

# THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE BOARD

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Purpose and Role

1. The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is responsible for supporting Buckinghamshire Council in meeting its Duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Board is convened by Buckinghamshire Council.
2. The Board will work together to:
  - reduce the occurrence or severity of domestic abuse by taking a whole system approach and a focus on early intervention and prevention
  - support, advise and work in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services.
  - improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support within safe accommodation services
  - on behalf of the Safer Buckinghamshire Board
    - be responsible for the development and delivery of the Safer Buckinghamshire Plan DVA priority and action Plan
    - oversee the arrangements for Domestic Homicide Reviews and implementation of action plans (N.B. The Safer Buckinghamshire Board will still need to formally agree DHR referrals)
  - provide strategic governance and oversight to the MARAC

### The responsibilities of the Board are to:

3. Provide advice and data to support Buckinghamshire Council to undertake a robust local needs assessment to identify and understand the needs of domestic abuse victims within their area (including those that present from out of area).
4. Provide expert advice and data to support the development of a local strategy, agreeing the appropriate steps needed to meet the needs identified.
5. Support Buckinghamshire Council to engage with domestic abuse victims and expert services to understand the range and complexity of needs.
6. Support Buckinghamshire Council to make commissioning and decommissioning decisions (where appropriate). This can include when and how commissioning is undertaken to ensure the best and most appropriate services are made available for victims.
7. Advise and support in dealing with issues raised and identified from engagement through formal and informal routes; and escalate issues to the relevant representative / body.
8. [Board members will] support in ensuring join up across other related areas such as housing, health, early years and childhood support, social services and police and crime services.

### Membership

9. The Board is made up of organisations or interests that must be represented by law; and other organisations that the Council has invited to participate:

- Buckinghamshire Council
- Aylesbury Women's Aid
- Wycombe Women's Aid
- Aylesbury Vale & Milton Keynes Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Services
- South Buckinghamshire Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Services
- Council services: Community Safety, Children's Services, Integrated Commissioning, Housing, Public Health, Education, Adults & Children's Safeguarding
- Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust
- Oxford Health Foundation Trust
- Primary Care
- Frimley Healthcare Trust
- Thames Valley Police Local Police Areas (3)
- Thames Valley Police Buckinghamshire Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Service
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
- Buckinghamshire Association of Secondary Heads (secondary schools)
- Primary Executive Board (primary schools)
- Victim representation (exact arrangements TBC)

10. An individual may represent more than one organisation.

11. There are other organisations that have an interest in the work of the Board and may be invited to attend on occasion or their input sought through other mechanisms.

### **Frequency and form of meetings**

12. The Board will usually meet at least quarterly. However, there is flexibility in the form and frequency of meetings. Board meetings will not be held in public.

### **Chairing**

13. The Chair of the Board will be appointed by the Council.

14. The Vice Chair of the Board will be agreed by the Board.

### **Governance and accountability**

15. The Board will be accountable for its actions to its individual member organisations. Members of the Board are responsible for ensuring they report back and feed into the Board on behalf of their represented group(s) / body(ies).

16. Board members will be accountable through their own organisations' decision-making processes for the decisions they take. It is expected that Members of the Board will have delegated authority from their organisations to take decisions within the terms of reference and constitution of the Board.

17. Where board members are unable to attend a meeting, they are responsible for informing the Board ahead of the meeting and, as far as possible, should ensure a representative is present on their behalf.

18. Board members are required to anticipate and declare any possible conflicts of interest; and follow the direction of the Chair in how the conflict of interest is managed.
19. Board members will be required to comply with appropriate information sharing and confidentiality requirements, for example, an Information Sharing Protocol.
20. The quoracy requirement is 50% of the statutory membership. Where one or more of the statutory members has a conflict of interest relating to the agenda of the meeting, the quoracy requirement is 50% of the remaining statutory membership. If inquorate, the Chair may proceed with the meeting with the decisions of the meeting ratified at the next Board meeting.
21. It is expected that decisions will be reached by consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Board will refer to the Council's constitution and decisions will be made by majority. The Chairman will have the casting vote.

### **Meeting management**

22. A forward plan will be maintained for the Board and members will be able to put forward suggested agenda items for consideration.
23. The chairman will be responsible for agreeing the agenda; and draft minutes for circulation.

### **Reporting**

24. The Chair will report back to the Council and the Safer Buckinghamshire Board and ensure close links are maintained with the Health & Wellbeing and Safeguarding Boards.
25. The Board will support Buckinghamshire Council in reporting back to MHCLG on delivering the duty in line with statutory guidance and the standardised reporting form.

### **Review**

26. These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and agreed by the Board after 12 months of operation. Next date for review April 2022.