ITEM: 6</b>
<b>Health and Wellbeing Board</b>		
<b>Sexual Violence and Abuse Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-key	
<b>Report of:</b> Maria Payne, Strategic Lead for Public Mental Health and Adult Mental Health System Transformation Sareena Gill-Dosanjh, Public Health Programme Manager		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b>		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Ian Wake, Director of Public Health		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

Every Health and Wellbeing Board has the responsibility to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for their area, which should give a comprehensive overview of the current and future health and care needs of local populations to inform and guide the planning and commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services. In Thurrock, the Public Health team produce Joint Strategic Needs Assessment documents themed around particular topics, and the most recent of these covers the needs of survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

The report sought to further our understanding of the nature and prevalence and types of sexual violence and abuse occurring locally. Findings from this needs assessment were developed from the analysis of literature, data from specialist and non-specialist sexual violence and abuse services and referral data and engagement with local professional and victims/survivors.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 That the Board endorse the report and approve it for publication.
- 1.2 The Board support to the next steps proposed, i.e. holding a Thurrock Sexual Violence and Abuse summit and implementation of the recommendations.

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 Tragically, sexual violence and abuse is a widespread problem that is still very much prevalent in our society. These crimes are serious and can have devastating and long-lasting effects on victims/survivors including a range of physical, emotional and psychological impacts. The experience of sexual violence and abuse at any age can have significant effects on every aspect of a person's being and life; on their mind, body, behaviour, thoughts and feelings. Sexual violence and abuse affects not just the victim/survivor, but the offender and the families and communities around both of them.
- 2.2 We estimate that there are 12,101 Thurrock residents who have experienced sexual assault since the age of 16, and 2,718 residents of all ages who experienced some form of sexual violence or abuse in the last 12 months.
- 2.3 However, a large number of these may be unknown to existing support services. The report details a number of issues including inconsistent data recording practices, perceived barriers to disclosure, barriers to accessing support and fragmentation between services where survivors are known to more than one provider.
- 2.4 The needs assessment report outlines recommendations to address each of these issues; the most fundamental of which proposes a new pathway of support to be established. It is suggested that a new sexual violence and abuse stakeholder partnership is set up in order to take forward the recommendations from this needs assessment and ensure an ongoing and consistent focus on sexual violence and abuse locally. The proposed recommendations will not be successful unless sexual violence and abuse is viewed as everybody's responsibility and key stakeholders work in partnership.
- 2.5 There has been a lot of national interest recently with regard to improving support to sexual violence and abuse survivors, and this piece of work has the opportunity to influence change beyond the Thurrock borders. There are few existing examples of needs assessment reports on this topic, however, none of which explore the topic to this extent.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 These are set out in detail in the report itself.

## **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 This report has been produced based on extensive stakeholder and survivor inputs, evidence review and wide-ranging data analyses in order to provide the most comprehensive assessment of sexual violence and abuse possible. The recommendations within should provide a starting point for further work to be done to improve the experiences of survivors and provide a level of consistency.

## **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 A wide range of stakeholders were consulted and contributed to this report. These are set out in the acknowledgements section of the report. Additionally, this needs assessment features information collected from a large number of local victims/survivors (83 responses to the survey and 6 victims/survivors who were interviewed and videoed, and 10 young people who planned and delivered the South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) REAL Conference in April 2019).
- 5.2 A draft version of this document has been shared at multiple forums including Brighter Futures Board, Directors Board, Community Safety Partnership and the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategic Group. Audiences were in support of the document and have provided comments regarding how to take the recommendations forward.
- 5.3 An overview of this needs assessment and its findings was presented at Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> November and was well received by its members.
- 5.4 It is intended to launch this needs assessment to a wider audience at a summit in spring 2020 in order to invite further discussion on the report's findings and taking the recommendations forward.

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The report contributes towards the 'People' priority – *a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay*, as it builds on our partnerships with statutory, community and voluntary groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.
- 6.2 The recommendations also contribute towards the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21 Objective D2. *When services are required, they are organised around the individual.*

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Strategic Lead, Corporate Finance**

The report looks at potential unmet needs of survivors of sexual violence and abuse. Whilst exact costs have not been calculated, the report indicates that there may be future increases in demand for specialist services; but it also

includes a number of potential areas for future financial savings if the impacts of sexual violence and abuse were mitigated.

Any specific investment decisions arising from the recommendations in this report would be subject to the approval of detailed business cases for individual services and these would be approved through the normal governance processes.

## 7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**  
**Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education.**

The provision of support for sexual violence survivors is governed by a number of key strategies and policies, such as the National Statement of Expectations regarding Violence Against Women and Girls (2016, updated 2019), the Victims Strategy (2018) and the NHS Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services. All of these detail commitments towards improving access to specialist support, reducing fragmentation in pathways and placing the survivor's needs at the heart of the support provided. The recommendations within this JSNA report align with all these principles.

## 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**  
**Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities**

The JSNA report states that whilst sexual violence and abuse can happen to anyone anywhere, sexual violence and abuse crimes tend to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in society / those likely to experience health inequalities more widely. In addition, the report demonstrates variation in those 'known' to the Police or other services when compared to those estimated to have experienced sexual violence and abuse. The recommendations made in this report should reduce barriers to accessing support and the current fragmentation seen between some services. This JSNA report will be subject to a full Community Equality Impact Assessment.

## 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Recommendations contained within the report should also contribute towards improved reporting of sexual violence and abuse crimes.

**8. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Detailed references are given in the main report.

**9. Appendices to the report**

- Sexual Violence Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Sexual Violence Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Appendices

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