



Subject:	Update: Notice of Motion regarding Domestic Violence
Date:	Friday 24 th January 2020
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Development
Contact Officer:	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Manager, City & Neighbourhood Services Catherine Christy, Human Resources Manager, City and Organisational Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd August 2019, a Motion regarding Domestic Violence was passed. The Motion noted:</p> <p>“This Council is saddened at the levels of domestic violence in Belfast and recognises that this manifests in many different forms, including emotional and economic abuse.</p> <p>Belfast needs to become a city that has zero tolerance towards domestic violence or abuse – a “Safe City” which is proactive in supporting victims of domestic violence and</p>

1.2	<p>challenging perpetrators. A Safe City recognises that domestic violence impacts upon many residents, regardless of age, religion, ethnic or cultural background.</p> <p>This Council pledges to build on the work already achieved by engaging with relevant partners to support victims of domestic abuse and challenge perpetrators and to update the Belfast City Council Domestic Violence Strategy.”</p> <p>This report outlines action being taken by the Council and its partners to support victims of domestic violence and identifies the next steps in Belfast being designated as a Safe Borough / City, for Members consideration.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the content of the report; • Agree to the Council progressing action to attain the Safe Borough / City accreditation; and • Agree to support the White Pledge Charter, as set out within the requirements for a Safe City / Borough Accreditation – see Appendix 1.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace Policy</p> <p>Members approved a revised policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd August 2019 and this was ratified by the Council on 2nd September 2019.</p>
3.2	<p>The Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace policy applies to all Council employees (including casual and temporary staff) with the aim to support and assist employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse as well as providing guidance on managing situations where employees are perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse.</p>
3.3	<p>Following the revision to the Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace policy, an additional 16 employees and 1 elected member have attended training with a further 7 employees completing the Trusted Colleague training, taking the total number of Trusted Colleagues within Council to 35. Further communication and awareness raising is planned</p>

to ensure all staff are fully aware of the Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace policy.

3.4 The revised policy and subsequent rollout of related communication and training were key to Council's re-accreditation of the ONUS (a social enterprise organisation offering best practice advice and specialist training on domestic violence and abuse) Workplace Charter (Safe Place) at Platinum level. Accreditation for the ONUS Workplace Charter is on an annual basis with Council first being awarded at Platinum level in 2018. In October 2019, Council was successfully re-accredited at Platinum level.

Safe Borough / City Accreditation

3.5 Additional to the Workplace Charter, officers have engaged with ONUS regarding the requirements for Belfast to be designated as a Safe Borough / City, which is defined by ONUS as a Borough / City that:

- promotes zero tolerance to domestic violence or abuse;
- recognises that domestic violence or abuse impacts upon many people living or working there, regardless of age, religion, disability, ethnic or cultural background and while the majority of victims are female, domestic violence or abuse can be experienced by men and by people in same sex relationships; and
- aims to provide an inclusive means of providing information on the range of organisations available to help anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse.

3.6 Safe Borough / City accreditation is linked to Council's Workplace Charter (Safe Place) accreditation at a Platinum level. It requires the Council to be an advocate for the message to never condone or stay silent about domestic violence and to work in partnership with ONUS and others to extend the message of Safe Place, raise awareness of anyone experiencing domestic violence and develop new means of rolling out 'participation pathways' to create safer workplaces, churches and communities.

The full list of requirements for Safe Borough / City accreditation can be found within Appendix 1.

Progress towards Belfast being recognised as a Safe Borough / City

- 3.7 Through engagement with ONUS and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PSCP), the need for, and opportunity to collaborate on the roll out of an extensive programme of Safe Churches training was identified and agreed. The roll out will see the delivery of two Safe Churches training sessions in each quarter of the city and will be supported and promoted through a range of partners including the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
- 3.8 Safe Churches is a bespoke pathway that enables Churches to recognise and respond to anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse. Once accredited, the Churches can offer information on the wide range of support services available to anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse and they possess a range of Safe Place resources to signpost individuals to the appropriate assistance. Further information on Safe Churches can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.9 Additionally, within the requirements for Safe City / Borough accreditation, is an action that 'Council management and elected members have signed and will display the White Ribbon Charter: a personal pledge to never commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence'. The White Ribbon Charter is part of the largest male-led Global campaign to end men's violence against women, with a presence in over 60 countries.
- 3.10 Annually the White Ribbon Campaign is marked with 16 Days of Action, which run between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25th November) until Human Rights Day (10th December). Council have in previous years supported the White Ribbon Campaign by facilitating the display of a White Ribbon on the cobbled area in front of City Hall, on 25th November. Subject to approval from elected members, officers will undertake to include all associated actions with supporting the White Ribbon Campaign within Council's internal plan for Safe Place Platinum re-accreditation.
- 3.11 Members are asked to agree that annually the Lord Mayor will reaffirm Council's commitment to Belfast being recognised as a Safe Borough / City, by signing the White Ribbon Charter. Ongoing promotion of this initiative will further assist with awareness raising of Domestic Violence and Abuse, both internally and externally.

	<p>Further requirements for a Safe Borough / City</p> <p>3.12 Parallel to advancing work listed above, the Council through the PCSP, continues to support a range of work linked to the Belfast Area Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership, including work to raise awareness of domestic violence and services available for those experiencing domestic violence; such as the series of ‘Domestic Violence Raising Awareness Sessions’, which took place throughout January in each quarter of the city. Council officers will continue to engage with partners and build on this work as part of our commitment to Belfast being recognised as a Safe Borough / City. It is envisaged that Safe Borough / City status can be achieved by Autumn 2020, as part of the annual re-accreditation of Council’s Workplace Charter (Safe Place) at Platinum level.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.13 There are no Financial or Resource implications to the recommendations outlined above.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.14 The work to raise awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse, and support available, has been progressed through the Women’s Steering Group as part of the Council’s Gender Action Plan. The revision and development of the Council’s Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace policy was undertaken with engagement and support from a number of Section 75 groups and supports the Council’s wider equality agenda.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Safe City / Borough Accreditation Checklist</p> <p>Appendix 2: Safe Churches Leaflet</p>